

Groton Daily Independent

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Weekly Paper Printed Tonight

The weekly edition of The Groton Independent will be printed tonight and put in Tuesday's mail. Jeslyn and I will be leaving for Provo, Utah on Tuesday to see my granddaughter!

Monday, June 29

Senior Menu: Spanish rice with hamburger, broccoli, Mandarin oranges with vanilla pudding, whole wheat bread.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
BBB Open Gym, 6-8 p.m., Arena
Jr. Legion hosts WIN, 5:30 p.m.
U12 Baseball at Clark, DH, 5:30 p.m.
U10 Baseball hosts Webster, DH, 5:30 p.m. (W&R)
U8 Baseball at Webster, DH, 5:30 p.m. (Red & Blue)
U18 Softball at Hub City, 6 p.m.
U12 Softball at Hub City, DH, 6 p.m. (B&W)
U10 Softball at Hub City, DH, 6 p.m. (B&W)

Groton Daily Independent
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Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



Tuesday, June 30

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

U14 Legion at Milbank, 5:30 p.m.
Sr. Legion hosts Webster, 5:30 p.m.
U12 Baseball hosts Sisseton, DH, 6 p.m., Falk Field
U14 Softball hosts Clark, 5:30 p.m.
T-Ball Scrimmage, 5 p.m., Falk Field

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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.

Knockout Round Begins

The knockout round of the World Cup kicked off yesterday, with cohost Canada topping South Africa, 1-0. The win-or-go-home phase of the tournament follows more than two weeks of the round-robin-style group stage, with 32 of the 48 teams advancing. The US, coming off its best group stage showing in team history, plays Bosnia-Herzegovina Wednesday (Fox, 8 pm ET).

Teams are not reseeded in the bracket—placement is determined by group stage performance—leading to several heavyweight matchups in the first round. Ranked Nos. 6 and 7 by FIFA heading into the tournament, Morocco and the Netherlands meet tonight (Fox, 9 pm ET), while cohost Mexico face Ecuador tomorrow (Fox, 9 pm ET). Cinderella Cape Verde, playing in its first World Cup, faces superstar Lionel Messi and defending champion Argentina Friday (Fox, 6 pm ET).

Beijing Plane Crash

A small two-seater aircraft crashed into Beijing's tallest building Friday, killing the pilot and wounding 13 others, per Chinese authorities. Details surrounding the crash—including the identity of the pilot and whether the crash was deliberate—were not publicly available as of this writing.

The crash occurred at 5:55 pm local time. In its immediate aftermath, posts about the incident were reportedly censored on China's WeChat. Flightradar data suggests the single-engine plane took off from Beijing's Pinggu District at 5:31 pm and encircled the area before flying west into the city's center. China's local government confirmed the crash Saturday afternoon but shared few details on the nature of the incident. It comes weeks after Beijing banned unauthorized purchasing, renting, or flying of drones in the city, citing security concerns.

CITIC Tower is a 109-story skyscraper completed in 2018 and shaped like a traditional Chinese wine vase.

A Little Birdie Told Me ...

A researcher at the University of California, Berkeley, has won the 2026 Collier-Dolittle Prize for progress toward interspecies communication. Julie Elie was awarded \$100K for her research decoding the calls of zebra finches.

Elie identified the 11 core calls of zebra finches, including introductory calls and distress signals. To test whether birds associated call types with distinct meanings, she played audio tracks, with one call type associated with a reward. The finches correctly pressed a button to "skip" unrelated call types. In some cases, the birds made a mistake by linking calls with similar meanings—for example, calls indicating different distances—even if the calls were tonally unrelated. The mistakes suggested the birds were listening for a call's meaning above other considerations.

The prize is awarded annually, with a \$10M grand prize for when someone cracks two-way human-animal communication. Jeremy Collier, the billionaire financing the prize, thinks we will cross that threshold by 2030, aided by advances in AI.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

2026 NHL Draft sees San Jose Sharks scoop up top talent, including No. 2 Ivar Stenberg and No. 9 Keaton Verhoeff; Toronto Maple Leafs nab No. 1 Gavin McKenna.

"Supergirl" opens to a disappointing \$38M domestic opening; with a \$170M production budget, the movie will likely need to earn \$375M to break even since cinema owners keep roughly half of revenue.

Vanilla Ice performance at Freedom 250 concert is canceled due to the threat of "inclement weather".

Science & Technology

Anthropic gets go-ahead to release Mythos 5 to some US companies, weeks after federal officials restricted the AI model over national security concerns.

Humans and great apes have similar rhythmic patterns when giggling, a shared behavior potentially dating back at least 15 million years.

Marine expedition off Brazil's Atlantic coast discovers more than 30 new species in two weeks; researchers focused on the "mid-water," roughly 600 feet to 3,000 feet below the surface.

Business & Markets

Markets close down slightly Friday (S&P 500 -0.1%, Dow -0.1%, Nasdaq -0.2%), driven by a slide in chipmaker stocks; tech-heavy Nasdaq down 4.6% on the week.

Consumers spend an estimated \$26.4B during Amazon's Prime Day, from June 23 to 26, up 9.3% year over year; increase attributed to inflation, larger ticket items.

Amazon's most profitable segment is actually its cloud computing service.

Prediction site Polymarket tops \$1B in annualized revenue less than two months after launching US exchange.

... and as it reportedly comes under a federal probe for use of deceptive social media videos.

Politics & World Affairs

US Supreme Court is expected to release opinions today, possibly including a ruling on President Donald Trump's birthright citizenship executive order.

Iran strikes US military bases in Kuwait and Bahrain and threatens to halt peace talks with the US; comes after US struck Iranian targets last week in response to Iran's alleged drone attack on a Singaporean-flagged ship.

Death toll in Venezuela's earthquakes last week rises to more than 1,400 people, with tens of thousands unaccounted for as of this writing.

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Foggy Weather This Morning

The weather outside is frightful. In a way. Humidity this morning is at 95 percent and the temperature is 74 degrees making it feel like 77 degrees.

Land for Sale

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

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

So far we've covered the WR, TE, and RB groups. I didn't expect the offense to dominate the list so far, but it makes sense... There hasn't been much turnover at these spots, and for the most part, the starters are basically set. We know what we're going to get with these groups, leading to high confidence levels.

The offensive theme continues this week with number 7 on the list: offensive line.

Confidence level: 86%

Current projected starters: Christian Darrisaw, Donovan Jackson, Blake Brandel, Will Fries, Brian O'Neill

Competing for a roster or practice squad spot: Henry Byrd, Gavin Gerhardt, Joe Huber, Michael Jurgens, Vershon Lee, Tristan Leigh, Delby Lemieux, Tomas Rimatek, Walter Rouse, Caleb Tiernan, and Ryan Van Demark.

Why I'm confident: The Vikings will have (basically) the same starting five from last season, and no position in football relies on continuity more than the offensive line. That alone instills a certain level of confidence. The only change is at center, with Blake Brandel moving to the starting center role after Ryan Kelly retired this offseason. However, this will be year six for Brandel, who started nine games last season, so there is plenty of familiarity.

Aside from continuity, the Vikings' offensive line is made up of some fantastic players. Darrisaw is an elite left tackle. Brian O'Neill is a Pro Bowl caliber right tackle. Donovan Jackson was a first round pick and is entering year two. Will Fries was a high-priced free agent signing a year ago. Brandel was asked to switch to center in the middle of last season, so theoretically he should perform better with more experience at the position.

Cause for concern: Injuries. Darrisaw is entering year six and has yet to play a full season, missing 17 games in the last two seasons alone. Both Jackson and O'Neill missed three games last season. Ironically, despite a gruesome leg injury in 2024, Fries was the only Vikings' offensive lineman to start all 17 games last season.

The center position is also a question mark. I think Brandel is a great depth piece, but I'm not sold on him as a starter in the NFL. Even going back to college, where he played tackle, he lacked the necessary strength to handle bull rushers. Now he'll be asked to go against defensive nose tackles every single play...

Depth is also a cause for concern. One of the few free agent signings this past offseason was Ryan Van Demark, who will be the team's swing tackle. Caleb Tiernan was a third-round pick who will likely be the backup guard. After that the water gets murky, which is worrisome considering the Vikings' injury woes.

Potential upgrades: Unfortunately, there aren't any centers available who would be an upgrade over Brandel. There are, however, some solid veterans available at tackle (Taylor Decker, Jack Conklin, and former Viking Cam Robinson), and guard (Mekhi Becton, Kevin Zeitler, and James Daniels).

If the offensive line is healthy, they have a chance to be one of the best units in the NFL. That's a big IF though.

Groton Post 39 14U opens Vern Jark Tournament with win, falls in final two games

ABERDEEN – Groton Post 39 opened play at the Vern Jark Tournament with a come-from-behind victory over Bismarck before dropping contests to Brookings and Aberdeen 13U over the weekend.

Groton finished the tournament with a 1-2 record and returns to action Wednesday at Milbank.

Groton opened the tournament Saturday with a 10-7 victory over Bismarck after overcoming an early three-run deficit.

Bismarck struck first with three runs in the opening inning on a two-run single by Blake R. and an RBI walk by Ben N., but Groton answered immediately. Post 39 erupted for five runs in the bottom of the first on four hits to grab a 5-3 lead, with an error providing the biggest blow of the inning.

Bismarck pulled even in the second on an error and an RBI single by Aiden E., but Groton regained control in the bottom half. Gavin Hanten delivered a two-run double before Bentley Ehresmann added an RBI ground out to extend the advantage to 8-5. Groton went on to secure the 10-7 victory.

Tucker Leicht earned the win, allowing seven runs, four earned, on six hits over four innings while striking out three and walking six. Easton Larson recorded the save.

Hanten drove in two runs, while Leicht and Asher Zimmerman each collected two hits. Groton showed patience at the plate with nine walks. Zimmerman and Knox Mulder each drew two free passes, while Leicht, Larson and Mulder each stole multiple bases as Groton finished with eight stolen bases. Post 39 also turned a double play defensively.

Bismarck was led by Blake R.'s three RBIs, while Aiden E. and Carter R. each had two hits. Cole W. drew two walks as Bismarck stole seven bases.

Groton ran into a hot-hitting Brookings squad in its second game Saturday, falling 18-8 despite a strong offensive performance from Zimmerman.

Zimmerman went 3-for-3 with three singles, while Mason Locke also collected three hits as Groton finished with 10 hits.

Brookings broke open a close game with an eight-run third inning, highlighted by Conner H.'s three-run triple, then added seven more runs in the fifth, including Branch O.'s inside-the-park three-run home run.

Zimmerman started on the mound for Groton, allowing 13 runs, 11 earned, on 13 hits over four innings. Conner H. earned the win for Brookings despite Groton scoring eight runs on 10 hits.

Leicht stole two bases for Groton, which also turned a double play.

Brookings pounded out 16 hits. Branch O. finished 3-for-3 with five RBIs, while Ty K. had four hits. Conner H., Max M., Everett J. and Griffin L. each added multiple-hit performances as Brookings drew seven walks and stole multiple bases.

On Sunday, Groton closed tournament play with a 10-0 loss to Aberdeen 13U.

Aberdeen built a 4-0 lead in the first inning before adding two more runs in the second and never looked back.

Trayce Schelle started for Groton, striking out five over 3 1/3 innings while allowing 10 runs, nine earned, on nine hits. Axton L. tossed four scoreless innings for Aberdeen, allowing four hits while striking out two.

Mason Locke paced Groton offensively with two hits in two at-bats. Post 39 played a clean defensive game without committing an error and turned one double play, with Locke handling a team-high five defensive chances.

Aberdeen 13U received two hits each from Carter P., Kannon B. and Tarek H. Kannon B. drove in three runs, while Aberdeen turned two double plays and also played error-free defense.

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Groton Locke Electric Stymied By Redfield Dairy Queen

By GameChanger Media

Groton Locke Electric had trouble keeping up with Redfield Dairy Queen in a 10-0 loss on Sunday at Redfield.

Redfield Dairy Queen got on the board in the bottom of the first inning after Nolan Gall singled to center field, Bennett Osborn singled to left field, and Cooper Hainy hit a sacrifice fly, each scoring one run.

A double by Hainy, a single by Owen Osborn, and a double by Jett Kleinsasser Legion helped Redfield Dairy Queen extend their early lead in the third.

Gall earned the win for Redfield Dairy Queen. The starting pitcher allowed three hits and zero runs over six innings, striking out eight and walking two. Wyatt Locke took the loss for Groton Locke Electric. The starting pitcher went six innings, allowing nine runs (eight earned) on 12 hits, striking out four and walking one.

Ryan Groeblichhoff, Carlos Camacho, and Ty Sieber each collected one hit for Groton Locke Electric.

Redfield Dairy Queen accumulated 12 hits in the game. Hainy drove the middle of the lineup, leading Redfield Dairy Queen with four runs batted in. The infielder went 2-for-3 on the day. Osborn, Hainy, Camden Osborn, and Brent Osborn each collected two hits for Redfield Dairy Queen. Osborn, Osborn, and Osborn each stole multiple bases for Redfield Dairy Queen. Redfield Dairy Queen ran wild on the base paths, piling up six stolen bases for the game. Redfield Dairy Queen were sure-handed and didn't commit a single error. Kleinsasser Legion made the most plays with nine.

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Groton Locke Electric 0 - 10 Redfield Dairy Queen

📍 Away 📅 Sunday June 28, 2026

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
GRTN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5
RDFL	3	0	4	0	0	2	1	10	12	0

BATTING

Groton Locke El...	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
B Fliehs #1 (CF)	3	0	0	0	0	1
R Groebli... #0 (LF)	3	0	1	0	0	1
T Sieber #24 (SS)	3	0	1	0	0	1
B Althoff #27 (RF)	2	0	0	0	1	0
B Hansen #11 (1B)	3	0	0	0	0	0
N Morris #45 (3B)	2	0	0	0	1	1
C Camacho #10 (C)	3	0	1	0	0	0
J Zimmer... #3 (DH)	2	0	0	0	0	2
A Jones #18 (RF)	1	0	0	0	0	1
D Frey #6 (2B)	2	0	0	0	0	2
Totals	24	0	3	0	2	9

TB: C Camacho, T Sieber, R Groeblichhoff, **LOB:** 5

Redfield Dairy Q...	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
C Osborn #2 (CF)	5	2	2	0	0	0
N Gall #17 (P)	4	1	1	1	0	0
B Osborn #29 (3B)	3	3	2	1	0	0
P Osborn #15 (1B)	3	1	1	0	0	1
C Hainy #19 (SS)	3	1	2	4	0	1
O Osborn #5 (2B)	3	1	1	1	1	1
B Osborn #3 (LF)	4	0	2	0	0	0
J Kleinsass... #3 (C)	3	1	1	1	1	0
N Klinkh... #13 (RF)	3	0	0	0	1	1
CR: B Roth #4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	31	10	12	8	3	4

2B: C Hainy, J Kleinsasser Legion, **TB:** B Osborn 2, P Osborn, C Hainy 3, B Osborn 2, N Gall, J Kleinsasser Legion 2, O Osborn, C Osborn 2, **SF:** C Hainy, N Gall, **HBP:** B Osborn, P Osborn, **SB:** B Osborn 2, O Osborn 2, C Osborn 2, **LOB:** 7

PITCHING

Groton Loc...	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
W Locke #25	6.0	12	9	8	1	4	0
N Morris #45	0.2	0	1	1	2	0	0
Totals	6.2	12	10	9	3	4	0

L: W Locke, **P-S:** N Morris 14-6, W Locke 109-69, **HBP:** W Locke 2, **BF:** N Morris 4, W Locke 34, **E:** B Fliehs, D Frey, T Sieber, W Locke, B Althoff

Redfield D...	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
N Gall #17	6.0	3	0	0	2	8	0
B Osbo... #29	1.0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Totals	7.0	3	0	0	2	9	0

W: N Gall, **P-S:** B Osborn 12-9, N Gall 100-64, **BF:** B Osborn 3, N Gall 23

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JULY 12,**

★
10 A.M. TO 3 P.M.

★



★ *Come see the
newly restored jail* ★



Is Megadrought In The American West The New Normal?

From the Editors of E - The Environmental Magazine

EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: Is the megadrought in the American West a new normal or just an anomaly? If the former, how should we be adjusting our lifestyles accordingly?

-- J.G., via email

Research at The University of Texas shows that dry spells can be seen throughout our planet's history, when warm waters directed storms away from the West during periods of high temperatures. However, with climate change worsening, scientists warn that this pattern, that would have ebbed and flowed in the past, will now last longer. Further-

more, conditions are worsening each year, especially as we use more and more water for new industries. Professor Jay Famiglietti, who teaches at Arizona State's School of Sustainability, noted that "in many areas, groundwater pumping is already the only lifeline—and it's a ticking time bomb." The megadrought may well extend as long as humans continue to warm the planet.

A crucial example of this is the Colorado Water Basin, which provides natural resources to seven basin states. Amy Haas, Executive Director of the Colorado River Authority of Utah says: "What I think we're seeing on the Colorado River is more in line with what we've coined 'aridification,'" the process by which a climate becomes increasingly dry. Just this century, the Basins' natural flow has dropped 13 percent, posing big risks to this region, since so many communities rely on the water that this basin provides.

It is important that we take action on not only an individual level, but in how we approach water use, climate mitigation and sustainability. Already, farmers are looking at ways to save water through planting crops that can thrive in drier climates. There have also been agreements made to reduce water use, but further policy changes are needed to actually make a difference.

In daily life, particularly if you live in an area that faces these issues, taking steps such as fixing leaky faucets or creating a water smart yard can help control wastefulness. For instance, did you know that every year, the average household leaks 38,000 liters of water? Fixing these small issues can save you money as well as conserve water. For your lawn, incorporate more plants that are drought resistant, and install drip systems instead of using sprinklers. Another way you could cut back on water would be switching up your routine to take a 5-minute shower—it could save more than 100 liters. Lastly, either reduce the number of times you do laundry, or update your machine so it is more efficient, which could use only 50 liters per cycle instead of over 100. These small changes, as well as spreading awareness among your community, are needed if we are to adjust to the megadrought that may never end.



Global warming has turned a long-term drought into a megadrought with no end in sight. Credit: Pexels.com.

Effective Immediately

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.

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A Critical Time for Public Health Advocacy

There is a common saying in public health: "Everything is public health." That is because public health touches nearly every aspect of our daily lives. It is the clean water we drink, the air we breathe, the safety of the food we eat and the environments where we live, work, learn and play. These conditions do not happen by accident; they are shaped by policies, systems and collective investments. Much like public education, public health reflects a shared commitment to creating the conditions where all people have the opportunity to thrive.

Public health is your local school nurse caring for children, your extension agent helping families and farmers, your WIC dietitian supporting healthy pregnancies and babies and your food inspector ensuring meals are safe to eat. Public health is as dynamic as the communities it serves. As communities change, public health must adapt to meet new challenges, respond to emerging threats and address evolving needs.

Yet we are facing a troubling reality. For the first time in generations, today's children are not on track to live as long as their parents. One reason for this is that public investment in health has not kept pace with the growing challenges facing our communities. We have seen significant disinvestment in public health infrastructure, prevention programs and community-based services. These decisions have consequences. When we underinvest in public health, we increase the risk of chronic disease, infectious disease outbreaks, preventable deaths, higher health care costs and reduced quality of life.

In South Dakota, nonprofit organizations, faith communities, health systems and private businesses often step in to fill gaps and support community well-being. Their contributions are essential. However, preparing for large-scale challenges such as natural disasters, emerging infectious diseases and public health emergencies requires coordinated local, state and federal systems. The COVID-19 pandemic reminded us that diseases do not recognize city, county, state or national borders. Maintaining strong public health infrastructure requires ongoing investment so communities can respond quickly and effectively when threats emerge.

Public health works best when science and community experience inform one another. The most effective solutions are rarely simple, and they are seldom captured in a single headline or sound bite. They emerge when community members, health professionals, policymakers, businesses and local leaders work together to understand problems and develop practical, evidence-based solutions.

The South Dakota Public Health Association (SDPHA) serves as a trusted source of public health information, and our role goes beyond sharing data and research. We want to help elevate the stories, challenges and successes happening in communities across South Dakota.

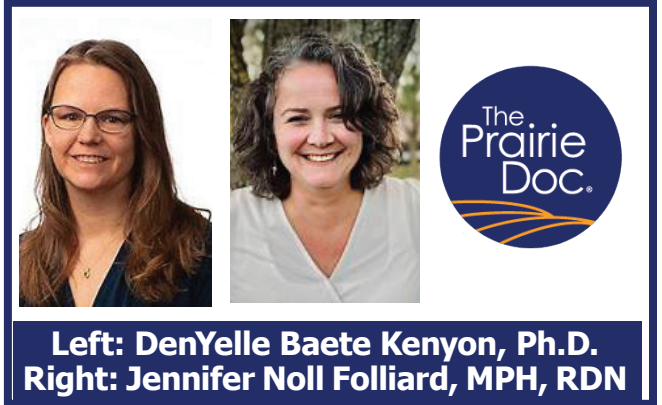
Is your community struggling to access healthy food? Are you concerned about air quality, housing, transportation or other factors affecting health? Have local residents come together to solve a problem in an innovative way? Policy makers and community leaders want to hear those stories.

Public health is strongest when it reflects the experiences of the people it serves. Now is the time to share your stories of challenges and successes in your communities. SDPHA can help amplify community voices, share promising solutions and connect local experiences to state and local decision-makers.

Together, we can build healthier, stronger and more resilient communities. We invite you to share your challenges, successes and ideas so that we can learn from one another and create solutions that work for all South Dakotans.

Jennifer Follard, MPH, RDN, is the founder and principal consultant at Health + Nutrition First and lead of the rapid response team for South Dakota Public Health Association. She is a registered dietitian with expertise in public health systems and policies. Jenn received her Bachelor of Science in human nutrition and food/nutrition in business from Purdue University and her Master of Public Health, focused on public health policy and systems of care, from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. In her previous position as the maternal child health director for the South Dakota Department of Health, Jenn worked with multi-sector partners to develop and advance priorities that would improve the health of South Dakota families. Before moving to South Dakota, she worked in Washington, D.C., for 10 years, conducting state and federal policy research and advocating for these policies to build effective public health systems.

DenYelle Baete Kenyon, Ph.D., holds several positions, including legislative chair of the South Dakota Public Health Association; University of South Dakota associate dean of Community Health & Engagement and Master of Public Health Program director; and professor of pediatrics at the Sanford School of Medicine. She received her B.S. in family social science from the University of Minnesota and went on to receive a Ph.D. in family studies and human development from the University of Arizona. DenYelle worked at Sanford Research for 11 years as a public health researcher, focusing on teen pregnancy/STI prevention, undergraduate research training and helping lead the Collaborative Research Center for American Indian Health. At USD for the past seven years, DenYelle leads community health and engagement efforts for the medical school and the Master of Public Health program, where she is fortunate to work with teams on increasing underrepresented students in health care careers and training future medical and public health practitioners on achieving health equity. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairedoc.org, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Tik Tok. Prairie Doc Programming includes On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show (most Thursdays at 7pm on SDPB, YouTube and streaming on Facebook), 2 podcasts, and a Radio program (on SDPB, Sundays at 6am and 1pm).



Left: DenYelle Baete Kenyon, Ph.D.
Right: Jennifer Noll Follard, MPH, RDN



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

Eliminating property taxes would weaken local control and open the door to income tax discussions

by Brad Johnson

Toby Doeden, a candidate for the Republican nomination for governor, says he wants to eliminate property taxes.

Most people hear that and immediately think about their own bill. They wonder whether they would finally get relief from rising valuations and steadily increasing taxes.

That is understandable.

But the bigger question is not how much you pay. It's who decides.

Because eliminating property taxes would not just change how South Dakota raises revenue. It would change who controls local government.

Today, counties, cities and school districts raise much of their own revenue through property taxes. Local voters elect local officials, and those officials decide how local dollars are spent.

It's imperfect, but it's local. Take away property taxes and that relationship changes fundamentally.

Schools, counties and cities would become dependent on money distributed by Pierre. Legislators — not local boards — would determine whether communities have the resources to maintain basic services.

The irony is hard to miss. Politicians advocating property tax elimination are often the ones who campaign loudly on local control.

Property taxes are unpopular. Local control is not. Eliminate one, and you weaken the other. And that's before we even get to the money.

Property taxes generate roughly \$1.9 billion every year, funding schools, counties, cities, townships, law enforcement, roads, bridges, emergency services and more.

A governor cannot make that revenue disappear. Only the Legislature can eliminate property taxes. And if lawmakers choose to do so, they must replace every dollar. Not once. Every year. Forever.

Replace it how? And just as importantly: Who gets the replacement money?

Would Pennington County get back what it generates today? Would Minnehaha County?

Would tourism-heavy communities subsidize counties with smaller tax bases?

Would growing communities compete against shrinking ones for the same pool of state dollars?

Every answer creates winners and losers. And every community would have a reason to lobby Pierre for a larger share, because decisions would be made by the state rather than locally.

Doeden's answer for revenue replacement is what he calls "external revenue" — tourism, economic growth, trust wealth and other sources that shift the burden away from South Dakotans.

In a June 2025 interview, Doeden claimed South Dakota is leaving \$2 billion to \$3 billion in visitor revenue "on the table" and insisted a state income tax is not a possibility.

If South Dakota truly had access to that much in untapped visitor revenue, then every Legislature for the last 30 years — Republican supermajorities included — has inexplicably refused to collect it.

There's a reason for that.

Tourism is enormously important to South Dakota's economy. But it is not stable. It is affected by weather, fuel and recessions. Pandemics can wipe it out.

No serious county commissioner would build a sheriff's department budget around whether Americans

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decide to take vacations next summer.

Tourism supports economies. It does not anchor local government finance.

South Dakota already relies heavily on sales taxes. Raise them substantially and the burden falls hardest on working families.

Trust revenue presents a different challenge. South Dakota became a global trust center by creating laws designed to attract mobile wealth. And mobile wealth has one defining characteristic: It moves.

Could South Dakota impose targeted fees? Probably. Could those fees replace \$1.9 billion? Almost certainly not. Aggressive taxation also risks damaging an industry the state spent decades cultivating.

Which brings us back to the central question: If property taxes disappear, what replaces them?

Roads will still require maintenance. Deputies will still answer 911 calls. The constitution will still require a public education system.

Government obligations do not disappear because a tax disappears. That's why a state income tax inevitably enters the conversation.

South Dakota is nowhere near adopting one today. The state has built part of its identity around not having an income tax. Business recruiters promote it. Retirees value it. Politicians celebrate it.

But if lawmakers eliminate one of the state's largest and most stable sources of local revenue, the list of realistic alternatives becomes remarkably short.

That does not mean South Dakota would adopt an income tax. It does mean eliminating property taxes makes future discussions about an income tax more likely than they are today.

And it does not mean property taxes should remain untouched. Lawmakers and Doeden's opponent, Gov. Larry Rhoden, have passed several bills during the past two legislative sessions to bring property taxes down for homeowners. Two of those new laws use a higher state sales tax rate and an optional county sales tax to fund the property tax reductions.

But reform and elimination are not the same thing.

Before South Dakotans embrace the largest restructuring of local government finance in state history, they deserve more than promises about "external revenue."

They deserve to know what replaces \$1.9 billion in local funding. They deserve to know who decides where that money goes.

Because eliminating property taxes is not simply a tax proposal. It's a proposal to transfer power from local communities to Pierre.

And once that power moves to Pierre, it will not come back.

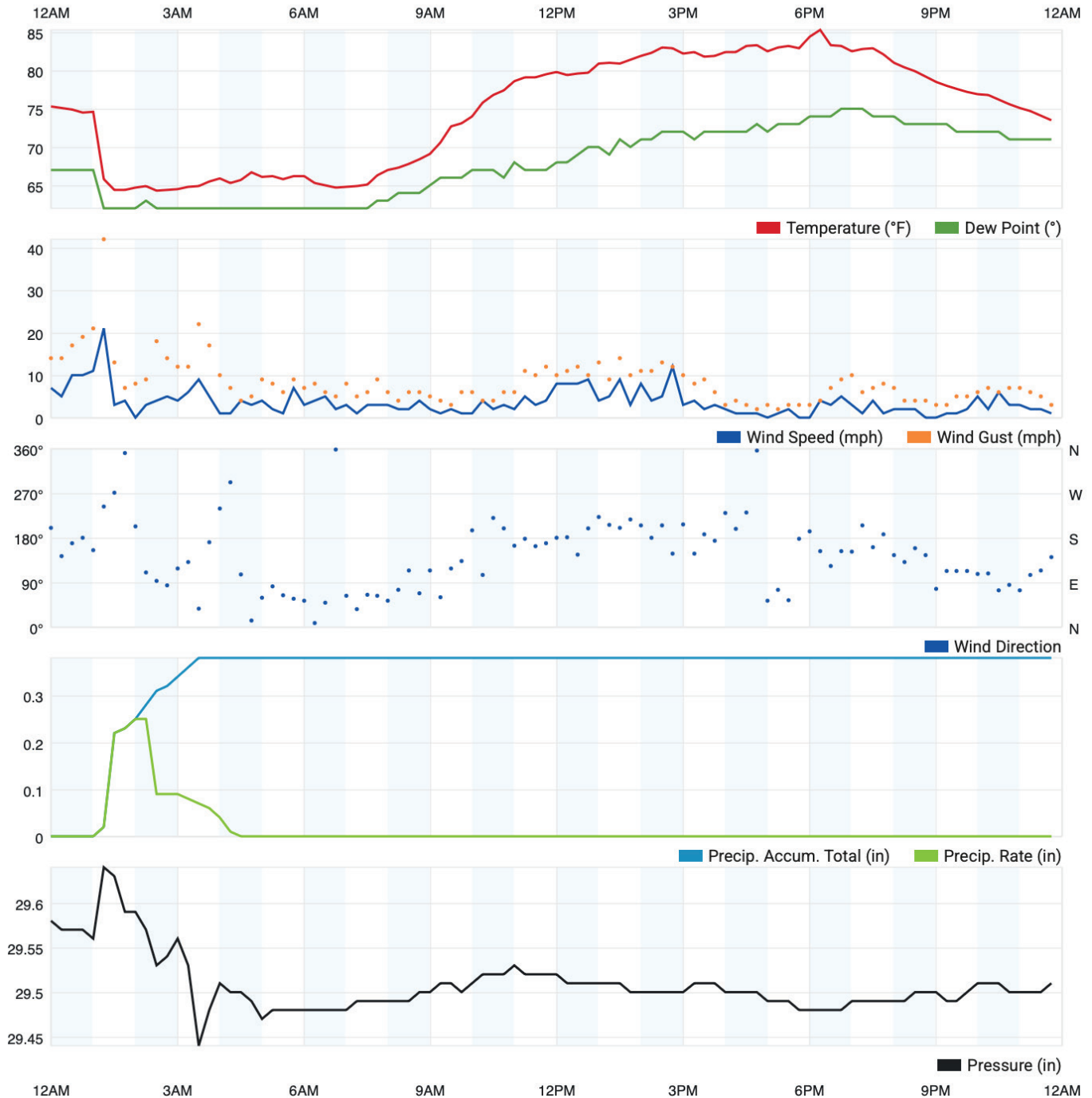
Brad Johnson is a certified general real estate appraiser and longtime journalist. He is past president of South Dakota Lakes and Streams Association, president of the South Dakota Wildlife Federation, a member of the National Wildlife Federation's board of directors, and served 16 years on the South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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

June 28, 2026



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Monday



High: 90 °F

Severe
Thunderstorms
and Patchy
Fog

Monday Night



Low: 57 °F

Mostly Clear

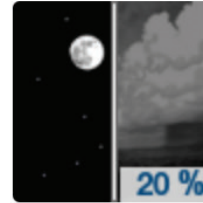
Tuesday



High: 87 °F

Sunny

Tuesday Night



Low: 59 °F

Clear then
Slight Chance
Showers

Wednesday



High: 88 °F

Chance
Showers

Severe Storms Anticipated Early Monday Morning

Issued June 28, 2026 10:44 PM

Timing

~3 to 5 AM CDT

Details

- Storms will move in from the southwest into central SD overnight into early Monday morning and track northeastward.

Be Prepared For



Hail as large as **3" in diameter**



Damaging winds as **high as 90 mph**

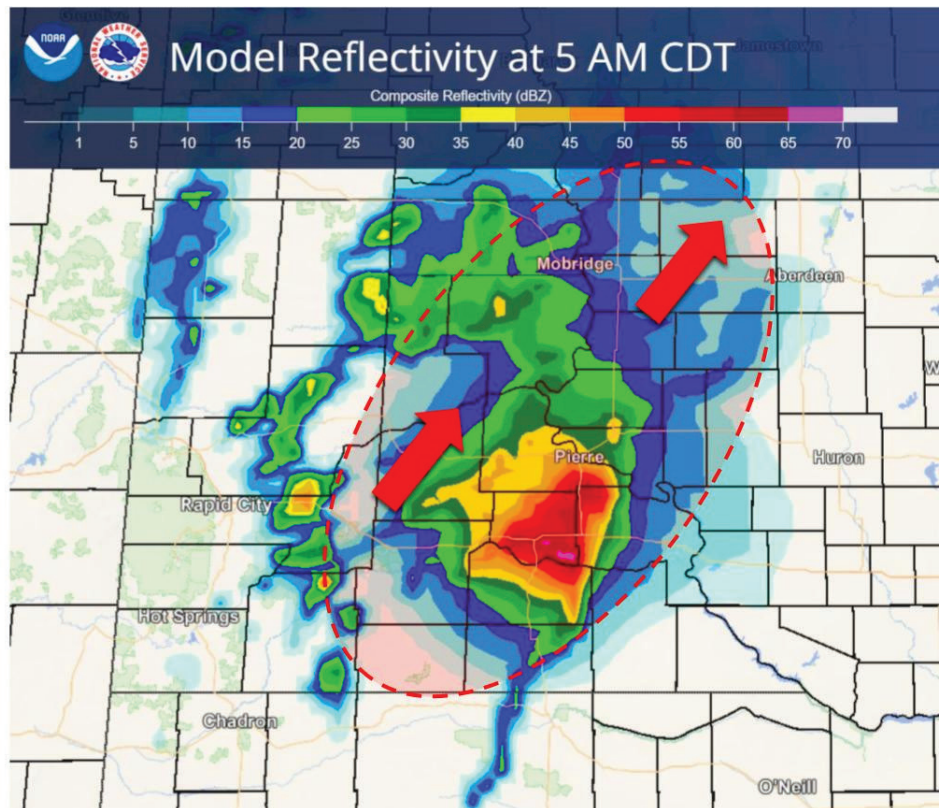


Development of a tornado or two



NOAA

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD



A cluster of storms will move in over central SD early Monday morning and track towards the northeast. These storms are capable of producing large hail, up to 3" in diameter, wind gusts up to 90 mph, and the threat for a tornado or two. Please make sure to stay alert and have multiple ways to receive warnings that will wake you up!

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Heat Advisory for This Afternoon

June 29, 2026
3:49 AM CDT

Primarily for far northeast South Dakota and western Minnesota

Key Messages

- Heat Index values within the Heat Advisory of 100 to 105 expected on this afternoon.
- Hot temperatures and high humidity may cause heat illnesses.

Heat Index (°F) Forecast

	8am	9am	10am	11am	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	10pm	11pm
Aberdeen	72	76	79	87	90	92	94	93	92	93	90	87	85	80	75	71
Britton	73	76	78	86	90	93	96	95	95	94	90	86	84	76	72	70
Chamberlain	72	73	78	79	85	86	86	87	88	87	86	87	83	79	74	72
Clark	72	75	78	86	89	92	95	95	94	93	88	86	84	77	73	72
Eagle Butte	63	65	68	70	72	74	78	80	80	80	79	78	72	68	65	
Eureka	68	70	73	73	74	74	76	78	79	82	81	80	78	72	68	66
Gettysburg	68	70	73	74	74	75	78	81	82	82	81	80	80	74	69	66
McIntosh	62	65	68	70	71	72	74	75	76	77	76	75	73	68	64	62
Milbank	74	76	84	90	95	99	102	105	104	104	99	95	90	82	76	73
Miller	69	72	77	84	87	87	88	88	87	87	85	84	81	77	73	69
Mobridge	67	70	72	73	74	75	78	82	82	82	81	79	75	70	68	
Murdo	64	65	68	70	73	75	79	81	81	81	80	79	74	70	68	
Pierre	68	69	72	74	76	78	83	84	84	84	83	81	78	73	70	
Redfield	71	74	84	89	93	94	94	93	92	91	88	87	84	79	74	71
Sisseton	73	75	78	85	90	96	100	101	101	100	96	93	88	81	75	74
Watertown	73	76	79	87	93	97	101	101	100	101	96	92	88	81	77	74
Webster	73	75	78	84	88	92	94	94	94	94	89	86	84	77	74	72
Wheaton	74	76	84	87	92	96	100	102	104	104	99	97	91	83	76	74

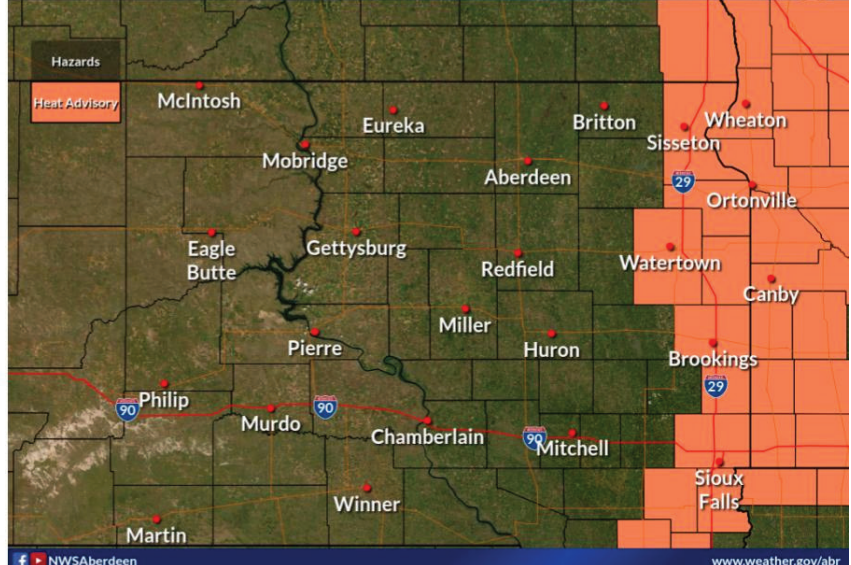
Heat Advisory This Afternoon

Valid for 12 PM CDT to 8 PM CDT

Weather Forecast Office

Aberdeen, SD

Issued Jun 29, 2026 1:11 AM CDT



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

There is a heat advisory this afternoon for areas over and east of the Sisseton Hills. This area will see high temperatures into the 90s with higher humidity values causing heat index values into the upper 90s to low 100. These temperatures and high humidity could cause heat illness in those sensitive to the heat and those working outside. Make sure to take frequent breaks, drink lots of water, and stay cool.



Severe Weather Potential Continues

June 29, 2026
3:49 AM CDT

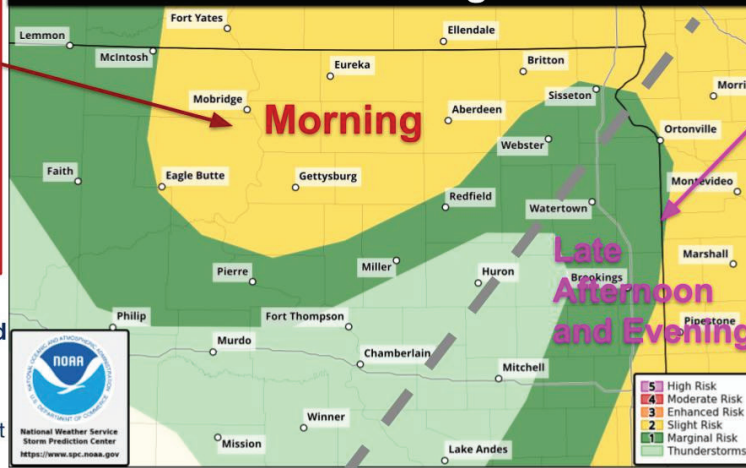
Brief Heat on Monday, then warming towards the Fourth of July

Key Messages

This Morning

- Slight Risk of Severe Storms (level 2 of 5) early this morning, primarily in central and portions of northeastern SD
 - Timing: Through 10am
 - Impacts: Hail to 3" in diameter and 90 mph wind gusts

Slight Risk For Severe Storms Overnight into This Morning



Late Afternoon and Evening

- Marginal to Slight Risk of Severe Storms this evening, primarily in northeastern SD
 - Timing: 6 through 9 PM
 - Impacts: Hail to 1" in diameter and 60 mph wind gusts

What Has Changed

- Heat Advisory has been expanded to include portions of east central SD



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

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HOT WEATHER AHEAD!

Maximum Heat Index (°F) Forecast

	6/29	6/30	7/1	7/2	7/3	7/4	7/5
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Aberdeen	94	86	87	92	92	87	83
Britton	96	84	85	89	91	85	80
Chamberlain	88	88	89	92	90	87	83
Clark	95	82	85	88	87	85	78
Eagle Butte	80	82	81	85	85	81	81
Eureka	82	82	82	87	88	82	80
Gettysburg	82	83	84	86	88	83	81
McIntosh	77	80	81	86	85	79	80
Milbank	105	86	89	93	92	89	82
Miller	88	84	86	88	89	85	81
Mobridge	82	84	84	87	89	84	82
Murdo	81	84	84	87	86	83	80
Pierre	84	86	87	90	90	86	83
Redfield	94	86	87	92	93	88	82
Sisseton	101	84	87	92	90	87	81
Watertown	101	85	89	93	92	89	81
Webster	94	82	85	88	88	84	78
Wheaton	104	86	88	92	90	87	81



STAY SAFE IN SUMMER HEAT



Heat indices will rise over 100 degrees this afternoon for locations east of a cold front moving through South Dakota. This will lead to slightly cooler temperatures for Tuesday and Wednesday, before warmer temperatures and humid conditions return through the rest of the week. Make sure to take caution to reduce heat related illnesses.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 85 °F at 6:13 PM

Low Temp: 64 °F at 1:33 AM

Wind: 43 mph at 1:08 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 107 in 1931

Record Low: 42 in 1900

Average High: 83

Average Low: 58

Average Precip in June.: 3.63

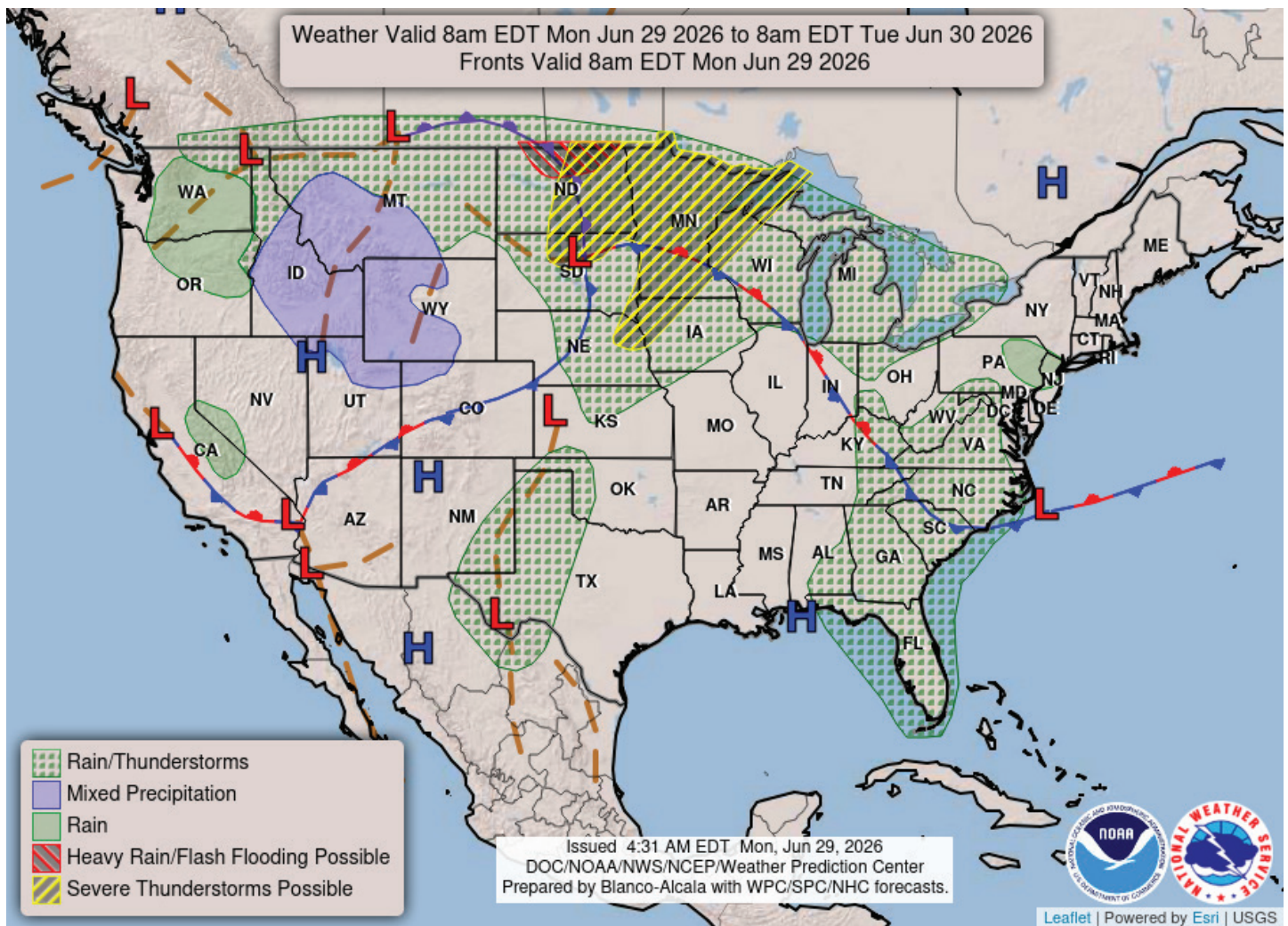
Precip to date in June.: 1.75

Average Precip to date: 10.88

Precip Year to Date: 8.51

Sunset Tonight: 9:24 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:47 am



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Today in Weather History

June 29, 1927: This estimated F2 tornado moved northeast from near Claremont, passing along the northwestern edge of Britton. The Claremont area had a \$12,000 loss as a large silo was destroyed. A dozen homes had roof damage in Britton.

June 29, 2005: Torrential rains of three to seven inches fell across far eastern Brown, western and northern Day, and most of Marshall Counties in the early morning and again in the afternoon hours. One location measured five inches of rain in two hours. Many township roads and highways were flooded along with thousands of acres of cropland. Water surrounded several homes resulting in people being rescued. Some of the houses were flooded. Many bridges were damaged, and roads and culverts were washed out. In Day County, 30 roads were washed out, and 15 bridges needed repairs. Some rainfall amounts include 5.04 inches in Britton, 3.34 at 8N of Columbia, and 2.08 in Aberdeen. Total June rainfall for some locations in Marshall and Day Counties was between 11 and 12 inches. The flooding continued into early July before receding by July 10th.

1826: Thomas Jefferson made his last entry in his weather observation log on this date, just six days before he died. The weather held a fascination for Jefferson as he made regular weather observations. He bought his first thermometer while working on the Declaration of Independence and his first barometer shortly after that.

1904: Tornado hits Karacharov Village area of Moscow killing about 24 people. Click [HERE](#) for more information from englishrussia.com

1931 — The temperature at Monticello FL hit 109 degrees to establish an all-time record for the state. (The Weather Channel)

1954 — Hurricane Alice dumped as much as 27 inches of rain on the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. The Rio Grande River at Laredo reached a level 12.6 feet above its previous highest mark, and the roadway of the U.S. 90 bridge was thirty feet below the high water. (David Ludlum)

1987 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Ohio Valley and the Great Lakes Region, with reports of large hail and damaging winds most numerous in Ohio, Indiana and Michigan. Thunderstorms spawned four tornadoes in Michigan. A tornado near Clare MI was accompanied by softball size hail. In Colorado, an untimely winter-like storm blanketed Mount Evans with six inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Alpena, MI, reported a record low of 39 degrees while Jackson, MS, equalled their record for the month of June with an afternoon high of 105 degrees. Thunderstorms in the central U.S. soaked Springfield MO with 3.62 inches of rain, a record for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Southern and Central High Plains Region. Thunderstorms in Colorado produced softball size hail at Kit Carson, while pea to marble size hail caused ten million dollars damage to crops in Philips County, CO. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1998: "The Corn Belt Derecho of 1998" in the following states NE, IA, IL, IN, KY. A derecho which originated in far southeast South Dakota moved across Illinois during the afternoon and evening and continued as far east as Ohio the next morning. Every county in central Illinois sustained some damage, as these severe thunderstorms passed. Winds gusted in the 60 to 80 mph range, with some localized microbursts producing winds more than 100 mph. Significant damage occurred in the microburst areas, including the towns of Morton, McLean, LeRoy, and Tolono. In Tolono, 22 cars of a southbound 101-car Illinois Central freight train were blown off the tracks. It was unknown how many vehicles were picked up by the wind, but 16 cars were turned over, and another six derailed but remained upright. The train was en route to Centralia from Chicago with a load of mixed freight, including plastic pellets and meal. The freight cars empty weighed about 60,000 pounds, while a full one weighs about 260,000 pounds. Overall, 12 people were injured, and damage was estimated at around \$16 million.

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Daily Devotion

The Power Within

**God doesn't call us to serve in our own strength—
He provides the Holy Spirit to empower us**

Ephesians 3:14-21:

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,
15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name,
16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,
17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,
19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.
20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,
21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Here's a sobering truth: In our own strength, we'll never become better people. We can't improve our fallen nature through willpower or good intentions.

But the good news is, God never intended for us to try. He knew we couldn't transform ourselves, so He sent the Holy Spirit to live inside us. As the Spirit releases His supernatural power in our life, we are able to go beyond what comes naturally to us. This is God's plan for every believer.

The work of the Holy Spirit in us is multifaceted, but four aspects are foundational to the life of faith:

The Spirit illumines our mind, enabling us to understand truth.

He energizes our body to serve the Lord.

He strengthens our will to follow through on doing right.

He transforms our emotions so we can feel and express the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

Only the Holy Spirit living inside us has the strength and wisdom to live out the Christian life victoriously. That's why God gave us His Spirit—so we could experience all the benefits of a godly life, not through our own effort, but in His strength.

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:
06.28.26

4 11 31 54 58 3

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 38 Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.26.26

5 13 30 33 52 6

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$511,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 23 Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.27.26

3 8 18 22 39 6

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$30,900,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 38 Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.27.26

2 21 25 30 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$157,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 53 Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.27.26

2 26 34 43 45 15

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 22 Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.27.26

3 16 28 30 59 11

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$360,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 22 Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Israeli strike targeting a militant kills 3, including a child, in Gaza

By WAFAA SHURAF and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — An Israeli airstrike killed at least three Palestinians, including a child, in the Gaza Strip on Monday, after hitting a tent sheltering displaced people that Israel said housed a militant.

Health authorities in the coastal enclave said the strike hit a neighborhood in Deir al-Balah, one of the least damaged towns in central Gaza. Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital said the fatalities were two men and an 8-year-old while a third man was wounded.

Israel's military identified the target as Zaher Abu Salem, who it said was a member of Islamic Jihad and was involved in the Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel that triggered the war.

While the heaviest fighting has subsided since a ceasefire took hold in October, Israeli forces have carried out repeated airstrikes, killing 1,045 Palestinians, according to health officials in Gaza. Israel has announced a series of strikes targeting militants, including three over the weekend.

The ministry, which is part of the Hamas-led government, maintains detailed casualty records that are seen as generally reliable by U.N. agencies and independent experts. But it does not give a breakdown of civilians and militants. Militants have carried out shooting attacks on troops, and Israel says its strikes are in response to that and other violations. Five Israeli soldiers have been killed since the ceasefire.

The Oct. 7 attack by militants on Israel killed some 1,200 people and saw 251 taken hostage. Israel's retaliatory offensive in Gaza has killed more than 73,058 Palestinians, including those killed since the ceasefire, Gaza's Health Ministry said.

Americans' pride in US history and democracy drops, and fewer are proud to be American, polls find

By LINLEY SANDERS, SIMRAN PARWANI and AMELIA THOMSON-DEVEAUX Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans have grown less proud of their country's history or the way its democracy works over the past decade, according to a new AP-NORC poll.

Americans' pride in the U.S. on several key attributes has dropped since 2017 — including the nation's military and its political influence around the globe — according to the survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. This poll was conducted in April, as the United States and Iran fought over the Strait of Hormuz in a prolonged war that started with the U.S. and Israel launching strikes on Iran.

New Gallup polling also finds that only 53% of U.S. adults are "extremely" or "very" proud to be an American, the lowest reading in the trend dating back to 2001.

The findings point to a broad decline in patriotic sentiment over a tumultuous period that included most of President Donald Trump's first term, the COVID-19 pandemic and rising inflation that contributed to a backlash against President Joe Biden. That timeframe also covers Trump's return to the White House, where he's taken more aggressive actions on immigration and issues abroad.

Much of the falling positivity comes from Democrats, who have become increasingly disenchanted with the country since Trump's first term.

At the same time, most U.S. adults say that being an American is "extremely" or "very" important to their identity, highlighting an enduring connection, even as some become increasingly critical of the country's past or the government's current actions.

American pride declines on the armed forces and democracy

Americans' pride in the way democracy works in the U.S. has declined 14 percentage points, falling from 42% in February 2017 to 28% now.

In addition, Americans' pride in their armed forces has dropped 19 percentage points since 2017, and

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pride in the U.S.'s history has declined 14 percentage points. In each case, the drop is largely driven by Democrats, with some movement among independents as well.

Karla Galdamez — a 48-year-old Democrat who used to teach U.S. history — believes America has regressed under the Trump administration. While the Californian is not proud of Trump, she is pleased with how far the U.S. has come in 250 years.

"It's a country that really wanted to be different and really wanted to be better," she said. "Despite some of the very ugly history that we have of segregation and slavery ... if you look at the trajectory of the last 250 years, we've done nothing but get better and move toward a more egalitarian nation."

Only 14% of Democrats and 28% of independents say they are "extremely" proud to be an American, according to Gallup's new poll, compared with 70% of Republicans.

The AP-NORC poll found that Republicans are especially likely to be proud of the nation's armed forces. About 9 in 10 Republicans say the military makes them "extremely" or "very" proud, compared with about 6 in 10 U.S. adults.

Samantha Fulks, a 40-year-old in San Antonio, Texas, says she's proud to be an American and doesn't hide it. The Texas Republican showcases that pride with an American flag in her front yard — as well as Trump flags in the back yard — and she plans to wear red, white and blue on the Fourth of July. Fulks comes from a military family, and while she believes the country's involvement in Iran is unnecessary, she remains a proud supporter of the military.

"I still support our troops no matter what they do," Fulks said.

Being an American matters more for personal identity among Republicans and older adults

Matt Stafford, a 39-year-old in Massachusetts, is proud of being an American, even if the U.S. political system frustrates him.

He has a bald eagle tattooed on his back to represent the United States, its freedoms and "all the things we're supposed to stand for as a country." But despite that national pride, he often finds himself frustrated by politicians on both sides. Stafford — a centrist who identifies as "politically homeless" — wants Democrats and Republicans to come together to look out for their constituents in middle America.

"I love America, but our biggest problem is how we're pushing both sides — like the left and the right — to the extremes," he said.

For many Americans, their partisanship is often intertwined with their national identity. The poll finds that Republicans are much likelier than Democrats or independents to say being an American is "extremely" or "very" important to their personal identity.

Younger people are also much less likely than older people to say being an American is highly important to their personal identity. About three-quarters of Americans ages 60 and older say being an American is highly important to them, compared with only about one-third of U.S. adults under 30.

Race or ethnicity matters more to many Black Americans

The AP-NORC survey found that the vast majority of Black Americans — 73% — say their race or ethnicity is "extremely" or "very" important to how they see themselves, higher than the share that say that about being an American.

Vincent Harris, a 60-year-old in California, says his identity as a Black man rises above other attributes for him because of how Black men are treated in America.

"A lot of people are scared of Black men just because we are Black and we are male. And that's crazy," Harris said. "People don't even take you for who you are as a person; they just look at your race."

About half of Hispanic Americans say their race or ethnicity is highly important to them, compared with 22% of white Americans.

Black and Hispanic adults are also more likely than white adults to say their family's ancestry or country of origin is highly important to their personal identity.

Harris, who identifies as a gay man, says being an American is "a wonderful thing" because of the freedoms that Americans have, despite the obstacles he's had to overcome.

"It's great to be an American — regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or whatever. As long as you have that freedom of choice as an American, that's a great thing," Harris said. "Right now, I wouldn't live in any other country in the world. I'm here. I love it."

Andy Burnham to set out his economic vision as he speeds toward power in Britain

By ALASTAIR GRANT and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

MANCHESTER, England (AP) — Andy Burnham, Britain's presumptive next prime minister, will set out details on Monday to give more powers to local government as part of a plan to spread wealth and economic growth.

Burnham will set out a sweeping economic vision in a key speech as he tries to bring voters, colleagues and financial markets up to speed with his ideas during his rapid progress toward power.

His office says Burnham will set out a 10-year vision for "good growth in every postcode," in a country where wealth and power are concentrated in London and the south of England.

During the speech in Manchester, where he served for nine years as mayor, Burnham plans to outline plans to move part of his prime ministerial operation to the northwest England city. He'll also commit to giving regional mayors more power over housing, welfare and education.

Burnham is aiming to replicate on a nationwide level the approach he took in Greater Manchester — harnessing private and public money to invest in transport, housing and infrastructure.

His speech is set to include a commitment to create new industrial jobs and better educational opportunities, and to reform of the U.K.'s inefficient and expensive privatized water and energy utilities.

Burnham won praise for his role in revitalizing and regenerating Manchester, but he has not served in a U.K. government for almost two decades, and may struggle to replicate "Manchesterism" on a U.K.-wide scale.

He'll also be aware that Prime Minister Keir Starmer also announced a 10-year mission — the equivalent of two full terms in government — to transform Britain soon after he was elected in a landslide in July 2024. Starmer is leaving after two years in office marred by missteps and judgment errors that eroded his standing with his party and the public.

Burnham won a special election for a seat in Parliament on June 18 and was sworn in as a lawmaker on June 22 — the same day Starmer announced that he will resign as soon as a successor is chosen.

Burnham is the strong favorite to replace him in a Labour Party leadership contest in the next few weeks. No other contenders have entered the race so far, and if no one does, Burnham will become prime minister by July 20.

While Burnham is considered more charismatic than the stolid Starmer, he will face many of the same political and economic challenges, including a sluggish economy, tattered public services and a cost-of-living squeeze. He will also be constrained by the platform the center-left Labour Party was elected on in 2024, with its pledges not to increase taxes on working people.

And like other NATO countries, the U.K. is under pressure to dramatically increase defense spending to counter a more aggressive Russia and less reliable United States.

The government's long-awaited defense investment plan — which sparked the resignation of Defense Secretary John Healey on June 11 — is expected to be published before a NATO summit in Turkey on July 7 and 8. Starmer's successor will be expected to stick to the commitments in the plan.

"Andy Burnham's big idea is to shuffle power between politicians," said opposition Conservative Party Chairman Kevin Hollinrake. "Not fix the welfare system. Not cut the taxes strangling working families and British business. Not fund the defense our country desperately needs."

Iran's president says \$6B in frozen assets in Qatar to be released as US talks challenged

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's president said Monday that \$6 billion in frozen Iranian assets would be released by Qatar as negotiations with the United States were challenged by attacks across the Persian Gulf this weekend.

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Masoud Pezeshkian's mention of the funds appear aimed at selling the Iranian public on the interim deal, particularly as its grip on the Strait of Hormuz has been challenged by efforts to open Oman's territorial waters to both inbound and outbound traffic from the Persian Gulf. Iran's attacks and threats stopped cargo ships and tankers from moving through the strait, in which about a fifth of all traded oil and natural gas passed in peacetime, creating a global energy crisis.

The strait has long been considered an international waterway despite its location in Iran and Oman's territorial waters. In recent days, Iran has twice attacked vessels going through a route near the Omani side, drawing retaliatory American airstrikes and concerns that negotiations to reach a formal end to the war could be disrupted. Iran launched drone and missile attacks targeting Bahrain and Kuwait on Sunday.

Pakistan, a key mediator, has said talks would resume Tuesday between the U.S. and Iran on the terms of their interim deal. The Trump administration on Sunday said nothing has been canceled and technical talks are on track for the coming days. Iran has yet to say whether it will take part.

Pezeshkian says \$6 billion coming to Iran

Pezeshkian offered praise for the interim deal in comments published Monday by the state-run IRNA news agency, calling it "a great victory for the Iranian people."

"Based on the plans made, \$6 billion out of the total \$12 billion of Iranian resources in Qatar will be released and returned to the country, and necessary follow-ups are being carried out," he said. He did not elaborate.

Pezeshkian, a reformist within Iran's theocracy, is the highest-ranking official within Iran to reference the release of the funds held by Qatar, a key mediator along with Pakistan in the negotiations. So far, U.S. officials say no frozen Iranian assets have been released. Qatar as well as has not acknowledged any such transfer and Iran attacked a tanker filled with Qatari crude oil this weekend during the crossfire in the Persian Gulf.

A Chinese dissident recounts his perilous dinghy escape to South Korea and how he got to Canada

By KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — A roughly 40-hour sea journey on a dinghy with a dying phone. Detention in South Korea. That's just part of what Chinese dissident Dong Guangping endured to escape his native country. He arrived late last week in Canada, a destination he had eyed for more than a decade.

Dong had been locked up in China several times, including for his activities commemorating the 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square and past efforts to flee.

"It's like living in a cage. Very suffocating," he said in an online video interview with The Associated Press from Toronto, referring to the lack of freedom of expression in China.

After his release from prison, the 68-year-old dissident said he was unable to receive retirement benefits or renew his passport and was under constant police monitoring.

He attempted to flee at least three previous times: in 2015 to Thailand, where authorities deported him back to China; in 2019 when he tried to swim to a Taiwanese island off China's east coast; and in 2020, when he reached Vietnam, only to be deported back again.

Last month, he tried again.

'No point fearing death'

In the early hours of May 24, he set off in a gray rubber dinghy fitted with an engine from Weihai, a coastal city in eastern China's Shandong province, under fine weather. He was eyeing Japan, confident that the government there would not send him back to China.

But the next day brought fog. When he noticed his phone, which he relied on for GPS navigation, was on its last bar, he became terrified. His power bank also died. He quickly switched to his contingency plan — South Korea.

Dong recalled that dread ran deep because his tiny boat might capsize if the winds and waves picked up. But he had no way to return and shook off the fear of death.

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"Living conditions back in the country are so terrible that being alive is little different than being dead. So there is no point fearing death," he said. "If you move forward, there's a chance at life."

In the evening, he saw lights in the distance and moved toward them. The first vessel could not hear his cries for help and left. Later, he encountered a fishing boat that agreed to pull him on board. He asked the fishers to call the police to help him.

The South Korean Coast Guard detained him for allegedly violating the country's immigration law. They sought a warrant to formally arrest him, but a court refused, saying it's "difficult to recognize sufficient grounds and necessity" for his arrest.

From refugee center to Canada

Dong was later sent to a refugee center in Incheon, a port city near Seoul. Earlier this month, the U.N. refugee agency contacted him via video call, he said.

A refugee center manager later asked about his height, weight and his eye color. He was worried at first but it turned out to be a good sign. His lawyer told him it was at the request of the Canadian diplomatic mission, he said.

About a week later, Dong boarded a flight and he arrived in Toronto Friday. He was still unclear what legal procedures were involved in his move, but guessed it was based on cooperation between the South Korean and Canadian governments and the U.N. agency.

"I feel very surprised, extremely surprised. It's like still in a dream. It's very fast," he said.

He believed the resettlement status in Canada that his family secured in 2015, before Thai authorities deported him back to China, was still valid.

The Canadian Embassy in South Korea declined to comment on Dong's case. The U.N. refugee agency and the South Korean government did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Dong vows to press on with his activism

Dong said he feels at home after arriving in Toronto, saying he finally tasted freedom for the first time in over a decade.

"There's not even a hint of fear," he said.

He hopes to make a living, possibly by being a truck driver or an Uber driver.

But the joy doesn't help Dong let go of the deportations by the Thai and Vietnamese authorities.

In 2015, Dong and his family went to Thailand to seek refugee status from the U.N. refugee agency, but Thai authorities later arrested him and returned him to China, according to Amnesty International. His ex-wife and daughter managed to settle in Canada.

The activist fled to Vietnam in 2020, but was sent back in 2022. He was jailed each time he was returned to China. He said he plans to consult a lawyer to see if he can sue both Thailand and Vietnam.

For Dong, the fight is far from over. He also plans to press on in his call for China's democratization.

In the late 1990s, the former police officer distributed leaflets with his articles on topics such as the Tiananmen crackdown. He was imprisoned for three years in 2001 for inciting subversion of state power.

He also spent more than eight months behind bars over his participation in a memorial for victims of the crackdown after being arrested in 2014, he said.

"My ultimate goal is for China to achieve constitutional democracy," he said.

Pakistani airstrikes kill 36 civilians in Afghanistan and wound 160, officials say

By ABDUL QAHAR AFGHAN and SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Overnight ground operations and strikes by Pakistani forces have killed at least 36 civilians and injured more than 160 others, Afghan officials said Monday, as tensions between the neighbors further escalated. One Afghan official said the attacks would be met with retaliation.

Pakistani security forces carried out a ground operation along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border late Sunday, followed by strikes against militant hideouts and safe havens, killing 29 fighters, Pakistan's Information

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Minister Attaullah Tarar said. Pakistan said the operations were launched in response to multiple militant attacks across Pakistan.

Afghanistan condemned the strikes as a "cowardly act of aggression" and an "act of brutality." Hayatullah Mohajer Farahi, the deputy minister for publications at the Ministry of Information and Culture, said Afghanistan would respond "in due time."

"The military regime in a cowardly manner bombed Paktia, Paktika, and Kunar provinces last night," Farahi said. "This will definitely be retaliated against in due time. The decisions of the regime are not made based on emotions, but rather serious measures are taken at the right time."

Hamdullah Fitrat, the deputy spokesperson for Afghanistan's Taliban government, said the Pakistani forces targeted a home in Paktia's Chamkani district, killing an elderly man and a child, while other family members were injured. When residents gathered to rescue people, the area was struck again, killing 28 villagers and wounding 158, he said.

Six people, mostly women and children, were killed in a village in Giyan district, Paktika province, when another home was struck, he said. A civilian home in Kunar province was also hit, causing no casualties but killing some 30 livestock.

Tarar, the Pakistani information minister, shared three videos on X that he said showed projectiles striking sprawling camps and safe havens of Jamaat-ul-Ahrar and Fitna al-Khwarij in Afghanistan's Paktia, Paktika and Kunar provinces. Tarar said the overnight strikes killed "terrorists" and destroyed weapons and ammunition stockpiles.

Tarar said Pakistan's relentless counter-terrorism campaign "will continue at full pace to wipe out the menace of foreign-sponsored and supported terrorism from the country."

Pakistan uses the phrase "Khawarij" to refer to Indian-backed Pakistani Taliban and other militants. Jamaat-ul-Ahrar is a breakaway faction of the Pakistani Taliban.

India however, strongly denied any involvement, with Foreign Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal calling the statements "baseless allegations." Pakistan should "look inwards, take credible action against the terror infrastructure on its territory," he said.

Militant attacks targeting Pakistan's police and security forces have surged in recent years. Authorities have blamed the Pakistani Taliban — known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP — and allied militant groups for most of the violence. The Pakistani Taliban are separate from but allied with the Afghan Taliban that returned to power in 2021.

The Pakistani security operation followed a militant attack targeting the regional headquarters of the paramilitary Rangers in Karachi that killed three soldiers. Security forces killed three attackers and arrested another assailant, whom the military identified as an Afghan national in wounded condition.

Jamaat-ul-Ahrar claimed responsibility for the Karachi attack.

Sunday's cross-border strikes and ground operation came less than three weeks after Pakistan's military launched airstrikes on what it said were militant hideouts in Afghanistan. They ended about a month of relative calm following what Islamabad had described as an "open war" between the neighboring countries, despite international efforts to broker a lasting peace.

The escalation follows months of tit-for-tat military action. Hundreds of people have been killed in cross-border fighting since February, when Afghanistan launched retaliatory strikes after Pakistan carried out airstrikes inside Afghan territory.

Multiple rounds of talks have failed to secure a lasting ceasefire. China also hosted the two sides in April and Beijing later said Pakistan and Afghanistan had agreed not to escalate their conflict and to explore a solution.

Pakistani officials said an uneasy calm prevailed along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border following the cross-border operation, with security forces remaining on high alert.

Europe's record heat has overwhelmed Paris mortuaries and left families in distress

By JOHN LEICESTER and JEFFREY SCHAEFFER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Every few minutes, the mortuary owner's phone rings. Since a record-smashing heat wave started taking lives and storage space for bodies in Paris and beyond, the funeral directors and mourning families calling him mostly have the same question: Do you have room for one more?

With all 32 places in his cold room taken, Zouhaier Hertelli reluctantly has to gently say "Non," over and over and over again.

"We're facing a really catastrophic situation," he said. "I'm getting hundreds of calls."

As the historic heat wave shifted its deadly temperatures eastward this weekend to other parts of Europe, France began counting the human cost it left in its wake.

Tallying heat-related deaths could take time

The statistical and public health work of tallying heat-related deaths could take weeks or months. But it's already apparent that the toll exacted by the intense, unrelenting extreme temperatures was terrible in France, the first country hit from mid-June, particularly among older people who died at home.

"We're dealing with an enormous spike of deaths because of the heat wave and we're really full, full, full," Hertelli said.

In its first preliminary estimate, the national public health agency said deaths surged during the heat wave's peak in France last week, which roasted most of Europe's largest country with temperatures that soared in many places above 40C (104 F) and also broke records for nighttime highs — an exhausting one-two punch for fatigued bodies.

Public Health France said there were more than 1,200 deaths last Wednesday, when France registered its hottest-ever day, breaking a record that had been set just the previous day.

Deaths then increased to more than 1,400 on Thursday and another 1,400 on Friday, it said. By way of comparison, the pre-heat wave death rate in April and May was around 900 to 1,000 per day, it said.

The agency cautioned that its estimate of at least 1,000 additional deaths during those three sizzling days alone is expected to increase as more death certificates come in for people who died at home and in care facilities for older people, where most deaths are still not registered electronically.

"Mortality will as a consequence be higher than these first figures," the agency said.

Many who died were 65 and older

It said that 85% of the deaths registered so far during the three days it studied involved people aged 65 and above and that there was a sharp increase in deaths at home — up by about 40% — particularly in the Paris region.

Hertelli and others in the funeral industry said Paris mortuaries quickly ran out of storage space. City Hall said two temporary storage units, with 20 places each, were installed for municipal mortuaries and that city hospitals provided another 50 additional places.

Still, Hertelli said funeral directors he spoke to told him they were having to store bodies as far away as Chartres — 80 kilometers (50 miles) from Paris — and in other regions around the capital. To open more space, he said he has asked authorities for permission to temporarily install refrigerated containers outside his mortuary, which is next to Paris' Orly airport, but is still waiting for a green light.

"Families are suffering," he said. "We have no solution to offer them, because the funeral homes are full. So we are deeply affected, we have empathy for them, but there's nothing we can offer. We are really facing a problem, a big problem," he said.

Temperatures reached historic highs

Historic high temperatures in 2003, surpassed this time, were blamed for 15,000 deaths, provoking a national reckoning about care of older people, who were particularly hard-hit. More than 5,700 deaths were also attributed to heat during an exceptionally hot summer last year.

Véronique Bertrand, a Paris funeral director, said she fears that lessons have been forgotten.

"Most of the deaths that we are dealing with at the moment were people who were living alone at home,

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isolated. Given the circumstances in which they were found, there can be no other conclusion than that these were deaths caused by the heat," Bertrand said.

"I think people absolutely need to wake up, that solidarity needs to come back, that what happened in 2003 led to a movement in that direction, with people thinking about their neighbors, of those around them who live alone and perhaps checking from time to time that they're drinking water and are being looked after," she said.

"With the passing years, we've perhaps forgotten that it could happen again and that things would even perhaps be worse."

Thousands of immigrants got scammed by an attorney exploiting humanitarian visas, lawsuits say

By JACK BROOK NEW ORLEANS

Associated Press (AP) — An attorney in Washington state promised "miracles" to tens of thousands of immigrants seeking legal status in the United States.

Instead, Alexandra Lozano created fake stories of domestic abuse and human trafficking to apply for humanitarian visas without her clients' knowledge, according to several lawsuits and a legal ethics investigation. They say she preyed on immigrants' desperation to drain their bank accounts while leaving them at risk of deportation.

She is accused hiring workers who didn't have proper legal credentials and building an assembly-line system to rush through applications, even copying clients' signatures onto documents they never saw.

"I put the trust of my family with her," 30-year-old Gabriel Martinez Garcia said. After they paid \$30,000, he said Lozano duped his family and got his mother placed in removal proceedings despite her marriage to a naturalized U.S. citizen. "We believed in her and then she just let us down."

Lozano's firm, Luz del Camino Legal, closed this month amid a barrage of allegations. She permanently surrendered her law license rather than face discipline from the bar association, and denies wrongdoing.

While federal data shows immigration service scams are rising sharply, Lozano's alleged scheme stands out for its scale. The bar says her signature is on more than 53,000 pending cases.

It's unclear how many cases were fraudulent or to what extent her clients were complicit. The ones suing her say they had no idea.

The consequences of her downfall are hitting the immigration system "like a tidal wave," said Erika Gonzalez, an attorney with the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking.

The Trump administration last year started overhauling the humanitarian programs Lozano allegedly exploited, claiming a surge in applications since 2020 was a sign of widespread fraud. The administration tightened the programs' restrictions and slowed processing rates, which advocacy groups say will hurt legitimate victims.

The visas are meant for people who were trafficked or abused

Lozano specialized in getting visas through the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 and the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, which covers all genders.

These programs seek to protect victims from having their immigration status weaponized by abusers. Evidence standards are more flexible, making the system more accessible to victims. But it's also easier for an unscrupulous firm to exploit, immigration attorneys say.

Lozano's firm probed clients for issues at home or work, then spun them as abuse cases that didn't meet the threshold for these humanitarian programs, according to attorneys representing dozens of her old clients.

Although clients quickly secured work permits, they often faced trouble years later when seeking permanent residency and their claims faced greater scrutiny.

Lozano denies mass immigration fraud

Angelo Calfo, an attorney representing Lozano, said clients were expected to review their applications before signing and blamed them for any false statements.

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"Alexandra's practice has always been to fight for her clients, zealously pursue every lawful option available to them, and support their efforts to build lives in this country," his statement said.

The bar accused Lozano of fraud in May and her firm shut down June 10. She's being investigated by the fraud unit of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, according to emails obtained by The Associated Press. The Department of Homeland Security, which runs the immigration agency, declined to comment.

At least 920 immigration service scams were reported in 2025, which is more than the first three years of the Biden administration combined, according to Federal Trade Commission data analyzed by the AP. Experts say that's probably an undercount, given immigrants' reluctance to come forward.

Clients say foreign workers, not US-licensed lawyers, handled cases

Lozano is accused of enlisting hundreds of employees in Colombia, Mexico and Argentina to provide legal advice to clients and handle visa applications. That would mean clients never got consultations from a U.S.-licensed attorney.

"Alexandra was telling us to please invent more information about the abuse because it is not real abuse," said Rafael Alvarez, who worked for Lozano from 2022 to 2024 in Colombia. "There were a lot of cases that were not true."

Lozano's former chief operating officer, Amy Rios, testified in 2024 that the firm earned \$1.7 million teaching other law firms its legal strategies for humanitarian visas and "changed the way many attorneys now approach immigration law."

Recent lawsuits accuse at least two other firms in Texas and Ohio of replicating Lozano's tactics, which they deny.

Immigrants say they didn't know about the lies

Erika Sanchez and her husband entered the U.S. unlawfully. Multiple lawyers told them there was no way to adjust their status from within the country.

But Lozano promised a successful outcome after just one consultation in 2020, according to a lawsuit the couple filed in May alongside seven other former clients.

The couple trusted the firm when it asked for their signatures on blank paper, Sanchez said, and lived on a tight budget to pay Lozano more than \$32,000.

"We truly did believe that she was doing the right thing," Sanchez said.

She added that they never saw the application submitted by the firm for her husband, which they later learned contained false claims that his teenage daughter abused him. He is now in removal proceedings.

Some former clients say they didn't discover the alleged fraud for years. Nora Murillo Moreno said the firm told her about the fake abuse claims on the day before her green card interview. She panicked.

"Should I say what really happened, or what is written?" Murillo Moreno said. "I knew things didn't match."

Trump administration says a surge in visas indicates 'rampant fraud'

Attorneys suing Lozano say her rise parallels an exponential increase in visa applications for trafficking and domestic abuse cases.

Domestic abuse claims more than tripled between the 2020 and 2025 fiscal years, from nearly 15,000 applications to upward of 53,000 per year, according to immigration agency data. There were also nearly twelve times as many applications from parents alleging their child abused them.

During that same period, human trafficking claims jumped from around 1,000 applications to more than 37,000.

In December, the immigration agency said it would overhaul its domestic violence visa program due to "rampant fraud" based on the increase in filings, without offering other evidence. The changes include narrowing definitions of abuse and giving greater weight to evidence supplied by alleged abusers.

Cecelia Levin, an attorney with the nonprofit Alliance for Immigrant Survivors, said making these visas harder for actual abuse victims isn't the answer. Instead, the Trump administration should focus on enforcing the law against attorneys running scams, she said.

An earlier ethics complaint was dismissed

Immigration attorneys say Lozano's social media was filled with red flags, like claiming the Virgin Mary

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blessed all her cases.

In 2023, the Washington bar said it had concerns about Lozano's law practice but dismissed an ethics complaint against her on the grounds that she was protected by disclaimers, according to a document obtained by the AP. The complaint alleged deceptive advertising and other misconduct.

Sara Niegowski, a spokesperson for the bar, said it blocked Lozano from practicing law "as quickly as possible."

Lozano's ex-clients are in a legal mess

Former clients are now scrambling to get their case files from the defunct firm. Hundreds showed up for recent consultations with volunteer attorneys in Washington and Oregon.

Many applied to join a lawsuit seeking financial compensation for legal malpractice. Another class action lawsuit aims to recoup their attorney fees.

Vicente Omar Barraza, an attorney behind the malpractice lawsuit, said hundreds of former clients told him they still don't know what Lozano's firm wrote in their applications. He's worried many people lost viable pathways to legal status.

Garcia Martinez, who says his mother is in removal proceedings because Lozano mishandled her case, lives every day in fear that she will be deported.

"I'm just praying really, really, really hard for her," Garcia Martinez said. "None of this should have happened."

Bill Maher accepts Twain humor prize as the Kennedy Center navigates Trump-era upheaval

By STEVEN SLOAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Comedian Bill Maher was the guest of honor at the Kennedy Center on Sunday night. But President Donald Trump's presence wasn't far away.

Just moments after Maher began to accept the prestigious Mark Twain Prize for American Humor, Matt Friend, a leading impersonator of the president, took to the stage and, in Trump's voice, joked that he would accept the award himself. Trump was a punchline for other comedians and entertainers, including Whitney Cummings, Jay Leno and Woody Harrelson.

For the most part, the barbs weren't particularly biting. Cummings, for instance, said that under Trump's influence, the Kennedy Center would host "white 'Hamilton.'" And once Friend left the stage, Maher largely steered clear of hitting the president. The commentary was nonetheless notable for unfolding in an iconic performing arts venue that Trump has gone to extraordinary lengths to bend to his favor, leaving its future in the coming years uncertain.

Accepting the award, Maher derided extremes in both political parties, rejecting what he called "group-think."

"If you hang around long enough and create something important enough, everyone hates you at some point," Maher said.

The ceremony in the Kennedy Center's Concert Hall wasn't purely political. There were plenty of jokes about Maher's fondness for marijuana, his rejection of organized religion and his penchant for controversy, including comments he made shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks that led to the cancellation of his television show, "Politically Incorrect."

The Kennedy Center's uncertain future hangs over event

But the future of the Kennedy Center hung most prominently over the event.

Shortly after Trump returned to the White House in January 2025, the Republican president fired much of the center's leadership and installed a board largely composed of allies. It named Trump as chairman and his name was added to the building's iconic facade, prompting a legal battle that became a proxy fight over the extent of the president's power.

Trump later said the Kennedy Center would close in July for a two-year renovation. But U.S. District Judge Christopher Cooper upended those plans in May by ruling that Trump's name was illegally added to

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the building, ordering it removed. The judge also has blocked the closure.

Trump's name has come down from the building, in compliance with the judge's order. But the part of the building once covered with letters spelling the president's name is now shrouded in a tarp. The full closure is on hold. Lawyers for the Kennedy Center have said they are not planning for now to build out programming.

Cooper has asked for an update next month on how long the tarp will remain on the building. For now, the final event scheduled for the Kennedy Center's Concert Hall is "The Freedom Gathering: A Musical Celebration" on July 3.

The legal fight has turned into a saga that at points became fodder for jokes at the Twain gala. At one point, Harrelson joked "we fixed that" in a nod to the court order calling for Trump's name to be removed from the building.

Ahead of the ceremony, Lutnick said Trump "wants to make this building sensational."

But others were more skeptical. As he walked the red carpet ahead of the ceremony, Leno said Trump's moves at the Kennedy Center were both "hilarious" and about "vanity."

"It's not a war," he said. "It's not people getting killed. It's not antisemitism. It's a silly thing covering a name. I mean what's funnier than that? I mean it's just like, you know it's high school with money."

Friend said he felt there was a "hunger games vibe" as he entered the building.

"It's crazy," he said of the changes Trump has pushed for.

Maher has a fraught relationship with Trump

Given Trump's sway over the Kennedy Center, Maher's selection for the award was notable because the two men have long had a fraught relationship.

Before he entered politics, Trump filed a \$5 million lawsuit against Maher in 2013 for breach of contract. Appearing on Leno's "The Tonight Show," Maher said he would give \$5 million to the charity of Trump's choice if Trump could prove he was not "the spawn of his mother having sex with an orangutan."

Trump claimed that when he provided his birth certificate, Maher did not pay up, prompting the lawsuit. Trump ended up dropping it.

The Trump-Maher relationship exploded again earlier this year, when the president claimed on social media that he wasted time sitting down for a meal with the comedian last year. Lutnick noted that Trump had written out all the critical comments he'd made about Maher over the years and autographed the document.

"You've got to be able to laugh at it," Lutnick said. "The president can laugh at it. Bill Maher can laugh at it. And that's what makes tonight great."

Maher hosted Vice President JD Vance on his show heading into the weekend. Vance, who is promoting a book, said he watches the show and laughed at Maher's monologue "even though you were making fun of me." During the interview, Maher pressed Vance on the Iran war, immigration enforcement and election conspiracy theories.

"You guys have two outcomes that an election can be," Maher told Vance. "Either we win or they cheated. That s--- has to stop."

The Twain prize ceremony will air on Netflix on July 21.

A skydiving plane crashes in northeastern France, killing all 11 people on board

By ANTONIN UTZ, JOHN LEICESTER and BARRY HATTON Associated Press

TOMBLAINE, France (AP) — Families watched in shock as a skydiving plane carrying their loved ones on what was meant to be a thrilling introduction to parachuting crashed in northeastern France on Sunday, killing all 11 people on board, authorities said.

The dead included five parachuting instructors, five novice jumpers and the pilot, Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said. Transport Minister Philippe Tabarot said it was France's biggest aviation accident involving

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skydiving in about 30 years.

"Some of the victims' families witnessed the aircraft falling with their own eyes. So there is tremendous emotion and an even greater psychological trauma," Nunez said.

He refused to speculate on what caused the crash but said the plane dropped out of the sky suddenly. He said it had just taken off from the Nancy-Essey airfield on the outskirts of the city of Nancy when it came down about 300 meters (yards) from the runway.

Yves Ségué, prefect of the Meurthe-et-Moselle region, said the plane suffered a malfunction and "fell almost vertically," narrowly missing a built-up area.

"Had it occurred just a few dozen meters away, the accident could have caused collateral casualties," he said.

The plane banked to the left after takeoff and crashed less than a minute later near houses, according to the flight tracking service Flightradar24.

Police cordoned off the crumpled wreckage.

Flight tracking sites identified the plane as a single-engine Pilatus PC-6, a small transporter of freight, passengers and skydivers.

The parachutists were to have jumped as tandems, Nancy Mayor Mathieu Klein told public broadcaster France Info. Tandem jumps are skydiving experiences where two people, often an instructor and a novice jumper, are attached together for the descent.

Emergency services responded immediately and were providing psychological support to victims' relatives, officials said. The Paris prosecutor's office is leading the crash probe, Nunez said.

A resident, identified as John Curaku by BFM-TV, told the broadcaster that he was in his yard when he heard what sounded like a plane's engine stopping, immediately followed by a bang.

He said he went to the crash site and "there were no signs of life," with two of the bodies thrown a few meters (yards) from the plane.

Iran attacks Bahrain and Kuwait following US strikes and threatens to halt talks

By JON GAMBRELL and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran again launched drone and missile attacks targeting Bahrain and Kuwait on Sunday following new U.S. airstrikes against the Islamic Republic, and threatened a "complete halt" in negotiations to end the war if Washington continues its attacks.

Efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz without Iran's oversight has sparked days of crossfire. A multinational maritime body overseen by the U.S. Navy said Saturday it would expand a route near Oman for inbound and outbound traffic.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Sunday reiterated the claim that Tehran must govern the strait to the Persian Gulf that once carried a fifth of the world's oil and natural gas.

"Any attempt to establish new or separate arrangements from those currently being carried out by the Islamic Republic of Iran will only lead to further complications, delay the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and increase the level of tension," Araghchi said.

The strait has long been considered an international waterway despite its location in Iran and Oman's territorial waters. In recent days, Iran has twice attacked vessels going through a route near the Omani side.

Pakistan, a key mediator, has said talks would resume Tuesday between the U.S. and Iran on the terms of their interim deal. The Trump administration on Sunday said nothing has been canceled and technical talks are on track for the coming days.

Talks include arrangements around the strait, the removal of a U.S. blockade on Iranian ports and sanctions on Iran, and the future of Iran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium. The two sides have 60 days from their signing of the memorandum of understanding earlier this month to work out details.

Continued conflict in Lebanon threatens the agreement, which says fighting must end on all fronts before certain issues can be discussed.

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Strikes target Gulf states hosting US military

Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard claimed responsibility for the attacks in Bahrain and Kuwait.

Kuwait, which hosts a major U.S. military base, said air defenses intercepted Iranian drones and two missiles just after the U.S. strikes in Iran. There were no reports of injuries or damage.

Bahrain said the Iranian strikes damaged a residential building near the international airport and no one was killed. Bahrain is home to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet. The damaged building was not near its headquarters.

Bahrain's Foreign Ministry denounced what it called "a dangerous escalation that reveals that what Tehran is doing is not a passing act, nor an isolated incident, but rather a deliberate approach and a systematic pattern of repeated aggression."

Later on Sunday, Qatar said a civilian had been killed, and another person was hurt, by shrapnel related to "military operations in the area" after a vessel didn't return at its scheduled time on Saturday. It did not give details.

Trump accuses Iran of violating ceasefire

The U.S. military said it struck Iranian military "surveillance infrastructure, communication systems, air defense sites, drone storage facilities and minelayer capabilities" following an attack on a ship on Saturday. The Panamanian-flagged tanker Kiku carried crude oil for the state-run energy company of Qatar, another key mediator.

U.S. President Donald Trump on social media accused Iran of violating the deal and warned of a point where the U.S. may "be forced to militarily complete the job."

"If that happens, the Islamic Republic of Iran will no longer exist!" Trump wrote.

The exchanges of fire began when an Iranian drone struck a merchant vessel off Oman on Thursday and the U.S. military retaliated.

Ship traffic on the strait had increased over the past 72 hours, "despite the elevated threat environment," the multinational maritime body overseen by the U.S. Navy said Sunday, adding that "U.S.-assisted commercial transits continued uninterrupted."

It said 89 such transits had been made, below the historical average of 138 vessels a day.

Iran calls for new 'conflict control unit' in Lebanon

Last week, Israel and Lebanon signed a framework agreement to end the latest fighting between Israel and the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group, which began two days after the Iran war started when Hezbollah fired at Israel. Israel has responded with an invasion of southern Lebanon and it has said it will not withdraw until Hezbollah is disarmed.

The agreement did not include Iran or Hezbollah, which has criticized it and rejected calls to disarm.

On Sunday, Iran's foreign minister again said the U.S. must force Israel to halt attacks and withdraw. Israel occupies around 600 square kilometers (231 square miles) in southern Lebanon, which it says it needs as a security buffer.

Sporadic clashes have continued, and Hezbollah's leader said Saturday that the group would continue fighting until Israel withdraws from Lebanon.

Key Iranian negotiator and parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf said Sunday that a meeting of a new "conflict control unit" formed among Iran, the United States and Lebanon should meet as soon as possible, Iran's state broadcaster reported.

Two strikes hit southern Lebanon on Sunday morning — one in Taybeh town and the other in the Nabatiyeh area, according to Lebanon's National News Agency. There was no immediate word on casualties.

Overnight, Hezbollah militants killed an Israeli soldier in Deir Siryan village in southern Lebanon, according to Israel's military. Hezbollah did not comment.

Israel targets a village in Syria

Israel's military targeted Abdin village in southern Syria's Daraa province with artillery shelling Sunday evening, Syrian state media reported. There was no immediate report of casualties.

The provincial government of Daraa said in a statement that residents of the village had thrown rocks at

an Israeli convoy when it advanced on the village, and that the troops withdrew after U.N. peacekeepers intervened. It said the Israeli artillery shelling drove Abdin's residents to flee the village.

Earlier on Sunday, Israel's military said it had killed several armed men in southern Syria but gave no details. There was no statement from Syrian officials.

Israel seized control of a U.N.-patrolled buffer zone in southern Syria in December 2024 following the ouster of former Syrian President Bashar Assad in an insurgent offensive. Israeli officials initially called the move temporary, but more recently they have said they plan to occupy the zone indefinitely.

Grief and optimism clash in scramble to locate survivors 4 days after Venezuela earthquakes

By REGINA GARCIA CANO, FERNANDO VERGARA and MEGAN JANETSKY Associated Press

LA GUAIRA, Venezuela (AP) — Local and international rescue teams raced against the clock to pull survivors from the rubble in Venezuela on Sunday, four days after two powerful earthquakes shook the northern state of La Guaira.

The government reported 1,450 dead from the quakes Sunday afternoon as it faced growing criticism from Venezuelans that its response was inadequate and overshadowed by civilian-led efforts to rescue people buried under collapsed buildings. Thousands more have been reported missing.

Even as the likelihood of finding people alive diminished with each passing hour, rescuers continued to free some survivors from mountains of debris, offering anguished families a sliver of hope. The first 48 to 72 hours after a natural disaster are crucial to rescue efforts, though survival can be extended if people have access to food and water.

Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodríguez said Sunday night that even as the threshold passed, the search for survivors would continue. More than 2,600 rescue workers from around the world had arrived with trained search dogs and machinery, the government said.

"It's been incredibly hard work, but we're going strong," said Jason Mercano, a civilian who was able to communicate with family buried under the rubble and was working with rescue teams to pull them out.

"We've never given up hope," he added.

More than 770 buildings partially or totally collapsed

Still, many Venezuelans are struggling to hold onto hope in an increasingly desperate situation. The one-two punch of 7.2 and 7.5 magnitude earthquakes that hit last Wednesday have left a trail of devastation. The U.N. said up to 6.8 million of Venezuela's nearly 30 million residents may be affected by the earthquakes.

A layer of dust coated coastal communities, and as the stench of decomposing bodies spread, more people began to wear masks.

Authorities said Sunday that more than 770 buildings had totally or partially collapsed from the earthquakes, twice as many as were reported destroyed or damaged on Friday. The risk of further damage remains as aftershocks continued to shake Venezuela; quakes measuring 4.2 and 4.5 hit Sunday morning.

But rescue efforts in La Guaira — the hardest-hit area — appeared significantly more organized on Sunday as international rescue missions arrived en masse. In previous days, residents there had expressed frustration and anger about the level of response.

The government reported on state television that more than 14,000 members of the military and police are now patrolling La Guaira state, where access is blocked and special permits are required to enter.

Because of the chaos and shoddy cellphone service since the earthquakes, many Venezuelans have turned to non-governmental digital databases to report their loved ones as missing. More than 50,000 people were reported missing on one such database, though it is unclear how many have been found.

Optimism and grief mark La Guaira

Moments of optimism contrasted sharply with grief on Sunday.

Masses of people gathered around a mountain of debris watching as rescue crews from the U.S., France and Venezuela pulled a man and his son from a crack in the concrete, covered in dust and almost unre-

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sponsive. Helmet-clad teams pulled them on a black tarp and passed the two carefully through the crowd to an ambulance to hydrate them through an IV.

Rescue teams and onlookers burst into applause in a moment of relief, then continued working.

In another part of La Guaira, Helen Guedez and her mother were reeling. They had spent days trying to save her father Jesús from their apartment.

She felt a swell of hope when rescue teams from the U.S. had come to inspect the building and confirmed to them that her dad was still alive under the rubble. But they told the family that the building was too unstable to enter and rescue him, she said.

They left the scene, but Guedez said would continue to try and rescue their father without their assistance. She said they were now working with civilian volunteers and local miners to get him out.

"We're not going to give up," said Guedez. "The rest of the team is willing to continue. They know there's another way to get him out and they said they're going to keep working until the very end."

Despite the overwhelming demand for medical services and the shortage of supplies in Venezuela's public health system, Domingo Luciani Hospital in the capital of Caracas coped with an influx of patients thanks to a flood of donations.

"We have tons of patients, but thank god, people have responded by bringing us a great deal of supplies," said Leomery Pérez, an anesthesiologist at the hospital.

Authorities said they had treated more than 3,100 wounded people, including many with crush injuries.

A big challenge for Venezuela's acting president

The disaster poses a significant challenge for acting President Rodríguez, the former vice president who took office in January after the U.S. capture and removal of then-President Nicolás Maduro.

Since then, the U.S. government has played an increasingly powerful role in dictating the future of the South American nation. Venezuela has faced economic disarray for more than a decade, and many people reject the legitimacy of the political movement Rodríguez represents.

The country now faces even more difficult circumstances, said Ronal Rodríguez, researcher for the Bogotá-based Venezuelan Observatory at the University of Rosario.

"There is political interference by the United States, the operational incompetence of a government that has driven the country into a complex humanitarian crisis and, all of the sudden, an earthquake in a place that lacks human capital and short-term resources to address the situation," he said.

Amy Pope, director general from International Organization for Migration, warned that displacement from Venezuela – where crisis has forced 8 million people to migrate over the past decade – was likely to increase as people seek safety.

Rodríguez on Sunday said she was setting up a special commission to assess the damage to homes to confirm whether it's safe for people sleeping on the streets to return, adding that her government would also examine infrastructure damage. The search for life in the destruction, she said, would also continue.

"Today we recovered people who are still alive," she said. "We always maintain hope."

Nvidia's AI chip sales in China stall, as local chipmakers like Huawei take the lead

By CHAN HO-HIM AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — In the race between the U.S. and China to develop artificial intelligence, the battle over hardware and computing power is heating up as Chinese companies like Huawei overtake global industry leaders like Nvidia in their home market.

Jensen Huang, the CEO of computer chip giant Nvidia, was mobbed by onlookers as he hit the streets for the "zhajiangmian" noodles while visiting Beijing during U.S. President Donald Trump's May summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping. But his celebrity status has not translated into success in selling Nvidia's advanced chips in China.

Controls imposed by Washington on exports of advanced technology due to national security concerns initially stalled sales of Nvidia's advanced H200 AI chips there. By the time Huang won a reprieve, with

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Trump agreeing to their sale, Beijing had switched to encouraging use of domestically designed chips made by local rivals led by Huawei.

Huang has acknowledged that the U.S. has lost its edge in China's advanced AI chips market as Chinese competitors have become "giants."

"Well, we were in China for 30 years, and before the export control banned Nvidia out of China we had about 95% market share, and so we were competing just fine," he said in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

"We have to have, number one, make sure that we have national security and that we protect our nation, but we also simultaneously should go and compete and grow our technology industry and maximize our exports," he said.

Among Chinese chipmakers, Huawei leads

Since the U.S. in 2019 excluded Huawei, and later China in general, from buying some of the world's most powerful computer chips and chipmaking machinery, Chinese semiconductor makers have rushed to become self-sufficient, developing their own chips and knowhow.

Santa Clara, California-based Nvidia and its main rival AMD, or Advanced Micro Devices, dominate in the U.S. AI chip sector and much of the global market, but Huawei has made big inroads in China as Chinese AI companies like DeepSeek drive a push for improved chip performance and cost-effectiveness.

A report by Bernstein, a global equity research and brokerage firm, estimated that Nvidia had about a 40% market share in China's AI chips market in 2025, roughly matched by Huawei. Bernstein has predicted Nvidia's market share will shrink to around 8% this year, while Huawei's will likely grow to about 50%.

Nvidia "has definitely lost significant ground to Huawei, which (now) leads domestically," said Antonia Hmadi, with the Mercator Institute for China Studies who focuses on semiconductors.

By some measures, Huawei's most advanced commercial AI chips, the Ascend 950 series, can be seen as roughly comparable to Nvidia's H200, considered in the industry to be among Nvidia's most powerful products, according to industry analysts.

"China now believes in its own self-sufficiency and supply capabilities," said He Hui, director of semiconductor research at research and advisory firm Omdia.

Last September, Huawei also said it was rolling out some of the world's most powerful AI computing clusters, combining the power of thousands of chips like its global rivals, despite having to rely on Chinese-made semiconductors due to the U.S. export controls.

Asked at a recent event about how Huawei's chip technology compares its rivals', including in the United States, He Tingbo, head of Huawei's semiconductor business, said: "We have found pretty good solutions."

"Who can walk faster? Huawei or other companies? I don't know the answer," she said. "I think only time will tell."

Nvidia is still vital for Chinese AI

The semiconductor supply chain is global and no single country can build an advanced AI chip on its own.

Demand still exceeds available supply in China when it comes to AI chips, said Rui Ma, founder of Tech Buzz China.

Several recent cases linked to smuggling Nvidia's AI chips into China to circumvent export controls show the appetite for its technology.

Nvidia designs the world's most powerful AI chips. To make them, it relies on Dutch company ASML's extreme ultraviolet lithography, or EUV, machines, which rely on U.S. components and technologies. Taiwan chipmaking giant TSMC uses those machines to make a large share of Nvidia's top AI chips at its fabrication plants.

China is barred from buying Nvidia's most powerful AI chips or ASML chipmaking EUV machines.

Huawei's high-performance chips lag behind Nvidia's most advanced technologies in many areas. Cutting edge technologies in China such as training AI models like DeepSeek's still rely on Nvidia AI chips, analysts say.

Chinese universities and other big tech companies also want chips like the H200, in part for research and development.

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Nvidia's global sales are still expanding as AI demand surges. The company expects around \$91 billion of revenue in May-July, up from nearly \$82 billion in the previous quarter, excluding any data center compute revenue from China.

Nvidia's latest annual revenue was almost \$216 billion, while Huawei's was \$126 billion for a comparable period.

Huawei is catching up

DeepSeek, the fast-growing Chinese rival of OpenAI's ChatGPT or Anthropic's Claude, said that its latest V4 AI model rolled out in April was adapted for Huawei's advanced Ascend chips.

Paul Triolo, a partner at DGA-Albright Stonebridge Group, said it is likely there is "significant effort going into collaboration between DeepSeek and Huawei" to train future DeepSeek models on domestic hardware.

That shows how Chinese-made chips can potentially replace Nvidia ones, said Phelix Lee, an analyst at Morningstar. But he added that, "We don't expect an abrupt switch toward (Huawei's) Ascend."

Nvidia engineered its H20 chips, stripping down their computing power, so they could be sold to China without violating U.S. restrictions. Up to last year, it was still selling H20 chips in China, although shipments were gradually declining, said Brady Wang, a Taipei-based semiconductor analyst with Counterpoint Research.

Beijing's public stance on imports of H200 chips has been unclear and Nvidia has said it has not sold H200 chips in China. At Nvidia's recent shareholders meeting, Huang said it had "yet to generate any revenue, and we are uncertain whether any imports will be allowed into the country."

Huawei also has global chip aspirations

Already the world's biggest supplier of telecommunications network equipment, Huawei has been expanding in global markets and its chips are no exception.

The company says it operates in 170 countries and regions with a mission of "bringing digital to every person, home and organization for a fully connected, intelligent world."

While there may be demand in other countries for its chips, China's production capacity for advanced chips still falls short of demand at home.

As China's advanced chip manufacturing capacity increases and pricing become more competitive, they could gain market share in regions like Southeast Asia among others, said Wang of Counterpoint.

"China's strategy of pursuing technological self-sufficiency — and eventually exporting its technologies — is unlikely to change regardless of whether Nvidia can sell its chips in China," Wang said.

Alex Murdaugh's true crime saga continues as he heads to court for hearing on murder retrial

By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

Alex Murdaugh will be back in court again Monday on charges he killed his wife and son, appearing at a pretrial hearing that will likely be short on substance but long on spectacle as the true crime sensation continues to captivate.

Murdaugh's murder convictions and sentence of life in prison were overturned last month by the South Carolina Supreme Court. The only goals of Monday's hearing are to set deadlines for exchanging evidence between the defense and prosecution, and to figure out dates for other hearings and maybe for the next trial.

Dozens of media outlets, from international agencies to local TV stations to true crime podcasters are heading to the Lexington County courthouse to again chronicle every forehead rub and quizzical look from the once rich and imposing Southern lawyer.

It's a rare chance to see up close how prison life has changed the 58-year-old Murdaugh, who still has decades to serve in a South Carolina prison after pleading guilty to stealing about \$12 million from clients and his family's law firm.

There likely is one other bit of business before the hearing starts at 10 a.m. Monday. Even though he remains in prison, Murdaugh's lawyers want the judge to allow him to wear civilian clothes and not have

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his wrists or ankles shackled at every hearing and during his retrial.

"Mr. Murdaugh's convictions for non-violent, white-collar crimes in no way justify presenting him to the jury pool as a shackled prisoner in a prison jumpsuit via video cameras at televised pretrial hearings," defense attorneys wrote in their request.

Murdaugh's attorneys have already filed other pretrial motions. One asks prosecutors to turn over for testing at a private lab DNA found under his wife's fingernails that investigators said was from an unknown and unrelated man.

Defense lawyers want to provide Murdaugh, who was disbarred during his legal troubles, a laptop in prison without internet access to review evidence so they don't have to print it all and want to hold the next trial outside of Colleton County where the killings happened and the first trial took place.

While admitting he is a thief, insurance cheat, liar and bad lawyer, Murdaugh has adamantly denied shooting to death his wife, Maggie, and younger son, Paul, since he found their bodies outside their home in 2021.

A jury convicted him of two counts of murder in 2023 and he was sentenced to life in prison without parole.

But during that trial, a few jurors said the Colleton County clerk of court, assigned to oversee the evidence and the jury during the trial, told them to watch Murdaugh's body language when he testified in his own defense and to not be fooled, confused or thrown off by what he might say.

The state Supreme Court ruled that was a suggestion Murdaugh was guilty and overturned his convictions.

The justices also were concerned that days of testimony at the murder trial centered around how Murdaugh stole from clients, many of them in dire straits.

Brief testimony is fine, but details such as how some of the people Murdaugh stole from were disabled or vulnerable could unfairly turn against him jurors who should be focused just on whether he killed his family, the justices said.

Murdaugh remains in a South Carolina prison as he serves a 40-year federal sentence at the same time as a 27-year state sentence for his financial crimes.

FACT FOCUS: A look at the Trump administration's challenge to birthright citizenship

By TIM SULLIVAN Associated Press

When it comes to birthright citizenship, the Trump administration hasn't been subtle about its views.

The practice, which grants automatic citizenship to nearly everyone born on U.S. soil and which is soon to face Supreme Court judgment, is "a disgrace," according to President Donald Trump.

"The gravest and most preposterous of all constitutional abominations," top White House adviser Stephen Miller wrote on X.

"The dumbest immigration policy in the world," Vice President JD Vance said in 2025.

"You know, we're the only country that has it," Trump said in one interview, a claim he has made repeatedly. And falsely.

The Supreme Court is expected to address the issue in the coming days, ruling on a Trump executive order that would upend more than a century of constitutional and legal history.

"It's all up to a couple of people," he told reporters recently. "I hope they do what's right."

Here's a closer look at the facts.

Birthright citizenship became law in 1868

Birthright citizenship became law in 1868 when the 14th Amendment was ratified in the aftermath of the Civil War, in part to ensure that former slaves would be citizens.

In the late 1800s, in the case of Wong Kim Ark, a man born in the U.S. to Chinese parents, it was expanded to include children of immigrants. In later cases, the Supreme Court ruled that anyone born in the U.S. is a citizen, including if their parents are in the U.S. illegally or temporarily.

There are a tiny number of exceptions, mostly for children born in the U.S. to foreign diplomats.

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It became an accepted part of U.S. jurisprudence and, until Trump, few saw it as controversial.

That's not surprising, since until fairly recently even many Republicans spoke warmly about immigration.

Recent immigrants "have crawled over walls and under barbed wire and through mine fields" to reach the U.S., President Ronald Reagan said at a 1984 naturalization ceremony in Detroit for new citizens.

"And all of them have added to the sum total of what your new country is."

Trump casts birthright citizenship as a 'magnet for illegal immigration'

Opposition to immigration has long been central to Trump's campaigns, and he has tapped into public frustration with issues like soaring illegal border crossings during the Biden administration, when border arrests from Mexico reached a record-high of 250,000 in just one month.

To Trump, birthright citizenship is a "magnet for illegal immigration," with administration officials often pointing to illegal "birth tourism" networks that arrange for non-U.S. citizens to come to the country solely to give birth.

In legal arguments against the practice, government lawyers often focus on one phrase in the amendment: "subject to the jurisdiction thereof." Breaking with most legal scholars, they insist that means the U.S. can deny citizenship to babies born to women who are in the country illegally.

But during April's oral arguments on the case, even some conservative Supreme Court justices questioned that approach.

Trump says only the US has birthright citizenship. Is that true?

No.

It's true that the practice isn't the norm around the world. In most countries, a child's citizenship follows that of its parents, no matter where the birth takes place.

Yet dozens of countries other than the United States have unrestricted birthright citizenship. Most are in the Americas, including Canada, Mexico and many nations in Central and South America.

Dozens of other countries, from Germany to Australia, have a mixed approach, using a variety of principles, including parenthood, place of birth, residency and ethnicity, to decide a child's citizenship.

The Supreme Court nears the end of its term with momentous cases about Trump's power to be decided By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is wrapping up a term that has focused on President Donald Trump's expansive claims of presidential power.

Trump's efforts to restrict birthright citizenship, fire the heads of most independent agencies at will and remove a sitting Federal Reserve governor are among the remaining eight cases the justices are expected to decide this week, beginning Monday.

The court also is weighing, in cases from West Virginia and Idaho, whether to uphold laws in roughly half the states that prohibit transgender girls and women from playing on their public school and college sports.

Two election-related cases remain, over state laws that allow a grace period for the receipt of mailed ballots, provided they are sent by Election Day, and limits on political party spending in support of candidates for Congress and president.

Also outstanding is a dispute over geofence warrants that collect the location history of cellphone users to find people near crime scenes. Critics say the practice is a fishing expedition that violates civil liberties.

The court's conservative majority has so far been mostly receptive to Trump's immigration crackdown, including a decision last week allowing the administration to end temporary legal protections for people who came to the U.S. because of war or natural disaster in their homeland. Another decision could make it harder for people fleeing persecution to seek asylum in the United States.

During arguments in April, the justices signaled a more skeptical look at Trump's executive order that would overturn long-settled understanding and deny citizenship to children born to parents who are in the country illegally or temporarily.

The court also has rejected Trump's assertion of the power to unilaterally impose wide-ranging tariffs under an emergency powers law.

The decision in February drew Trump's ire, including an unusually harsh and personal denunciation of two of his court appointees, Justices Neil Gorsuch and Amy Coney Barrett, who voted against him.

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The extent of Trump's power to fire independent agency members is the oldest undecided case, argued in December. The justices seem likely to overturn, or drastically narrow, a 91-year-old decision. It required a cause, like neglect of duty, before a president could remove the Senate-confirmed officials from their jobs.

The outcome appears to be in little doubt because the conservatives have allowed the firings to take effect while the case plays out, even after lower-court judges found the firings illegal.

The court seemed less willing to endorse Trump's bid to immediately fire Federal Reserve governor Lisa Cook over allegations of mortgage fraud, which she denies. No president has ever fired a Fed governor in the agency's 112-year history.

By custom, the court finishes its work before July 4. After this week, its next public meeting is the first Monday in October.

Lauryn Hill honored, Janet Jackson stuns Teyana Taylor and Druski makes history at BET Awards

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — After watching a 20-minute tribute celebrating her groundbreaking career, Lauryn Hill surprised the BET Awards audience Sunday with an impromptu performance of her 1998 classic "Ex-Factor" after accepting the Living Legend Icon Award before closing the show with "Everything Is Everything."

Introduced by Ice Cube, the eight-time Grammy winner was honored with performances at Los Angeles' Peacock Theater from SZA, DoeChii, Lizzo, Queen Latifah, Common, her children Selah Marley and Zion Marley, who revisited songs from Hill's stellar catalog while she stood smiling, singing along and applauding throughout the tribute.

After she accepted the honor, Hill encouraged artists to embrace their gifts and remain true to their purpose.

"I fight for y'all," Hill said. "And fighting for y'all is me fighting for myself, it's me fighting for my children, it's me fighting for my community."

The Living Legend Icon Award recognizes pioneers whose work has remained culturally essential across generations. Hill first emerged as a member of the Fugees before releasing her landmark solo debut, "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill," featuring classics including "Doo Wop (That Thing)," "Ex-Factor" and "Everything Is Everything."

Janet Jackson surprises Teyana Taylor with honor

Teyana Taylor fought back tears Sunday after an emotional surprise at the BET Awards: Janet Jackson walked onto the stage to present Taylor with the Icon of the Year Award.

Taylor, visibly stunned as Jackson received a standing ovation, embraced the music legend before thanking one of her biggest inspirations.

"They did not tell me Janet was coming," Taylor said through tears. "There will be no me without you."

Presenting the award, Jackson praised Taylor's relentless work ethic and artistic range, highlighting her Golden Globe win for best supporting actress in "One Battle After Another" and calling her gifts "God-given."

The Icon of the Year Award recognizes a creative force whose influence is shaping culture. Taylor has evolved from a multiplatinum recording artist into an award-winning actor, director, producer and choreographer.

Accepting the honor, Taylor reflected on her two-decade career.

"I worked my (expletives) off 20 years," she said. "So I'm not accepting what I've earned with arrogance. I'm accepting what I've earned with gratitude."

BET Awards remembers Clive Davis, Richard Smallwood and other trailblazers

The BET Awards paused to honor influential figures from music and entertainment who died over the past year during an emotional in memoriam tribute.

Erica Campbell of Mary Mary introduced the segment by reflecting on the enduring legacies left behind

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by those who died, paying special tribute to the late gospel composer Richard Smallwood, whose music she said strengthened her faith. She also remembered the late music executive Clive Davis, who died earlier this week at 94, before performing Whitney Houston's "I Love the Lord" with Le'Andria Johnson.

The tribute remembered Smallwood, Davis, Malcolm-Jamal Warner and others whose contributions left a lasting mark on music, television and culture.

D'Angelo honored with all-star tribute

The show also celebrated the late D'Angelo's legacy with a star-studded tribute that opened with appearances by his three children.

Ari Lennox, BJ the Chicago Kid, Durand Bernarr, George Clinton and RAYE were among the artists who honored the singer with performances of his music, celebrating the enduring influence of one of R&B's most acclaimed voices.

Sylvia Rhone honored for shaping generations of artists

Music executive Sylvia Rhone received the BET Ultimate Icon Award in recognition of her groundbreaking leadership and lasting impact on the music industry.

Presented by Kelly Rowland, the honor celebrated Rhone's trailblazing career as the first Black woman to lead a major record company owned by a Fortune 500 corporation. A video tribute featured messages from artists including Missy Elliott and Busta Rhymes, highlighting her role in helping develop the careers of performers such as Tracy Chapman, Brandy, Erykah Badu, Lil Wayne, Kid Cudi, Future, Travis Scott and Tyler, the Creator.

While accepting the award, Rhone dedicated the honor to the artists and creative teams she has worked alongside throughout her career.

"Tonight's honor bears my name, but it really belongs to all of us who create culture," she said.

Rhone also used the moment to urge the music industry to protect artists as artificial intelligence reshapes the business.

"We make the algorithm. The algorithm doesn't make us," she said. "We must honor the musician. We must compensate the creator."

She concluded by calling on the industry to ensure the next generation of artists has the opportunity to create "the songs that will change the world."

Druski opens BET Awards with dramatic entrance

Druski made a grand entrance to kick off the BET Awards on Sunday, descending from the rafters in a harness as a choir filled the theater with a rendition of Kirk Franklin's "Revolution," setting the tone for a night celebrating music, comedy and culture.

The comedian and digital creator made history by becoming the youngest host of the ceremony. The show's opening performances featured Kehlani, who sang "Folded" with Jamie Foxx and his daughter, Anelise Estelle Foxx, on guitar. Don Toliver also performed his hits "E85" and "Body."

Accepting the award for best female R&B/pop artist, Kehlani admitted she hadn't prepared a speech, instead marveling that "Janet Jackson is here," before telling the icon she was "really honored to be here" among the night's talent.

Druski, 31, surpassed Kevin Hart, who previously held the distinction as the BET Award's youngest host when he emceed in 2011.

Throughout the night, Druski leaned into his comedic persona with appearances alongside Martin Lawrence and Latto. Lawrence jokingly shut down Druski's pitch to appear in the next "Bad Boys" film before teasing his upcoming Paramount+ series, while Latto playfully poked fun at the host during one of the show's transitions. Druski also spoofed Jay-Z's Roots Picnic freestyle.

Druski became one of entertainment's fastest-rising stars through his viral sketches before expanding into sold-out comedy tours and collaborations with artists including Drake and Snoop Dogg, as well as appearances alongside figures like Tom Brady and Timothée Chalamet.

Hip-hop pioneer MC Lyte returned as the show's announcer.

Australia to double potential fines for Facebook and Instagram over child social media accounts

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Australia plans to double potential fines for social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram, who fail to prevent Australian children from holding accounts as critics argue the world-first ban on under-16s was failing.

Communications Minister Anika Wells on Monday blamed the platforms' resistance to the age restrictions for the need to toughen the laws that came into force on Dec. 10.

"We can all agree we would like the scheme to work better than it is currently, but that is on Big Tech taking the Mickey," Wells told the Australian Broadcasting Corp., using an Australian slang term for deceiving, teasing or mocking.

The government announced Sunday it would introduce draft legislation into Parliament this week that would double the maximum fine to 99 million Australian dollars (\$68 million) for platforms that fail to take reasons steps to prevent Australian children from holding accounts.

The amendments would also increase the powers of eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant, Australia's online safety watchdog, to demand information and documents to ensure platforms were complying with Australian law, a government statement said.

The new powers would also include information from third parties, such as age assurance technology providers, to test claims made by the platforms about how those under 16 continued to circumvent the ban, the statement said.

Senior opposition lawmaker Jane Hume said her party would consider voting for the reforms, saying the "social media ban wasn't working" because of deficient laws.

"The legislation was clearly undercooked in the first place. The eSafety Commissioner wasn't given the powers to be able to pursue these Big Tech companies," Hume said.

Parliament passed the initial legislation with overwhelming support in 2024. The targeted platforms were given more than 12 months to plan to implement the ban.

Many countries who have implemented or are planning similar restrictions have been closely watching progress of Australia's ban.

The government initially reported more than 5 million children had accounts removed, deactivated or restricted after the ban became law.

But eSafety reported in March that seven in 10 children who held accounts on restricted platforms on Dec. 10 remained on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok.

Inman Grant said in April she was considering court action against those platforms and YouTube, alleging they were not taking reasonable steps to exclude children.

She had been satisfied with progress made by the remaining restricted platforms: X, Kick, Reddit, Threads and Twitch.

Wells said she had received monthly updates from eSafety since March and "we are not seeing improvements."

"These (draft) changes ensure that the eSafety Commissioner has the tools and powers she needs to hold platforms to account and we're making sure that she can do just that," Wells said.

Khadijah Farrakhan, 'first lady of Nation of Islam' as wife of famous pastor, dies at 90

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

Khadijah Farrakhan, longtime wife of Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, died Saturday, the Nation of Islam has announced. She was 90.

"Mother Khadijah" worked alongside her provocative and charismatic husband for decades, helping lead their religious and sociopolitical movement, which espouses Black self-reliance. Its home base was Mosque

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Maryam on the south side of Chicago, where the pair lived.

"The Honorable Minister @LouisFarrakhan with deep sadness yet with profound gratitude to Allah informs you that his beloved wife of 72 years, the first lady of the Nation of Islam, Mother Khadijah has returned to Allah (may Allah be pleased)," a statement by the Shura Executive Council said.

Her death came only seven months after devotees had marked Khadijah's 90th birthday. The statement said funeral services are to be announced.

Mosque Maryam remembered Farrakhan as "a devoted follower" with "a precious soul, a sweet heart."

In a post on Facebook, R&B artist ZaRio Son Rise recalled her as "a true queen, a righteous woman, and one of the greatest examples of dignity, faith, loyalty, and grace our generation has ever witnessed."

Born Betsy Ross, Khadijah Farrakhan married her husband, then named Louis Walcott, in Boston on Sept. 12, 1953. The two had nine children. Their eldest son, Louis Farrakhan Jr., died in 2018, and son Joshua Farrakhan died in 2023.

Khadijah Farrakhan converted to Islam in 1955, the same year that her husband joined the Chicago-based movement after being heavily influenced by Malcolm X, his friend from Boston. The pair changed their names around that time.

Louis Farrakhan stepped into the organization's leadership vacuum shortly after Malcolm X was assassinated in 1965. Among his most significant accomplishments was the Million Man March on Washington in 1995.

Two years later, Khadijah Farrakhan spoke before a gathering of America's Black women in Philadelphia dubbed the Million Woman March.

"A nation can rise no higher than its women," she told the crowd. "We focus on women but cannot lose sight that we must rise as a family -- men, women and children."

France records around 1,000 additional deaths as extreme heat breaks European records

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER and JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — France saw around 1,000 additional deaths last week at the height of its record-smashing heat wave, the country's public health agency said Sunday, as the head of the World Health Organization warned that Europe is now the fastest-warming continent and needs to do more to protect its citizens.

Temperature records were toppled in several countries on the weekend, wildfires were sparked in Germany and Berlin police used water cannons to cool down the crowds.

Meanwhile, the heat wave slowly moved toward eastern parts of the continent.

Germany marked a new record for the third day in a row with 41.7 degrees Celsius (107 degrees Fahrenheit) in Neißemünde, near the border with Poland, which baked under its new all-time high of 40.5 C (104.9 F). The Czech Republic also experienced its hottest day ever with 41.9 C (107.4 F), up from the previous record of 40.9 degrees Celsius (105.6 F) on Saturday.

A new study from the World Weather Attribution, a Europe-based collaboration of scientists, reported Friday that the record-breaking heat and humidity in Europe this past week would not have been possible without climate change.

The rapid study 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.

France records surge in deaths during heat wave

France reported a surge in deaths last week, including a sharp increase at private homes, especially in the Paris region, the national public health agency said Sunday.

There were more than 1,200 deaths on Wednesday, when France was sweltering under its hottest temperatures, increasing to more than 1,400 deaths on each of the two following days, Public Health France said. In April and May, before the heat wave, France's rate of deaths was about 900 to 1,000 per day.

The agency concluded that France experienced a total of at least 1,000 additional deaths during those three days alone, an estimate it cautioned is likely to increase as more data is collected, including for

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deaths at home.

The increase was sharpest in areas under red warnings of extreme heat, it said. Those warnings blanketed about three-quarters of the country at the peak of the heat wave. The agency said that 85% of the deaths involved people aged 65 and above.

Europe is the fastest-warming continent, WHO warns

"Europe is the fastest-warming continent on Earth, heating at twice the global average," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said Sunday on X. "Right now 150 million people are living under extreme heat, hundreds have died, schools are shut, grids are buckling."

Driven by climate change and global warming, the "once-in-a-generation" heat wave is now occurring nearly every year, Tedros said, adding that more than 1,300 excess deaths have been recorded since June 21 linked to high temperatures in Europe.

"Heat stress is often called the 'silent killer' — and European homes, workplaces and schools were not built for these temperatures," Tedros warned as he called on European countries to implement action plans. He said they should focus on preparedness, prevention and stronger health system responses.

Lightning strikes Swedish theme park

In Sweden, several people were injured when they were hit by lightning at an amusement park, the country's TT news agency reported.

Three adults were taken to the hospital, among them a woman with serious injuries, after the lightning struck the Tosselilla Sommarland park in Tomelilla in the south of the country.

Across Europe, the extreme heat has been followed by severe thunderstorms.

Denmark, which marked new temperature records on Saturday, recorded 1,156 lightning strikes by Sunday morning, according to public broadcaster DR.

Heat sparks wildfires in forests contaminated with WWII ammunition

In Gohrschheide, in eastern Germany, a fire broke out in a large forest that's still contaminated with ammunition from World War II, complicating efforts by firefighters.

Similarly, a major firefighting operation was underway in southwest Germany near the village of Traisen, where the heat sparked a forest fire in an area that also contained unexploded ordnance. Firefighters had to stop work temporarily after explosions took place and an ordnance disposal unit was brought in to continuously assess the situation, German news agency dpa reported. Some 650 people in Traisen had to leave their homes Sunday afternoon because the fire continued to spread.

Fire departments in the big cities were busy sending out ambulances to people suffering from heat-related illnesses. In Berlin, an additional 500 ambulance dispatches were reported on Saturday, most of them heat-related.

Berlin police use water cannons to cool down locals and tourists

The German capital's police found a way to help suffering Berliners and tourists alike. They put up two huge water cannons — usually used to disperse unruly protesters — in front of the iconic Brandenburg Gate and sprayed the cool water across the cheering crowd.

The heat also worsened damage to infrastructure, with the concrete surface on countless highways breaking up, and a weekend warning by national rail operator Deutsche Bahn to avoid all unnecessary train travel.

More than 600 passengers had to be evacuated from an overheated train in Brandenburg after a tree fell onto an overhead power line during a storm on Saturday evening. The train, which was on its way from Hamburg to Prague, lost power. The air conditioners stopped working and the doors were locked until emergency responders forced them open. Two people were hospitalized with heat-related problems, dpa reported.

In the eastern city of Leipzig, no trams will be running until early Monday morning due to heat damage to tracks and switches. The Leipzig Public Transportation Authority said that the high temperatures had caused the joint sealant for asphalt and concrete in switches and tracks to run and clump together in many places throughout the city's network.

Ukrainian drones set another Russian oil refinery ablaze as Putin admits fuel shortages

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine kept up its heavy drone assault on Russia, setting fire to a major oil refinery in the south, as President Vladimir Putin acknowledged for the first time on Sunday that the country was facing a “certain deficit” of fuel and vowed to strengthen protection of oil facilities and boost fuel output.

Ukraine has markedly stepped up its long-range attacks on Russian military industries and energy facilities in recent months, aiming to cut Moscow’s revenue for its invasion — now in its fifth year — and make Russians feel the consequences.

“Our ‘long-range sanctions’ reached two oil refineries in Russia,” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on the Telegram messaging app on Sunday. “Each (strike) means a reduction in the resources that fuel the Russian war machine, and another step toward peace.”

The campaign has choked Russian fuel supplies, causing widespread shortages and long lines at gas stations across the country and prompting authorities in many regions to introduce fuel rationing. According to Western analysts, it has also slowed Moscow’s efforts on the battlefield, heaping pressure on the Kremlin to come to the negotiating table.

Putin says Ukrainian attacks aim to split Russian society

Speaking to a Russian state TV reporter, Putin described the Ukrainian attacks on oil refineries as an attempt to “cause a split in Russian society and force Russia to halt, even if only briefly, the advance of our troops along the line of contact, and create conditions for launching a negotiation process on terms advantageous to our adversary.”

“We will not give them that chance,” Putin said, adding that “strikes on our infrastructure, wherever they are directed, have absolutely no effect on the situation at the front, on the line of contact.”

He said for the first time that Ukraine has proposed a halt on deep strikes, arguing that Kyiv made the offer because Russian strikes deep into Ukrainian territory are more powerful and devastating.

The Russian leader added that Kyiv also offered to limit the fighting to the four regions that Russia annexed but never fully captured — Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia. He rejected the proposal, arguing it would allow Ukraine to relocate its forces that are fighting Russian troops in other areas to let them focus on fending off the Russian attacks in the four southeastern regions.

Ukrainian drones set major Russian refinery on fire

Meanwhile, debris from downed Ukrainian drones sparked a blaze at the refinery in Slavyansk-na-Kubani, a town in Russia’s Krasnodar region, east of occupied Crimea, according to regional Gov. Veniamin Konratyev. The falling debris killed one person in Slavyansk and wounded another in a nearby village, local authorities said.

The facility is one of southern Russia’s major refineries, processing close to 4 million tons of crude per year, according to its operator’s website. It is also a key source of petroleum products intended for export through Russia’s Black Sea ports, including fuel oil, naphtha and marine fuel.

Zelenskyy also claimed that another Russian refinery, in the Yaroslavl region around 700 kilometers (435 miles) from the Ukrainian border, was hit during the nighttime strikes.

There were no immediate reports from Russian authorities about the strike on the Yaroslavl refinery. Local Gov. Mikhail Evraev reported on Sunday morning that some roads between Moscow and the region’s capital, Yaroslavl, were temporarily closed due to “an enemy attack by Ukrainian drones.”

Fuel shortages in Russia as Putin says plans will be ‘adjusted’

For months, Ukraine has been stepping up attacks on energy facilities deep inside Russia. Despite a raft of Western sanctions, Moscow remains among the world’s top exporters of oil and natural gas.

More recently, Ukraine has attempted to choke off fuel deliveries to Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula illegally annexed by Moscow in early 2014. Last weekend, Kremlin-installed officials in Crimea suspended gasoline sales to civilians, after Kyiv’s targeting of supply routes triggered the worst energy crisis there since the annexation.

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Speaking at a meeting with officials that focused on the fuel situation, Putin admitted that the country was "going through a difficult period," but insisted that Moscow would "honor all its social obligations."

Shortly after, he told state TV that the country's arms industries will quickly ramp up production of air defense systems to fend off Ukrainian attacks.

Putin also said that Russia will import more fuel and speed up repair works at oil facilities to end the "temporary deficit."

"All damaged facilities are being restored quite quickly, and the issues that arise are not critical," he said.

Putin specifically pledged to quickly deal with fuel shortages in Crimea, saying that fuel deliveries to the Black Sea peninsula by land and sea will rise and voicing confidence that "this task will be accomplished."

As fuel shortages spread across Russia, the governor of the Irkutsk region in Siberia, thousands of kilometers (miles) from the Ukrainian border, Igor Kobzev announced that drivers will only be allowed to buy no more than 50 liters (13 gallons) of fuel per vehicle per day at state-run Rosneft gas stations in the province. Other gas stations may set lower limits.

Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said that Moscow was actively reviewing fuel export agreements to avoid compromising domestic needs.

Drones, bombs and missiles target more regions

Also on Sunday, a Russian aerial bomb killed two people in Zaporizhzhia — a city in southern Ukraine — and injured 16 others, including two children, said regional administration head Ivan Fedorov.

In Russia's border region of Belgorod, Ukrainian drone strikes killed one person and injured another earlier on Sunday, according to acting local Gov. Alexander Shuvayev.

Russia's Defense Ministry said its forces shot down 213 Ukrainian drones during the night, including over Russia, occupied Crimea and the Black and Azov seas.

Meanwhile, Russia attacked Ukraine with 142 long-range strike drones and eight missiles overnight, according to the Ukrainian air force. Of those, 125 drones and seven missiles were struck down, the air force said.

3 firefighters killed in Colorado as wildfires stoked by heat, wind rage across the West

By TY ONEIL, MICHAEL R. SISAK and JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

BEAVER, Utah (AP) — Blistering heat and strong winds Sunday stoked wildfires across the West after three firefighters were killed a day earlier in Colorado while battling a blaze along the state's border with Utah.

The National Weather Service said wildfire conditions "remain critical" across the Southwest, with risk high in the Four Corners region where Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah intersect. The agency warned of "extreme fire behavior" along the Utah-Colorado border, where "rapid fire growth is likely."

The firefighters were killed and two sustained burn injuries when they were overcome Saturday by flames from fast-moving fires. They deployed emergency protective shelters during the so-called burnover — which occurs when a fire spreads and closes off all escape routes — in Mesa County, the U.S. Interior Department said.

They worked for the U.S. Wildland Fire Service and U.S. Forest Service and were part of an interagency response to the Knowles and Gore fires, which merged with other fires to form the Snyder Fire. So far, about 44 square miles (114 square kilometers) have burned.

The Wildland Fire Service, created earlier this year to streamline firefighting on public lands, said in a statement that it "stands united" with the Forest Service in grief and "in our unwavering support for the loved ones left behind."

The names of the firefighters were withheld pending notification to their loved ones, the Interior Department said.

Temperatures in Grand Junction — east of the fire — hit a high of 93 degrees Fahrenheit (34 degrees Celsius) Saturday, with winds gusting to 44 mph (71 kph), according to the National Weather Service.

The Mesa County Sheriff's Office asked people to evacuate the potential path of the fire and to turn on

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irrigation water to saturate the land. The federal Bureau of Land Management on Saturday closed public access to lands it manages nearby.

On Sunday, strong winds pushed waves of thick, gray smoke from the fire as it burned through a desolate stretch of scrub and red mesa.

Hot, dry and windy conditions

Consecutive days of hot, dry and windy weather fueled fires in Colorado, Utah, Arizona and elsewhere. New fires popped up across the region.

The largest blaze, the Cottonwood Fire, burned out of control in rugged terrain in southwest Utah. It ballooned Sunday to more than 146 square miles (378 square kilometers) after marching through canyons and mountainsides, destroying part of a ski resort. The cause is under investigation.

Firefighters worked on multiple fronts, using bulldozers to scrape away brush and trees to starve the fire of fuel.

No estimates of damage were immediately available. Gov. Spencer Cox in a post on social media thanked crews for what he called "several miraculous stops and saves."

The danger is even higher this year because of Utah's record-low snowpack and its warmest winter on record. Much of the West is grappling with similar conditions, according to the National Interagency Fire Center. Some 12 fires were burning in Utah. None were contained by late afternoon Sunday.

Fires across the U.S. burn thousands of square miles this year

Nationally, nearly 4,688 square miles (12,142 square kilometers) have burned since Jan. 1. That is more than the 10-year average.

Fully or largely uncontained wildfires burned across the desert Southwest on Sunday, according to Forest Service data, including in Nevada and Arizona. Their area totaled nearly 469 square miles (1,214 square kilometers).

Emergencies declared in Utah and Colorado

Citing fire conditions, Cox declared an emergency last week and banned fireworks ahead of the July Fourth holiday. State officials said Utah has seen an increase in wildfire starts, with each fire showing unprecedented behavior and stretching wildland firefighting capabilities.

Colorado Gov. Jared Polis also declared an emergency on Saturday, authorizing the use of the National Guard to tackle the fires.

South of Grand Canyon National Park, authorities said a new wildfire was moving away from Grand Canyon Village on Saturday. But about 50 miles (80 kilometers) away, another fire prompted Coconino County officials to issue evacuation orders for those near Kendrick Mountain.

Parts of northern Arizona were without power Saturday as the utility serving the area initiated a safety shut-off in hopes of lessening the wildfire risk. On Sunday, officials said power had been restored to much of Grand Canyon National Park.

Power shutoffs have become more common in the West as wildfire risk has expanded. It is usually a last resort after utility forecasters weigh factors like sustained wind and gust speeds, available fuels and topography.

Canada beats South Africa 1-0 in World Cup's first knockout match on Stephen Eustáquio's late goal

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP) — Right after Canada finished its first knockout match victory in a World Cup, coach Jesse Marsch huddled his players on the grass of a stadium still in pandemonium and spoke from his heart — shouted, actually.

"You guys are Canadian heroes today!" Marsch declared. "Canadian heroes for the future children of this country who play this sport. The sport has a big future because of you guys. You should be so proud of who you are. You should be so proud of this game. You never lost belief. You went after it, point after point, moment after moment. You are Canadian heroes!"

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Stephen Eustáquio's dramatic late goal had inspired Marsch to Ted Lasso levels of earnestness, and he didn't care who knew it.

Soccer has never been the main event on Canada's busy sports calendar, and Les Rouges are playing in only their third World Cup this summer. But Marsch realized this landmark 1-0 win over South Africa on Sunday is the type of achievement that can seize an entire nation's attention for a generation.

"We could have made life a little easier on ourselves if we would have made a play earlier when we had some big chances," Marsch said. "But obviously the timing of the goal means that the win is incredibly dramatic, and I think the effect that it will have in Canada, and the inspiring of people, will be immense."

After 90-plus minutes of frustration and failure to break down cagey South Africa at SoFi Stadium, Canada made history in an instant when Alistair Johnston's long pass into the box was cleared directly into the path of Eustáquio.

The midfielder who plays professionally at nearby Los Angeles FC coolly chested it down and blasted it off the bounce into the bottom corner of Ronwen Williams' net before sprinting away to celebrate with Canada's bench in the second minute of second-half stoppage time.

"We worked for it," Eustáquio said. "We have a special group. We feel like we are brothers. When we fight for each other, when we play for each other, special things like this can happen. I am over the moon, but at the same time I don't want to say that the job is finished."

Canada, which sits 30th in the most recent FIFA world rankings, advanced to face the Netherlands or Morocco in Houston on Saturday.

After playing its first three group matches in Toronto and Vancouver, Canada missed the chance to also make this bit of history at home when it lost 2-1 to Switzerland last Wednesday and got sent on the road for the knockout rounds. But Marsch's plucky team responded by winning this tournament's first round of 32 match and reaching the round of 16 for the first time in its three trips to the World Cup.

The Canadians were still the clear crowd favorite in the Los Angeles area between their traveling fans and thousands of supportive locals, including several in Eustáquio's LAFC shirt who couldn't have imagined the day they were about to enjoy.

"We never stopped believing," Eustáquio said. "And I think the goal is really something that we deserved."

After finishing second in their respective groups, both South Africa and Canada were playing for their nations' first knockout victories at a World Cup when they opened knockout play with the only match of the day.

Canada got a boost in the 75th minute when star defender Alphonso Davies came on for his first World Cup action. The playmaking Bayern Munich defender missed group play after injuring his hamstring last month for the third time this year, but finally returned in the same stadium where he tore a knee ligament in March 2025 in CONCACAF Nations League play.

Davies immediately made the best pass of the day to set up Promise David for a golden chance, but the forward hit it wide. The game then bogged down again — but Eustáquio made sure Canada avoided extra time.

"Steph is one of the people in the team that I think is the most reliable and understands what we're trying to achieve as a group, and understands how to manage moments in games, and to be a leader, a true leader," Marsch said. "It was good to see him, in that moment, just being in the moment and thinking about the best way to strike the ball in the way to give it the best chance to go in. Really composed and really well-executed."

Williams made five saves for South Africa, which played with remarkable heart while hanging in until the final moments in search of another historic win for the team known as Bafana Bafana. South Africa stayed firm defensively and created a handful of tantalizing chances despite getting only one shot on goal to close a tournament in which it scored two goals in four matches.

"We lost the game because there was a lack of power and speed in our team when I compare that with our opponent," South Africa coach Hugo Broos said. "We had a difficult game, certainly. But when we look back, we can be fairly satisfied with what we did."

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America split from monarchy 250 years ago. Trump's presidency is testing how far it's come

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

The 250th anniversary of America's liberation from a king kicked off with a campaign-style rally on the National Mall by President Donald Trump, whose face already stares down from banners fluttering from federal buildings across the nation's capital.

The images illustrate how the Republican president has dominated daily life since returning to power and, to some, evoke more the style of a monarch than the leader of the world's oldest democracy. But it's also how he has wielded that power that has led to comparisons of an imperial reign.

Since returning to office in January 2025, Trump has nominated one of his personal lawyers to serve as attorney general, ordered the Department of Justice to pursue his political enemies, deployed the U.S. Marines to the nation's second largest city and leveraged the presidency to enrich himself and his family.

He has demanded that comedians who mock him be fired, has slapped his name on the Kennedy Center, has pushed to seize control of elections, has filed lawsuits against news organizations whose coverage he disliked and has sued his own government seeking \$10 billion in taxpayer money.

With the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding fast approaching, Trump's own celebrations have overshadowed the bipartisan, congressionally authorized commission that was supposed to coordinate events commemorating the moment. He plans to return to the National Mall on July Fourth for what he calls a "Trump rally."

The president's actions have led to comparisons with King George III, the British monarch whose rule inspired the American Revolution. It is a parallel Trump himself rejects.

"I'm not a king," he told CBS' "60 Minutes" earlier this year. "If I was a king, I wouldn't be dealing with you."

Past presidents have been branded as imperial, but Trump stands out

There is a long American political tradition of opponents reviling presidents as kings. But Julian Zelizer, a Princeton University historian, said the label fits differently on Trump.

"It's more about how he imagines who is he and what the presidency is," Zelizer said. "We're celebrating founding principles, and that was a driving issue — fears of how a centralized power can be corrupted. And here we are again."

When King Charles III visited Trump this year, the official White House X account posted an image of the two men with the caption "TWO KINGS." At the start of his second term, Trump declared he had ended a New York City transportation program and posted: "LONG LIVE THE KING." The posts also seemed to indicate a willingness to leverage the label and the reaction it provokes in his critics.

It is no coincidence that the main resistance movement in Trump's second term adopted the slogan "No Kings." Ezra Levin of Indivisible said activists were thinking ahead to 2026 and the America 250 celebration when they chose the label.

"It looks like the same kind of tyranny we were rebelling against 250 years ago, the type of domination of Americans by a secret police force that's murdering people in the streets like in Minneapolis this year and in Boston in 1770," Levin said, referring to demonstrations against the administration's immigration crackdown that led to the fatal shootings of two protesters this year by federal officers.

When asked for comment, the White House referred to Trump's own statements about his use of executive power. The president has weighed in multiple times about his maximalist approach.

During his first term, he referred to Article II of the Constitution when he told participants in a youth summit, "I have the right to do whatever I want as president," while declaring that it "gives me all of these rights at a level nobody has ever seen before." He told The New York Times in an interview this year that the only check on his global power was "my own morality. My own mind. It's the only thing that can stop me."

Yet he also has said that portrayals of his approach as authoritarian were wrong: "I'm not a dictator," he told reporters last year. In response to a question about whether he was concentrating power in the

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presidency, Trump told Time in an interview last year, "I don't think so. I think I'm using it properly, and I'm also using it as per my election."

Supreme Court's conservative majority has enabled Trump's approach

With a deferential Republican-controlled Congress, courts have become the last check on Trump. The president has harshly criticized judges who have ruled against him, and his administration has sometimes defied their orders.

Yet his quest to expand presidential power has been aided by the conservative majority on the U.S. Supreme Court, which has sided with Trump numerous times after lower court rulings hampered him.

In the middle of his 2024 campaign, the high court ruled that presidents have broad immunity from prosecution. The decision derailed multiple investigations stemming from Trump's first term, including one focused on his attempts to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

Trump has argued the courts cannot constrain the president on key issues, including his claims that he has the ability to fire members of independent agencies. The most notorious example was in 2024, when a judge asked during the immunity case whether a president could be prosecuted for ordering the assassination of a political rival. Trump's lawyer, D. John Sauer, answered with a "qualified yes."

Sauer is now solicitor general, the administration official who oversees arguments before the high court. He has continued to insist that courts cannot review presidential acts.

"Once the President has made a determination ... at that point, there's no work for the reviewing court to do," Sauer said during Supreme Court arguments in a case over whether Trump could fire Lisa Cook, a Federal Reserve governor.

But the Supreme Court has allowed Cook to remain on the board while it considers the case. The majority also slapped down his global tariffs, finding that only Congress had that authority.

Such rulings demonstrate that presidential power does have its limits, said John Yoo, a law professor at the University of California, Berkeley.

"The presidency today, even when colored by President Trump's worst excesses, is not a monarchy," he said.

Trump uses the presidency to enrich himself and his family

Trump was the richest man to ever become president. During his first term, he was criticized for owning properties where foreign dignitaries and others hoping to curry his favor spent lavishly. The conflicts of interest have escalated in his second term.

Trump launched cryptocurrencies before and after returning to office. By conservative estimates, one has pulled in \$320 million this year alone, while another sold \$550 million worth of tokens. A third received a \$2 billion investment from a foreign wealth fund.

Trump took a new step earlier this year, filing a private \$10 billion lawsuit against the IRS for the leak of his tax returns during his first term. His Department of Justice directed the IRS to settle the litigation to create a \$1.776 billion fund to pay damages to people who claimed the federal government unfairly prosecuted them.

The administration pulled back the settlement amid an outcry from congressional Democrats and Republicans. But Todd Blanche, a former personal lawyer for Trump who is now acting attorney general, said at least one provision remains — a ban on the IRS auditing Trump.

Zelizer said Trump's financial entanglements might be the most monarchical part of his administration.

"We have not seen a person who has a business operation of this scale and scope benefiting directly from the decisions he makes," Zelizer said.

Trump has used the government to pursue his enemies

The Justice Department's role in the IRS lawsuit is one example of how Trump has decreed that executive branch employees should act as agents of his will.

In breaching what is supposed to be a firewall between the White House and Justice Department, Trump has demanded that federal prosecutors target his foes. In one social media post last year, he called out by name Pam Bondi, who was attorney general at the time, in pushing her to prosecute several of his political opponents: "JUSTICE MUST BE SERVED, NOW!!!" Trump wrote.

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Indictments followed shortly after, including against former FBI Director James Comey and New York Attorney General Letitia James, a Democrat. The charges against both eventually were dismissed, but the department under Blanche filed new charges against Comey.

The pursuit is not limited to Trump enemies of the past.

For his 80th birthday this month, the president hosted a fight held by UFC — a company he invested in — on the White House lawn. The event was broadcast on a network owned by the son of one of the president's major donors. The spectacle drew a rebuke from California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a persistent critic and potential 2028 Democratic presidential contender.

"The White House was built to serve the American people. Tonight it was used to promote a company the President owns stock in, sell subscriptions, promote corporate sponsors, push Trump crypto, and enrich the President and his family," Newsom wrote on X. "The founders warned us about kings enriching themselves from public office."

Days later, Newsom disclosed that Trump's Department of Justice was investigating him and his wife.

Heat wave and high humidity will blast much of the eastern US this week, meteorologists say

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

A long and dangerous heat wave will blast a large swath of the central and eastern United States this week, the National Weather Service said, with temperatures rising ahead of the July Fourth holiday and feeling even hotter because of the high humidity that's arriving with it.

Already, parts of the U.S., especially Phoenix and central Texas, and much of the Southwest were experiencing temperatures around 100 F (38 C) on Sunday, while the weather service warned of severe wildfire conditions developing across much of the West as new fires popped up across the region.

On Sunday, well over 130 million Americans across southern and Great Plains states were under moderate to severe heat risk conditions, according to weather service maps, with that area forecast to expand and temperatures to intensify as the week drags on.

Forecasters say several days of high temperatures — some above 100 degrees F — will settle in across the lower Great Lakes, the mid-Atlantic and the Mississippi and Ohio River valleys. Some record highs could be set in areas from the lower Great Lakes to the mid-Atlantic and New England later in the week, said weather service meteorologist Bryan Putnam.

A number of big cities could see their highest temperatures of the year so far as they host World Cup matches and celebrations for America's 250th anniversary.

Feeling the heat will be the East Coast cities of New York, Philadelphia, Washington and Baltimore, and Midwestern and Great Lakes cities including Chicago, Indianapolis, St. Louis and Detroit. Southern cities including Dallas, Little Rock, Arkansas, and Memphis, Tennessee, will also see high temperatures.

High heat will last into next weekend across the Great Plains, the Southeast and the mid-Atlantic, the weather service said.

Temperatures will reach well into the 90s and low 100 degrees Fahrenheit (mid to high 30s Celsius), the weather service said. High humidity will lead to heat indexes of 100 to 110 degrees F (40 C to 43 C), and as high as 115 F (46 C).

"That's heat that's impactful to anyone," Putnam said. "It's not just older adults or younger children or people who are spending a ton of time outdoors, maybe straining themselves a little more than normal. This is heat that really could impact everyone, especially with people outdoors going into the holiday weekend."

The heat index, which factors in humidity and is included on many weather forecasts, provides a sense of how hot it really feels — and what's dangerous for prolonged exposure or strenuous activity.

AccuWeather meteorologist Tyler Roys said temperatures will be significantly above normal. For instance, in Washington, highs around July Fourth average around 89 degrees F (32 C), while Indianapolis averages around 85 degrees F (29 C). But this week, both cities will be hotter by 10 or 11 degrees F, Roys said.

The high pressure system — an area of dry, sinking air — creating the heat will act like a "rock" that

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will force storms to go around it and limit rainfall across the East, Roys said. That's sometimes called a "heat dome."

Nightly lows in the 70s F (21 to 26 C) or even high 80s won't provide much relief, meteorologists said. For those who don't have air conditioning, especially in Eastern Seaboard cities like New York where lows may not dip below 80 F (27 C), it's going to be miserable to sleep, Roys said.

Roys also said this is a primetime for heat-related illnesses because people's bodies aren't able to recover and cool off.

During extreme temperatures, limit outdoor activity, stay hydrated and ensure access to air-conditioning and other cooling areas, the weather service said.

The weather service said it expected extremely dry and windy conditions that could promote rapid wildfire spread across the Great Basin and the Southwest on Sunday.

In hot, windy conditions near the Colorado-Utah border, three firefighters working for the U.S. Wildland Fire Service and U.S. Forest Service were killed, and two others sustained burn injuries, when they were overcome by flames from fast-moving wildfires.

Wildfire activity has intensified across the Western U.S. as hot, dry and windy weather fueled flames in Utah, Colorado, Arizona and elsewhere.

Israeli strikes and shelling in Gaza kill at least 4 Palestinians, health workers say

By WAFAA SHURAFI Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip on Sunday killed at least four Palestinians, including a 13-year-old girl, local health officials said.

The first strike targeted a group of people in northern Gaza's Beit Lahiya, killing two and wounding another, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent Society.

Another Israeli strike in southern Gaza killed a man, according to health officials at Nasser hospital.

And the 13-year-old girl, Eileen al-Farra, was killed by shrapnel from Israeli tank shelling in southern Gaza, according to Nasser hospital.

The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the strikes but said one of them targeted a " Hamas terrorist," without elaborating.

Palestinians on Sunday reported heavy tank shelling across Gaza and quadcopters — a type of unmanned aerial vehicle — buzzing overhead.

The heaviest fighting in Gaza has eased after a fragile ceasefire deal was reached in October between Israel and the Hamas militant group, but Palestinians continue to report new casualties almost daily. Israel says it targets Hamas and other militants who pose a threat and in response to ceasefire violations.

Israel has killed more than 1,040 people in Gaza since the ceasefire went into effect, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, part of the Hamas-led government. The ministry maintains detailed casualty records that are seen as generally reliable by United Nations agencies and independent experts. It does not distinguish between civilians and militants but says women and children make up around half of all deaths.

Israel has said five soldiers have been killed since the ceasefire.

The war began on Oct. 7, 2023, with a Hamas-led attack on southern Israel that killed some 1,200 people and saw 251 taken hostage. Israel's retaliatory offensive in Gaza has killed more than 73,050 Palestinians, including those killed since the ceasefire, Gaza's Health Ministry said.

NASA races to save Swift telescope from falling back to Earth with daring rescue mission

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — NASA is racing to save an aging telescope from falling back to Earth

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with a daring rescue mission.

The \$30 million salvage operation gets underway as soon as this week with the planned launch of a robotic lifesaver.

NASA hired startup Katalyst Space Technologies to boost the Swift Observatory to a higher orbit where it can continue hunting for some of the universe's biggest explosions. A three-armed spacecraft built by Katalyst will chase after Swift once it takes off from an atoll in the Pacific's Marshall Islands aboard an airplane-launched Pegasus rocket. Liftoff could occur as early as Tuesday.

Scanning the cosmos since its launch in 2004, Swift has been sinking faster and faster because of recent intense solar activity. It needs to get to a higher, more stable orbit as soon as possible to survive.

NASA's Hubble Space Telescope — also at risk — could be next.

Like Swift, Hubble is losing altitude as the sun erupts with one flare after another. Katalyst Space CEO Ghonhee Lee said his company's next-generation robot, still in development, could save the day for the much bigger Hubble in a couple years.

Only China has attempted a mission like the upcoming one, successfully boosting a satellite into a higher graveyard orbit four years ago.

"This is the first American space robot to go up and do anything like this," Lee told The Associated Press. "NASA has all these big senior observatories ... all of them can benefit from a service like this. So what we're proving with this mission is this is a new play in the playbook that's available."

It will take Katalyst's autonomous spacecraft, named Link, about a month to rendezvous with Swift and catch it, and another couple months to raise its orbit from the current 224 miles (360 kilometers) to the desired 373 miles (600 kilometers).

The 1.6-ton (1.4-metric ton) gamma ray observatory must be above 185 miles (300 kilometers) for the rescue to work. It's expected to reach that point of no return in October, according to the latest estimates.

Roughly the size of a small kitchen refrigerator with a 40-foot (12-meter) solar wingspan, Link sports three arms with a reach of just over 3 feet (1 meter). Each arm has two finger-like pinching grippers that resemble the hands of a Lego mini figure.

If all goes well, Swift could be back in business by September, according to Lee.

Worth hundreds of millions of dollars, Swift was never designed to be repaired, let alone retrieved by hands — human or otherwise. That's what makes this so challenging, according to company officials, who stress there is no guarantee it will work.

NASA signed a contract with Katalyst last September with only two requests: It has to be a rush job, but please don't make things worse. Nine months later, the company is ready to rumble.

"I have to be honest. No one thought it was going to be possible. No one thought we would get as far as we've already gotten today," said Shawn Domagal-Goldman, NASA's astrophysics director.

NASA has bought a little more time for Swift, turning off all scientific instruments to slow its descent. Observations ceased in February.

NASA's science mission chief Nicky Fox said it's worth the effort.

"If we let Swift reenter, we would lose that telescope. We would lose a lot of capability," she said. "We don't currently have the budget to build another one to replace that."

While everything cannot be saved in space, Swift is special, said Domagal-Goldman.

True to its name, Swift is designed to pivot quickly to capture late-breaking astronomical events such as gamma ray bursts and exploding stars. With more discoveries expected by the Webb Space Telescope and soon-to-launch Roman Space Telescope, Swift, if saved, would be busier than ever as "NASA's first responder."

Katalyst sees Swift as the jumping-off point for a new repair business in space. The company's next-generation robotic rescuer, scheduled to fly next year, will tackle satellites as high as 22,300 miles (35,800 kilometers) up. Lee envisions hundreds of robots in orbit one day, not only fixing and hoisting satellites but also refueling them and building solar farms, data centers and other platforms.

Thirty-six-year-old Hubble, which received repeat servicing by spacewalking astronauts during the shuttle

era, could follow in 2028 with a life-extending Katalyst boost.

"It's a national treasure," Fox said. "People love Hubble."

The US lags other countries in social media restrictions for kids, but a reform push is growing

By KAITLYN HUAMANI and BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writers

Amy Neville describes Kristin Bride as her "soulmate." But the day that forged their bond — June 23, 2020 — was the worst of each of their lives.

Both Bride and Neville lost their teen sons that day. Their kids lived a thousand miles apart and never met, but they both died from harms related to their social media use.

When the two mothers met, early in their advocacy work to protect other kids, Bride said she had felt "totally alone." But they have since seen the online child safety movement blossom, with scores of other parents who lost kids pursuing stronger social media safeguards and legislation to protect children online.

With that momentum, advocates say the tide seems to be turning. A pair of landmark jury verdicts this year showed a way forward for holding tech companies accountable. And while the U.S. is nowhere near embracing social media bans for children like those seen from Australia to Indonesia, a push for regulation is simmering again in Congress.

"Moving forward for me, it's this groundswell. We now have the court of public opinion on our side, and that is powerful. That has brought things to the next level," Neville said in an interview.

Her son Alexander Neville was "brilliant and intense," Neville said, with an entrepreneurial spirit and "the best laugh in the world." When he was 14, a drug dealer connected with him on Snapchat and sold him the pill that killed him. Carson Bride was the "bright light" of his family, a funny and caring kid who loved connecting with people, his mother said. He died by suicide at age 16 after severe cyberbullying.

The teenagers were honored in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday alongside 270 other children and young people who died because of online harms. It was the sixth anniversary of the boys' deaths, a date their families have worked to establish as Social Media Victims Remembrance Day.

Jury verdicts hold social media companies responsible for harms

Growing awareness of the dangers social media poses for young, developing brains has shown up in a wave of new restrictions globally. Australia, the U.K., Turkey, Indonesia and others have passed bans on kids under 16 or 15 from using platforms like TikTok, YouTube and Instagram.

In the U.S., the movement turned a corner with two jury verdicts against Meta and one against Google that galvanized proponents for kids' online safety. Evidence in the court cases revealed some of the tech companies' inner workings, including communications of employees who likened their products to drugs and casinos.

That the Los Angeles trial accusing social media platforms of causing deliberate harm to children was allowed to move forward was itself a watershed movement, said Matthew Bergman, head of the Social Media Victims Law Center, which represents more than 1,000 plaintiffs in lawsuits against social media companies.

Section 230 of the 1996 Communications Decency Act shields tech companies from legal responsibility for posted content. It has been a barrier to accountability but lawsuits are side-stepping its protections by focusing on the companies' deliberate design choices rather than content.

"It is still a hurdle, but it is no longer a barrier," Bergman said.

Advocates say there's a long road ahead

In the U.S., federal legislation of social media has moved at a glacial pace. The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, which took effect in 2000, requires kid-oriented apps and websites to get parents' consent before collecting personal information of children under 13.

This week, lawmakers in the House unveiled a bipartisan deal called the Kids Internet and Digital Safety Act. It includes portions of the the Kids Online Safety Act, or KOSA, which passed the Senate in 2024, but critics say it's been stripped of its most important part — a provision called "duty of care," a legal term

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that requires companies to take reasonable steps to prevent harm.

"Without a duty of care, Big Tech companies will maintain the status quo of putting profit before the safety of our children," Sen. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., said in a statement.

Bride said advocates have to employ a three-prong approach, utilizing legislation, litigation and education. That way, "when one stalls, like legislation," Bride said, "then we have the trials and we have litigation. So we keep pressing forward. We're not going to give up."

Representatives from Meta, YouTube and TikTok did not immediately respond to messages for comment. Snap said in a written statement that it works continuously to strengthen safety protections across its platform.

Over the years, social media platforms have introduced some safety features including separating minors into teen accounts and providing even tighter restrictions for younger teenagers. Instagram, for instance, now restricts teen accounts to viewing content that aligns with "PG-13" ratings and accounts are set to private and can't be messaged by strangers. YouTube has a separate kids app and parental controls on its regular platform that allow for "supervised kid accounts" for preteens who have aged out of YouTube kids.

But child advocates say there's still a long way to go.

"Their fundamental incentive to design products that maximize engagement has not changed," Bergman said. "Yes, there have been some improvements. A 13-year-old child is not by default provided with an open account for adult predators to prey upon. So, you know, there are baby steps, but there are steps in the right direction. We just need more of them."

Senators say social media concerns are reaching a tipping point

Since 2024, the Senate has passed a resolution annually to recognize June 23 as Social Media Harms Victim Remembrance Day, which honors the lives of those who died because of online harms including suicide, drug poisoning, cyberbullying and dangerous social media challenges.

Alongside several parents and advocates who spoke at the event Tuesday evening — including Bride and Neville — senators called for urgent action.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., advocated for the repeal of Section 230. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., said advocates and lawmakers need to "fight like hell for the living." Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., assailed his fellow Congress members for not doing more, saying "we all know why" they haven't acted.

"It's the same reason that the companies want the kids online, want their privacy destroyed, want all their information — it's money," Hawley said, noting the technology industry provides campaign contributions to lawmakers and spends millions on lobbying annually.

The Senate Judiciary Committee has invited the CEOs of Meta, Alphabet, TikTok and Snap to testify at an upcoming hearing about children's safety on their platforms. The committee has suggested the U.S. is reaching a tipping point for awareness of the risks of social media, asking in the hearing title, "Is This Social Media's Big Tobacco Moment?"

Bride and Neville will attentively listen to what the tech CEOs say under oath — as they did during a similar hearing in 2024 and many other events related to kids online safety — and they remain optimistic.

Neville said she feels that "every morning I wake up, lives are on the line. If we're not talking about these things, if we're not doing something about it, lives are on line," she said. "And that's probably not good for my nervous system, but that's the state that I'll live in until I'll probably die on this hill."

Democrats wrestle with race, populism and ideology in clashes with lawmakers of color

By MATT BROWN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After democratic socialist Claire Valdez defeated an establishment-backed candidate in New York's congressional primary last week, her elated supporters quickly turned their attention to a new target.

"You're next!" they chanted when an image of House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York

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flashed on the television screens at Valdez's victory party in a renovated Brooklyn warehouse.

The message alarmed Democratic Rep. Gregory Meeks, whose district borders the one that Valdez is poised to represent. Jeffries would likely be the first Black speaker of the House if Democrats regain the majority, Meeks said, and "people died to see something like that opportunity."

The episode reflects the party's dilemma in a populist age.

As left-wing insurgents make inroads in New York and elsewhere, their campaigns are confronting legacy institutions led by people of color. For a party that prides itself on diversity, the clashes have exacerbated fierce debates over identity politics and long-standing rifts between progressives and moderates.

The outcome will determine who holds power within the Democratic coalition as it battles for control of Congress and prepares for what is expected to be a sprawling and searing presidential primary in 2028.

Although minority-led organizations have historically been viewed as more radical and antiestablishment, some Democratic leaders now view the left-wing surge as driven by white college graduates. Progressives argue that their agenda remains popular within communities of color.

"It's complicated," said Juan Proaño, CEO of the League of United Latin American Citizens. "But these changes are a real opportunity for our communities, and maybe a passing of the baton to a younger generation of leaders."

Jeffries brushed off a question about whether he could face his own primary challenge.

"When you ask me a serious question, I'll give you a serious answer," he told a reporter from Fox Business.

A past generation of minority political leaders went from outsiders to insiders

Once the distant dreams of Black and Latino activists, the political machines in many communities of color have become a central part of the Democratic establishment. They were a key driver of the party's embrace of civil rights and diversity as core values.

Some of the party's most tenured members and influential dynasties now come from communities of color, and politicians such as Jeffries rose through the ranks of such systems to serve as party leaders.

But such organizations were built in a different era.

"A lot of our communities are anchored in older, more traditional voters, and those older, more traditional voters carry older, more traditional values," said Dallas Jones, the former Texas political director for Democrat Joe Biden's presidential campaign in 2020. In Democrats' current debates of "people versus elites," Jones said, "you cannot help but find that the Black community is caught up in the middle of it."

Jones said that yearning for generational change helped topple Texas Rep. Al Green, a progressive seeking his 12th term in Congress, in May. A longtime civil rights activist, Green, 78, was defeated by Christian Menefee, a 38-year-old first-term congressman who is also Black, to represent a majority-Black district anchored by Houston.

The Democratic electorate grew slightly whiter in 2024 as Donald Trump made some gains among Black and Hispanic voters. In addition, white Democrats have become more likely to describe themselves as liberal than are Black and Hispanic Democrats, according to Gallup research from 2022.

Progressives argue that they are challenging longtime lawmakers based on their establishment ties rather than any shift in the party's demographics. They point to progressives recently winning House Democratic primaries for majority-minority districts in Pennsylvania and New Jersey as signs of deeper appeal.

"The point of being a senior Democrat is you're supposed to be able to deliver more and impact the agenda," said Regina Monge, a strategist who led a political action committee that backed democratic socialist Zohran Mamdani in last year's race for New York mayor. "People are supposed to feel the benefits of their leadership in the district."

Senior lawmakers are skeptical that much can be extrapolated nationally from last week's results, where Mamdani successfully pushed a slate of three insurgent candidates.

"Our path to 218" — the number of seats necessary for a House majority — "wasn't affected by those races that are getting a lot of news," said Democratic Rep. Pete Aguilar of California, the highest-ranking Latino in Congress. "The mayor made some endorsements, and those individuals won, and I presume that they're going to come and vote with the Democratic caucus when they get here."

Generational change clashes with legacy in closely watched primaries

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The new style of challenger often rises from outside the traditional civil rights and organizing structures that characterized some communities for decades.

Valdez, who is Latina and Native American, won the primary to replace retiring Rep. Nydia Velázquez, a former chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus who was born in Puerto Rico.

The current caucus leader, Rep. Adriano Espaillat of New York, lost his primary to Darializa Avila Chevalier, another democratic socialist, in a district that includes parts of Manhattan and the Bronx. Espaillat was born in the Dominican Republic; Chevalier's parents are Dominican immigrants.

"We're really looking at a moment in time where people are anxious about the future of our country," said Katharine Pichardo, who leads Latino Victory.

Pichardo was a senior adviser to Espaillat's first successful run for Congress, in 2016. She said Espaillat's message "needed to focus more on kitchen table issues" and be "forward looking" if he were to ward off Chevalier.

For incumbents to defeat populist and more ideological challengers, she said, they must "give people a sense of security against the very real anxiety over what's going on in Washington, D.C."

Basil Smikle, a former executive director of the New York State Democratic Party who now teaches at Columbia University, said insurgent candidates and their voters see institutions as "inherently flawed." He said party leaders "would do well to turn with the momentum and not against it."

"This is an opportunity for Hakeem to turn around and say, 'Look, I'm with you, I'm not going to stand in your way, let's iron out our differences and make me speaker, get us back to power,'" Smikle said. "That would be the best way to bridge this divide."

On Saturday, Jeffries took a step in that direction by congratulating New York City's Democratic nominees, including Valdez and Chevalier. He did not mention his ideological disagreements with them or his support for their opponents, instead stressing that they would help "crush far-right extremism."

"The path is different but the work is the same," Jeffries said.

Ugandan army chief orders the closure of a major news platform

By RODNEY MUHUMUZA Associated Press

KAMPALA, Uganda (AP) — The offices of a major news organization in Uganda were shut down on the orders of the military chief, who warned Sunday that all media "will follow the rules" while asserting his authority as the East African country's de facto ruler.

Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, the eldest son of President Yoweri Museveni, has served as the top military commander since 2024. In recent days, after Museveni was sworn in for a seventh consecutive term, Kainerugaba has strengthened his grip with a series of directives and orders usually reserved for the head of state.

Soldiers were deployed outside the Kampala offices of the Daily Monitor newspaper early Sunday. The paper is part of the Nation Media Group of companies whose headquarters is in Nairobi, the Kenyan capital.

"I have the power in Uganda to shut down ANY media house I want to," Kainerugaba wrote on X, his preferred channel of communication. "I have had this power since 2017. This power was given to me by my great father."

He added: "From now on ALL media in Uganda will follow the rules!"

The army chief said that in addition to Daily Monitor, his closure directive also targeted local broadcaster NTV, part of Nation Media Group.

The National Association of Broadcasters said in a statement that at least six publishing and broadcasting outlets — all under Nation Media Group — were closed. "We are deeply concerned about this action and its impact on the media ecosystem," the statement said.

Kainerugaba asserts that he will succeed his father in the presidency, an increasingly likely possibility as the 81-year-old leader now relies heavily on his son's military authority.

Earlier this month, Kainerugaba retaliated against a prominent attorney who sought to hold him accountable for his alleged role in the violation of the rights of opposition leader Kizza Besigye. He was seized

in Nairobi in 2024, and has since been imprisoned on treason charges he says are politically motivated. Besigye's attorney, Erias Lukwago, was taken from his house and later charged with an offense related to the concealment of treason.

Museveni, who has ruled Uganda since 1986, has not said when he will retire. He has no rivals within the ruling party, the reason many believe the military will have a say in choosing his successor.

Kainerugaba's associates describe him as a dedicated military officer who often eschews ostentatious displays of wealth. They say he opposes official corruption and would punish it heavily as president.

He attended military schools in the U.S. and Britain before taking charge of a presidential guard unit that has since been expanded into an elite group of special forces. In addition to his military duties, he is the founder of a political activist group known as the Patriotic League of Uganda. Its members and well-wishers range from the parliamentary speaker to government ministers.

Trump presses Syria to take on Hezbollah, raising alarm in Lebanon and Israel

By ABBY SEWELL Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — As the White House has soured on Israel's war with Hezbollah in Lebanon, U.S. President Donald Trump has shocked many in the region by pushing an alternative: Let Syria fight the Iran-backed militant group instead.

He has suggested that the battle-hardened and Islamist-led insurgents who overthrew Syria's autocratic President Bashar Assad a year and a half ago and formed a new government would do a better job of rooting out Hezbollah than the Israeli army.

Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa has said he has no interest in doing so, and has asserted that Trump's comments were misconstrued. But Trump has doubled down on the idea.

Although it remains unclear how serious the White House is about the proposal, the prospect of a Syrian invasion has raised alarms in Lebanon — and also in Israel, which regards al-Sharaa's Islamist-led government with suspicion and has seized control of a strip of southern Syria since he took power.

Syria has also become the site of rising tensions between Israel and Turkey — a main backer of al-Sharaa's government — with each seeking to limit the other's influence in the neighboring country.

Top Israeli security officials convened a meeting on the subject on Wednesday, according to an official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Trump says Syria would 'do a better job' against Hezbollah

On the sidelines of the G7 summit earlier this month, Trump complained that Israel's war with Hezbollah is dragging on too long and "too many people are being killed."

More than 4,000 people have been killed by Israeli strikes in Lebanon since Hezbollah joined the wider Iran war with a March 2 attack on Israel, including hundreds of women and children. Israel says its strikes target Hezbollah and that it takes measures to protect civilians.

"You don't have to knock down an apartment house every time you're looking for somebody, because there are a lot of people in those apartment houses and they're not all Hezbollah," Trump said.

"I suggested to Israel to let Syria take care of Hezbollah. 'Cause to be honest with you, I think they'd do a better job."

Days later, on the first day of U.S.-Iran talks in Switzerland, Fox News' Trey Yingst said that, during an interview, Trump had expressed disappointment that Israel can't "put Hezbollah away" and said that he is "close to giving it to Syria" because he thinks al-Sharaa would be more precise.

The White House declined to comment and referred to Trump's previous statements.

Syria denies plans to intervene in Lebanon

Syrian officials scrambled to do damage control.

In a speech in Damascus on June 13, al-Sharaa said, "There are people spreading rumors that Syria will intervene in Lebanon. This is not true. We are calling for a permanent end to the war and the strengthening of institutions and for there to be economic ties and a calming of the situation in Lebanon."

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In a June 21 interview with the Emirati network Al Mashhad, al-Sharaa said Trump's remarks had been misunderstood.

Trump "spoke about Syria's role in finding a safe and peaceful solution, but the statement was misinterpreted as if Syria were going to invade Lebanon tomorrow morning," al-Sharaa said.

He said Syria had "presented our vision for a solution to the United States, which is to stop the war and address the negative effects on Lebanon and Syria, and to find different economic, political and social solutions."

Syria's leaders say they don't want to settle scores with Hezbollah

Hezbollah, along with Iran, intervened on the side of Assad during Syria's 14-year civil war, while al-Sharaa was the leader of an insurgent group seeking to overthrow him.

But the new leaders in Damascus have said since taking power in December 2024 that they are focused on rebuilding the country, are not seeking to settle scores, and want to remain outside of any regional conflict.

After Israel and the U.S. launched their war against Iran — which triggered a wider regional conflict — Syria made a point of remaining on the sidelines.

In the first weeks of the war, the Syrian military sent reinforcements to the border with Lebanon, which officials said aimed to stop cross-border weapons smuggling or any spillover of the conflict. At one point in March, Syria accused Hezbollah of launching artillery shells across the border toward Syrian army positions, which Hezbollah denied. The escalation stopped there.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told The Associated Press in March that Turkey had interceded to defuse the tensions.

Al-Sharaa told Al Mashhad that "the decision of (Hezbollah) to enter into the Syrian conflict was wrong," but that he was willing to hold a "dialogue" with the militant group and even to mediate between different Lebanese factions as they debate the future of Hezbollah's weapons.

Trump's proposal dredges up sectarian fears and memory of occupation

In March, U.S. envoy to Syria Tom Barrack denied reports that Washington had floated the idea of Syria intervening against Hezbollah.

But since then, Trump has begun to make the call openly.

Randa Slim, director of the Middle East Program at the Washington-based Stimson Center, said Trump's proposal is, "at best, driven by a profound ignorance of the dynamics on the ground."

"Syria needs to focus on a myriad of complex and daunting challenges — not least rebuilding a shattered country and repatriating millions of refugees," she said. "Syrian forces are far from a coherent military institution; they include thousands of foreign jihadi fighters of uncertain loyalty and discipline."

In the months after Assad's fall in Syria, there were several eruptions of violence between groups loyal and opposed to al-Sharaa that spiraled into sectarian revenge attacks, in which Sunni Islamist fighters affiliated with the new government carried out attacks on Alawite and Druze civilians. The attacks triggered fears of cross-border violence among Lebanon's Shiite, Christian and Druze populations.

Many Lebanese also have bitter memories of the decades of Syrian occupation of Lebanon, which began during the Lebanese civil war, initially at the request of Lebanese authorities and with the backing of Arab states, ending in 2005.

The official who spoke anonymously said that Israel is also concerned about some signs that Syria could assume its old role in Lebanese politics. But the official said while Israel is closely watching developments between Syria and Lebanon, its main concern is Hezbollah.

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Today in History: June 29

Apple releases the first iPhone to consumers

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, June 29, the 180th day of 2026. There are 185 days left in the year.

Today's highlight in history: On June 29, 2007, the first version of the iPhone went on sale to the public; over 2.3 billion iPhones have been sold to date.

Also on this date:

In 1520, Montezuma II, the ninth and last emperor of the Aztecs, died in Tenochtitlan (tay-nohch-TEET'-lahn) under unclear circumstances (some say he was killed by his own subjects; others, by the Spanish).

In 1613, London's original Globe Theatre, where many of William Shakespeare's plays were performed, was destroyed by a fire sparked by a cannon shot during a performance of "Henry VIII."

In 1767, Britain approved the Townshend Revenue Act, which imposed import duties on glass, paint, oil, lead, paper and tea shipped to the American colonies. (Colonists bitterly protested, prompting Parliament to repeal the duties on each of the products — except for tea.)

In 1776, the Virginia state constitution was adopted, and Patrick Henry was made the state's governor.

In 1967, Jerusalem was reunified as Israel removed barricades separating the Old City from the Israeli sector.

In 1970, the United States ended a two-month military offensive into Cambodia.

In 1995, the U.S. space shuttle Atlantis docked with Russia's Mir space station as they orbited the Earth.

In 2006, the Supreme Court ruled, 5-3, that President George W. Bush's plan to try Guantanamo Bay detainees in military tribunals violated U.S. and international law.

In 2009, disgraced financier Bernard Madoff received a 150-year sentence for his multibillion-dollar fraud. (Madoff died in prison in April 2021.)

In 2022, R. Kelly was sentenced to 30 years in prison for using his R&B superstardom to subject young fans to sexual abuse. The singer and songwriter was convicted of racketeering and sex trafficking the previous year.

Today's Birthdays: Songwriter L. Russell Brown is 86. Singer-songwriter Garland Jeffreys is 83. Actor Gary Busey is 82. Former actor and politician Fred Grandy is 78. Rock musician Ian Paice (Deep Purple) is 78. Singer Don Dokken is 73. Rock singer Colin Hay (Men At Work) is 73. Actor Maria Conchita Alonso is 71. Actor Sharon Lawrence ("NYPD Blue") is 65. Actor Amanda Donohoe is 64. Violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter is 63. Producer-writer Matthew Weiner is 61. Actor Melora Hardin is 59. Actor Brian D'Arcy James is 58. Rap DJ and record producer DJ Shadow is 54. Actor Zuleikha Robinson is 49. Rock musician Sam Farrar (Maroon 5) is 48. Actor Luke Kirby is 48. Singer and TV personality Nicole Scherzinger is 48. Comedian-writer Colin Jost is 44. Actor Lily Rabe is 44. NBA forward Kawhi Leonard is 35. Actor Camila Mendes (TV: "Riverdale") is 32. Soccer player Jude Bellingham is 23.