

Groton Daily Independent

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Monday, July 13

Senior Menu: Ground beef stroganoff with noodles, peas, fruit, whole wheat bread.
Junior Legion hosts Sisseton, 5:30 p.m., DH.
Senior Citizens meeting at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.
JVT Practice, 6 p.m., GHS Arena.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Tuesday, July 14

Senior Menu: Egg salad sandwich, tomato spoon salad, fruit, cookie.
Groton Legion at Milbank, 5:30 p.m., DH.
U10 Baseball (R&B) at Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m., DH, North Complex.
T-Ball scrimmage, 6 p.m., Nelson Field.
Tiger Skills Workouts, GHS Arena, 7:30 a.m.

Groton Daily Independent

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May God's **Favor** Go
Before You,
His **Love** Surround You,
And His **Strength** Uphold
You Through Every
Moment Of This Day

BB Open Gym, 6 p.m., GHS Arena.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Council, 6 p.m.
United Methodist: Bible study: Christmas in July!,
10 am.
Ladies Golf 6 p.m

Wednesday, July 15

Senior Menu: Roasted chicken breast, roasted potatoes, California blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.
Groton Legion at Redfield, 5:30 p.m.
Junior Legion at Redfield, 7 p.m.
U10 Baseball at Ipswich, 5:30 p.m., DH.
School Supply Drive, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., Groton Community Center.
JVT Practice, 7:30 p.m., GHS Arena.
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.
Men's Golf 3 p.m.

Thursday, July 16

Senior Menu: Cheeseburger casserole, sweet potatoes, corn, fruit, whole wheat bread.
Cancelled: Junior Legion hosts Watertown, 5:30 p.m. (DH).
U14 Tournament in Groton: Game 1: Redfield vs. Groton, 5 p.m.; followed by Clark taking on the winner of Game 1.
Junior/Adult Golf Tournament, 5:30 p.m., Olive Grove Golf Course.

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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.

Lindsey Graham Dies

South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham (R) died Saturday night from an aortic rupture related to cardiac disease, according to a preliminary report from medical examiners. As recently as Friday afternoon, Graham was in Kyiv meeting with Ukrainian lawmakers before returning the next morning.

Born in the small South Carolina town of Central, the 71-year-old spent more than three decades as an Air Force lawyer and part of the South Carolina Air National Guard and Reserves (while in office), retiring in 2015. Known for his staunch conservative foreign policy stances, Graham succeeded Strom Thurmond (R) in the Senate in 2003 and was seeking reelection in the upcoming midterms. Gov. Henry McMaster (R) will select his interim replacement, likely providing an inside track to the party's nomination.

Separately, Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) addressed his nearly monthlong hospitalization for the first time yesterday, saying he suffered injuries from a fall at his home.

Earth's Night Light?

The Federal Communications Commission last week approved a startup's plans to launch a satellite reflecting sunlight onto the dark side of Earth. California-based Reflect Orbital aims to launch its first satellite later this year.

Reflect Orbital anticipates customers will include solar farms and rescue workers in emergency situations. Critics, however, caution about light pollution and the impact it could have on animals' circadian rhythms. The project could also interfere with space research.

Reflect Orbital's first satellite will include a 60-foot mirror that can light up a 3-mile-wide area on Earth with a full moon level of brightness for about five minutes. The company ultimately hopes to roll out up to 50,000 satellites, potentially charging \$5K per hour for those with an annual contract (and a higher rate in emergency situations).

The Cost of Forever

The US Postal Service raised the cost of Forever stamps by 4 cents yesterday, up from 78 cents to 82 cents apiece—part of a broader set of price hikes.

The announcement comes as the USPS recorded a \$9B loss in FY 2025. The postmaster general told Congress this year that first-class stamps would need to cost 90 cents to 95 cents apiece to stabilize the USPS. Future hikes could come as often as twice a year through 2028, though none have been announced to date. The Postal Service's problems have been blamed on declining mail volume and a since-revised 2006 law requiring the USPS to prepay retirement benefits, costing over \$5B annually.

The Forever stamp continues to be usable for domestic, 1-ounce letters, regardless of price hikes.

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Jannik Sinner defends Wimbledon's men's final, defeating Alexander Zverev.

Linda Nosková wins first Grand Slam title in Wimbledon women's final Saturday.

Disney's live-action "Moana" earns a projected \$43M at the domestic box office, below expectations and on par with "Snow White" in 2025.

"Michael" becomes first Lionsgate movie to cross \$1B at the global box office.

World Cup semifinals set, with France facing Spain tomorrow (3 pm ET, Fox) and England taking on Argentina Wednesday (3 pm ET, Fox).

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Science & Technology

Meta suspends Muse Image days after launch, following widespread backlash; tool allowed AI image creation from any public Instagram account without the user's consent.

China completes its first successful recovery of an orbital reusable rocket; technique used a netlike wire grid to "catch" the booster.

Nanoparticles made from the membranes of human immune cells show ability to treat the fungus responsible for yeast infections, mouse study shows.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close up Friday (S&P 500 +0.4%, Dow +0.3%, Nasdaq +0.3%); South Korean chip-maker SK Hynix rises 13% on Nasdaq debut.

Jeff Bezos-backed General Fusion becomes first nuclear fusion startup to be publicly traded; Nasdaq listing starts today after Friday SPAC merger.

Khosla family, led by venture capitalist Vinod Khosla, to buy Super Bowl champion Seattle Seahawks for more than \$9.6B.

Politics & World Affairs

More than 350 people rescued in Missouri amid flash flooding in three counties, including roughly 100 rescues by water.

Maine's Democratic Senate candidate Graham Platner formally withdraws from the race; state's Democratic Party will hold a nominating convention Saturday, July 25 to determine his replacement.

Shooting attack at a street festival in Toronto kills two people, wounds at least six others; a suspect was still at large as of this writing.

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Historic Jail Open House

by Dorene Nelson

Alfred "Topper" Tastad hosted an open house on the site of the currently restored Groton historical city jail. The event was held on Sunday, July 12, 2026, with light refreshments being available, provided by Tastad.

The purpose of the open house was to celebrate the ongoing work of restoration of the jail as well as offer Groton citizens the opportunity to join in the effort to continue with the process of restoration and preservation of the historic building.

Following a fire in 1912 that burned the original jail, the current jail had been built. It contains four separate cells and a pot belly stove as its only source of heat. In order to restore the jail as much as possible, the original brick and plaster walls had been scraped, the electrical system was updated, and the entire building was cleaned, making it resemble the original jail as much as possible. An appropriate item found in the restored building is a plaque that lists every known

Elda Stange, a 102 year old Groton citizen, was willingly "arrested" by Groton Police Chief Mayou and put in one of the restored jail cells. Her immediate release was provided by former police chief Mike Nehls who paid her \$2 "delinquent birthday tax bill."

Tastad has plans for more improvements in the structure to continue the preservation of this landmark.



Groton Police Chief Stacy Mayou put 102-year-old Elda Stange in jail for failure to pay her "birthday tax." Former Groton Police Chief Michael Nehls bailed her out with the \$2 payment. (Photo by Dorene Nelson)



Steve and Sandy Dresbach were "not happy" about being put in jail on Sunday. The jail open house was held and it was an opportunity for photo opps. (Photo by

Dorene Nelson)



The open house for the 1913 Groton Jail was held Sunday. A good turnout was held for the event.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

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A plaque has been established that lists the former Groton Police Chiefs in Groton, sponsored by the Eddy Nehls family. Pictured are Virginia Nehls, former Groton Police Chief Michael Nehls, and Nancy Radke. Virginia and Nancy were city dispatcher for the Groton Police Department for many years while their husbands were working for the police force. Both of their husbands were police chiefs - Eddy Nehls and Butch Radke. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

The left photo was taken during Eddy's retirement party.

Ready to go down the tracks

When the new publisher first came to town over 10 years ago, he was greeted the first night by the Chief of Police, Eddy Nehls. Nehls informed the new publisher that he would be railroaded out of town. That was quite a greeting! At Eddy's retirement party, Paul Kosel presented Nehls with his own pack on a stick to go down the railroad tracks! (Photo #2233 by Paul Kosel)

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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.

Coming in at number 5: quarterback

Confidence level: 60%

Current projected starters: Kyler Murray

Current depth: J.J. McCarthy, Carson Wentz

Competing for a roster or practice squad spot: Max Brosmer

Why I'm confident: Kyler Murray is a former number one overall pick with an immense amount of talent. The two-time Pro Bowler spent the first seven seasons of his career on an Arizona Cardinals team that routinely found itself near the bottom of the standings. Now, after being cast aside by his former team, Murray gets a chance to rewrite his story in Minnesota. He'll be throwing to one of the NFL's best groups of pass catchers while being coached by Kevin O'Connell, one of the league's top offensive minds and a former NFL quarterback.

Hot on Murray's heels is McCarthy, who the Vikings spent a top 10 pick on just a couple years ago. McCarthy has shown flashes of phenomenal play, but injuries and inconsistencies have plagued him since day one. If he can figure out how to put it all together, there's still a chance he becomes the player the Vikings thought they'd be getting when they drafted him.

And worst-case scenario, the Vikings have Carson Wentz ready to step in. While he may not be the same player he was earlier in his career, Wentz proved last season that he's more than capable of coming in and playing solid football. He is, without a doubt, the best third-string QB in the NFL.

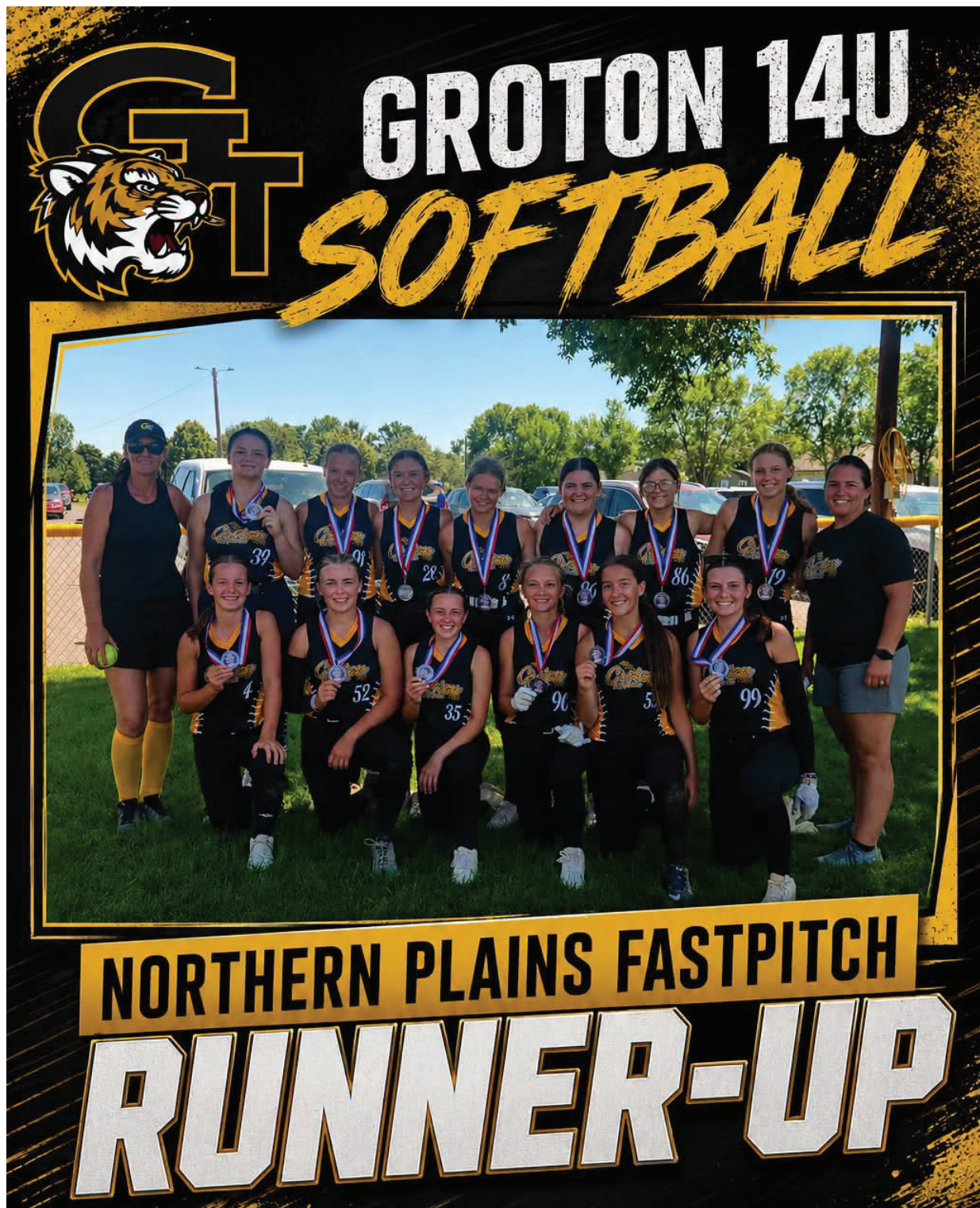
Cause for concern: There are plenty of ways this experiment can go wrong, which isn't great considering quarterback is the most important position in football.

Kyler Murray will be 29 years old when the season starts, and his diminutive stature combined with his reckless playmaking means he likely has a shorter shelf life than the average NFL QB. The worst case scenario here is that Murray plays... fine. Not good enough to clearly be the Vikings starter for the foreseeable future, but not bad enough for the team to turn the reins over to McCarthy. He's also on a one-year deal, and after watching Sam Darnold leave after one season then immediately win a Super Bowl, will the Vikings over-pay Murray just to prevent that from happening again?

And what about McCarthy? He's still young, but after a rocky start to his career, will he be able to survive another year sitting behind a one-year rental QB? Or will another year on the bench hurt his development to the point where he never gets a real opportunity to prove he can be the Vikings' long-term answer?

Potential upgrades: As you can imagine, the QB cupboard is bare at this point in the offseason. Russell Wilson is the biggest name still available, while Cooper Rush, Jimmy Garoppolo, and Teddy Bridgewater would be decent backups. But honestly, none of those players are better than Carson Wentz. So like it or not, the Vikings QB room won't be changing unless something drastic happens.

Ultimately, this ranking comes down to one thing: options. The Vikings don't know who their long-term quarterback will be, but they have multiple paths forward. That uncertainty keeps this group in the bottom half of my confidence rankings, but it's also why I'm more confident in it than the remaining position groups.



Back Row L to R: Coach Amanda Bisbee, Illyanna Dellaire, Maycee Moody, Kaedy Bonn, Ari Dinger, Caelynn Pullan, Andi Gauer, Neely Althoff, Jackie Iverson
Front Row L to R: Andi Iverson, Brinley Dunker, Gracie Borg, Mya Moody, Kinley Sandness, Tori Schuster

EARTHTALK

Is Fashion Getting More Sustainable?

by Audrey Li

Dear EarthTalk: What are some ways that fashion is getting more sustainable? – H.M., Via email

When we think of the main sources of carbon (CO₂), three main things come to mind: industry, transportation, electricity. But what many people miss is that a major contributor to global CO₂ emissions is on their very body: clothes. According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, fashion accounts for 10 percent of global CO₂ emissions. While clothing remains an essential part of daily life, a growing number of innovations and initiatives are helping make the fashion industry more sustainable.

Sustainability in fashion starts from the source by implementing sustainable practices during textile production. In regular textile production, hazardous chemicals like polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAs) are used extensively—chemicals that can bioaccumulate in the environment and contaminate water and soil. To combat this, researchers like Professor Julia Eastoe at Bristol's School of Chemistry have developed sustainable alternatives, replacing fluorine groups with those containing only carbon and hydrogen while still maintaining its original stain-resistance and oil-repellence qualities.

Another step for sustainability within the fashion sector is redefining the idea of a "circular economy." At the frontlines of this movement include companies like FabScrap, which diverts textile waste from landfills by reusing and recycling fabric scraps collected from partnered clothing brands. These collected scraps are then repurposed into products like insulation and carpet padding, giving "waste" fabric a second life.

Companies aren't alone championing a more sustainable, circular economy. As Accenture finds, 83 percent of U.S. shoppers reported increased sustainable shopping behaviors in the last 12 months, including buying from secondhand sellers like Thredup and Poshmark. Also, with clothing rental companies like Girl Meets Dress, customers can rent garments for one-time, special occasions instead of purchasing items to only gather dust in the closet. Moreover, calls to mandate microplastic filters in new washing machines are increasingly championed by organizations like A Plastic Planet and Planet Care.

Together, these innovations redefine what sustainability means in fashion, from chemicals used in textile processes to large-scale adoptions of sustainable shopping habits. Achieving total sustainability is far from over. As Elisa Tonda, Chief of the Resources and Markets Branch of the United Nations Environmental Programme, states, "We need everyone pulling together if we're going to make the systemic change necessary to transform the fashion industry into a force for environmental good."



A growing number of innovations and initiatives are helping make the fashion industry more sustainable. Credit: Pexels.com.

Sip to Stay Strong: Why Hydration Matters More Than We Think

During the warm summer months in South Dakota, many of us spend extra time outside walking, working or enjoying community events. The heat and wind can pull moisture from the body faster than we realize. Hydration becomes important for everyone, from kids running around at the park to adults juggling busy schedules to older adults who may not notice thirst as quickly. Water supports our health in every season, but summer reminds us just how essential it is.

We often think of dehydration as something that only happens when a person is ill, running a marathon or working outside on a hot day. But in reality, our bodies lose two to three liters of water every day just by breathing, urinating and through our skin. If we don't replace that water, the body begins borrowing it from tissues, including the mouth and brain.

And here's the remarkable truth: every single cell in the human body requires water to function. We can survive for weeks without food, but only a few days without fluids. Water fuels energy production, carries nutrients, removes waste, regulates temperature and supports the electrical signals that keep our hearts and brains working. It is the foundation of life.

Hydration needs change across the lifespan

While everyone needs water, the reasons vary across the lifespan. Children lose water faster and may forget to drink while playing. Teens and adults often push through busy days relying on caffeine instead of water. Athletes and outdoor workers lose more fluid through sweat.

Although dehydration can affect anyone, it can be especially impactful on older adults and is a well-recognized contributor to confusion. Older adults are more prone to fluid loss because they don't sense thirst as easily, many take medications that cause the body to lose water, and they naturally have about 15-20% less total body water than younger adults.

Hydration and oral health: a connection for all ages

Saliva is 99% water, and dehydration can cut salivary flow by half. When the mouth dries out, problems follow:

- Higher risk of cavities and gum disease
- Denture discomfort
- Difficulty chewing and swallowing
- Changes in taste that reduce appetite

Hydration and the brain

The brain is about 73% water, and losing just 1-2% of that water can affect you even before you feel thirsty and negatively impact things like attention span, memory, mood and reaction time. For kids, this can mean trouble focusing in school. For adults, it may feel like brain fog. For older adults, it can increase fall risk.

Simple habits that help everyone

- Keep a bottle or glass nearby at home, school or work and sip it regularly even if you're not thirsty
- Choose infusions that don't lower pH, such as mint, basil or cucumbers. If you enjoy citrus, use it occasionally rather than sipping it all day to protect enamel.
- Choose hydrating foods like fruits, yogurt, soups and smoothies
- Avoid excessive salt and alcohol intake which can both contribute to dehydration



Carissa Regnerus, RDH, MA, FADHA

As we move through the warm months, staying hydrated is one of the simplest ways to support comfort, clarity and wellbeing. Water helps us enjoy the activities we love- working, learning, playing and aging well. Small habits that support hydration can help people of all ages stay healthy and strong throughout the South Dakota summer and beyond.

Carissa Regnerus, RDH, MA, FADHA, has been a licensed dental hygienist for more than 25 years and a faculty member in the University of South Dakota's Department of Dental Hygiene since 2001. She teaches courses in dental public health, nutrition and preventive care, with a focus on helping students understand the oralsystemic connections that shape overall health. Her work in medical mission settings reflects her dedication to improving oral and systemic health across diverse communities. She can be reached at Carissa.Regnerus@usd.edu. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Tik Tok. Prairie Doc Programming includes On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show (most Thursdays at 7pm on SDPB, YouTube and streaming on Facebook), 2 podcasts, and a Radio program (on SDPB, Sundays at 6am and 1pm).

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We the People

The South Dakota Humanities Council is making available a weekly column -- "We the People" -- that focuses on the U.S. Constitution. It is written by David Adler, who is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality, and civic education.



By David Adler

The Founders' Leadership: Unrivaled Greatness, Historic Triumphs

Scholarly surveys, discussions and polls have consistently revealed a clear consensus: the leadership capacity of the founding generation—Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Hamilton and Madison—is unrivaled by any subsequent coterie of American statesman. It is true that these same academic conversations reflect agreement that Abraham Lincoln and Franklin D. Roosevelt stand atop the list of America's greatest presidents, with founding chief executives such as Washington and Jefferson closely on their heels, but there is, it seems, no generation of political leaders across 250 years that is comparable to those who launched the American Revolution, drafted the Declaration of Independence and wrote the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The question, always, is why not?

This is not to suggest that the World War II generation is not our nation's finest, for it very likely was, but only that the collection of political leaders who launched a revolution against monarchy, conceived of a republican form of government and served as stewards of it through the early years of nationhood, exhibited a particular set of creative talents, skills, vision and ingenuity that has not been matched since. To be clear, this is no slight against Lincoln—a man for the ages—whose own sense of historical responsibilities, remarkable leadership qualities and steadfast belief in a government "of, by and for the people," saved the Union, and commends him as the last of founders. Nor does it disregard the extraordinary, transformational leadership exhibited by Roosevelt, whose stewardship overcame the depths of the Great Depression, vanquished the fascists and saved democracy. It is to say, rather, that the collective leadership of the founders commands a unique status in our nation's history.

Victory in the American Revolution did not exhaust the energies of the founding leaders, but rather inspired great achievements. Consider the far-reaching impact of just three of them. They launched an experiment, Alexander Hamilton wrote in Federalist No. 1, asking whether it was possible for people to govern themselves through reflection and choice, discussion and debate, or whether they must forever suffer the imposition of government upon them. This is what Lincoln meant when he asked, "whether any government so conceived and so dedicated can long endure." Two hundred and fifty years after the Declaration of Independence, Americans are still testing the thesis.

In addition, the founders created an enduring republic across a huge land mass which, history suggested, was nearly impossible. The historical verdict was that a republic, based on popular consent, could work only if confined to a small area, such as the Greek city-states, and certainly not in a large nation, with a booming population. The many regional interests and values, it was supposed, would undermine anything approaching a national consensus. The larger the nation, the greater the disputes. Madison's genius for governmental innovation, highlighted by his injection of federalism, overcame the historical objections to the founders' experiment.

Finally, the founders succeeded in creating a secular state, grounded on republican principles and values embraced by the citizenry that would create common consensus and purpose. Previously, it had been held that a viable government required state support of an established religion as a means necessary to instill shared religious beliefs that would bind a nation. The founders, however, were committed to the separation of church and state, a reflection of the presence in America of many different religions and religious beliefs, to be sure, but more importantly, a function of their understanding that religious freedom—a prized

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liberty-- was better promoted and secured by keeping government out of religious matters. America, Madison and Jefferson hoped, could avoid the internecine religious strife that had plagued Europe for centuries.

Historians have grappled with the question of how a remarkable collection of wise, talented and creative leaders appeared, so to speak, on the scene at a pivotal moment that changed the course of American history. Answers are elusive. There is much to be said for the explanation that the colonists were swayed by the power of Thomas Paine's incendiary pamphlet, "Common Sense" which, John Adams believed, had become "the common article" of faith. Monarchism was indefensible for a people who yearned for freedom and self-governance. There is much to be said, as well, for Arnold Toynbee's view that crises create leaders. This, indeed, is a quintessentially America view--the abiding belief, a deep confidence, that the citizenry will rise to the occasion and meet the challenges of the moment. Any moment.

David Adler is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality and civic education. This column is made possible with the support of the South Dakota Humanities Council, South Dakota NewsMedia Association and this newspaper.

Names Released in Lyman County Fatal Crash

What: Two-vehicle fatal crash

Where: S.D. Highway 248 at mile marker 257, 2 miles east of Lyman, South Dakota

When: 6:47 p.m., Thursday, July 9, 2026

Driver 1: Gayle V. Mohr, 63-year-old female from Reliance, South Dakota, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 1998 Suzuki VDD51TON mini truck

Seat Belt Used: No

Driver 2: Collin James Hoffer, 57-year-old male from Reliance, South Dakota, minor injuries

Vehicle 2: 2006 Freightliner semi-truck

Seat Belt Used: No

Lyman County, S.D.- A Reliance, South Dakota woman died Thursday in a two-vehicle crash near Lyman, South Dakota.

Preliminary crash information indicates Gayle V. Mohr, the driver of a 1998 Suzuki VDD51TON mini truck, was traveling southbound on 324th Avenue. At the same time, Collin James Hoffer, the driver of a 2006 Freightliner semi-truck, was traveling westbound on S.D. Highway 248. Mohr entered the intersection without stopping and collided with the Freightliner. She was ejected from the vehicle and sustained fatal injuries. Hoffer was taken to a Chamberlain hospital with minor injuries.

The investigation is ongoing. All information released is preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

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Groton Locke Electric splits pair at Northville tournament

Groton Locke Electric earned a split in Sunday action at the Northville tournament, blanking Merchants 4-0 behind a dominant pitching performance from Ryan Groeblichhoff before falling to Dairy Queen 10-5 after surrendering an early four-run advantage.

Groeblichhoff was nearly untouchable in the opener, tossing a two-hit shutout while keeping Merchants off the scoreboard throughout the contest. He scattered just two hits in the complete-game effort.

Groton broke through in the second inning when BJ Richter grounded out to bring home the game's first run. The offense added three more runs over the final innings to secure the victory.

Ty Sieber paced the offense with a perfect 3-for-3 performance at the plate. Bradin Althoff, Richter, Sieber and Jonah Schmidt each drove in a run, while Brevin Fliehs stole two bases. Groton also played flawless defense without committing an error, with Brian Hansen leading the way defensively with eight chances.

Kyle Stahl and Dawson Ward accounted for Merchants' only two hits, while the Merchants turned one double play. Bryan Weber took the loss after allowing three runs, one earned, over 4¹/₃ innings.

In Sunday's second game, Groton Locke Electric raced out to a 4-0 lead in the opening inning but couldn't hold off Dairy Queen, which rallied for a 10-5 victory.

Groton's fast start was fueled by Bradin Althoff's bases-clearing triple, followed by an RBI single from Dylan Frey.

Dairy Queen answered quickly, taking a 6-4 lead in the second inning behind RBI singles from Cooper Hainy and Owen Osborn, then continued to build its advantage the rest of the way.

Althoff finished with three RBIs to lead the Groton offense. Althoff, Ty Sieber, Brian Hansen and Frey each collected a hit.

Jonah Schmidt was charged with the loss after pitching three innings, allowing six runs, three earned, while striking out two and walking five. Nolan Gall earned the complete-game victory for Dairy Queen, giving up five runs on four hits while striking out seven.

Hainy and Owen Osborn each drove in three runs for Dairy Queen. Bennett Osborn and Owen Osborn both had two hits, while Brent Osborn drew three of Dairy Queen's eight walks.

The split gave Groton Locke Electric one win and one loss on the day, highlighted by Groeblichhoff's complete-game shutout in the opener.

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Merchants 0 - 4 Groton Locke Electric

📍 Home 📅 Sunday July 12, 2026

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
MRCH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
GRTN	0	1	0	0	3	0	X	4	7	0

BATTING

Merchants	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
D Bakeburg #2 (SS)	3	0	0	0	0	0
A Remily #22 (1B)	3	0	0	0	0	2
E Beyers #34 (2B)	2	0	0	0	1	0
K Stahl #2 (C)	3	0	1	0	0	0
L Fischb... #11 (3B)	3	0	0	0	0	0
M Waltm... #29 (LF)	3	0	0	0	0	1
B Kirsch #14 (CF)	1	0	0	0	1	0
K Kirsch #6	0	0	0	0	0	0
C Bahr #6 (DH)	3	0	0	0	0	2
D Ward #20 (RF)	2	0	1	0	1	0
Totals	23	0	2	0	3	5

TB: D Ward, K Stahl, **HBP:** D Bakeburg, K Kirsch, **LOB:** 7

PITCHING

Merchants	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
B Weber #8	4.1	3	3	1	3	1	0
M Wal... #29	1.2	4	1	1	0	1	0
Totals	6.0	7	4	1	3	2	0

L: B Weber, **P-S:** M Waltman 26-16, B Weber 79-46, **HBP:** B Weber, **BF:** M Waltman 9, B Weber 20, **E:** D Bakeburg

Groton Locke El...	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
B Fliehs #1 (LF)	4	1	1	0	0	0
B Hansen #11 (1B)	3	1	0	0	1	0
T Sieber #24 (SS)	3	1	3	1	0	0
J Schmidt #21 (CF)	2	0	0	1	0	1
B Althoff #27 (RF)	3	1	2	1	0	0
N Morris #45 (3B)	2	0	0	0	0	0
R Groebmlin... #0 (P)	2	0	0	0	1	0
C Camacho #5 (2B)	1	0	0	0	1	0
J Zimme... #3 (2B)	1	0	0	0	0	1
B Richter #19 (C)	3	0	1	1	0	0
CR: W Richte... #19	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	24	4	7	4	3	2

2B: B Althoff, T Sieber, **TB:** B Fliehs, B Althoff 3, B Richter, T Sieber 4, **SF:** J Schmidt, **HBP:** N Morris, **SB:** B Fliehs 2, B Hansen, **LOB:** 7

Groton Loc...	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
R Groebl... #0	7.0	2	0	0	3	5	0
Totals	7.0	2	0	0	3	5	0

W: R Groeblinghoff, **P-S:** R Groeblinghoff 113-69, **HBP:** R Groeblinghoff 2, **BF:** R Groeblinghoff 28

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Groton Locke Electric 5 - 10 Dairy Queen

📍 Away 📅 Sunday July 12, 2026

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
GRTN	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	5	4	2
DRYQ	3	3	0	2	2	0	X	10	7	1

BATTING

Groton Locke El...	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
B Fliehs #1 (CF)	4	0	0	0	0	1
B Hansen #11 (1B)	3	2	1	0	0	0
T Sieber #24 (3B)	2	1	1	1	1	0
J Schmidt #21 (P)	2	1	0	0	0	0
B Althoff #27 (RF)	3	1	1	3	0	0
R Groebli... #0 (SS)	3	0	0	0	0	3
D Frey #6 (LF)	2	0	1	1	1	1
C Larson #8 (C)	3	0	0	0	0	1
J Zimmer... #3 (2B)	1	0	0	0	0	1
B Richter #19 (P)	0	0	0	0	0	0
W Richter V... #19	1	0	0	0	0	0
N Morris #45 (P)	0	0	0	0	0	0
S Locke #15	0	0	0	0	1	0
C Camacho #5 (P)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	24	5	4	5	3	7

2B: B Hansen, T Sieber, **3B:** B Althoff, **TB:** B Althoff 3, B Hansen 2, D Frey, T Sieber 2, **CS:** C Larson, **HBP:** J Schmidt, B Hansen, **LOB:** 3

PITCHING

Groton Loc...	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
J Schmi... #21	3.0	3	6	3	5	2	0
B Rich... #19	1.0	2	2	2	2	0	0
N Morris #45	1.0	2	2	2	1	0	0
C Cama... #5	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	6.0	7	10	7	8	2	0

Dairy Queen	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
C Osborn #2 (CF)	2	2	0	0	1	1
N Gall #17 (P)	2	3	1	1	1	0
B Osborn #29 (3B)	4	2	2	0	0	1
P Osborn #15 (1B)	2	2	1	1	0	0
C Hainy #19 (SS)	3	1	1	3	1	0
O Osborn #5 (2B)	3	0	2	3	1	0
B Osborn #3 (LF)	1	0	0	1	3	0
J Kleinsass... #3 (C)	3	0	0	0	1	0
K Gall #57 (RF)	4	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	24	10	7	9	8	2

TB: B Osborn 2, C Hainy, O Osborn 2, N Gall, P Osborn, **SAC:** P Osborn, **HBP:** C Osborn, N Gall, P Osborn, **SB:** B Osborn, O Osborn, C Osborn, **LOB:** 8

Dairy Queen	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
N Gall #17	7.0	4	5	5	3	7	0
Totals	7.0	4	5	5	3	7	0



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

State law requiring prenatal instruction videos is intended to indoctrinate, not educate

by Rick Snedeker

South Dakota House Bill 1313 is a coyote in sheep's clothing.

The legislation requires public schools to show students "age-appropriate and research-based" videos about prenatal development.

But it gives off an odor of mendacity, of deceit.

In the movie version of Tennessee Williams' iconic 1955 play about a dysfunctional mid-century Southern planter family, "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," patriarch Big Daddy tries to school his eldest son, Brick, on the underhanded, deceitful realities of the world and his own family:

"What's that smell in this room? Didn't you notice it, Brick? Didn't you notice a powerful and obnoxious odor of mendacity in this room? There ain't nothin' more powerful than the odor of mendacity."

There's a whiff of that in HB 1313, which the South Dakota House overwhelmingly passed, 52-10, on Feb. 12, the Senate approved by an equally lop-

sided margin, 31-3, on March 3, and Gov. Larry Rhoden signed on March 20. The law took effect July 1, after the state Board of Education Standards on June 23 approved, 7-0, two 3-minute videos and one 42-minute film that comply with the law: "Baby Olivia," produced by the anti-abortion group Live Action; "How a Human Embryo Develops into a Fetus" by Encyclopedia Britannica; and "The Biology of Prenatal Development" by nonprofit, nonpartisan The Endowment for Human Development.

Tellingly, the law prohibits videos developed by abortion-rights groups. This implicitly reveals that the Legislature deliberately chose not to teach the state's elementary and secondary school children the whole



South Dakota Gov. Larry Rhoden prepares to sign three anti-abortion bills into law on March 20, 2026, at the Alpha Center in Sioux Falls. Also pictured, from left, are state Sen. Tamara Grove, R-Lower Brule, Alpha Center founder Leslee Unruh, House Speaker Jon Hansen, R-Dell Rapids, Rep. Les Heinemann, R-Flandreau, Rep. Jon Hughes, R-Sioux Falls, and Dale Bartscher of South Dakota Right to Life. (Photo by Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

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story of human reproduction, including its sexual precedents and real-world consequences. Sex-ed is not mandated in South Dakota.

After the state Board of Education's action, Gov. Rhoden emphasized "Human life is sacred, and our students deserve to learn what human life looks like even before a baby is born. ... By educating our students on the dignity of human life, we will continue to protect the unborn for generations to come."

Yet, opponents of the law voiced concern about the accuracy of computer-generated imagery (CGI) used in the videos.

Samantha Chapman of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) said that "the depiction in the videos and the medical community's standards are misaligned."

"[The videos include] CGI imagery that grossly misrepresents the sizes and different developmental stages during pregnancy and gestation. They are not medically accurate; they use terminology that is not medically accurate, and they use a different system for dating the pregnancy than what you know obstetricians and gynecologists will use when you are pregnant, and you go see your doctor," Chapman said. "They are now, instead, getting ideologically driven propaganda."

Although the law purports to better educate students on human gestation, it actually — this is the mendacious part — appears to be purposely hiding from students the full context of human behavior and moral calculation surrounding that natural, physical process. That means there's nothing in the videos on the broad diversity of human sexuality (homosexuality, transsexuality, etc.), on sex itself (also "prenatal"), which leads to fertilization, to the many significant and often dangerous complications of pregnancy, and to the often compelling, defensible reasons women choose to end their pregnancies with abortions. These include severe birth defects, risk to the mother, lack of resources to raise a child once born, and practical difficulties of adoption.

This adult squeamishness concerning sexuality characterizes South Dakota in recent years. Although a 1996 dissertation by Aleene Golis at South Dakota State University — "Adult Attitudes Regarding Sex Education in South Dakota Schools" — found that 88.8% of the respondents in her study supported sex education in schools, the state in 2026 still does not mandate it, leaving it up to individual districts to decide.

The prenatal development videos now required in state schools do not teach students the actual behavioral precedents that bring zygotes, fetuses and birthed babies into existence in the first place, or what babies' final arrival fully portends for the parents and society at large. But abstinence instruction — long debunked as ineffective — is mandated under state law requiring "character development instruction."

So, the new government-mandated videos were selected, it appears, not to fully educate, but to implant the images of computer-generated beautiful, vulnerable zygotes and fetuses in kids' minds as a shame-inducing bulwark against future abortions.

That's the mendacity, the deceit. Otherwise, sex-ed would be as robust and comprehensive in our schools today as it is in 36 other states and the District of Columbia.

Rick Snedeker, a retired journalist living in Mitchell, is the author of a 2020 memoir about growing up in a Saudi oil camp in the 1950s, "3,001 Arabian Days," and a 2022 historical overview of Christianity's coercive evolution in America, "Holy Smoke."

South Carolina US Sen. Lindsey Graham dies after 'brief and sudden illness'

BY JANE NORMAN

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham died on Saturday night of a "brief and sudden illness," the South Carolina Republican's office announced early Sunday.

"Senator Graham's family appreciates prayers at this time and asks for privacy during this incredibly difficult period," the statement added.

Graham, who turned 71 on Thursday, was a close ally of President Donald Trump and chairman of the Senate Budget Committee. In June he defeated five Republican challengers in the Senate primary in South Carolina and was to face Democrat Annie Andrews in the general election.

A statement shared with the media Sunday night by Graham's office, citing the District of Columbia medical examiner, said he died following an aortic dissection due to arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease. According to the Mayo Clinic, an aortic dissection occurs when there is a tear in the inner layer of the aorta, the body's main artery; blood rushes through the tear; and the inner and middle layers of the aorta split.

The statement also said Graham's death certificate will be pending until all toxicological and microscopic testing is final.

Trump on social media called Graham "one of the greatest people and Senators I have ever known."

"He was always working, and was a true American Patriot. Lindsey will be greatly missed!!! DETAILS AND ARRANGEMENTS TO FOLLOW. So sad!"

Graham, who had just returned from a visit to Ukraine, had been scheduled to appear on NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday morning. Instead, Trump came on as a guest and told host Kristen Welker he spoke with Graham on Saturday night, "sometime in the sevens," apparently not long before Graham died. "He was really a worker but he sounded great, actually," Trump said, adding that Graham said he was "a little tired" after the trip overseas.

"I got a message about 1 o'clock in the morning from one of the people in his office that he had passed away," said Trump.

"He was a great politician actually," said Trump, who had endorsed Graham. "There was nobody like him. He loved being a politician, and he was going to win his election, he was going to win it big."

Trump said if he "had a problem with a Democrat, he could work it out," and added that Graham in their final conversation underlined his advocacy for the SAVE America Act, an elections bill stalled in the Senate.

Asked by Welker if he had anyone in mind who should be appointed to the seat, Trump said, "I have



U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham speaks as South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster looks on during a press conference in the governor's office at the Statehouse in Columbia, South Carolina, on Aug. 9, 2022. (File photo by Travis Bell/STATEHOUSE CAROLINA/Special to the

SC Daily Gazette)

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somebody that I think would be great, but I don't want to say it now because ... it's too soon."

Republican Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina, also on "Meet the Press," said, "The entire state has lost a statesman. I have lost a friend." He said he expected at least one or two U.S. House members from South Carolina would be considered for the appointment to Graham's seat.

Former President Joe Biden, a Democratic member of the Senate from Delaware before his election to the presidency, said on social media he and Graham served together for more than a decade and worked closely on many issues as members of the Foreign Relations Committee. "We disagreed often, and sometimes loudly," said Biden. "Lindsey and I did agree on the profound importance of public service. Like me, he loved the Senate as an institution, even with all its flaws and complexities."

Trump said Sunday afternoon has ordered all U.S. flags be lowered to half staff until July 18.

Return from Ukraine

Graham, the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs, while in Ukraine met with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who posted photos of the two of them on X on Friday. "This is already his 10th visit to our country, and we appreciate this support," Zelenskyy said then.

Early Sunday, Zelenskyy posted on social media: "Deeply saddened by the news of the passing of United States Senator Lindsey Graham. Lindsey was a true defender of freedom and the values that make our world safer." He said they had met twice on Graham's most recent visit.

Graham's office did not provide additional details on the circumstances of his death. The Washington Post, citing police scanner audio, reported that emergency responders at Graham's Washington, D.C., home worked to stabilize a man on Saturday night and transported the individual to a hospital.

NBC News reported that the response, according to emergency responders' audio, was to a call for "cardiac arrest" and CPR was in progress. "Photographs from the scene reviewed by NBC News show paramedics carrying a person on a stretcher from Graham's home to an awaiting ambulance. Police cars and fire trucks were also on site," NBC said.

'My heart is heavy'

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said in a statement "my heart is heavy" to learn of Graham's death.

"Lindsey's long and dedicated service in the Air Force and in Congress carried him to far-flung regions of the world," Thune said. "He was a strong advocate for the United States and a strong ally to freedom-loving countries across the globe. He believed in the might of America to achieve good in the world and dedicated his life to advancing that cause."

Graham, who was born in Central, S.C., first joined Congress in 1994 when he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from the Third Congressional District. He was elected to the Senate in 2002 and reelected in 2008, 2014 and 2020.

He earned undergraduate and law degrees from the University of South Carolina and spent six-and-a-half years on active duty as an Air Force lawyer. He then served in the South Carolina Air National Guard and Air Force Reserves, according to his official biography, retiring at the rank of colonel in 2015.

Under the 17th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the governor of a state must schedule an election to fill an empty Senate seat. South Carolina law says the governor can make an appointment to fill the Senate seat for the remainder of Graham's term, which expires in January, according to the South Carolina Daily Gazette.

Also under South Carolina law, a special primary election must be held to select the next Republican nominee to the seat Graham held. The special primary is set for Aug. 11 with a runoff if needed on Aug. 25, the Daily Gazette reported.

The Democratic nominee for Senate, Andrews, expressed her condolences on X. "From his small-town South Carolina roots to the halls of the U.S. Senate, he was a man of great faith who proudly served our nation as a JAG officer and Air Force colonel," she said. "I hope that South Carolinians will join me in setting partisanship aside and offering gratitude to Senator Lindsey Graham for his service to the great state

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of South Carolina.”

South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster said on social media he and his family were “devastated” by Graham’s death. “Lindsey Graham is irreplaceable,” he said. “The fiercest of fighters for South Carolina and America—and a loyal and steadfast friend.”

Narrow margin in Senate

Republicans control the Senate with 53 seats. Graham’s death came as concerns have mounted about the continuing absence of 84-year-old Sen. Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican, whose office has said he has been hospitalized since June 14 for an undisclosed condition.

Senators expressed their condolences after awakening Sunday to the unexpected news. “I’m shocked and saddened by the passing of my friend and colleague Senator Lindsey Graham,” said Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C. “Lindsey was a lifelong public servant, a tireless champion for South Carolina, and an outspoken advocate for America’s role in protecting freedom throughout the world.”

Senate Majority Whip John Barrasso, a Wyoming Republican, said Graham represented South Carolina and America “with pride and determination. He guided the Senate through our toughest battles while Chairman of both the Judiciary Committee and the Budget Committee. He carried the day with his mission clarity and steadfast leadership.”

Vice President JD Vance, a former GOP senator from Ohio, said on social media that Graham “came from humble beginnings and became one of the most powerful lawmakers in the most powerful nation on Earth,” and recalled a shouting match they once got into at a Senate lunch over a Ukraine funding bill. Vance said he then learned Graham was quietly pushing for rail legislation that Vance wanted.

“That was Lindsey Graham. He fought like hell for the things he believed in, and he was just as willing to go to bat for you when it counted,” said Vance. “Lindsey had the best sense of humor in the Senate. He loved the game of politics. He was constantly asking which races were up and down, and how he could help. As he liked to say, ‘I don’t care if you’re an isolationist or a religious fanatic, so long as you have an R next to your name, I want you to win.’”

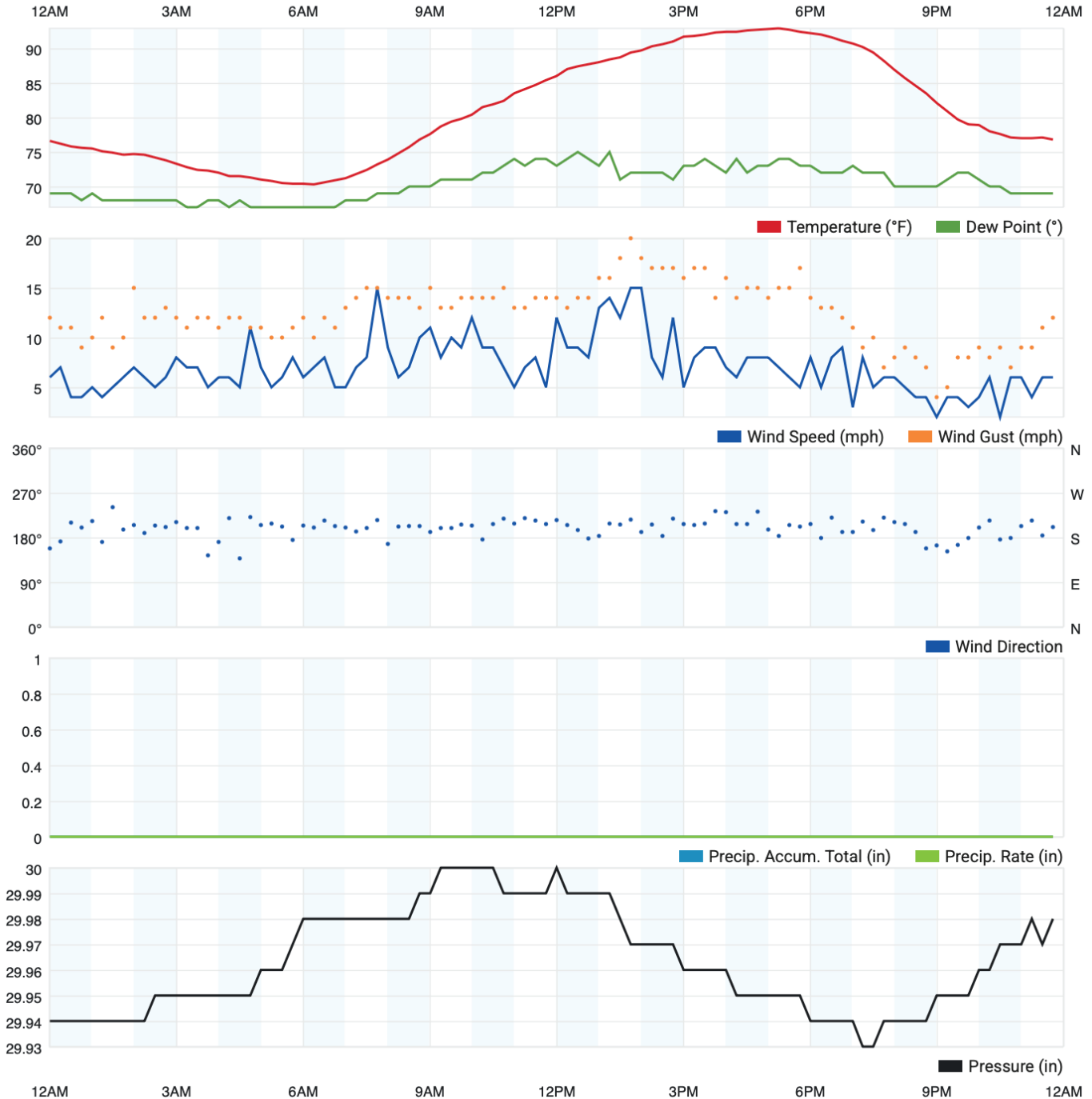
As the Washington Bureau Chief of States Newsroom, Jane directs national coverage, managing staff and free-lance reporters in the nation’s capital and assigning and editing state-specific daily and enterprise stories. Jane is a veteran of more than three decades in journalism.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

July 12, 2026



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Heat Advisory

Today

Tonight

Tuesday

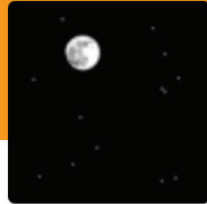
Tuesday Night

Wednesday



High: 97 °F

Hot and
Breezy



Low: 72 °F

Clear



High: 99 °F

Hot



Low: 69 °F

Mostly Clear



High: 99 °F

Hot



Long Duration Heatwave

July 13, 2026

2:02 AM

Peak Heat Expected through Thu

Key Messages

- Temperatures and humidity remaining consistent through the middle of the week.
 - ◆ **Hottest stretch of days will be through Thursday!**
- Dewpoints in the 60s & low 70s. **Heat Index Values from 90s to low 100s.**
- The **LONG DURATION** heat may cause widespread heat related impacts particularly for those without adequate cooling and/or those sensitive to heat!

Maximum Temperature (°F)

Maximum Heat Index (°F)

Forecast

Forecast

7/13/7/14/7/15/7/16/7/17/7/18							7/13/7/14/7/15/7/16/7/17/7/18						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat		Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
Aberdeen	99	101	102	103	99	97	Aberdeen	99	101	100	102	99	95
Britton	94	96	96	97	94	91	Britton	95	97	96	97	94	90
Clark	92	94	95	96	94	91	Clark	91	93	93	94	94	90
Eagle Butte	102	101	100	100	99	97	Eagle Butte	100	99	97	98	97	94
Eureka	100	100	99	100	98	95	Eureka	98	98	96	98	96	92
Gettysburg	99	100	100	101	99	97	Gettysburg	98	99	97	99	98	95
Kennebec	99	100	101	102	102	100	Kennebec	99	98	98	101	101	98
McIntosh	103	101	100	99	96	94	McIntosh	101	100	97	97	94	91
Milbank	94	97	97	97	94	92	Milbank	95	98	97	98	96	91
Miller	96	97	98	99	98	96	Miller	95	96	95	98	98	94
Mobridge	102	103	102	102	100	98	Mobridge	101	101	100	101	99	96
Murdo	98	99	98	100	99	97	Murdo	98	97	96	98	98	95
Pierre	103	104	103	104	103	101	Pierre	103	103	101	103	103	99
Redfield	98	100	100	102	100	97	Redfield	97	98	98	100	99	95
Sisseton	95	97	96	97	94	91	Sisseton	96	99	97	97	96	90
Watertown	94	96	97	97	95	93	Watertown	94	96	96	97	97	92
Webster	92	94	94	95	93	90	Webster	92	94	94	95	93	89
Wheaton	93	96	95	96	94	92	Wheaton	96	99	97	97	96	91

Maximum Temperature Forecast (°F)

Maximum Heat Index Forecast (°F)



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

Dangerously hot temperatures will persist across the region as heat dome remains overhead through the middle of the week. High temperatures will top out in the mid 90s to low 100s for the next several days. Maximum heat index values will reach the upper 90s to low 100s through the end of the week. The long duration heat may lead to widespread heat related impacts, especially for those without adequate cooling and those sensitive to heat.

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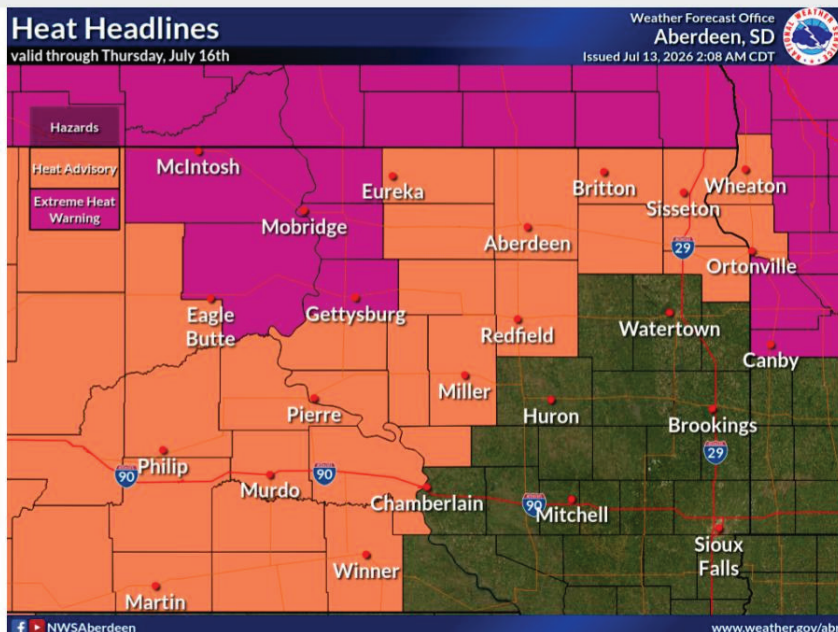
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Long Duration Heatwave Headlines

July 13, 2026
2:02 AM

- **Extreme Heat Warning**- North central South Dakota.
- **Heat Advisory**- Central and portions of northeastern SD through west central MN.
- **Valid: through Thursday evening CDT.**
- Uncertainty exists regarding how extreme the heat and humidity will get, therefore, changes in timing and intensity of heat are still possible.



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

An Extreme Heat Warning and a Heat Advisory remain in effect for portions of north central SD and central and portions of northeast SD into west central MN respectively. These headlines will remain in effect through Thursday evening.



Maximum HeatRisk

July 13, 2026
2:02 AM CDT

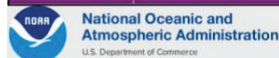
Key Messages

- Maximum HeatRisk is expected to be **Major** to **Extreme**.
- This heat affects anyone without cooling/hydration and those sensitive to heat.
- **Don't forget about your pets!** Make sure to provide them with lots of water and shade. Bring them inside if possible. Never leave pets in a hot vehicle!

Orange 2	Moderate - Affects those who are sensitive to heat, especially those without cooling/hydration, and some health systems and industries.
Red 3	Major - Affects anyone without cooling/hydration as well as health systems and industries.
Magenta 4	Extreme - Rare and/or long-duration extreme heat with no overnight relief affecting anyone without cooling/hydration as well as health systems, industries, and infrastructure.

Maximum HeatRisk Forecast

	7/13	7/14	7/15	7/16	7/17	7/18
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Aberdeen	3	3	3	3	3	3
Britton	3	3	3	3	3	3
Clark	3	3	3	3	3	3
Eagle Butte	3	4	4	4	4	2
Eureka	4	4	4	4	4	4
Gettysburg	3	4	4	4	4	4
Kennebec	2	2	2	2	2	2
McIntosh	3	4	4	4	4	2
Milbank	3	4	4	4	4	4
Miller	3	3	3	3	3	3
Mobridge	4	4	4	4	4	4
Murdo	2	2	2	3	3	3
Pierre	3	4	4	4	4	3
Redfield	3	4	4	4	4	4
Sisseton	3	4	4	4	4	3
Watertown	3	4	4	4	4	4
Webster	3	3	4	4	4	3
Wheaton	3	3	3	3	3	3



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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 93 °F at 4:59 PM

Low Temp: 70 °F at 6:13 AM

Wind: 20 mph at 1:41 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 106 in 1936

Record Low: 44 in 1987

Average High: 85

Average Low: 60

Average Precip in July.: 1.48

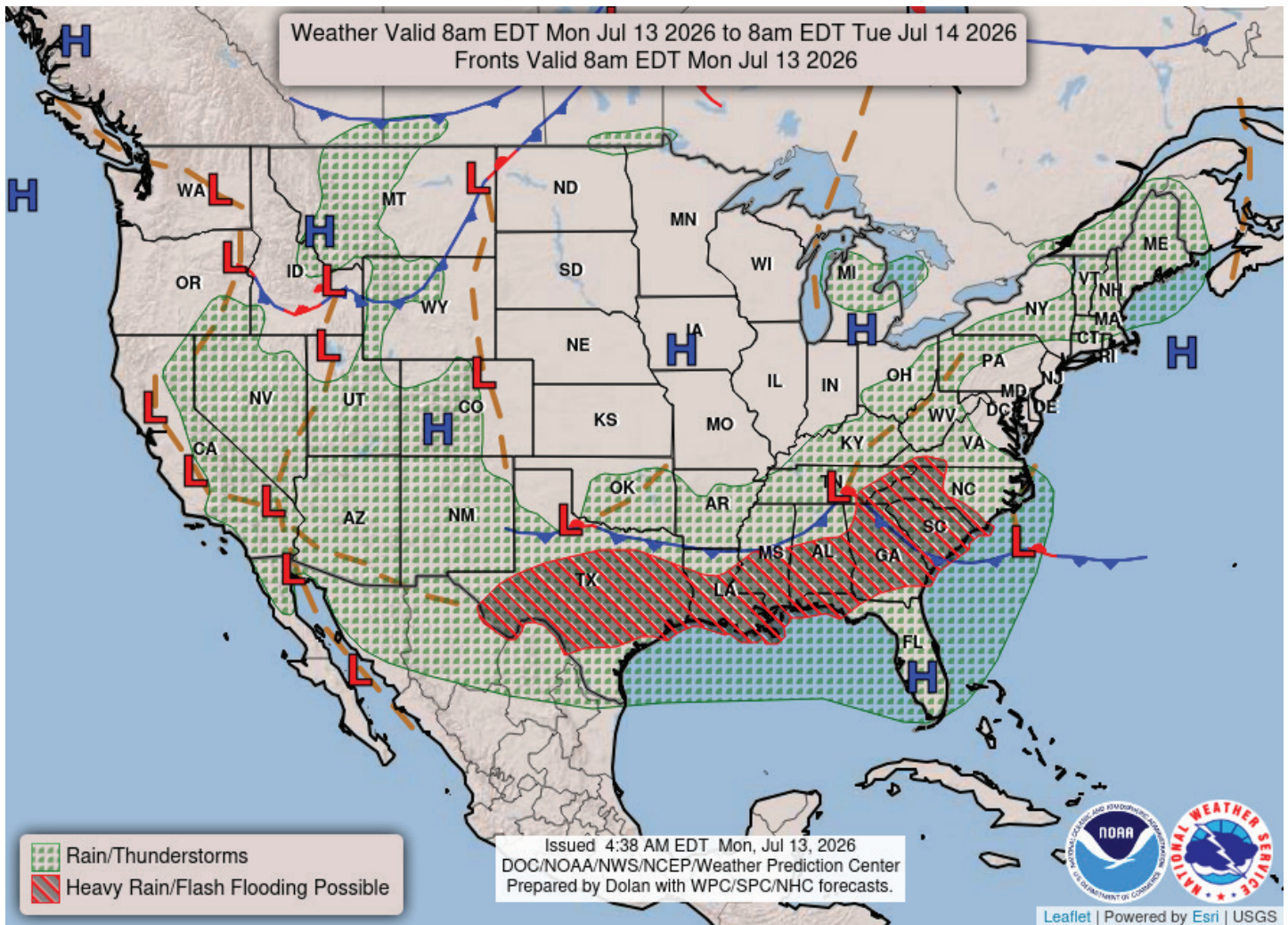
Precip to date in July.: 4.72

Average Precip to date: 12.49

Precip Year to Date: 14.19

Sunset Tonight: 9:19 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:57 am



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Today in Weather History

July 13, 1964: Early morning low temperatures dropped into the lower to mid-30s across the northern half of the state. Some low temperatures include 32 degrees at Castlewood, 33 in Andover and 4 miles NW of Onida.

1895: A tornado that began in Cherry Hill, New Jersey made its way to Woodhaven and Long Island in New York.

1951: Rivers across eastern Kansas crest well above flood stage, causing the most significant destruction from flooding in the Midwestern United States at that time. Five-hundred-thousand people were left homeless, and 24 people died in the disaster.

1975 — Dover, DE, was deluged with 8.50 inches of rain to establish a 24 hour record for the state. (The Weather Channel)

1977 — Lightning struck a key electrical transmission line in Westchester County of southeastern New York State plunging New York City into darkness. (David Ludlum)

1980 — Afternoon highs of 108 degrees at Memphis, TN, 108 degrees at Macon, GA, and 105 degrees at Atlanta, GA, established all-time records for those three cities. The high of 110 degrees at Newington, GA, was just two degrees shy of the state record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Unseasonably cool weather prevailed across the Midwest. Ten cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Casper, WY, with a reading of 39 degrees. By way of contrast, record heat was reported in the eastern U.S., with highs of 93 degrees at Burlington, VT, and 101 degrees around Miami, FL. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — There were just three reports of severe weather across the country, and just one record high temperature reported. Thunderstorms brought much needed rains to the Tennessee Valley area, producing nine inches at Senatobia, MS. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — A thunderstorm at Albany, GA, produced 1.40 inches of rain in forty minutes, along with wind gusts to 82 mph. Afternoon highs of 98 degrees at Corpus Christi, TX, 110 degrees at Tucson, AZ, and 114 degrees at Phoenix, AZ, equalled records for the date. Greenwood, MS, reported 55.65 inches of precipitation for the year, twice the amount normally received by mid July. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)



The Symptoms of Discouragement

There is danger in discouragement. But with God's strength, we can overcome it.

James 1:2-4: 2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

One of the most dangerous feelings is discouragement. When it takes hold, it can affect every area of our life. Understanding how discouragement shows up can help us recognize and address it.

A divided mind is often the first sign. This underlying distraction clouds every decision and thought. No matter what you're doing, it feels as if a shadow has settled over your entire perspective, making it hard to think clearly or find joy in anything.

The "blame game" is another common response. When we're hurting, it's natural to want someone to hold responsible—maybe God for allowing painful circumstances, or others for the way they've treated us. But shifting blame doesn't bring the healing we're after. In fact, it often keeps us stuck in the very pain we're trying to escape.

Unresolved anger can also signal discouragement. When bitterness takes root and anger festers, it can deepen into something more serious.

At times, we all feel discouraged. The question isn't whether that will happen but how we'll respond. Ask God to search your heart for any trace of discouragement and to replace it with His strength and peace. He will be faithful to provide them (Isaiah 41:10).

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:

07.12.26

12 21 39 46 48 2

TOP PRIZE:

\$1,000,000/year

NEXT 17 Hrs 34 Mins 52
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.10.26

2 39 44 46 56 23

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$637,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 19
DRAW: Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.11.26

15 17 29 44 46 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$33,480,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 34 Mins 52
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.11.26

1 2 10 18 20

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$183,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 49
DRAW: Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.11.26

5 7 17 26 28 5

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 18 Mins 52
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.11.26

8 10 14 45 59 5

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$478,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 18 Mins 52
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Innovation, data fixes fuel Native American graduation gains at federally funded schools

By SAVANNAH PETERS Associated Press

During his senior year of high school on the Puyallup Reservation, Gerald Dillon traded much of his academic coursework for career training. When he walked into the second grade classroom where he worked as a teaching assistant, students would rush from their seats for a fist bump or a hug.

The 18-year-old, who once found classes boring and put in only enough effort to pass, found renewed purpose to come to school everyday.

"It motivates me. I like making connections with the kids, I like helping them," Dillon said.

It began in his junior year when he enrolled in career training courses. Soon, Dillon said, his grades improved. He graduated in June from Chief Leschi Schools in Washington and is now considering going to college for a teaching degree.

Administrators at the school say a shift in focus to technical training and career readiness is paying off, with more students not only staying in school but graduating on time.

Those gains are emblematic of progress across the U.S. Bureau of Indian Education, which oversees 183 primary and secondary schools serving over 40,000 students. In 2015, just over half of high schoolers at BIE schools graduated within four years. That number soared to a record high of 79% by 2025.

Some BIE educators attribute that surge to local innovations. Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Billy Kirkland says they reflect the Trump administration's commitment to Native American students, including efforts to strengthen teacher training. In addition, the way graduation rates are reported across BIE schools was changed to address flawed data collection that previously depressed the numbers.

But concerns loom that changes reshaping the BIE under the Trump administration — including the planned dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education and continued fallout from cuts instituted by DOGE — could undermine progress and prevent struggling schools from improving.

Reporting standards net more accurate data

The surge in graduation rates reflects, in part, more accurate reporting rather than a sudden leap in student academic improvement, according to agency officials.

For years, school administrators across the system used flawed methods to track graduation rates, often counting students who had transferred to other schools as dropouts.

"We had to come to a consensus and set an accountability framework for our schools," said Carmelia Becenti, the agency's chief academic officer.

Beginning in 2018, BIE began standardizing data collection methods. In the years since, Becenti said, the data has painted a more accurate and encouraging picture.

An AP analysis of BIE data found that graduation rates across the system are up 55% since new reporting standards began rolling out, with nine of its secondary schools reporting 100% growth or higher.

New approaches help students connect

Less than one-third of BIE schools are operated by the agency itself. The rest are run by tribes and receive federal funding. At some of those, educators say data collection is only part of the story.

Don Brummett, superintendent of Chief Leschi Schools, said his staff has been working to correct a "disconnect" between the high school's previous laser focus on getting students ready for college and many students' goals of finding a job upon graduation.

"We devalued the trades. That was a mistake," Brummett said.

The school launched its career and technical curriculum in 2020 with funding from the Puyallup Tribal Council. Since then, Brummett has seen students who might otherwise have dropped out instead enter health sciences, education and fisheries management and find new motivation to stay in school.

Dillon, the recent graduate, said hands-on job training was a better match for his learning style.

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"It was kind of the first time I felt excited to go to school," said Dillon, reflecting on his time helping second graders practice reading skills and learn the life cycle of a frog.

Between 2019 and 2025, Chief Leschi Schools reported four-year graduation rates rose from 53% to 87%.

A focus on trades is just one of the ways tribal-controlled BIE schools have innovated to keep students on track. At Choctaw Central High School, a BIE school operated by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw, administrators said a COVID-era experiment in virtual learning contributed to a surge in graduation rates from roughly 70% to 93%.

"For certain kids that have more responsibilities at home, kids that need to work, we saw that (virtual learning) gave them a flexible schedule and an opportunity to earn their diploma," said principal Alaric Keams.

When pandemic lockdowns lifted, the district maintained a virtual learning option for all high schoolers.

But not all tribal governments have the resources to pay for these kinds of programs or take over management of BIE schools.

Peter Lengkeek, chairman of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe in South Dakota, says the BIE-operated high school serving his community is chronically understaffed and crumbling under a backlog of deferred maintenance, including a gymnasium with sinking walls and a rodent infestation. It has reported graduating fewer than 60% of students on time in recent years.

"If we were able to, we would step in and try to remedy a lot of these things," said Lengkeek. "We have to rely on the government to fulfill its treaty promise."

Tribal leaders push back against education changes

From the dismantling of the federal Department of Education to DOGE reductions that swept out longtime staffers, as well as repeated threats of deep funding cuts, tribal leaders fear the progress that has been made could be undermined.

In November 2025, the Department of Education began handing off oversight of dozens of programs that serve Native students to BIE.

At a tribal consultation session in February in Washington, D.C., dozens of tribal leaders spoke in opposition, saying the transition could overwhelm the already understaffed and stretched BIE with additional responsibilities. Several accused the department of ignoring its legal responsibility to seek their input before moving forward.

"We are here too late," said Herschel Gorham, lieutenant governor of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. "The ink was dry on the agreements before the tribes were ever notified. That should never, ever happen."

Jason Dropik, executive director of the National Indian Education Association, said turmoil at the agency's Washington office trickles down to schools, pointing to a Trump administration executive order that aimed to turn the BIE into a school choice system but was scaled back after an outcry from tribes.

"That caused some delays and disruptions to services," Dropik said. "When drastic changes go into motion without tribal consultation, there can be unintended consequences for our students."

Lengkeek worries the BIE could be consumed by political upheaval while schools like the one serving his community continue to underperform.

"This system holds the future of our nations in its hands," Lengkeek said. "We need stability. We need increased funding. We need infrastructure."

This story is published through the Global Indigenous Reporting Network at The Associated Press.

Oil prices jump and world shares are mixed as US and Iran carry out airstrikes

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Oil prices jumped and world shares were mixed on Monday after the U.S. carried out airstrikes and Iran retaliated.

In early European trading, Germany's DAX added 0.2% to 25,105.55 and the CAC 40 in Paris edged 0.1%

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higher, to 8,347.26. Britain's FTSE 100 also was up just 0.1%, at 10,506.86.

U.S. stock futures were mixed, with the contract for the S&P 500 down 0.3% and that for the Dow nearly unchanged. The Nasdaq composite future lost 0.9%.

The price of Brent crude, the international standard, climbed as much as nearly 5% early Monday before falling back. As of early morning in Europe, it was up 2.3% at \$77.72 per barrel, while U.S. benchmark crude added 2.1% to \$72.92 per barrel.

Prices for both types of crude oil recently had slipped back to around the levels they were at before the war with Iran began after the two sides set an interim agreement on ending the conflict and ships resumed transporting oil through the Strait of Hormuz.

However, the United States launched several waves of strikes on Iran into Monday morning over an Iranian attack on a container ship in the strait that set it ablaze and left a crew member missing over the weekend. Iran retaliated by targeting countries across the Middle East.

In Asian share trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index lost 1.9% to 67,242.73, while in Seoul, the Kospi declined 9% to 6,806.93. It's now at its lowest level since early May.

Shares in South Korean memory chipmaker SK Hynix, which soared 13% in their debut Friday on Wall Street, slumped 15.4% in Seoul. Its bigger rival Samsung Electronics sank 10.7%.

Elsewhere in Asia, Hong Kong's Hang Seng edged 0.2% higher, to 24,212.36, and the Shanghai Composite index shed 2.1% to 3,913.79.

In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 was nearly unchanged at 8,808.50.

U.S. stocks ticked higher Friday after investors showed sustained appetite for winners of the artificial-intelligence boom. The S&P 500 rose 0.4% and the Dow Jones Industrial Average added 0.3%. The Nasdaq composite climbed 0.3%.

SK Hynix's shares jumped immediately after trading began in the midday hours after it raised roughly \$26.5 billion by selling American depositary shares at a price of \$149 each.

SK Hynix's stock in Seoul had already surged more than 600% over the last year thanks to euphoria around AI. The boom has created real profits due to surging demand for computer memory. But it has also raised worries that AI stock prices have shot too high and that all the world's spending on chips and data centers won't be able to produce enough productivity and profit growth to make it worth it.

"The reason why this stock, along with other memory chipmakers, has gone parabolic is that AI demand has somehow created the perception that a sector historically defined by boom-and-bust cycles could remain permanently in the boom phase," Ipek Ozkardeskaya of Swissquote said in a commentary.

SK Hynix plans to double its production capacity, or possibly more, to keep up with demand. However, "Technological breakthroughs, more efficient AI models or simply a slowdown in AI infrastructure investment could quickly turn the market into one of oversupply," she said.

Similar concerns apply to many AI stocks as they've grown into some of Wall Street's most influential because of their huge valuations. Beyond that, investors will be focusing on earnings reports, watching to see if corporate profits are growing fast enough to justify big gains in stock prices, which are broadly near records.

This week will bring earnings reports from many of the biggest U.S. banks, including Bank of America, Citigroup, JPMorgan Chase, Goldman Sachs and Wells Fargo on Tuesday alone.

Meanwhile, worries about how continued fighting with Iran will affect the global flow of crude are clouding the outlook both for energy costs and overall inflation.

High bond yields have been weighing on financial markets worldwide since more expensive oil and high inflation could push the Federal Reserve and other central banks to raise interest rates.

Higher rates can keep a lid on inflation, but they also slow the economy and hurt prices for all kinds of investments.

In other dealings early Monday, the U.S. dollar rose to 162.01 Japanese yen from 161.72 yen. The euro rose to \$1.1435 from \$1.1408.

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US and Iran vie for Strait of Hormuz, waterway key to global energy supplies, in latest attacks

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The United States and Iran each asserted Monday they controlled the Strait of Hormuz after a weekend of attacks stretching across the wider Middle East, further threatening any diplomacy to end the war.

The attacks, sparked by Iran striking a container ship Sunday in the strait off the coast of Oman, again underlined that the waterway that once saw a fifth of the world's traded crude oil and natural gas pass through it remained the key issue in negotiations. The narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf has seen shipping disrupted since the start of the war as Iran maintained a chokehold on it by attacking commercial vessels around it, intimidating shippers.

Iran and the U.S. are nearly at the midway point of the 60-day period of an interim deal that was supposed to set up talks for a permanent end to the war. Instead, it has devolved into a series of attacks over the strait and its future, worrying world leaders the Iran war fully could resume.

"A return to full-scale hostilities would have catastrophic consequences," United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said in a statement.

US says it strikes dozens of targets in Iran

The U.S. military's Central Command described its forces as hitting dozens of sites in the strikes Monday, including air defense systems, radar sites, missile and drone equipment and small boats.

"The Strait of Hormuz is a vital maritime corridor for global trade," Central Command said. "Iran does not control it."

The European Union's top diplomat, Kaja Kallas, also called for the strait to be open as it was before the war.

"The Strait of Hormuz has to be opened, freedom of navigation has to be respected," she said.

Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, a key power center in the country's theocracy that controls its ballistic missile arsenal, sharply rejected America's statement.

"The Strait of Hormuz is our territory, and we will not allow a rogue and child-killing army from the other side of the world to continue its illegal interference in it," the Guard said.

Missile alert sirens sounded three times Monday in Bahrain, home to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, and Kuwait said it was intercepting hostile fire. There was no immediate word on damage in either country.

In Jordan, the kingdom's military said it shot down four Iranian missiles in an incident that "resulted in zero casualties or material damage." Jordan also hosts U.S. military forces and aircraft.

In Iran, authorities reported attacks in Hormozgan, Khuzestan and Markazi provinces and at least two people were killed, according to state-run IRNA news agency. Semiofficial Iranian media also reported strikes on Sistan and Baluchestan province as well.

Iranian attacks on Sunday stretched Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan and even Oman — whose territorial waters with Iran make up the strait. Oman, which long has been an interlocutor between Tehran and the West, summoned an Iranian diplomat to criticize the attack.

Meanwhile Monday, a base belonging to the armed wing of the Kurdistan Freedom Party, an Iranian Kurdish opposition group based in Iraq's semiautonomous northern Kurdistan region, came under drone attack. Rebaz Sharifi, commander of the Kurdistan Militia Corps, said the strikes targeted the group's Chamshar base, without giving details on casualties or damage. No group immediately claimed responsibility.

Fighting focuses on the status of the strait

The U.S. military early Sunday said it hit some 140 targets, including missile and drone launch sites, ammunition dumps, communication equipment and other sites — a far-heavier set of attacks than in two previous rounds of strikes in the last week.

"We bombed the hell out of them last night," U.S. President Donald Trump told NBC's "Meet the Press."

Iran retaliated by attacking nations in the region hosting U.S. military forces, while insisting it alone must control the strait and potentially charge vessels for traveling through it.

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Iran described the strait as being closed, while the U.S. military and Trump asserted that the strait remained open.

Iran's chokehold on the strait, however, has loosened as the U.S. military provided support to vessels moving along a southern route hugging the coastline of Oman. That new route has angered Iran, which launched repeated attacks on ships using it.

Iran's grip on the strait led to a global energy crisis, though oil prices have sharply dropped since wartime highs of \$120 a barrel.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei blamed Washington for the chaos gripping the Mideast.

"Considering the memorandum of understanding's fourteen clauses, the Americans have, in this brief period, in one way or another, slaughtered its various components," Baghaei told journalists Monday.

Baghaei also said Iran wouldn't agree to visits by the International Atomic Energy Agency to Iranian nuclear sites bombed in 2025 by the U.S., where Tehran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium is believed still to be.

Attacks followed more diplomatic talks about the strait

Trump suggested last week that the interim deal in the war was "over." But mediators, including Pakistan, Qatar and Egypt, have continued efforts to reach a final agreement to end the war.

A regional official involved in mediation, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss talks, said efforts to shore up the ceasefire continued Sunday. Pakistan said its foreign minister spoke by phone with Iran's top diplomat and urged "de-escalation" on both sides.

Iran's new supreme leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, unseen since the war began, on Saturday vowed in his first statement since the funeral of his father, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, that Iranians would avenge his killing.

New Zealand actor Sam Neill, known for 'Jurassic Park' and 'The Piano,' dies at 78, his family says

By MARK KENNEDY and CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-McLAY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — Sam Neill, a smoothly elegant and versatile actor whose career moved from art film to blockbuster as he dodged velociraptors in "Jurassic Park" and played Holly Hunter's husband in "The Piano," has died. He was 78.

In 2023, Neill disclosed he had been diagnosed with angioimmunoblastic T-cell lymphoma, a rare type of non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Neill died on Monday in Sydney, according to a statement posted to the actor's social media page.

His death was "sudden and unexpected," the statement said, adding that he "remained cancer free" when he died. A cause of death wasn't specified.

"Sam was surrounded by family and passed with the dignity that has characterised his whole life," his family wrote.

Actor came to world's notice with 'Dead Calm' and 'My Brilliant Career'

Neill was one of a host of actors and directors who achieved international fame after an explosion of Australian films that began in the late 1970s, a list that includes Paul Hogan, Mel Gibson, Geoffrey Rush, Russell Crowe, Jane Campion, Peter Weir and Gillian Armstrong. His range was remarkable, playing opposite Helena Bonham Carter in the Alan Ayckbourn comedy "Sweet Revenge" to chopping off Hunter's finger in "The Piano" to poking his own eyes out in the sci-fi horror "Event Horizon."

In "Omen III: The Final Conflict," he played Damien the Antichrist and he also played Cardinal Thomas Wolsey in "The Tudors."

The actor first came to the attention of international audiences in Armstrong's 1979 film "My Brilliant Career," which also introduced Judy Davis. He later appeared in Phillip Noyce's "Dead Calm," a classy thriller set at sea and co-starring the then-relatively unknown Nicole Kidman.

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Neill twice co-starred with Meryl Streep, in Australian director Fred Schepisi's "Plenty" and — again for Schepisi — in "A Cry in the Dark," a film about the sensationalized aftermath of a dingo killing a baby in the Australian Outback. He earned an Emmy nomination for his performance in the title role of the 1998 miniseries "Merlin" and another as narrator of 2017's "Wild New Zealand."

'Jurassic Park' was his best-known film

Perhaps Neill achieved his highest level of fame in "Jurassic Park" playing paleontologist Alan Grant, who is summoned to an island off Costa Rica where a theme park has been built to house herds of cloned dinosaurs. He co-starred alongside Laura Dern, Jeff Goldblum and Richard Attenborough.

His character was thoughtful and reasonable, a scientist who warned the mastermind of the theme park before the chaos: "Dinosaurs and man, two species separated by 65 million years of evolution have just been suddenly thrown back into the mix together. How can we possibly have the slightest idea what to expect?"

Grant survived the harrowing events when the creatures get loose, but didn't return for "The Lost World: Jurassic Park II" in 1997. He came back for the third episode in 2001 and "Jurassic World: Dominion" in 2022.

"It's probably a little late to learn these things," he told the Daily New of New York in 2001, "but I finally feel I've worked out how to be an action hero. I'm happier with Grant this time. He's gnarly and grizzled, but he looks like he knows what he's doing."

Neill grew up in Northern Ireland, then New Zealand

Born in 1947 in Northern Ireland, Neill emigrated to New Zealand at the age of 7. He was born Nigel Neill, but told interviewers he started to go by Sam because there were too many Nigels at his school.

His family settled in Dunedin on the South Island and he was sent to boarding school in Christchurch. After college, he took the lead in "Sleeping Dogs" in 1977, the first feature made in New Zealand in more than a decade.

Neill's other film roles included playing a Soviet submarine officer who memorably dreams of a home in Montana in "The Hunt for Red October" and an investigator in director John Carpenter's "In the Mouth of Madness."

On the small screen, Neill played the malign Chester Campbell in TV's "Peaky Blinders" and Thomas Jefferson in the four-hour CBS miniseries, "Sally Hemings: an American Tragedy." On Apple TV+, he was on "Invasion," playing Oklahoma Sheriff John Bell Tyson, a man late in his career searching for his purpose. In 2024 he starred opposite Annette Bening in the Peacock series "Apples Never Fall."

Actor beloved in New Zealand as an unassuming celebrity

The actor became known in New Zealand as a modest and unassuming person who didn't embrace celebrity. On social media, he often posted images of his farm animals, many of them affectionately named after celebrities and friends, like Laura Dern the chicken, Kylie Minogue the duck and Helena Bonham Carter the cow.

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon mourned Neill as "one of the greats" in a statement posted to social media.

"He started out when there was barely a film industry to speak of," Luxon wrote. "For more than fifty years he took New Zealand stories to the world and his talents helped make our film industry into what it is today."

Neill was also a vintner and under his Two Paddocks brand, he produced pinot noir and riesling wines from his winery in the Central Otago region of New Zealand's South Island.

His memoir "Did I Ever Tell You This?" came out in March 2023 and he was awarded a knighthood in recognition of his "outstanding contribution to film," a title approved by the late Queen Elizabeth II.

"I can't pretend that the last year hasn't had its dark moments," Neill told The Guardian in 2023, referring to his cancer diagnosis and treatment. "But those dark moments throw the light into sharp relief, you know, and have made me grateful for every day and immensely grateful for all my friends."

He is survived by his four children and eight grandchildren.

Fire at a music bar in Bangkok kills at least 27 people

By ANTON L. DELGADO and JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — A huge fire tore through a music bar in Bangkok overnight, killing at least 27 people and leaving 25 hospitalized in critical condition in the Thai capital's most deadly blaze in 17 years.

Photos from the Rong Beer Na Ladprao bar in a northern part of the Thai capital showed people fleeing as flames shot out the single-story building and thick black smoke billowed into the sky. Shoes lost and scattered as their owners sought to flee could be seen in pictures from the aftermath of the tragedy.

Bangkok city officials said the fire broke out shortly before midnight Sunday, and it was about half an hour until firefighters brought it under control.

By daylight Monday morning, the site had been cordoned off as dozens of Thai forensic officers combed through the burned remains for clues about what caused the fire.

The building's street-facing windows had been blown out and debris littered the sidewalk, including charred television sets, speakers and an electric guitar. From outside, the scale of the devastation was visible through the shattered windows, where burned-out tables, some still holding empty beer bottles, stood inside.

Thai national police chief Kittharath Punpetch said most of the dead were found trapped in windowless bathrooms near one of the rear exits of the bar, where they may have sheltered to escape the flames in the hall.

He said the exit had not been used, and people may have been obstructed from reaching it by a table set up in the hall to sell candy, or because it was too dark to find it.

Access to another exit near the kitchen might also have been narrowed by shelving units and lockers, said Kittharath, who visited the scene Monday morning. There were signs that at least some of the exit doors might have been locked shut, he added.

Investigators are focusing on the ceiling above the performance stage, where they found materials that may have been used as decorative elements, he said. Police will examine whether flammable materials were used in the interior and how electrical wiring was installed across the ceiling.

Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul told reporters that a musician who was performing at the bar told him that he saw smoke coming out of a circuit breaker near the stage before the power went out, then an explosion was heard and thick smoke quickly filled the place.

According to Bangkok's Erawan emergency services center, the number of injured people was 73, with 25 in critical condition. Bangkok Gov. Chadchart Sittipunt said most of the deaths were caused by smoke inhalation and that the authorities are working on identifying victims as many did not carry ID.

Some Buddhist monks visited the site Monday morning to pray for the victims, while nurses handed out face masks to people nearby to help protect them from smoke and lingering fumes from the burned-out building.

A registration spot was set up to gather information from relatives coming at the scene looking for their loved ones.

Singer Sukanya Wongwongwai said she was performing nearby when she heard news of the fire and rushed to the scene because several of her bandmates were performing at the bar. She said one of them died, three were hospitalized and one hasn't been located.

"From what I heard from people who were inside, when the fire started everything went dark. The power was out and there was smoke everywhere, so they couldn't locate other people," she said.

In 2022, 14 people were killed by a fire at a music bar in the eastern part of the country. And more than a decade before that, 66 people were killed and more than 200 injured in a fire during a Jan. 1, 2009, New Year's Eve celebration at the Santika nightclub in Thailand's capital. That blaze was apparently sparked by an indoor fireworks display.

Sen. Lindsey Graham likely died after aorta tear, medical examiner says

By SEUNG MIN KIM, MARY CLARE JALONICK and MEG KINNARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Lindsey Graham, one of President Donald Trump's closest allies in Congress who traveled the globe to advocate for a more aggressive U.S. foreign policy, died after a tear in his aorta, according to a preliminary medical examiner finding shared by his office.

The tear in the inner wall of the aorta, called an aortic dissection, was related to the hardening of Graham's arteries. An official cause of death will be disclosed after toxicological and microscopic testing.

Graham, a prominent South Carolina Republican and former Air Force lawyer who served in Congress for more than three decades, had turned 71 years old just two days before dying on Saturday night. His office had originally said he had suffered from a "brief and sudden illness."

Trump, who talked to Graham frequently, said he was "like a member of the family. It's very tough." He said on NBC's "Meet the Press" that Graham had called him on Saturday night after returning from a trip to Ukraine and "sounded a little bit tired, but perfect." The president ordered that flags across the country be flown at half-staff until next Saturday evening.

A noted foreign policy hawk, Graham was one of the most influential figures in Washington on international affairs and he advised Trump on matters such as the Iran war and Russia. On Friday, Graham had announced an agreement with the Trump administration to move forward on a package of Russia sanctions.

As chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, Graham also had a central role during Trump's second term as Republicans pushed major legislation on party-line votes while holding a narrow 53-47 majority in the chamber.

Under South Carolina law, Republican Gov. Henry McMaster will appoint a temporary replacement for Graham, who was seeking a fifth term in November. A new nominee will be selected in a special primary, which is required to be held within weeks of a vacancy. The winner of November's general election will start a full six-year term in January.

Graham had a close, complicated relationship with Trump

Graham, elected to the Senate in 2002 after serving in the House, long promoted a policy of robust U.S. military interventionism and strong national defense that in later years would put him at odds with the growing isolationist wing of his party.

Over time, Graham became well-known for his close ties with Trump, whom the senator briefly ran against for the presidential nomination in 2016.

Their relationship would begin on a rough note, with Graham calling the then-New York businessman "unfit for office." Graham used a profanity to describe Trump after Trump made disparaging comments about Arizona Republican John McCain, Graham's best friend in the Senate and a Vietnam War veteran. McCain and Graham, along with Sen. Joe Lieberman, I-Conn., were known as the "Three Amigos" and frequently traveled together to promote their foreign policy views around the globe.

During a campaign rally in South Carolina, Trump read out Graham's personal cellphone number and continued to belittle him throughout the 2016 race as Graham made it clear he would not support Trump.

Graham, however, shifted significantly once Trump won the White House and emerged as one of Trump's top allies — speaking with him frequently and becoming a regular presence on the golf course alongside the president — even as McCain remained a critic.

In a 2018 interview with The Associated Press, Graham explained his pivot by saying McCain taught him that the country must move forward after elections and that meant "you have an obligation" to help the president. McCain ran twice for the White House.

"And I've tried to be helpful where I could because I think he needs all the help he can get," Graham said of Trump. "You can be a better critic when people understand that you're trying to help them be successful."

Graham was a prominent defender of Trump during the president's two first-term impeachments — a reversal from Graham's role as a House prosecutor during Democratic President Bill Clinton's impeachment

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in 1998, when he urged senators not to make up their minds before listening to all of the arguments. Both Trump and Clinton were eventually acquitted.

Graham appeared to break with Trump after the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, saying in a dramatic speech on the Senate floor that night, "Count me out. Enough is enough." But the senator soon returned to Trump's side and the two remained close during Trump's second term.

Foreign policy was a focus for Graham

Graham had just been in Ukraine to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who said the senator visited his country 10 times during the years since Russia invaded in February 2022. "Lindsey was a true defender of freedom and the values that make our world safer," Zelenskyy said.

He was also one of the chief backers of Trump's war in Iran, having advocated for years for direct confrontation between Washington and Tehran. Graham continued to defend Trump this summer even as many of his fellow Republicans questioned a tentative June ceasefire agreement that they worried could send billions of dollars to Iran.

"I'd rather try diplomacy than take it off the table," Graham said of Trump's memorandum of understanding with Tehran.

Graham's travels made him a familiar face to dozens of world leaders.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Graham understood that the security of Israel and the United States was inseparable.

"Israel has lost one of its greatest friends. America has lost a great patriot. I have lost a beloved friend," Netanyahu said.

Graham led both the Senate Budget and Judiciary committees

As Budget Committee chairman, Graham helped oversee a Senate procedure that allowed Republicans to pass significant policies such as last year's tax law without the threat of a Democratic filibuster.

He had previously led the Senate Judiciary Committee when Republicans confirmed Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court in 2020. The senator was in line to regain that gavel if the party kept its majority after the midterm elections and had pledged to confirm "as many conservative judges as possible."

Graham was a key player in the Senate's efforts to craft a massive immigration overhaul in 2013 as a member of a bipartisan group. The legislation passed the Senate with 68 votes but was never taken up by the House, so it did not become law.

Graham's views on immigration, particularly an endorsement of a path to citizenship for people in the U.S. without legal status, put him at odds with some Republican factions.

Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin, a Democrat who was his ally on that issue, said Graham was "part of every important policy issue and an indispensable player" in bipartisan negotiations.

An 'irreplaceable' force in the Senate

Graham often worked across the aisle, even as he remained fiercely loyal to Trump. Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, a Democrat, said in a statement that "personal relationships often mattered more to him than the political disagreements of the day."

Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., said Graham was "over the moon" with the Russian sanctions deal announced Friday. "The last thing in the world I would have guessed was that he was sick or ill or in any way vulnerable," Blumenthal said.

Jaime Harrison, a former national and state Democratic Party chairman who unsuccessfully ran against Graham in 2020, said that even during their "fiercest political battles" the two men "could still share a conversation, a laugh, and a mutual respect for South Carolina."

Graham was unique in the Senate for his influence not only on Trump, but also with his fellow Republicans who were aware of his ability to sometimes move the president's thinking. He was also known for his sense of humor, often deployed to defuse tensions.

Wyoming Sen. John Barrasso, the second-ranking Republican, said Graham will be missed for his "quick wit and infectious laughter."

McMaster said in a statement that Graham was "irreplaceable." Former Republican President George

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W. Bush said Graham “understood how the world works” and “was a kind and funny man who loved our country and loved serving it.”

Graham often spoke about his humble roots, growing up in the back of a South Carolina bar and helping to raise his sister, Darline, after his parents died at a young age. Graham was not married and did not have children.

Special election to replace Graham could be within weeks

Graham won 57% of the GOP vote in South Carolina’s primary in June and was up against Democrat Annie Andrews, a pediatrician, and several minor party and independent candidates in November.

His death will likely prompt a scramble to fill a rare open Senate seat.

A number of Republican names began circulating as possible replacements to serve out the rest of Graham’s term, including three candidates who fell short for the party’s nomination for governor this year — Rep. Nancy Mace, Rep. Ralph Norman and Lt. Gov. Pamela Evette.

Also in the mix is Rep. Russell Fry, who was elected to the House in 2022.

Iran persecutes its Baha’i minority fiercely in a year of protests and war, rights groups say

By FATMA KHALED Associated Press

Peyvand Naimi has spent more than six months in an Iranian prison, accused of killing state security agents during nationwide protests, although his family says no formal charges or evidence have been presented. “The Baha’is will not be released,” the family says it was told by the prosecutor.

Ever since the Baha’i faith was founded in Persia — now Iran — in the 19th century, its followers there have been persecuted, usually more harshly during times of crisis.

This year, amid massive anti-government protests and war with the United States and Israel, the Islamic Republic has mounted a fierce crackdown on the country’s largest non-Muslim religious minority, human rights groups say.

Since January, dozens of Baha’is have been imprisoned because of their faith, human rights groups say. Holy books and religious symbols have been desecrated during raids of Baha’i family homes — which these groups say is evidence of authorities’ sectarian motivations. Those detained have faced mistreatment ranging from electric shocks to mock hangings, and some have made forced confessions to crimes punishable by death, rights groups say.

The Islamic Republic’s intensified campaign against Baha’is is part of a wider crackdown across Iran. Nationwide protests that began in late December prompted the deadliest backlash by Iranian security forces since the Islamic Republic took power in 1979, with thousands killed and tens of thousands reportedly arrested.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry and its spokesperson at the United Nations didn’t respond to multiple requests to discuss the treatment of Baha’is.

The targeting of Baha’is, who make up less than 1% of Iran’s population, is hardly discreet: The authoritarian government often uses state TV and social media to accuse followers of being spies and blame them for the country’s economic woes.

“Every time there is a crisis — social, economic, or political — shift the blame to the Baha’is,” said Simin Fahandeh, who represents the international community of Baha’is at the United Nations. “And this (year’s) protest and the war have also been no different.”

While Baha’is often practice their religion in secret, the Iranian public is encouraged to report on neighbors if they are known or suspected followers of the faith, which is considered immoral by the country’s ruling clerics.

“Much of this portrayal stems from theological hostility,” said Omid Ghaemmaghami, an associate professor of Middle East Studies at the State University of New York at Binghamton. He and other experts said the scapegoating of Baha’is also serves to instill fear and obedience among other Iranians.

A confession made under duress

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Naimi was arrested at work on the afternoon of Jan. 8 by agents from Iran's intelligence ministry, according to his family, which insists he did not participate in anti-government protests. Amnesty International says the alleged killings of three Basij agents during Jan. 8 protests in Kerman took place after he was arrested. The government has not publicized any details about the alleged killings.

On Feb. 1, Iranian state TV broadcast a clip of him admitting to taking part in the protests, though his family says the confession was made under duress.

Authorities also accused Naimi of "celebrating" from prison the killing of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei during the opening salvos of the Iran war, according to the Baha'i International Community. The group said Naimi at the time had no access to communications and "no knowledge" of Khamenei's death.

Naimi told his family over the phone that he was held in solitary confinement in Kerman Central Prison for over two months, according to Fahandej.

Naimi's cousin Emilia Nazari said a judge ordered Naimi's release on March 7, but that he remained behind bars. Soon after, family members visited the prosecutor's office every day for more than a week to demand his release. That is when the family says the prosecutor told them it would never happen — and referred to Naimi only by his religion.

When his parents visited him in late March, he told them he had been subjected to 10 days of harsh treatment that included denial of food, Nazari said. In mid-May, his family learned that he was transferred out of solitary and into a cell among the general population at the Kerman prison, Nazari said.

Baha'is have a long history of persecution in Iran

The Baha'i faith was founded in the 1860s by a Persian nobleman named Baha'u'llah, who was considered a prophet by his followers. He taught that all religions represent progressive stages in the revelation of God's will, leading to the unity of all people and faiths.

There are more than 5 million Baha'is across the world, according to Harvard University's The Pluralism Project. Most live in Asia, with the largest community in India.

Baha'is also face persecution in Egypt, Qatar and Yemen. But the mistreatment is greatest in Iran, where Shiite Muslim clerics have regarded the faith as heretical since its earliest days.

After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, many Baha'is fled Iran in the face of arrests, executions, property seizures, and restrictions on education and employment. Some stayed, while others have returned in the ensuing decades. An estimated 300,000 Baha'is live in Iran, whose population exceeds 90 million.

Many Baha'is feel a sense of purpose by remaining in Iran, said Sheyda Kamran, a professor at the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education. Despite living in fear, her students often ask how they can help Iranians grieving losses from protests and war. "They have a goal," she said. "That is the only way they can survive."

Scapegoating intensified after war began

The crackdown against Baha'is — and all Iranians — intensified after the U.S. and Israel launched the war in late February.

The Baha'i International Community says at least 63 Baha'is were detained in Iranian prisons as of June 11, though it says the figure is likely an undercount because some families fear speaking out.

Most detainees are being held without known charges, while others face accusations of "propaganda against the regime" and acts deemed "contrary to Islamic law," the Human Rights Activists News Agency said on X.

Some Iranian television outlets and social media accounts have amplified anti-Baha'i rhetoric in recent months, accusing followers of the faith of collaborating with Israel to undermine the Islamic Republic.

In May, in the northern Mazandaran province, an exhibition open to the public portrayed Baha'is as enemies of the state, according to IRNA, the Iranian state-run news agency. A representative for Iran's supreme leader who attended the exhibition, Mohammad Baqer Mohammadi Laini, said Baha'is are "spies" and should be banned from owning property, according to the semiofficial news agency Tasnim.

The highly publicized harassment of Baha'is suggests the real purpose is to instill fear among all Iranians, said Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, founder of Iran Human Rights, an Oslo-based organization.

"I think it's part of the general intensification of the repression in Iran," he said.

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Baha'is pay a 'heavy price' for remaining in Iran

In April, Behzad Basiri was arrested by Revolutionary Guard agents at his house in Shiraz — without any charges, according to his family, which said Baha'i holy books were torn up during the raid. His wife Mandana Sotoudeh was arrested the same day at her parents' house and her sister Mahsa Sotoudeh had been detained three days earlier.

Basiri was released on bail on May 6; his wife and sister-in-law were released on bail on July 1, according to their family.

Basiri's sister, Roya, who lives in Canada, said some of her family members chose to stay in Iran out of love for the country and hope for a better future.

"They're paying the heavy price for that choice," she said.

Qatar's former ruler Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani has died at 74

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, who as ruler of Qatar transformed the tiny Persian Gulf nation into a global player in diplomacy, media and investment, and then shattered tradition by voluntarily turning over power to his son, has died, state media reported. He was 74.

The state-run Qatar News Agency reported his death. It offered no cause.

Sheikh Hamad, who stepped down in June 2013 after 18 years as emir, was the architect of energy-rich Qatar's stunning ambitions that turned it from a backwater into an international crossroads in less than a generation. Qatar owns the Harrod's department store in London and founded the powerful Al Jazeera satellite news network.

Qatar's political reach today stretches from North Africa to Afghanistan and it hosted the 2022 FIFA World Cup, the world's most-watched soccer event. Sheikh Hamad, though long out of power, received thunderous applause from Qataris attending its opening match.

But Qatar's rise under Sheikh Hamad also rankled regional and Western allies with its independent-minded policymaking, including its close ties to Shiite powerhouse Iran, the Palestinian militant Hamas group and Egypt's outlawed Muslim Brotherhood.

Al Jazeera's blunt reporting, though a much-praised departure from the traditionally deferential habits of Arab media, also was criticized and accused of slanting coverage to suit the views of Qatar's rulers.

"The future lies ahead of you, the children of this homeland, as you usher into a new era where young leadership hoists the banner," Sheikh Hamad said as he announced his abdication and the carefully crafted transition to his son, the British-educated crown prince Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, who was then 33.

Sheikh Hamad handed over power to his son

The peaceful, voluntary transfer of power was rare in a region where such change usually results from death or overthrow. Sheikh Hamad himself seized control after deposing his father, Sheikh Khalifa, in a bloodless palace coup in 1995.

His abdication was seen as Qatar's attempt to stay ahead of Arab Spring-inspired calls for reforms and leadership more attuned to the region's large and powerful young population. Qatar, a peninsula half the size of New Jersey, is believed to have around 300,000 citizens.

At the time, Sheikh Hamad also was thought to have been in poor health for years. In December 2015, Qatari officials said he was flown to Switzerland for surgery after breaking a leg while on holiday.

Sheikh Hamad attended Britain's military academy, Sandhurst, and became commander of Qatar's armed forces and defense minister. He was named crown prince in the late 1970s and gradually broadened his duties to include planning for Qatar's vast oil and gas reserves.

Sheikh Hamad created Al Jazeera, a powerful voice in Arab media

After seizing power from his father, who then lived in exile for nearly a decade, Sheikh Hamad quickly moved to open an inward-looking nation to outside influences, epitomized by Al Jazeera, which became a major force in global media.

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Its reporting not only angered other Arab leaders, sometimes to the point of diplomatic rupture, it also riled Washington. Al Jazeera aired statements from the terror network al-Qaida, even as Qatar hosted one of the key Pentagon logistical hubs following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and the U.S.-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Sheikh Hamad, meanwhile, aggressively sought international prestige through sports, an effort crowned by Qatar's successful bid to host the World Cup, though marred by accusations that it used its huge wealth to woo poor countries' support.

Qatar's brand is also prominent across the sporting world from sponsorship deals with the Spanish football giant Barcelona to a majority stake in the football club Paris Saint-Germain.

Sheikh Hamad also pushed Qatar Airways to expand into a major international carrier, trying to rival neighboring carrier Emirates. The country's international airport in Doha, Qatar's capital, which cost at least \$15 billion to construct, also bears his name.

Qatar became a powerhouse for diplomacy

Sheikh Hamad had wide-ranging visions for Qatar's role as a diplomatic broker. Over the years, its mediation was brought to bear on the conflict in Sudan's western Darfur region, Lebanese factional feuding and the rift between the Palestinians' Hamas and Fatah factions.

In October 2012, Sheikh Hamad became the first head of state to visit the Gaza Strip since Hamas seized control five years previously, promising a total of \$400 million in projects and investments. During the visit, Gaza radio stations played a song entitled "Thank you, Qatar."

Qatar also reached out to Hamas' main foe, Israel. Sheikh Hamad met in 2007 with Israel's then-foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, at the United Nations General Assembly. Qatar allowed an Israeli trade office to operate in Doha until it was ordered closed in response to Israel's attacks on Gaza in late 2008.

While neighboring Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates diplomatically recognized Israel in 2020, Qatar maintained its distance. Israelis at the World Cup also faced a multitude of Palestinian flags and anger over its occupation of lands Palestinians claim for their future state.

During the Arab Spring, Qatar sent warplanes to the NATO-led missions in Libya against Moammar Gadhafi's forces and provided key military and financial aid to the successful Libyan rebels. In Syria, Qatar was a main political sponsor of the opposition to then-President Bashar Assad and led calls to increase the flow of weapons to the Syrian rebels.

However, its backing of Islamists like the Muslim Brotherhood has caused rifts with other nations in the region. Those tensions culminated under Sheikh Tamim, when Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE launched a yearslong boycott of Qatar, in part over the policies of his father that continued during his rule.

In one of the last initiatives before Sheikh Hamad's abdication, Qatar formally opened an office for Afghanistan's Taliban, which set the stage for talks between the United States and the Taliban that ultimately led to NATO and America's chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021.

Is there such a thing as being too old to execute?

Aging death row inmates are set to die in Florida

By DAVID FISCHER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The last prisoner strapped to a table in Florida's death chamber was 74 years old — the oldest the state has executed in modern times. The next two set to die are older still.

The series of executions, due to be carried out by the end of this month, highlights the nation's aging death-row population. One of Florida's prisoners scheduled to die in July, a man convicted of killing his ex-girlfriend's parents in 1986, is 80 years old and would be only the second known octogenarian to be executed in the U.S.

For some, it renews questions about the humanity of administering capital punishment to inmates who might soon die from natural causes. For others, it illustrates how lengthy appeals designed to ensure constitutional protections and prevent innocent people from being executed can also delay justice.

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"Is this intentional, as though to say, we're not going to let a natural death help you escape executions?" asked the Rev. Dustin Feddon, a Catholic priest who has been ministering to Florida death row inmates since 2013. Noting the church's opposition to capital punishment, he added: "To execute those that are the most frail and elderly is even more cruel and unusual."

Marilyn Gifford, whose sister's killer is set to die Tuesday, doesn't see it that way.

"I'm just happy it's ever happening in our lifetime," she said. "I wish my mother was alive to see it."

Death warrants follow decades on death row

On June 25, Dusty Ray Spencer, who was convicted of fatally stabbing his wife in 1992, became the oldest person executed in Florida in modern history. The U.S. Supreme Court rejected the 74-year-old's appeal that his liver disease rendered him susceptible to excruciating pain from lethal injection.

Dennis Sochor, convicted of killing 18-year-old Patricia Gifford just hours into 1982 after meeting her at a New Year's Eve party, would be just a week older if his execution is carried out on Tuesday. Marilyn Gifford said she and her family plan to be there.

Dominick Anthony Occhicone, 80, has spent nearly four decades on death row after being sentenced in the murders of his ex-girlfriend's parents. He is scheduled to die July 28 and would become the second oldest prisoner known to be put to death in the U.S., after 83-year-old Walter Moody Jr. Moody was executed in Alabama in 2018 for killing a federal judge and a Black civil rights attorney.

There are three inmates older than Occhicone on Florida's death row.

The scheduling of executions is up to the governor

It's unclear why Florida set the executions for the three prisoners consecutively. Maria DeLiberato, legal director of Floridians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, noted that in Florida, the governor has practically sole discretion when it comes to the scheduling of executions. In many other death penalty states, the scheduling is up to the courts.

About half of Florida's 242 death row inmates have exhausted their appeals and could see their death warrant issued at any time. The family of Michael Sheridan spent a year calling and writing to Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, requesting he sign a death warrant, before Sheridan's killer was executed earlier this year.

DeSantis' office did not respond to an Associated Press request for comment. He oversaw a record 19 executions in 2025, more in a single year than any other Florida governor since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976. The state has executed nine inmates so far this year.

DeSantis said last year his goal is to bring justice to victims' families who have waited for decades.

"Some of these crimes were committed in the '80s," the governor said last year. "Justice delayed is justice denied."

Death row gets older

The average age of inmates executed in the U.S. has crept up from the 30s to the 50s over the past half-century, according to the Death Penalty Information Center. While some inmates committed capital offenses later in life, lengthy appeals and mandatory reviews have resulted in many spending decades on death row, sometimes developing medical conditions that can complicate efforts to execute them.

Occhicone has several age-related ailments, including kidney and prostate problems, according to his attorneys. He needs help getting in and out of the shower, they noted.

Under Supreme Court precedent, those who were under 18 when they committed their crimes cannot be put to death. But advanced age alone doesn't provide a legal case for avoiding execution, said Gerod Hooper, an attorney with Florida's Capital Collateral Regional Counsel, a state agency that provides post-conviction legal representation.

"You'd have to say it's unconstitutional to execute this 80-year-old because he's mentally deficient, he doesn't have capacity to be executed," Hooper said. "Or because of some underlying medical condition, the drug cocktail they inject would cause undue pain and suffering."

Death row inmates with dementia in Utah and Alabama have avoided execution and later died of apparent natural causes. An inmate in Idaho received at least one stay of execution because of cancer and

other health problems, but state officials continue to push for his death.

'He could live another 20 years'

At the time of Gifford's disappearance, Sochor was free on probation from a 1980 rape conviction.

"I knew him as a child, and he was a bully," said Frank Frandel, who grew up as a family friend in Portland, Michigan. "I could believe he could be violent like that."

Frandel offered no sympathy for Sochor's advanced age, pointing out that Sochor's father will turn 99 this year.

"He could live another 20 years," Frandel said. "So no, I don't feel sorry for him being at that age."

Ukraine reels after Sen. Lindsey Graham's sudden death, fearing a weaker link to Trump

By SAMYA KULLAB and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — With the death of Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, Ukraine lost a close ally in President Donald Trump's orbit, leaving its leaders grappling with the implications for their war-torn country.

Graham had been in Ukraine two days prior, standing in Kyiv's St. Michael's Square, flanked by the golden domes of the monastery and the burned-out remains of Russian military equipment.

There, he offered Ukrainians reason to be optimistic, telling reporters that sweeping new hard-hitting economic sanctions against Russia, legislation he had spent years pushing with Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal, were finally within reach. He would be heading back to Washington to meet with bipartisan leaders to advance the proposal.

Two days later, on Sunday, the world learned of his sudden death.

Ukrainian officials and lawmakers were devastated by the news. For years, Graham had been one of Kyiv's closest allies in Washington and a trusted intermediary with Trump, who had a strained relationship with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Now, officials fear that without Graham, Ukraine's ability to influence the White House could be diminished across a broad range of issues, not just the fate of the Russia sanctions bill.

"Huge and absolutely unexpected loss," said Oleksandr Merezhko, a lawmaker with Zelenskyy's party. "He was truly indispensable. I even don't know who might be as important for us now in Trump's entourage."

"He was the closest link between Ukraine, our president and Trump," he added. "Our position in Trump's entourage might be weaker."

Zelenskyy said he had 'constant dialogue' with Graham

Condolences poured in from senior Ukrainian officials including Zelenskyy, who remembered Graham as one of Ukraine's staunchest champions in Washington and someone who was in constant contact with Kyiv.

Zelenskyy said he was "deeply saddened" by the senator's sudden death, noting that Graham had visited Ukraine 10 times since Russia's full-scale invasion and had been with Ukrainians "when it was most needed."

"We were in constant dialogue and will miss that greatly," Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram, recalling that the two had met twice last week, at the NATO summit and again during Graham's visit to Kyiv.

Parliamentary Speaker Ruslan Stefanchuk described Graham as a "steadfast friend of Ukraine" whose support was "principled and resolute." He said he would always remember their "meaningful, sincere, and warmly personal meetings," adding that he believed Graham's efforts to impose tougher sanctions on Russia would be carried forward despite his death.

With Trump's return to the White House after the Biden administration, Ukrainian officials moved swiftly to cultivate relationships with Republicans close to him amid growing uncertainty over future U.S. backing. Graham became a central figure in those efforts, lawmakers said at the time.

Oleksandr Kraiev, a political analyst at the think tank Ukrainian Prism, said Graham was an unusually prominent figure in Ukraine.

"Graham is even more well-known and more popular among Ukrainians than many Ukrainian politicians," Kraiev said.

Without Graham, Ukraine could lose an influential advocate with direct access to Trump, Kraiev said.

"I don't see anyone else who will take the lead in helping Ukraine maintain those necessary connections," he said.

In a break from many Trump supporters, Graham stayed focused on Ukraine

Graham was a political phenomenon now rare in a Republican Party where Trump has absolute control.

The senator steadfastly held onto more traditional conservative foreign policy values that included staunchly opposing Russia, being especially hawkish on Iran and pushing the White House to even more fully embrace Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Graham also was a vocal supporter of traditional U.S. allies in Europe at a time when Trump threatened to pull American troops off the continent and denigrated NATO with increasing zeal.

The senator maintained those views despite them often putting him at odds with many vocal supporters of the isolationism and "America First" approach of the president's "Make America Great Again" movement.

Although Trump frequently ridicules Republican members of Congress he perceives as not sufficiently loyal, he remained close to Graham and listened to him, especially on foreign policy matters.

A powerful voice in the Senate, even Democrats noticed Graham's independent streak with much of the rest of his party.

"He marched to his own drummer," Blumenthal, a Democrat from Connecticut, said in a statement. "He could be strong-minded, fiercely driven, and sometimes unpredictable, but also deeply compassionate and sympathetic when he saw suffering and injustice."

Graham's support of Ukraine bumped up against Trump's complaints that the U.S. was spending too much money to help the besieged country.

Still, Graham thought he was close to advancing legislation bolstering economic sanctions against Russia. Blumenthal said he'd spoken to Graham over the weekend and that the South Carolinian was "exulted" about the prospect of moving such a package forward.

Blumenthal added that the bill should now be passed as a "fitting tribute" to Graham.

Who could replace Lindsey Graham?

South Carolina's next steps after senator's death

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — The death of Sen. Lindsey Graham, who was running for a fifth term when he passed away over the weekend, began a tumultuous new chapter in South Carolina politics during a year that has already been full of upheaval.

As the conservative state's senior senator and an influential ally of President Donald Trump, Graham was presumed to be on a glide path toward reelection.

Now, Gov. Henry McMaster must choose a temporary replacement who can serve until January while the state also prepares a special primary so voters can choose a new Republican nominee for the general election.

The rare open Senate seat has ignited a scramble among South Carolina's most ambitious conservatives, who have been eager to climb the political ladder.

Republicans just finished a sprawling and bruising contest to figure out their nominee for succeeding McMaster, who is wrapping up his second term. State Attorney General Alan Wilson won the nomination, overcoming a field that included Lt. Gov. Pamela Evette, Rep. Nancy Mace and Ralph Norman — all of whom are now eyeing Graham's seat.

How will a special primary work?

According to South Carolina law, a one-week filing period for a special primary election begins on the second Tuesday after the candidate's death, or July 21.

The special primary election would be held on the second Tuesday after that filing period closes, or Aug. 11. Any necessary runoff would follow two weeks after that, or Aug. 25.

From that point, the new nominee would have just over two months to campaign for the general election on Nov. 3.

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All of this is problematic according to federal law, which requires military and overseas ballots to go out 45 days before any federal election. For the general election primary, that would have been June 27. Federal Election Commission officials didn't immediately return a message seeking clarity about the process.

Who could replace Graham?

Graham died on Saturday night, and a preliminary medical examiner report said he suffered a tear in his aorta, known as an aortic dissection.

In the hours after Graham's death was announced, South Carolina's Republican circles were already swirling with rumors about possible replacements. Given the proximity of November's election, it's likely that whomever McMaster appoints could be a top contender in the special primary, although it's possible that McMaster's choice will only serve as a temporary caretaker.

Evette, who has served nearly eight years alongside McMaster and received his endorsement in the governor's race, is one possibility. She lost the June 23 runoff to Wilson.

A person with knowledge of Evette's thinking but not authorized to discuss it publicly said that she was getting encouragement from across the state and feels she would have good chances in the special primary.

It's unlikely that any House member would be appointed to finish Graham's current term, since Republicans have such a slim majority in the chamber.

U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson, a rumored replacement, said he assured Trump on Sunday that "my goal is to remain in the House to keep his two-vote majority for the American people!!!"

However, that doesn't mean that House members won't run for the next full term. A person with knowledge of Mace's thinking but not authorized to speak about it publicly said she was considering the race. Mace is not running for reelection to the House.

But another Republican from the state, Rep. Russell Fry, could be a possibility. The two-term lawmaker represents the growing area around Myrtle Beach, and he's been a top Trump ally.

A spokesman for businessman Mark Lynch, whom Graham defeated in the primary, didn't return a message Sunday.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, who lived in South Carolina prior to joining the Trump administration, has fielded calls about potentially replacing Graham but doesn't have interest in the role and enjoys working for the president, according to a person who requested anonymity to describe private conversations.

How does Graham's death affect the general election?

No Democrat has won a Senate seat in South Carolina in decades, and Republicans in recent history typically take statewide seats by double digits. When he last ran in 2020, Graham defeated his Democratic opponent, Jaime Harrison, by a 10 percentage point margin.

So while history suggests that Graham was en route to a fifth term, Republicans are carefully surveying the landscape.

Charleston pediatrician Annie Andrews won the Democratic nomination last month and has raised more than \$8 million in the race, and had just under \$3 million cash on hand at the end of May, according to federal filings. Graham had taken in \$6 million, with just over \$4 million on hand.

In a statement Sunday, Andrews called on South Carolinians to join her "in setting partisanship aside and offering gratitude" to Graham for his service.

Noting that he and Graham "had our share of political disagreements," Harrison wrote on social media that he "always appreciated that even in our fiercest political battles, we could still share a conversation, a laugh, and a mutual respect for South Carolina and the institutions we were both privileged to serve."

What happens to South Carolina's Republican clout?

Graham leaves a major void in the Senate, where seniority can determine influence. He served more than two decades in the chamber, positioning himself to lead committees and set the agenda.

Sen. Tim Scott, South Carolina's junior senator, has only been in office since 2012 — short by the state's standards. Fritz Hollings served for 38 years and Strom Thurmond was there for 47.

Scott, who co-chaired Graham's reelection effort, described his former colleague as "irreplaceable."

"America lost a statesman, but I lost a friend," he told ABC's "This Week."

Senate returns to Washington after Sen. Lindsey Graham's death with uncertain agenda

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Republicans will return to Washington on Monday with an uncertain agenda after the sudden death of prominent Republican Lindsey Graham, a committee chairman and key player who served as a crucial ally with President Donald Trump.

Graham, 71, died Saturday evening after a tear in his aorta, according to a statement from his office on Sunday. The shocking news came after another prominent Republican senator, former Republican leader Mitch McConnell, has been hospitalized for almost a month. McConnell broke a weeklong silence about his health Sunday evening, saying that he was still recovering after suffering from pneumonia and falling in his home.

The continued absence of McConnell, R-Ky., and the surprise death of the South Carolina senator have shaken Republicans who were already at odds with Trump and stalled on several priorities as they return from a two-week recess. And the reduced Republican numbers in the 53-47 Senate are sure to add confusion to what was already expected to be a chaotic and difficult few months before the November midterm elections.

Despite consolidated power in Washington, Republicans have been unable to get much done as the Senate, House and White House have disagreed on legislative priorities and as Trump has criticized Senate Republicans, in particular, for not passing his legislation to require proof of citizenship for voters. Graham, who was one of Trump's closest friends in the Senate, often served as a pivotal intermediary.

"He was a great — like a gauge, a temperature gauge of the Senate," Trump said of Graham on NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday morning, noting he had talked to Graham on Saturday. "He could go in and get something approved. He would just get people on his side."

Republican priorities are stalled

The Senate left town two weeks ago after a rough few weeks for Republicans. Trump blocked the Senate from confirming one of his own nominees, asked them to fund parts of his White House ballroom project despite opposition and forced them to defend the Iran war even as they questioned the strategy and endgame.

He also refused to sign a bipartisan, election-year housing bill that had the support of large bipartisan majorities in both chambers, arguing that they should pass his bill to require proof of citizenship, the SAVE America Act, instead. The bill became law on Friday at midnight after he declined to sign it but did not veto it.

The alliance between Trump and Senate Republicans has also been weakened after the president endorsed the opponents of two Republican incumbent senators who had been reliable votes, Texas Sen. John Cornyn and Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy. Cassidy challenged Trump directly on the Iran war in a Capitol meeting between Trump and Republicans just before they left town that did not go well.

Senate's agenda is uncertain

Republicans return to a number of important agenda items, including the confirmation of Trump's pick for attorney general, Todd Blanche, and the confirmation of Jay Clayton, who Trump selected to be director of national intelligence and later temporarily blocked.

They also must find a way to navigate Democratic opposition and Trump's continued ire to keep the government open and prevent a government shutdown, again. Graham was a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, as is McConnell.

Graham also sat on the Judiciary Committee that will consider Blanche's nomination and is the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, which has been under pressure from House Republicans and Trump to move a budget package with increased defense spending for Iran.

There is also bipartisan legislation to move forward on a package of Russia sanctions that Graham and Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut had announced on Friday after an agreement with

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the Trump administration.

Blumenthal told The Associated Press on Sunday that Graham was “absolutely focused on this moment” as they announced the sanctions package after months of negotiations. He said he hopes Graham’s memory will inspire the Senate to move forward.

“We’ve really reached this moment where all of the stars are aligned and we will be lacking Lindsey’s spectacular advocacy,” Blumenthal said.

Graham’s death came after a trip to Ukraine

Senate leaders have not yet announced how they will honor Graham, who died after a tear in the inner wall of the aorta, called an aortic dissection, related to hardening of Graham’s arteries, according to his office. An official cause of death will be disclosed after toxicological and microscopic testing, his office said.

Graham, a prominent South Carolina Republican and former Air Force lawyer who served in Congress for more than three decades, had just returned from a trip to Ukraine.

A number of Republican names began circulating as possible replacements to serve out the rest of Graham’s term, including three candidates who fell short for the party’s nomination for governor this year — Rep. Nancy Mace, Rep. Ralph Norman and Lt. Gov. Pamela Evette.

Also in the mix is Rep. Russell Fry, who was elected to the House in 2022.

McConnell not expected to return immediately

McConnell’s Sunday announcement revealed for the first time that a fall led to his hospitalization, breaking the silence about his condition after weeks of mounting speculation about his health.

The Kentucky Republican, who is retiring in January, said in a statement that he was “briefly unconscious” around the time he was first taken to the hospital in June and has undergone a battery of tests to try and determine what led to his fall. He said he was also treated for mild pneumonia and has been moved to a rehabilitation facility.

“My doctors have confirmed that I didn’t break any bones or suffer a concussion. I didn’t have a heart attack or a stroke. I don’t have any tumors or hemorrhages,” McConnell said, adding that he is now “regaining my strength.”

He said he cannot return to the Senate “quite yet.”

McConnell explained the four-week silence about his condition by saying that “folks of my generation often hesitate to share the vulnerability that comes with growing older.”

“Even in the public eye, I feel that same instinct — I can’t help it,” he said.

The US launches more strikes on Iran as the standoff over the Strait of Hormuz escalates

By JON GAMBRELL, WILL WEISSERT and KONSTANTIN TOROPIN Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The United States launched several waves of strikes on Iran into Monday morning over an Iranian attack on a container ship in the Strait of Hormuz that set it ablaze and left a crew member missing over the weekend. Iran retaliated by targeting countries across the Middle East.

Missile alert sirens sounded at dawn Monday in Bahrain, home to the U.S. Navy’s 5th Fleet. There was no immediate word on damage.

Iranian state media acknowledged the latest attacks on its soil early Monday, describing explosions in several locations with at least one person being killed.

Iranian attacks on Sunday stretched Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan and even Oman — whose territorial waters with Iran make up the strait. The narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, which once saw a fifth of all oil and natural gas pass through it, has become the key issue challenging an interim deal between the U.S. and Iran.

Iran and the U.S. are nearly at the midway point of the 60-day period of that deal, which was supposed to set up talks for a permanent end to the war. Instead, it has devolved into a series of attacks over the strait and its future, worrying world leaders the Iran war could resume.

“A return to full-scale hostilities would have catastrophic consequences,” United Nations Secretary-General

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António Guterres said in a statement.

Fighting focuses on the status of the strait

The U.S. military earlier Sunday said it hit some 140 targets, including missile and drone launch sites, ammunition dumps, communication equipment and other sites — a far-heavier set of attacks than in two previous rounds of strikes in the last week.

"We bombed the hell out of them last night," President Donald Trump told NBC's "Meet the Press."

Iran retaliated by attacking nations in the region hosting U.S. military forces, while insisting it alone must control the strait and potentially charge vessels for traveling through it.

Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard acknowledged in a statement early Monday it had begun a new round of strikes across the Middle East.

"The era of one-sided deals is OVER," Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, the speaker of Iran's Parliament and a main negotiator, wrote. "We told you: keep your word or pay the price. Reality is knocking."

Iran described the strait as being closed, while the U.S. military and Trump asserted that the strait remained open. Iran since the war began back on Feb. 28 with the killing of the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has used attacks on vessels in the region to intimidate shippers into not traveling through the waterway.

Iran's chokehold on the strait, however, has loosened as the U.S. military provided support to vessels moving along a southern route hugging the coastline of Oman. That new route has angered Iran, which launched repeated attacks on ships using it.

Iran's grip on the strait led to a global energy crisis, though oil prices have sharply dropped since war-time highs of \$120 a barrel.

Attacks followed more diplomatic talks about the strait

Trump suggested last week that the interim deal in the war was "over." But mediators, including Pakistan, Qatar and Egypt, have continued efforts to reach a final agreement to end the war.

A regional official involved in mediation, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss talks, said efforts to shore up the ceasefire continued Sunday. Pakistan said its foreign minister spoke by phone with Iran's top diplomat and urged "de-escalation" on both sides.

Iran's new supreme leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, unseen since the war began, on Saturday vowed in his first statement since the funeral of his father, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, that Iranians would avenge his killing.

Lindsey Graham remembered for a vision of American foreign policy that's fading in Washington

By GEIR MOULSON and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

For decades Lindsey Graham traveled the globe selling a vision of the United States as a nation willing to use its military might to protect democracies around the world, even as his party was taken over by a president openly skeptical of that worldview.

Graham — who died unexpectedly at 71 on Saturday night — was a rare bridge between President Donald Trump's "America First" foreign policy and the traditional Washington consensus prioritizing alliances with Europe and Israel, one falling out of favor with many in both political parties.

With that idea of the U.S., Graham remained a staunch defender of Ukraine to the end, even as Trump's commitment wavered.

Graham represented South Carolina in the House and Senate for more than three decades. He died after what a preliminary report from the Washington, D.C., medical examiner's office said was a tear in his aorta. The senator's death triggered praise from leaders and diplomats around the world and condemnation from Iran and other countries where he'd agitated for military action.

"In an increasingly isolationist America, Sen. Graham was one of the last titans of the Senate who favored a muscular and engaged U.S. foreign policy," said Paul Foldi, a former diplomat and top Republican

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staffer on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "He is irreplaceable."

Trump, whom Graham opposed, then embraced, won the White House partly by harnessing voters' disgust with wars in Iraq and Afghanistan — both of which were championed by Graham's wing of the Republican Party.

Graham tied himself to Trump

When Trump returned for a second term, Graham cheered his aggressive approach to Iran but was largely silent as the president dismantled the U.S. Agency for International Development, questioned the value of NATO, suggested using military force against allies to seize Greenland and praised dictators like Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"His moral flexibility over the last few years has been disappointing to many who saw him as a principled patriot," Dan Baer, a former State Department official under President Barack Obama who is now at the Carnegie Endowment for Peace.

Matthew Kroenig, a vice president at the Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C., said Graham once told him there was no point in trying to defy Trump.

"As a good politician, he recognized Trump commanded the Republican Party and the Republican base and if you tried to work against him you'd get nothing done," Kroenig said.

He argued Graham's approach has paid off in Trump's second term as the president hasn't abandoned Ukraine while also green lighting interventions in Iran and Venezuela that the senator advocated.

"Look at Trump's foreign policy — it's more of a Lindsey Graham foreign policy than a Tucker Carlson foreign policy," Kroenig said, referring to the conservative commentator who is a prominent opponent of American intervention overseas.

Hailed as a friend of Ukraine

On Friday, shortly after returning from a trip to Kyiv, Graham announced an agreement with the Trump administration to move forward on a package of sanctions against Russia.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Graham, whom he met twice in the past week, had visited Ukraine 10 times since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, and "was here with our people when it was most needed." He said that "Lindsey was a true defender of freedom and the values that make our world safer."

Graham also drew tributes for his longtime commitment to NATO and trans-Atlantic friendship at a time when those ties have been under severe strain.

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte said Graham was "a powerful advocate for America who believed strongly in the NATO Alliance and was actively working to bring an end to Russia's war against Ukraine." Rutte's predecessor, Jens Stoltenberg, lauded the South Carolina senator's "tireless commitment" to NATO and the trans-Atlantic bond, and his "staunch support" for Ukraine.

Graham commanded respect on NATO's eastern edge, where Russia's intentions are viewed with deep concern.

Estonia's Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna said that "Estonia will remember him as a steadfast friend, a strong supporter of NATO's eastern flank, and an unwavering advocate for Ukraine." Latvian counterpart Baiba Braže said that he was "among the strongest supporters of NATO and trans-Atlantic relations (and) assistance to Ukraine in countering Russian aggression."

Advocated attacking Iran

Baer, the former State Department official under Obama, said that Graham deserved credit for helping push Trump to retain at least some support for Ukraine. But he noted the South Carolina senator also advocated for the president to attack Iran, sparking an ongoing conflict that Baer argues the U.S. is losing.

"I don't think the historic record of Lindsey Graham's foreign policy record will be black and white," Baer said.

Graham long backed policies aimed at isolating Iran and limiting its missile and nuclear programs, cheered Trump's decision to strike nuclear sites last year and was a supporter of the latest conflict there.

At one point, Graham advocated using ground troops to seize Kharg Island, a crucial site for Iranian oil processing.

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"We did Iwo Jima, we can do this," he told Fox News in March.

Iranian state television announced Graham's death during a live broadcast in openly hostile terms.

"I congratulate the great nation of Iran on Lindsey Graham, the warmongering and anti-Iranian U.S. senator, having gone to hell," the anchor said.

A strong ally of Israel's

While Graham was admired in Israel, his position toward the war in Gaza in particular angered many in the Middle East, including U.S. allies who advocated a diplomatic solution.

He was outspoken in supporting Israel's devastating military operations in Gaza after the Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel by Hamas-led militants.

In May 2024, after Washington paused some military aid to Israel, Graham urged then-Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin to "give Israel what they need to fight the war." He likened the threat Israel faced to "Hiroshima and Nagasaki on steroids." He posted on social media later that year that "the Palestinians in Gaza are the most radicalized population on the planet who are taught to hate Jews from birth."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called him "a great friend of Israel" and "a cherished friend of mine."

Netanyahu said Graham understood that the security of Israel and the United States are inseparable and the prime minister said that Graham devoted his life to defending America, strengthening the U.S.-Israel alliance and standing up for the free world.

"Israel has lost one of its greatest friends. America has lost a great patriot. I have lost a beloved friend," Netanyahu said.

But the Gaza war has also helped trigger a shift against Israel among American voters, with 58% of Democrats saying in a recent AP-NORC poll that the U.S. gives Israelis too much support.

In addition, younger Republicans are more likely than their older counterparts to say the U.S. is too supportive of Israelis, raising the possibility of a generational shift.

Lindsey Graham's journey from a pool hall to the heights of political power

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

Lindsey Graham, the garrulous son of South Carolina pool hall owners, rose to become a fixture on the global stage and one of the most prominent advocates of American military might in the U.S. Senate.

A former military lawyer who reached the rank of colonel in the Air Force, the wisecracking Graham was known for his Southern drawl, political flexibility and reliably hawkish stance on foreign policy. He ran for the Republican presidential nomination in 2016 as a determined opponent of Donald Trump, then became one of the new president's staunchest allies.

In his typical high-energy manner, Graham had just returned to Washington from a trip to Ukraine, having announced a deal with the Trump administration for a new package of sanctions against Russia. He was due to appear on NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday to discuss it. Trump appeared in the senator's place.

"I just can't believe it," Trump said. "He was like a member of the family."

Graham died Saturday night after what a preliminary report from the Washington, D.C., medical examiner's office said was a tear in his aorta stemming from the hardening of his arteries. He was 71.

His death brought encomiums from world leaders and, closer to home, Republicans and Democrats alike, a mark of his influence and his ability to befriend colleagues of different political persuasions. In an outpouring of tributes, lawmakers expressed their shock and remembered his good humor, kindness and zest for the political arena.

"He is the quintessential boy makes good story," said Bob McAlister, a communications consultant who long worked with Graham. "I don't know of anybody who, or know very few people who, started out with less and gained as much from life as he did. I guess that may be my epitaph for him."

Graham transformed from Trump critic to ally

Graham was part of the "Never Trump" movement during his 2016 run and feuded heatedly with his

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reality television star rival during the campaign. He was especially upset at Trump for "slandering" his close friend and political brother-in-arms, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz. "You know, run for president, but don't be the world's biggest jackass," Graham said.

In response, Trump announced Graham's cellphone number during a campaign rally, leading Graham to muse about whether he should get an Android or iPhone to replace it.

By coming around to Trump, particularly in the years after McCain's death in 2018, Graham amassed influence as an intermediary to the White House. Graham and Trump enjoyed a close relationship and became frequent golfing partners, though their relationship ruptured for a time after the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

Still, a year later, Graham was urging Republicans to rally behind Trump again rather than side with critics calling for his political exile.

"Can I just say to my Republican colleagues — can we move forward without President Trump?" Graham said on Fox News in 2022. "The answer is no," he said, adding "we can't grow without him."

His journey from the pool hall to Congress

Graham was born to Millie and Florence James Graham of Central, South Carolina on July 19, 1955. The couple owned a restaurant, bar and pool hall in the town. Graham, his parents and younger sister all lived in one room in the back of the building.

"It was one room, where we all slept, we all ate, we watched TV, the sofa, everything was in one room," his sister Darline recalled in 2015.

As a child, Graham had free reign of the Sanitary Cafe, where he occasionally would sneak a swig of beer or a puff on a customer's cigarette, he wrote in an autobiography. The patrons, who would take him hunting and fishing as if he were their own son, called him "Stinkball."

"It was a good life," Graham recalled to The Post and Courier of Charleston, South Carolina. "I could go grab a Coke any time I wanted to. In my world, I was as rich as I could be."

Like many institutions at the time, the Sanitary Cafe was segregated, Graham wrote. Black patrons had to take their alcohol to drink outside the establishment until the 1970s. But Graham said his father, known to all as "Dude," would not tolerate his white customers using slurs against Black people.

Only a C student in high school, Graham still became the first member of his family to attend college at the University of South Carolina. While he was at college, his mother died of Hodgkin lymphoma. Months later, his father was diagnosed with prostate cancer and died of a heart attack as Graham started his first semester of law school.

Graham, a lifelong bachelor who never had children, became the guardian for his younger sister after his parents' death, and later in life often extolled the benefits of Social Security that helped keep them financially afloat.

After earning his law degree, Graham served as a judge advocate general in the Air Force, starting as a defense attorney for accused troops and eventually rising to the Air Force's chief prosecutor in Europe, based in Germany. He returned home in 1989 but remained a reserve or National Guard member for decades.

Even in the Senate, Graham briefly switched back to active status to help advise the Air Force during the Iraq War and was awarded the Bronze Star medal for service in 2014 before formally retiring as a colonel in 2015.

Graham had a lead role in Bill Clinton's impeachment

Upon returning to South Carolina, Graham soon dove into politics. He won a statehouse seat in 1992 and then a U.S. House seat in 1994. He became one of a group of young, combative Republican lawmakers who pushed to oust then-House Speaker Newt Gingrich for cutting too many deals with the Democratic president, Bill Clinton.

Graham took on a prominent role in Clinton's impeachment for an affair with a White House intern. "Is this Watergate or Peyton Place?" Graham asked at one House hearing. After the GOP-controlled House impeached Clinton, Graham became one of the managers of the case in the Senate, which voted to acquit the Democrat.

In 2002, when Strom Thurmond, South Carolina's senior senator, decided to retire at 99, Graham ran

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for his seat and won. He quickly took to the Senate and its emphasis on relationships, starting some mornings by eating alone in the stately Senate dining room, then throwing himself into the day's bubbling political fights.

Vice President JD Vance recalled experiencing Graham's approach to politics up close when Vance was first elected to the Senate.

"I remember getting into a shouting match with Lindsey about a Ukraine funding bill at lunch and then learning the very next day that he was pushing rail legislation I really cared about behind the scenes," Vance said. "That was Lindsey Graham. He fought like hell for the things he believed in, and he was just as willing to go to bat for you when it counted."

Graham had a gang of 'Three Amigos' in the Senate

Much of Graham's career was defined in large measure by his close relationship with McCain and Joe Lieberman, a Connecticut Democrat who later became an independent. Calling themselves "The Three Amigos," the senators traveled the world and pushed for U.S. intervention in several places, particularly the Middle East after the 9/11 attacks.

When McCain died in 2018, Graham broke down in tears on the Senate floor as he memorialized his friend.

"He failed a lot, but he never quit," Graham said. "And the reason we're talking about him today and the reason I'm crying is because he was successful in spite of his failures."

In the latter part his career Graham leaned on his legal background to take a key role in judicial appointments, especially to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 2018, when Trump's nominee, Brett Kavanaugh, faced accusations of sexual misconduct, Graham helped turn the tide with an impassioned defense of the federal judge.

"Boy, y'all want power. Boy, I hope you never get it," Graham said, accusing Democrats of setting up Kavanaugh and breaking trust in the nomination process. "I hope the American people can see through this sham."

Still, Graham's partisan side was usually tamped down as he positioned himself as a dealmaker. Almost any bipartisan "gang" in the Senate always has had him as a member.

"He was a fierce Republican partisan one day and a key bipartisan ally the next," recalled Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois, who worked with him on immigration legislation.

Kevin Bishop, who worked for Graham for 27 years and later ran for Congress himself, said the senator inspired fierce loyalty in his staff.

"He was incredibly fun to be around," Bishop said. People would walk into his office with "pitchforks" and Graham would turn them around, he said.

"He was willing to accept a lot of criticism to move the ball forward," Bishop said.

Jannik Sinner bounces back with another Wimbledon title after his French Open meltdown

By ANDREW DAMPF AP Sports Writer

LONDON (AP) — A year ago, it was a matter of bouncing back after wasting three match points in a devastating loss to Carlos Alcaraz in the French Open final and showing that he could still win a Grand Slam after a three-month doping ban.

This year it was about demonstrating that he still has the physical toughness to win a major after a debilitating second-round meltdown at Roland Garros in a Paris heat wave

Whatever gets thrown Jannik Sinner's way in the French capital — it seems lately — only makes him stronger across the Channel in London.

For the second straight year, Sinner responded to adversity in Paris with a title at Wimbledon.

The top-ranked Sinner beat Alexander Zverev 6-7 (7), 7-6 (2), 6-3, 6-4 on Sunday for his second consecutive title at the All England Club after his German opponent appeared bothered by a knee issue following a slip to the grass on a key point in the third set.

When Sinner ripped a forehand winner up the line on his first match point, the Italian dropped to the

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grass on his back in an unusually dramatic celebration for the normally low-key Italian.

"This one means a lot because (it) was a tough one after Paris again," Sinner said. "I'm proud of myself and my team, which continues to push me in the right direction."

Amid stifling heat and humidity in Paris in late May, Sinner had his 30-match winning streak ended after coming within one game of a straight-set victory over Juan Manuel Cerundolo, who was ranked No. 56.

Sinner went in for medical exams in Milan after the Paris defeat and didn't play an official match again until he arrived at Wimbledon, where he twice had to come back from a set down in a five-set marathon against Miomir Kecmanovic in the first round.

Sinner then didn't drop a set the rest of the way until the final, having dominated against Novak Djokovic in the semifinals.

"It goes to show the maturity of the player that we're working with," said Darren Cahill, one of Sinner's coaches. "That he can take a kick in the guts like that."

"What makes us the most proud of him and working with him is the way he comes back from those," Cahill added. "It doesn't put him down for too long."

It was Sinner's fifth Grand Slam title.

"I don't think this one was any more important than any of the others that he's played," Cahill said. "But it felt damn special, that's for sure."

It was Sinner's 10th straight victory over Zverev, who was coming off his first Grand Slam title at the French Open.

Zverev's previous best performance at Wimbledon was reaching the fourth round three times.

"I'm 29 years old and this is the first time I actually believe I can win this trophy," Zverev said.

Prince William joined his wife Kate and two of their children for the final in a star-studded Royal Box that also included actors Dustin Hoffman, Nicole Kidman and Ben Stiller.

"There's no better place to play tennis," Sinner said during the trophy ceremony.

Linda Noskova beat Karolina Muchova in an all-Czech women's final on Saturday for her first Grand Slam title.

Zverev slips

The top two seeds appeared perfectly matched until Zverev earned his only break point of the match at 3-3 in the third set -- 2 hours and 42 minutes in. Sinner produced a drop shot and Zverev slipped and appeared to hyper-extend his right knee as he attempted to change directions behind the baseline.

Zverev grasped his knee in apparent discomfort and Sinner went around the net and helped his opponent up off the grass. Zverev quickly resumed playing but he appeared slightly hampered and slung his racket across the baseline in frustration when he missed a forehand and handed Sinner the first break of the match and a 5-3 lead in the third. Sinner then served it out.

Zverev had also lost 14 straight sets to Sinner and when he claimed the opening set of the final with a forehand winner up the line to conclude a tight tiebreaker, he let out a loud roar toward his box as he bent over in celebration.

Zverev continually cranked out serves at up to 139 mph (224 kph), while Sinner produced a series of well-placed aces at a slightly lower speed.

But Sinner began to read Zverev's serve better in the second-set tiebreaker and Zverev started to miss forehands.

"He showed once again," Zverev said, "why he's the best player in the world."

Sinner produced 58 winners to Zverev's 49 and had only 25 unforced errors to Zverev's 45.

Zverev led 17-15 in aces.

Sinner became the first player to win the men's singles title at Wimbledon without conceding a service game in either the semifinals (against Novak Djokovic) or the final since Roger Federer did it in 2003 against Andy Roddick and Mark Philippoussis, respectively, en route to the first of his record eight titles.

Sinner conceded one break point in both the semifinals and final and saved both of them.

Despite the defeat, Zverev will leapfrog Alcaraz into the No. 2 spot in the rankings on Monday.

Alcaraz missed both the French Open and Wimbledon this year due to a right wrist injury.

Keystone Pipeline system's operator agrees to pay a \$26.9M penalty over a major Kansas oil spill

By JOHN HANNA Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — A proposed legal settlement with the U.S. government would require the Keystone Pipeline system's operator to pay a \$26.9 million civil penalty over a major oil spill in Kansas in December 2022 and spend about \$40 million more to prevent future accidents.

The agreement would resolve allegations from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Kansas that South Bow, based in Canada, violated U.S. and state clean water laws. The rupture dumped nearly 13,000 barrels of heavy crude oil into a creek running through a rural pasture in Washington County, Kansas, about 150 miles (241 kilometers) northwest of Kansas City.

The accident was the largest onshore crude pipeline spill in the U.S. in nine years and surpassed all 22 previous ones on the same pipeline system combined, according to a 2021 report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office. The total amount of oil spilled would have nearly filled an Olympic-sized swimming pool.

South Bow also would pay Kansas more than \$3 million for environmental restoration projects under a proposed decree filed Friday in U.S. District Court in Kansas. A judge would have to approve the proposed decree after a 30-day public comment period.

"The oil spill blanketed land and water, rendering the waterway lifeless and useless and requiring extensive cleanup and remediation," Jeffrey Hall, the EPA's assistant administrator for its enforcement office, said in a statement. "The substantial penalty reflects the seriousness of the environmental harm."

South Bow spokesperson Sara Hunter said in an emailed statement Sunday that the company "proactively" launched its response to the spill before receiving formal directives from government officials, including "comprehensive environmental remediation" completed in February 2024. She also said that since the spill, the company has done more than 12,000 miles (19,312 kilometers) of pipeline inspections and 400 excavations to examine pipe and make repairs where necessary.

"This work reflects our ongoing commitment to the safe, reliable operation of our pipeline system and to continuously strengthening pipeline integrity," she said.

The company that built the pipeline, TC Energy, spun off South Bow as a separate firm in 2024, after the Kansas cleanup was done.

No pipeline workers or area residents were injured in the spill, and officials said public water supplies weren't affected. However, a complaint filed Friday by the U.S. government along with the proposed settlement said more than 2,700 animals were harmed or killed. The area is home to an endangered species, the long-eared bat.

In a May 2023 report for the U.S. government, an engineering consulting firm said that a bend in the Keystone system where the spill occurred had been "overstressed" since its installation in December 2010 — likely because construction activity itself altered the land around the pipe. The complaint filed Friday in court said soil under the pipe had been "improperly compacted" and that while the company re-excavated the site in 2013, it did not replace that section of pipe.

The 2,689-mile (4,327-kilometer) Keystone system carries thick, Canadian tar sands oil to refineries in Illinois, Oklahoma and Texas.

In April, President Donald Trump gave the go-ahead for South Bow and another company to build a second pipeline from Canada to Wyoming, a smaller version of a massive \$8 billion pipeline project known as Keystone XL blocked by former President Joe Biden's administration in 2021 over environmental concerns.

Philadelphia area digs out from damage left by a severe series of microburst storms

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Residents in some Philadelphia neighborhoods and surrounding counties were cleaning up Sunday from widespread damage caused by a line of severe, short thunderstorms that passed through.

The storms, called microbursts, passed through Saturday afternoon, downing trees and power lines, flooding a handful of streets and causing structural damage. A building that collapsed in a West Philadelphia neighborhood threw bricks into the street, crushing cars and blocking trolley tracks.

The National Weather Service said at least four of the microbursts brought straight-line wind gusts of 60 to 70 mph (97 to 113 kph) to Montgomery and Philadelphia counties between about 2:30 and 3:15 p.m. Saturday. Despite speculation that the damage — including part of a roof torn off a Philadelphia Housing Authority apartment building — had been caused by a tornado, NWS officials confirmed the straight-line winds were to blame.

The microbursts in Philadelphia were among a range of severe weather across the U.S. this weekend that included heatwaves, flooding and wildfires.

In a news release early Sunday from Philadelphia officials, Mayor Cherelle Parker said she had toured the damage in multiple neighborhoods in her city throughout Saturday afternoon and evening. The city issued a Declaration of Disaster Emergency related to the storms.

"Every level of government is working together today, tonight, and for as long as it takes to respond to this storm, restore services, and help our residents recover. That is our commitment," she said.

Philadelphia Housing Authority officials said 11 residential units were affected by the roof and water damage at its apartment building. All residents were safely evacuated to temporary shelter before being relocated to a nearby hotel.

Philadelphia Office of Emergency Management staff also helped evacuate at least one private residential property because of damage as well, city officials said.

World Sailing measures the environmental impact of the sport's Olympic equipment for the first time

By JENNIFER McDERMOTT Associated Press

The governing body for sailing is looking at how the sport's Olympic-class equipment is made, used and discarded, to eventually make changes that will reduce its environmental impact.

Alexandra Rickham, director of sustainability at World Sailing, said this first-of-a-kind life cycle assessment project will give the organization the evidence it needs to make smarter choices and shape the future of Olympic equipment.

"Sailing naturally has a close relationship with nature, with the environment. It's seen very much as this clean, green sport using the wind," she said. "But the reality is that our equipment has an impact. It goes through some major industrial processes."

Rickham said the project could be useful not just for Olympic sailing but for the broader sailing community and potentially other sports.

Competitive sailing, an Olympic sport since 1900, involves racing boats powered by only the wind and the waves. In the 2024 Olympics, one- and two-person crews sailed boats with hulls measuring as long as 17 feet (5 meters) around a course marked by buoys in the Bay of Marseille.

Outside the Olympics, competitive sailors race throughout the year in local events and larger regattas.

The boats are commonly made of carbon fiber, fiberglass and PVC foam, which take a lot of energy to produce in processes that emit carbon pollution. These materials don't decompose and are challenging to recycle. So when elite sailors are done with them, the boats would need to be sold, passed onto junior sailors or sent for specialized recycling to avoid landfills.

As part of World Sailing's initiative, the sustainability consultancy Marine Futures is collecting data from

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boat builders about their operations and surveying athletes about how many boats, sails, masts and other gear they use, how often they replace their equipment and how they travel with their vessels.

By the end of this year, the goal is to capture the environmental impact of a four-year Olympic cycle and identify which interventions by World Sailing could make the most difference, said Ollie Taylor, director of Marine Futures. Taylor said those could include encouraging builders to incorporate reusable materials, redesigning boats, shifting competition schedules to minimize travel and boat transport, or taking steps to ensure equipment is reused.

The goal is to remove guesswork and put data behind every decision, Taylor said.

Michelle Carnevale, president of the environmental organization 11th Hour Racing, said the effort shows how much progress has been made in recent years. Sustainability wasn't talked about much in the sailing world a decade ago, and now environmental monitoring and benchmarking could become embedded into the rules of the sport, said Carnevale, whose organization sponsored the development of software being used in the project.

Walker Ross, an expert on sport ecology and sustainability at the University of Edinburgh, said he loves World Sailing's leadership on sustainability and wishes more sports organizations were as thoughtful.

"Many sports have specialized equipment that can be quite resource intensive to produce and which are therefore difficult to recycle at the end of their useful lives," he wrote in an email Wednesday.

Stuart Parkinson, executive director of Scientists for Global Responsibility, commended World Sailing for tackling the environmental impacts of boat construction. But Parkinson, whose organization calculates the environmental impact of major sporting events, said the biggest impacts of international sports come from travel, especially air travel by spectators.

Sailors want to be better stewards of the environment

At the Olympic level, sailors often buy equipment in multiples to pick out the best one in the hopes of gaining a competitive edge. That can add up to more waste, said Olympian Dave Hughes, who competed and coached for the U.S. team.

"There is a certain amount of competition to always have the best equipment and that can create a variety of opportunities for places where we can save on waste," said Hughes, chair of the committee representing athletes at World Sailing.

Hughes said that if World Sailing can work with manufacturers to create higher standards, there would be less variation and less incentive to source multiple options for a given piece of equipment such as masts, foils or sails. That would help the environment and lower teams' costs, said Hughes.

"Our connection to the ocean environment is daily, so therefore our experience of how the planet is changing is also daily," Hughes said.

Santiago Sampaio, chief technical officer of the International Laser Class Association, which oversees a type of single-handed racing dinghy used in the Olympics, said he thinks it is possible to reduce the amount of equipment used by sailors annually and to use building materials that don't harm the environment. The association is testing whether high-density PVC foam on the ILCA sailboat could be replaced with environmentally friendly recycled PET plastic.

Sampaio said it will be important to consider whether any change would impact a boat's performance or longevity, render thousands of other boats already in use obsolete, or make it unaffordable for some teams to compete.

"We don't want to make a boat that is too expensive. It's great for the environment, but then we don't have people in Fiji or in Ghana or Angola that can actually buy this environmentally sustainable boat, and then we lose those people."

World Sailing hopes to inspire broader changes

Rickham said that ideally any changes or new regulations based on the project's findings will be in place for the 2032 Olympics, if not earlier. The data could be used for selecting some equipment suppliers for the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles. Starting in 2032, Olympic sailing classes will be required to provide an independently verified life cycle assessment.

Rickham said World Sailing hopes the wider sailing community and other sports organizations will follow

its lead.

"That's where our biggest area of impact is: the ripple effect that we can drive across Olympic sports and the industry of boating and recreational boating going forward," she said.

Madeleine Orr, assistant professor of sport ecology at the University of Toronto, thinks that could happen. World Sailing will have the data needed to push its suppliers to adopt more sustainable materials and circular options, and those suppliers' other clients span the whole boating sector, Orr said.

Disney's live-action 'Moana' crashes to shore with an underwhelming splash at the box office

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

The Walt Disney Company's live action "Moana" may be the No. 1 movie at the domestic box office, but it did not make a big splash in its first weekend in theaters.

The movie, which cost a reported \$250 million to produce, earned just \$43 million from ticket sales in the U.S. and Canada, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Internationally, it earned \$52 million from 50 markets, adding up to a \$95 million global debut.

The studio bet big on "Moana," one of its most popular franchises. The 2016 animated film is the most watched movie on Disney+. Its sequel, which was stitched together from a planned streaming series, made over \$1 billion and scored a Thanksgiving record when it opened with \$225 million in 2024. "Moana 2" was also released just 19 months ago.

This latest "Moana," directed by Thomas Kail, brings Dwayne Johnson back as the demigod Maui and introduces Catherine Laga'aia as the adventuring Polynesian princess. Despite praise for Laga'aia, the film set sail on a wave of dismal reviews from critics for being essentially a shot-for-shot remake of the original.

What audiences say about "Moana"

It's currently sitting at a 34% on Rotten Tomatoes. Audiences, the majority of whom were women (66%), were less negative: According to PostTrak, 63% said they would "definitely" recommend the film to their friends. Parent reactions were even stronger, with 78% saying they would recommend it to other parents. It also got a promising A- CinemaScore.

Disney's live action remakes of beloved animated films, new and old, have had their share of successes and disappointments. Some have made over \$1 billion, including "Lilo & Stitch," "The Lion King" and "Beauty and the Beast." Others have floundered, most notably last year's "Snow White," which made only \$205 million worldwide. "Moana" opened more on par with "Snow White" (\$42.2 million).

Paul Dergarabedian, the head of marketplace trends for Rentrak, said "Moana's" debut could also be a product of PG-rated oversaturation in the marketplace: Universal's "Minions & Monsters" was in second place with \$20.5 million and "Toy Story 5" was close behind in third place with \$18.5 million.

"Families love going to the movies, but right now there are three of them," Dergarabedian said. "That's a lot of competition."

PG-rated films outgrossed others in 2024 and 2025, so "Moana's" performance may not be a case of "family movie fatigue," he said, but simply shows there can be a ceiling. Families have to make a choice, and after four weekends, "Toy Story 5" is still going strong with a running global total of \$879.1 million.

There also are signs that these movies might not sink or swim based on the opening weekend alone. Although "Minions & Monsters" opened below expectations over the Fourth of July holiday, it also had a modest 45% drop this weekend. Its running domestic total is currently sitting at \$108.3 million.

Elsewhere at the box office, horror and history

The weekend's other big new opener was definitely not PG: The R-rated horror "Evil Dead Burn," a Warner Bros. release, opened in fourth place with \$13.7 million. It's a significant dip from the previous two films in the series, which both opened in the \$25 million range.

Angel Studios' George Washington movie "Young Washington" rounded out the top five films in its second weekend in theaters, with \$6.4 million. Olivia Wilde's chamber dramedy "The Invite" landed in sixth place in its first weekend in wide release, with \$5.7 million from 1,610 theaters.

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And though it has dropped out of the top 10 domestically, "Michael" has officially crossed \$1 billion at the worldwide box office, only the second film this year to do so after "The Super Mario Galaxy Movie." It's also now the highest grossing musical biopic of all time, a title previously held by "Bohemian Rhapsody."

The total domestic box office for the year is currently sitting just under \$5.2 billion, up about 10.7% from this point last year. While both May and June were very strong — both generating over \$1 billion in North America — July, Dergarabedian said, has faced some headwinds with a string of underperformers, including "Supergirl." Things will likely pick up next week with the arrival of Christopher Nolan's "The Odyssey" followed by "Spider-Man: Brand New Day" the weekend after.

"They could power a stronger August than July at the box office, which would be very unusual," Dergarabedian said.

Top 10 movies by domestic box office

With final domestic figures being released Monday, this list factors in the estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Rentrak:

1. "Moana," \$43 million.
2. "Minions & Monsters," \$20.5 million.
3. "Toy Story 5," \$18.5 million.
4. "Evil Dead Burn," \$13.7 million.
5. "Young Washington," \$6.4 million.
6. "The Invite," \$5.7 million.
7. "Obsession," \$3.8 million.
8. "Supergirl," \$3.6 million.
9. "Disclosure Day," \$3.2 million.
10. "Backrooms," \$1.5 million.

Ukraine's prime minister steps down as Zelenskyy announces government reshuffle

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko stepped down on Sunday as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced fresh changes to Ukraine's government, saying he had offered a new and important position to the former premier.

Zelenskyy, who has remained in office under martial law because wartime elections are prohibited, has periodically reshuffled his government in an effort to bring fresh momentum to his administration.

Svyrydenko, who has served as Ukraine's economy minister, was named prime minister in July 2025 at the age of 39 after playing a lead role in securing a mineral agreement between Ukraine and the United States, seen as an important way of tying U.S. interests to Ukraine's security.

In a statement on social media, Svyrydenko said she was "proud to have had the honor of leading the government during one of the most difficult periods in Ukraine's modern history." She also said she had discussed "next steps" with Zelenskyy, but did not provide further details.

"I remain ready to serve the Ukrainian state and carry out every task aimed at strengthening Ukraine's position, defending our national interests and bringing a just peace closer," she said.

Zelenskyy announced her resignation in a post saying that Ukraine was "changing its political strategy." He also said he had offered Svyrydenko the opportunity to lead "a new, important area" in Ukraine's relations with a key international partner.

"Each priority area of foreign policy will be assigned to a specific person with substantial experience who is capable of implementing what we agree on at the leaders' level and what the Ukrainian people expect," Zelenskyy said, describing the impending reshuffle.

The Ukrainian leader also said there would be changes among the top ranks of Ukraine's law enforcement agencies.

Zelenskyy met with a series of senior officials following the announcement, including Energy Minister

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Denys Shmyhal, Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko and Defense Minister Mykhailo Fedorov.

The overhaul, which Zelenskyy has yet to explain in detail, would be the fourth major reorganization of his government since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion.

Ukraine continues strikes against Russian oil sites

Elsewhere, a Ukrainian attack in southwest Russia killed one person and wounded three more, local officials said Sunday, as Kyiv's forces continued to bombard Russia's oil facilities.

The head of Russia's Samara region, Gov. Vyacheslav Fedorishchev, said that a child was among the injured. He also said that residential homes and apartment buildings were damaged in the strike, as well as an unspecified "industrial site."

Russian media outlets reported that the attack's target was the region's Syzran Oil Refinery, with many sharing images that appeared to show plumes of black smoke rising over the site. The refinery, which is owned by oil and gas giant Rosneft and sits some 800 kilometers (500 miles) east of the border, has been a repeated target for Kyiv's forces.

Meanwhile the governor of Russia's Rostov region, Yuri Slyusar, said that a tanker had been damaged in a drone attack in the Azov-Black Sea maritime canal. The tanker was empty and there is no threat of an oil spill, Slyusar said.

Ukraine's drone strikes on oil refineries and other infrastructure across Russia have triggered a widespread fuel crisis with gasoline shortages and rationing in multiple regions and motorists waiting for hours to fill their tanks. Moscow has responded by intensifying its bombardment on Kyiv and other cities, exposing Ukraine's vulnerability to ballistic missile strikes.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has described the strikes on Russia's energy infrastructure as part of Kyiv's campaign of "long-range sanctions" carried out in response to Moscow's refusal to halt its four-year invasion of its neighbor.

Meanwhile, Russia's Ministry of Defense said Sunday that it had attacked the ports of Odesa and Chornomorsk in Ukraine's Odesa region. Ukrainian officials have not yet commented on the claims.

Israeli fire in Gaza kills 6 people, including a little girl, health officials say

By WAFAA SHURAF and NATALIE MELZER Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli fire in Gaza on Sunday killed at least six Palestinians, including a 9-year-old girl, and wounded over a dozen others, according to local health officials.

A drone strike on a blacksmith shop in Gaza City's Sabra neighborhood killed at least four Palestinians, according to officials at Shifa hospital, where the casualties were taken.

The Israeli military acknowledged striking the area, saying it targeted "terrorist infrastructure," without elaborating. It later said it struck a Hamas weapon production site.

Palestinians received an evacuation order from the military following the first strikes. Roughly an hour later, intense airstrikes targeted the same blacksmith shop. The Palestinian Red Crescent Society's ambulance service said the strikes in Gaza City wounded 14 people.

Also on Sunday, Israeli gunfire killed 9-year-old Tala Abu Matar in a displacement camp in central Gaza, according to officials at the Health Ministry. The Israeli military said it was unaware of such an incident.

And an Israeli strike on a displacement tent in southern Gaza's Khan Younis killed one Palestinian, according to health officials at Nasser hospital, where the body was taken. Israel's military said it carried out a strike in that area and called it "part of routine activities." The military said it was not aware of casualties.

Israeli strikes have lessened considerably since a ceasefire took effect on Oct. 10, but they continue almost daily. Israel's military says it targets Hamas and other militants, often asserting they were planning attacks. The strikes have also killed many civilians.

At least 1,098 Palestinians, including at least 260 children, have been killed since the ceasefire, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. Five Israeli soldiers have been killed in that time.

The Oct. 7, 2023, attack by Hamas-led militants that sparked the war killed some 1,200 people in Israel

and saw 251 others taken hostage. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed 73,221 Palestinians, according to the Health Ministry. It is part of the Hamas-led government and is staffed by medical professionals who maintain detailed records viewed as generally reliable by United Nations agencies and independent experts. It does not distinguish between civilians and militants but says women and children make up around half of all deaths.

Negotiations between Israel and Hamas remain largely deadlocked over the implementation of the ceasefire's second phase, including the disarmament of Hamas and the reconstruction of Gaza. Most of the population of over 2 million people remains displaced, with many living in crowded tent camps with little or no basic services or in the ruins of buildings.

From staunch critic to fierce ally: Graham's long, strange and consequential friendship with Trump

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After the Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021, Sen. Lindsey Graham said he had finally had enough of the man who was championed by the mob that stormed the pillar of American democracy: President Donald Trump.

"Trump and I, we've had a hell of a journey. I hate it to end this way. Oh my God, I hate it. From my point of view, he's been a consequential president," an emotional Graham said once authorities cleared the rioters and allowed senators to reclaim their chamber. "All I can say is count me out. Enough is enough."

It wasn't, of course.

Graham, the South Carolina Republican who died unexpectedly on Saturday night at age 71, realized that his party's future was inextricably tied to Trump and quickly reverted back to being a staunch defender. The shift made what had once seemed like a final rupture into just another twist in the topsy-turvy relationship between the powerful senator and the president who came to dominate their party.

"Can we move forward without President Trump? The answer is no," Graham said in May 2021, just four months after the Jan. 6 attack. "I've determined we can't grow without him."

Trump, who called Graham a "true American Patriot" in a social media post Sunday, appeared shocked by the lawmaker's sudden passing.

"I just can't believe it," the president told NBC's "Meet the Press." "He was like a member of the family."

Graham often advised Trump on foreign affairs, particularly on matters pertaining to Israel, Ukraine and Iran. He was a frequent visitor at the White House.

"At the end of a particularly thrilling and rollicking meeting in the Oval Office, Lindsey Graham turned to the room and said: 'I've never had this much fun in my life,'" deputy White House chief of staff Stephen Miller wrote on X. He said such gatherings "were filled with camaraderie, kinship and uproarious laughter."

Trump recalled that during his last conversation with Graham, he told his friend, "We'll see you soon, come over anytime you want."

Graham once said Trump's candidacy was like 'being shot in the head'

The senator and Trump first clashed while competing for the 2016 presidential nomination.

Graham described Trump as "unfit for office," and was angered when Trump denigrated the military service of Graham's close friend, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz. Trump suggested, "I like people that weren't captured" when talking about McCain's years as a prisoner of war in Vietnam.

Trump got mad enough at Graham to release the senator's personal cellphone number. That prompted a viral video in which the senator dramatically destroyed a series of flip phones. He smashed one with a meat cleaver and another with a golf club, then used lighter fluid, a blender and toaster oven to pulverize others before tossing one off the roof.

Graham eventually likened Trump's winning the nomination to "being shot in the head" and said he refused to vote for Trump that November. But the pair later bonded over golf and what Graham described as a mutual and irreverent sense of humor.

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Trump and Graham began so frequently hitting the links together that the senator started seeing it as something of a career builder, leaning heavily into the kind of over-the-top flattery Trump relishes. In 2017, Graham joked that Trump had beaten him "like a drum" on the course — even worse than in the presidential primary.

"Their true friendship could only be seen behind the curtain," Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C., told ABC's "This Week." Scott said that relationship was forged as political adversaries but also strengthened by spending 100-plus hours golfing together.

During Trump's first term, Graham helped advance Trump's nominees to the Supreme Court, lent credibility to the White House's legislative agenda and even at times became part of the president's inner circle. He frequently said Trump was maturing in politics and growing on the job.

Graham's political divergence with McCain, who died in 2018, was never more clear than in 2017, when McCain voted against a Trump-backed plan to overturn Democratic President Barack Obama's signature health care law. The effort had been co-sponsored by Graham.

A split that was short-lived, an alliance reignited

In his floor speech after the Capitol attack, Graham said "he'd never been so humiliated and embarrassed for the country." But the break with Trump ended quickly.

Weeks later, Trump invited Graham for golf and dinner at the president's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, reigniting their alliance. During Trump's 2024 campaign, Graham was a frequent Trump surrogate on television, promoting U.S. military strength that he said would advance "America First" policies.

Graham never shed his more traditional Republican foreign policy views, including outspoken support for Ukraine during the Russian invasion. He was also a leading voice pushing the White House to more fully embrace Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and take a harder line against Iran.

After the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran in February, Graham remained hawkish, staunchly defending the action and working to counter many in Trump's "Make America Great Again" base who thought "America First" meant avoiding such military conflicts.

"To those who say Iran is stronger now than before, that is an insult to the American military and it is delusional thinking because the Iranian economy is in shambles," Graham posted on social media June 19.

But Graham's admiration for Trump went far beyond Iran. When Graham clinched the South Carolina Republican primary last month, he suggested the president was just short of a deity.

"I want to start with a bunch of thank yous. I want to thank the big guy, God. Trump comes later," Graham laughed. "Mr. President, you're not far behind God, but we're gonna start with him."

Macron warns of resurgent demons of antisemitism as France honors Alfred Dreyfus

By MASHA MACPHERSON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday decried a resurgence of the "demons of antisemitism" that have darkened France's past and present.

The French leader and others were inaugurating a statue honoring Capt. Alfred Dreyfus, whose wrongful 19th century treason conviction exposed deeply rooted anti-Jewish bias in France. Sunday marked 120 years since Dreyfus' exoneration by France's highest court, where the statue now stands.

Hours before the ceremony, police evacuated some 300 people from the Paris suburb of Sarcelles because intelligence services identified a suspicious vehicle containing a military weapon near a synagogue. Sarcelles has a significant Jewish population, and prosecutors opened a terrorism investigation.

French Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said the vehicle contained a "long military weapon," and that it's unclear if the weapon was meant to target the Jewish community.

France is home to Europe's largest Jewish population and saw a surge in antisemitic acts, including threats, vandalism and physical violence following the Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas attacks on Israel and the ensuing war in Gaza.

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the U.S. ambassador to France, Charles Kushner, accused Macron of further fueling antisemitism by deciding to recognize Palestine last year.

"We know that the old demons of antisemitism have never completely disappeared from our country," the French president said at Sunday's ceremony for Dreyfus, calling for constant vigilance to prevent acts that "target people because of who they are."

Dreyfus, who was Jewish, was convicted of treason in 1894 after being falsely accused of passing military secrets to Germany, and sentenced to life imprisonment. Prominent intellectuals, including novelist Emile Zola, argued that Dreyfus had been made a scapegoat by the French military.

He was cleared of all charges on July 12, 1906 by the Court of Cassation, France's highest court. Macron declared July 12 to be a national day of commemoration of Dreyfus' innocence, starting this year.

After he was exonerated, Dreyfus rejoined the French army and served in World War I. He died in 1935.

Dreyfus' 99-year-old grandson Charles was among those attending Sunday's ceremony.

"I must sadly admit that I would not have imagined, at my age, seeing antisemitism resurface with such virulence in our country," Charles Dreyfus said.

His sorrow, however, was tempered by what he called "the deep joy" at seeing his grandfather's statue erected outside the Palace of Justice, depicting Dreyfus proudly wielding a broken sword.

Hundreds of firefighters battle wildfire in southern Spain that killed at least 12

By SERGIO RODRIGO and SERGE CARTWRIGHT Associated Press

BEDAR, Spain (AP) — Hundreds of firefighters backed by helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft struggled on Saturday to contain one of Spain's deadliest wildfires that erupted earlier this week and killed at least 12 people.

The blazes, which also lashed France this week, came as parts of Western Europe are facing their third heat wave in six weeks. Europe is the world's fastest-warming continent, with temperatures increasing twice as fast as the global average since the 1980s, according to the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service.

In Spain's Andalusia, a combination of light winds and high humidity are helping crews but the sheer size of the fire still poses challenges, Antonio Sanz, head of the region's emergency services, said. The fire has so far scorched some 66 square kilometers (25 square miles) of forest and farmland — about the size of Manhattan.

Sanz said fire crews carried out controlled burns overnight around the perimeter of the fire, which broke out late Thursday in a semi-arid area near the Sierra de Los Filabres mountains in Almería province, just as Spain was sizzling.

Favorable weather conditions were expected into Sunday, which could help firefighting efforts, Spain's official EFE news agency reported. Justice Minister Félix Bolaños said nearly all homes on the fire front's perimeter were undamaged.

Most of the victims, who are believed to be foreign nationals, died after ignoring shelter-in-place instructions, authorities said. Seven people died while on foot after abandoning their cars.

Four of the dead were believed to be British because the steering wheel of their burned-out car was on the right side, as with British vehicles, regional authorities said.

Sanz said Saturday that authorities had completed autopsies and DNA samples were collected to identify them.

Spain's Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares has spoken with his counterparts from the U.K., Belgium, Canada and the Netherlands about the fire, EFE reported. Almería is home to one of the largest communities of foreign nationals in Andalusia.

Authorities proactively evacuated 1,448 people from some 11 areas.

Many are fleeing the flames

Jeffrey Kember and his wife, Christine, were watching a favorite TV show in their Los Pinos farmhouse

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when the blare of a siren alerted them to the fire. The couple jumped into their respective cars while also trying to help a neighbor with two toddlers.

The husband described how they got separated and how he was unable to speak to his wife because she didn't have a phone on her.

"I'm driving through the flames. It was actually flames. I thought, 'I can't stop, I just gotta go,'" he told The Associated Press, his wife now next to him outside an evacuation center. "It was eerie because all of a sudden I came out of the flames and it was all bright sunshine. It was like surreal."

Meanwhile, Spanish authorities arrested two people for ignoring evacuation orders and returning to a high-risk area, according to EFE. Authorities are still combing through the Bédar area in search for any victims.

Europe withers in intense heat

Spain has battled frequent and severe heat waves in recent years, with temperatures often exceeding 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit). Wind, high temperatures and little rainfall help small wildfires grow into unchecked blazes.

Bolaños, the justice minister, on Saturday attributed the ferocity of the Almeida wildfire to a "climate emergency." He said the fire, at its most intense, advanced as fast as 100 meters per minute (328 feet per minute.)

Spain's Meteorological Agency warned that the wildfire risk over the weekend will remain very high.

In June, Spain experienced several days of record-setting heat, with over 1,000 excess deaths. Globally, 2025 was the third-hottest year on record, bringing several intense heat waves across Europe.

Wildfires lash France

Several wildfires remained active across France on Saturday as temperatures soared. Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said that 32 people have been arrested across the country since the beginning of the summer in connection with wildfires.

"Those unacceptable acts, which have disastrous consequences and mobilize our firefighters at the risk of their lives, now fall into the hands of the justice system," he said. "We will continue our determined action and will not let anything slide."

French President Emmanuel Macron also weighed in, recalling in a post on X that nine out of 10 wildfires start because of human activity. More than 25,000 hectares (62,000 acres) of land have burned in France since the start of 2026, roughly double the area compared to the same period last year.

France is experiencing the peak of its third heat wave this summer, with temperatures reaching 40 C across western and central areas and around 37 C (98 F) in Paris. In the French capital, the Eiffel Tower will close in the afternoon over the weekend instead of late at night, as it usually does. The Louvre and Orsay museum have also announced reduced opening hours because of the heat wave.

Last month was France's hottest June on record, with deaths surging by nearly a third during the hottest week.

Spain and Portugal have faced deadly fires before

Spain is no stranger to wildfires, with last year's fire season burning more than 393,000 hectares (971,000 acres). according to the European Forest Fire Information System, an area twice as large as London. Four people died.

Spain's deadliest wildfire was in 1979, when 21 people perished in Lloret de Mar, a coastal town about an hour north of Barcelona.

In 2017, a wildfire in neighboring Portugal left 66 people dead in Pedrogao Grande, located 200 kilometers (120 miles) northeast of Lisbon. In that blaze, 47 people died on one road while similarly attempting to flee in their cars.

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A timeline of the Iran conflict and talks aimed at ending it

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

The United States and Iran have again traded strikes after a week in which U.S. President Donald Trump mused that fragile negotiations between them might be "over."

The countries are now nearly halfway through the 60-day period that began with their signing of an interim deal aimed at permanently ending the war.

At stake are the lives of Iranians and others throughout the region, including Israel and Lebanon, along with foreign residents of Gulf nations, U.S. military personnel stationed in multiple countries and thousands of mariners on ships still hoping to exit the Strait of Hormuz.

The strait between Iran and Oman, considered an international waterway before the war, has become one of Tehran's strongest pressure points in talks. Iran insists it alone now controls the strait.

Here's a brief timeline of the war and efforts to end it:

Feb. 28

Israel and the U.S. attack Iran, killing Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other top officials, sparking the war. Iran quickly responds with strikes against Israel and across the Gulf region and asserts control over the Strait of Hormuz, a key waterway for global oil and natural gas supplies from the Gulf.

March 2

The Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon enters the war by firing rockets at Israel.

Israel retaliates, leading to an invasion that will occupy large swaths of southern Lebanon.

March 8

Iran names one of Khamenei's sons, Mojtaba, as the new supreme leader. He still has not been seen in public and is believed to be in hiding after reportedly being hurt in the war's opening strikes.

April 7

A tenuous, two-week ceasefire deal is reached. Israel is not included in the discussions.

April 12

The U.S. and Iran end hours of historic face-to-face talks in Pakistan's capital without reaching an agreement.

April 13

Trump says the U.S. has begun a blockade of Iranian ports in an attempt to pressure Tehran to give up its grip on the strait.

April 14

Lebanon and Israel hold their first direct diplomatic talks in decades in Washington.

April 17

Iran says it has reopened the strait to shipping, but that doesn't last.

April 21

Trump says he is indefinitely extending the ceasefire.

May 3

Trump announces a U.S. effort to guide ships through the strait. That, too, doesn't last.

May 31

Israel's ground invasion of Lebanon makes its deepest incursion in over a quarter-century as Hezbollah continues to target northern Israel.

June 3

Israel and Lebanon say they agree to renew their fragile ceasefire and create security zones that exclude Hezbollah.

Hezbollah and Israel quickly resume firing at each other.

June 7

Iran fires at Israel in the first such bombardment since the ceasefire took effect in early April. Israel fires back.

June 14

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Trump says an interim deal has been reached with Iran and will be signed within days. Iran insists the deal means an end to fighting in Lebanon as well.

June 17

Trump signs an agreement with Iran that calls for Tehran to dilute its stockpile of highly enriched uranium and waives U.S.-backed sanctions on the country, immediately allowing Iran to sell its oil freely.

June 22

Vice President JD Vance says new talks with senior Iranian officials in Switzerland created a "good foundation for a successful final deal."

June 26

Israel and Lebanon announce a U.S.-backed framework agreement that is described as a first step toward peace.

July 1

Host Qatar says U.S. and Iranian negotiators meet separately with Qatari and Pakistani mediators, with "positive progress made."

July 2

Iran's joint military command warns that all oil tankers moving through the strait must use its approved routes or face a "forceful response."

July 4

Iran begins a dayslong funeral for the late supreme leader, Khamenei. Talks with the U.S. toward a final deal on the war and Iran's nuclear program are expected to resume after it ends.

July 7

Iran is accused of striking three ships in the strait after traffic slowly increases, the most in a single day since late April. The U.S. responds by striking dozens of targets in Iran and reinstating sanctions on Iran's oil sales. Tehran's lead negotiator declares that "The era of bullying and extortion is over."

July 8

Trump declares the ceasefire is "over" but says negotiations can continue, raising fears that the war could ignite again. Days of attacks follow with Iran also firing at Arab states in the region.

July 10

Trump threatens Iran with more strikes, saying he's responding to calls for his death during Khamenei's funeral.

July 12

The U.S. military says it hits over 140 targets in Iran, after an Iranian strike on a container ship in the strait left a crew member missing. Tehran says the strait is closed until calm is restored. The U.S. says the strait remains open.

Vietnam police detain captain after speedboat capsizing kills 15 Indian tourists

By ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Vietnamese police detained Sunday the captain of a speedboat that capsized off southern Vietnam, killing 15 Indian tourists.

The speedboat was carrying 32 Indian tourists and four Vietnamese crew members when it overturned less than half a kilometer (0.30 mile) from shore Saturday afternoon, shortly after leaving Hon May Rut Ngoai island near Phu Quoc, Vietnam's largest island, authorities said.

The captain, Nguyen Hong Hai, 57, is under investigation for alleged violations of waterway transport safety regulations, state media reported.

Sixteen survivors of Saturday's speedboat accident have been discharged from the hospital and are returning to India, the Indian Embassy in Hanoi said on social media Sunday. One remains in critical condition in a Vietnamese hospital.

The bodies of the victims were being transported to Ho Chi Minh City before being flown to India after

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official formalities, according to the embassy.

The boat capsizes moments after departure

All 15 victims were on a company trip organized by India's Lava International, a smartphone and consumer electronics manufacturer, for its employees, distributors and retail partners, the company said.

Ashish Kumar, a 48-year-old distributor for the company from the Indian city of Guntur who took part in the trip, said the party had split into three groups to travel between islands when he witnessed the accident from shore.

The first boat had already departed while the other two were still docked when it capsized.

The boat was relatively close to shore when it flipped, he told The Associated Press over the phone.

"We screamed, 'Help! Help!'"

Nearby boats immediately rushed to the rescue. "But by then it was too late," he said.

Rough seas hamper rescue efforts

Ha Van Loc, piloting a nearby boat at the time of the accident, told state media VN Express that he spotted the overturned vessel at around 12:40 p.m. local time. He saw about a dozen people clinging to the boat's hull, while others — without life jackets — were struggling in the water.

"They were being submerged by the waves but still waving their hands for help," Loc said.

He said he couldn't get close to the upturned speedboat because of the rough seas and was afraid his boat's propeller could injure those in the water. He and his crew threw life buoys attached to ropes and pulled four survivors aboard within 10 minutes.

Realizing others were still trapped, Loc recorded a short video and alerted other boat operators in the area.

Within minutes, nearly a dozen boats and rescue teams arrived at the scene.

Rough seas with waves up to 3 meters (10 feet) high hampered the rescue. Jet Skis were able to reach survivors more easily than larger boats and brought them ashore one by one.

State media VN Express cited passengers as saying the captain told everyone to wear life jackets before departure, but many carried them in their hands. When the speedboat capsized, some passengers were trapped inside and had to escape through the bow or windows, the report said.

Kumar, the eyewitness, said that there was no emergency medical care available at the shore when survivors were brought back.

On shore, tourists and tour company staff took turns performing CPR and giving oxygen to the victims, state media said.

The 17 injured were admitted to Phu Quoc Sun Hospital after two emergency resuscitation doctors and one nurse were dispatched.

The Indian Embassy in Vietnam said 10 of the dead were from the southern state of Tamil Nadu, three from Andhra Pradesh and two from Kerala.

Hundreds of thousands of Indian tourists visit Vietnam each year

Hon May Rut island is about 10 kilometers (6 miles) south of Phu Quoc, one of Vietnam's most popular beach destinations. Both are known for their white sandy beaches and clear waters, drawing millions of domestic and foreign tourists each year.

India is one of Vietnam's fastest-growing tourism markets. The Southeast Asian country welcomed about 750,000 Indians in 2025, up nearly 50% from the previous year.

Officials attribute the growth to an expanding network of direct flights between major Indian and Vietnamese cities and Vietnam's liberal e-visa policy.

Georgia teen charged in Apalachee High School shooting to appear in court for plea and sentencing

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — A judge has set a plea and sentencing hearing later this month for a teenager accused of killing four people in a September 2024 shooting at Apalachee High School in Georgia.

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Colt Gray, 16, had pleaded not guilty to charges including murder in the shooting that killed two students and two teachers, and left several others wounded, at the high school northeast of Atlanta.

In a court filing Friday, the judge overseeing his case set a "Non-Negotiated Plea and Sentencing Hearing" to begin July 24. The judge had previously said that if Gray wanted to plead guilty ahead of trial, he must notify the state and court by this coming Wednesday.

A non-negotiated plea means that the state and the defense have not reached an agreement on a sentence. Unlike a negotiated plea, or plea deal, where a defendant reaches an agreement with prosecutors to plead guilty in exchange for an agreed upon sentence and possibly reduced charges, this leaves sentencing entirely up to the judge who makes a decision after giving each side a chance to present a summary of the case and a sentencing recommendation.

Colt Gray's attorney did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment Sunday.

Gray's trial had been set to begin in mid-October in Columbia County, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) from Barrow County where the shooting happened, after the judge agreed to a defense request to change the venue.

Gray's father, Colin Gray, was convicted by a jury in March on charges including second-degree murder and involuntary manslaughter after prosecutors said he gave his teenage son the assault-style rifle used to open fire at the school. The elder Gray is set to be sentenced later this month.

The Sept. 4, 2024, shooting killed teachers Richard "Ricky" Aspinwall, 39, and Cristina Irimie, 53, and students Mason Schermerhorn and Christian Angulo, both 14. Another teacher and eight more students were wounded, seven of them hit by gunfire. Colt Gray, who was 14 at the time of the shooting, was charged as an adult with 55 total counts, including murder, cruelty to children and 25 counts of aggravated assault.

Investigators testified that Colt Gray carried the rifle given to him by his father onto the school bus with the barrel wrapped in a poster board. They said the teenager left his second-period class and emerged from a bathroom with the rifle, shooting people in a classroom and hallway.

Investigators have said the teenager carefully plotted the shooting at the high school of 1,900 students. A Georgia Bureau of Investigation agent testified that the boy left a notebook in his classroom with step-by-step instructions and a diagram to prepare for the assault, including an estimate that he could kill as many as 26 people and wound as many as 13 others.

Colt and Colin Gray were interviewed by sheriff's deputies about an online threat linked to Colt Gray in May 2023. Colt Gray denied making the threat at the time. He skipped 8th grade, enrolled as a freshman at Apalachee after the academic year began, and then skipped multiple days of school.

Family members had been seeking psychological help for Colt Gray before the shooting, but it appeared he never saw a counselor.

Colt's mother, Marcee Gray, who was separated from Colin Gray, told investigators that she had argued with Colin Gray weeks before the shooting, asking him to secure his guns and restrict Colt's access. Instead, over time, he bought the boy ammunition, a gun sight and other shooting accessories, records show.

Colt Gray even created a shrine in his bedroom to Nikolas Cruz, the shooter in the 2018 massacre at Florida's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, prosecutors said.

McCullum fired as England test coach but will continue with T20 and ODI teams

By STEVE DOUGLAS AP Sports Writer

SOUTHPORT, England (AP) — Brendon McCullum has been fired as coach of England's test cricket team after four years in charge but will continue to lead the country's T20 and ODI sides.

The England and Wales Cricket Board announced Sunday that McCullum "will stand down," with the New Zealander saying in the ECB statement he was "gutted not to be continuing" with the test team — suggesting it was a decision taken by those above him.

"But I respect the decision," McCullum added. "My focus now is on giving everything I've got to the white-ball teams and helping England keep moving forward."

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The announcement came two weeks after England's series loss to New Zealand — its first loss at home in a series of three tests or more since 2012.

That came on the heels of a 4-1 Ashes series loss Down Under in which the England team came under scrutiny for its perceived lack of professionalism.

Ben Stokes quit international cricket after the New Zealand series and now McCullum has gone, too, signaling the end of the so-called "Bazball" era — an entertaining but often flawed period for test cricket in England.

"Brendon breathed new life into England men's test team during an exciting period which saw some amazing victories, and we're grateful for all he has given to the role," said Richard Gould, CEO of the ECB. "We now believe that the time is right to make a change for the test team as we target victory in the Ashes next summer."

The ECB called the "Bazball" era — when McCullum's team played aggressive, fearless cricket — one of the most "exciting and progressive periods" in England's test-playing history.

"It's been an absolute privilege to watch him shape the mentality of the team," ECB director Rob Key said, "to one the players have loved, and see him develop a new generation of talent who will be at the heart of England men's teams for years to come."

"He leaves the test team well-set and poised to achieve great things."

McCullum said there had been "some unbelievable highs and a few tough days along the way, but that's all part of taking on a challenge like this."

"I wish the test team nothing but success," he said. "There's a hell of a lot of talent in that dressing room and they're a special bunch of lads. I'll always be backing the boys, with a smile on my face, and hoping they keep taking the game on. I know they'll continue to make people proud."

England's next test series is against Pakistan starting next month.

McCullum has combined his white and red-ball roles since January 2025.

England's T20 team has just thrashed India 4-0 in a home series to become the No. 1-ranked side in the world.

Today in History: July 13, Live Aid concerts

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, July 13, the 194th day of 2026. There are 171 days left in the year.

Today in History:

On July 13, 1985, the "Live Aid" benefit rock concerts were held simultaneously in London and Philadelphia, raising millions for famine relief in Ethiopia.

Also on this date:

In 1793, French politician, physician and journalist Jean-Paul Marat was assassinated by Charlotte Corday, who stabbed him to death in his bath.

In 1863, deadly rioting against the Civil War military draft erupted in New York City. (The insurrection was put down three days later.)

In 1923, a sign consisting of 50-foot-tall letters spelling out "HOLLYWOODLAND" was dedicated in the Hollywood Hills to promote a real estate subdivision (the last four letters were removed in 1949).

In 1930, the first FIFA World Cup began in Uruguay.

In 1960, John F. Kennedy won the Democratic presidential nomination on the first ballot at his party's convention in Los Angeles.

In 1973, former presidential aide Alexander P. Butterfield revealed to Senate Watergate Committee staff members the existence of President Richard Nixon's secret White House taping system.

In 1999, Angel Maturino Resendiz, suspected of being the "Railroad Killer" responsible for the deaths of at least nine people, surrendered in El Paso, Texas. He was convicted of capital murder in a Texas court and executed in June 2006.

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In 2013, a jury in Florida cleared neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman of all charges in the shooting of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed Black teenager whose killing unleashed furious debate over racial profiling, self-defense and equal justice.

In 2018, a grand jury indictment, sought by special counsel Robert Mueller, alleged that the Russian government was behind a sweeping conspiracy to interfere in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

In 2020, Washington's NFL franchise dropped the "Redskins" name and logo amid pressure from sponsors; the move followed decades of criticism that the name and logo were offensive to Native Americans. (The team was eventually renamed the Commanders.)

Today's Birthdays: Game show announcer Johnny Gilbert (TV: "Jeopardy!") is 98. Author and Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka is 92. Actor Patrick Stewart is 86. Actor Harrison Ford is 84. Singer-guitarist Roger McGuinn (The Byrds) is 84. Rubik's Cube inventor Erno Rubik is 82. Actor-comedian Cheech Marin is 80. Actor Daphne Maxwell Reid is 78. Actor Didi Conn is 75. Actor Gil Birmingham is 73. Singer Louise Mandrell is 72. Former boxing champion Michael Spinks is 70. Actor-director Cameron Crowe is 69. Comedian Tom Kenny is 64. Actor Ken Jeong is 57. Singer Deborah Cox is 52. Actor Aya Cash is 44. Former St. Louis Cardinals catcher Yadier Molina is 44. Actor Colton Haynes is 38. Actor Steven R. McQueen is 38. Soul singer Leon Bridges is 37. Actor Hayley Erin (TV: "General Hospital") is 32.