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Friday, June 26

Senior Menu: Breaded chicken on bun, oven roasted potatoes, California blend, fruit.

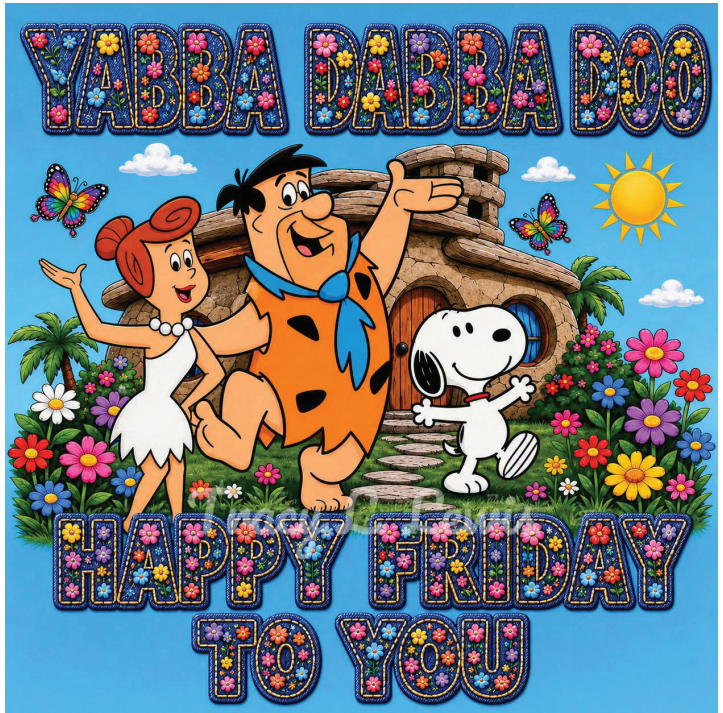
U14 Legion at Vern Jark Tournament, Aberdeen
Sr. Legion at The ROCK Tournament, Madison
T-Ball Scrimmage, 6 p.m., Nelson Field

Saturday, June 27

U14 Legion at Vern Jark Tournament, Aberdeen
Sr. Legion at The ROCK Tournament, Madison
U8 Baseball - Groton Tournament (Red & Blue)

Groton Daily Independent
PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

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Sunday, June 28

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m., at Zion, 11 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

U14 Legion at Vern Jark Tournament, Aberdeen

Sr. Legion at The ROCK Tournament, Madison

U12 Softball hosts Mobridge, DH, 2 p.m., (B&W)

U10 Softball hosts Mobridge, DH, 4 p.m., (G&W)

U8 Softball hosts Mobridge, DH, 2 p.m. (B&W)

U14 Softball hosts Mobridge, DH, 4 p.m.

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1440

Why 1440? The printing press was invented around the year 1440, spreading knowledge to the masses and changing the course of history. More facts: In every day, there are 1,440 minutes. We're here to make each one count.

SCOTUS Immigration Rulings

The Supreme Court handed down two immigration rulings yesterday, allowing the Trump administration to revive a border asylum policy and immediately move forward with ending deportation protections for migrants from Haiti and Syria.

In the first case, the court ruled migrants turned away before setting foot on US soil cannot apply for asylum. The decision restores the "metering" policy, which limits daily asylum processing at the US-Mexico border, a policy that was rescinded under President Joe Biden. In the second case, the court said the administration may immediately end Temporary Protected Status for roughly 350,000 Haitians and 6,000 Syrians while legal challenges continue. Created in 1990, TPS protects migrants from deportation if their home countries face war, natural disasters, or other emergencies, with protections intended to end when conditions improve.

Separately, the court struck down Hawaii's restriction on carrying firearms onto private property open to the public and limited state-law failure-to-warn lawsuits against Bayer over its Roundup weedkiller.

Deadly Double Quake

Rescue crews are searching for thousands of people reported missing after powerful twin earthquakes struck Venezuela less than a minute apart Wednesday evening. At least 188 people are dead as of this writing, and hundreds more are injured.

The first, a 7.2-magnitude earthquake, struck west of Caracas, putting stress on another fault line roughly 3 miles away and triggering a 7.5-magnitude quake 39 seconds later. The second quake was the strongest Venezuela has experienced in over a century. The nation sits on a border where the Caribbean tectonic plate slides along the South American plate. The tremors were felt in Brazil's Amazon, roughly 1,050 miles from Caracas, where buildings, power, and cell service all went down.

Interim President Delcy Rodríguez is reportedly coordinating aid with several countries, including the US, which has backed her since capturing former President Nicolás Maduro. The United Nations is also calling on Rodríguez to lift digital media restrictions imposed by Maduro to facilitate the flow of lifesaving information.

'Peppa Pig' Contract Doesn't Fly

Nearly 1,000 people have signed an open letter condemning contracts requiring child actors to sign over their voices to AI. The letter comes after Hasbro, which owns the "Peppa Pig" brand, reportedly updated its contracts to include the clause.

The new contracts come after Hasbro presented an AI version of Peppa Pig this year, in partnership with ElevenLabs. It's not clear if six-year-old Harriette Cox, who began voicing the character last year, licensed her voice for the project. Child advocates say kids are too young to sign over rights to their voices or images indefinitely. If they refuse, however, they risk losing out on business opportunities.

"Peppa Pig" is a Nick Jr. show with tens of millions of YouTube subscribers. The animated series is one of dozens of entertainment projects owned by Hasbro; adaptations of Monopoly, My Little Pony, Magic: The Gathering, and Furby are currently in development.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Harvey Weinstein's New York rape charge is dropped after an overturned verdict and two deadlocked juries; his accuser says she does not want to testify at a fourth trial.

David Clayton-Thomas, lead singer of the Grammy-winning band Blood, Sweat & Tears, dies at age 84.

France and Norway battle at 3 pm ET for the top spot in their World Cup group, while Uruguay faces Spain at 8 pm ET with a chance to advance on the line (More, w/schedule) | See highlights from last night's USMNT vs. Turkey game; USMNT already clinched a spot in the next round, which begins Sunday.

Science & Technology

IBM unveils world's first sub-1-nanometer chip technology, expected to enable significantly more powerful computers without a corresponding energy increase.

Gene editing enables scientists to see an early human embryo in detail, revealing a master gene crucial to development; finding may improve IVF outcomes and reduce pregnancy loss.

Astronomers discover two planets the size of Jupiter but lighter than cotton candy; they are likely composed primarily of helium and hydrogen.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 -0.0%, Dow +0.1%, Nasdaq -0.5%).

US Personal Consumption Expenditures Price Index—key inflation metric monitored by the Fed—rose 4.1% year over year in May, highest level in three years.

Apple shares drop 6% after it raises prices for MacBooks and iPads due to higher memory chip and storage costs.

Microsoft raises Xbox console prices for third time in 13 months due to higher component costs.

Dating app Bumble reportedly exploring sale amid slow growth.

Politics & World Affairs

UN agency pauses plan to evacuate hundreds of ships stranded in the Persian Gulf after Iran allegedly attacks a Singaporean-flagged cargo ship in the Gulf of Oman with a drone.

Great American State Fair kicks off in DC's National Mall; will be open through July 10.

National Park Service says the lining of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool was cut with a knife or razor this month.

North Korean soldier defects to South Korea, becoming the latest of more than 34,000 North Koreans who have defected since 1998, per South Korean data.



A promotional poster for a live music performance. It features a photograph of a smiling woman with long blonde hair wearing sunglasses. In the top left corner, there is a circular logo with a guitar neck and the text "LIVE MUSIC AT THE LEGION!". The name "LIZZY HOFER" is written in large, bold, white letters with a red flame graphic to the left. Below the name, it says "PLAYING FRIDAY JUNE 26" in green and pink. To the right, it indicates the time "9 P.M. TO 1 A.M." and the venue "GROTON AMERICAN LEGION". At the bottom, a banner reads "GREAT MUSIC ★ COLD DRINKS ★ GOOD TIMES" and "EVERYONE WELCOME!" with decorative arrows.

LIVE MUSIC
AT THE LEGION!

LIZZY HOFER

PLAYING
FRIDAY
JUNE 26

9 P.M. TO 1 A.M.
GROTON
AMERICAN LEGION

GREAT MUSIC ★ COLD DRINKS ★ GOOD TIMES
EVERYONE WELCOME!

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Groton Post 39 14U sweeps Redfield behind balanced offense and strong pitching

Groton Post 39's 14U team completed a doubleheader sweep of Redfield on Thursday, rolling to an 18-5 victory in the opener before closing out the day with a 7-2 win.

Groton's offense piled up 25 hits over the two games while its pitchers combined to limit Redfield to seven runs.

In the opener, Bentley E turned in a monster performance at the plate, driving in six runs on four hits. He singled home a run in the second inning, blasted a three-run double during a four-run third, and added a two-run single in Groton's eight-run fifth inning.

The bottom of Groton's lineup fueled the attack as Bentley, Hank H and Mason L combined for six of the team's 10 hits while scoring three runs and driving in eight.

Groton scored first on a sacrifice fly by Trayce S in the opening inning before Redfield answered with three runs in the bottom half to take an early lead. Groton quickly regained control, scoring three times in the second to move in front 4-3, then broke the game open with four more runs in the third. The Post 39 bats put the contest away with an eight-run fifth inning that featured a two-run double by Keegan K, RBI singles from Trayce, Easton L and Mason, Bentley's two-run single, and another run on a balk.

Keegan started on the mound, allowing three runs over one inning. Kyson K was dominant in relief, working the final four innings while allowing just two runs on four hits. He struck out seven despite issuing seven walks.

Mason added two hits, Tucker L drew three walks, and Keegan swiped two bases. Groton showed patience throughout the game, drawing 12 walks, and played flawless defense without committing an error.

The momentum carried into the nightcap.

After Gavin H drove in Groton's first run with an RBI single in the opening inning, Redfield answered with two runs in the bottom of the first to grab a 2-1 lead. Groton evened the score in the third on Trayce S's RBI single before taking control the rest of the way.

Graham R turned in a strong complete-game effort, allowing just two hits and two runs over five innings while striking out six and walking six.

Groton pounded out 12 hits in the second game. Mason L led the offense with a perfect 4-for-4 performance, while Gavin H finished 2-for-3 with three RBIs. Trayce added two hits and stole two bases as Groton steadily pulled away for the 7-2 victory.

Like the opener, Groton was flawless defensively, finishing the second game without an error. Mason led the team with seven defensive chances.

CITY OF GROTON WATER RESTRICTIONS

*We appreciate your immediate cooperation
to keep our water levels safe.*

If your house number is odd, you may only water
on odd days (**& only before 11am or after 6pm**).

If your house number is even, you may only water
on even days (**& only before 11am or after 6pm**).



**Absolutely NO WATERING
between 11am - 6pm.**

Failure to comply will result in fines.
After a warning is issued, fines will start
at \$50 and double with each offense.

Land for Sale

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& northern
Clark County
646 tillable acres,
133 pasture**

**For more info, visit:
www.keminklandco.com**



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Watertown, SD**



for Ida Hannon's 90th Birthday

Ida will be turning 90 on July 7th! While a party isn't possible this year, we still want to make her day extra memorable. We'd like for her dearest friends and family (that's you!) to send her a card or gift this year. Include a message, old memories, photos, or simply birthday wishes.

Help us make her day one that she won't forget.

We will gather the cards and gifts for her to have on her big day.

please mail your card/gifts to:

Ida hannon (granddaughter
Michelle)

1208 appollo ave
Aberdeen SD, 57401
by July 11th

*thank you
for making this day extra special for my
grandma.*





SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

South Dakota Republican Party blocks journalist from attending Thune and Mullin speeches

BY: SETH TUPPER

RAPID CITY — The South Dakota Republican Party blocked media including Searchlight from attending speeches by U.S. Senate Majority Leader John Thune and Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin on Thursday night during the party's state convention.

South Dakota Searchlight completed an online registration days ago and received an email reply granting permission to attend. The party's state convention started Thursday and lasts through Saturday at The Monument events center in Rapid City.

An FAQ page on the party's convention website includes the question, "Is there a place for press in Rushmore Hall and Lacroix?" The answer says, "Yes. There are areas set aside for the press in both rooms." Thune and Mullin spoke in Rushmore Hall. The page also says reporters can apply for credentials.

Pennington County Republican Chairwoman Amy Wagner replied within minutes of receiving Searchlight's form submission Saturday, writing in an email, "That opportunity is available. There will be a press box in both rooms. You will need to check in at the registration desk to get a press pass."

At the event, Searchlight showed several party officials the email confirming permission to attend, and spoke with Wagner and other party officials and officeholders. Several said they were having problems with other people who registered as media but weren't from what the state party considers legitimate outlets.

Wagner apologized to Searchlight and said, "I didn't realize that they weren't going to allow press tonight." Wagner said it was the decision of "the chairman," a reference to State Party Chairman Jim Eschenbaum.

Eschenbaum did not immediately respond to a text message Thursday night from Searchlight.

Friday evening's schedule includes keynote speeches by the two candidates in the July 28 runoff election for the party's nomination for governor — businessman Toby Doeden and Gov. Larry Rhoden.

Searchlight asked Wagner if journalists will be allowed to attend those speeches.

"I don't know what his decision on that is," Wagner said, referring to Eschenbaum. "It's a possibility that we will. You might want to check tomorrow."

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

Trump will attend July 3 Mount Rushmore fireworks display

President's attendance at 2020 event included physical clash between protesters and law enforcement

BY: MEGHAN O'BRIEN AND SETH TUPPER

President Donald Trump will attend the first fireworks display in six years at Mount Rushmore National Memorial on July 3, according to announcements Thursday morning from Freedom 250 and South Dakota Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden.

The event, officially known as South Dakota's Freedom 250 Mount Rushmore Fireworks Celebration, in honor of the nation's 250th birthday, will have 4,800 attendees who won tickets in an online lottery prior to the announcement of Trump's attendance. The National Park Service plans to close the memorial to the public on the evening of July 2 and open it for event ticketholders only on July 3.

Trump will deliver keynote remarks, according to Freedom 250, a Trump administration planning group.

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The Freedom 250 press release said Interior Department Secretary Doug Burgum — the former governor of North Dakota — and Rhoden will also speak.

"It is my honor to welcome President Trump to the great state of South Dakota — the freest state in a nation founded on the principles of freedom," Rhoden said in a news release.

The visit could be a political boost for Rhoden, who's in the midst of a top-two runoff campaign for the Republican nomination for governor, after nobody earned the required 35% for victory in the four-way June 2 primary. Rhoden finished second in the primary to Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden. Advance voting is underway for their runoff election, which is July 28.

Trump also attended Mount Rushmore's most recent fireworks display in 2020, after then-Gov. Kristi Noem asked him to reinstate the event. The National Park Service had ended the fireworks shows more than a decade earlier due to concerns about embers falling in the surrounding forest and sparking wildfires, plus concerns about chemicals from fireworks polluting local water sources, litter from exploded fireworks lingering on the grounds, and opposition from Native American tribes that formerly controlled the surrounding Black Hills.

During the 2020 event, a Native American-led protest on a road leading to Mount Rushmore turned into a physical clash with law enforcement, who arrested more than a dozen people. Charges were later dropped.

South Dakota's Department of Tourism entered into a \$700,000 contract in April with California-based Pyro Spectaculars to produce this year's fireworks show, and for "lighting elements that can be utilized if environmental conditions require an alternative to fireworks," according to the department.

"Environmental conditions" is a reference to potentially high wildfire danger from drought or other factors, although the Black Hills area has had a run of rainfall lately. Pyro Spectaculars did not directly respond to South Dakota Searchlight's request for detailed information about what visitors could expect from any potential alternative "lighting elements," but the company's website features its work on drone shows.

Trump will also visit the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library in Medora, North Dakota, July 1 before it opens to the public July 4.

Meghan O'Brien is the audio reporter for South Dakota Searchlight where she covers the state government and its impact on South Dakotans. She's previously reported in Nebraska with a focus on health care and rural communities across the state.

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

17 Republican attorneys general, including South Dakota's, sue California over plastics law

BY: NADA HASSANEIN

Seventeen Republican attorneys general, including South Dakota's, have sued California over a state law that requires plastic packaging producers to move away from single-use plastics, alleging that the law will raise costs for consumers across the country.

Led by Nebraska Attorney General Mike Hilgers and the National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors, the complaint filed Monday in the U.S. District Court of the Eastern District of California challenges California's Plastics Act. Under the law, which took effect May 1, plastic packaging producers must reduce single-use plastic by 25% and ensure all packaging is recyclable or compostable by 2032.

Joining Hilgers in the lawsuit are the attorneys general of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah and West Virginia. They say the law is an attempt by California "to impose its own policy preferences on the entire nation."

The law "will cause steep and persistent price increases" on products used daily by consumers in other states, the plaintiffs argue.

South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley said in a news release that the California law "imposes

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unreasonable, burdensome requirements on businesses and consumers nationwide.”

The attorneys general also assert that the law violates the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution by interfering with interstate commerce, and that it improperly extends regulatory authority to a private organization. California appointed a nonprofit, the Circular Action Alliance, to help develop, administer and implement the law.

“Once again, California is trying to enact a policy that negatively impacts the rest of the country. If California goes unchecked, consumers will be forced to pay more for basic necessities,” Hilgers said in a news release. “Nebraska is continuing to fight for consumers against California’s overreach.”

Environmental advocacy groups also sued California earlier this month, alleging the new regulations “fall short” in meeting the state’s aims of reducing plastic packaging, and that they contain loopholes for producers.

Stateline reporter Nada Hassanein can be reached at nhassanein@stateline.org. South Dakota Searchlight contributed to this report.

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

Nada Hassanein is a health care reporter for Stateline with a focus on inequities.

Trump order limiting voting by mail halted by federal court

BY: JONATHAN SHORMAN

A federal judge on Thursday blocked major portions of President Donald Trump’s executive order restricting voting by mail, finding he had exceeded his constitutional authority.

The decision halts, at least until a nearly certain appeal is heard, efforts by the U.S. Postal Service to require states to submit the names of likely mail voters before it delivers ballots. It also stops the U.S. Department of Homeland Security from compiling lists of voting-age citizens in each state.

U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani, an appointee of President Barack Obama in Massachusetts, is the first judge to block the March 31 executive order. State and local election officials have raised concerns that its requirements would inject chaos into preparations for the November midterm elections.

Talwani ruled that Trump had asserted too much control over elections in several parts of the order as he directed federal officials to quickly take actions that he argues are needed to prevent noncitizen voting, which rarely occurs.

“The Constitution does not grant the President any specific powers over elections,” Talwani wrote.

Order overpowered states

The executive order directed Postmaster General David Steiner to put forward a rule requiring states, at least 90 days before a federal election, notify the Postal Service whether they intended to allow ballots to be sent through the mail. States would then have to submit to USPS a list of voters planning to vote by mail at least 60 days before the election.

Talwani wrote that the Postal Service lacks any authorization by Congress to put forward binding regulations on mail-in voting. The Constitution, she wrote, “reserves the power to determine voter eligibility to the States alone.”

The executive order also required the Department of Homeland Security, with help from the Social Security Administration, to compile a list of voting-age U.S. citizens living in each state and then provide that information to state officials at least 60 days before each federal election. The order does not tell states how to use the data.

The list of citizens would be drawn from naturalization and Social Security records, according to the order. It would also include data from SAVE, a powerful computer program maintained by Homeland Security that verifies citizenship by checking names against information in federal databases.

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The executive order pointed to no relevant constitutional or legal authority supporting the compilation of the citizenship lists, Talwani wrote. Trump "lacks any authority to compile voter lists for each State," she wrote.

A day before the decision, Steiner told a U.S. Senate committee that a proposed Postal Service rule to implement the executive order would lead to non-delivery of ballots in states that don't provide lists of anticipated mail voters — a position condemned by Democrats.

"Today's decision is a very significant victory for free and fair elections and a defeat for Donald Trump's vile efforts to make it harder for people to vote," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, a New York Democrat, said in a statement.

"Once again, the courts have reaffirmed that Trump's efforts to subvert the election are patently unconstitutional."

White House spokesperson Abigail Jackson said in a statement that the Trump administration remains confident the executive order will be implemented by the November election.

"The entire Trump Administration will continue lawfully enacting the agenda President Trump was elected to enact — which includes the safety and security of American elections," Jackson said.

Latest setback

Trump has suffered a series of setbacks in recent days in his efforts to influence the administration of state-run elections.

A federal appeals court on Wednesday ruled that the Department of Justice wasn't entitled to state voter rolls. Senators also continues to rebuff the president's attempts to pressure them into passing the SAVE America Act, which would require voters to show documents proving their citizenship.

Talwani's decision came in a lawsuit brought by Democratic state attorneys general. It is the second major district court ruling over the executive order, after a judge in Washington, D.C., declined to stop the order because the Trump administration hadn't taken enough action to implement it.

Under Thursday's decision, federal officials must notify their employees within a week that sweeping portions of the executive order are void.

And on Monday, a judge blocked the use of SAVE to search for noncitizen voters.

Jonathan Shorman covers democracy for States Newsroom. Based in Kansas City, his coverage area includes elections and voting rights, fights over state and federal power, civil liberties and more. An alumnus of the University of Kansas, he previously covered politics for The Kansas City Star.

US Supreme Court hands win to Monsanto in case related to claims Roundup causes cancer

BY: JACOB FISCHLER

State courts cannot find liability for labeling shortcomings in pesticides and similar products because such products are covered by federal law, the U.S. Supreme Court said Thursday in a decision backing agricultural giant Monsanto.

The justices, in a 7-2 decision, threw out a \$1.25 million verdict a Missouri court awarded to a man who said long-term use of the weedkiller Roundup caused him to develop non-Hodgkin lymphoma, a type of blood cancer.

The herbicide, produced by Monsanto, does not include any warning of carcinogenic material. Monsanto and parent company Bayer deny there is any link and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has routinely found that glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup, does not likely cause cancer.

Consumer and health advocates, though, said the decision provided companies immunity from health-related claims.

The decision created an unusual split for the conservative-dominated court, with Justice Brett Kavanaugh

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writing the majority opinion and his fellow conservative Justice Neil Gorsuch joining a dissent written by liberal Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson.

Federal law trumps state

The majority ruled that the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, or FIFRA, which governs herbicide use, explicitly preempts state claims like the one awarded to John Durnell of St. Louis.

Roundup's label complied with EPA regulations, to which states cannot add requirements, Kavanaugh wrote. Placing a cancer warning would open the company up to civil and criminal penalties for using a label the EPA did not approve, he said.

"In sum, federal law requires Monsanto to sell Roundup with the label that EPA approved at the initial registration and that EPA has subsequently re-approved on multiple occasions—that is, the label without a cancer warning," he wrote.

"Durnell's state tort claim, by contrast, would require Monsanto to add a cancer warning to its labels. That Missouri-law requirement is 'in addition to' and 'different from' Monsanto's federal-law labeling obligations."

In a statement, Bayer CEO Bill Anderson praised the ruling for providing regulatory certainty to farmers and the herbicide producer.

"This decision is good for American farmers who help feed the world," he said. "It provides the regulatory clarity necessary for innovators like us to develop the agricultural tools that guarantee an affordable food supply."

Closing the courthouse doors

In her dissent, Jackson wrote that the majority's decision improperly prioritized national uniformity over consumer protection.

While the federal law does include a preemption clause, it also includes a provision against "false or misleading" statements. That provision covers the absence of a warning necessary to protect health and the environment, she wrote.

"Ultimately, the effect of the majority's interpretation is both remarkable and regrettable, for it unjustifiably closes the courthouse doors to state tort plaintiffs like Durnell," she wrote.

Advocates also criticized what they said was the ruling's creation of legal immunity for manufacturers.

Bill Jordan, whose 40-year EPA career included three years as the deputy director of the Office of Pesticide Programs during the Obama administration, said in a statement distributed by the Environmental Protection Network, a coalition of former EPA officials, that the decision leaves people "with fewer tools to protect themselves."

"When people are exposed to pesticides, they deserve honest warnings about the risks," Jordan said. "If federal protections aren't enough, states should be able to act before people get sick. This Supreme Court decision favors companies and takes away one of the important ways states can require stronger health warnings for the public."

Farm bill amendment

U.S. Sen. Cory Booker said on a press call the decision reversed thousands of jury awards to people who said they were harmed by herbicides like Roundup.

The court "sided with the wealthy, powerful multinational corporations, reversing years and years of precedent, dismissing, ultimately, effectively hundreds and hundreds, in fact thousands, of cases," the New Jersey Democrat said. "They sided with the big multinational corporations against the people."

Booker said he would introduce an amendment to the farm bill to strip out the preemption clause.

He also suggested that corporate lobbying and campaign contributions influenced the decision.

"We have seen hundreds of millions of dollars, billions of dollars pouring into our political system, corrupting all three branches of government," Booker said.

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Missouri verdict

Durnell sued Monsanto and parent company Bayer in 2019, claiming that exposure to Roundup over two decades led to his cancer diagnosis. A Missouri trial court awarded him \$1.25 million, and a state appeals court affirmed the ruling.

The Supreme Court was the first federal court to hear the case.

Federal law typically trumps state law, which Monsanto and the Justice Department emphasized during April oral arguments. Industry groups across the economy tend to support federal supremacy because it saves companies from complying with 50 separate regulatory schemes across states.

Jacob covers federal policy and helps direct national coverage as deputy Washington bureau chief for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.

Trump refashions campaign rhetoric for Freedom 250 kickoff

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY AND SAM GAUNTT

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump kicked off his administration's celebration of America's 250th anniversary Wednesday night with a rally speech nearly mirroring his days on the 2024 presidential campaign trail to a crowd of loyal supporters waving American flag placards.

The president delivered remarks for roughly 25 minutes on the National Mall against the backdrop of the Washington Monument and exalted the Founding Fathers and valuable contributions to the world by American inventors.

But Trump also spent significant time on his familiar refrains, declaring "America is back," and that he rescued it from "total disaster," he said, by closing the "most wide open, insecure" border along the U.S. southwest, "sending education back to the states where it belongs," issuing an executive order requiring only two genders on federal documents, signing a bill that made tips non-taxable income for four years, among other policies.

"We're not a joke anymore, we're the most powerful country in the world," Trump said. "But just like those patriots of 1776, over the past 17 months, we have taken power back from the far-off political class. They're trying to gain it back, but it's not going to happen."

Trump also praised what he described as a military boom. The event featured music by the U.S. Marine Corps Band and five separate military flyovers of fighter jets and a B-2 stealth bomber.

Military recruitment, he said, is "setting records," well above the numbers under former President Joe Biden.

"Then the thing happened on Nov. 5, it's called a great election victory, and from that moment on, now you can't even get into the military, we have waiting lists to get into the military," he said.

Trump also credited the war he launched in Iran for bringing peace to the Middle East "for the first time in 3,000 years," and said the administration's peace negotiations sent the stock market "skyrocketing upward."

The S&P 500 has actually dropped slightly since close on June 18, the day before the administration announced a peace deal with Iran.

"How good is our military? How good? In one week, Iran was essentially finished in one hour, Venezuela was finished, and I guess we have other things in store, but we don't want to get carried away," he said.

Washington revamp

He also touted his efforts to beautify Washington, D.C., highlighting projects including the restored Christopher Columbus statue outside Union Station, his planned ballroom that will replace the White House's East Wing and the renovations to the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool.

After the pool was drained to paint the basin "American flag blue," it has faced consistent problems with algae blooms and peeling paint, which Trump has said is the fault of vandals.

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Trump concluded his remarks by invoking imagery of early American settlers and revolutionary heroes. He described the American spirit as taking up the call to freedom, exploring the "most dangerous frontiers," and fighting and winning the "most vicious battles."

Now, Trump said, America is expanding that "glory of American freedom into a horizon that's never been seen before."

"We've never reached so high as we're reaching right now," he said. "This is our heritage, this is our history, and this is the destiny of America to be the greatest, most incredible country ever to grace the earth."

After Trump finished his speech, the band played the Village People's YMCA, a staple at his rallies and events, and he danced off the stage.

Supporters arrive early

Attendees — wearing plenty of splashy outfits and historical costumes among a sea of red, white and blue and MAGA red — began to trickle through U.S. Secret Service security hours before Trump was set to give remarks initially scheduled for 7 p.m. Eastern.

Excited guests shaded themselves from the sun with American flag placards until the U.S. Marine Corps band began to play a patriotic melody. Chairs in the front row at the stage's edge were reserved for "Front Row Joes," a nickname Trump gave to regulars at his 2024 presidential campaign rallies.

The grounds weren't quite ready for primetime. Construction continued on the National Mall where Freedom 250's Great American State Fair was scheduled to begin Thursday.

And food vendors hurried to hang menu signs as guests looked to see if food was ready for sale. Among the menu items were a \$23 turkey leg, pretzel bites and plenty of Phorm, the energy drink owned by Dana White, the president of the Ultimate Fighting Championship and close ally of Trump.

Bill Anderson, 64, of Plankinton, South Dakota, said he traveled to "just to take it in."

"I don't know what Trump's speech is going to be, but it's always going to be uplifting, and maybe tell us some things (that) are going to happen in the future," Anderson said, adding the semiquincentennial makes him feel hopeful for what's ahead in the United States, which he predicted will be a stronger focus on Christianity.

Anderson attended the Christian heritage "Rededicate 250" event on the National Mall in May, which featured appearances by several Cabinet members and Republican lawmakers, including U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson.

'Beautiful turning point'

Patti Gordon, 71, of Atlanta, wore matching red, white and blue sequined jackets with her friend from Texas. Each featured an eagle and stars and stripes on the back with the message, "America 250th Anniversary."

Gordon, a vice chair of the Fulton County, Georgia, Republican Party, sat in the third row and said the semiquincentennial is a "beautiful turning point for this country."

"I'm really hoping people become a little bit more patriotic and realize this country is worth saving," she said. "I think a lot of people are trying to destroy this country and erase our history and say that we have a horrible history. We do not. We know we are the most generous country in the world, and we have helped people to freedom."

Fulton County is a focus of Trump's unfounded claims that he won the 2020 presidential election. In January, the Trump administration deployed federal agents to the county to seize ballots from the 2020 election.

Laura Strohmeyer, 37, a new resident of Washington, said she came out to the kickoff to see a B-2 stealth bomber fly by.

"I think it's pretty awesome," the former Virginia resident said of the kickoff. "I think it's cool to celebrate our country, our history — something to be very proud of."

Strohmeyer added that she hoped celebrating the country's 250th would bring people together, rather than further separate them.

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Honest Abe

Many attendees came in customized outfits featuring sequins, American flag print or political slogans. One, dressed as Abraham Lincoln, called himself Honest Abe and said his real first name was Alex, but declined to provide States Newsroom his last name. He is a frequent presence at Trump's rallies, and said he has twice been recognized by the president for his historical garb. The back of his jacket featured an image of the late conservative activist Charlie Kirk with the words "Martyr for Truth and Freedom."

As people milled about the kickoff celebration, many stopped to take their picture with the Lincoln impersonator who wore a "special guest" credential issued by Freedom 250. He gave several interviews.

"We'll be happy to see him again, and to celebrate America 250 years, to be here with the patriots," he said of Trump.

The impersonator said that, after George Washington and, of course, Lincoln, Trump ranks as the third-best president "in the Holy Story of America."

Summer of celebration

Freedom 250, the Trump administration's iteration of semiquincentennial celebrations, will stretch through the summer, with the Great American State Fair on the National Mall until July 10 followed by a high school athletic competition and an INDYCAR race around the National Mall in August.

The White House worked with the Las Vegas-based Ultimate Fighting Championship to promote a series of primetime mixed martial arts fights on Flag Day, and Trump's 80th birthday, as a kickoff to the semiquincentennial.

The administration's Freedom 250 events are not part of the America250 commission created by Congress a decade ago that is hosting events and initiatives around the country on Independence Day and throughout 2026.

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

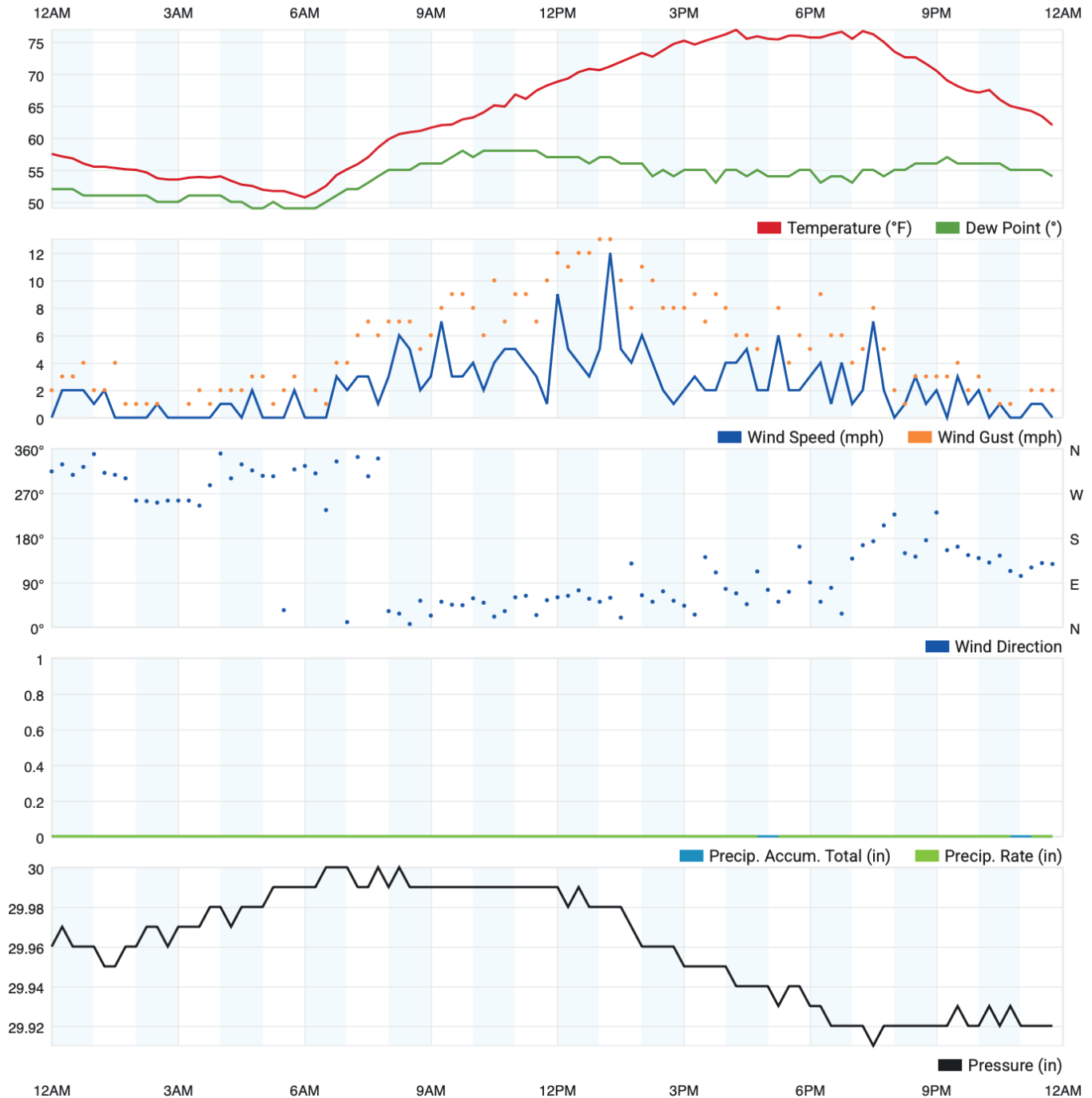
Sam Gauntt is an intern at States Newsroom's Washington bureau through the Dow Jones News Fund internship program. He is a senior journalism major at the University of Maryland and editor in chief of The Diamondback, the university's independent student newspaper. He previously interned with Maryland Matters, an affiliate of States Newsroom.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

June 25, 2026



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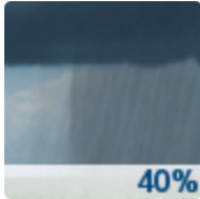
Friday

Friday Night

Saturday

Saturday Night

Sunday



High: 80 °F

Chance
Showers



Low: 64 °F

Mostly Cloudy



High: 85 °F

Breezy.
Partly Sunny
then Slight
Chance
T-storms



Low: 67 °F

Showers
Likely and
Breezy



High: 94 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms

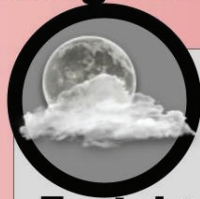
Increasing Storm potential Saturday Night...



Today
78-83°

40-60% chance of mainly morning showers near the ND/SD border.

Winds out of the southeast gusting 25-35 mph west of the James River.



Tonight
Low 60s

Winds out of the southeast gusting 25-35 mph.



Saturday
80s

30% chance afternoon showers. Storms possible over north central SD by late afternoon.

Winds out of the south-southeast **gusting 35-45 mph**, strongest over central SD.



Saturday Night
60s

50-70% chance of showers and storms. **Scattered to isolated severe storms** possible, primarily over western ND & northwestern SD.

Winds out of the southeast gusting 20-35 mph, strongest west of the Missouri River.

National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD



weather.gov/aberndeen

Today: 40-60% chance of mainly morning showers near the ND/SD border, with highs in the upper 70s to low 80s. Winds out of the southeast will gust 25-35 mph west of the James River. Winds will remain elevated tonight. Saturday: Windy conditions will take hold Saturday, with winds out of the south-southeast gusting 35-45 mph, strongest over central SD. A 30% chance afternoon showers Saturday will increase to a 50-70% chance Saturday night. Scattered to isolated severe storms are possible Saturday night, primarily over western ND and northwestern SD.

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

2

WHAT THIS MEANS:
Isolated to Scattered Severe Storms Possible

**7 PM Saturday -
daybreak Sunday**

PRIMARY THREATS

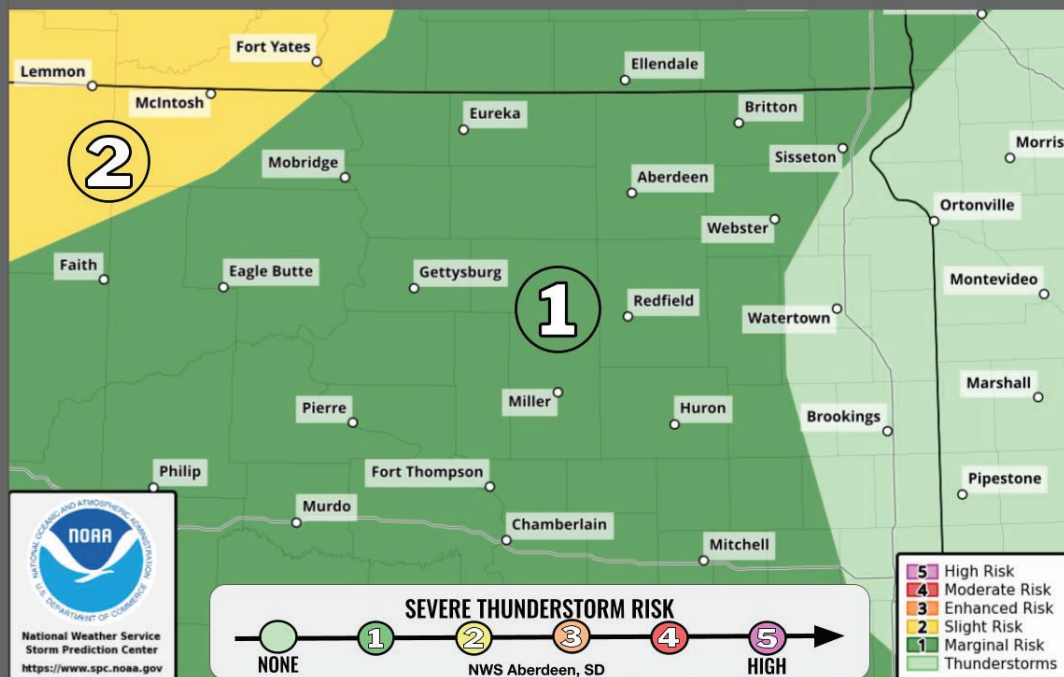

DAMAGING
WIND GUSTS
up to 60 mph


LARGE HAIL
up to 2" in
diameter

SECONDARY THREATS


A COUPLE OF
TORNADOES
POSSIBLE

Slight Risk For Severe Storms Saturday Night



Scattered to Isolated Severe Storms are possible Saturday night primarily west of Interstate 29 in South Dakota. The strongest storms will be capable of producing damaging winds of around 60 mph. Hail up to 2" in diameter or a couple of tornadoes will also be possible west of the Missouri River.



Heating Up this Weekend

High temperatures in the 80s & 90s starting Saturday

Heat Risk: The likelihood that temperatures & humidity to cause negative health impacts (ie heat exhaustion or heat stroke)

Category	Risk of Heat-Related Impacts
Green 0	Little to no risk from expected heat.
Yellow 1	Minor - Primarily affects those who are extremely sensitive to heat and without cooling/hydration.
Orange 2	Moderate - Affects those who are sensitive to heat, especially those without cooling/hydration, and some health systems and industries.
Red 3	Major - Affects anyone without cooling/hydration as well as health systems and industries.
Magenta 4	Extreme - Rare and/or long-duration extreme heat with no overnight relief affecting anyone without cooling/hydration as well as health systems, industries, and infrastructure.

Maximum HeatRisk Forecast

	6/26	6/27	6/28	6/29	6/30	7/1	7/2	7/3
	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
McIntosh	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
Eagle Butte	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2
Murdo	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2
Mobridge	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	3
Pierre	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
Gettysburg	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
Eureka	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	3
Chamberlain	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
Miller	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	3
Redfield	1	1	3	3	3	2	3	3
Aberdeen	1	1	3	3	3	2	3	3
Britton	1	1	2	3	3	2	3	3
Clark	1	1	3	3	3	2	3	3
Webster	1	1	3	3	3	2	3	3
Watertown	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	4
Sisseton	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	4
Milbank	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	4
Wheaton	1	1	2	3	3	2	3	3

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 77 °F at 4:14 PM

Low Temp: 51 °F at 5:58 AM

Wind: 16 mph at 12:50 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 109 in 1933

Record Low: 39 in 2017

Average High: 83

Average Low: 58

Average Precip in June.: 3.24

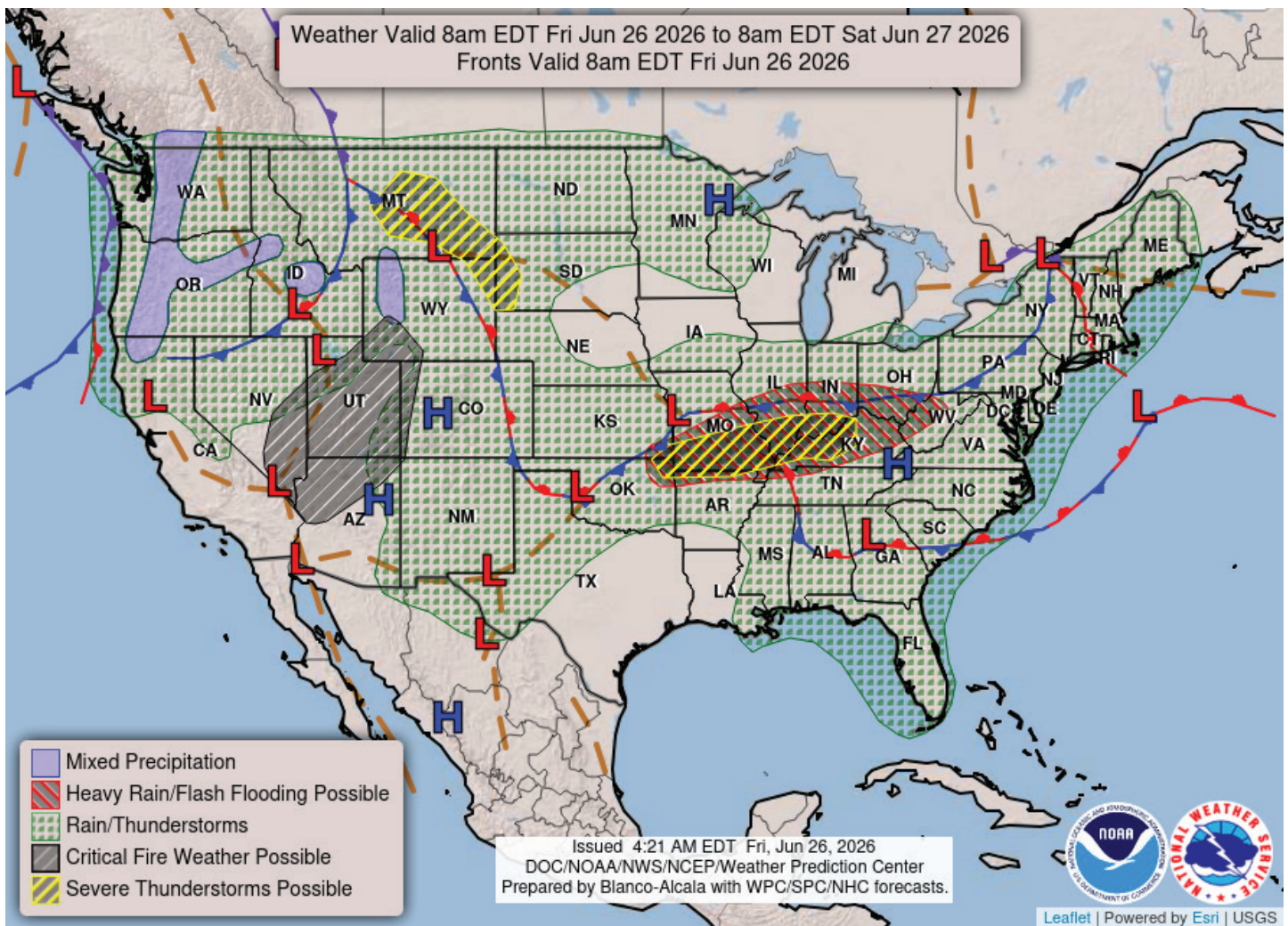
Precip to date in June.: 1.37

Average Precip to date: 10.49

Precip Year to Date: 8.13

Sunset Tonight: 9:25 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:45 am



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Today in Weather History

June 26th, 1998: Heavy rains of 2 to 5 inches fell across much of northern and eastern Brown, western and northern Day, and all of Marshall County during the afternoon and evening hours. Heavy rain only exacerbated the flooding, which had occurred over much of this area for years. Kidder, in northern Marshall County, received up to 5 inches of rain on the 26th after receiving around 2 inches on the 25th. The heavy rain on the 26th flooded the whole town, filling nearly every basement. One resident had the basement walls cave in. Areas of Britton were also flooded with water in many basements. The heavy rains added to the already thousands of acres of crop and pastureland under water. One farmer in Day County, near Webster, had documented over one-half million dollars in damages to fences, buildings, land, and income from the prolonged flooding. On his farm, he had 15 buildings underwater. This farmer said the highest he had measured the water from flooding was 9 feet, but for this year, it had gone up to 21 feet. As a result of this and past heavy rains and many years of above-average precipitation, about 22 percent of the total farm and pastureland acres in the three counties were flooded or too wet to farm. Some rainfall amounts included 2.30 inches at Sand Lake NWR, 2.7 inches at Langford, 2.95 inches at Groton, 3.5 inches northwest of Bristol, and 5.10 inches 9N 9W of Britton.

June 26th, 2008: During the evening, a compact upper-level low-pressure system tracking through the Northern Plains interacted with a very moist and unstable air mass over western and central South Dakota, resulting in a widespread severe weather outbreak. Three confirmed tornadoes occurred briefly in western Dewey County. Little or no damage was reported, and all three tornadoes were rated EF0. In addition to the tornadoes, multiple reports of large hail were received over Corson and Dewey Counties, including some to the size of baseballs near the communities of McLaughlin and Isabel. The large hail broke out many home and vehicle windows and damaged many roofs in Dewey, Corson, and Sully Counties. Significant wind damage occurred over sections of Sully County. There were multiple reports of wind gusts more than 70 mph, with the most concentrated swath of damaging winds extending from near Sutton Bay, eastward to the city of Onida, then southeast to the community of Harrold.

The storm survey began near Sutton Bay on Lake Oahe, where a wind gust of 92 mph was recorded. The most significant property damage was further east, near the community of Agar, where multiple grain bins were either damaged or destroyed. A barn was destroyed nine miles west of Agar, and a large pine tree was snapped in half. Winds in this area were estimated to range from 80 to 100 mph. Near the intersection of Highways 1804 and 175th Street, several Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) electrical transmission towers were collapsed entirely. The damage is consistent with wind speeds ranging from 130-140 mph. In Onida, a bank roof was damaged, and the city was without power until the next day. Four miles north of Onida, a feed wagon was tossed nearly 40 feet. In Harrold, several railroad cars were tipped over. Also of great significance during the event was the peak wind speed of 124 mph recorded at the Onida airport. This wind speed is the strongest wind gust ever measured in the Aberdeen County Warning Area and the 4th highest wind speed reported in South Dakota.

1888 — Residents of New York suffered through a record heat wave. Daily average temperatures were above 80 degrees for fourteen straight days. The heat wave was a sharp contrast to the severe blizzard in March of that year, which buried the city under nearly two feet of snow. (David Ludlum)

1977 — The Human Lightning Conductor, park ranger Roy C. Sullivan, was struck by lightning for the seventh time. He was first hit in 1942, then again in 1970, 1972, 1973 and 1976. (The Weather Channel)

1983 — Record heat prevailed from Texas to Michigan. Alpena MI hit 98 degrees. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1985 — A spectacular early morning waterspout developed at 5:20 AM (MST) from a stationary thunderstorm over the south end of the Great Salt Lake in Utah. It was visible 20 miles away, and lasted four minutes. (The Weather Channel)



The Motivational Power of Grace

**When you experience God's grace, guilt loses its grip,
and gratitude becomes your motivation for service.**

Romans 6:1-4: 1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Some of us have a hard time with grace. It just seems too easy to believe in Jesus and then make decisions on your own. Shouldn't Christians be required to live a certain way to please the Lord? The problem with this reasoning is that it mixes legalism with grace by saying, "Sure, we are saved by grace, but after salvation, you'd better follow the rules if you want to stay in God's favor."

Grace is a far greater and more powerful motivator than the law. If you have to perform certain works in order to please God, guilt is your constant companion because you can never be good enough (Ephesians 2:8-9). Every time you fail to live up to your own expectations, you may question whether the Lord loves you—or maybe even whether you're really saved. Our Father doesn't want us to live in bondage to performance. We've already received His acceptance, and there is nothing more we can add to it.

Grace not only sets us free from guilt but also motivates us to obey the Lord and serve Him out of love and gratitude for everything He's done for us. Instead of feeling burned out or trapped in fear, we will have a burning passion for Him.

When you truly understand and live in God's grace, you'll be energized because obedience and service will be a natural result of His overflowing love.

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

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The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.25.26

3 13 14 34 45 1

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

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 31 Mins 6
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.23.26

48 51 60 63 66 20

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$489,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 16 Mins 6
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.24.26

26 39 45 49 51 2

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$30,800,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 31
Mins 6 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.24.26

2 12 13 26 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$151,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 46
Mins 6 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.24.26

3 11 20 31 65 5

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 15
Mins 6 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.24.26

13 14 16 21 38 14

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$348,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 15
Mins 7 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

A rifle-toting war reporter died with Custer at Little Bighorn 150 years ago

By MEAD GRUVER Associated Press

They've died from artillery fire, aircraft crashes, gunfire, disease — even by execution — in conflict zones and elsewhere around the world.

Over the 180-year history of The Associated Press, 38 journalists have fallen on the job while working for the independent not-for-profit news organization.

Thursday marked the 150th anniversary of the very first: Mark Kellogg, one of five civilians killed alongside Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer and his men at the Battle of Little Bighorn.

Kellogg, 43, was embedded with Custer's troops. He was reporting for The Bismarck Tribune and New York Herald — the AP circulated his reports across the country — when Custer underestimated the size of a Sioux village that he attacked.

Custer and his outnumbered men made a last stand on a hill. There, they were annihilated by Native American defenders. Kellogg's scalped body was found not far away.

His last published dispatch read in part: "I go with Custer and will be at the death."

It was more of an attempt at poetry than prophecy. "At the death" is a foxhunting term for the end of the hunt, suggesting Kellogg expected Custer to prevail.

Still, Kellogg's final words and fate circulated far and wide through his employers and the AP. It gave the obscure, part-time journalist — a widower who worked a variety of jobs to support his two daughters — fame in death.

He got to know Custer. He covered the campaign. He mingled with the soldiers and interviewed them at their camps, historian Sandy Barnard said.

"While his record as a journalist might be very small compared to modern reporters who go into combat, he certainly was doing exactly what they are doing," Barnard said.

Yet in other ways, Kellogg was much different from modern journalists. He carried a rifle into action, Barnard pointed out. And he made no attempt to avoid not just bias but racism against Native Americans, whom he called "red devils."

"During the last stages of the campaign, Kellogg was probably more of a soldier than he was a newspaper man," said Barnard, author of a Kellogg biography and other books on the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

The State Historical Society of North Dakota preserves Kellogg's diary and various belongings, including eyeglasses, tobacco, clothing and a mosquito head net. The fragile diary, now digitized online, documents weather, distances covered, who was riding in front and in back, how many antelope they saw and other day-to-day operations, Deputy State Archivist Lindsay Meidinger said. The diary ends before the battle.

"It's a primary source of the historical event, that not many other primary sources remain from that time period related to the Seventh Cavalry and Custer," Meidinger said.

Others who have perished while reporting for AP in war zones include:

— Mariam Dagga, a freelance visual journalist who was killed in an Israeli strike on a hospital in the Gaza Strip last August;

— Anja Niedringhaus, a photographer shot by a police officer as she sat in her car in Afghanistan in 2014;

— Myles Tierney, a videojournalist killed while traveling in a convoy that came under fire in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in 1999;

— Joseph Morton, a war correspondent who was the only U.S. reporter known to have been executed by the Nazis following his capture alongside Slovakian partisans in 1944.

Native Americans commemorate victory at Little Bighorn with horse races, dance and song

By MATTHEW BROWN and JACK DURA Associated Press

LITTLE BIGHORN BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL MONUMENT, Mont. (AP) — The quiet, wind-swept hills of the Battle of Greasy Grass, known to many as the Battle of Little Bighorn, are the setting for Native Americans commemorating the battle's 150th anniversary with horse rides, battle reenactments and a camp of hundreds of people this week.

The battle, one of the most famous and symbolically charged events in American history, marked its anniversary Thursday. Allied tribes came together on that hot day near the banks of the Little Bighorn River in present-day Montana to hand the U.S. Army a rare defeat as they fought to preserve their way of life in the face of westward expansion. Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer and more than 200 his troops were killed.

Reenactments will illustrate the battle. Horse riders from the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota and elsewhere traveled hundreds of miles to the Crow Agency area in Montana to mark the occasion. Families were encouraged to share their oral histories. At the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota, people planned horse races and traditional songs and dances.

Gathering at the battlefield area in Montana means "we're still here," said William Good Bird, a traditional singer from the Spirit Lake Dakota Nation in North Dakota who woke up the camp where hundreds of people were gathered from numerous tribes with a song and drumming.

"Today I am celebrating the victory of our people, celebrating my life as a human being and my spot on this earth," he said.

Native warriors overpowered divided U.S. Army forces

The discovery of gold in the Black Hills in what is now South Dakota by a Custer expedition just years earlier spurred a military campaign against Great Plains tribes that aimed to push them onto reservations, or what were known then as agencies, said historian Dakota Goodhouse.

There were bigger, longer battles and other Native victories between March 1876 and June 1877, but Goodhouse said only the Battle of Greasy Grass — named by Native Americans for the slick grass along the river — gained national recognition because the commanding officer was killed.

At the time, the Lakota were one of the largest and most powerful tribal nations, with strong leaders in Sitting Bull and warriors like Crazy Horse. Native warriors quickly overwhelmed Custer's men as the U.S. forces were spread miles apart over the hilly area.

News of Custer's defeat stunned Americans, who were celebrating their country's centennial.

The federal government accelerated efforts to subdue resistance, bringing years of hardship and upheaval for Native Americans. Crazy Horse was killed in 1877, and starvation brought about the surrender of others in 1881.

Sitting Bull didn't surrender as history books tell it, said Jon Eagle Sr., a former Standing Rock tribal historic preservation officer from the Hunkpapa band of the Oceti Sakowin.

"Our people say that he looked at his son Crow Foot and said, 'My boy, if you live, you can never be a man in this world because you can never own a gun or a pony,'" Eagle said. "I think that he understood that things were going to change for his children, his grandchildren and those not yet born."

Sitting Bull was killed with about a dozen other people when agency police attempted to arrest him in 1890.

Custer is remembered as a polarizing figure

Biographer T.J. Stiles described Custer as one of the most distinguished combat officers in the Army at the end of the Civil War. But he said the "Boy General" with his long hair and flamboyant battlefield wardrobe often bristled at the chain of command and did not take to the management side of leadership.

"Custer was someone who whenever he got into the frying pan, he immediately started looking for the fire," he said.

In 1873, Custer was assigned to lead the Seventh Cavalry at Fort Abraham Lincoln, near present-day

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Bismarck, North Dakota. From there, he led military expeditions, including one that confirmed the gold in the Black Hills, a sacred place to the Lakota.

Seen in the U.S. as a tragic hero and memorialized for his military feats, Custer could also be considered progressive even as the federal government sought to displace Native Americans and stamp out Native languages through boarding schools, Goodhouse said. He learned to speak Arikara and Lakota and became fluent in sign language used by tribes in the region.

Still, as many Americans are celebrating the 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, for many Native Americans it's not a reason to rejoice.

"It's just a mark to me of 250 years of injustice to the Native people," Crow tribal member and reenactment coordinator Jim Real Bird said.

Eagle agreed: "That's one of the things that we always tell our people when we come together, is they failed at their attempts to rub us out. We're still here as ancient people deeply connected to our environment."

Commemoration keeps history alive for future generations

For more than 30 years, reenactments featuring hundreds of warriors have marked the anniversary near the battlefield. The choreography is based on Northern Cheyenne oral history and highlights horsemanship and language preservation.

"All the other things that are Native American don't mean nothing if you don't know your language," said Real Bird.

The atmosphere at the battlefield area was celebratory as hundreds of people from numerous tribes had gathered. Several hundred horse riders charged up a hill and circled at the top as they whooped and yelled. The sun shined on the battlefield area, a wide-open grassland with few trees, mountains in the distance.

Elders wore headdresses. People sang and played drums as flags flew from various tribal nations. The camp with dozens of tepees stood along the Little Bighorn River, with people there from tribes in the Dakotas and as far away as Washington state.

"This is our fuel for the year. We come here and this is a renewal for us, too, you know, personally," said Theresa Long Turkey, of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe in South Dakota.

At Standing Rock, Eagle said the races honor the horse nation that carried their ancestors to victory 150 years ago. The commemoration also includes *oskáte*, a traditional celebration of oral histories, victory songs and tribal dancing.

"It's just an opportunity for us to share with the generations coming behind us that they're descendants of a very powerful nation and ancient people that are still here despite everything that was done to us," said Eagle, whose great-great-grandfather, Sunka, fought that day. His father, Charging Thunder, also was there.

Goodhouse recalled stories his grandfather would tell him of their ancestors who were in the Hunkpapa camp when troops attacked. His grandfather's great-grandfather, Striped Face, was shot but mounted his horse and joined the fight.

"There's this kind of energy there that still lives on because we have this direct narrative that was handed down," he said.

Touring Trump's Washington: How the president is putting his imprint on the nation's capital

By GARY FIELDS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — America is celebrating its 250th year. And what better way to mark that anniversary than with an American summer staple — a trip to Washington, D.C.?

But visitors to the nation's capital will find that it is undergoing tremendous change, courtesy of President Donald Trump's takeover makeover.

Since returning to office 17 months ago, Trump has demonstrated a continuing fixation with the city. The Republican president has slapped his image and name on buildings, torn down storied structures, altered

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others, started massive construction projects and deployed armed military personnel.

The traditional tourist sights remain. But with slight detours, an open mind and a critical eye, the ambitious walker can see all the ways the president has pushed to remake the capital.

On the eve of the United States' birthday, take a trip with The Associated Press across a changing Washington.

First stop: An indefinite National Guard deployment

We start our tour at Union Station and Metro Center, the city's main transit hubs. Notice the Greco-Roman architecture of the former, the Brutalist design of the latter. Now see the ongoing, indefinite deployment of armed National Guard troops there and in many other parts of the city.

National Guard members from Washington, D.C., and several states have been in the city since August 2025, deployed under an emergency order issued by Trump in what he called a bid to fight crime. Trump has portrayed the deployment as a lifeline for the city. They will be here for most, if not all, of 2026 and are expected to number 5,000 this summer.

It's not the first time the military has deployed to the capital. Troops were in D.C. throughout the Civil War, to quell riots after Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1968 assassination and, famously, hours into the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot.

But in Trump's Washington, Guardsmen at street corners and metro stations have become an increasingly normal part of the city's scenery.

And no one knows when they will leave.

Second stop: Scars left by DOGE

Exit Union Station, take in the view of the U.S. Capitol building and turn right down Pennsylvania Avenue. There sits a building now synonymous with the Department of Government Efficiency, the Trump administration's effort to shrink the federal government.

The U.S. Agency for International Development was the first major federal agency targeted by then-DOGE leader Elon Musk in the remake of the federal government, when cost-cutting measures prompted the terminations of tens of thousands of workers. USAID spent billions on humanitarian aid worldwide and was credited with saving millions of lives over time.

By eliminating 90% of foreign aid contracts, the Trump administration effectively cut some \$60 billion in funding.

After workers cleared their desks last February, the USAID offices on Pennsylvania Avenue were repurposed for other government uses.

The shuttering of the agency also contributed to a massive increase in unemployment in the region where about one-fifth of the workforce lives.

Many workers still ask: When their lives were upended, what was saved?

Third stop: Trump's image staring down

Walking south along any of the numbered streets leads to Constitution Avenue and the National Mall. Banners bearing Trump's image have adorned the facades of several government buildings over the past 17 months — an uncommon practice for a sitting American president and a highly literal sign of his imprint upon the city.

At the U.S. Department of the Interior, his image has equal billing with George Washington on similar banners proclaiming "America's First" and "America First."

A mile away, Trump's face glowers from the storied Justice Department building, a physical display of the Republican president's efforts to exert power over the law enforcement agency that once investigated him. It's also a striking symbol of the erosion of the department's tradition of independence from White House control, as the president pushes to prosecute his political adversaries.

Next up: The Reflecting Pool painted 'American flag blue'

Westward toward the Lincoln Memorial sits the recently repainted Reflecting Pool.

The site has always been a must-see on any tourist's checklist. But the Reflecting Pool, the scene of historic marches and protests, today also symbolizes Trump's drive to change Washington.

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Trump called the area “filthy” and had workers paint it in a color he has dubbed “American flag blue.” A Washington-based nonprofit that tried to block the move said it undermined the somber tone of the area, which sits near the memorials to Lincoln and to the Vietnam and Korean wars.

Since the makeover, the pool has been fraught with problems, from runaway algae growth to dead ducks and a torn lining. Authorities say vandals have been responsible for some of the problems and arrests have been made.

A walk over the Memorial Bridge across the Potomac River leads directly to the proposed future site of Trump’s 20-story, gold-adorned triumphal arch. Although embroiled in a court battle, like a number of his projects, the arch has been approved by a key federal agency and survey work has begun at the site.

In a city meticulously planned and rich with the symbolism that defines the nation, new construction can unsettle the carefully crafted balance.

The arch, when built, will break up the intentionally designed symbolic sightline between Arlington House, once the home of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee, and the Lincoln Memorial, which symbolized the reunification of a divided nation following the Civil War.

Just ahead: The Trump-Kennedy Center

Visible from the site is the John F. Kennedy Memorial Center for the Performing Arts — known for much of this year as the Donald J. Trump and John F. Kennedy Memorial Center.

Congress named the performing arts venue as a living memorial to Kennedy in 1964, the year after he was assassinated. A law explicitly prohibits its board of trustees from making the center into a memorial to anyone else, and from putting another person’s name on the building’s exterior.

A court decision eventually stripped the center of Trump’s name, but a tarp remains there, obscuring the change.

Trump also added his name to the U.S. Institute of Peace, part of a broader series of tributes that has been largely unprecedented for a sitting, living president.

In the middle of it all: A significantly changed White House

No tour would be complete without 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue — the White House. There, gazers can look at the construction site formerly known as the East Wing. It’s now the president’s ballroom-in-waiting as the courts and Congress battle over whether to build it.

The White House has said the \$400 million cost would be paid by private donors, but public money — around \$1 billion for the entire White House complex, including the ballroom — would be used for security measures. The proposed building has also expanded to a size larger than the rest of the White House. Trump argues the ballroom is necessary for security reasons, and amplified that assertion after the attack on the White House Correspondents’ Association dinner in April.

Not viewable on the tour: the area formerly known as the Rose Garden. Planted by then-first Lady Jackie Kennedy, it has been paved over into a patio.

Last stop: Black Lives Matter Plaza no more

Directly north, across Pennsylvania Avenue, is the area of town formerly known as Black Lives Matter Plaza. During Trump’s first term, a more defiant Mayor Muriel Bowser ordered the painting and naming of the area as a remembrance of the death of George Floyd at the hands of the Minneapolis Police.

BLM Plaza became a magnet point for years of political activism. Hundreds of protests started, ended or rallied there.

The plaza came down in March 2025 at Bowser’s direction, spurred by threats from Congress to hold the city’s funding. The decision served as an acknowledgment of a major shift in tone under Trump.

That’s the tour, folks. Please enjoy your stay.

Ukraine unleashes one of its heaviest drone bombardments of Russia

By The Associated Press undefined

Russian air defenses intercepted 660 Ukrainian drones in a major nighttime attack on 12 Russian regions as well as the Russia-held Crimean peninsula, the Black Sea and the Azov Sea, Russia's Defense Ministry said Friday.

It appeared to be one of the biggest drone attacks on Russia and the illegally annexed Crimea since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than four years ago. The previous biggest Ukrainian attack over the past year was 556 drones on May 17.

In an effort to turn the tables on Russia's grinding war of attrition, Ukrainian long-range drones have for months been battering targets, including oil production and energy facilities, behind the front line and deep inside Russia. The campaign has choked Russian fuel supplies and military deliveries, stalling Moscow's efforts on the battlefield, Western officials and analysts say, and heaped pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Initial damage reports from Russia after the overnight attack provided scant information. Russia's Defense Ministry usually doesn't say what was targeted in Ukraine's drone attacks, nor does it detail any damage.

Ukraine's Security Service said it used drones to strike Russian navy ships and air defense radars in Kerch, an important port city in Crimea.

The targets were two reconnaissance and mine-laying ships, the Volga and the Vyatka, and the cargo-passenger ferry Petropavlovsk, the agency said, claiming that the strikes started a large fire. The claim could not be independently verified.

Successful drone attacks hearten Ukraine

The major attack came hours after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on X that he had ordered "a 40-day influence operation," believed to mean an escalation of attacks, aimed at "compelling (Russia) to end the war" after U.S. peace efforts over the past year yielded no breakthrough.

The successful strikes, including hitting targets in Moscow and St. Petersburg, have buoyed Ukraine.

Zelenskyy said he got further promises of foreign support when he attended a recent summit of G7 leaders, including from U.S. President Donald Trump, and that the promised aid will help Ukraine step up its effort to force Putin to the negotiating table.

A NATO summit next month could be another key moment in beefing up Ukraine's military.

A Russian chemical plant is reportedly hit

In the Tula region just south of Moscow, a private house was damaged by the attack and a woman was wounded, Tula Gov. Dmitry Milyaev said in an online statement, as reports of damage caused by the attack began to emerge.

He also said a power line was damaged and an unspecified industrial facility in the city of Novomoskovsk.

Russian independent online outlet Astra reported that a chemical plant and a hydroelectric plant in Novomoskovsk were attacked and caught fire. The Associated Press couldn't independently verify the report, and there was no official confirmation.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin also reported that 47 Ukrainian drones were downed as they flew toward the Russian capital. He did not report any casualties or damage.

Ukraine says 2 civilians were killed in Russian attacks

Two people were killed and seven others injured in Russian attacks on the northeastern Kharkiv region over the previous 24 hours, regional head Oleh Syniehubov said Friday.

Russian forces struck the city of Kharkiv and 16 other settlements across the region using guided aerial bombs and drones of various types, Syniehubov said.

Ukraine's defenses overnight stopped 174 of 189 Russian drones, the Ukrainian air force said. However, four of seven Iskander-M ballistic missiles that were fired got through air defenses and struck various locations, it said.

Ukrainian officials reported damage to energy facilities, homes and other civilian infrastructure in the

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capital, Kyiv, the southern Odesa and Zaporizhzhia regions, and Sumy in the northeast. At least six people were wounded, according to authorities.

No Russian military buildup seen on border with Belarus, Ukraine says

Russia is expanding several of its military sites deep inside Belarus, but there is no buildup of forces near the Ukrainian border, a State Border Guard Service spokesman said Friday.

Russia launched its 2022 invasion of Ukraine from Belarus, which borders both countries, and Kyiv has kept a close watch on developments there during the war.

Ukrainian intelligence units have detected no grouping or reinforcement of Russian units, equipment or personnel close to the border, spokesman Andrii Demchenko said in remarks to Ukrainian television.

However, Russia has a growing number of training grounds, bases and other sites deeper inside the country, according to intelligence units.

AP Exclusive: NATO deputy commander wants Turkey summit to spur more defense spending and show unity

By EMMA BURROWS AP European Security Correspondent

LONDON (AP) — NATO's deputy commander told The Associated Press that he wants a summit in Turkey to spur member countries to spend more on defense, reaffirm support for Ukraine and underline the unity of the alliance.

Air Chief Marshal John Stringer, NATO's deputy supreme allied commander in Europe, spoke to AP in London less than two weeks before the crucial Ankara summit on July 7-8 tests the cohesion of the 77-year-old alliance.

U.S. President Donald Trump has sent conflicting signals over America's force posture in Europe and has threatened to leave the alliance. He has also unnerved European leaders with his push to annex Greenland and his flattery of NATO adversary Russian President Vladimir Putin. U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth lambasted NATO allies last week for not allowing use of their bases to attack Iran, as he announced a surprise six-month review of American forces in Europe.

Meanwhile, in the U.K. — the country which holds the position of NATO deputy supreme allied commander — government ministers quit recently over what they said were military spending plans that fail to keep Britain safe.

Summits are "highly political events and they are a demonstration of any organization's unity," said Stringer, a senior British air force officer. It would be strange if there weren't moments of turbulence over decades of NATO expanding, he said.

"Are we in one of those moments at the moment? Yes, we are," Stringer said during a military conference in London where AP also interviewed other senior European military officials about their hopes — and fears — for the summit.

NATO's European members step up on defense

Trump has long urged European allies to take more responsibility for their own defense, and with the notable exception of Spain they have largely heeded with an unprecedented effort to spend more on their armed forces.

Russia is increasingly threatening Europe, so allies should boost their own militaries while helping Ukraine degrade Russia's fighting power, said Maj. Gen. Indrek Sirel, a commander in Estonia's armed forces.

"Europe as a whole has a lot to do in order to be credible against Russia," said Brig. Gen. Jyri Raitasalo of Finland, which shares NATO's longest border with Russia.

Stringer said European nations are investing to generate a "really credible force," citing as an example how some countries are quadrupling production of 155 mm artillery shells. The summit will discuss ramping up production in ways the alliance has not had to do in decades, Stringer said.

European military chiefs wait for clarity on US plans

The outcome of Hegseth's six-month review of forces will determine how fast Europeans must take responsibility for their own security. The U.S. military in Europe had said earlier in June that Washington

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would be withdrawing some capabilities from Europe and expecting other allies to fill the gaps.

The Trump administration says that troop reductions in Europe have long been planned and coordinated with allies, but Sirel said it's still not clear how U.S. forces will be positioned in the Baltic states. That includes some U.S.-led deterrence of Russia on NATO's eastern flank.

Sirel said he was "confident" he could rely on a U.S. presence, though the Estonian military is finding ways to react to sudden changes.

Stringer said it would be difficult to replace U.S. long-range strike and surveillance capabilities, but he was confident allies could bridge the gap — not always with the same equipment, but by mixing a "cocktail" of capabilities.

Only the U.S. operates B1 and B52 bomber aircraft, but Stringer said that, in theory, a loss of their capabilities might be offset by firing missiles from a variety of other systems including from the ground, sea and smaller aircraft.

Changing plans suddenly is not good for defense

NATO allies were bewildered in May when Trump said he would send 5,000 U.S. troops to Poland just weeks after ordering the same number pulled from Europe.

Such sudden changes are challenging because military planning requires long-term strategy, said Raitasalo, the Finnish military's logistics chief. "If you change your mind, or change your plan, every week or every month or even every year, you will not get very good results," he said.

Raitasalo said the allies need to make clear pledges of capabilities, rather than just promise spending.

Sweden's army chief, Maj. Gen. Jonny Lindfors, said a good outcome from the summit would be "a common picture of how to realign when it comes to deterrence and defense."

Lindfors said he would like at least an outline — if not a "clear vision" — on how defense burdens should shift so that he knows what "NATO 3.0 is starting to look like."

Britain needs to commit to defense

British Defense Secretary John Healey resigned earlier this month, along with another minister, saying the government was unable and unwilling to commit the resources Britain needs to "defend the country at this time of rising threats."

At last year's NATO summit, members agreed to spend 3.5% of their gross domestic product on core defense. The U.K. committed to meeting that target by 2035, but Healey said the proposed defense investment plan would see spending rise to just 2.68% of GDP in 2030.

The new defense secretary, Dan Jarvis, has said Britain will keep its commitments, and the British government has committed to publishing the spending plan.

By the summit, NATO expects nations to have a "credible path" to 3.5%, and the U.K. is "as beholden to that as anybody else," Stringer said.

He said the U.K. cannot presume that "thought leadership" in NATO is enough, and that it must match its "forces and resources."

NATO's credibility is at stake

At last year's summit, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte kept Trump on board by telling him he would achieve "BIG" success at getting allies to spend more on defense.

"It's a tricky question," said Lindfors, the Swedish commander, when asked if a key goal for this summit is to avoid a situation where the U.S. president slams his allies.

Stringer said that at this year's summit it's important to display "cohesion and unity" among the alliance's 32 members but also to have "honest" conversations and deliver "credible" plans.

Raitasalo of Finland said the meeting must go beyond traditional "communiqués, roadmaps and action plans" and demonstrate deterrence through deeds. He said if NATO members don't step up and translate promises into action, the "credibility" of the alliance is at stake.

Massive Shiite crowds mark Ashoura amid fresh Iran-Israel-US war fallout

By FADI TAWIL and ABBY SEWELL Associated Press

NABATIYEH, Lebanon (AP) — Shiite Muslims marked one of the most important days on their calendar Friday with large gatherings in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and other parts of the world to remember the seventh-century killing of Hussein, the grand son of Islam's Prophet Muhammad.

The annual commemoration, known as Ashoura, is marked on the 10th day of the month of Muharram in the lunar-based Islamic calendar. Ashoura is the culmination of a 10-day mourning period and marks the day Hussein was killed alongside members of his family and companions as he fought against the army of Caliph Yazid, to whom Hussein had refused to pledge allegiance.

Hussein's killing cemented the schism between Sunni and Shiite Islam and remains a powerful symbol of resistance against oppression and injustice.

Ashoura this year comes after a war between predominantly Shiite Iran and the United States and Israel, who launched strikes on the country on Feb. 28, killing senior officials including Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The 86-year-old Khamenei was not just Iran's top political leader but also had a final say on all religious matters and was revered by millions of Shiites worldwide.

A funeral procession for Khamenei is scheduled to take place in early July.

On Friday, large crowds of people gathered in the Iraqi Shiite holy city of Karbala to mark Ashoura. Hussein is buried in the city where he was killed in the battle that took place in 680, and his shrine is visited by millions of Shiites from around the world every year.

In Baghdad, thousands marched through the streets, including some who slashed their heads with razors and performed other forms of self-flagellation in a show of grief to mark the occasion.

In Lebanon, where a fragile ceasefire between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah is in place, thousands of black-clad mourners gathered in Beirut's southern suburbs at a shrine to Hezbollah's former longtime leader, Hassan Nasrallah, who was killed in a series of massive Israeli strikes in 2024.

Women clutched photographs of sons and brothers killed in the war — many of them fighting for Hezbollah — while others held photographs of Nasrallah or Iran's Khamenei, who was killed in February in an attack by the U.S. and Israel.

Many of them sobbed. Expressions of grief for the death of the Imam Hussein are traditional during Ashoura, but many of the mourners were also grieving more personal losses.

Naghm Jaber said her fiance was killed in the war.

"This war was truly harsh on all of us, and now we are feeling the meaning of Ashoura more than usual," she said.

In the southern Lebanese city of Nabatiyeh, that is usually a major center to commemorate Ashoura, dozens of people gathered near the main square, much of which was destroyed by Israeli airstrikes over the past weeks, with some of them inflicting head injuries on themselves to express their mourning. The practice is widely opposed by many Shiites, including Hezbollah.

Earlier on Friday, state media and Associated Press journalists on the ground reported two Israeli airstrikes on the nearby village of Nabatiyeh al-Fawqa. It was not immediately clear if the strike inflicted any casualties.

"Despite all the hardships, everything happening to the Shiite Muslim community, and the wars we are facing, we came to reaffirm our loyalty, our love and our unwavering passion for Imam Hussein," said Khader Kamal.

To Shiites, who make up the second-largest branch of Islam after the Sunni majority, the killing of Hussein holds deep religious and historical resonance and plays a key role in shaping identity.

Hezbollah's leader, Naim Kasseem, said in a speech Friday that Ashoura is being repeated again by the U.S. and Israel, adding that his group and its supporters were subjected to a "war of elimination."

"America and Israel also wanted to eliminate Iran by removing the regime and controlling the country,"

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Kassem said. "The memorandum of understanding is a declaration of defeat for America and Israel," Kassem said of the deal reached this month between Washington and Tehran.

Greece bets on space technology to contain wildfires

By DEREK GATOPOULOS Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — In the searing Mediterranean summer, wildfires turn dangerous in minutes.

Greece has learned that at a terrible cost. In 2018, a blaze east of Athens moved with ferocious speed, killing more than 100 people. Five years later, a massive fire tore through a remote nature reserve; it was the largest wildfire ever recorded in the European Union.

Greece is looking to the heavens for help, with a dedicated satellite constellation that monitors for fires. It's a model for the continent as Europe races toward broader independence in space technology.

Four satellites, each smaller than a piece of carry-on luggage, were launched into low orbit in May. That made Greece the first nation in the world to integrate a dedicated satellite array into its national firefighting system.

Built by German company OroraTech, the satellites carry thermal sensors designed to flag new blazes as small as four meters (13 feet) wide, beating traditional satellites that can only spot fires the size of a cruise ship.

Satellites help manage multiple wildfires

As Europe struggles with its latest blistering heatwave, the high temperatures foreshadow the wildfire season. Fires pose a unique challenge in Greece with its tinder-dry mountainous mainland and over 100 inhabited islands.

If a fire ignites, AI-processed satellite data is sent as an alert to commanders with the location, size and intensity already calculated. If multiple fires are burning at once, real-time data is crucial to determining response.

"For example, if you have 10 fires all over Greece and the fire radiative power is lower in some cases, you will not give priority to those ignitions; you will give priority to other ones," Fire Service Col. Zisoula Ntasiou, vice president of the International Association of Fire and Rescue Services, told The Associated Press in an interview.

Thermal sensors also pick up solar panels, hot factory roofs and sunbaked rock faces, but AI models are built to filter out those false alarms before alerts reach emergency services, according to officials involved in the program.

Hotter summers require better AI models

Greece recorded its hottest summer on record in 2024 and its third-hottest last year.

"The global temperature is going up. That causes fires to change in intensity and ferocity," Ioannis Lantouris, head of OroraTech's Greek operations, told the AP. "Our models have to change and adjust to that. They have to be faster. They have to be more precise."

Lantouris spoke in his office in Athens, while engineers worked on fire behavior models. Near their desks, they keep a life-sized replica of the satellite.

Thermal satellites add a layer of detection to drones and ground sensors, and Greece has expanded both since the 2018 disaster forced an overhaul of wildfire response. The constellation helps fill coverage gaps from international satellites, spot fires in remote terrain and build more detailed models of fire behavior.

Multiple countries use thermal satellites but Greece is the first to fully integrate them into its firefighting system. The satellites themselves mark an early stage of a broader Europe-backed effort.

Greece is building a wider observation network with three European companies, combining thermal satellites, radar satellites capable of seeing through clouds and smoke, and optical satellites that capture highly detailed imagery of the ground.

That network carries a total price tag of 200 million euros (\$227 million) and is funded by the EU. Falling costs for launch and manufacturing have made the expansion possible. Additional satellite deployments are planned by the end of the year.

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Future ideas include border surveillance

Planners in Athens and across Europe already envision applying the same kind of network far beyond fire detection. Future systems will support border surveillance, crop management, disaster response and heat-wave planning.

One priority is identifying urban "heat islands," allowing authorities to target cooling centers and emergency services more effectively.

The ambitions follow a strategic shift to seek greater technological independence. Rattled by Russia's war in Ukraine and strained trans-Atlantic ties, European governments are reducing dependence on foreign technology.

Space infrastructure has become a pillar of that effort.

"These technologies support civil protection, security and, where necessary, defense-related applications," Dimitris Papastergiou, Greece's minister of digital governance, said in an interview at his office in Athens.

"The knowledge generated through these investments should remain in Europe and be combined with other European capabilities, including telecommunications and AI infrastructure," he said.

Papastergiou announced Friday that the EU is planning to further boost funding for the Greek programs with an additional 350 million euros.

Greece's satellite network is part of a European push linking launch vehicles, navigation systems, Earth observation networks and secure communications into a more sovereign technological ecosystem.

The goal, officials say, is to move beyond satellite imagery as a passive tool and develop near-real-time decision systems that help governments manage crises as they happen.

The blazing Greek summer will offer an initial test.

Venezuelans hope online posts will bring news of missing after devastating earthquakes

By MEGAN JANETSKY and ELÉONORE HUGHES Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A father holds the hand of his daughter dressed as a fairy. A 24-year-old man in a pilot uniform stares proudly at the camera. A family embraces on a soccer field.

They are among the images posted by relatives within Venezuela and abroad desperately searching for their missing loved ones following two powerful, back-to-back earthquakes on Wednesday evening.

Health Minister Carlos Alvarado said late Thursday that the death toll had risen to around 235, with at least 4,300 people injured. The number of casualties is expected to climb after the 7.2- and 7.5-magnitude quakes that caused widespread damage and were among the strongest to strike Venezuela in more than a century.

With communication patchy, social media and online registries have become a crucial tool for many Venezuelans seeking information and resources beyond sparse government statistics. Independent online registries documenting up to 40,000 people missing far surpass the official government account.

While some rushed to search beneath the rubble of collapsed buildings, others created digital flyers on WhatsApp, Facebook and X with their relatives' details.

Searching for relatives

Among them was Vanesa Marcano, 31, who posted photos from Madrid of her uncle and aunt, who live in La Guaira state, north of the capital Caracas, which suffered some of the heaviest damage and casualties.

Marcano posted the images in the hopes that they were only unreachable due to damaged communication lines. Her uncle's daughter and his 7-year-old grandson were visiting from the United States and also are missing.

"It's a feeling of impotence and uncertainty," Marcano said by phone. "I know you must stay calm and focus on the actions you can take. But it's very easy to fall into despair."

Jhoyser Concalves, a Venezuelan from the northern coastal city of Catia La Mar, was talking to his partner and her daughter just minutes before the shaking. It was the last he heard from them.

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When the earthquake stopped, Concalves ran out of his house to their apartment building, where they lived on the sixth floor. There was only debris and people desperately trying to rescue neighbors from the rubble.

Concalves posted a flyer reading "MISSING" on X and Facebook in a desperate attempt to find them.

"They are pulling people out of the building alive. So I still have hope that they are in there alive," he said.

United Nations calls for restored social media access

The search was complicated by the country's restrictions on social media and messaging platforms.

On Thursday, the U.N. human rights mission in Venezuela issued a statement calling on the government to lift local restrictions on social media and saying timely access to reliable information can save lives.

Sites including X and messaging app Signal were blocked in August 2024 by then-President Nicolás Maduro in an attempt to suppress communication among those who rejected his claim of victory in the presidential election. Former Vice President Delcy Rodríguez became the acting president in January after the U.S. captured and removed Maduro from power.

Shortly after the U.N.'s request Thursday, Venezuelans in the country were able to access X.

Search from abroad

Outside the country, such sites have become even more important for many of the 8 million people who have migrated from Venezuela in recent years and were unable to check on their loved ones.

Elibel Tovar Lanas, 38, was planning to travel Saturday from Chile, where he has lived for 23 years, for the first visit in a decade with his 70-year-old father, who lives in Brazil but was in La Guaira for business. Lanas has not heard from his dad, Félix Ramón Tovar Hernández.

"I feel powerless because I don't know how this is affecting him: the shock, the decisions he's having to make, whether he is physically okay, or even whether he is still alive," said Lanas, who registered his father on the website for the missing.

"Being in Chile makes it very difficult to get information, and everything we see feels confusing," Lanas said via WhatsApp.

In Madrid, Marcano said she was trying to stay calm for the sake of her 1-year-old daughter.

"You keep hoping someone will organize a fundraiser or some kind of initiative where you can help," Marcano said. "But the truth is, from far away, there is very little you can do."

World shares skid as traders sell to lock in profits after recent rallies driven by AI

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — World shares retreated Friday, led by heavy losses in Japan and South Korea as traders sold to lock in gains from recent rallies in stocks related to artificial intelligence.

In early European trading, Germany's DAX gave up 0.8% to 24,793.58, while the CAC 40 in Paris lost 0.4% to 8,398.14. Britain's FTSE 100 shed 0.4% to 10,490.62.

The future for the S&P 500 lost 0.2% while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average edged 0.2% higher.

In Asia, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index shed 4.2% to 69,360.88 and the Kospi in Seoul plunged 5.8% to 8,411.21. Both recovered some ground lost earlier in the day.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 1.8% to 22,667.13, while the Shanghai Composite index slipped 2.3% to 4,027.26.

In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 was an outlier, gaining 0.2% to 8,764.20.

Taiwan's Taiex gave up 3.6%.

The wide swings in Tokyo and Seoul are typical of recent volatility in markets as investors react to the deluge of dollars heading into AI data centers and other investments. Shares in Japan and South Korea hit records this week and logged strong gains on Thursday after chipmakers Qualcomm and Micron Technology reported better than expected earnings.

In South Korea, market trends have been dominated by movements in stock in Samsung Electronics, the country's biggest company, and chipmaker SK Hynix, which like Samsung is collaborating with Nvidia

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on artificial intelligence.

Given that concentration, "a strong Micron print can produce a powerful upside chase one day; a new concern around memory costs, capex, or the durability of AI demand can reverse it violently the next," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

Samsung's shares lost 5.3% on Friday, while those of SK Hynix fell 8.4%. In Tokyo trading, technology giant SoftBank Group Corp. lost 12.5% and computer chip testing equipment maker Advantest sank 3.2%.

On Thursday, the U.S. stock market drifted to a mixed finish after several AI stocks veered back up the roller coaster, while Apple shares dropped 6.1% after the company hiked prices on many of its products.

The S&P 500 finished nearly unchanged with a dip of less than 0.1% after swinging between gains and losses throughout the day. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 71 points, or 0.1%, and the Nasdaq composite fell 0.5%.

Micron Technology helped lead the market after jumping 15.7%. The maker of computer memory reported much bigger profit and revenue for the latest quarter than analysts expected, and it gave a stronger growth forecast for the current quarter than Wall Street expected. That helped allay worries a bit that its stock had grown too expensive after coming into the day with a surge of 267% so far this year.

Micron and AI stocks broadly have been under intermittent pressure recently because of worries that their profits can't possibly keep pace with the tremendous rallies for their stock prices. Beyond Micron, Qualcomm said late Wednesday that the acceleration of the AI era is forcing it to upgrade forecasts for its own growth in upcoming years.

SpaceX, meanwhile, fell 1% to drop below \$153 for its lowest finish since its vaunted debut on the Nasdaq earlier this month.

While the AI boom regularly roils tech shares, other sectors have held relatively steady, noted Thomas Mathews of Capital Economics.

"Even if the AI boom turned into a bust the 'non-tech' parts of the stock market could conceivably shrug it off for a while, as they have this week," he wrote in a report.

A report released Thursday showed U.S. inflation is behaving pretty much as economists expected, climbing to 4.1% last month from 3.8% in April. The hope is that it will ease because of a drop-off in oil prices.

The price for a barrel of Brent crude oil, the international standard, declined 2.3% to \$73.77 per barrel early Friday. It has fallen from its highs above \$100 caused by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz because of the Iran war, which slowed the global flow of oil.

U.S. benchmark crude oil lost 2.4% to \$70.17.

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar fell to 161.65 Japanese yen from 161.80 yen. The euro rose to \$1.1387 from \$1.1371.

Australia plans to strengthen laws banning children from social media

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — The Australian government plans to strengthen laws that ban children younger than 16 from social media platforms, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said.

Observers said on Friday the government was responding to evidence that the ban on young children holding accounts on platforms including Facebook, Instagram and YouTube had failed since it came into force on Dec. 10 last year. Australia was the first country in the world to pass legislation keeping youth off social media, but others have since followed.

Albanese told Parliament on Thursday this government was considering options to strengthen the ban.

"We're working on that as a priority because this is something that other generations didn't have to deal with, which is why it's complex," Albanese told Parliament.

He told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. on Friday the government was asking "are the laws as strong as possible?" and did eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant, Australia's online safety watchdog, "have

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every power at her disposal?"

Britain announced last week plans to ban children under 16 from a range of platforms to protect them from harmful content and excessive screen time.

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.

Inman Grant said in April she was considering court action against Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube, alleging they were not doing enough to keep young Australian children off their platforms.

These platforms, as well as X, Kick, Reddit, Threads and Twitch, face fines of up to 49.5 million Australian dollars (\$34 million) if they fail to take reasonable steps to remove the accounts of young children.

Melbourne's RMIT University expert on information sciences Lisa Given said the government's proposed reform was a response to evidence that the ban was failing. The evidence included eSafety's own data released in March that showed seven in 10 underage children continued to hold accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok since December.

Given also pointed to a study published in the British Medical Journal on Wednesday that found 85% of a group of Australian 12 to 17-year-olds were using restricted platforms.

"I do think it's failing," Given said. "Many kids in the media have reported that they also think that this is really a failed exercise."

The Sydney Morning Herald newspaper reported Inman Grant saying in an interview in early June: "I don't have potent powers."

"What I would say is a regulator is only as good as the tools and the resources that they're given," she is quoted as saying.

The Associated Press asked Inman Grant's office on Friday to comment on the accuracy of that reporting, but her office did not immediately reply.

Given said Inman Grant faced a challenge in enforcing legislation that platforms were resisting.

"Either the eSafety Commissioner needs more powers or we've got to have some other approach to enforcement," Given said.

Given expected the courts would need to decide what constituted "reasonable steps" required by the law to be taken to keep children off platforms.

Albanese said as part of increased efforts to enforce the social media ban, his government would proceed with digital duty of care legislation which would hold platforms accountable for foreseeable harms caused by content and algorithms.

A historic heat wave catches Europe's fashion industry unprepared

By THOMAS ADAMSON AP Fashion Writer

PARIS (AP) — As a historic heat wave gripped Paris this week, fashion houses tried to keep their guests cool with ice packs, mist machines and iced Evian on silver platters.

It wasn't enough: some venues still sweltered, water ran short and air conditioning was absent or inadequate.

Then they sent their models down the runway in leather, neoprene and wool.

That was the contradiction at Paris Fashion Week Men's, where a heat wave turned spring-summer fashion into a test of whether luxury can dress — or act — for the warming world it claims to address.

"I honestly thought I was going to pass out," said Ben Freeman, a London-based fashion critic from Australia.

Some in the front row said Paris may have to consider moving fashion week away from the height of summer if climate change keeps bringing more frequent and intense heat waves.

"I don't know how the models did it this week in some of the leather and knit coats," said fashion student Thomas Levy, 24, outside one show.

"The heat rarely seems to make it into the clothes. It shows up in the sets like at waterfalls and mist

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machines and ice packs.”

Heat as a production problem

Across the week, designers treated heat as a hospitality problem, a staging problem and a scheduling problem — rarely as a design problem.

Guests got ice packs, cold towels and water. Sets got waves, fog and mist. Schedules moved earlier, and punctuality became a heat precaution.

Dior moved its show Wednesday from 2:30 p.m. to 9 a.m., but the heat pressed in. Water was limited, there was no air conditioning, and some guests appeared unwell.

Jonathan Anderson’s most elegant answer was sheer silk-chiffon tailoring — but elsewhere came heavy knits, made less for Paris in June than for a global calendar out of sync with the weather.

“The calendar does not make any sense,” Anderson told reporters. He cited fractured delivery cycles and a changing business, suggesting the fashion calendar no longer lines up with actual weather or with how luxury clothes are sold.

Runways out of season

These are spring-summer shows, but not simply summer clothes.

Luxury collections are made for global markets, staggered deliveries and customers who pass the hottest months in refrigerated air.

For many, a wool coat in June is not a seasonal contradiction; it’s a desired purchase.

At Saint Laurent, models walked through clouds of vapor from a Fujiko Nakaya fog installation inside the Bourse de Commerce, turning heat into atmosphere rather than escape.

Anthony Vaccarello stripped his tailoring to unlined jackets and soft, pale silhouettes — light, he told reporters, for the heat — then ran the temperature back up with leather briefs, choker scarves, bare legs and transparent shoes clouded with perspiration.

The result was not a surrender to summer, but a Saint Laurent version of it: cooler construction, hotter attitude.

At Louis Vuitton, Pharrell Williams’ models emerged from a giant artificial wave onto sand. Yet the wet-suits were neoprene, the coats cashmere and fur.

Issey Miyake’s IM Men offered one of the week’s clearer practical answers.

Its show, “In Praise of Bamboo Shadows,” handed out ice packs at the door, then sent out bamboo-thread fabrics woven with organic cotton, light nylon and shadowy prints.

The silhouettes moved away from the body, treating air as part of the design rather than something supplied only by the venue.

At Ami, Alexandre Mattiussi said the obvious from beside an industrial fan — “Paris is burning” — and dressed it like a Parisian living in it: loose shorts, washed trenches and “I Love Paris” T-shirts.

Rick Owens came closest to making heat the subject. He moved his Thursday show earlier because of the heat, then sent models through mist at the Palais de Tokyo in garments with fans whirring inside.

One prominent fashion critic called the show “a metaphor for climate catastrophe.”

A French fight over cooling

Pascal Morand, head of France’s Haute Couture and Fashion Federation, said organizers were following the French government’s heat-wave plan.

“We are conscious of the challenges and very attentive to preserving the Fashion Week experience in this context of structural change,” he told The Associated Press.

Fashion was not the only Paris institution straining. As the Louvre shortened its hours during the heat wave, the museum said its historic building “remains vulnerable and is not sufficiently adapted to climate change.”

That change feeds a French argument over air conditioning, still distrusted by many in much of Europe — dismissed as wasteful or unecological.

Fashion week became a glamorous version of the problem facing France itself: how to keep public life, work and spectacle running in heat the country was not built for, without turning every room into an air-conditioned box.

President Emmanuel Macron's government has leaned, like much of France, toward shade, insulation and trees instead.

Europe is the fastest-warming continent, its cities built of stone and short on air conditioning.

"Paris Fashion Week is the canary in the mine," Freeman said.

From sport to tourism to construction, industries built around fixed calendars and outdoor crowds are being forced to adapt to heat that comes earlier, lasts longer and climbs higher.

Paris Fashion Week — outdoor, fixed and watched by the world — became a visible test.

Europe's extreme heat would be impossible without climate change, scientists say

By ALEXA ST. JOHN Associated Press

The record-breaking heat that's scorching Europe day and night this month would not have been possible without climate change, according to a new study.

The World Weather Attribution rapid study released Friday found that the heat would have been virtually impossible just five decades ago, and is 200 times more likely today than it would have been 20 years ago.

Millions in France, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom and elsewhere in Europe are experiencing extreme temperatures and humidity this week associated with a heat dome. Daytime temperatures have topped 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) in many places, while high nighttime temperatures have also made it harder to cool down and recover.

The scientists estimated that a heat wave with similar characteristics occurring in the climate of June 1976 would have been about 3.5 degrees Celsius (6.3 Fahrenheit) cooler during the day and about 2 degrees Celsius cooler (3.6 Fahrenheit) in 2003. The nighttime temperatures would have been about 2.4 degrees Celsius (4.3 Fahrenheit) cooler in June 1976 and about 1.3 degrees Celsius (2.3 Fahrenheit) cooler in 2003.

They chose 1976 and 2003 for comparison because those years saw extreme heat in Europe.

"The increase in temperatures was so dramatic that we would have expected to have never seen this event in the 1976 climate," said the study's lead author Theodore Keeping, also a climate scientist at the Centre for Environmental Policy at Imperial College London. "And it would also still have been very, very rare, even 23 years ago in 2003."

Climate change is the driving force behind the heat

World Weather Attribution, a Europe-based collaborative of scientists who study the causes of global extreme weather events, began assessing in 2015 the extent to which those could be attributed to climate change caused by the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas. The organization's rapid attribution studies, including this one, aren't peer-reviewed but use peer-reviewed methodology.

The current study used observed temperature data and forecasts for an analysis of the heat wave that started on June 18.

It also found that 45% of the 850 cities analyzed across 30 European countries have broken, or are expected to hit, records for heat stress levels, a measure that includes humidity and temperature.

"It directly relates to the heat stress on the human body and our ability to cool ourselves down, and it's a really good metric for the expected health impacts we expect to see from this heat wave," Keeping said. Heat and humidity make for a dangerous combination for humans.

Ultimately, this marks the most severe heat wave to have ever been recorded in this region of Europe and most severe humid heat event, WWA researchers said.

Europe is especially unequipped for these extreme temperatures

Europe is the world's fastest-warming continent, with temperatures increasing at twice the speed as the global average since the 1980s, according to the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service. In a separate study last year, WWA researchers found there were about 1,500 climate change-caused deaths during a European heat wave last summer.

This week, weather agencies across Europe have issued red alerts about heat risks, and sporting events, schools, public transportation and attractions have been limited as a result. Many of these countries do

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not have widespread air conditioning or other infrastructure to account for warmer climates. France, which has been bearing much of the brunt of the heat wave, recorded its hottest day ever this week, and has also reported 40 deaths from drownings as people seek cooling relief.

The WWA scientists said the current El Nino warming cycle did not influence this heat.

Europe also experienced record-shattering high temperatures in May. Typically, Europe does not see dramatically warmer weather until July and August.

The findings of the study released Friday are reasonable, but may downplay climate change's role in the heat, said Michael Mann, a climate scientist at the University of Pennsylvania who was not involved in the research.

"If anything, this latest assessment — and all similar assessments — are actually underestimating the role that climate change is playing here," said Mann, who has separately studied how climate change is increasing heat stress in North America.

Keeping, the study author, said the Europe heat wave shows the need to adapt infrastructure and behavior to extreme temperatures.

"We need to expect them to happen. They're only going to become more frequent in the near term," Keeping said. "We also need to address the source of climate change as well. And that is very simply carbon emissions from burning fossil fuels."

Texas school board to vote on required Bible readings in public education

By JAMIE STENGLE and JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The Texas education board will vote Friday on a required reading list for more than 5 million public school students that includes Bible passages, widening conservative efforts to push Christian teachings in U.S. classrooms.

The proposal in Texas — which would mandate literary works such as Charles Dickens' "Great Expectations" alongside parables from the New Testament — has been closely followed by education observers who say it appears to be the first of its kind in the nation.

If approved by the Texas State Board of Education, which is controlled by Republicans, the reading list would take effect in 2030.

Texas, which educates roughly 1 in 10 of the nation's public school students, has been at the forefront of a charge by conservatives to incorporate more religion into classrooms. The state already allows public schools to hire chaplains to counsel students, mandates the display of the Ten Commandments in classrooms and has approved an optional Bible-infused curriculum.

For months, critics have blasted both the push to require Bible readings and the state mandating what books are read by students, which are decisions typically left up to teachers. Teachers could still assign students other books to read on top of the required titles.

A focus on Christianity

Critics say the reading list lacks diversity, blurs the separation of church and state that is enshrined in the Constitution and leaves teachers and students with little room to decide what to read.

"Kids of all faith backgrounds and no faith are served by Texas schools and they should all feel welcome in Texas schools," said Elva Mendoza, legislative communications associate for the progressive Texas Freedom Network. "But this is sending the message to children that one and only one religious text — a Christian one — is worthy of making this required reading list."

Others have applauded the possibility of mandated Christian religious reading in public schools. Brooke Mazel, a retiree from Lubbock, encouraged the board to adopt biblical materials, saying her children and grandchildren grew up with "strong faith and family values."

"America should celebrate our 250 years that started as a nation of unwavering Christian values," Mazel said.

The board is also set to vote Friday on a social studies curriculum that links Bible stories with American

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history.

Texas may be a trailblazer

A state law passed in 2023 required a mandatory list of at least one literary work be taught in each grade level. The proposed new list contains around 200 texts, including Bible passages, essays and books, far in excess of that requirement.

Antero Garcia, president of the National Council of Teachers of English and a Stanford University professor, said he doesn't know of any other state with a mandatory reading list that includes religious texts. Educators at the district and school level usually choose the texts their students will read, Garcia said.

Kasey Meehan, director of PEN America's Freedom to Read program, agrees the move is "unique" to Texas.

Picture-book stories for elementary students including "David and Goliath" and "Daniel and the Lion's Den" are on the required reading list. By fourth grade, students would encounter passages about Jesus in the New Testament.

By middle school, students would be expected to read several passages about Jesus, including passages from his most famous sermon, and another where he instructs people to cast aside earthly anxiety and seek the kingdom of God.

For high schoolers, the list requires the reading of specific Bible passages as supportive materials for literary works including works by Dickens and Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice."

Holding diversity in check

Such strict requirements amount to "almost de facto censorship," Meehan said, comparing the list to book bans.

"It certainly leans ideologically more conservative," she said. "It excludes a lot of diverse voices from the reading list."

The list mandates that students reading Shakespeare's "The Tragedy of Julius Caesar" also read a eulogy for President Ronald Reagan written by former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, a staunch conservative.

Frank Strong, an English and journalism teacher and co-founder of the student advocacy group Texas Freedom to Read, said diversity is not only important for students needing to see themselves in what they read but also as a way to learn about different cultures.

Many of the books on the reading list are not controversial, but Mendoza asks why books like "Chicka Chicka Boom Boom" need to be required for kindergartners.

"Can't our kindergarten teachers be trusted to choose board books?" Mendoza asks.

Reflecting Pool liner was cut with a sharp knife or razor, National Park Service says

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A liner along the bottom of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool was cut with a sharp knife or razor this month, causing damage to the foam sealant installed as part of a \$16 million rehabilitation project, a top official at the National Park Service says.

The U.S. Park Police responded June 9 to a complaint by the park service, said Frank Lands, deputy director of operations for the park service. Lands made the statement in a court document filed late Wednesday as part of a lawsuit filed by a nonprofit organization to halt the Trump administration's work on the project.

His statement does not say when exactly the damage occurred or whether it was a suspected case of vandalism and does not identify anyone who might have been involved.

The police report indicates damage to the pool, "including a caulk over the foam sealant that was cut with a sharp knife or razor and destruction of delaminating surface material," Lands said. About 70 fence post tops also were thrown into the pool, he said.

The statements are the first time the Republican administration has offered specifics for when and how the Reflecting Pool may have been damaged after work on the project was substantially completed.

Interior Department thought the reported damage was an 'isolated incident'

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A spokesperson for the Interior Department said Thursday that public notification about the damage was delayed because, "at the time of the June 9 incident, the vandalism was under investigation and believed to be isolated. So as not to encourage deranged individuals, we did not announce what we hoped to be an isolated incident."

Around the same time, park service staff "discovered another incident where fencing around the pool had been forcibly removed and thrown into the pool," the spokesperson said in an email.

The department soon noticed that "recurring cases and videos of people ripping at the coating began to circulate. We then knew this was not an isolated incident, but a new trend to attempt to damage the Reflecting Pool," the email said.

President Donald Trump and other officials have repeatedly blamed, without citing evidence, unidentified vandals for peeling paint as well as a "350-foot gash" in the liner and other problems. Six people have been arrested, Trump said this week, without providing details.

The Interior Department said Thursday there have been seven arrests, seven federal citations and 18 police reports filed. The department did not specify what the charges were or identify anyone cited by police.

Trump pledged to beautify the century-old Reflecting Pool before the nation's 250th birthday celebrations, draining its water and directing the bottom to be painted a color he called "American flag blue." But after the site was restored, its water was plagued by an algae bloom for more than a week, and pieces of the new coating have appeared to be peeling off the bottom. The pool has largely cleared in recent days after devices called nanobubblers infused ozone into the water to kill algae and bacteria.

Trump's administration faces a self-imposed deadline to complete the renovation before July Fourth. Trump also has said the federal government would release images to substantiate his claim.

Trump said Wednesday that "sick people" had used razors and box cutters to slice portions of the lining. Reflecting Pool was refilled between June 4 and June 9

The Associated Press reviewed videos showing that the Reflecting Pool was refilled between June 4 and June 9, meaning the alleged cut reported to law enforcement on June 9 could have occurred before the basin was fully refilled. Days later, pieces of the new blue liner were observed peeling up from the bottom.

The Park Police posted surveillance footage Wednesday evening and asked for help "identifying the individual depicted here in connection with a Destruction of Government Property investigation." The grainy, 30-second video appears to show a person kneeling down, reaching into the reflecting pool and removing something from the water. Police said it was taken on Friday afternoon.

In his statement to the court, Lands said the parks agency plans to begin draining the Reflecting Pool following Independence Day celebrations to conduct repairs, including assessing and repairing any damage to the lining.

The park service completed more than two months of renovations at the Reflecting Pool in early June. The 2,000-foot-long basin was drained and a tinted, plastic-like liner was installed to waterproof and protect the concrete pool surface, and the pool was refilled with water, Lands said.

The Cultural Landscape Foundation, an education and advocacy group that sued in May to halt work on the project, asked a federal judge to block further renovations.

"It is also not too late to correct course," the group wrote in a filing Monday. It urged the administration to "engage with experts and the public, and make an informed decision about what is best based on the consultations mandated by the law, instead of once again rushing ahead with half-baked ideas."

Democrats call for investigations into the pool renovations

Congressional Democrats have called for formal investigations into the pool renovations, saying no-bid contracts for the project were awarded to vendors with prior ties to Trump.

Ohio-based Green Water Solutions, also known as Greenwater Services, was given a \$1.7 million contract to install a water-purification system in the Reflecting Pool, while Virginia-based Atlantic Industrial Coatings was awarded \$14.7 million to repaint and waterproof the pool's concrete floor.

Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley, the top Democrat on the Senate Appropriations panel overseeing the Interior Department's budget, said the pool renovation appears to be a waste of taxpayers' dollars.

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"After railing about waste, fraud and abuse, Donald Trump spent more than \$16 million on a renovation of the Reflecting Pool that's now peeling and chock full of algae," Merkley said Thursday. He said this is a "massive waste" of tax dollars and the public deserves "swift answers — and a refund."

Merkley is one of about 10 Democratic senators and House members investigating the pool project.

"Taxpayers deserve a full explanation of how these failures occurred and who will be held accountable for correcting them," said another letter, signed by New Mexico Sen. Martin Heinrich and five other senators.

Heinrich is the top Democrat on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which oversees the Interior Department.

Venezuela health minister says around 235 people dead and 4,300 injured in catastrophic earthquakes

By MEGAN JANETSKY, ANDRY RINCÓN and JUAN PABLO ARRAEZ Associated Press

LA GUAIRA, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuelans searched for survivors beneath collapsed buildings Thursday and rescue teams raced to northern areas rocked by a pair of powerful earthquakes that officials say killed around 235 people and left at least 4,300 people injured.

"Unfortunately we have received around 235 patients who arrive without vital signs or die when they arrive at our health facilities," Health Minister Carlos Alvarado told state media Thursday.

The number of dead and injured is expected to rise with thousands reported missing after the 7.2- and 7.5-magnitude earthquakes that struck Wednesday evening, which was among the strongest in Venezuela in more than a century and was felt throughout the region.

Thousands were reported missing and buildings were evacuated as far away as Brazil's Amazon.

In response to the devastation, the U.S. Treasury on Thursday moved to waive some sanctions until Oct. 23 to allow transactions related to earthquake relief efforts in Venezuela that would otherwise be prohibited.

Meanwhile, in cities across northern Venezuela, panicked residents poured into the streets and searched for the missing in the debris.

The injured were pulled out of the rubble covered in dust and blood, among them children and animals. Venezuelan state TV showed dramatic images of rescues, including a woman who was trapped under a cement slab, only a barefoot poking out before crews managed to get her out alive. But few government search teams were seen outside Caracas.

In the capital, Dayana Delgado, mother of three children, asked where the heavy machinery was that government officials had promised, pointing out that neighbors were the ones digging through the rubble.

"I want to know where my child is, if he's trapped or in a shelter," she said of her 8-year-old son who was missing.

One mother sobbed and collapsed in grief as the bodies of her 3- and 10-year-old children were wrapped in blankets and carried away. Others screamed the names of missing loved ones. Some stood in silent shock.

The coastal region of La Guaira — north of the capital, Caracas — suffered some of the heaviest damage and casualties. The country's main airport is there and was closed due to damage, complicating aid efforts.

Retired schoolteacher Juan Alberto Mendaño climbed through wreckage in La Guaira and past a dead body when he spotted a woman who was trapped and signaling with her hand for help.

"May God rescue her as quickly as possible," said Mendaño. "When we heard the scream, there was nothing we could do."

Offers to send aid and supplies poured in from around the world, including from the United States, which seized Venezuela's then-president Nicolas Maduro at the beginning of the year in a surprise military operation.

The natural disaster is just the latest challenge for acting President Delcy Rodríguez, the former vice president who took office in January after Maduro's capture. Venezuela has been facing economic disarray for more than a decade, and many people reject the legitimacy of the political movement Rodríguez represents.

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Rescue teams head to heavily damaged coastal region

Venezuelan authorities said they were diverting rescue teams from other parts of the country to La Guaira, which is no stranger to natural disasters: a 1999 mudslide killed thousands in what is considered one of the country's worst natural disasters.

Rodríguez appealed to businesses Thursday to make heavy construction equipment available for rescue operations.

"We hope to rescue as many living people as possible," said Rodríguez, who referred to La Guaira as a "disaster zone."

She said the first rescuers from the Dominican Republic were about to land and more from other countries were expected to arrive in the coming hours.

While Venezuela sits near multiple fault lines, its position straddling the South American and Caribbean plates makes strong earthquakes much less common than in other parts of Latin America.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the first earthquake, with a magnitude of 7.2, hit west of Moron on the Caribbean coast, about 170 kilometers (105 miles) west of Caracas. It had a depth of 22 kilometers (about 14 miles). Just a minute later, USGS reported a second 7.5 magnitude earthquake, with a depth of 10 kilometers (about 6 miles) and an epicenter 16 kilometers (10 miles) southwest of Moron.

The one-two punch of the quakes, combined with the shallow seismic movements, amplified the destruction, said Marcos Ferreira, a geophysicist and researcher at the Geological Survey of Brazil.

"It is as if I am screaming and then someone starts screaming, too. That amplifies the vibration and adds to the potential hazard," Ferreira said.

Venezuela residents reeling from quakes

During the quakes, people ran from swaying buildings. Many were stunned Thursday morning as they saw buildings reduced to skeletons, furniture hanging out of windows and helicopters circling overhead.

In La Guaira, Cristian Carreño stared at his charred apartment building tilting precariously to one side.

"I lost everything," he said. "There are people still inside, I imagine, that couldn't get out. It's incredibly devastating."

In downtown Caracas, hundreds spent the night huddled in parks, parking lots and other open spaces.

"We were afraid the buildings would collapse on us," said María Cristina Díaz, a 41-year-old janitor. "My mother, my daughter and I were cold. We didn't sleep a wink."

Parts of the capital lost power and cellphone service, Rodríguez said. Subway services were suspended and natural gas was shut off, she said. Classes will also be canceled for several days, and the Ministry of Education said some school buildings would be used as shelters and donation centers.

Families began posting missing-person flyers with photos of loved ones, while others shared handwritten lists of names as they searched for loved ones. Venezuelans living abroad struggled to make contact with relatives.

Shortly after United Nations officials in Venezuela called on the government to lift social media restrictions so people can get potentially life-saving information, Venezuelans in the country were able to access X. The site had been blocked by Maduro since August 2024, in an attempt to suppress the exchange of information among those who rejected his claim of victory in the July presidential election.

Several governments offered assistance

Rodríguez declared a state of emergency in an address to the nation late Wednesday. She said the government was creating a \$200 million reconstruction fund for damaged hospitals and homes.

Leaders from Mexico, Qatar, Brazil, Spain, Portugal, Canada vowed to send aid. A number of shipments were already on the way Thursday. Aid included emergency and military personnel, canine and search teams, medical supplies, water purifiers, airplanes and drones.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who spoke to Rodríguez following the quake, said the United States was "immediately" deploying search and rescue teams, medical resources other assistance, though he acknowledged the closure of Venezuela's main airport created logistical challenges.

"We have a whole-of-government response. It'll be big; it'll be fast; and it'll be effective," Rubio said.

California voters will consider a measure in November to raise taxes on billionaires

By SOPHIE AUSTIN Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California voters will consider a controversial proposal in November to temporarily raise taxes on billionaires after the labor union backing the measure announced Thursday it would forge ahead despite pressure from critics to withdraw it.

The proposal, backed by the Service Employees International Union Healthcare Workers West, would impose a one-time 5% tax on individuals whose net worth exceeds \$1 billion and who were living in the state as of Jan. 1, 2026. The goal is to generate \$100 billion in revenue, mainly to fund the state's Medicaid system after federal cuts.

"I am all in on this," union President Dave Regan said on a Zoom call, adding that opponents of the proposal are "totally out of touch."

Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom and many traditional allies of the union oppose the measure. They argue it is a temporary fix for an ongoing problem and that it would push the ultrawealthy to leave the state, taking the money they would contribute in income taxes with them. Newsom, who is considering a presidential run as he prepares to leave office in January, has generally opposed tax increases during his time as governor.

A coalition of healthcare, education and housing groups — including the California Medical Association and California School Boards Association — banded together last week to fight the tax.

"The dangerous wealth tax directly threatens vital funding for education and schools, healthcare and clinics, public safety, and infrastructure projects by making California's revenue even more volatile," the coalition said in a statement.

Brian Brokaw, a Newsom political adviser who is leading a political committee opposing the tax, said it would "make California's biggest challenges worse."

"Driving away the state's sustainable tax base for a one-time grab is bad policy and an even worse deal for 40 million Californians who will be left holding the bag," he said in a statement.

Under the proposal, the state would spend the money generated from the tax over multiple years. The nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office estimates that the proposal would generate tens of billions of dollars in the first few years, but that income tax revenues would subsequently decline by hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

Many of the Silicon Valley tech moguls who oppose the measure have already moved their assets to other states or threatened to do so to avoid the possible tax. They have also spent millions to try to defeat it.

Since the proposal was announced in October, Google co-founder Sergey Brin has donated \$82 million to a political committee called Building a Better California that backs a variety of initiatives designed to blunt the billionaire tax proposal. It has raised more than \$118 million, counting Brin's contributions, from fewer than a dozen donors.

California relies on its top 1% of earners for nearly half of its personal income tax revenue.

The union offered to scale back its proposal last week, asking Newsom to back a 2% tax on billionaires instead. But the governor's office said the lower rate didn't change his stance.

The proposed tax may have piqued the interest of many Democrats because it comes at a time when they are particularly concerned about affordability, income inequality and federal cutbacks to government programs, said Martin Gilens, a political science professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.

"There's kind of a perfect storm that sort of bolsters preexisting inclinations to be sympathetic to the idea of raising taxes on the well-to-do," he said.

But there's a catch. Support for ballot initiatives often declines as the election nears, and if the measure passes, it's likely to face legal challenges, Gilens said.

Ecuador advances to World Cup knockout rounds, beats Germany 2-1 on Plata's 77th-minute goal

By RONALD BLUM AP Sports Writer

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — A little flick of Gonzalo Plata's big toe helped Ecuador make a great escape.

Plata poked the ball past Manuel Neuer in the 77th minute and lifted Ecuador to a come-from-behind 2-1 win over Germany on Thursday and into the knockout round of the World Cup for the first time since 2006.

"Life is different now. We suffered a lot," said Plata, a 25-year-old winger who scored his ninth international goal. "We suffered too much in the first two matches. We would have liked to secure qualification much earlier, but now we're going forward more hungry, knowing we have to give it our all."

Ecuador, which has lost only one of its last 22 games, finished third in Group E with four points and advanced past the group stage for the second time, headed to a possible matchup with Mexico on Tuesday in Mexico City.

A four-time champion already assured of advancement by winning its first two games, Germany will play its round of 32 game Monday at Foxborough, Massachusetts, most likely against Paraguay, Australia or Sweden.

"On Monday it's important that we start well," Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann said through a translator.

Germany's winning streak was stopped at 11 games, one shy of the team record set in 1979-80.

"The difference was today that the opponent wanted to win more than us, and you could really feel it, especially in the second half," Germany midfielder Joshua Kimmich said.

Germany went ahead on Leroy Sané's second-minute goal. Aleksandar Pavlović chested the ball and ended up kicking Pedro Vite in the head following Nathaniel Brown's throw-in, but American referee Tori Penso didn't whistle a foul. Pavlović passed to Florian Wirtz, who centered to Sané just inside the penalty area to beat goalkeeper Hernán Galíndez.

Nilson Angulo equalized in the ninth minute with Ecuador's first goal of the tournament following a 1-0 loss to Ivory Coast and a 0-0 draw with Curaçao. Felix Nmecha lost the ball in midfield to Vite. The midfielder passed to Angulo, who dribbled toward goal and beat Neuer to the far post from just outside the area.

Penso originally awarded Germany a penalty kick less than 30 seconds into the second half after Joel Ordóñez took down Kai Havertz, but a video review ruled Sané had first fouled Vite.

With the crowd tensing as time ran down, Plata scored after Vite's corner kick was nodded on by Kevin Rodríguez, who was 6 yards out at the near post. Neuer, the 40-year-old Germany goalkeeper who ended two years of international retirement for the World Cup, was about to grasp the ball when Plata raised his left foot and stabbed it into the net.

Sebastián Beccacece, an Argentine who has coached Ecuador for two years, sprinted to the front of the stands, his shoulder-length blond hair flowing, to hug his wife, Patricia Persson. He had been pilloried after the poor start and paraphrased a lyric from Argentine rock band Los Redondos.

"In loneliness you cannot always listen to what you hear. You just keep pushing forward. You ignite your fire and you continue," he said.

A crowd of 80,663 at MetLife Stadium was mostly in Ecuador's yellow. FIFA said it boosted attendance to a record 3,587,539 in the 56th game of the expanded World Cup, one more than the 52 matches for the 1994 tournament in the U.S.

"We felt at home in all these stadiums," Rodríguez said.

Ecuador had prepared to return to its training camp in Columbus, Ohio, rather than head home to South America.

"They told us: 'You will be back here,'" he said. "The staff in the kitchen, in the spa, even the drivers." Ecuador isn't sure of its next opponent or even where the match will be played, so fans can't lock in travel just yet.

"I hope they brought plenty of clothes in their luggage," Plata said.

74-year-old man becomes oldest inmate executed in modern Florida history

By DAVID FISCHER and DAVE COLLINS Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — A 74-year-old man convicted of fatally stabbing his wife became the oldest person executed in Florida's modern history on Thursday, and the state is scheduled to execute another 74-year-old inmate next month.

Dusty Ray Spencer was pronounced dead at 6:10 p.m. following a three-drug injection at Florida State Prison near Starke. Spencer was convicted of the 1992 stabbing death of his wife Karen.

The curtain to the death chamber went up promptly at the 6 p.m. execution time and the warden asked Spencer if he had any statement as he lay strapped to a metal table with an IV inserted in his arm.

"Sorry, sorry to the family. Into thy hands I commit my spirit and my soul. I'm on my way, Lord. I'm on my way. Amen," Spencer said, a spiritual adviser nearby at the foot of the table.

Immediately after his words, the lethal drugs began flowing and, after a few minutes of labored breathing, Spencer ceased all movements.

The warden then shook Spencer and shouted his name several times, but there was no response. Several more minutes elapsed before a medic was called in to check Spencer's vital signs, and the inmate was declared dead.

Alex Lanfranconi, in the office of Gov. Ron DeSantis, told The Associated Press in a text message that there were no complications. He had no immediate response to further phone and text messages seeking comment about the ages of the inmate executed Thursday and the next facing execution.

The family of the victim released no statement.

Florida Department of Correction records dating to 1924 show the oldest inmates previously executed by the state were both 72 — Samuel Lee Smithers on Oct. 14, 2025, for the 1996 killings of two women; and R. Charlie Gifford on Feb. 21, 1951, for the 1950 shooting death of a state lawmaker, Charles Schuh Jr.

Another 74-year-old Florida inmate, Dennis Sochor, is scheduled to be executed on July 14. Sochor was convicted of killing a woman just hours into 1982 after meeting her at a New Year's Eve party.

Nationwide, the oldest person ever executed in modern times was Walter Leroy Moody Jr., 83, who was put to death in Alabama in 2018 for sending mail bombs during a wave of Southern terror, killing a federal judge and a Black civil rights attorney.

Thursday's execution was the ninth in Florida this year after a record 19 executions in 2025. DeSantis, a Republican, oversaw more executions in a single year in 2025 than any other Florida governor since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976. The previous record was eight executions set in 2014.

Court records show Spencer was arrested after choking and threatening to kill Karen Spencer in December 1991. While in jail, Dusty Ray Spencer called his wife and warned her that when he got out, he was going to finish what he had started.

On Jan. 18, 1992, Spencer beat his wife's teenage son with a clothes iron when the boy tried to stop Spencer from attacking his mother, officials said. Then about a week later, the son responded to a commotion outside their home and found Spencer hitting his mother in the head with a brick, according to officials.

Court records show the teen tried to shoot Spencer with a rifle, but the gun misfired. Spencer threatened the teen with a knife, and the boy ran away to get help. When police arrived, they found Karen Spencer dead with several stab wounds to the chest.

Spencer was initially sentenced to death in 1992 after being convicted of first-degree murder, attempted first-degree murder, aggravated assault and aggravated battery. In 1994, the Florida Supreme Court ordered his new sentencing after finding that the trial court had mishandled evaluating aggravating and mitigating circumstances. Spencer was resentenced to death the next year, and subsequent appeals were denied.

Last week, the state Supreme Court rejected Spencer's appeals. His attorneys had argued that he had health issues such as liver disease that posed a heightened risk of pain and suffering. They also argued that executing him at his advanced age would constitute cruel and unusual punishment.

The U.S. Supreme Court rejected a final appeal earlier Thursday without comment. All Florida executions are carried out by the lethal injection of a sedative, a paralytic and a drug that stops the heart, according to the Department of Corrections.

Supreme Court's ruling to end protections for Haitian, Syrian immigrants could have broader impact

By GISELA SALOMON Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The reach of the Supreme Court's decision allowing President Donald Trump's administration to end temporary legal protections for Haitian and Syrian immigrants may extend to many other countries.

Thursday's decision directly applies to about 350,000 Haitians and 6,000 Syrians, but may be a sign of what's in store for nearly 1.3 million people from 17 countries on Temporary Protected Status. Many have lived and worked in the United States for decades and have American children.

The decision exposes TPS holders from Haiti and Syria to potential detention and deportation. It could also pave the way for hundreds of thousands of other beneficiaries with pending asylum claims or other immigration relief to be forced to leave the country.

Venezuelans are the biggest beneficiaries of TPS

TPS was created by Congress in 1990 to prevent deportations to countries suffering from natural disasters or civil strife. When Trump took office, Venezuelans comprised the largest group of beneficiaries, followed by Haitians and Salvadorans.

TPS protections are available only to people who have been continuously present in the U.S. since the date of designation. The Department of Homeland Security can extend it in increments of up to 18 months.

The Trump administration has argued that immigrants were poorly vetted after former President Joe Biden's Democratic administration dramatically expanded the designation, and says countries are safe for return. Trump's government has ended TPS for about 1 million people from 13 countries, including about 650,000 from Venezuela and 50,000 from Honduras. Decisions are looming for about 200,000 Salvadorans and 100,000 Ukrainians whose protections expire soon.

Other countries with smaller numbers include Afghanistan, Myanmar, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Nicaragua, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen.

The impact may extend far beyond Haitians and Syrians

People of all nationalities whose TPS was ended by the Trump administration have filed dozens of lawsuits. Many of these cases are still ongoing, and judges will closely examine the Supreme Court's decision.

The government argued that DHS, not judges, had sole authority to end the protections. The court's 6-3 conservative majority agreed, paving the way to end protections for Haitians and Syrians.

"The decision is definitely bad news," said Ahilan Arulanantham, co-director of the Miñana Family Center for Immigration Law and Policy at the University of California, Los Angeles, and one of the attorneys who represented Syrians. "The implication of this is that at least most of the claims that have been litigated to challenge this administration's sort of illegal war on TPS are now foreclosed."

Immigration lawyers maintain that both countries are in crisis and that people cannot return safely. They asserted that the administration neither assessed conditions in those countries nor consulted other government agencies, as required by law.

It may take a month for the ruling to take effect

Supreme Court decisions generally take effect 32 days after being announced, said Emi MacLean, a senior attorney at the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California, which represents Venezuelans, Haitians, Hondurans, Nicaraguans and Nepali TPS holders.

With its decision, the Supreme Court is sending the case back to the lower courts to implement the ruling, and that is not expected to be before July 27, according to MacLean and other attorneys. In the meantime, they said, Haitians and Syrian TPS holders could continue working.

"In 32 days, everyone from Haiti and from Syria who held their employment authorization through TPS will most likely lose that authorization," Arulanantham said.

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Lawyers urge TPS holders to pursue other avenues

Lawyers and activists are urging individuals with TPS to seek other avenues to remain in the country. They may include asylum or employment-based visas, although the government has also made those options increasingly difficult.

Many may have to choose between voluntarily returning to their home country or facing deportation proceedings. They could lose their jobs and be separated from their U.S.-born children.

Each beneficiary would return to the immigration status they had before receiving TPS, unless that status has expired or the person has successfully acquired a different status, for example, as an asylee.

Advocates are also urging Congress to allow TPS holders to remain in the country.

"We also call on Congress to immediately restore these vital humanitarian protections that the TPS program represents for the sake of our clients and TPS holders, their families, and all of our communities," said Melissa Keenan, an attorney who represents Syrian TPS holders.

Conditions in the countries

Advocates and attorneys representing TPS beneficiaries from Haiti and Syria claim that while protections are intended to be temporary, conditions in the countries have not yet improved to allow these individuals to return safely.

The law requires that the DHS secretary consult with other government agencies before designating a country for TPS. Although these other agencies are not specified, these consultations could involve the Department of State, the National Security Council and the Department of Justice.

TPS beneficiaries from Haiti and Syria claim that other agencies were not consulted and that the decision was premeditated without considering conditions in those countries.

Haitians were first granted TPS in 2010 after a catastrophic earthquake, with extensions given as gang violence displaced more than a million people, according to court documents.

Syrians were first granted TPS in 2012 during a civil war that lasted decades until the fall of the national government in late 2024.

The Supreme Court lets the Trump administration end legal protections for Haitians and Syrians

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Thursday allowed the Trump administration to end legal protections for migrants fleeing violence and natural disaster in Haiti and Syria, exposing hundreds of thousands more people to potential deportation.

The 6-3 decision overturns lower court orders and allows the Department of Homeland Security to swiftly end temporary protected status, a program that protects a total of 1.3 million people from 17 countries.

It marked another victory at the high court for Republican President Donald Trump's sweeping crack-down on immigration. Though the conservative-dominated court has put the brakes on some of Trump's immigration policies, it handed him a second win Thursday in a decision clearing the way for the revival of a policy restricting immigrants seeking asylum.

The court's conservative majority found that the law doesn't allow courts to question the process that immigration authorities use to revoke the protections.

The opinion from Justice Samuel Alito also brushed aside arguments that Trump's derogatory comments about Haitians showed the decision was unlawfully tinged by prejudice. He called the statements "insufficient to show that the termination of Haiti's TPS designation was based on the race of the Haitian people."

Justice Elena Kagan forcefully disagreed, calling Trump's comments "so repellent and racially inflected that the majority declines to put them in print." Her dissent pointed out that Trump had said Haitians in the U.S. "probably have AIDS," and he also amplified false rumors during the 2024 campaign that Haitian immigrants in Ohio were abducting and eating dogs and cats.

Federal authorities deny that prejudice played a role, and argued that TPS was supposed to be temporary but has lasted over a decade in some cases.

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James Percival, DHS general counsel, applauded Thursday's ruling. He said the program had become "de facto amnesty. This is a win for the rule of law and common sense."

In a Fox News interview Thursday, Deputy White House Chief of Staff Stephen Miller called it "a victory 10 years in the making," saying it allows Haitian migrants to "finally" be removed.

Lawyers said Haitian immigrants would be in danger if they are sent back. "Simply put, the Supreme Court's ruling will directly result in thousands of innocent people dying violent, needless deaths," Geoff Pipoly and Andy Tauber said.

They urged the Senate to approve an extension of deportation protections for Haitians that passed the House on a rare bipartisan vote in April.

"Families are here, kids are going to school, parents are going into work, folks are trying to commute, and it's like the Supreme Court just put all those activities on stop and put folks in limbo," said Viles Dorsainvil, who runs a support center for Haitians in Springfield, Ohio.

People with TPS are also a key part of the workforce in long-term care facilities, an industry group said. "This would be a dreadful loss for all seniors in our community," said Rita Siebenaler, a resident at Goodwin Living, a senior living community in Virginia.

The Justice Department appealed to the Supreme Court after judges postponed the end of the program for about 350,000 Haitians and 6,000 Syrians. The high court sided with the administration before and allowed the end of the program for people from Venezuela.

Since Trump returned to the White House in January 2025, Homeland Security has moved to end the protections, including some that had been in place for more than a decade, for people from 13 countries.

Immigration lawyers said the terminations were made through an improperly fast process, even though countries such as Haiti and Syria remain dangerous. Four Haitian women who were deported from the United States in February were later found beheaded and dumped in a river several months later, lawyers said in court documents.

Derrick Johnson, president and CEO of the NAACP, called the ruling "a devastating betrayal of Haitian families who have lived, worked, and contributed to this country for years — only to be cast out based on anti-Black immigration sentiment."

The United States first granted protections to Haitians in 2010 after a catastrophic earthquake and extended them multiple times amid ongoing gang violence that has displaced more than a million people, according to court documents.

Syrians were first granted protected status in 2012, during a civil war that lasted for more than a decade before the fall of President Bashar Assad's government in late 2024.

"Today, many of our community members, they feel lost," Farrah AlKhorfan of Immigrants Act Now said about Syrian immigrants losing TPS protections. "They are trying to understand ... what this decision means for them and how it will be implemented and how much time they will have to prepare for what comes next."

The program was created by Congress in 1990 to prevent deportations to countries suffering from natural disasters, civil strife and other instability. It allows people already in the country to stay with work permits in increments of up to 18 months, but it does not provide a path to citizenship.

DEA asks watchdog to investigate claims that agents permitted fentanyl to hit the streets

By JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

The federal Drug Enforcement Administration on Thursday asked the U.S. Justice Department's internal watchdog to investigate a whistleblower's claims that DEA agents permitted hundreds of thousands of fentanyl pills to hit the streets of New Mexico.

The request came days after an Associated Press investigation found agents repeatedly monitored — but did not seize — major shipments of the synthetic opioid in a bid to build bigger criminal cases between 2023 and 2025.

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In a letter sent Thursday to the U.S. Justice Department's Inspector General, DEA administrator Terry Cole wrote that an internal probe was necessary because "the allegations have generated significant public attention and have raised questions regarding DEA's operational decisions, supervisory oversight, and response to concerns."

Cole wrote in a public statement that his request "should not be interpreted as reflecting any lack of confidence in the professionalism or integrity of DEA personnel or in the investigative decisions made during this matter."

"If improvements are identified, DEA will implement them," he added. "Strong institutions are sustained — not diminished — by objective oversight and a willingness to continuously assess and improve."

Current and former DEA agents told the AP the investigative strategy — known as letting the counterfeit painkillers "walk" — amounted to a gamble with public safety in a state ravaged by the fentanyl epidemic and may have violated Justice Department rules intended to safeguard communities from a drug the White House last year designated as a "weapon of mass destruction."

The AP investigation cited three current and former agents and government records, including an internal report of a 2023 delivery of 74,000 pills the DEA watched happen at a mobile home park in Albuquerque. One of those agents, David Howell, first raised serious concerns about this strategy in a 2023 whistleblower complaint. He continued to raise his objections internally and spoke at length with the AP about what he described as a strategy that "poisoned our community to make cases."

In an earlier statement to AP, a DEA spokesperson said "public descriptions suggesting that DEA knowingly permitted fentanyl to reach communities are false and fundamentally mischaracterize the facts."

The DEA's request for the watchdog investigation came just a day after New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham asked the state's attorney general to examine whether the agency's actions violated New Mexico law, an extraordinary challenge to a federal law enforcement agency at a time when fentanyl remains one of the country's deadliest public health threats.

"There are no words to describe how reckless and dangerous these decisions were," Lujan Grisham said in a statement. "Make no mistake: the DEA knew people would die if these pills made it into New Mexico communities, and the agency let it happen anyway."

The Justice Department said in a statement that it welcomes a partnership with New Mexico leaders to keep the state safe.

"Protecting the public requires more than addressing individual transactions as they occur," the statement said. "It requires identifying the sources of supply, the individuals directing criminal activity and the organizations responsible for moving dangerous drugs into our communities."

Democratic lawmakers in New Mexico, meanwhile, sent Cole a letter asking for a briefing on the DEA's tactics in the state.

"New Mexicans are paying the price for a fentanyl epidemic that is tearing families apart and deserve answers," U.S. Rep. Melanie Stansbury said in a statement. "At a time when overdose deaths continue to devastate our state and communities, the DEA should be focused on stopping these drugs before they reach our streets — period."

UN agency pauses evacuation of ships through the Strait of Hormuz after attack on vessel

By JON GAMBRELL, MATTHEW LEE AND KONSTANTIN TOROPIN Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A United Nations agency paused the evacuation of ships through the Strait of Hormuz on Thursday after the British military said a vessel was hit by a projectile off the coast of Oman following the passage of several tankers that used a route backed by the U.N.

The head of the International Maritime Organization said the plan to move stranded ships out of the Persian Gulf through the strait will be on hold until the agency can confirm safety guarantees for the ships on the evacuation list and in the region.

The report of a strike came hours after Iran threatened vessels to stop using the route through the

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strait without Tehran's permission. The vessel that was attacked was not part of the evacuation effort, said Arsenio Dominguez, the U.N. agency's secretary-general.

A U.S. official told The Associated Press that the vessel was hit by an Iranian drone.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive situation, said the merchant vessel Ever Lovely was attacked by a drone being flown by the Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard.

Following reports of the attack, Iran's Persian Gulf Strait Authority — a new government agency established to control shipping in the strait — wrote on X that transit outside its own designated routes "will not be covered by the guarantee of safe passage."

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said the vessel sustained damage, but it reported no injuries or environmental effects from the attack off the coast of Oman.

An alternative passage would relieve pressure on economy

The opening of an alternative passage through the vital waterway would relieve pressure on the world economy and remove Iran's main source of leverage in ongoing peace talks with the United States. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, on a visit to the Gulf to reassure American allies, said Washington was committed to the new route and ensuring that ships are able to transit the strait.

"If that stops, then we're going to have a problem," Rubio said Thursday before the report of the strike on the ship.

Traffic through the strait increased in recent days but was still well below prewar levels. Oil on Thursday briefly dipped below its last prewar price of just under \$73 per barrel, a sign that the market believes the situation is improving.

The U.S. and Iran are still debating terms of an interim peace deal, including issues such as getting ships through the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf and addressing the future of Iran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium.

Under the memorandum of understanding signed last week, the U.S. and Iran have 60 days to iron out the details. As talks are held behind closed doors, U.S. President Donald Trump and Iranian leaders have seemed to negotiate in public, trading threats and claiming concessions the other side denies.

Meanwhile, a flare-up of fighting in Lebanon between Israel and Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants threatened the wider truce. Lebanon says five people have been killed by Israeli strikes over the past two days. Iran says the tentative deal to end the war would require Israel to withdraw from Lebanon — a condition Israel has rejected.

More ships pass through the strait, but far fewer than before the war

Oil tankers, led by the Stoic Warrior vessel, sailed along the United Arab Emirates and then Oman early Thursday, passing by Oman's Musandam Peninsula fairly close to the shore. The route was laid out by Oman and the International Maritime Organization.

North of the route is a corridor in the center of the strait where ships moved freely before the war, transporting about a fifth of all the world's oil and natural gas.

Iran said it mined that passage after the U.S. and Israel attacked it on Feb. 28. At least one mine has been sighted there.

Though some ships had been getting out of the strait, with U.S. military support, the U.N. agency's effort was the latest to free trapped vessels. The shipping company Maersk said its container ship, the Maersk Baltimore, and another chartered vessel made it out on Thursday.

Last week, 125 vessels crossed the strait, up from 33 the week before, according to marine data and analysis firm Lloyd's List Intelligence.

According to S&P Global, Wednesday saw 78 transits, the most since the war began, but still below the daily prewar average of 130 or more.

Iran says the new shipping route is 'unacceptable'

The naval arm of the Revolutionary Guard issued a warning Thursday against using the new route.

In a statement carried by Iran's state-run IRNA news agency, naval officials said the route was established without notice or coordination with Iran, calling it "unacceptable and completely dangerous."

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"The only authorized route for passing through the Strait of Hormuz is the one declared by the Islamic Republic of Iran," the Iranian force said. "Vessel traffic outside these routes is extremely dangerous and prohibited."

"Violators will be dealt with," it added, without elaborating.

On Wednesday, the Guard threatened one tanker over the radio, with a soldier warning, "You are in range of my missiles and maybe (I) fire on you," according to the private security firm Ambrey.

Rubio says the US will ensure there are no tolls on ships

Rubio met with foreign ministers from the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council to assure them that their interests would be protected in any agreement with Iran.

Those countries, including major energy producers reliant on the strait for exports, came under attack by Iran after the start of the war.

"There is no part in this deal that's undertaken that in any way undermines the security, the stability or the prosperity of any of our partners in the Gulf region," Rubio said at the meeting in Bahrain.

Bahrain's foreign minister, Abdullatif bin Rashid al-Zayani, said the agreement brought a glimmer of hope but stressed that it was "critically important that Iran adheres to its obligations."

Lebanon remains a flashpoint

A lull in fire between Israeli forces and Hezbollah that started Sunday began to show cracks after Israel said it targeted Hezbollah militants.

Lebanon's health ministry said Thursday that three people were killed by an Israeli strike on a car in southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah has called the recent strikes a ceasefire violation but has not retaliated. The Israeli military said Thursday that it fired on two separate groups it suspected of being Hezbollah members. The strikes came as Lebanese and Israeli officials were in Washington discussing a proposed phased withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon.

Israel's military also said Thursday that a reservist soldier was killed in southern Lebanon.

What to know about Harvey Weinstein's cases after a rape charge was dropped

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York prosecutors have dropped a rape charge against Harvey Weinstein instead of trying it a fourth time. His accuser supported Thursday's decision, which puts an end to one piece of a landmark #MeToo-era prosecution.

It doesn't clear the former Hollywood honcho's criminal record. The 74-year-old has been convicted of other sex crimes in two states and is still behind bars while he appeals those verdicts.

Here's what you need to know about the case:

Charge dropped when accuser said she couldn't endure another trial

Jessica Mann, the hairstylist and actor who accused Weinstein of raping her in a New York hotel room in 2013, told the court in a letter that she "could no longer endure going through this."

She had given extensive, emotional testimony at three trials. One produced a conviction that later got overturned for reasons unrelated to her testimony. Then two retrials ended in hung juries.

Mann, 40, said in her letter that she "gave my all" in the case, it "put me through more harm than good" and she wanted to close this chapter of her life.

Prosecutors said they believed Mann and were confident in the case, but they would drop it because of her wishes and Weinstein's other convictions.

Weinstein's lawyers said the charge should never have been brought in the first place.

He denies the allegation, and his lawyers said the encounter was part of a consensual, yearslong relationship. Mann testified that in the early months of that relationship, Weinstein raped her after cornering her in a Manhattan hotel room, grabbing her arms and ignoring her repeated pleas not to have sex.

Dismissal doesn't affect Weinstein's convictions

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Mann's allegation was one of a number of criminal charges that evolved from a 2017 deluge of sexual misconduct allegations against Weinstein, an Oscar-winning producer who had huge sway in Hollywood. The accusations propelled the #MeToo movement against sexual assault and sexual harassment.

Weinstein was convicted of some charges and acquitted of others at trials in New York and California. The dismissal of the Mann-related case doesn't affect his convictions, which involved other women.

Weinstein is facing sentencing in other case

Weinstein, who has said he "never assaulted anyone," is challenging his convictions. He was found guilty of raping and sexually assaulting an Italian actor-model in Los Angeles and sexually assaulting Miriam Haley, a production assistant and producer, in New York.

The Associated Press does not identify people who say they have been sexually assaulted, unless they choose to make their names public, as Mann and Haley have done.

Weinstein, 74, is facing sentencing in September on the conviction tied to Haley — a verdict reached in at a 2025 retrial after an appeals court reversed an earlier conviction. Haley testified that Weinstein forcibly performed oral sex on her after inviting her to stop by his Manhattan apartment before a flight in July 2006.

Prosecutors are seeking a 20-year sentence for that conviction. Weinstein's lawyers say they haven't yet decided what sentence they will seek.

After whatever punishment Weinstein gets in New York, he faces a 16-year sentence in California.

What to know about earthquake early warning systems

By REBECCA BOONE and OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

As earthquakes struck from California to Venezuela to Japan, millions of people received warnings on their mobile phones, providing critical seconds to seek protection.

Venezuela was struck with a pair of deadly earthquakes Wednesday evening and Thursday morning that brought significant shaking to the northern coast of Japan. Earlier in the week residents in the U.S. state of California experienced a moderate earthquake, and at the start of June, 37 people in the Philippines died in a quake near Mindanao.

Many nations have developed systems for alerting people seconds before shaking begins. Even in countries like Venezuela that do not have such systems, Google Android Earthquake Alerts can send warnings.

Here's what to know:

Warning systems are used around the world

Several countries have Early Earthquake Warnings — sometimes shortened to EEW — including the United States, Mexico, Japan, Turkey, Romania, China, Italy and Taiwan, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Venezuela does not have a national EEW. Wednesday evening's back-to-back 7.2- and 7.5-magnitude earthquakes were among the strongest to strike the country in more than a century.

Still, some people in Venezuela received warnings seconds or even minutes before the shaking began through Google's Android Earthquake Alerts system.

The warning system relies on crowdsourced data from the sensors in individual cellphones to detect seismic events and send warnings to other phone users in the area. It has greatly expanded since it rolled out in 2020 with 250 million people receiving alerts in 2020, to over 2.5 billion today, according to Richard Allen, director of the Berkeley Seismology Lab.

It alerts about 60 earthquakes each month to an average of 18 million phones, according to Allen's website.

Pericles Sánchez, a 39-year-old Venezuelan writer in Caracas, received an earthquake warning on his Android phone minutes before the earthquake reached his home, allowing him time to run outside. Sánchez said his family's house was not damaged.

"It wasn't until we were already outside that we started to feel it," Sánchez said.

Diogenes López, 36, a Venezuelan migrant, said an earthquake alert app on his phone alerted him of the quakes in his homeland even though he now lives in Bogota, Colombia. Having previously lived in Chile, where earthquake warning systems are widely used, he immediately zoomed in on the map and realized

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the epicenter was near his hometown.

"My mind went straight to the worst," López said. "All my family is there."

His sister eventually managed to send a message saying the family was safe.

"Venezuela doesn't have the earthquake culture you see in countries like Chile or Japan. People aren't used to these kinds of events and don't always know how to react," he said, adding that he worried Venezuela's deteriorating buildings would not withstand much.

Earthquake warning systems are fairly new

On the U.S. West Coast, the USGS operates an early warning system called ShakeAlert for California, Oregon and Washington that alerts in multiple ways, including through a California-run app called MyShake. Launched in 2019, it has since sent 6.8 million alerts for 194 earthquakes.

Over 4 million people were alerted to Wednesday's quake, said Robert de Groot, a USGS scientist.

"It's always good to have more than one way of getting alerts. It's the reason why you carry a spare tire in your car or carry some small bills in your wallet because the ATM may not work," he said.

The first public EEW was launched in 1991 in Mexico, and today people are warned of large quakes through broadcast stations, phone apps and public alarm systems. Mexico City also holds earthquake drills to practice how to respond to an earthquake.

Japan expanded its earthquake warning system to cover the ocean floor after the magnitude 9.0 earthquake and tsunami in 2011 that killed more than 22,000 people and triggered a catastrophic meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Japan's Seafloor Observation Network for Earthquakes and Tsunamis, or S-Net, uses thousands of miles of underwater cables and sensors to directly monitor the offshore subduction zone where tectonic plates meet. The system is considered the most sophisticated in the world, and it has increased warning times for earthquakes by about 20 seconds, and made tsunami warnings as much as 20 minutes faster.

Most systems rely on sensors and cellphones or public alarms

Earthquakes generate a few types of movement "waves:" P-waves travel fastest and cause smaller vibrations in the earth. Larger, slower S-waves come next, creating more dangerous earth-shaking movements. L-waves come last and are the most destructive.

Google's Android earthquake warning system relies on the accelerometers in individual cellphones, which are the same sensors that flip the screen when a phone is turned sideways. If a stationary Android phone detects a P-wave, it sends a signal to Google's detection center, which then analyzes data from other phones in the region. That crowdsourced data is used to confirm the earthquake and send alerts.

Most EEWs use seismometers and other sensors to detect those waves, and then transmit that information to regional networks where the data is used to determine an initial location and estimated magnitude within seconds. If the intensity of the earthquake reaches a certain threshold, alerts go out to the areas likely to be affected.

In the U.S., those alerts are sent through multiple means including the public Wireless Emergency Alert system, various phone apps or regional public warning systems.

Some people might get multiple alerts for the same event, and others — particularly those in rural areas — might not get any.

The closer to the quake, the shorter the warning time

The electronic signals used to detect the shaking and transmit the warnings move at the speed of light, much faster than seismic waves can travel through the ground. It's sort of like a rainstorm — the further away someone is from a lightning strike, the longer it will take before they hear the accompanying thunder.

People closest to the epicenter will get the shortest warning times, or may not even get the warning until heavy shaking has already begun. People farther away may have more time to prepare — though it's typically only seconds.

Harvey Weinstein's New York rape charge dropped after accuser says she can't endure a fourth trial

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Harvey Weinstein won't face a fourth trial on a New York rape charge. Prosecutors dropped the #MeToo-era case on Thursday after his accuser said she could not bear to testify again.

The movie mogul still stands convicted of another sexual felony in New York and others in California, and he remains behind bars. But the New York rape charge had remained unresolved after an overturned conviction followed by two hung juries.

Jessica Mann, a hairstylist and actor, spent days on the witness stand at all three trials, telling jurors that Weinstein raped her in a Manhattan hotel in 2013 and being questioned extensively about the complex relationship she had with him before and afterward. The Oscar-winning producer denied the charge and said everything that happened between him and Mann was consensual.

In a letter that prosecutor Nicole Blumberg quoted in court Thursday, Mann said she could "no longer endure going through this," adding that the 8-year-old case has "put me through more harm than good."

Blumberg told the court that prosecutors believe Mann and hail her "bravery, strength, courage and inspiration" to other survivors, but given her feelings about proceeding, "dismissal is appropriate." With that, Judge Curtis Farber formally dismissed the case.

Weinstein left court with a neutral expression, returning to jail to await a September sentencing on a New York sexual assault conviction involving a different woman. Prosecutors are seeking a 20-year prison term.

Once Weinstein finishes whatever punishment he gets in New York, he's due to serve 16 years in California, where he was convicted of raping a third woman, who's an Italian actor. He is appealing both convictions.

Weinstein's lawyers said he was relieved by the dismissal of the case surrounding Mann's allegation.

"These charges should never have been brought to begin with," lawyer Jacob Kaplan said outside court. "He is innocent."

Mann has testified that she had a consensual, on-and-off relationship with Weinstein, who was married at the time.

But she told jurors she repeatedly tried to leave and said no to any sexual activity as he cornered her in a hotel room on March 18, 2013. They had planned to meet in the lobby for breakfast, but he had spontaneously taken a room.

She said he persevered, demanding that she undress and grabbing her arms, until she was afraid to keep protesting.

The latest trial, this spring, took a visible toll on Mann, 40. During five days of testimony, she was questioned for the first time about a diarylike, soul-baring note she wrote two days after the alleged rape, which the note did not mention. At one point during her testimony, Mann said she was struggling to focus, prompting court to wrap up early for the day.

In her letter to the court Thursday, she said she had suffered a concussion shortly before her testimony, had headaches and other symptoms on the stand and ultimately "disassociated." It was a humiliating addition to an already crushing experience, she wrote.

"I have been fragmented, silenced, defamed and traumatized. I've paid the price of my reputation," Mann wrote. Slamming the court, the media and Weinstein, she said her experience showed that "pursuing justice is better left a pipe dream."

Weinstein was one of the movie industry's most powerful figures, a producer of such tastemakers and hits as "Shakespeare in Love," "Pulp Fiction" and "Chocolat."

Then a series of sexual misconduct allegations against him became public in 2017, fueling the #MeToo campaign for accountability and eventually leading to criminal charges in New York and Los Angeles.

He denied all of them and was acquitted of some, even as he was convicted of others.

During a series of trials, Weinstein was convicted in 2020 of raping Mann. Then an appeals court overturned that verdict for reasons unrelated to her testimony. Jury deliberations broke down at a 2025 retrial, and jurors deadlocked again at this year's retrial.

The rape charge in this case was a low-level felony punishable by up to four years in prison — less time than Weinstein, 74, already has served.

Weinstein didn't testify at any of the trials, though he complained during and after the 2025 New York retrial that it was unfair; the judge disagreed.

His lawyers have maintained that all his accusers had completely consensual sexual liaisons with a movie studio boss who could help them go places in show business. Weinstein himself has said he "acted wrongly, but I never assaulted anyone."

The Associated Press does not identify people who say they have been sexually assaulted, unless they choose to be named, as Mann has done.

Supreme Court clears way for Trump administration to revive restrictive policy for asylum seekers

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court cleared the way Thursday for the Trump administration to potentially revive an immigration policy once used to turn back migrants seeking asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border.

The justices, in a 6-3 decision, overturned a lower court order blocking the practice that limited the number of people who could apply for asylum each day, first under the Obama administration and then expanded during President Donald Trump's first term.

Advocates said the tactic created a humanitarian crisis as thousands of people settled in unsafe make-shift shelters along ports of entry to await their turn for days or months. The Trump administration said it was necessary to deal with an increase in asylum seekers at the border.

The policy is not in place now, and crowds are much thinner as authorities have imposed other restrictions on asylum seekers. The Department of Homeland Security did not say if it plans to revive it, but applauded the ruling. "This decision opens up an important tool to continue securing our southern border," said James Percival, the agency's general counsel.

The administration argued that metering is a critical tool used by presidents of both parties and should remain available. Federal attorneys say people turned away at the border could come back later, though lines were thousands of people long when the policy was in place before.

The case is one of several immigration suits the court is considering this term, including Trump's push to restrict birthright citizenship. The high court also allowed his administration to end deportation for migrants fleeing instability and armed conflict on Thursday.

Under federal law, migrants who arrive in the U.S. must be able to apply for asylum and be screened for fear of persecution in their home countries.

The Justice Department argued that people stopped by authorities haven't arrived in the country, so immigration agents don't have to let them apply.

The court's conservative majority agreed. "A guest does not arrive in a house when he knocks on the front door," Justice Samuel Alito wrote.

But attorneys for people seeking asylum say the law has long meant anyone arriving at a port of entry should be screened, and blocking arrivals disregards the nation's ideals.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor dissented from the bench, saying that the majority's opinion "regrettably and tragically extinguishes the light of the torch of the Statue of Liberty."

The decision could also give people a "perverse incentive" to enter the country illegally if they can't count on being able to legally apply for asylum at a port of entry, she said, a concern that Alito's opinion said was overblown.

In an unusual exchange, Alito voiced a response after she finished speaking. He expressed surprise that she had read her dissent aloud and defended his opinion by noting that the policy had been used under two presidential administrations. "I won't add anything more to that," Alito said.

Metering was first used under President Barack Obama when large numbers of Haitians appeared at the

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main crossing to San Diego from Tijuana, Mexico. It was expanded to all border crossings from Mexico during Trump's first term in the White House.

Customs officers often cited reaching maximum capacity in holding cells at the port of entry as a reason for delays in processing asylum seekers waiting to be accepted for inspection, but those claims were refuted by official data that was disclosed in a lawsuit in 2020. Many waiting in Mexico were exposed to violence by organized crime, severe heat during the summer and cold conditions during the winter. The queue was managed differently at each port of entry, sometimes by Mexican authorities, volunteers or migrants.

The policy ended in 2020 when the government introduced greater restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic, and President Joe Biden formally rescinded it in 2021.

The same year, a California-based federal judge found that metering violated the asylum seekers' rights and the law requiring screening. A divided appeals court panel affirmed the ruling, but nearly half of the judges on the full San Francisco-based court voted to rehear it, a strong signal that might have caught the attention of the Supreme Court.

Since Trump returned to the White House, crowds at international bridges have decreased significantly. In May, the government reported an average of 114 immigrants encountered by customs officers along the southwest ports of entry. Those numbers reached a daily high of 1,703 immigrants in May 2024.

Attorneys with the group Democracy Forward first brought the case, and condemned Thursday's ruling. "We are disappointed in the Court's decision and call on all Americans to demand that our government protect the families the Court today decided to keep in harm's way," said President and CEO Skye Perryman.

They represented the group Al Otro Lado, whose executive director said the decision would mean a "hardening of borders to keep out the most vulnerable" that is "sure to result in many more lives lost."

U.S. law allows people seeking refuge to apply for asylum once they are on American soil, regardless of whether they came legally. To qualify for asylum, they must show a fear of persecution in their homeland for specific reasons, like race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion.

People who are eventually granted asylum can't be deported. They can legally work, bring in immediate family, apply for legal residency and seek citizenship.

Things to know about the Venezuela earthquakes

The Associated Press undefined

A rare double earthquake ravaged Venezuela on Wednesday, killing at least 188 people and leaving more than 200 trapped. Many more are feared dead.

Thousands of people have been reported missing and about 1,500 people have been injured. Some of the heaviest damage and casualties were in La Guaira, a coastal region north of the capital, Caracas.

Here's what to know about the earthquakes and the search for survivors:

Two earthquakes in less than one minute

The powerful 7.2- and 7.5-magnitude earthquakes struck 39 seconds apart along the San Sebastian fault on Venezuela's northern coast, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

They were among the strongest in the South American nation in more than a century.

The first earthquake, a 7.2-magnitude foreshock, hit west of Morón on the Caribbean coast, about 170 kilometers (105 miles) west of Caracas, with a depth of 22 kilometers (about 14 miles).

The second, a 7.5-magnitude mainshock, was centered 16 kilometers (10 miles) southwest of Morón, with a depth of 10 kilometers (about 6 miles).

The back-to-back earthquakes — known as a doublet because of their similarities in magnitude, time and proximity — resulted from shallow strike-slip faulting near the complex plate boundary between the Caribbean and South American tectonic plates, the U.S. Geological Survey said.

Many people are dead, injured or missing

The death toll in Venezuela is likely to climb as rescue crews comb through buildings toppled by the earthquake.

Acting President Delcy Rodríguez said authorities have deployed rescue teams from other parts of the

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country to La Guaira, where dozens of buildings have collapsed.

The city, about 165 kilometers (103 miles) east of the 7.5-magnitude quake's epicenter, is a "disaster zone," she said.

Civilians and authorities pulled survivors out of concrete rubble, some of them covered in dust and blood. Families sobbed in front of destroyed homes.

Families began posting missing-person flyers with photos of loved ones, while others shared handwritten lists of names as they searched for those still unaccounted for.

Significant damage in Caracas and beyond

The earthquake destroyed buildings in Caracas and led to evacuation as far away as Brazil's Amazon, about 1,700 kilometers (1,050 miles) away.

In downtown Caracas, hundreds of people spent the night huddled in parks, parking lots and other open spaces.

Parts of the city lost power and cellphone service. Venezuela's main airport in Caracas was damaged and closed, subway service was suspended and natural gas was shut off.

Classes will also be canceled for several days as schools are used as shelters and donation centers.

Rodríguez said the government was creating a \$200 million reconstruction fund for hospitals and homes damaged by the earthquakes.

Another challenge for Venezuela's leader

The earthquakes are yet another crisis for Rodríguez, the former vice president who took office in January after the U.S. captured former President Nicolás Maduro.

Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, are jailed in New York City while awaiting trial on drug trafficking charges.

Rodríguez inherited a country that has been in economic turmoil for more than a decade.

Many Venezuelans reject the legitimacy of her political movement, while some loyalists have criticized her leadership and warming relationship with the U.S.

Help from other nations and Venezuelans abroad

The U.S. said Thursday it is sending two specialized urban search and rescue teams to Venezuela and will provide \$150 million in assistance through nongovernmental organizations and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The United Nations said Thursday that international search and rescue teams are expected to start arriving "in the coming hours."

Other countries sending aid to Venezuela include Qatar and Mexico.

Venezuelans in the U.S. are rushing to organize donation drives. More than 770,000 Venezuelans live in the U.S., with large communities in Florida, Texas and Utah.

Florida's 'Alligator Alcatraz' immigration detention center has closed, governor says

By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

The Florida Everglades immigration detention center known as "Alligator Alcatraz" has served its purpose, Gov. Ron DeSantis said Thursday, closing the makeshift facility heralded by the Trump administration and denounced as inhumane by civil rights groups.

DeSantis said the center, which opened in July 2025, was always meant to be only temporary until more permanent detention centers could be secured and federal officials now have that capacity.

"We stepped up because there was a gap, but my hope is that they'll be able to handle that," the Republican governor said at a news conference at the facility.

Officials announced a temporary closure of the facility earlier in June and sent all of the detainees to other facilities, saying hurricane season made it unsafe to keep them in the Everglades.

Immigration advocates said the center's tents were never safe or humane for holding people. Detainees at the facility have talked about their difficulty accessing lawyers and described poor physical conditions, including worms in the food, toilets that didn't flush, floors flooded with fecal waste, and mosquitoes and

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other insects everywhere.

They described large white tents with rows of and rows of bunk beds surrounded by chain-link cages. The air conditioning could shut off abruptly in the sweltering Florida heat. Detainees could go days without showering or getting prescription medicine.

Advocates for immigrants said the closure of "Alligator Alcatraz" does nothing to stop the harm to people who spend months in custody as their families suffer. The Florida Immigrant Coalition said the only winners were corporations and contractors who profited millions of dollars as Republicans pushed an immigration emergency that does not exist.

The detention center of tents and trailers was built by DeSantis' administration in a matter of days. The governor and President Donald Trump said the center was critical to Republican efforts to return people in the country illegally back to their home countries.

"There is no question this mission has made the state of Florida safer," said DeSantis, noting that 21,000 people were deported through the facility.

Even with the closure of the facility, Florida continues to play a key role with other detention centers and an increased role in helping with immigration enforcement, White House border czar Tom Homan said at Thursday's news conference.

"Gov. DeSantis did a good job, and he's going to continue doing what he's doing to help us make this country safe again," Homan said. "This isn't the end of relationship. This is a continuation."

Lawyers for the immigrants at the facility said their clients suddenly started leaving for other facilities in South Florida, California, Arizona, Louisiana and Texas earlier this month, disappearing for about a week before their attorneys and families were told where they were sent.

DeSantis said the Everglades airstrip the facility was built around will continue to be used.

Environmental groups sued over the detention center, saying Florida officials never got the proper permits or did required reviews on its impact.

The state and federal governments built the site with no oversight and closed it with no input, but they will still be held responsible even with the site is closed, said Paul J. Schwiep, an attorney for Friends of the Everglades and the Center for Biological Diversity.

"The administration believes it can quietly walk away and leave its mess for others to clean up. The law will not allow them to escape accountability. We will ask the courts to ensure that the environmental damage is fully addressed," Schwiep said in a statement Thursday.

Staggering amounts of fentanyl hit streets as the DEA watched and took no action, records show

By JIM MUSTIAN and JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Even as it battled the deadliest drug epidemic in American history, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration permitted hundreds of thousands of fentanyl pills to hit the streets of New Mexico between 2023 and 2025, according to three current and former DEA agents and government records reviewed by The Associated Press.

DEA agents repeatedly monitored shipments of fentanyl pills — but did not seize them — as federal prosecutors sought to bring bigger criminal cases against traffickers of a synthetic opioid that the White House last year designated a "weapon of mass destruction."

Agents and experts, however, said the tactic amounted to a gamble with public safety that potentially imperiled communities in and around Albuquerque and may have violated U.S. Justice Department rules intended to safeguard the public.

"We poisoned our community to make cases," DEA Special Agent David Howell told AP in a series of interviews in New Mexico. "Through our own willful blindness, we get to say, 'We don't really know what happened to the drugs.' But we 100% got people killed."

The DEA has long contended it would not be plausible to seize every shipment of every drug. But the strategy of allowing staggering amounts of counterfeit painkillers to hit the streets shocked several veteran

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agents who spoke with AP.

Ridding the streets of illicit fentanyl, manufactured mostly in Mexican labs, became the DEA's top priority over the past decade as overdose deaths surged. At the same time, its lethality — a few milligrams can kill the average adult — upended time-tested tactics that had been used to combat drugs like cocaine and heroin. Those methods have included allowing drug transactions to be completed so agents might follow the narcotics through the supply chain. Fentanyl, however, is so dangerous that the Justice Department developed guidelines for agents in such circumstances, encouraging them to seize the opioid whenever "practicable."

Albuquerque, which has a neighborhood so besieged by drugs it's known as "War Zone," and other regions in New Mexico remain at the epicenter of the fentanyl epidemic. While overdose deaths nationwide fell 14% last year, government data show New Mexico tallied a 21% spike.

New Mexico became a testing ground for a high-stakes strategy

Alex Uballez, who served as U.S. attorney in New Mexico from May 2022 until February 2025, said authorities at times allowed drug shipments to go unseized as part of a broader effort to gather intelligence and build cases against major drug traffickers. He said the approach reflected his office's limited resources and his belief that prosecuting larger organizations can have a bigger impact than interdicting every suspected drug transaction.

Last year, the DEA recorded the largest fentanyl bust in its history in Albuquerque.

"The bigger fish are worth catching," Uballez said, "and that will save more lives."

The DEA said in a statement that "the investigative decisions at issue were lawful, reasonable under the circumstances and consistent with Department guidance."

"Public descriptions suggesting that DEA knowingly permitted fentanyl to reach communities are false and fundamentally mischaracterize the facts," DEA spokesperson Amanda Wozniak wrote in an email. She said the investigations involved court-authorized wiretaps "in which agents and prosecutors conducted real-time surveillance, intelligence gathering, and operational analysis targeting larger drug trafficking organizations."

Agents watched tens of thousands of fentanyl pills change hands

In some cases, the DEA had such detailed intelligence about drug deliveries that agents were able to tally precise pill counts, according to reports reviewed by AP.

Agents, for example, deciphered coded chatter over cellphones and closely surveilled a transaction at a mobile home park in Albuquerque in June 2023, according to a 66-page report reviewed by AP. Agents wrote in the report that traffickers delivered 74,000 pills as part of that deal, a figure federal prosecutors later confirmed in a court filing.

Days earlier, another DEA report showed, investigators watched the same distribution ring deliver a spare tire hiding another suspected fentanyl shipment that similarly went unseized.

"We did nothing but sit back and watch," said Howell, who filed an official whistleblower complaint in 2023 to bring attention to what he thought was a tactic that risked public safety.

Months passed before federal authorities busted the traffickers, and Howell, who participated in the surveillance, said authorities today cannot account for the unseized shipments.

"It's outrageous to put that many lives at risk in hopes of making a big case," said Tristan Leavitt, president of Empower Oversight, a whistleblower advocacy group that has asked the Senate Judiciary Committee and Justice Department's Office of Inspector General to investigate Howell's claims.

A former DEA supervisor, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation, said he and his Albuquerque colleagues allowed "millions" of pills to go unseized during a multistate investigation last year.

Howell reported in his whistleblower disclosures that agents on that case permitted the delivery of at least 1.8 million fentanyl pills.

That investigation, the former supervisor and Howell told AP, culminated in the largest fentanyl bust in DEA history, a takedown announced in May 2025 by then-Attorney General Pam Bondi that resulted in the seizure of more than 3 million pills.

"The amount we ultimately seized was hitting the streets every month while that case was going on,"

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the former supervisor said, adding that the DEA could have dismantled the organization six months earlier.

Authorities said bigger cases justified the risk

The U.S. attorney's office in Albuquerque did not answer questions about the unseized fentanyl shipments but, in a statement to AP, said the "conduct" Howell brought to light happened during the prior administration.

"The current leadership of this office is focused on aggressively investigating and prosecuting fentanyl trafficking and disrupting the criminal organizations responsible for distributing these drugs," Tessa DuBerry, a spokesperson for the office, wrote in an email.

Ubaldez, the former U.S. attorney, said estimated pill counts "based on intercepted phone calls are not reliable."

"I don't think I'd contest that drugs are 'walked,'" he said, referring to the law enforcement tactic of allowing contraband to go unseized to further an investigation. "How much and how frequently — and with what certainty — is incredibly difficult to answer in retrospect."

Federal guidelines treated fentanyl as a special case

As fentanyl overdoses became an epidemic over the past decade, the U.S. Justice Department developed an internal playbook for combating the deadliest drug ever to cross the Mexican border. The game plan coincided with a publicity campaign that warned Americans that "One Pill Can Kill," a DEA effort to highlight fentanyl's unique dangers.

Adopted in 2017, the department's two-page "Fentanyl Protocols" called on agents to "seize or otherwise prevent the distribution" of fentanyl "as soon as practicable." The rules, which have not previously been made public, said that "protecting public safety is paramount," irrespective of whether seizures compromise investigations.

The Justice Department rewrote the rules in 2024 to afford law enforcement more discretion in such cases. The updated protocols say investigators "may exercise discretion in determining whether to take action to prevent the trafficking of fentanyl," balancing public safety risks against "the benefits to be achieved through preserving the investigation."

The DEA rarely discusses the tactic of allowing drugs to go unseized. Its agent manual describes taking drugs off the street as "the usual course of action," but adds "there may be instances where the investigative objectives can be better achieved by not doing so."

The agency has long used "controlled deliveries" in which constant surveillance of the drugs — and often replacing them with fake narcotics — is followed by a takedown to recover them, according to current and former agents.

In interviews, several current and former agents likened the decision to permit fentanyl to hit the streets to the infamous "Operation Fast and Furious," a 2011 gun-walking scandal in which straw buyers smuggled some 2,000 assault weapons into Mexico with the intent of tracing the firearms to cartel leaders.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives was savaged with bipartisan criticism after two of those guns surfaced at the scene of a fatal shooting of a Border Patrol agent, and the Justice Department explicitly forbade agents from allowing firearms to be trafficked.

A whistleblower forced the debate into the open

Howell became so unnerved by his agency's failure to seize fentanyl that he began flagging overdose deaths that might have been caused by the very pills the DEA permitted to flow to dealers. One of those cases included a 15-month-old toddler who died after ingesting burned fentanyl residue last year in Española, a New Mexico town ravaged by grinding poverty and addiction.

Howell, who joined the DEA 19 years ago after a decade in the Navy, took his allegations to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel. The agency, tasked with protecting whistleblowers, initially found a "substantial likelihood of wrongdoing" and asked the Justice Department to investigate.

In early 2024, Howell told the Justice Department's Office of Professional Responsibility that DEA agents had observed — yet not seized — separate deliveries of 150,000 and 50,000 fentanyl pills.

The DEA and federal prosecutors, he added, "are placing themselves in a precarious position where they will not be able to prove that the fentanyl they could have stopped did not result in the death of a person."

The Justice Department's Office of Professional Responsibility found in 2024 that the DEA and the U.S. attorney's office had made reasonable decisions in deciding to allow drugs to go unseized and that their inaction posed no "specific danger to public health."

The Office of Special Counsel, which critics say rarely pushes back on agency findings, deemed the Justice Department's report reasonable.

Howell, meanwhile, paid a price after coming forward. The DEA relegated him to desk duty for more than a year and docked his performance evaluations, according to Howell and DEA records. Internal records also show prosecutors barred him from testifying in federal court, citing his "pattern of refusing to heed" admonitions to allow drugs to go unseized during long-term investigations.

Pointing to the DEA's own "One Pill Can Kill" campaign, current and former agents said they could not understand the watchdog's finding that the tactics had not put the public in danger. They noted the drug is so dangerous it has to be handled in a specialized laboratory.

Supreme Court strikes down Hawaii law requiring permission to carry guns in stores and hotels

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court struck down a Hawaii law requiring people to get permission to carry guns into stores and hotels on Thursday, in its latest opinion backing Second Amendment rights.

The high court's 6-3 decision means people can carry guns onto privately owned property like shopping malls and gas stations, unless the owners specifically say guns are banned at their establishments. It comes shortly after the court found that marijuana users can't be completely banned from owning firearms.

It's a win for President Donald Trump's Republican administration, which argued the law violates the Second Amendment. The measure was sometimes referred to as a "vampire rule" because it required people with guns to get permission to enter, according to vampire lore, bloodsuckers need an invitation to enter a home.

Hawaii argued that the 2023 measure ensured private owners could decide whether they wanted firearms on their property. The state passed the law as thousands more people got legal permission to carry guns in the wake of a 2022 Supreme Court ruling that found the Second Amendment gives most people the right to have guns in public.

About four other states have enacted similar laws, though presumptive restrictions for guns on private property open to the public have also been blocked elsewhere.

Hawaii also restricts guns in places like parks, beaches and restaurants that serve alcohol, but those rules weren't before the court. They are being challenged in lower courts, however.

The suit before the Supreme Court was filed by a gun rights group, the Hawaii Firearms Coalition, and three people from Maui. A judge originally blocked the measure, but an appeals court allowed it to be enforced. Trump's Republican administration backed the Supreme Court appeal.

The Second Amendment Foundation applauded the ruling. "This law was nothing more than a thinly veiled attempt to disarm peaceable citizens, and we're grateful the Supreme Court saw through the ruse," said Alan Gottlieb, its founder and executive vice president.

The Hawaii Department of the Attorney General said they are disappointed, but will "continue to pursue common-sense regulation of firearms, consistent with the Second Amendment, for the safety of our people."

The gun-control group Everytown Law pointed out that business owners can still post signs forbidding firearms on their properties. "The Supreme Court may have changed the default rule, but it cannot take away a private property owner's authority over their own land," said Janet Carter, managing director of Second Amendment Litigation.

The two Second Amendment decisions this term are the latest in a series of gun cases that have come before the Supreme Court in the wake of its 2022 ruling, which led to a flood of challenges to firearm restrictions across the country. The justices have since struck down a ban on bump stocks, gun accessories that enable rapid firing, but upheld a federal gun law intended to protect domestic violence victims as well

as strict regulations on firearms known as ghost guns, which are nearly impossible to trace.

Key inflation gauge jumps to 3-year high in latest sign of affordability challenges

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge rose to a new three-year high in May as gas prices peaked, a sign rising costs could pose political problems for President Donald Trump and his political party as midterm elections near.

Consumer prices rose 4.1% in May from a year earlier, the Commerce Department said Thursday, the largest annual increase since April 2023. On a monthly basis, inflation was 0.4% last month, matching April's increase and down from 0.7% in March.

The increase was largely driven by more expensive gas, as well as pricier semiconductors and other computer equipment that are in high demand for the AI buildout. Rising prices have caused the inflation-fighters at the Federal Reserve to keep their key rate unchanged this year, a reversal from January when they had penciled in two cuts. Some economists forecast the central bank could lift rates this year instead.

"Underlying inflation is closer to 3% rather than 2%," said Mark Vitner, chief economist at Piedmont Crescent Capital. "It does suggest to me that the next Fed move, whenever it comes, is more likely to be a hike than a cut." The Fed probably won't raise rates until next year, he added.

Oil and gas prices have fallen substantially since Trump agreed to a peace deal with Iran earlier this month, but the conflict lifted gas prices to nearly \$4.50 a gallon on average nationwide in May. They have since fallen back to \$3.92 as of Thursday, according to AAA, but that's more than 20% above prices at this time last year as the driving season gets underway.

Declining gas prices will likely pull down headline inflation next month, yet measures of underlying inflation remain stubbornly elevated and will be a concern for the Fed. Excluding the volatile energy and food categories, core prices rose 3.4% in May compared with a year earlier, up from 3.3% in April and the largest increase since October 2023. On a monthly basis, they rose 0.3% from April to May, the same as the previous month.

Higher gas prices aren't the only thing worsening inflation. The AI buildout has made computer components more expensive, and Apple announced last week that it would raise prices for its computers and iPads because of the higher costs. Services prices also rose sharply last month, lifted by more expensive restaurant meals, hotel rooms, auto repairs, and health care.

At the same time, consumers appear willing to keep spending and boost the economy. Adjusted for inflation, spending rose 0.3% from April to May. And inflation-adjusted incomes rose for the first time in four months, picking up 0.3%, which could bolster consumer spending in coming months.

A separate report Thursday showed that the economy expanded at a 2.1% annual rate in the first three months of the year, an upgrade from a previous estimate of 1.6%. And the number of people seeking unemployment benefits fell last week, a sign that layoffs remain low.

New Fed chair Kevin Warsh last week underscored the central bank's determination to drive inflation back to its 2% target, but he gave no sign of what steps the Fed might take. Some economists, however, now expect the central bank to increase rates this year. Those expectations upended U.S. markets this week, hammering fast-growing sectors like tech.

Inflation has been above the Fed's 2% target for more than five years, leaving many Americans more gloomy about the future. Vitner points out that inflation hadn't topped 2.5% for nearly a decade before the pandemic, likely making the inflation spikes since then even harder to accept for most households.

Thursday's report covers the personal consumption expenditures price index, a lesser-known measure compared to the consumer price index, which was released earlier this month and showed a similarly large increase. The Fed prefers the PCE index because it puts less weight on housing and also reflects changes in how Americans shop when prices rise, such as when consumers buy cheaper off-brand items.

The new inflation data arrives a day after Trump refused to sign housing legislation, approved by Congress,

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that is intended to spur more construction and lower home prices over time, a response to Americans' concerns about rising costs.

Trump responded to the CPI report earlier this month by saying he "loved the inflation." He has previously dismissed Democrats' focus on "affordability" as a "hoax."

Inflation jumped to 9.1% under former President Joe Biden, but even as it fell back closer to 2% in 2024, voters remained angry about the cumulative rise in the cost of groceries, rent, and other necessities.

The PCE price index was last below 2.5% in April 2025, when Trump unveiled his "Liberation Day" tariffs. Inflation then climbed steadily to 2.9% just before the Iran war.

David Clayton-Thomas, powerhouse lead singer of Blood, Sweat & Tears, dies at 84

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — David Clayton-Thomas, the lead singer of Blood, Sweat & Tears, whose husky, high-strung tenor on "Spinning Wheel," "And When I Die" and other hits helped make the so-called brass rock band among the most popular acts of the late 1960s, has died at age 84.

Spokesperson Eric Alper said that Clayton-Thomas died "peacefully" Wednesday at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto. Alper did not cite a specific cause.

Clayton-Thomas was a onetime street fighter and petty thief from Canada who briefly became a rock superstar, the front man of a nine-member group that sold millions of records and won two Grammys for "Blood, Sweat & Tears," which beat out the Beatles' "Abbey Road" for best album of 1969. Calling out amid a jazzy parade of horns, keyboards and percussion, Clayton-Thomas' urgent shout was a signature voice of the era, preaching love on the Motown cover "You've Made Me So Very Happy," a lasting legacy on Laura Nyro's "And When I Die" and a cool head on his own "Spinning Wheel." Meanwhile, Blood, Sweat & Tears helped inspire a wave of horn-led bands, among them Chicago, the Electric Flag and Ten Wheel Drive.

"A lot of the guys (in Blood, Sweat & Tears) would play a Broadway show matinee, then go up to Harlem and play Latin music or R&B and funk at night, or come down to the Village and play pure jazz the next night," Clayton-Thomas told bestclassicbands.com in 2023. "I was just a blues player: give me three chords and I've got a song."

At its peak, Blood, Sweat & Tears' appeal was so broad it helped lead to the band's downfall.

Hip enough to perform at the 1969 Woodstock festival, where they were among the highest paid acts, they also were known enough to the establishment to tour Eastern Europe the following year on behalf of the State Department. When Clayton-Thomas and other band members denounced the Communist regimes on the other side of the Cold War, Rolling Stone's David Felton wrote that "the State Department got its money worth." Yuppies would turn up at a 1970 Blood, Sweat & Tears show at Madison Square Garden, carrying obscene banners outside and dumping manure by the front gate.

The band had practical reasons for going along with the government: Clayton-Thomas, who had allegedly wielded a gun at his girlfriend, had been denied a green card and faced deportation. But after topping the charts in 1970 with the album "Blood, Sweat & Tears 3," their appeal soon faded. A burned out Clayton-Thomas left the group in 1972, and neither he nor the remaining musicians ever regained their old stature. Blood, Sweat & Tears would continue recording over the next few years, and even briefly reunited with Clayton-Thomas, who went on to release more than a dozen solo albums and tour on his own for decades.

Clayton-Thomas was inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame in 1996. "Spinning Wheel," covered by everyone from James Brown to TV star Barbara Eden, was voted into the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame a decade later.

Clayton-Thomas is survived by his daughters, Ashleigh Clayton-Thomas and Christine Graham.

Up from the streets

Born David Henry Thomsett in Surrey, England, and raised near Toronto and Ottawa, he was the son of a Canadian World War II veteran and of a pianist-entertainer who helped inspire her son's interest in music. Thomsett was lucky to have the chance. He fought violently with his father, was living in the streets

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by his mid-teens and by age 20 was serving time in a reformatory for vagrancy, assault and other crimes.

An old guitar, left behind by a fellow inmate, changed his life. He taught himself to play and began spending extensive time in the early 1960s around Toronto's Yonge Street music "strip," where peers included the American rockabilly star Ronnie Hawkins, a mentor to Robbie Robertson and other future members of the Band and a guide for Thomsett early in his career.

Anxious to reinvent himself, he changed his last name to Clayton-Thomas while leading his own groups. In the mid-60s, he released such albums as "Sings Like It Is" and had a hit single with the anti-war rocker "Brainwashed." He would also befriend a rising star, Joni Mitchell, whose childlike "Circle Game" helped inspire "Spinning Wheel," and the venerable John Lee Hooker, who would indirectly contribute to Clayton-Thomas' breakthrough in the U.S.

America beckons

Hooker had encouraged Clayton-Thomas to move to New York, where the American bluesman had an engagement at the Cafe Au Go Go in Greenwich Village. When Hooker unexpectedly departed for a tour of Europe, club owner Howard Solomon needed a replacement and recruited Clayton-Thomas.

"So I played him a couple songs on the guitar," Clayton-Thomas told bestclassicbands.com. "He said, 'Do you have a band?' I said, 'Sure,' and went out into Greenwich Village looking for anybody carrying a guitar case or even looking like a musician, and we put together a little band and we opened there that night. We ended up staying there for several months."

Around the same time, session man-producer Al Kooper was looking to form a jazz-rock group and was joined by such musicians as guitarist Steve Katz, drummer Bobby Colomby and horn players Randy Brecker and Jerry Weiss. They called themselves Blood, Sweat & Tears, releasing the debut album "Child Is Father to the Man" early in 1968. Although praised by Rolling Stone publisher Jann Wenner as "a fine, exemplary group," members were torn between those allied with Kooper and those who thought his vocals too weak to attract a substantial audience.

By the end of the year, Kooper and others had departed, and the band was seeking a new singer. After Judy Collins saw Clayton-Thomas perform, she recommended him to Colomby.

"I got home and just a couple of days later, Bobby Colomby called me up and said, 'Hey, Kooper's gone. We got four guys left out of the nine. And we still got a record contract with Columbia. Do you want to come down and try out for the band?'" Clayton-Thomas told bestclassicbands.com. "I said, 'You're damn right.' I knew (bassist) Jim Fielder real well and I knew they were superb musicians. So I was on the next plane. We had a rehearsal that afternoon, an audition, and it was instant magic. We just knew right off the bat."

Federal judge halts Trump's election executive order seeking to create a federal voter list

By MICHAEL CASEY, BILL BARROW and JOHN HANNA Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A federal judge on Thursday halted President Donald Trump's executive order that sought to create a federal voter list and limit who can receive a mail ballot.

U.S. District Court Judge Indira Talwani, who was nominated by Democratic President Barack Obama, sided with a coalition of nearly two dozen states that challenged the Republican president's order in granting a summary judgment. Her ruling applies to this year's midterm election cycle.

Plaintiffs argued in two lawsuits, both filed in federal court in Boston, that Trump's order should be found unconstitutional because the states and Congress, not the president, have the power to set election rules. The judge agreed, saying in her ruling that the provisions of Trump's order seeking to create a federal list of eligible voters and using the U.S. Postal Service to determine who can receive a mail ballot are "legally void" because they "unconstitutionally violate the separation of powers."

It was the second ruling in as many days against executive orders Trump has signed seeking oversight of the nation's elections. A separate ruling Wednesday prohibited an executive order he had signed last year that would have required people to show documents proving their citizenship when registering to vote.

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Order targeted mail voting, administration likely to appeal

Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes, whose state was among the plaintiffs, celebrated the court's decision. "Millions of independents, Republicans and Democrats across Arizona have voted by mail for decades," she said in a statement, noting that nearly 80% of ballots in the state are cast by that method.

Mayes, a Democrat, singled out military families, voters in the state's rural expanses and Native Americans who cast ballots from tribal lands.

"Donald Trump's executive order targeted all of these voters," she said. "But today, the courts affirmed what the Constitution makes clear: States run their elections, not the President."

The White House stood by Trump's executive order and indicated the administration would appeal the ruling. The order, said spokeswoman Abigail Jackson, "lawfully protects our elections, and we are confident that we will ultimately prevail in its implementation."

The administration, in its motions to dismiss the lawsuits challenging the order, argued that the motions were premature and that plaintiffs lacked the legal basis to bring their claim based on the Administrative Procedure Act, which governs how federal agencies develop and issue regulations.

But in an interim order before Thursday's ruling, Talwani said the motions pertaining to this year's election cycle were relevant: "In light of the EO's specific deadlines over the next three months, and the reality that elections will be occurring throughout this period with the November 3, 2026 midterm occurring in just five months, postponing judicial review is impracticable and may inflict significant hardship on Plaintiffs," she wrote. That order denied the Trump administration's motion to dismiss the challenges.

Executive order sought to give Postal Service a central role in elections

Trump's executive order, the second one aimed at elections during his second term, comes as he continues to raise the specter of widespread voting by noncitizens as a reason to change election rules. But states already have detailed processes aimed at keeping their voter rolls accurate, and voting by noncitizens has been shown to be rare. It also is a felony that can be punishable by deportation.

Trump issued his second order in March after a bill he supported to overhaul voting stalled in Congress. The order would have had the federal government — through the director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the commissioner of the Social Security Administration — create a "state citizenship list" of eligible voters. It then directed the U.S. Postal Service to deliver mail ballots only to those on the list.

Election officials argued that it was ripe for abuse and could cause chaos.

The Postal Service has published a proposed rule required by Trump's executive order in the Federal Register. Among other things, the rule would not apply to primary elections or overseas ballots.

Postal Service workers have pushed back against the order, saying they are not equipped to determine who is eligible to vote in each state. After Trump issued his order last spring, the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association said forcing its members into such a role "risks politicizing one of the nation's most trusted public institutions."

Maine Secretary of State Shenna Bellows, a Democrat whose state was among the plaintiffs, said the executive order illustrated how Trump was attempting to "abuse power in previously unthinkable ways" to interfere in elections.

She said it "strains credulity" to think the U.S. Postal Service could set up a workable system for pre-screening individual voters to determine whether they would be allowed to vote by mail, adding that it would be "a shocking violation of American constitutional rights."

The Postal Service did not immediately respond Thursday to requests for comment.

Trump's second election executive order faces multiple legal challenges

The lawsuit seeking summary judgment was filed by Democratic attorneys general representing 22 states and the District of Columbia. Also signing on were attorneys representing Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania, which has a Republican attorney general.

The states also told the court that the move imposes a costly burden on election officials to comply and would spread fear about the possibility of prosecution. Stephen Pezzi, a lawyer for the Trump administration, had argued that no one would be prosecuted for violating the order.

The other lawsuit filed in Talwani's court was by the League of Women Voters and other voting rights

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groups, which have sought a preliminary injunction against the executive order.

In yet another lawsuit filed against the executive order, a federal judge in Washington, D.C., in May agreed with the Trump administration that it was too early to block the order because it had yet to be implemented. That lawsuit was brought by Democratic and civil rights groups, which have appealed.

Since his 2020 presidential election loss to Democrat Joe Biden, Trump has groundlessly claimed mail voting is rife with fraud and has launched a federal investigation into that year's vote, even though repeated audits and investigations, including ones run by Republicans, found it was free of widespread fraud. Trump also has said he wants to "take over" election administration in Democratic areas.

Get a load of this: Humans and great apes share similar giggles

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Humans and great apes have been giggling in similar ways since branching off the evolutionary tree, a new study suggests.

How do we know this? Researchers tickled 13 captive apes — including gorillas, orangutans, chimpanzees and bonobos — and recorded the results. The new research reexamined those decades-old recordings and compared them with the newly captured giggles of four young children while they were being tickled and playing at home.

It turns out that the chuckles of humans and great apes follow similar rhythms, with regular timing between their laughs, a unifying thread that likely reflects their ties to a common ancestor, researchers said.

"In a way, we are very similar to other great apes because we've been laughing in a similar way for 15 million years," said study author Chiara De Gregorio, a primatologist at the University of Warwick in England.

Laughter communicates a playful, happy feeling without using words. Many animals can laugh too, but the giggles don't follow human patterns as closely. When researchers tickle rats, for example, they respond with ultrasonic squeaks.

Scientists trying to uncover how laughter evolved have picked apart animals' facial expressions, but less work has been done on how laughs sound. And compared with apes, human laughter has become faster and more complex. For one, our laughs sound different based on context — from a polite chuckle among colleagues to a full-bodied guffaw with close friends.

"We are like the masters of laughter, I would say," said De Gregorio, whose findings were published Thursday in the journal *Communications Biology*.

These giggles evolved to best suit animals' different social lives, said Brittany Florkiewicz, who studies animal communication at Lyon College and had no role in the new research. She said the study's findings make sense, and point to a need for more investigation.

Florkiewicz said she'd like to hear comparable recordings of other animals with playful facial expressions, like dogs, horses and cats. That could tell us more about how laughter evolved, so we can "understand what makes us uniquely human, but also what is similar between humans and other animals."

Studying the origins of laughter may seem corny, but it's one aspect of human communication that can help us understand others — including how we learned to speak. Because sounds don't fossilize, scientists are using the evidence we do have to trace things back, one chuckle at a time.

Senate Republicans reject war powers resolution after Trump berates them at Capitol meeting

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, STEVEN SLOAN, JOEY CAPPELLETTI and LISA MASCARO Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Republicans who were berated by President Donald Trump over opposition to his war in Iran held a late-night vote Wednesday to try to appease him, rejecting a war powers resolution a day after a similar measure passed.

Trump harangued GOP senators face to face earlier in the day for allowing a vote to block his war in Iran on Tuesday, further escalating a feud that has diverted GOP efforts to focus on election-year affordability

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issues and brought much of the chamber's business to a halt. He exchanged particularly harsh words with Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy, one of four Republicans who had voted with Democrats on the measure.

Hours later, though, Cassidy was invited to receive a personal briefing on the war at the White House from Vice President JD Vance and envoy Steve Witkoff. Cassidy then returned to the Capitol to vote against a separate but nearly identical war powers resolution.

"I want to thank Vice President Vance and Special Envoy Witkoff for the thorough briefing this afternoon on Iran. I appreciate the quick invitation to the White House to address many of my concerns," said Cassidy, who lost reelection last month after Trump endorsed his opponent, in a post on X.

Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul, a Republican who has repeatedly voted with Democrats to halt the war, voted present this time "to give the President more space and leverage to negotiate a lasting peace," he said on X. The measure failed 47-50-1 just before midnight on Wednesday, and the Senate then left town for a two-week recess.

It's unclear whether the move will be enough to appease Trump, who had called the Republicans "losers" for voting against his war and had called Cassidy a "lunatic" at the lunch after their tense exchange. But the vote was a clear signal to the president from Republican senators who still want to placate him, despite increasing tensions in recent weeks and his decision Wednesday morning to reverse himself and delay signing a housing bill that received overwhelming bipartisan support.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., and a small group of his Senate GOP colleagues called Trump after the vote. Thune told reporters that the president was "pleased with the outcome."

Trump later thanked Thune in a social media post and noted that Cassidy and Paul had switched their votes. "This vote puts Iran on notice!" he wrote.

The war powers measure blocked by the Senate on Wednesday was on a separate track from the nearly identical resolution adopted on Tuesday, which had also been passed by the House. Both votes were largely symbolic, and the measures do not carry the full force of law.

Cassidy had sharp words for Trump

Invited by Florida Sen. Rick Scott to speak at a GOP luncheon in the Capitol, Trump had signaled ahead of time that he would use the closed-door meeting to push senators to pass his proof-of-citizenship voting bill. But the conversation was more focused on Tuesday's vote on war powers.

Most Republicans stayed quiet. But Cassidy stood up and defended his vote.

"I stood and said, 'You have not told the American people what's going on,'" Cassidy told reporters after the meeting. "This was supposed to last four weeks, it's lasted four months. Our original objectives have not been achieved."

The two men "went back and forth," Cassidy said, and he "matched his tone and volume." Cassidy said that he eventually de-escalated, but he did not want to be bullied.

"I am voting for war powers until I get a briefing," he said afterward.

Trump repeatedly told Cassidy to sit down, according to a person familiar with the private meeting who was not authorized to discuss it. At one point, the president called the senator a "lunatic."

Publicly, Trump said afterward that they had "a really great meeting." But he hinted at the discord.

"We like everyone in the room," Trump told reporters on his way out. "I don't like a few people, but that's OK."

The luncheon capped weeks of friction between Trump and Senate Republicans and added a new layer of frustration as Tuesday's vote was the first time the Senate had adopted a war powers resolution on the Iran war. Trump made clear he was in no mood to compromise before it even started, calling off a scheduled signing ceremony on a housing bill that passed both chambers overwhelmingly this week and that GOP lawmakers were touting as an election-year achievement.

Trump reverses on housing bill

Republican senators were eager for a conciliatory meeting with the president after escalating tensions in recent weeks. But Trump upended their plans when he declared on social media just beforehand that he wouldn't sign the legislation until they send him the SAVE America Act, his bill to require proof of citi-

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zanship for all voters.

North Carolina Sen. Thom Tillis said he doesn't know why Trump is holding the housing bill "hostage" for the voting bill that "will never pass in this Congress."

"It makes no sense to me," Tillis said as he walked into the luncheon.

Thune said the housing legislation, which aims to lower costs, is "an affordability issue," and that "eventually I hope he finds a way to sign it."

It's unclear if Trump might veto the legislation or if the late Wednesday night vote will change his outlook. But by rejecting a public bill signing, Republicans worry that Trump is indicating a level of indifference to voters' affordability concerns heading into November's midterm elections.

Trump and Senate Republicans have been at odds

Trump's move on the housing bill is his latest reversal after weeks of being at odds with Senate Republicans.

Trump has blocked the Senate from confirming one of his own nominees, asked them to fund parts of his White House ballroom project despite opposition and forced them to defend the Iran war even as they question the strategy and endgame.

Trump has also helped whittle down his own support in the Senate after endorsing primary challengers to two GOP incumbents who were previously reliable votes for his agenda — Cassidy and Texas Sen. John Cornyn. Both men have become more critical of Trump since losing reelection.

"If we're going to win the midterm elections, we need to get on the same page," Cornyn said ahead of the meeting. "We're not on the same page now, and that I think is dangerous."

Trump pushes Thune on SAVE America Act

Trump has pressed Republicans for months to kill the Senate filibuster and focus on the proof-of-citizenship voting bill, even though Thune has repeatedly told him that neither has the votes.

While Thune remains popular in his conference and cordial with the president, he has spent much of his time lately telling Trump what he doesn't want to hear. Thune said Tuesday that while Trump and some in their conference want to see the voting bill pass, "it's just not realistic."

Thune devoted weeks of floor time to the voting bill earlier this year and has said he supports it. But he has repeatedly said there aren't enough votes to scrap the filibuster that triggers a 60-vote threshold to pass most bills in the 53-47 Senate. And Democrats are uniformly opposed to the bill.

"I think people at some point have to come to grips with that," Thune said.

Shiite Muslims mark holy day of Ashoura after months of war in Iran and Lebanon

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Shiite Muslims around the world on Thursday marked Ashoura, a holy day symbolizing sacrifice and martyrdom that holds special significance for many this year after months of war in Iran and Lebanon.

Ashoura commemorates the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, at the Battle of Karbala in A.D. 680. Imam Hussein was killed with his family and companions after refusing to pledge allegiance to the Umayyad caliphate.

The event cemented the schism between Sunni and Shiite Islam and remains a powerful symbol of resistance against oppression and injustice.

The holiest day in the Shiite calendar

This year, Ashoura comes after months of war in Iran and Lebanon, homes to two of the world's largest Shiite populations. Iran and the U.S. this week launched talks aimed at finalizing a fragile ceasefire agreement.

On the first day of the war, on Feb. 28, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was killed in an Israeli airstrike. The 86-year-old Khamenei was not just Iran's top political leader. He also had a final say

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on all religious matters and was revered by millions of Shiites worldwide. Ashoura comes just days before his funeral procession.

The war also spilled over into Lebanon, where Iran's key ally, the Hezbollah militant group, has been battling Israeli troops for months.

Hezbollah entered the fighting days into the war by firing rockets into northern Israel in solidarity with Tehran. That sparked widespread Israeli aerial bombardment and a ground invasion that decimated large swaths of predominantly Shiite areas in southern Lebanon and Beirut's southern suburbs.

Ashoura comes as many of the more than one million displaced Lebanese people are trying to return to their villages in southern Lebanon. Cities and towns had held sermons and events in the buildup to the holy day surrounded by buildings reduced to rubble and ruins.

Ashoura is the holiest day in the Shiite calendar, marked by traditional mourning rituals that include chest-beating, elegies and lamentations. It is held on the 10th day of the month of Muharram.

Visitors arrive at Imam Hussein's shrine

In Karbala, the southern Iraqi city holy to Shiite Muslims, security was tightened as visitors arrived. Religious banners flew from the walls of Imam Hussein's golden-domed shrine and actors played out scenes from the 7th century.

"We see all kinds of people here and they don't lack food, drinks or services, thanks to God, despite the massive gathering," Redha Nouri, who traveled from Ahwaz in Iran, said. "There will be more crowds coming tomorrow, but the Iraqi people are here and will serve them."

Mourners observe the holy day in Iran

In war-stricken Iran, black-clad mourners filled streets, mosques and neighborhood religious halls across Tehran for a public holiday that brought much of the capital to a halt.

Shops were shuttered in many areas as processions of men beating their chests marched past and loudspeakers played elegies. Volunteers handed out tea and dates.

The previous evening mourners had gathered at the shrine of Imam Ruhollah Khomeini south of Tehran in a ceremony attended by President Masoud Pezeshkian and other officials, Iranian state media reported. Khomeini led the 1979 revolution that ushered in Iran's Islamic republic.

In a social media post laden with an apparent message of resistance to the U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran, Pezeshkian noted how Hussein taught people to stand against oppression, the temptation of power and the pursuit of self-interest.

"We should neither oppress, nor accept oppression, nor remain silent before it," he wrote.

The commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard's Quds Force, Gen. Esmail Ghaani, invoked the "spirit of Ashoura" in warning Israel to withdraw its forces from Lebanon or face defeat.

The annual ceremonies came as Iran's leadership continues to draw on Ashoura's language of sacrifice and resistance at a time of deep political and economic pressure.

The faithful in Lebanon attend sermons and visit graves

Families in the Lebanese coastal city of Tyre who lost relatives fighting with Hezbollah or working as paramedics wept during a sermon on the third day of Muharram. A cleric, who sat between portraits of current Iranian Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei and Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Kassem, compared the struggles the modern-day leaders faced in the war to that of Hussein and his companions in Karbala.

Banners in red and black bearing Hussein's name were hung on every street.

In Beirut's southern suburbs, many flocked to the grave of former Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, who was killed in an Israeli strike in September 2024.

Security is raised in Pakistan to protect the Shiite minority

Elsewhere, Pakistan deployed thousands of police and paramilitary personnel across the country following intelligence reports warning of possible militant attacks on Shiite Muslims, a minority in the predominantly Sunni country.

Although most Sunnis and Shiites live peacefully alongside one another, militant groups have repeatedly targeted Shiite communities, mosques, and religious gatherings in sectarian attacks that have claimed

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hundreds of lives.

As members of Pakistan's Shiite minority prepare to take part in mourning processions, mobile phone service in some areas is expected to be suspended temporarily to help prevent attacks.

"Imam Hussein is a symbol of the highest struggle and sacrifice," said Saadia Shah, 33, as she entered a congregation hall in the eastern city of Lahore with her two children. "His name gives us the courage to stand up to tyranny, to say what is right and oppose what is wrong."

Today in History: June 26, US Supreme Court legalizes same-sex marriage

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, June 26, the 177th day of 2026. There are 188 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On June 26, 2015, in its 5-4 *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage across the country, ruling that state-level bans on same-sex marriage violated the due process and equal protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Also on this date:

In 1917, U.S. troops entered World War I as the first soldiers of the American Expeditionary Force landed in Saint-Nazaire, France.

In 1945, the charter of the United Nations was signed by 50 countries in San Francisco.

In 1948, the Berlin Airlift began in earnest after the Soviet Union cut off land and water routes to the isolated western sector of Berlin.

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy visited West Berlin, where he delivered his famous speech expressing solidarity with the city's residents, declaring: "Ich bin ein Berliner" ("I am a Berliner").

In 1993, President Bill Clinton announced the U.S. had launched missiles against Iraqi targets because of "compelling evidence" Iraq had plotted to assassinate former President George H.W. Bush.

In 1996, in the case of *United States v. Virginia*, the U.S. Supreme Court found that the Virginia Military Institute's male-only admission policy violated the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause. (VMI enrolled its first female cadets the following year.)

In 1997, the first Harry Potter novel, "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" by J.K. Rowling, was published in the United Kingdom. It was later released in the United States under the title "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone."

In 2008, in *District of Columbia v. Heller*, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a handgun ban in the District of Columbia as it affirmed, 5-4, that an individual's right to gun ownership is protected by the Second Amendment.

In 2013, in the case of *United States v. Windsor*, the U.S. Supreme Court gave the nation's legally married same-sex couples equal federal footing with all other married Americans, and cleared the way for same-sex marriages to resume in California in a separate decision.

In 2024, former Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez was sentenced in federal court in New York to 45 years in prison and fined \$8 million for conspiring to distribute more than 400 tons of cocaine and for firearms offenses. (Hernandez was freed in 2025 after a pardon by President Donald Trump, who said Hondurans believed Hernandez had been "set up.")

Today's Birthdays: Jazz musician-composer Dave Grusin is 92. Brazilian singer-songwriter and politician Gilberto Gil is 84. Basketball Hall of Fame coach Tara VanDerveer is 73. Musician Mick Jones (The Clash, Big Audio Dynamite) is 71. Cyclist Greg LeMond is 65. Football Hall of Famer Shannon Sharpe is 58. Filmmaker Paul Thomas Anderson is 56. Actor Sean Hayes is 56. Actor Chris O'Donnell is 56. Actor Nick Offerman is 56. Country musician Gretchen Wilson is 53. Baseball Hall of Famer Derek Jeter is 52. Actor Jason Schwartzman is 46. Actor Aubrey Plaza is 42. Actor-author Jennette McCurdy is 34. Singer-actor Ariana Grande is 33. Actor Jacob Elordi is 29.