

Groton Daily Independent

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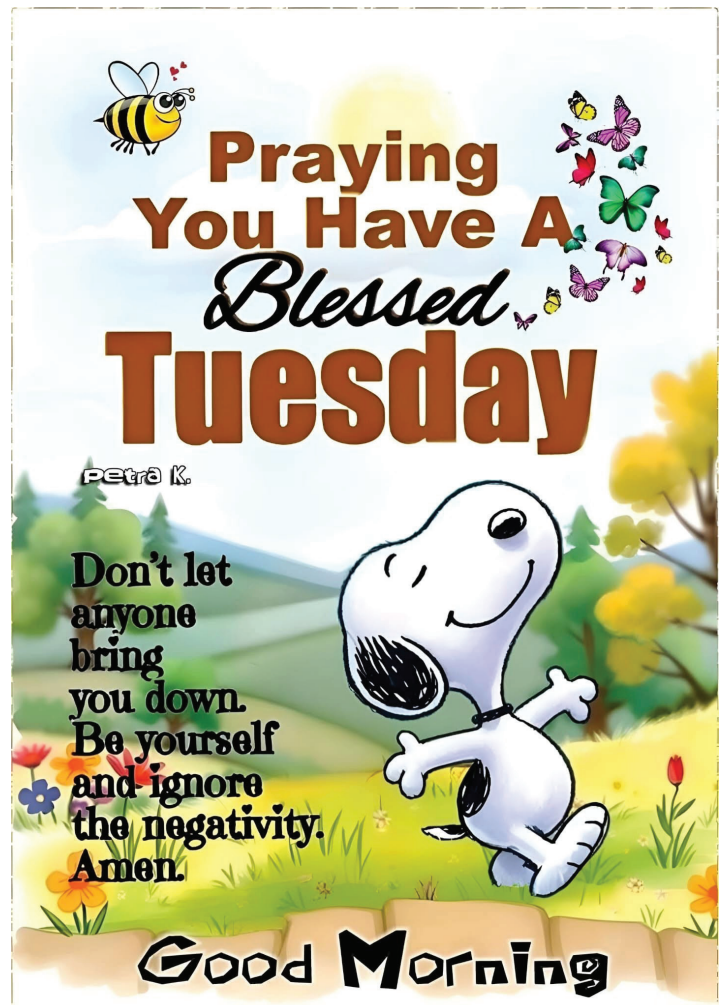
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Tuesday, July 21

Senior Legion Region at Milbank
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.
Tiger Skills Workouts, GHS Arena, 7:30 a.m.
JVT Practice, 6 p.m., Arena.
St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.; Vacation Bible School, 5:30 p.m.

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

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Wednesday, July 22

Senior Legion Region at Milbank
JVT Practice, 6 p.m., Arena.
St. John's Lutheran: Vacation Bible School, 5:30 p.m.

Thursday, July 23

Senior Legion Region at Milbank
Story Time at Wage Memorial Library, 10 a.m.
Tiger Skills Workouts, GHS Arena, 7:30 a.m.

Friday, July 24

State B Legion 14U at Vermillion
10U Baseball State at Hartford/Beresford

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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.

Lindsay Clancy Trial Begins

Jury selection began yesterday for Lindsay Clancy, a Massachusetts mother who killed her three children and is citing a rare defense: postpartum psychosis, a mental illness affecting one to two of every 1,000 mothers globally.

Some facts are not disputed: On Jan. 24, 2023, Clancy asked her husband to pick up takeout food and an item from the pharmacy. She then killed her three children before attempting to take her own life. Prosecutors characterize Clancy's actions as premeditated and allege she consulted a mapping app to determine how long her husband would be away. Her defense team cites her efforts to seek psychiatric care—including admitting herself to a postpartum depression program—and argues she was overmedicated and hallucinating. Clancy's husband sued her medical team this year, accusing them of failing to monitor her responses to the medications.

There is little precedent for the case. In 2006, Andrea Yates was found not guilty by reason of insanity after she killed her five children, citing psychotic delusions tied to postpartum depression.

The Cockroach Uprising

Tens of thousands of protesters marched toward India's Parliament in New Delhi yesterday before police fired tear gas to disperse the crowd. The self-described Cockroach Janta Party is demanding the education minister's resignation following repeated leaks of a medical entrance exam that millions of students see as determining their futures.

The movement emerged in May after India's chief justice compared unemployed young people to "parasites" and "cockroaches" during a Supreme Court hearing. The party has since focused on India's medical entrance exam, where more than 2 million students compete annually for roughly 130,000 medical school spots. Families borrow money or even sell land to pay for years of private tutoring, while the competitive exam culture has also raised concerns about students' mental health.

India is home to the world's largest youth population, with about half its 1.5 billion people under age 30.

Coffee Consumption Guidance

Most adults can safely drink up to five 8-ounce cups of black coffee per day, and regular consumption may improve cardiovascular health, the American Heart Association said yesterday.

An analysis of recent studies suggests consuming about 400 milligrams of caffeine daily may lower the risk of Type 2 diabetes, stroke, heart disease, and heart failure. However, because most research is observational, scientists are still unsure why caffeine may benefit heart health. Some studies suggest antioxidants in coffee help reduce inflammation, indicating not all caffeine sources offer the same effects. Synthetic caffeine products, such as energy drinks, have been linked to higher risk of high blood pressure and irregular heart rhythms. Coffee's benefits also diminish when sugar and high-fat creamers are added.

Brewing methods may matter, too. Cardiovascular benefits have been linked most strongly to paper-filtered or instant coffee. Unfiltered methods, including French press and espresso, retain cafestol, a natural compound that can raise artery-clogging cholesterol.

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Kevin Keegan, a former England manager and forward who won Europe's top individual soccer honor twice, dies at age 75 after being diagnosed with cancer earlier this year.

Women's Tennis Association requires mandatory gene testing to verify biological sex, aligning with new Olympic policy.

University of Michigan athletic director Warde Manuel to step down after \$12M independent culture probe.

Toronto International Film Festival sets initial lineup, including a drama written and directed by come-

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dian Chris Rock and a biopic about the making of Sylvester Stallone's 1976 film "Rocky".

Science & Technology

Food and Drug Administration says test result linking Taylor Farms lettuce to cyclosporiasis outbreak was a false positive but maintains the company could still be tied to the intestinal illness.

China's new AI model, Kimi K3, pauses new subscriptions after demand overwhelms capacity; Kimi K3 is touted as the world's largest open-source AI model and a major competitor to Anthropic and OpenAI's most advanced models.

Analysis of bird skeletons strengthens long-standing theory that animals evolved in rapid bursts coinciding with climate shifts; bird species living in areas with greater seasonal temperature variation tended to evolve more quickly.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close lower (S&P 500 -0.2%, Dow -0.6%, Nasdaq -0.0%).

Archer Aviation shares rise roughly 20% after unveiling autonomous military craft dubbed Thunder in partnership with defense firm Anduril.

AMC Entertainment shares jump nearly 27% after America's largest movie theater chain posted record quarterly revenue of \$1.6B and surprise adjusted profit.

Federal judge blocks Paramount-Warner Bros. Discovery merger for two weeks amid an antitrust lawsuit led by California and 11 other states.

Politics & World Affairs

Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen declare naval embargo on Saudi Arabia; closure of Bab el-Mandeb Strait to the Red Sea could reduce global oil supply by as much as 7%.

UK's Andy Burnham becomes the country's seventh prime minister in a decade after his official meeting with King Charles III.

FBI arrests Army veteran Andrew Arrabaca, accuses him of planting an incendiary device and setting a fire outside a federal building in New York City.

Land for Sale

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Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

July 21, 2026 – 7:00pm

City Hall – 120 North Main Street

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

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Open Bids for 2007 Ford F550 Bucket Truck
4. June Finance Report
5. Park Saferoom Update
6. Discussion Regarding Vacating Portions of West 7th Avenue and North Lincoln Street
7. Minutes
8. Bills
9. Announcement: Family Fun Fest on August 6, 2026, from 5:30pm to 7:30pm. Street to be blocked off.
10. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
11. Begin Accepting Applications for Full-Time Public Works Laborer
12. Adjournment

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BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA GENERAL MEETING

TUESDAY, JULY 21, 2026, 8:45 A.M.

COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS

COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
 - ❖ *Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes or at Boards Discretion. Presentations will be limited to 3 minutes*
4. Chris Hemen, Weed & Pest Supervisor
 - a. Award Bid for Weed & Pest Vehicle
5. Richmond Dam Update
6. Patricia Kendall, Dacotah Prairie Museum Director
 - a. Request for Funding
7. Rachel Kippley, Fair/Fairgrounds/Parks
 - a. Quotes for Talent Booking Agencies
8. Dennis Jones – Discuss the Home Arts Building at the Fairgrounds
9. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign Local Emergency Management Performance Grant (LEMPG) for 3rd Qtr.
10. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes of July 14, 2026
 - b. Claims
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Travel Requests
11. Other Business
12. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
13. Adjourn

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

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

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

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

BUDGET WORK SESSION

NOTICE OF TESTING AUTOMATIC TABULATING EQUIPMENT

Notice is hereby given to the public, the county chair of the Republican party, that the automatic tabulating equipment will be tested to ascertain that it will correctly count all the votes for the Governor Runoff Election held on the 28th day of July, 2026.

The test will be conducted on the 20th day of July, 2026 at 9 o'clock A.M. at the following location: Brown County Auditor's Office, 25 Market St., Ste. 1, Aberdeen, SD 57401

Dated this 17th day of July, 2026.

Lynn Heupel, Brown County Auditor

Columbia Fest car show continues to grow in third year

COLUMBIA, S.D. — What began as an idea to add another attraction to Columbia Fest has quickly become one of the celebration's fastest-growing events.

Kaden Kampa, who is organizing the Columbia Fest Car Show for the third consecutive year, said participation has steadily increased since the inaugural show.

"This will be my third year putting on the car show," Kampa said. "Two years ago we had 76 cars, and last year we had 102 cars. So we're growing."

The idea came after Kampa attended Columbia Fest several years ago and believed a car show would draw more visitors while giving festival-goers another attraction to enjoy.

"I figured this could probably use a car show," he said. "It would bring a lot more people in and give people something to do and walk around and look at."

After presenting the idea to the Columbia Fest board, Kampa was given the opportunity to organize the event himself.



Taylor Thorstenson and Kaden Kampa have been planning the third annual car show at the Columbia Fest this year. (Courtesy photo)



This is one of the awards that will be presented at the Columbia Fest Car Show. (Courtesy photo)

Although launching the show required plenty of trial and error, Kampa credited organizers of the Andover Car Show for helping him learn the process.

"They kind of walked me through how they do everything, and then we tweaked it to what we thought would work better," he said.

The biggest challenge during the first year was simply spreading the word.

"Advertisement is a huge thing," Kampa said. "How much effort you put into it is going to affect your outcome."

Now entering its third year, the event has built a following, with many exhibitors planning to return annually.

As of this week, nearly 50 vehicles had already been pre-registered for this year's show, putting organizers on pace for another strong turnout if the weather cooperates.

The 2026 show will feature 10 judged classes with first- and second-place awards in each class, along with People's Choice and Best of Show honors.

Kampa said exhibitors also appreciate the addition of numerous door prizes, giving participants an opportunity to take home something even if they don't earn a trophy.

This year's event also introduces two new categories — motorcycles and big rigs.

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"We've had a bunch of motorcycles show up the last few years," Kampa said. "This year we decided to give them their own class."

Organizing the event requires more than just one person. Kampa said volunteers handle registration, direct vehicles into parking areas and assist throughout the day. His girl friend, Taylor Thorstenson, has helped a lot. "Taylor helps me a lot with the car show," Kampa said.

"You definitely need quite a few people to make it work," he said.

Parking has not been a problem in previous years thanks to the City of Columbia closing several streets around the park, although organizers are discussing the best locations for the larger semi-trucks expected to participate this year.

Preparation for the one-day event actually begins months in advance. Kampa said planning for this year's trophies started in January, while securing sponsors and donations takes several months.

Nearly 20 businesses are supporting this year's show through sponsorships, gift cards and door prizes.

"The amount of people that are at Columbia Fest, it's a pretty good chance to get your name out there," Kampa said.

The Columbia Fest Car Show will be held Saturday, July 25, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Registration will take place from 8 to 10 a.m., public voting runs from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and awards are scheduled for approximately 2 p.m.

The awards will be presented under the big tent in the bar parking lot during Columbia Fest. While pre-registration has closed, participants may still register the morning of the show for \$10.

NVC

Open House

234 E 1st Ave, Groton

Tuesday, July 21st 10am-4pm

Refreshments Served ★ Door Prizes

 Join us for an Open House as we celebrate our newly remodeled space.

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EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: What can we do to get away from hazardous agricultural fertilizers and pesticides?

-- Mark Winston, New York, NY

Hazardous agricultural fertilizers and pesticides have had a long history. A previously commonplace and insidious pesticide, Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane, or DDT, was determined to be an ecosystem and human life disruptor. These scientific findings, supported by public outcry through the tireless work of individuals like Rachel Carson (author of *Silent Spring*), resulted in 1972 legislation that still exists today. However, other hazardous agricultural chemicals, like Paraquat and Phoradendron have yet to be fully regulated, leaving gaps within the move away from these harmful pesticides and fertilizers.



Many farmers are working hard to move away from hazardous fertilizers and pesticides. Credit: Pexels.com.

Regulation doesn't necessarily mean removal of a chemical. Fifty years after DDT's banning in the U.S. and global efforts to move away from it in select anti-malaria uses, concern from historical use still remains. Effects persist for decades after the last wide-scale use—making regulation as urgent as can be.

In regulating hazardous fertilizers and pesticides, understanding the importance of agriculture is key. Agriculture has long served as the basis for the global economy, providing products that are vital to human life as well as employment. Fertilizers and pesticides are undoubtedly harmful, but they are often essential to farming operations to meet demand. Recognizing the environmental effects presented by the use of these chemicals, many farmers have moved to sustainable practices, making eco-friendly switches within their farming operations.

Dr. Jose Ramirez, an expert in entomology expounded upon the viability of eco-friendly alternatives to agricultural chemicals: "Microbial pesticides and parasitic insects offer an environmentally-friendly alternative with the potential to alleviate huge economic losses to U.S. agriculture and benefit public health." With these scientific advances, the global community has been able to continue its crack-down on hazardous agricultural chemicals without severely impeding agricultural production. Though most regulation is "patchwork," meaning that it varies from country to country, governing bodies in most nations have taken charge in regulating the most harmful substances previously used.

Looking ahead, the best way to move away from these fertilizers and pesticides is through innovation and regulation. By empowering scientific efforts to find sustainable yet equally if not more effective alternatives, the agricultural community can remain strong and eco-friendly. Regulation can be supported through similar outreach and advocacy efforts, encouraging stronger limits and rules about hazardous chemicals, specifically based on what science dictates to be safe.

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Children's
Miracle Network
Hospitals



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Help local kids.



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MAKE A

Miracle!



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THURSDAY
JULY
30

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Miracle Treat Day®
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Groton, SD



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Treat Day® will be donated to
Children's Miracle Network Hospitals
to support Sanford Children's Hospital.

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with a sweet treat



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right here in our community

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Blizzard® Treat coupons
available in Groton!



**THANK YOU FOR HELPING DQ® BRING SMILES TO
LOCAL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES RECEIVING CARE!**



See you on July 30!



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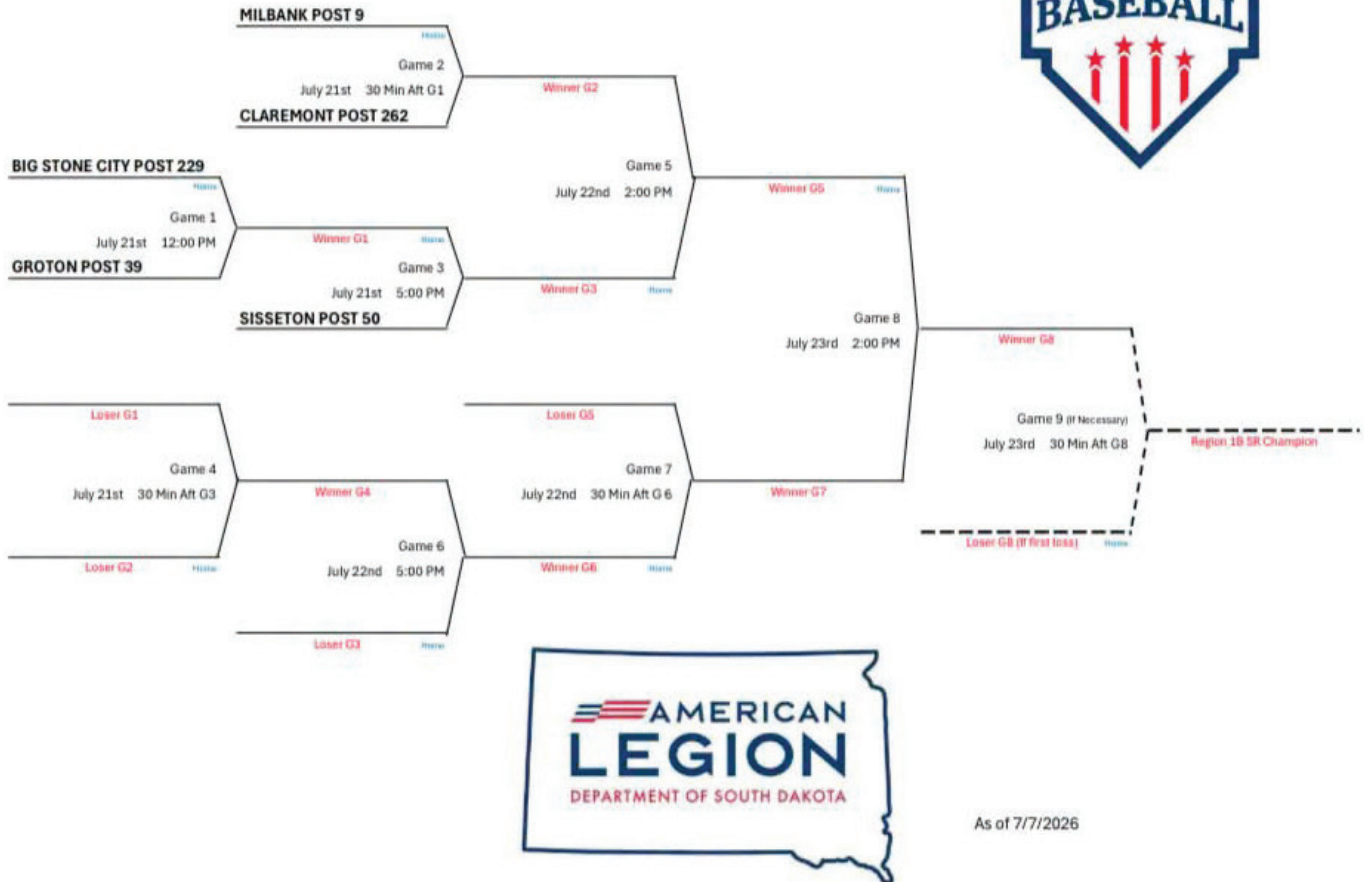
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SOUTH DAKOTA AMERICAN LEGION "B" SENIOR BASEBALL

REGION 1B

MILBANK LEGION POST 9, MILBANK, SD

JULY 21ST - JULY 23RD, 2026



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Groton Locke Electric With Tough Game Against Aberdeen Circus Baseball

By GameChanger Media

Groton Locke Electric had trouble keeping up with Aberdeen Circus Baseball in a 13-4 loss on Monday at Groton.

Aberdeen Circus Baseball got on the board in the second inning after Jesse Babcock tripled, scoring one run.

Aberdeen Circus Baseball scored six runs on three hits in the top of the fifth inning. WolfDon Thorson tripled, scoring one run, Kris Kwak doubled, scoring one run, Jaiden Smith drew a walk, scoring one run, Kelly Coates singled, scoring two runs, and Babcock drew a walk, scoring one run.

Joey Wollman earned the win for Aberdeen Circus Baseball. The pitcher allowed two hits and zero runs over five innings, striking out three and walking two. Nick Morris took the loss for Groton Locke Electric. The pitcher went two-thirds of an inning, surrendering six runs on three hits, striking out none and walking three. Wyatt Locke opened the game for Groton Locke Electric. The hurler gave up one hit and one run over two innings, striking out none and walking two.

Bradin Althoff, Brian Hansen, and Ben Althoff each collected one hit for Groton Locke Electric. Althoff went 1-for-3 at the plate and led the team with three runs batted in. Groton Locke Electric had patience at the plate, amassing 11 walks for the game. Ryan Groebelinghoff, Hansen, and Brevin Fliehs led the team with two walks each.

Aberdeen Circus Baseball amassed 11 hits in the game. Babcock led Aberdeen Circus Baseball with three runs batted in from the number nine spot in the lineup. The outfielder went 2-for-3 on the day. Coates, Babcock, and Kwak each collected two hits for Aberdeen Circus Baseball. Aberdeen Circus Baseball had a strong eye at the plate, accumulating 12 walks for the game. Coates and Smith led the team with two free passes each. Aberdeen Circus Baseball didn't commit a single error in the field. Coates had the most chances in the field with nine.

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Aberdeen Circus Baseball **13 - 4** Groton Locke Electric

📍 Home 📅 Monday July 20, 2026

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	R	H	E
ABRD	0	1	0	0	6	0	4	0	2	13	11	0
GRTN	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	3	1

BATTING

Aberdeen Circus...	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
W Thorson (LF)	5	2	1	1	1	1
M Babcock (SS)	2	0	0	0	1	1
R Soler (SS)	2	0	0	0	1	0
K Kwak (RF)	5	2	2	2	1	0
C Vining (3B)	4	1	1	2	1	0
J Steinwandt (1B)	4	1	1	0	1	1
T Oliver (1B)	0	0	0	0	1	0
R Clemente (DH)	2	1	0	0	0	1
J Foss (DH)	3	0	1	1	0	1
J Smith (2B)	4	2	1	1	2	0
K Coates (C)	4	2	2	2	2	0
J Babcock (CF)	3	2	2	3	1	0
Totals	38	13	11	12	12	5

2B: J Babcock, C Vining, K Kwak, **3B:** J Babcock, W Thorson, **TB:** J Steinwandt, J Babcock 5, J Smith, W Thorson 3, C Vining 2, K Kwak 3, J Foss, K Coates 2, **HBP:** J Babcock, R Clemente, C Vining, **SB:** J Babcock, J Smith, **LOB:** 13

Groton Locke El...	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
B Fliehs #1 (LF)	3	1	0	0	2	1
B Hansen #11 (1B)	2	0	1	0	2	0
B Althoff #27 (1B)	3	1	1	0	1	1
T Sieber #24 (3B)	3	1	0	1	1	0
J Schmidt #21 (CF)	3	1	0	0	1	1
B Althoff #4 (SS)	3	0	1	3	1	0
P Boyd #7 (DH)	1	0	0	0	0	0
N Morris #45 (P)	0	0	0	0	0	0
D Frey #6 (2B)	3	0	0	0	0	1
R Groebli... #0 (RF)	2	0	0	0	2	1
C Camacho #5 (C)	2	0	0	0	1	1
S Locke #15	1	0	0	0	0	0
K Kucker #9 (2B)	4	0	0	0	0	2
CR: J Zimmer... #3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	30	4	3	4	11	8

2B: B Althoff, **TB:** B Hansen, B Althoff, B Althoff 2, **LOB:** 10



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Explanation of unspent social services money makes some lawmakers celebratory, others concerned

BY MEGHAN O'BRIEN

PIERRE — South Dakota's top state budget official offered further explanations Monday for the \$39 million that state departments left unspent during the recently completed fiscal year, eliciting both praise and concerns from lawmakers.

The fiscal year ended June 30. The Department of Social Services had the biggest budget reversion, returning \$32 million.

Jim Terwilliger, commissioner of the state's Bureau of Finance and Management, told a committee of state lawmakers that the size of the department's reversion shouldn't be "a surprise, because it's the one area in the state budget that is a lot less predictable."

"There's only two sides of the coin," he said. "That you have enough funds to get you through, or you're going to be short."

Unused funds from state departments made up more than half of the \$69 million budget surplus that Gov. Larry Rhoden announced last week. The state also collected \$30 million more than its budgeted revenue, \$17 million of which came from higher-than-projected sales tax revenue. The surplus went into the state's reserve funds and "will be available for one-time investments in future budget years," the governor said.

Department of Social Services reversions

The Department of Social Services' \$32 million of reversions came from a \$1.8 billion departmental budget. The department manages programs such as Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, among others. About \$654 million of its budget was from state funding sources, with most of the remainder coming from the federal government.

The department's largest category of unspent funds was in medical services, which includes Medicaid, the joint federal-state program that helps pay for healthcare for low-income people of any age. There were \$12.5 million of medical services reversions.

"We're trying to predict how many people come to the hospital with various acute conditions and so on and so forth," Terwilliger said. "So, it's not something that's easy to predict going forward."



The Interim Committee on Appropriations meets at the South Dakota State Capitol in Pierre on July 20, 2026. (Photo

by Meghan O'Brien/South Dakota Searchlight)

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Medicaid enrollment declined by 968 people, from 143,743 at the start of the fiscal year last July to 142,775 last month.

Lower use of substance use disorder programming and mental health treatment services resulted partially from fewer staff to provide treatment, Terwilliger said. In particular, the Human Services Center, a facility in Yankton dedicated to providing treatment for substance use disorder and mental health, has struggled to hire personnel.

Terwilliger also credited the department's launch of a program called BEES— the Beneficiary Eligibility and Enrollment System — in 2024, which screens applicants for their eligibility for medical eligibility programs.

Some lawmakers were pleased with the returned funds, including Sen. Taffy Howard, R-Rapid City.

"These are all welfare services, so lower utilization should be cause to celebrate," she said. "And I hope we aren't looking for ways to increase utilization just because we happen to have some reversions."

Sen. Red Dawn Foster, D-Pine Ridge, said she agreed with Howard's comments, "but I think that the services that we do provide, we want to make sure that there's a pathway to self-sufficiency and not just attrition."

Foster also asked if the launch of BEES is causing people to be eliminated from programs. Terwilliger did not provide further information but said "it's something we can certainly look at."

Current-year revenue

Legislators received varying predictions Monday about how revenue will fare during the current fiscal year, which began July 1.

Derek Johnson, state economist with the bureau, estimated revenue will be 0.34% higher than originally estimated, resulting in \$8.7 million more than lawmakers planned for when they approved the budget in March. Johnson works for the governor in the executive branch.

The state collected \$17 million more in sales and use tax during the recently ended fiscal year than predicted, and collections were 6.6% higher than the previous fiscal year. Johnson is projecting continued growth.

Jeff Mehlhaff, who works for lawmakers as interim director of the Legislative Research Council, is also considering last year's sales tax growth. But he views it as a reason to be conservative.

"I just didn't expect that much growth, which leads me to pause a little bit," he said. "Typically when you have a high growth year like that, where you exceed your expectations, the next year usually produces a below average return."

Mehlhaff predicted this fiscal year's revenues will be 0.5% lower than estimated, resulting in \$13.3 million less than planned.

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

COMMENTARY

Before we spend millions on flood control, let's remember thousands of years

Previous federal research puts modern flooding of northeastern South Dakota lakes in broader context

by Brad Johnson

Twenty-seven years ago, the federal government reached a startling conclusion about one of South Dakota's most unusual watersheds.

After years of research, the Northern Great Plains Water Resources Research Center concluded that soil surveys indicated the Waubay Lakes Chain in northeastern South Dakota probably had not spilled naturally into the Big Sioux River with any significant volume or duration since the glacial age.

That conclusion wasn't drawn from a few decades of rainfall records. It emerged from one of the most comprehensive scientific investigations ever conducted on a South Dakota watershed.

On June 30, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers returned to Webster looking through a much shorter window into the past.

Using projections built largely on the last 20 years of precipitation, the Corps outlined rising lake levels, inundated roads, threatened homes and farmland, and nearly \$100 million in potential public infrastructure damage under one scenario.

Then Jay Gilbertson asked what may have been the most important question of the afternoon.

The East Dakota Water Development District manager asked why the public presentation emphasized roughly two decades of precipitation when earlier federal studies reconstructed the watershed's climatic history over centuries.

Before South Dakota considers the next step, that question deserves a public answer.

The Waubay-Bitter Lake system is one of the nation's most significant closed-basin watersheds, compared by federal scientists to Devils Lake in North Dakota and Utah's Great Salt Lake because all three respond to long-term climate cycles rather than having permanent surface outlets.

After the region's devastating floods of the late 1990s, federal and state agencies took an unusually broad approach. They sponsored five separate investigations, bringing together hydrologists, climate scientists, geologists, engineers and statisticians to answer a single question: How does the 10-lake Waubay-Bitter Lake system naturally behave?

To answer that question, scientists drilled living bur oaks growing on islands in Waubay Lake. They matched those tree rings with century-old bur oak timbers from Fort Sisseton. They analyzed ancient shorelines, soil surveys, lake sediments, pollen and radiocarbon dates.

Together, those lines of evidence reconstructed the watershed's climatic history across centuries.

Tree-ring chronologies documented an extreme drought in the mid-1700s comparable to the Dust Bowl, demonstrating that dramatic swings between wet and dry periods have long been part of this landscape.



Bitter Lake encroaches on the town of Waubay during spring flooding in 2011. (Photo by Brad Johnson)

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The lesson was simple: This watershed has a much longer memory than we do.

If you've visited Fort Sisseton, you've stood in the middle of that memory. When soldiers established Fort Sisseton in 1864, they looked out across lakes on three sides. In fact, Army records later noted that the fort had originally been surrounded by a chain of lakes before many of them dried during the following years.

During the Dust Bowl — and again during the drought of 1976 — you could stand in the same place and wonder why anyone chose that location for a military fort. Today, visitors once again look across water much as those soldiers did more than 160 years ago.

Those changing views became more than history. They became scientific evidence.

None of this proves the Corps is wrong.

Changing land use, drainage, wetlands, roads, climate trends and advances in hydrologic modeling may well make the last 20 years of precipitation the most appropriate basis for forecasting future conditions.

Perhaps the Corps fully integrated the earlier paleohydrology and climatological research into its modern engineering analysis. If so, the public presentation never explained how.

And when hundreds of millions of public dollars may follow, unexplained assumptions aren't a footnote. They become part of the public debate.

The Corps' Planning Assistance to States study is essentially complete. The next decision shifts from engineers to elected officials.

According to the Corps, the next step would likely be a \$3 million general investigation feasibility study, with about half paid by the non-federal sponsor. If that study ultimately leads to construction, the alternatives discussed publicly range into the hundreds of millions of dollars, with state and local governments responsible for a substantial share of the cost.

For a county the size of Day County, the non-federal share is not simply a local question. It is the kind of question that ultimately reaches Pierre.

That is where science meets public policy. Before public policy follows the science, the connection between them should be clearly explained.

Twenty-seven years ago, federal scientists began with one question: How does this watershed naturally behave?

The Corps is now asking: What should we do about it?

Both are essential questions, and South Dakotans deserve to understand the first answer before they invest millions of public dollars in the second.

Citizens need to understand how the Corps' short-term analytical window connects to the long-term climatological record federal scientists once believed was essential to understanding this watershed.

The larger the public investment, the greater the obligation to explain the science — clearly, publicly, and before the money moves.

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

FDA: Taylor Farms iceberg lettuce sample produced a false positive for cyclospora

BY SAM GAUNTT

WASHINGTON — A top U.S. Food and Drug Administration official said Monday that a false positive report for the parasite cyclospora from a Taylor Farms iceberg lettuce sample does not change the basis for an ongoing agency investigation.

FDA had announced Sunday the false positive on a Taylor Farms lettuce sample, amid an outbreak of cyclosporiasis that has sickened more than 1,600 people.

But in a call with reporters Monday afternoon, acting FDA Commissioner Kyle Diamantas said the false positive report doesn't change the basis for the probe or the epidemiological data supporting Taylor Farms' voluntary recall of some of its iceberg lettuce products.

"I want to stress that our investigation continues, including into other potential sources and commodities for other clusters of illnesses," he said on the call.

The announcement comes after the FDA previously reported on Saturday that a sample of iceberg lettuce from Taylor Farms in central Mexico had tested positive for the parasite. As of Sunday, the FDA said there are no confirmed samples of Taylor Farms lettuce testing positive for cyclospora.

The FDA did not cite any other positive tests for the source of the outbreak, which has been linked to severe gastrointestinal illness.

As of Monday morning, a banner on an FDA webpage tracking the outbreak still reads: "Do not eat recalled iceberg lettuce from Taylor Farms de Mexico. FDA's investigation is ongoing."

The FDA also said: "Due to the complexity in detection of Cyclospora, FDA laboratory experts re-reviewed the sample results and have concluded that the finding does not represent true amplification and should be considered a false positive."

5 states affected

After an FDA investigation into the source of the outbreak affecting at least five states identified shredded lettuce provided by Taylor Farms and sold in many Taco Bell restaurants in the United States as a potential reason, the California-based produce firm announced a voluntary recall of many of its lettuce products.

The sample that generated the false positive was not part of the current recall, according to FDA acting Deputy Commissioner for Food Donald Prater.

Prater said that it was important to communicate the finding given the ongoing outbreak and public health risk. The FDA detected the false positive during a subsequent quality check in the lab and immediately issued the correction, he said.

"The reevaluation of the sample does not alter the data supporting the outbreak advisory that prompted the current voluntary recall," Prater said on the call with reporters Monday. "FDA's traceback investigation and the outbreak data continue to converge on shredded iceberg lettuce from Taylor Farms' location in



The main entrance of Food and Drug Administration Building 1 on the FDA campus in Silver Spring, Maryland.

(Photo by Michael J. Ermarth/FDA)

central Mexico.”

The FDA and Taylor Farms continue to work together to ensure that “product implicated in this outbreak” has been removed from store shelves and not sold on the market, the Sunday statement continued.

Taylor Farms statement

In its own statement Sunday, Taylor Farms said the FDA had “apologized” to the company after informing it of the mistaken result.

“Based on initial information provided by health officials, in an abundance of caution, we completed a voluntary recall of iceberg lettuce from central Mexico,” the company’s statement read. “Recalled product was limited to iceberg lettuce grown and processed in central Mexico. All other Taylor Farms products, including all Taylor Farms brand products available for purchase, are not involved in the recall.”

In the call with reporters on Monday, however, an FDA official said that the agency informed the company of the false positive report and explained how it happened, but did not offer an official apology.

“We did not offer an official apology, but did explain factually the issues,” the official said.

The multistate outbreak of the parasite has mostly been concentrated in the Great Lakes and Appalachian regions, with cases identified in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky and West Virginia, according to the FDA.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says there have been more than 1,644 confirmed cases of cyclosporiasis, the food-borne illness caused by ingestion of the parasite, with 94 of those cases leading to hospitalization. There have been no reported deaths.

The CDC’s webpage on the cyclosporiasis outbreak was last updated on Saturday, before the false positive was announced.

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

Canadian hockey sticks, wine and cement subject to new Trump tariffs

BY ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump ordered 50% tariffs on several Canadian products Monday in response to what his administration describes as retaliatory restrictions on imports of American goods, including alcohol, dairy and automobiles.

Trump’s three separate proclamations to impose steep tariffs on items like hockey sticks, wine and cement, came just days after he threatened to slap more tariffs on Canada as smoke from raging wildfires in Ontario blanketed much of the northeastern U.S. through the weekend. But a senior administration official denied the new tariffs were in response to the smoke.

“These are not the so-called wildfire tariffs. The president has asked for options on that, and options are being shared with him. These tariffs are in response to discriminatory treat-



President Donald Trump attends a bilateral meeting with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi on the sidelines of the G7 Summit on June 17, 2026 in Evian-les-Bains, France. (Photo by Anna Mon-

eymaker/Getty Images)

ment by Canada against U.S. products,” the senior administration official said on a call with reporters Monday afternoon.

The tariffs will go into effect Aug. 19.

Trump appeared alongside Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney Sunday at the FIFA World Cup trophy ceremony in East Rutherford, New Jersey, but the two leaders did not discuss White House plans for the new tariffs, according to the senior administration official.

Trump triggered the new tariffs under Section 338 of the Tariff Act of 1930, a Depression-era provision that authorizes the president to impose duties up to 50% of a product’s value in response to discrimination against U.S. commerce. The provision has been long forgotten since the 1940s and has never been enforced, experts say.

“To our knowledge, Section 338 has not been used for this purpose before,” the senior administration official told reporters. “It’s been on the books for a long time. In our view, the terms are clear: It gives the president this authority in situations where a country discriminates against the United States relative to the treatment given (to) a third country.”

Trump’s unprecedented sweeping tariffs on global goods, including from Canada, imposed in April 2025 under the 1977 International Economic Emergency Powers Act, or IEEPA, were found illegal and overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court in February.

The administration was ordered by the U.S. Court of International Trade to refund roughly \$166 billion in duties paid by importers under the IEEPA tariffs.

Since the Supreme Court’s major blow to Trump’s trade agenda, the White House has sought other routes to impose tariffs. Almost immediately after the court’s decision, Trump announced a temporary base 10% tariff on all imports under section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974. Those tariffs are now being litigated in trade court.

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

ICE officers to wear body cameras at traffic stops, White House border czar says

BY ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — In the wake of two fatal shootings in Texas and Maine, U.S. Immigration Customs and Enforcement officers will wear “at least one body camera” during traffic stops, Tom Homan, the president’s border czar, said over the weekend.

Homan, who President Donald Trump has tasked with leading his mass deportation campaign, said in a Sunday interview on Fox News that ICE’s acting director has instructed officers to wear a body camera “whenever possible” during vehicle stops.

This month, two immigrants — 25-year-old Johan Sebastián Durán Guerrero and 52-year-old Lorenzo Salgado Araujo — were shot and killed by ICE agents who stopped their vehicles. Neither man was an initial enforcement target, the Department of Homeland Security said.

During Sunday’s Fox and Friends Weekend



A masked U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent knocks on a car window in Minnesota on Jan. 12, 2026. (Photo by Nicole Neri/Minnesota Reformer)

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program, Homan said he supported body cameras because "they exonerate more law enforcement than they convict."

"I want officers to wear body cameras because I want the American people to see what the officers saw when they took that action," Homan said.

Federal immigration officers have shot 22 people and killed six, including three U.S. citizens, during the second Trump administration. Most shootings have stemmed from traffic stops, which Homan said officers were continuing.

After the back-to-back shootings of Salgado Araujo in Texas and Guerrero in Maine, DHS instructed agents to pause vehicle stops, but Trump quickly reversed those plans.

Congressional standstill

Homan blamed Democrats for the reason immigration agents don't have body cameras, pointing to the weeks-long shutdown of DHS. He also accused traffic stops of becoming more dangerous because of Democrats criticizing ICE.

"They're more dangerous now than ever because Democratic members of Congress, Democratic mayors and governors have preached for the past year 'ICE isn't a real law enforcement agency. ICE has no authority. Resist,'" he said.

Democrats refused to approve funding for DHS unless restraints were placed on ICE and Border Patrol officers, such as the requirement for body cameras, after two U.S. citizens were killed by federal immigration officers in Minnesota in January.

Congressional Republicans last year used a special legislative maneuver to allocate roughly \$175 billion to DHS for immigration enforcement, detainment and deportations, without needing Democratic support.

GOP lawmakers used the same move following the shutdown this year to fund \$75 billion for ICE and Border Patrol until September of 2029.

In a separate interview, on CBS's Face the Nation Sunday, Homan again gave his support for body cameras on ICE officers and blamed Democrats for a lack of body cameras.

"I think body cameras are the way to go," he said.

After the two killings in Minnesota in January, then-Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said DHS would be issuing body cameras to immigration officers.

Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include immigration, congressional policy and legal challenges with a focus on how those policies impact the lives of immigrants and migrants coming to the U.S.

Political parties boast new clout and cash in midterms thanks to US Supreme Court

BY DAVID LIGHTMAN

A recent U.S. Supreme Court decision makes it easier for political parties to put their stamp on the most important campaigns, just as the struggle heats up for control of Congress in the midterm elections.

Simply put, the ruling "gives the parties more money to spend," said David Kolker, senior counsel at the nonpartisan Campaign Legal Center.

In a 6-3 decision on June 30, the court struck down limits on how much political parties could spend in coordination with specific candidates.

But will it make a difference, particularly in mega-money Senate races in Ohio, Maine, Texas, Iowa and elsewhere?

In sheer dollars from big donors, maybe not. In strengthening the role of political parties and how they use those dollars to help campaigns, yes.

"The idea there will be an explosion of money that's not already going to be there, I don't really see that. The super PAC money is already there," said Brendan Glavin, director of insight at OpenSecrets.org, a nonpartisan group that tracks and analyzes money in politics. Super PACs can spend unlimited sums independent of campaigns.

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Don Levy, Siena Research Institute director, saw evidence in July of how eagerly the parties could spend money — or yank it back.

Maine Democratic Senate candidate Graham Platner's now-defunct campaign was rocked by new allegations of sexual abuse, which he has denied. Siena conducts polls in Maine.

When the scandal broke, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Chair Kirsten Gillibrand, both of New York, issued a terse three-sentence statement in response.

One of those sentences was: "The DSCC will not invest in the Maine Senate race if Platner remains on the ballot."

That indicated "money is top of mind" for the party, Levy said. Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, is seeking reelection in a state that Democratic



Graham Platner, then the Democratic nominee for the U.S. Senate in Maine, unveils an anti-corruption policy plan outside the Portland office of incumbent Republican U.S. Sen. Collins on June 25, 2026. (Photo by Emma Davis/ Maine Morning Star)

presidential nominee Kamala Harris won in 2024 by 7 points.

The court and big money

The Supreme Court has been methodically tearing down barriers aimed at limiting big money in politics. In 2010, the Citizens United decision overturned decades-old restrictions on corporate independent expenditures, allowing them to spend unlimited sums from their corporate profits to support the candidates of their choice.

The ruling led to the creation of super PACs, allowing special interests to raise and spend unlimited funds to boost political candidates.

An analysis by Daniel Weiner, director, elections and government at the Brennan Center for Justice, found that their funding "largely comes from a small group of the very wealthiest donors."

From 2010 to 2022, super PACs spent about \$6.4 billion on federal elections. They spent an estimated \$2.7 billion in the 2024 election.

There were, and are, limits on contributions to specific candidates and political parties. Super PACs cannot coordinate with campaigns.

Until the Supreme Court ruling, there were limits on how much the parties could coordinate. Not anymore. Parties have "complained about being outspent by the outside super PACs. Whether that's true or not you could debate," said Kolker.

The court decision, though, makes it easier for big donors to funnel money to the parties, knowing the parties can now seamlessly direct the funds to candidates they feel need it most.

Republicans pushed for the ruling, with many in the GOP believing that Democrats had the advantage of obtaining more, often smaller, contributions to their candidates, while Republicans relied on bigger donors who felt more bound by contribution limits and restrictions.

Republicans hailed the decision.

"By striking down these unconstitutional caps on coordinated spending, the Court has restored core political speech and ensured parties can compete on a level playing field," said a joint statement from Sen.

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Tim Scott of South Carolina, chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, and Rep. Richard Hudson of North Carolina, who chairs the GOP's House campaign committee.

Democrats saw things much differently. The ruling "is a win for billionaire donors and special interests who want more influence over the GOP agenda and an invitation for corruption," said a joint statement from Democratic Party Chairman Ken Martin, Rep. Suzan DelBene, D-Wash., who heads the party's House campaign committee, and Gillibrand.

Maine and other swing states for Senate control

Democrats need a net gain of four Senate and three House seats in November's elections to win control of those chambers.

The biggest money is likely to pour into a handful of Senate races.

Maine has been a top Democratic target, though the turmoil over Platner's candidacy makes it unpredictable.

It had been a competitive race. In the Siena/New York Times/Portland Press Herald poll June 19-26 poll, before the latest Platner controversy erupted, he led Collins by 2 points. Trump's approval rating was 36%.

Maine Democrats have until July 27 to choose a replacement for Platner, who left the race July 8.

The court ruling is "not going to be a huge game changer for the amount of money flowing into a competitive race. They already have super PAC money, and already have megadonors giving to parties," said Glavin.

Money could matter more in Ohio, where big spending in 2024 – a non-presidential election record of \$483.4 million, according to AdImpact – helped Republicans paint incumbent Sen. Sherrod Brown, a Democrat, as out of touch with the GOP-trending state. Brown lost to Republican businessman Bernie Moreno by 4 points.

"I think money made a difference last time as they drove up Brown's negatives," said Jessica Taylor, Senate and governors editor at the nonpartisan Cook Political Report. Brown now will be able to tap more party expertise and funding as he runs this year against Sen. Jon Husted, a Republican appointed to the seat in 2025 to replace Vice President JD Vance.

Iowa is a different sort of money battleground. "Money could make a big difference if Democrats spend there," Taylor said. Democrats are trying to win the seat now held by Sen. Joni Ernst, a Republican who is not seeking reelection. State Rep. Josh Turek, a Democrat, is running against U.S. Rep. Ashley Hinson, a Republican.

Levy offered this example of where shifting party money could matter. Suppose polls hold up and former Gov. Roy Cooper, a Democrat, remains favored to win a North Carolina Senate seat now held by Republican Thom Tillis, in his campaign against Republican Michael Whatley.

"The national party could say we'll write off North Carolina because Cooper has a big lead and is extremely well known in the state. It would be difficult to beat him," Levy said. Maybe they'd direct more money to Texas, where state Rep. James Talarico and Attorney General Ken Paxton were tied in last month's Siena poll.

The court ruling gives "a lot more power to party leaders who control how these funds are spent," said Kolker, and probably more clout to Congress itself, making it easier to impose party discipline.

Does big money matter?

Experts are quick to warn that big money is no surefire guarantee of success.

There are just too many moving parts influencing voters – their economic situation, their views of President Donald Trump and their disillusionment with the political establishment, to name a few.

"You want to have a robust TV program but the political environment is still going to matter in a lot of these races," said Taylor.

What often matters most for a candidate and a political party is building an image and reputation and sustaining it, which is why in election after election, incumbents usually win.

"There is still an incumbent advantage. There are cycles where voter discontent and frustration reaches a point where the only way to express your frustration is to vote against whoever is in power," said Todd

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Eberly, professor of political science at St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Maine provides a strong example of the advantages and disadvantages of money.

Collins has been a senator since 1997. "Collins will play to her strength. The people of Maine, regardless of what the left may say, they feel she has good moral character and is in touch with the values of Mainers," Levy said.

Democrats will undoubtedly try to tie her to Trump and the Washington establishment. At the same time, he said, "Maine is an inexpensive state and money will fly in there to say Susan Collins is in tune with Maine."

The race will be a test of all the factors that influence a race, financial and otherwise.

"Candidates who spend more, their probability of winning has increased significantly," said Eberly. "With one exception. If you're an incumbent, it (big spending) doesn't make much of a difference."

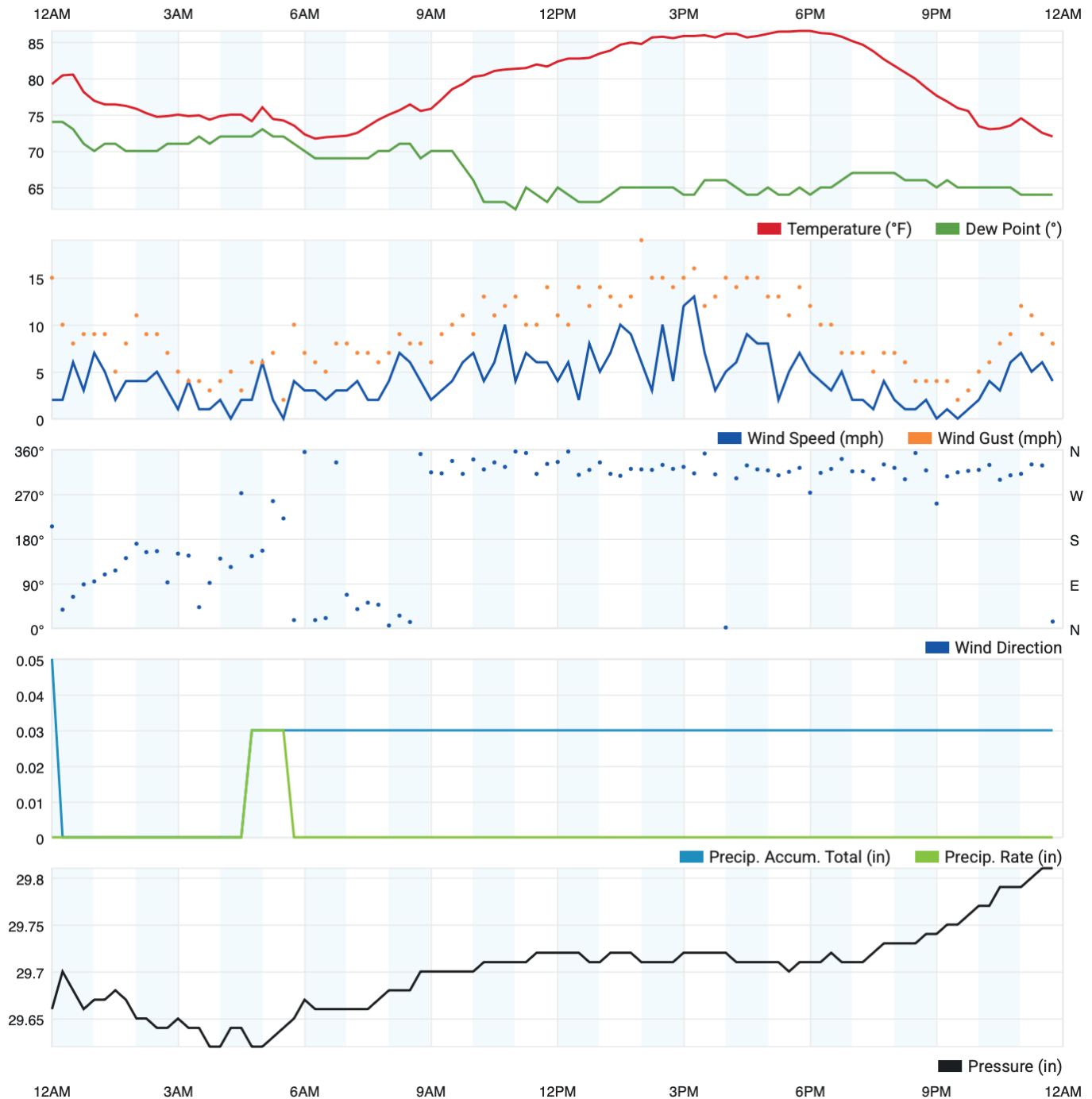
David Lightman has been a reporter or editor for more than 50 years. He's worked for the Hagerstown (Md.) Morning Herald, Riverside (Calif.) Press Enterprise, and then 10 years at the Baltimore Evening Sun, covering local news and, for six years, state government and the legislature. He spent 23 years as the Hartford Courant's Washington Bureau Chief, and 18 years at McClatchy's Washington bureau, where he covered the White House and Congress. He also served as regional editor, supervising the bureau's seven regional reporters. He was president of Washington's Gridiron Club in 2018 and won the David Lynch award for regional reporting in 2007.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

July 20, 2026



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Today



High: 81 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 55 °F

Partly Cloudy

Wednesday



High: 82 °F

Mostly Sunny

Wednesday
Night



Low: 59 °F

Mostly Clear

Thursday



High: 85 °F

Mostly Sunny

Cooler, Chances for Rain

Today July 21, 2026 Wednesday July 22, 2026 Thursday July 23, 2026



77 to 84°



78 to 85°



80 to 87°

40 - 60% chance of rain from Pierre south late tonight through mid morning Wednesday.

20 - 40% chance of rain mainly west of the James Valley Thursday afternoon and evening.

July 21, 2026

3:05 AM



Highs will be seasonable through the middle of the week, generally in the upper 70s to 80s. A few scattered chances for rain move in Wednesday and Thursday with a quarter inch or less expected each day where the rain falls.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 87 °F at 5:34 PM

Low Temp: 72 °F at 6:13 AM

Wind: 20 mph at 1:59 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 106 in 1899

Record Low: 41 in 1902

Average High: 85

Average Low: 60

Average Precip in July.: 2.27

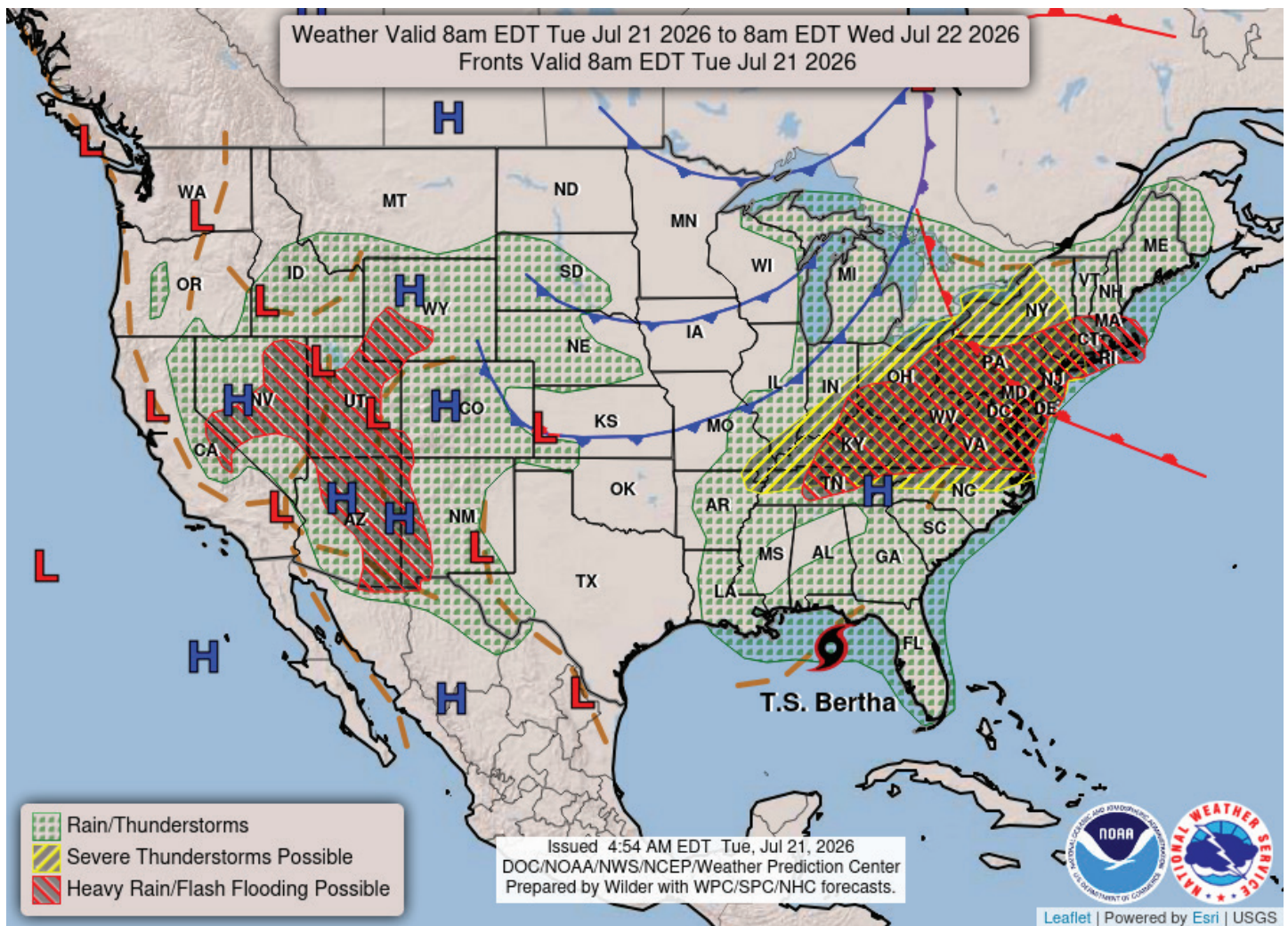
Precip to date in July.: 4.77

Average Precip to date: 13.28

Precip Year to Date: 14.24

Sunset Tonight: 9:13 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:05 am



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Today in Weather History

July 21, 1940: From near Miller, an estimated F2 tornado moved southeast, destroying a barn, garage, and two windmills.

July 21, 2000: 3.25-inch hail was reported near Okcreek in northeastern Todd County.

1911 — The temperature at Painter, WY, dipped to 10 degrees to equal the record low for July for the continental U.S. (The Weather Channel)

1934 — The temperature reached 109 degrees at Cincinnati, OH, to cap their hottest summer of record. The state record for Ohio was established that day with a reading of 113 degrees near the town of Gallopis. (David Ludlum)

1975 — Six inches of rain fell across Mercer County, NJ, in just ten hours causing the worst flooding in twenty years. Assunpink Creek crested eleven feet above flood stage at Hamilton and Trenton, the highest level of record. Traffic was brought to a standstill, and railway service between New York City and Washington D.C. was cut off for two days. Flooding left 1000 persons homeless, and caused an estimated 25 million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1983: At Vostok Station in Antarctica, the temperature dropped to 128.6 degrees below zero. This reading is the coldest temperature ever recorded.

1987: An F4 tornado ravages the Teton Wilderness and Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming. The tornado's violent winds destroy millions of trees on a 24.3-mile track that traverses the Continental Divide at an elevation of 10,170 feet.

1987 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather from Utah to North Dakota, spawning a dozen tornadoes in North Dakota. Thunderstorms in North Dakota also produced baseball size hail at Clifford which caused four million dollars damage, and high winds which toppled a couple of eighty foot towers cutting off power to the town of Blanchard. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — While cool air invaded the central U.S., unseasonably hot weather continued over the western states. The temperature at Spring Valley, NV, soared from a morning low of 35 degrees to an afternoon high of 95 degrees. Fallon, NV, reported an all-time record high of 108 degrees, and Death Valley, CA, reported their sixth straight day of 120 degree heat. (The Weather Channel) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Afternoon thunderstorms over Florida produced wind gusts to 92 mph at Jacksonville, damaging thirteen light planes at Herlong Field. Five cities in Texas reported record low temperatures for the date. Corpus Christi, TX, equalled their record low for the date with a reading of 71 degrees, and then tied their record high for the date that afternoon with a reading of 97 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



Courage in the Lonely Hour

The loneliest moments often become opportunities to experience God's presence in a deeper way.

Deuteronomy 31:6-8: 6 "Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you."

7 Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance.

8 "The LORD is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."

Loneliness is one of the most isolating, painful feelings people face. God designed us for connection, both with Him and with others. From the very beginning, He said it was not good for man to be alone (Genesis 2:18).

Yet even the most faithful believers face seasons of loneliness. Picture Elijah standing alone on Mount Sinai after fleeing for his life (1 Kings 19:9-10) or Jesus praying alone in the garden while His disciples slept nearby (Matthew 26:36-46). These moments weren't failures of faith—they were simply part of the human experience.

When loneliness settles over us, it's easy to believe we've been forgotten or abandoned. But God promises, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). His presence doesn't depend on our feelings or circumstances. He is with us in the crowded room and in the empty house, in seasons of rich community and in times when we feel utterly alone.

Loneliness can drive us to despair, or it can become an invitation to experience God's nearness in a deeper way. In those quiet moments, we can bring our need directly to Him and discover that His companionship is real, present, and enough.

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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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.20.26

3 20 23 24 44 1

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 46 Mins 41 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.17.26

22 34 45 48 55 14

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$707,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 31 Mins 41 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.20.26

23 31 34 37 52 7

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,050,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 46 Mins 41 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.18.26

1 13 27 28 29

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 1 Mins 41 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.20.26

15 21 39 54 67 7

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 30 Mins 41 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.20.26

2 9 44 53 59 8

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$567,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 30 Mins 41 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

US strikes Iran for 10th consecutive night as Tehran strikes tanker in the Strait of Hormuz

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran attacked a tanker in the Strait of Hormuz early Tuesday, forcing its crew to abandon the ship, while the United States conducted yet another round of airstrikes targeting the Islamic Republic as they struggle over control of the key waterway.

The 10 consecutive nights of U.S. airstrikes haven't compelled Tehran to loosen its grip on the strait, through which about a fifth of all crude oil and natural gas traded once passed in peacetime.

Even as the U.S. and Iran inch closer to all-out war again, Iran's interior minister traveled to Pakistan, a key mediator in the conflict, for talks. However, it remains unclear just what new deal could be reached to end the fighting.

The interim deal signed last month that was meant to end the fighting has crumbled. Shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has largely stalled. And as fighting intensifies, both sides have targeted civilian infrastructure relied on by millions of people.

"Iran and groups supportive of Iran may target other U.S. interests overseas or at locations associated with the United States and Americans throughout the world," the U.S. State Department said in a new warning to Americans.

The escalation has pushed oil prices higher in recent weeks. Benchmark Brent crude traded Tuesday above \$88 a barrel and regular gasoline in the U.S. climbed to an average of \$4 a gallon, keeping pressure on Americans' wallets ahead of midterm elections this fall.

Meanwhile, the U.S. military identified two soldiers who were killed in Jordan in attacks that left a third person missing. Separately, the military confirmed another death in Iraq on Saturday during the "controlled detonation" of a downed Iranian drone. President Donald Trump took to social media on Monday to warn that "Every time Iran kills an American Soldier they will pay for that killing many times over!"

Trump was planning to attend a ceremony on Tuesday evening at Dover Air Force Base, where at least one service member's remains were due to arrive.

US strikes come as ships attacked

The U.S. military's Central Command said Tuesday it targeted "Iranian military command centers, maritime capabilities, missile and drone launch sites and air defense systems." It released more footage of bombings that targeted sites in Iran.

"American forces remain postured and prepared to hold Iran accountable for unwarranted aggression toward civilian mariners seeking to freely and openly transit the strait," the command said.

Iranian state media reported that explosions were heard in Fars, Hormozgan, Ilam, Kerman and Sistan and Baluchistan provinces.

However, traffic through the strait has slowed to a crawl during the latest violence. Lloyd's List Intelligence said only three ships transited the strait on Sunday.

The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said a tanker came under attack early Tuesday in the strait off Oman, forcing the crew to abandon the vessel.

Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard claimed the attack, as well as two other attacks on ships Monday in the waterway.

The route around Oman has been the one the U.S. military has encouraged ships to travel to avoid Iran's control. The UKMTO separately reported Tuesday that another previously unknown attack on a ship took place early the previous day.

Tehran also hit U.S.-allied countries throughout the Middle East. Jordan military's said Tuesday that Iran targeted it with five drones and three missiles, all of which were shot down.

Nearly 100 US injuries since early July

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The Pentagon's chief spokesperson said nearly 100 U.S. service members have been injured since the U.S. restarted strikes on July 7, and 96% of them have returned to duty.

"The vast majority of injuries experienced were minor concussions," Sean Parnell posted Monday on X in response to a New York Times report that the Pentagon has withheld information about troop injuries from Iranian strikes. He denied that the Pentagon was hiding data about injuries.

However, the Defense Casualty Analysis System, the military's clearinghouse for reporting deaths and injuries in conflict, has not been updated as of Monday night with the latest attacks.

Yemen rebels threaten attacks on other Mideast waterway

Yemen's Houthi rebels announced a maritime embargo against Saudi Arabia on Monday. The Houthis, who are backed by Iran, said they would block shipping between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden by targeting the Bab el-Mandeb, a maritime chokepoint like the Strait of Hormuz, in response to an attack on Sanaa International Airport last week that they blamed on Saudi Arabia.

With the Strait of Hormuz blocked, Saudi Arabia has been relying on a pipeline to the Red Sea to get millions of barrels of oil out to market. The Houthis earlier demonstrated their ability to disrupt shipping there when they targeted ships for months over the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, with over 100 vessels attacked.

Saudi Arabia's military said it would keep the waterway open.

"All Houthi threats against transiting vessels will be dealt with swiftly and firmly, as such threats are a blatant violation of international law and fall under acts of maritime piracy," said Maj. Gen. Turki al-Malki, a Saudi military spokesman.

A glimmer of hope for diplomacy

Pakistan has intensified diplomatic efforts in recent days to resuscitate the interim deal.

Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni arrived in Islamabad on Monday for two days of talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and others.

On Sunday, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio told reporters that the U.S. is still open to negotiating with Iran but that "it has to be real."

"If the door opens to diplomacy — if the guys that want to do something productive for Iran win and take control of that system, or take control of the negotiations — that'll be a very positive development," Rubio said. "That's not where we are tonight, unfortunately."

Iranian authorities on Sunday said at least 50 people have been killed and 517 wounded in the latest rounds of U.S. strikes. Since the war began on Feb. 28, 17 U.S. service members have been killed.

Lebanon's president will meet with Trump in Washington to push for Israeli troop withdrawal

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon's president will meet with U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday to wrap up a four-day visit to Washington, in a bid to bring about long-term calm in the war-torn country after months of war between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group.

Joseph Aoun's landmark meeting with Trump comes as Lebanon and Israel continue to hold rare direct talks mediated by Washington. Lebanon hopes they will result in Israeli troops withdrawing from large swaths of southern Lebanon that they currently occupy, and for the Lebanese military to receive support to assert full control in areas where Hezbollah militants had held sway.

Lebanon and Israel announced a "framework agreement" on June 26, setting a plan for Israeli forces to withdraw from southern Lebanon as well as the disarmament of Hezbollah, which for decades had a strong presence in the area. It also lays out steps toward an eventual peace agreement between both countries, which have never held formal diplomatic ties and have been nominally in a state of war for nearly 80 years after Israel's establishment.

The U.S. State Department announced Monday that operations in three villages deemed part of a "pilot zone" had begun, without giving details on what that entailed. Two of the three villages, Froun and Srifa, are not under Israeli military control and the Lebanese army is present there, while Israeli forces are in

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part of Zawtar al-Gharbieh.

The Lebanese army in a statement said it was preparing for Israel to withdraw from Zawtar al-Gharbieh and that it had begun deploying troops to the area Tuesday. The Israeli military said it "will adjust its force posture in one of the pilot areas in order to enable the Lebanese Armed Forces to carry out their mission," without specifying the location.

An Israeli military official, speaking on condition of anonymity in accordance with military guidelines said Tuesday that the withdrawal had not yet begun.

Village mayor waiting for safety to be confirmed

Abed Ezzeldine, Mayor of Zawtar al-Gharbieh said that they are waiting for the Lebanese military to tell him whether its safe for residents to check on their homes after they fully deploy and patrol the area. He is concerned about the safety of his village given that the Israeli military is still present in another village next door, while Israeli strikes continue nearby.

"The villages are intertwined, so we don't feel safe because the Israelis are present there, they're on our borders and are not very far from us," Ezzeldine told The Associated Press, who said Zawtar al-Gharbieh is uninhabitable.

"Once the army gives us permission to enter Zawtar al-Gharbieh, we as civilians will go in, but only to check it out and see how things are and then we will leave," he said. "We can't stay because the infrastructure is completely damaged and houses have been leveled. They (the Israelis) have bulldozed the roads."

Rubio says US will continue to support framework agreement

Aoun met with Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Sunday, who said Washington will continue to endorse the Lebanese agreement and support the agreement's full implementation. Rubio described the meeting as "very positive" and warned that Lebanon will "never be fully at peace" as long as the Hezbollah issue is not resolved.

"How do you replace Hezbollah? You defeat and replace them with a government that is strong enough to be the sole force of arms in the country," Rubio said after the meeting. Skeptics in Lebanon fear that a military confrontation with Hezbollah could lead to a civil war, as government officials have also urged for investment into the country's battered infrastructure to empower the weakened state, which Rubio echoed.

"This is not just about military stuff," he added. "This is about how can we attract more U.S. and international investment into Lebanon."

The Lebanese military last week increased its presence in some of the areas expected to be included in the pilot zone, including the three villages, with troops patrolling and setting up checkpoints. Though recent talks in Rome have signaled that the agreement's implementation will begin soon, Israeli troops have not withdrawn from the areas under control.

Israeli officials, meanwhile, have said they plan to keep forces long term in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah has dismissed the direct talks brokered by the United States and instead backed Washington's talks with their key ally and patron Iran to end their war, which also includes ending the war in Lebanon as a condition to bring back calm.

Lebanon's government came to power on a reformist platform in early 2025, vowing to disarm all non-state groups including Hezbollah. It blames Hezbollah for dragging the country into another war with Israel in March when the militant group fired several rockets toward northern Israel after the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran.

Beirut's leadership, however, has condemned Israel's subsequent ground invasion and massive aerial campaign in the country, which killed over 4,000 people and displaced 1.2 million others. While grappling with stark political opposition from Hezbollah and allies within the deeply divided country, Lebanon's leadership insists that Israeli withdrawal and international financial support for Lebanon's cash-strapped army is crucial for a sustainable security solution.

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Israel is building a miles-long earthen barrier inside Gaza, entrenching its division

By LEE KEATH and JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — The Israeli military is quietly but quickly building a giant earthen barrier separating the over 50% of the Gaza Strip it controls from the rest of the territory, according to satellite imagery, further entrenching the division of the tiny Palestinian enclave.

More than 23 kilometers (14 miles) have been constructed in recent months, running through Palestinian communities demolished by the military. That is equivalent to more than half the length of the coastal strip, which is some 40 kilometers (25 miles) long and 11 kilometers (7 miles) wide, and home to over 2 million Palestinians.

When presented with the satellite images, Israel's military confirmed to The Associated Press it has built a physical barrier in the area of the so-called yellow line, the boundary to which Israeli troops withdrew under the October ceasefire deal with Hamas. The line was envisioned in the U.S.-backed agreement as a temporary division of the territory pending a fuller Israeli withdrawal.

But as the truce stagnates, it appears Israel is digging in, heightening Palestinian fears that the line is morphing into a border. Neither U.S. Central Command, which is tasked with monitoring the ceasefire, nor the Board of Peace, the body led by U.S. President Donald Trump meant to eventually oversee Gaza, would comment on the barrier.

Along with the barrier, the military told AP it has developed a "security zone" around the line, equipped with intelligence and technological assets. It declined to give details on the route of the barrier when asked how far it would be extended. It said the barrier aimed to prevent infiltration and protect Israeli troops and Israeli communities near Gaza.

Construction of the barrier is proceeding rapidly

Since the ceasefire deal took hold, Palestinians in Gaza have feared Israel would not return the area of Gaza it controls. But few appear to be aware of the berms now being built around them — because of the danger of even approaching that area.

A portion of the berm network in southern Gaza was extended by more than 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) in two weeks this month, according to the satellite images provided by Planet Labs PBC.

The berm was about 500 meters (0.3 miles) long on July 1. By July 15, it was about 2.4 kilometers (1.5 miles), splicing the Israel-controlled ruins of the city of Rafah from Muwasi, site of some of the largest Palestinian tent camps.

If construction continues in its current direction, it will join up with the longest stretch of the barrier, which runs nearly unbroken for around 17 kilometers (10 miles) from the southern city of Khan Younis to near Gaza City, in the north.

Construction began on that stretch in February, and it appears work to extend it further south is continuing, according to the satellite images. More than a kilometer (0.6 miles) was added between June 21 and July 7, running close to an Israeli military base built on the ruins of the town of Bani Suheila, near Khan Younis.

In the far north of Gaza, several unconnected stretches of berms run just outside the largely leveled town of Beit Lahia.

The height of the berms in each place remains unclear. In some places, the barriers appear to run outside the yellow line.

Israel has mostly destroyed and depopulated the half of Gaza it controls

Gaza's population has been crowded into the coastal area west of the yellow line, most living in squalid tent camps and dependent on aid.

On the other side of the line, satellite imagery shows that Israeli forces have leveled the vast majority of buildings using bulldozers and explosives, virtually erasing several towns and Rafah, once home to more than a quarter million people.

They have carved new road networks and erected new bases on the ruins of Palestinian towns. Agricul-

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tural land has also been destroyed. The Israeli military says it is demolishing infrastructure used by Hamas.

The yellow line was never precisely defined, whether in the ceasefire deal or by Israeli or U.S. officials, and it has been inconsistently marked on the ground. The military told AP it is working to clearly mark the route of the yellow line to "reduce friction and prevent harm to uninvolved individuals."

Israeli forces have killed Palestinians who came close to the line or crossed it. The Israeli military says it fires on those believed to be militants threatening its troops. But those killed have included children and other civilians seemingly unaware of the line. Some soldiers have said they don't always know who they are firing on and have orders to kill anyone crossing the boundary.

Israeli strikes have killed hundreds of Palestinians since the ceasefire

Israeli forces have killed more than 1,100 Palestinians since the ceasefire began, most in airstrikes and drone strikes around Gaza. The Israeli military says it is targeting militants. Militant attacks have killed five Israeli soldiers in the same period.

Under the ceasefire deal, Israel is eventually supposed to withdraw its troops further to the very edges of Gaza, to be replaced by an international security force. But implementation of the deal has been stalled for months.

A former U.N. diplomat now in charge of coordinating the ceasefire has blamed Hamas' failure to disarm. Sporadic talks to reach a formula for decommissioning its weapons appear to have made little progress, and Hamas accuses Israel in turn of violating the ceasefire.

The war began after Hamas-led militants attacked Israeli communities on Oct. 7, 2023, killing around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking 251 others hostage. Israel responded with a punishing military offensive that has killed more than 73,000 people, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

The ministry, which was part of the recently dissolved Hamas-run government, maintains detailed records viewed as generally reliable by U.N. agencies and international organizations. It does not distinguish between civilians and militants but says women and children make up around half of all fatalities.

Another tanker attacked in Strait of Hormuz as US strikes Iran for 10th consecutive night

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran attacked a tanker in the Strait of Hormuz early Tuesday, forcing its crew to abandon the ship even as the United States conducted yet-another round of airstrikes targeting the Islamic Republic over control of the key waterway.

The 10 consecutive nights of U.S. airstrikes haven't compelled Tehran to loosen its grip on the strait, through which about a fifth of all crude oil and natural gas traded once passed in peacetime.

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Meanwhile, the U.S. military identified two soldiers who were killed in Jordan in attacks that left a third person missing. Separately, the military confirmed another death in Iraq on Saturday during the "controlled detonation" of a downed Iranian drone. President Donald Trump took to social media on Monday to warn

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Kuwait said its air defenses fired at an incoming barrage, and Jordan's armed forces said Monday evening they had shot down three Iranian missiles, adding that there had been no material damage or casualties. Bahrain's Foreign Ministry condemned Iranian drone strikes targeting the country's air traffic systems, saying they endanger travel for civilians.

Nearly 100 US injuries since early July

The Pentagon's chief spokesman said nearly 100 U.S. service members have been injured since the U.S. restarted strikes on July 7, and 96% of them have returned to duty.

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The Tate brothers fight extradition to the UK where they face rape and sex trafficking charges

By DAVID FISCHER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Social media influencers Andrew and Tristan Tate will fight extradition to the United Kingdom, where the brothers are accused of rape and sex trafficking, their lawyer said Monday, suggesting their arrest in Miami was politically motivated without explaining why.

The Tates appeared in federal court Monday for the first time since their arrest on Saturday and are being held in federal detention. In the coming weeks, a U.S. district judge will consider whether they meet the conditions for extradition. U.S. Magistrate Lauren Louis set another hearing for July 27.

In court documents unsealed Monday, U.S. prosecutors described allegations from the United Kingdom against the brothers involving three victims. One woman accused Tristan Tate of rape and assault during a long-term relationship with him beginning in 2012, including when she was unconscious, reporting him to U.K. authorities multiple times. Two other women, one who met Andrew Tate through a webcam business and another through a dating app, also accused him of rape and assault in 2014 and 2015.

The brothers, through their social media empire promoting wealth, male dominance and misogyny, are among the world's most polarizing internet personalities.

Normally photographed in tailored suits and fitted shirts, they wore tan jail uniforms and handcuffs during Monday's brief hearing. Neither brother said a word.

Their attorney, Joseph McBride, insisted they should remain in the U.S.

"We are of course objecting to extradition because Andrew and Tristan are innocent," McBride said after the hearing. "They've never done nothing wrong. They shouldn't be extradited for crimes they did not commit."

The brothers were surprised when they were arrested, McBride said, adding that the attempt to have them extradited was politically motivated. "There's no question about it," he told reporters.

He suggested the Tates' case "had a lot to do with" former British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's decision to step down, without providing any details, and said it was no coincidence that the brothers were arrested after meeting "friends in Washington, D.C."

"We went to see our Congress people in D.C. and now we're getting arrested. This feels political," McBride said. He didn't specify who the pair met with or what was discussed.

On Sunday, McBride said he was confident the extradition request would be denied.

Prosecutors in Britain said the new charges relate to four new victims and were brought after authorities received evidence from Bedfordshire Police in southeastern England. The allegations, spanning 2010 to 2017, include rape, assault, trafficking and offenses relating to "indecent images of a child and extreme pornography."

McBride said none of the latest accusers have been identified, adding "we'd like to know who's accused Andrew and Tristan of what."

The brothers are already charged with rape, bodily harm, human trafficking and controlling prostitution for gain relating to three other alleged victims in the U.K. between 2012 and 2015.

Their lawyer said in a statement Saturday that he believed the arrests were "greenlighted by a low-level functionary" at the Justice Department without input from leadership. The Justice Department told The Associated Press that the arrests were approved by leadership of its Criminal Division.

The new allegations are the latest in a long-running international legal saga involving the Tates that has spanned the U.S., Britain and Romania. The brothers have repeatedly denied wrongdoing.

The dual U.S. and British citizens moved to Romania in 2016. They were arrested there in 2022, accused of participating in schemes to lure women for sexual exploitation. They denied those allegations and the Romanian case hasn't gone forward because of legal and procedural problems.

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Last year, they were allowed to leave Romania and flew to Florida.

The former professional kickboxers have millions of followers on social media and are vocal supporters of President Donald Trump.

Andrew Tate, 39, first became known a decade ago when he was a contestant on the U.K. reality television show "Big Brother." He was booted from the show when a video appeared to show him assaulting a woman.

He has amassed over 10 million followers on X but has been banned from other platforms for violating hate speech guidelines, including YouTube, TikTok and Instagram. He has made widely condemned comments, such as saying women who are sexually assaulted should bear some responsibility for the attacks and sharing graphic descriptions of how he might attack women.

The Tate brothers have consistently denied allegations of abuse and human trafficking, claiming their violent and misogynistic statements have been taken out of context or were intended as jokes.

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5 dead in attempt to save a struggling swimmer in an Ohio river, sheriff says

POWELL, Ohio (AP) — Five people have died on a river in Ohio after several of them went into the water to help another person who was struggling to swim, authorities said Monday.

The group had gathered Sunday along the Scioto River in the Columbus suburb of Powell when one of them went into the river for a swim. "That's when the tragedy started to occur," Delaware County Sheriff Jeffrey Balzer said at a news conference. He said others who jumped in to help also began struggling.

A motorist called 911 after spotting a frightened child with the group who was running along a nearby road to seek help, Balzer said.

Rescue crews searching the water later Sunday found two women who were pronounced dead at a hospital, Balzer said. The bodies of three men were found in the river on Monday, said Tracy Whited, a spokesperson for the Delaware County Sheriff's Office. Authorities did not say exactly where the victims were found.

The river was running high and fast on Sunday, according to data from a U.S. Geological Survey water gauge at the nearby dam. The data shows the water was flowing at a rate of about 350 cubic feet (10 cubic meters) per second on Sunday — more than a fourfold increase over a three-day span, and more than double the average rate.

The tragedy occurred two days after five people were killed in southern Utah after a flash flood swept through scenic red rock canyons during a hiking excursion.

The Ohio sheriff said the child who ran for help, prompting the 911 call, has been placed in the care of family services along with another child under the age of 10. Authorities were working on notifying relatives of the victims, he said.

Balzer said people who gather near water must be aware of the conditions and take precautions.

"Know your skill level before you get in the water. Are you a confident swimmer?" Balzer said. "Make sure you have other people around in case something goes wrong to notify someone."

Road deaths have declined globally since 1990 except in poorer countries, study finds

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Road deaths are declining in the U.S. and worldwide, but lower-income countries aren't experiencing much of the improvement, according to a study published Monday.

Global rates of road injuries and deaths each fell more than 30% between 1990 and 2023, according to the study published in *Lancet Public Health*, which noted the progress varied from country to country.

Pedestrian and vehicle occupant deaths rose over that time in six countries — including the United States. However, more recent data shows road deaths fell in the U.S. in 2024 and 2025.

The World Health Organization put out its own numbers Monday, finding that road traffic deaths declined by 21% between 2011 and 2025. However, traffic crashes still claimed more than 1.1 million lives last year, and they remain the leading cause of death among children and youth aged 5 to 29 years, the WHO said.

Road deaths involve fatal injuries that happen to pedestrians, cyclists and people riding in cars, trucks and other vehicles. Complete data is lacking in some countries, so the researchers behind the new report made estimates based on what data is available.

The researchers, from the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, found that road injury rates are higher in high-income countries, but 90% of road deaths occur in low-income countries.

In many low-income countries, safety measures have not kept up with rapid growth in cities and use of motorized vehicles. For example, seat belt mandates are more common in high-income countries, as are car safety features such as air bags.

"Road injury outcomes are shaped not only by crashes, but by the systems designed to prevent them and protect people when they occur," said Liane Ong, the new paper's senior author, in a statement.

However, there have been conflicting trends in the U.S., including the proliferation of taller and larger passenger vehicles, the authors wrote. U.S. officials also have said thousands of deaths each year can be attributed to "distracted driving," including drivers looking at their phones.

In the U.S., motor vehicle traffic fatalities rose in the last decade and peaked at more than 43,000 in 2021 before beginning to decline, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The agency estimated the count fell to about 36,600 last year.

Meanwhile, the Governors Highway Safety Association recently reported that U.S. drivers hit and killed 7% fewer people walking on U.S. roads in 2025 compared with the year before. It was the largest annual reduction since pedestrian deaths began falling three years ago, but it was still higher than what the numbers were before the COVID-19 pandemic.

The WHO identified road safety as an international public health priority more than two decades ago. The *Lancet* report's release coincides with the start of a two-day United Nations high-level meeting on improving global road safety, being held in New York City.

How Spain built a soccer identity that conquered the world

By TALES AZZONI AP Sports Writer

Spanish soccer has reached a level of its own.

Spain's World Cup victory on Sunday added to the nation's long list of recent triumphs across men's, women's and youth competitions, highlighting the dominance of a system that has stuck to a tactical identity and the development of collective talent.

The men's team is also the current European champion, the Olympic gold medalist and has reached the Nations League final twice — winning it once. The women's squad is the defending World Cup champion and a two-time Women's Nations League winner. It also made it to the final of the 2025 European Championship.

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Spain is the first nation to hold both the men's and women's World Cup titles at the same time and is the only country with two men's World Cup triumphs this century. The nation also has won several youth tournaments in recent years with both the men's and women's teams.

The men's senior squad has been racking up titles since it was gradually revamped after the demise of a golden generation that won the nation's first World Cup in 2010 with the likes of Andrés Iniesta, Xavi Hernández, Sergio Ramos and Gerard Piqué.

Players such as Lamine Yamal, Pau Cubarsí, Rodri and Ferran Torres — the goal scorer in the 1-0 win over Argentina in Sunday's final — now are the ones representing a new generation that has taken La Roja back to the top.

"I'm very emotional looking back," Spain coach Luis de la Fuente said. "We've talked about it with the players; we have won everything, it's wonderful ... It's a generation of players that has been an example for Spanish sports, for young Spaniards, for Spain. Together we are stronger."

Spain hadn't gone past the last 16 of the men's World Cup since winning the title in South Africa in 2010. It has been in contention in nearly every competition it has played since De la Fuente's arrival in 2022 and its 38-match unbeaten streak is the longest in men's international soccer.

Collective talent

Despite a very talented group of players, it has been Spain's collective performance that has impressed the most and the team hasn't had to rely on star players. It also has been thriving defensively, with a solid backline and a relentless pursuit to regain possession.

"We played against the best national squads in the world, but we were the best team in the world," De la Fuente said. "I'm very proud of this generation of players. They have grown with this idea, they've been loyal to this idea, they have given us an example of a group, of a team, of a family. I'm very proud of them. It's been an honor."

How can other teams possibly replicate the Spanish system?

"Go to work," former France player Thierry Henry, a commentator for Fox Sports, said after the final. "Think about how you want to go about it at every level and play the same way. This is why they are dominating world football on every level, men and women, it doesn't really matter, they go about it the same way."

Youth-system success

The recent wave of success can be tracked to the surprise hiring of De la Fuente to replace Luis Enrique following the team's elimination against Morocco in the round of 16 of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. De la Fuente was relatively unknown at the time, but the Spanish soccer federation knew him well.

By hiring him, Spain was actually betting on its youth system as De la Fuente had been coaching Spain's younger national teams for some time.

He was well versed in the soccer federation's process of instilling a tactical identity at all levels, from the bottom up and across men's and women's squads, allowing players from youth teams to go through a seamless transition to the main squads.

It was the case for players such as Yamal, Cubarsí, Nico Williams, Pedri and Gavi, who are among the youngsters set to keep Spain's men's team thriving for some time.

"When you look at everything that we've gone through, you realize how this process was important," De la Fuente said. "Certainly, we wouldn't have been able to do what we did today if we hadn't gone through this process with these players. And it's not something that happened during this World Cup, it has been happening for several years."

Tactical identity

Spain's "tiki-taka" style of valuing ball possession and focusing on quick passing, which led to the 2010 World Cup title and victories at Euro 2008 and Euro 2012, had come under attack after the national team began to struggle.

Some said the style lacked efficiency, and a few coaches made some changes to it over time. But Spain never fully abandoned the idea of controlling ball possession to dominate games.

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Part of De la Fuente's success stemmed from his ability to get his squad to successfully mix ball possession and efficiency. And it showed as Spain led this year's World Cup in both passing and attempts on goal.

Coaching prowess

De la Fuente's recent success quickly put him in the group of Spanish coaches who have been leading national teams and helping clubs thrive across the globe.

Pep Guardiola, Luis Enrique, Mikel Arteta, Unai Emery, Xabi Alonso and Roberto Martínez are among the successful coaches spreading Spanish tactics everywhere — another sign of the nation's prominence in global soccer.

"We are exactly where we want to be," De la Fuente said. "We are privileged to represent a wonderful national team with exceptional players. But the real merit we have is to seek good travel companions, people with values and principles who make our lives easier and at the same time are very talented. We'll enjoy this now, because it's historic, and then we will start thinking match by match again."

Judge says Paramount and Warner must halt merger for at least two weeks, granting states' request

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A federal judge on Monday ordered Paramount and Warner Bros. Discovery to halt their \$81 billion merger for at least two weeks, allowing states that are challenging the deal more time to see their case through in court.

Twelve states, led by California, sued to block Paramount's pending buyout of Warner last week — alleging that such a combination would "extinguish competition" in Hollywood and lead to fewer choices for consumers, particularly moviegoers and cable customers across the U.S.

The states' top prosecutors called on Warner and Paramount to not close the transaction until after a court had time to fully evaluate their claims. And when the companies refused, they filed for a temporary restraining order — which is what District Judge Araceli Martínez-Olguín granted on Monday. That opens the door to a potential preliminary injunction that the states are also seeking to effectively block the deal.

"This is a critical first win in our case to ensure this megamerger never sees the light of day," California Attorney General Rob Bonta said in a statement Monday. "History tells the tale of what happens when a few people have great power over markets that are central to Americans' lives: fewer opportunities for more people, worse products and services for all people."

A Warner-Paramount tie-up would bring together two of the five last legacy studios in Hollywood — as well as a host of TV networks, titles filling streaming libraries and news operations. Warner's HBO Max, fan favorites like "Harry Potter" and even CNN would come under the same roof of Paramount-owned CBS, movies like "Top Gun" and the Paramount+ streaming service.

Paramount, which was bought out by Skydance just last year, has vowed to vigorously defend its acquisition — and touts regulatory greenlights the deal has received elsewhere, including from President Donald Trump's administration last month.

On Monday, Paramount said the states' antitrust arguments "are without merit" or "any basis in modern market realities" — and maintained that its merger with Warner will benefit consumers and workers alike. Timing for next steps also falls in line with the company's previous requests.

Deal is paused for at least two weeks

The temporary restraining order granted Monday halts the deal from progressing for at least 14 days, although the pause could be extended for up to 28 days. The court has set Aug. 3 as a date for a hearing on the states' preliminary injunction motion, but that schedule could also be pushed back.

The clock is ticking. Ahead of Monday's decision, the companies proposed wrapping up a preliminary injunction hearing by the end of August, leaving time to make a possible appeal by Sept. 30 — a date on the top of Paramount's mind because it's pledged to pay shareholders added "ticking fee" compensation amounting to about \$7 million per day if the deal isn't closed by then.

But the states called such a timeline unprecedented and unfair. They maintain that payments Paramount

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might have to incur after Sept. 30 were the risk of a decision the company made on its own — and argued in a hearing held Friday that commencing a trial in April 2027 would allow enough time for discovery and presenting proper evidence.

Including billions of dollars in debt, Paramount's proposed purchase of Warner is currently valued at nearly \$111 billion based on outstanding shares.

What the states are challenging

Paramount has repeatedly pointed to tech and streaming companies' growing reach across the entertainment industry — and argues that merging with Warner would particularly help it compete with bigger rivals like Netflix. Last week, it said the states' challenge would help shield Netflix and others "who have harmed the market for theatrical exhibition" from meaningful competition.

The states' case doesn't focus on streaming. It alleges that a combined Paramount-Warner merger violates federal antitrust law because of what the companies' combined reach would become across three markets: theatrical movie distribution, theater releases of bigger blockbusters and the licensing of basic cable channels.

Their complaint says a combined Paramount-Warner could control nearly a third of both the theatrical film distribution market as well as basic cable programming. The states argued this would create a "media behemoth" with enough power to both raise prices for consumers and threaten workers' wages, while reducing production and quality of content.

In terms of movie theater releases, Paramount's lawyers have pointed to a growing list of blockbuster hits from studios that are not in Hollywood's "big five," such as A24 and Amazon's MGM. The states maintain the core legacy studios — which beyond Warner and Paramount include Disney, Universal and Sony — still make up the vast majority of the market.

Beyond California, states challenging the deal include Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon and Washington.

Other regulatory clearances

Outside of the U.S., Paramount has touted greenlights from regulators in countries like China, Canada and Australia. But regulatory reviews are also ongoing in the European Union and the U.K., which has separately suggested it may intervene.

Meanwhile, the Writers Guild of America has filed its own lawsuit seeking to block the merger. And Paramount faces additional legal fights, including from a shareholder accusing CEO David Ellison and his father Larry Ellison (who is putting up tens of billions of dollars to back the deal for his son's company) of promising "illegal, private benefits" to Trump in order to get the merger through.

Paramount has repeatedly dismissed such accusations, and the U.S. Justice Department maintained its review was not political.

Still, politics have come into question throughout Paramount's quest for Warner. Beyond Trump's relationship with the Ellison family, critics of the deal also stress what new ownership could mean for Warner assets like CNN — a network that has long attracted ire from the Republican president — particularly in light of editorial turmoil at Paramount-owned CBS since Skydance's takeover.

The contrast between the 12 states' complaint, brought forth by all Democratic attorneys general, and the federal government's blessing only underlines all of that further.

"It's a political merger. It's the product of the president's engagement in private business affairs," New York Attorney General Letitia James said in a webinar about the states' case last week. She maintained the states had been successful in challenging the Trump administration before and "we're not finished yet."

Trial begins for Massachusetts mom who says postpartum issues led her to kill 3 children

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

Jury selection began Monday in the trial of a Massachusetts mother who strangled her three children while undergoing medical treatment for psychiatric problems that developed after she gave birth.

The trial of Lindsay Clancy, which could take several weeks, is expected to explore the complicated and rare phenomenon of postpartum psychosis, which afflicts a very small percentage of women who develop delusions and sometimes hallucinations after childbirth.

Five jurors were selected Monday. A total of 18 jurors, including six alternates, will be chosen for the trial.

Clancy's lawyers — and her husband — say she was not responsible for her actions. Defense attorney Kevin Reddington doesn't dispute that she killed the children, but plans to raise an insanity defense.

"This whole case is an extreme tragedy," he said.

Prosecutors say the killings were intentional and well planned, not the work of someone who had lost control.

Clancy, a former labor and delivery nurse at Massachusetts General Hospital, has pleaded not guilty to murder charges in the deaths of her children Cora, 5, Dawson, 3, and Callan, 8 months, when they were killed on Jan. 24, 2023.

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

On the day of the killings, Clancy, now 36, asked her husband Patrick Clancy to leave their home to get takeout food and to pick up something at a pharmacy. She strangled the children with exercise bands, then used multiple methods to try to end her own life.

She was paralyzed after falling from the home's second-story window, and is being held at a state hospital.

Clancy's husband is on the list of witnesses for both the prosecution and the defense. He has said in interviews that he forgives his wife.

Eighteen jurors, including six alternates, are expected to be chosen over several days for the trial in Plymouth, which is near the family's home in Duxbury, an upscale coastal suburb about 30 miles (48 kilometers) south of Boston.

Clancy and her husband filed lawsuits earlier this year accusing her medical providers of failing to properly diagnose, treat and monitor her for a "severe postpartum psychiatric condition." She spent several days at a psychiatric hospital weeks before the killings.

Lindsay Clancy's lawsuit detailed how she was depressed, had trouble sleeping and repeatedly heard voices urging her to harm her children and herself.

"Lindsay Clancy did everything a mother in her situation could do," the lawsuit said. "She recognized something was wrong with her. She sought medical treatment. She went to emergency rooms. She called crisis hotlines. She admitted herself to hospitals. She took the medication prescribed to her. She communicated her worsening symptoms to her providers. She told them the medications were making her worse."

The day of the killings, Clancy said she heard voices saying, "This is your last chance. Kill the children so you can kill yourself." A voice told her "that her children would suffer if she was gone," according to the lawsuit filed by Patrick Clancy, citing medical records.

In a post on GoFundMe several days after the killings, Patrick Clancy wrote that the "shock and pain is excruciating and relentless," but he urged the public to see Lindsay Clancy as he did before the killings.

"The real Lindsay was generously loving and caring toward everyone — me, our kids, family, friends, and her patients. The very fibers of her soul are loving. All I wish for her now is that she can somehow find peace," it said.

Los Angeles medical examiner pushes for greater transparency in high-profile deaths

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Autopsy reports rarely come with barbed comments. So eyebrows rose when the autopsy results of 14-year-old Celeste Rivas Hernandez were released with a statement from the Los Angeles County chief medical examiner saying it was “unfathomable” her grieving parents had to wait months to learn how their daughter died.

The autopsy performed on the dismembered body found in a Tesla in the Hollywood Hills had been sealed by a court order in the investigation that led to murder charges for singer D4vd. Dr. Odey Ukpo’s comment with the report was his most pointed effort yet to emphasize his office’s independence from police and prosecutors, as well as his desire to make as much death information public as soon as possible.

D4vd, who has pleaded not guilty, this week faces a crucial preliminary hearing to determine whether there is enough evidence for a trial. Ukpo’s agency, which determined Rivas Hernandez died from stab wounds, plays a major role, as it has in other prominent cases, including following the death of “Friends” star Matthew Perry and the killings of director Rob Reiner and his wife, photographer Michele Singer Reiner.

Ukpo, 46, sat for a recent interview with The Associated Press in the building where he performed autopsies for nearly a decade before getting the head role in 2023. He has always welcomed the celebrity cases that Los Angeles brings, saying the scrutiny they receive and the likelihood of misinformation spreading are strong incentives to do careful, irrefutable work. And they provide an opportunity to show what his office does and what kind of dangers the community may face.

“I should be able to anticipate the strongest arguments or the most interesting questions by the work that I’ve done,” he said. “If I haven’t, then something’s missing.”

“Life is complicated, but death is simple,” Ukpo said.

The medical examiner pushes back on police secrecy

Ukpo doesn’t believe sealing autopsy reports helps police investigations, including in the killing of Celeste.

“That goes completely against our mission,” he said. “It’s so important for us to release the information that she did not die from something natural, she did not die from drugs, she was stabbed. And then we start to look back at what made her vulnerable to be in that situation.”

A court-ordered security hold still seals the Reiner autopsies. Authorities said immediately after their deaths that they had been stabbed by their son, who has pleaded not guilty, but little information has followed. Ukpo said he would discuss the findings — if he was allowed.

“The Reiners’ case is one that’s straightforward,” he said. “It’s unclear to me what sort of information we have that would ruin the case.”

Sometimes there is no good reason for secrecy, he said.

“People say: ‘Why would they get the information out there? Because then the case is just going to go away.’ But away? How? What information?” he said, adding: “The killer knows what they did.”

The LA County Sheriff’s Department said in a statement that security holds “are rarely requested and are carefully reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine whether temporarily withholding the autopsy report is necessary to preserve sensitive investigative information.” It said the reports can contain details “that only the person responsible would know,” meaning detectives can use that knowledge to assess the credibility of witness statements and uncover false confessions.

The Los Angeles Police Department, which handled the D4vd and Reiner cases, did not respond to a request for comment, and the district attorney’s office declined comment.

A change to his title underscores Ukpo’s independence

Ukpo was appointed chief medical examiner-coroner in 2023, becoming the agency’s first Black leader since it was founded in 1850. His staff responds to more than 12,000 sudden, unexpected and premature deaths per year.

The “coroner” part of his title was dropped soon after his appointment and Ukpo supported that change, saying a coroner is usually an elected official — often also the county sheriff — but not a doctor.

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"Coroner' just kind of confused our purpose and suggested that we were within a law enforcement agency," Ukpo said. "It's so important to establish our independence."

Andrew Bernstein, a longtime New York criminal defense attorney who is not involved in any of Ukpo's cases, said "buddy-buddy" relationships can easily develop between medical examiners and law enforcement.

"They're dealing with the cops all the time," he said. "They're using the same language."

That relationship can hurt a prosecutor's case, he said, because "jurors pick up on that all the time" and may perceive a testifying medical examiner as biased.

But, Bernstein said, "you don't want so much independence" that the medical examiner makes decisions regardless of the wants and needs of police and prosecutors.

"You don't want a rock star chief medical examiner," he said.

Dr. Michelle A. Jordan, president of the National Association of Medical Examiners, told the AP in an email that the organization supports Ukpo's "determination to maintain his office's independence from law enforcement" and the authority of forensic pathologists to "provide transparent postmortem assessments and accurate death investigations" that are "free from undue influence."

How he decided to make autopsies his life's work

At age 6, Ukpo — who grew up in Anaheim not far from Disneyland — had wanted to be a homicide detective.

But when he met his family physician, he "thought it was really cool how he would work with his hands, do dirty work, work with blood" but "could be very professional in his office, in a suit, in a tie."

"There you go, that's the formula for a forensic pathologist," he said.

Very few medical students want to make autopsies their life's work. He said with a laugh that declaring his intentions "made for interesting medical school interviews."

His education included stints at Loyola University in Chicago, at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and with the medical examiner in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Celebrity autopsies hold meaning beyond LA County

Ukpo performed autopsies on rapper Mac Miller, actor Tommy Lister Jr., and model and actor Kim Porter, the former longtime partner of Sean "Diddy" Combs.

Perry died within months of Ukpo getting the top job, and his office determined the primary cause of death was acute ketamine toxicity.

"Matthew Perry was really an important one to notify people that ketamine is not harmless," he said.

He said this and all his work is driven by his desire to first and foremost serve the public.

"What I'm trying to shift during my leadership here is to try to focus on community first," he said. "Death doesn't just happen for the family, for the individual. When a death happens, it reverberates."

Nolan Wells remembered for his gentle spirit as Rev. Al Sharpton demands truth about his death

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ and STEPHEN SMITH Associated Press

OCEAN SPRINGS, Miss. (AP) — Family members and supporters of Nolan Xavier Wells filled a Mississippi church Monday to mourn and celebrate the 18-year-old, as the Rev. Al Sharpton pleaded for new evidence addressing the "many unanswered questions" around the teenager's July 4 disappearance.

The funeral opened with tearful remarks from Wells' parents, who described their son as a warm and gentle presence, a role model to his younger siblings and a gifted athlete with NFL ambitions.

"He had a way of making people feel seen, welcomed and valued," said his mother, Christine Wonsley. "He could lift your confidence with just a few words and make you feel like you belong."

In a fiery eulogy, Sharpton then promised a \$100,000 reward for any new information about the circumstances around Wells' death, which came following a boat trip with friends to Horn Island, off the Gulf Coast.

Half of the sum will be covered by the actor and producer Tyler Perry, who also paid for the funeral, Sharpton noted.

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"Somebody knows something," Sharpton continued, drawing applause from the crowd that included the director Spike Lee, former NFL player Terrell Owens and many prominent Black clergy.

"Let every stone be rolled back and every veil be torn asunder and let truth pop out of the ground like a flower," he continued.

Wells, who was Black, had traveled to Horn Island — a popular Fourth of July destination — with a group of friends from high school, all of whom are white. He did not return with them to the mainland that evening, officials said. His body was found two days later off the island's coast.

Jackson County Sheriff John Ledbetter said initial interviews suggested Wells chose to stay on the island and that his friends believed he would get a ride with someone else. The friends were cooperating with investigators, according to the sheriff.

But the still-unknown circumstances leading to Wells' disappearance have fueled rampant online speculation and galvanized leaders in the Black community, including some who have expressed skepticism about the independence and transparency of the investigation.

In his eulogy, Sharpton urged those following the case to withhold judgement until more information becomes available. But he also questioned why Wells' phone and keys were found with his friends, why they had not immediately called police after realizing he was missing and why local officials appeared so quick to dismiss the possibility of foul play.

Invoking the history of racist violence in Mississippi, including the lynching of Emmett Till and assassination of Medgar Evers, Sharpton continued, addressing the state's law enforcement authorities: "Before we can medicate and heal today, we've got to look at your history."

The family's attorney, Ben Crump, then led the crowd in a chant of "Nolan's life mattered," as Wells' mother sobbed into the shoulder of her husband, Elmore Wonsley.

At a news conference following the funeral, Crump said they were still waiting on the results of an independent autopsy. The official autopsy has also not been released.

Crump had said he is working alongside the local prosecutor to inspect Wells' phone. The prosecutor has agreed to present the results of the investigation to a grand jury once it is completed, according to Crump.

"They went out on the boat, the boat came back, and Nolan washed up on the shore two days later dead," he said at the funeral Monday. "Wouldn't you want answers?"

Wells, who would have turned 19 next month, played wide receiver on the football team at Southwest Mississippi Community College in Summit, Mississippi, and had aspirations of playing at a high-level Division I program.

At the funeral, Wells' father, Elmore Wonsley, recalled the hours the two spent studying game tape and running drills on the beach.

"I nicknamed you Mr. Cool Hands because it seemed like you were catching a touchdown every game," the father said through tears.

"Our son meant a lot to a lot of people," he concluded. "Today shows us how much he meant to the community, the country and the world."

Darline Graham says she will run for a full term in Lindsey Graham's Senate seat

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Sen. Darline Graham said Monday she's running for a full term to replace her late brother Lindsey Graham's Senate seat.

"I've made a decision," Darline Graham told Fox News Channel host Sean Hannity, according to a clip released of an interview set to air later Monday. "I'm in."

The entrance of Darline Graham — sworn in last week to fulfill the remaining months of her late brother's term, which expires in January — into the Republican scramble to select a new Senate nominee further complicates an already rushed process following Lindsey Graham's death earlier this month.

A weeklong filing period opens Tuesday for the special Republican primary, which will be Aug. 11. On

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Friday, President Donald Trump said that Darline Graham had his "Complete and Total Endorsement" to seek the nomination, adding, "RUN, DARLINE, RUN!"

Last week, Gov. Henry McMaster appointed Darline Graham to serve the remainder of her brother's term, which ends in January. In his announcement, McMaster made no reference to Darline Graham as a placeholder or symbolic appointment, although a person familiar with McMaster's thinking but unauthorized to speak publicly said the governor, in selecting Darline Graham, had never contemplated that she would run for the seat herself.

Before the emergence of Darline Graham — and their Oval Office meeting after she was sworn in — Trump had previously suggested he could back a potential candidacy from Rep. Russell Fry, who said Monday he would officially enter the special primary.

Several other noteworthy politicians, including Rep. Ralph Norman, have already gotten in, and others like Lt. Gov. Pamela Evette have been eyeing a run. Rep. Nancy Mace announced Monday she would not enter the contest.

Darline Graham told Hannity said she had been "praying a lot" about how to navigate her new role.

"It is a tremendous amount of pressure," she said.

"I know I'm a hard worker. I learned that from Lindsey," Darline Graham said. "I feel like I can do it. I feel an inner peace about it. Will it be difficult? Yes."

Funeral services for Lindsey Graham are scheduled to be held next week in Washington and South Carolina. A preliminary report from the medical examiner said he suffered a tear in his aorta.

The millions in Lindsey Graham's campaign account aren't funds that Darline Graham could directly access in a run of her own, according to Bradley A. Smith, a former chairman of the Federal Election Commission.

Under federal rules, Lindsey Graham's campaign would be limited to transferring just \$2,000 to a potential Darline Graham candidacy. However, Smith said there is no limit on how much it could transfer to the National Republican Senatorial Committee, which could — thanks to a Supreme Court decision last month — "spend an unlimited amount in coordination with Darline's campaign."

FDA still focused on lettuce supplier as source of parasite, despite faulty test result

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal health officials said Monday they remain focused on lettuce from Taylor Farms as the source of a multistate outbreak of a diarrhea-causing parasite, despite inaccurate test results that the government briefly publicized over the weekend.

Food and Drug Administration officials on Monday said a laboratory test incorrectly identified a positive result for cyclospora on a sample of lettuce from Taylor Farms. The FDA posted the finding to its website on Saturday but then said Sunday that the result had been a false positive.

Federal and state authorities have been investigating a rise in cases of the parasite, initially linking the outbreak in five states to lettuce served at Taco Bell locations. On Saturday, Taylor Farms announced it was recalling 25 shredded lettuce and salad mix products sold under eight different brand codes. The products are used by a number of U.S. food chains and suppliers.

"FDA's traceback investigation and the outbreak data continue to converge on shredded iceberg lettuce from Taylor Farms' locations in central Mexico," FDA's acting food chief, Donald Prater, told reporters on Monday.

In addition to tracing the supply chain of lettuce, FDA staff have begun testing samples of produce coming across the U.S. border.

FDA officials on Monday said the false positive result came from a rapid test used to screen for traces of cyclospora. The sample that initially appeared positive for the parasite came from Taylor Farms but was not part of the company's lettuce recall. FDA officials said they felt compelled to alert the public to the finding.

But a subsequent quality control check showed the positive finding was an error. FDA officials notified Taylor Farms of that on Sunday.

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The company touted the updated test results on social media and claimed "FDA apologized to us." Agency officials said there was no official apology.

Cyclospora is a microscopic parasite that infects food that has come into contact with human feces, most commonly when produce is irrigated or washed with contaminated water. When ingested, the parasite causes intestinal illness marked by "frequent and sometimes explosive bowel movements," according to the CDC.

In 2026, cyclospora has sickened at least 1,645 people in the U.S. and hospitalized 141, according to the FDA and CDC. The agencies are investigating five separate clusters of illnesses, including the one traced to Taylor Farms.

FDA's acting commissioner, Kyle Diamantas, said health officials have continued to see new cases associated with the latest outbreak, including some as recent as last week.

"Which means it's imperative for us to take action to ensure that contaminated product is not making its way to the market," Diamantas explained.

As of Friday, foot traffic was down at a number of dining chains compared with the day-of-the-week averages between Jan. 1 and July 6, according to Placer.ai, which tracks people's movements based on cellphone usage.

Taco Bell suffered the biggest drop — an 18.9% decline — after federal health officials named the chain in its investigation of the cyclosporiasis outbreak. Foot traffic fell 14.3% at Chopt, Placer.ai said. Both Chipotle and Panera Bread had close to a 7% drop in traffic, while Cava's drop was less — at 4.2% — according to the firm.

Food safety investigators often cannot draw a direct biological connection between recalled produce and outbreaks of foodborne illness. Some common tests used to check for food poisoning have not been geared to detect cyclospora. Technicians aren't able to grow the parasite in labs, making it hard to draw evidence from contaminated produce.

Instead, investigators draw conclusions based on accounts of what people ate, the proximity and timing of cases and other patterns.

What to know about the Tate brothers, social media influencers facing rape and trafficking charges

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Influencer brothers Andrew and Tristan Tate appeared before a federal magistrate Monday in Miami for the first time since prosecutors in the United Kingdom brought new rape and sex trafficking charges against them.

Their lawyer said the brothers will fight extradition to the U.K. and suggested their arrest in Miami was politically motivated without explaining why.

A U.S. district judge will consider in the weeks ahead whether they meet the conditions for extradition. U.S. Magistrate Lauren Louis set another hearing for July 27. The brothers have denied wrongdoing.

Here are some things to know about the Tate brothers:

Who the Tate Brothers are

Andrew Tate, 39, and Tristan Tate, 38, are dual U.S.-British citizens known for their social media empire promoting wealth, male dominance and misogyny.

Andrew Tate is a former professional kickboxer and self-described misogynist who has amassed more than 10 million followers, most of them boys and young men, on X. He has been banned from platforms like YouTube, TikTok and Instagram for violating hate speech guidelines.

He also runs an online academy where he says he teaches young men how to get rich and attract women. Tristan Tate is also a former kickboxer.

The brothers are avid supporters of U.S. President Donald Trump.

What the Tates are charged with

Andrew Tate and his brother have faced multiple charges in the U.K. and Romania, where they lived

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from 2016 to 2025.

British prosecutors said the new charges relate to alleged offenses that took place between 2010 and 2017. They said Andrew Tate was charged with seven further counts of rape, three counts of arranging or facilitating trafficking for sexual exploitation, three counts of assault and 19 charges for offenses relating to indecent images of a child and extreme pornography.

Tristan Tate was charged with one count of sexual assault, two counts of rape and three counts of arranging or facilitating sex trafficking.

The Crown Prosecution Service said in a statement it "has requested the extradition of the Tates from the U.S. They have been arrested and await extradition proceedings to the U.K."

The Tates already face previous charges of rape, bodily harm, human trafficking and controlling prostitution for gain relating to three other alleged victims in the U.K. between 2012 and 2015.

In June, a U.K. High Court judge threw out a legal bid by the Tates to be told the names of their accusers.

In Romania, the siblings were arrested in late 2022 along with two Romanian women. The four were accused of participating in criminal schemes to lure women for sexual exploitation. They denied those allegations and the Romanian case hasn't gone forward because of legal and procedural problems.

The case hasn't been closed, and there is also a separate legal case against the brothers in Romania.

Andrew Tate has repeatedly claimed that prosecutors in Romania have no evidence against him and that there is a political conspiracy to silence him.

How the extradition process could work

The brothers appeared Monday before a magistrate judge in Miami, where they were being held in federal detention. Bail is rarely granted to those held for international extradition, and their lawyer said he expects they will remain jailed for the time being.

In the coming weeks, a U.S. district judge will consider whether they meet the conditions for extradition.

The ultimate decision about whether to order the extradition will fall to U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio. While the State Department has some discretion to deny extradition requests from the U.K., it has granted nearly every British request since ratifying a strengthened extradition treaty in 2007.

One exception came during Trump's first term, when the U.S. declined an extradition request for the wife of a former American diplomat involved in a fatal crash in England, citing diplomatic immunity. The rejection prompted an international outcry.

Why the Tates were in the U.S.

British police previously sought the Tates' extradition to the U.K. once their legal proceedings in Romania concluded.

But in February 2025 they were allowed to leave Romania after authorities lifted travel restrictions, and they flew to Florida on a private jet.

Romania's foreign minister said at the time that a U.S. official in the Trump administration had expressed interest in the brothers' legal case in Romania.

Trump said he knew "nothing about" the case when asked if his administration pressured the Romania government to release the Tates.

Andy Burnham becomes the UK's seventh prime minister in a decade after Starmer resigns

By JILL LAWLESS and BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Andy Burnham took office Monday as Britain's new prime minister, promising a 10-year plan to restore political stability and revive the economy while acknowledging that six other U.K. leaders have tried and failed to do so in the past decade.

Speaking outside 10 Downing St. minutes after being formally appointed by King Charles III, Burnham pledged to ease the cost of living for ordinary people, decentralize political power, revitalize industry and end street sleeping by homeless people. He said he would deliver a "circuit breaker" for a system that

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has taken wrong turns since the 1980s, when public services and utilities were privatized and local government eroded.

"We will take power out of here and carry it into every postcode in the land so that they can do more and in doing more, build a new economy where we put life's essentials back under stronger public control to make them affordable to you again," he said.

Burnham said he was "acutely conscious" of the political revolving door he was walking through.

"This is a moment for reflection and new resolution," he said. "It requires my generation of politicians to raise our game and rise to the new challenge. Britain needs to show the world that we can regain our stability once again, and that is our challenge to make politics work, to make it work better."

One of Burnham's biggest tasks on his first day was to appoint a Cabinet. The key post of chancellor of the exchequer went to John Healey, the former defense secretary who quit the previous government a few weeks ago over funding plans for his department. His appointment as Treasury chief was a surprise.

Healey replaces Rachel Reeves, the architect of much of the economic agenda of Burnham's predecessor, Keir Starmer, as well as some of the missteps that ate away at his support. Others leaving the Cabinet included David Lammy, who was deputy prime minister.

Energy Secretary Ed Miliband was given the role of foreign secretary. He replaces Yvette Cooper, who was appointed health secretary, a demotion but a hugely important post for the Labour Party's reelection prospects. Shabana Mahmood remains as home secretary. The full Cabinet meets Tuesday.

Party changed leaders in midterm

Burnham became the seventh U.K. prime minister since 2016 in a now well-rehearsed handover after replacing Starmer as leader of the center-left governing Labour Party on Friday. Starmer announced last month that he would resign.

Starmer left office just two years after winning a landslide election victory, forced out by his own party after a series of missteps and U-turns.

Britain's parliamentary democracy allows governing parties to change leaders, and thus prime ministers, without the need for a general election. The next national poll does not have to be held until 2029, though Burnham can call one sooner if he wants.

Burnham was the only candidate in a contest to become the party's new leader, securing nominations from 379 of the 403 Labour lawmakers in the House of Commons.

He will confront many of the same struggles as his predecessor: a sluggish economy, a cost-of-living crisis, overstretched public services, concerns about migration and foreign affairs that include wars in Ukraine and the Middle East.

He will also try to navigate relations with U.S. President Donald Trump, who first warmed to, then soured on, Starmer. Burnham's office said the prime minister spoke to Trump on Monday afternoon and "underlined his commitment to defense and security."

The new leader pledges a new style of politics

The former mayor of Greater Manchester previously pledged to make politics "less toxic," improve living standards across the country and "bring back the hope we have all been missing."

Burnham said he will set out a 10-year plan for Britain later this year. Before that, he will lay out first steps "to give people some breathing space now, some help with the cost of living."

"And I will set out some of those measures starting tomorrow, including how we pay for them," he said.

After his speech, he told reporters that he has "always taken a very prudent approach" to the economy in previous jobs, and will not take any economic risks now.

Tim Bale, professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London, said Labour had backed Burnham "to inject a sense of positivity, of hope, of purpose, a sense of direction."

Burnham says "he is going to mark a big break, not just with Keir Starmer, but also with what he regards as four decades of the country going in the wrong direction," Bale said. "But quite what that means in terms of concrete policies, in terms how much he's going to spend and on what, and how much is going to tax ... we're not sure yet."

Starmer exits early but says his job was done

In the rapid-fire world of British political transitions, Burnham entered Downing Street only minutes after Starmer left.

"I go with good grace. I go with a smile, and I go proud of everything that we have achieved," Starmer said before heading to Buckingham Palace to offer his resignation to the king. It was an offer the king "was graciously pleased to accept," the palace said in a statement.

Starmer became Labour leader in 2020 after one of the party's worst election defeats, and he led Labour to a landslide victory four years later. But he was soon defeated by the challenges of governing.

"It has been the privilege of my life to serve you and this great country as prime minister," Starmer said before leaving Downing Street, hand-in-hand with his wife, Victoria. "I am confident that Britain is now stronger and fairer than it was two years ago."

British prosecutors charge a man with murder in the death of former politician Ann Widdecombe

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British prosecutors charged a 28-year-old man with murder Monday in the death of former politician and reality TV contestant Ann Widdecombe.

Joshua Kerry was charged after more than a week in custody on suspicion of murder and acts of terror. Police are continuing to investigate his motive, including a potential political or terrorist connection, prosecutors said.

The death of Widdecombe, 78, a former member of Parliament, shocked the British political world, where Widdecombe was a prominent voice for decades. She was a blunt-speaking character known for socially conservative views opposing abortion and the expansion of LGBTQ+ rights.

Police said they believe Widdecombe was attacked July 8. She failed to appear that afternoon for a scheduled TV interview and was found dead the next day in her isolated rural home in a southwest England village.

Police did not disclose a cause of death, saying only that she had sustained "serious injuries" in what they called a targeted and brutal attack.

"I want to make it very clear that our investigation into this individual, determining his motivations and any wider activity he may have been involved in is continuing," said Laurence Taylor, head of counter-terrorism policing.

"Given Ann Widdecombe's profile and the targeted nature of the attack, determining the motivation, including any possible political motivation, remains an active avenue of investigation for our detectives," he said.

Taylor added that the investigation is intensive and complex, and detectives were working through more than 800 lines of inquiry.

Kerry was arrested July 11 in South Yorkshire county in northern England, more than 200 miles (320 kilometers) from the village of Haytor on the edge of Dartmoor National Park, where Widdecombe was found dead Thursday.

Kerry remains in custody and is scheduled to appear in Westminster Magistrates' Court on Tuesday.

He was originally arrested on suspicion of murder, but after finding new evidence while he was custody, he was rearrested on suspicion of commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism.

Widdecombe was in the House of Commons from 1987 to 2010, serving in roles including prisons minister in Prime Minister John Major's 1990s Conservative government.

She found fame after leaving Parliament as a contestant on the reality television shows "Strictly Come Dancing" and "Celebrity Big Brother."

She later joined the Brexit Party, briefly serving as a member of the European Parliament before Britain left the European Union in 2020. Most recently, she joined the anti-immigration Reform UK party, often appearing in the media as a spokesperson.

The killing has renewed concerns for politicians about security, which was tightened in the past decade after the murders of two serving members of Parliament. Labour lawmaker Jo Cox was shot and stabbed in 2016 by a far-right extremist, and Conservative David Amess was stabbed in 2021 by an attacker inspired by the Islamic State group.

Senators demand ICE answers and body cameras after 2 fatal shootings in Maine and Houston

By REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Dozens of Democratic U.S. senators and the Independent senator from Maine pushed for more details Monday from Immigration and Customs Enforcement about the agency's vetting practices for new agents and how officers conduct vehicle pursuits, even as they demanded that body cameras be swiftly rolled out to all officers.

The demands came in a letter spearheaded by Maine's Independent Sen. Angus King, signed by 38 Democratic senators and sent to the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees ICE. The demands follow two deadly shootings in which ICE officers shot and killed immigrants in Houston and Maine.

The Associated Press reported last week that the ICE officer in Maine who opened fire and killed a man from Colombia had a history of violent behavior toward family members that was detailed in family court records.

His first ex-wife, Ashley Brouillette, told AP he was physically violent with her, including once throwing boiling water at her while she was holding their child.

His second ex-wife, Lucinda Brouillette, sent a statement over the weekend alleging "a persistent pattern of abuse, intimidation, manipulation, fear, and control."

"Throughout our marriage and in the years that followed, I have feared for a long time that his anger, aggression, and escalating behavior would eventually result in severe, life threatening violence, and I often believed I would be the one on the receiving end of it," she wrote.

Hundreds of pages of family court documents describe their turbulent marriage, and the years after. Lucinda Brouillette told the court he had stalked and harassed her and physically and verbally abused his daughter, according to multiple requests for temporary protection orders. Brouillette tackled his teenage daughter and smashed spaghetti in her hair, and during another outburst, he dragged his daughter around the house as she cried, she said.

"Dave needs counseling or something for his PTSD & depression," she wrote in an application for a temporary protective order on behalf of his teenage daughter which a judge granted in 2021.

In court filings, David Brouillette said that his second ex-wife had slandered him.

Multiple family members told the AP the government should have never given him a gun, badge and the authority to patrol city streets as the Trump administration ramps up its mass deportation agenda.

The senators' letter on Monday listed new measures to increase accountability at the agency, including transparency about whether ICE considers records from family court of domestic violence or abuse when vetting new recruits.

"We remain supportive of removing dangerous convicted criminals from our communities, but this goal can and must be achieved without endangering these very communities in the process. By no stretch could either of the victims in Texas and Maine be characterized as 'the worst of the worst,' making these tragic deaths even more egregious," the senators wrote. "The American people deserve clarity and accountability."

They said ICE should immediately start wearing uniforms or vests that clearly identify them as "ICE" instead of the more generic "POLICE" or "POLICE ICE." Civil rights groups and advocates have often criticized ICE for not wearing uniforms or clear identification on their ballistics vests identifying them as deportation officers.

Senators also demanded to know what changes were being made to how officers conduct traffic stops and vehicle pursuits.

The shootings in Maine and Houston both involved ICE officers shooting at people who were in vehicles

at the time. In the wake of the Maine shooting, Homeland Security temporarily stopped officers from conducting vehicle stops except in specific situations. But just a day later, after fierce criticism from some MAGA supporters, President Donald Trump said on social media that traffic stops should continue.

Homeland Security said last week that it was adding new training in crowd-control measures, high-risk vehicle stops, live-fire exercises and medical training, in response to what they called coordinated attacks against their officers and ICE facilities.

Ex-Mexican drug lord Ismael 'El Mayo' Zambada denounces violence as he's sentenced to life in prison

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Former Mexican drug kingpin Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada was sentenced in a U.S. court on Monday to life in prison and called for an end to the brand of brutal violence he used to grow the Sinaloa cartel into what prosecutors said was the world's largest drug trafficking organization.

"No one wins in a war like this," the 76-year-old Zambada said through a Spanish-language translator in Brooklyn federal court. He apologized "for the harm I caused and for the example I set." He urged future generations to "choose a different path."

"If there's one thing I can say that has value today, it's this: the violence must end," the Sinaloa cartel co-founder said. "In Mexico and elsewhere affected by this type of crime, too many lives are lost, too many families are destroyed, and too many young people are trapped in a cycle that leads only to prison or death."

Violence was Zambada's "tool for more than three decades when it benefited him," Assistant U.S. Attorney Adam Amir said.

Zambada ordered torture and plotted murders — including his own nephew's killing — as the cartel flooded the U.S. with tons of cocaine, fentanyl, methamphetamine and other drugs, Amir said.

More than a million Americans died of overdoses during Zambada's reign — many from drugs flowing from Mexico or the Sinaloa cartel, the prosecutor added.

Zambada's punishment was guaranteed by his guilty plea last year to drug trafficking charges that carry a mandatory life sentence. He also faces \$15 billion in financial penalties related to proceeds from the cartel's crimes, but prosecutors said they haven't been able to identify or recover any assets.

"The sentence here is kind of anticlimactic because I have no discretion," Judge Brian M. Cogan said. "He is going to spend the rest of his days in prison. He accepts that."

His sentencing was the culmination of the U.S. government's yearslong fight to bring the long-elusive drug lord to justice. He was arrested in 2024 after he said he was kidnapped in Mexico and flown to Texas.

Zambada "spent nearly four decades poisoning American communities to make billions of dollars in profit and ordering the murders of anyone who stood in his way," Brooklyn U.S. Attorney Joseph Nocella Jr. said. "Today, that chapter closes for good."

Judge says Zambada should go to a prison hospital

Cogan, acting on a defense request, said he will recommend that Zambada serve his sentence at a federal prison hospital where he can be treated for what his lawyer described as a "complex of age-related health issues."

The judge ordered Zambada's medical records sealed from public view but said he suffers from a number of "progressive illnesses" and that his mental state is "drifting toward cognitively impaired," Cogan said.

Judges often make recommendations about where inmates should serve time, but it's up to the federal Bureau of Prisons to decide.

Zambada's lawyer, Frank Perez, stressed in court on Monday that he wasn't cooperating with prosecutors. But, in arguing to have him sent to a prison hospital, Perez contrasted Zambada's guilty plea and Guzmán's decision to go to trial — an 11-week ordeal that involved closing down the Brooklyn Bridge to shuttle him to and from court and jail.

In pleading guilty, Cogan said, Zambada "has spared us all an exercise that we all know would've been

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very difficult.”

Zambada, wearing a tan jail suit over an orange T-shirt, walked gingerly as deputy federal marshals escorted him to and from the courtroom, which was packed with drug enforcement agents and prosecution staff. The top federal prosecutors in Brooklyn, Miami and western Texas watched from the gallery.

At first, he said he had trouble hearing and understanding the courtroom translator and, through the translator, asked Cogan to speak slower. After an adjustment to his earpiece, Zambada indicated that he was able to follow along.

He read his remarks in Spanish from a piece of paper, coughed several times during the hearing and stared across the room, looking toward reporters and sketch artists in the jury box. He appeared to show no emotion as Cogan confirmed his sentence.

Zambada was the Sinaloa cartel’s strategist and dealmaker

Zambada was seen as the Sinaloa cartel’s strategist and dealmaker and was more involved in its day-to-day operations than his co-founder Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán, who was convicted in 2019 and is serving a life sentence at the federal Supermax prison in Florence, Colorado.

Zambada was arrested in July 2024 after, according to Perez, he was beaten, tied up, abducted and driven to a private plane by one of Guzmán’s sons, Joaquín Guzmán López. Their arrests touched off deadly fighting in Sinaloa that pitted Zambada’s loyalists against backers of Guzmán’s sons, dubbed the Chapitos, or “little Chapos.”

Zambada pleaded guilty in August 2025 to charges of engaging in a continuing criminal enterprise and racketeering conspiracy, acknowledging culpability for 85 underlying crimes, after prosecutors said they wouldn’t seek the death penalty.

In pleading guilty, Zambada said that from 1980 until last year, he and his cartel were responsible for transporting at least 1.5 million kilograms (3.3 million pounds) of cocaine, “most of which went to the United States.” Zambada, the father of 16 children ranging in age from 6 to 55, said he first got into the drug trade as a marijuana grower in 1969 after leaving school with a sixth-grade education.

He acknowledged the scope of the Sinaloa operation, including underlings who built relationships with Colombian cocaine producers, oversaw importing cocaine to Mexico by boat and plane and smuggling the drug across the U.S.-Mexico border. He said the cartel raked in hundreds of millions of dollars a year and admitted that people working for him paid hefty bribes to Mexican officials “so they could operate freely.”

Months before his arrest, prosecutors said, Zambada ordered the killing of his nephew Eliseo Imperial Castro, also known as “Cheyo Antrax,” after learning that Castro was claiming to be collecting debts for Zambada and pocketing the money without Zambada’s permission.

In 2023, at least three people were killed in retaliatory violence that Zambada directed after a large cache of fentanyl pills, methamphetamine and cocaine was stolen from the cartel, prosecutors said.

“I grew up in an environment where violence and crime seemed normal, but now I know that’s no excuse,” Zambada said in court on Monday. “There comes a time when every person must take responsibility for their decisions. I didn’t, and many people paid the price.”

The men behind Trump’s \$3.47 gas: An NFL coach, a GOP fundraiser and two New Jersey brothers

By BRIAN SLODYSKO, MICHAEL BIESECKER and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and his White House have enthusiastically promoted the Freedom Fuel Network, a chain of star-spangled convenience stores selling gas at \$3.47 per gallon in honor of the 47th president.

Untangling exactly who is behind the Philadelphia-area venture has proven difficult. Records indicate the chain, which was launched last month, is run by a disparate collection of businessmen that includes an NFL kicking coach, a GOP fundraiser and a New Jersey entrepreneur who this year was ordered, along with his brother, to pay civil damages for unlawfully taking more than 200,000 gallons of fuel.

How the stations got Trump’s attention remains a mystery, and the four businessmen declined to — or

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could not be reached for — comment.

What is clear: Trump loved the idea of cheaper gas. The president celebrated the network's gas prices just before the busy July 4th travel period as consumers were grappling with higher oil prices sparked by the war with Iran.

"I am pleased to announce that a VERY smart Retailer, located throughout the Northeast, is stepping up," Trump wrote about the company on his Truth Social platform on July 1. "America has never been stronger than it is now, and Gas Prices will soon be back to the Record Low Prices Americans enjoyed at the pump before our very successful 'excursion' in Iran."

The White House followed up with a post on X a few days later that heralded the opening of the first Freedom Fuel station and produced a video showing patrons waving wads of cash and thanking Trump for reducing the prices outside a store festooned with American flags and a golden eagle logo.

That station, located in Dresher, Pennsylvania, is owned by a subsidiary of Blue Owl Capital, an investment firm, records show. Trump has owned up to \$25 million worth of Blue Owl stock, though his most recent financial disclosure says he has sold almost all of that stake.

The White House denied Trump had any personal connection to the venture, but declined to say how the project was developed. It acknowledged having discussions with individuals who set up the network of gas stations.

"The Administration is not involved in the company, nor has the Administration given the company any funding. There is no other entity or person subsidizing the lower gasoline costs," the White House wrote in a statement.

Blue Owl owns about a third of the Freedom Fuel properties, though the company said it leases the stores to independent contractors and "is not involved in the tenant's operations or business decisions."

Fourteen stations in the 25-location network are controlled by companies linked to Shamikh and Syed Kazmi, two brothers who have been dogged by a string of civil misconduct accusations, including fraud, records show.

Shamikh Kazmi is leasing eight of those stations from Blue Owl, according to state records and people familiar with the businesses who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the matter. The Associated Press was able to link the brothers to six other Freedom Network locations through records that show they listed those stations' addresses as headquarters for other ventures or supplied those locations with fuel.

A White House official, who insisted on anonymity to discuss the project, said that no one at the White House who was in conversations with Freedom Fuel Network had specifically spoken or worked with Syed Kazmi, a claim that indicates discussions occurred with the other brother, Shamikh.

The Kazmis have marketed themselves as "top tier" petroleum distributors and gas station operators, with over 75 years of experience and a deep well of corporate affiliations, according to an archived version of the website for one of their companies.

Public records offer a more nuanced portrait, showing the Kazmis have been repeatedly sued by companies they had dealings with.

The brothers have legal issues

Legal filings detail a series of judgments against the Kazmis, who failed to comply with a court order and have been accused of obscuring their finances and dodging service processors as a growing list of former suppliers and franchisors sought payment.

In February, a federal judge in New Jersey ordered the Kazmis to pay over \$600,000 to a fuel supplier that accused the brothers of stealing gas. The supplier alleged in court filings that it cut the brothers off after they refused to sign a new contract. But the Kazmis exploited a security lapse and gained access to the supplier's fuel depot. Over a ten-day period in August 2021, tanker trucks absconded with more than 230,000 gallons of fuel, according to the supplier's court filings. A judge ruled in the supplier's favor, finding the brothers unlawfully took the gas.

The fuel supplier says it has yet to receive payment.

Syed Kazmi was hit with a \$380,000 judgment two years ago in a suit brought by 7-Eleven, the convenience chain, which accused him of "dishonest, unethical, immoral" conduct while operating a franchise

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in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, that was flagged for unsanitary conditions that included trash issues and a rodent infestation. The company also said "tens of thousands of dollars" of cigarettes ordered from 7-Eleven on credit had gone missing.

A federal judge held a company operated by Shamikh Kazmi in contempt in 2022 in a trademark case brought by BP America.

Though BP had severed ties with Kazmi's Diwan Petrol two years prior to the legal action, the corporation's signage had not been removed from the gas station despite a court order to do so. The judge authorized U.S. Marshals to accompany BP workers to remove it.

A man who answered a call to a number listed for the Kazmi brothers said he was not the right person to talk to and instead directed inquiries to the Freedom Fuel Network's website. But that website has no contact information, phone number or mailing address. A request for comment submitted through an online contact form was not answered.

Company formed in a state known for opacity

Records from Delaware, a state known for offering incorporators a large degree of opacity, show the Freedom Fuel Network was registered on June 23. The document forming the company was signed by Randy Brown and Yoni Gontownnik.

Politico and the website The Newsground reported that Brown is a senior special teams coach with the Baltimore Ravens. He has also served as the elected mayor of Evesham Township, a New Jersey suburb of Philadelphia, where a Freedom Fuel Network station is located.

Brown, a Republican, considered a run for Congress in 2021, telling a local newspaper he was a conservative and a "proud Trump supporter."

Gontownnik is a former investment director at Mercuria, a Swiss-owned commodities trading firm. He and his wife live in northern New Jersey and have been active with the pro-Israel political action committee NORPAC, including hosting fundraisers for Republican members of Congress.

Gontownnik and Brown did not respond to requests for comment.

Experts say gas likely sold for a loss

Jeff Lenard, a spokesman for the National Association of Convenience Stores, said Freedom Fuel's rock bottom promotional price meant the chain was likely selling the gas at a loss.

"It's not unusual for retailers to have prices that are different than a market when they're looking to make a splash," said Lenard, whose association's members account for most U.S. retail fuel sales, adding that such a splash typically lasts "a matter of hours or a matter of days."

Social media posts and gas-price checking websites show that the per-gallon rate advertised at Freedom Fuel locations began creeping up this week.

A Freedom Fuel station in Bensalem, Pennsylvania, for example, on Thursday was selling regular gasoline for \$3.82 a gallon. That was 27 cents cheaper than at a Sunoco station across the street.

The Freedom Fuel Network posted a note of thanks to its website this week, crediting Trump's "strong endorsement" for the "explosive growth" of their business.

"Despite the misinformation and baseless speculation circulating," the statement reads, "let us set the record straight: Freedom Fuel Network is proudly lowering its prices to benefit our community."

Ex-Olympian charged with damaging Reflecting Pool gets Sept. 28 trial date

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A judge in the nation's capital has set a trial date in September for a former Olympic canoe racer charged with deliberately damaging the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, the site of a troubled multimillion-dollar renovation project championed by President Donald Trump.

D.C. Superior Court Judge Todd Edelman scheduled the Sept. 28 trial date for David Hearn during a hearing on Monday. It was Hearn's second court appearance since a grand jury indicted him on a felony count of property destruction.

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Hearn, who pleaded not guilty to the charge on July 9, has asked the court to dismiss the case. In a court filing, his attorneys argued the government has failed to properly preserve important physical evidence from the Reflecting Pool.

At least three other people have been charged in the same court with misdemeanors for allegedly removing pieces of paint from the Reflecting Pool. The felony charge against Hearn, which accuses him of causing at least \$1,000 in damage to the pool, carries a maximum prison sentence of 10 years upon conviction.

Trump ordered the pool's renovation work ahead of the country's 250th independence celebrations, but the project has been plagued by problems. Trump initially suggested that pool renovations would cost \$1.5 million, but the cost of the project has exceeded \$16 million.

Trump, a Republican, has claimed that vandals have damaged the pool, but administration critics attribute the problems to shoddy repair work. Hearn and his supporters claim his prosecution is a politically motivated attempt by the Trump administration to deflect blame and scapegoat him and others for their own failures.

Workers recently drained the pool again, prompting Hearn's attorneys to argue that the government was destroying evidence of his innocence.

"The Constitution simply does not permit the government to charge a man with destroying an object, retain exclusive custody of that object, and then drain, disturb, and alter the object before the defense may examine it, despite a written demand for its preservation. And yet that is what has happened here," they wrote in their dismissal request.

Hearn, 67, previously told The Associated Press that he was detained by National Guard troops and U.S. Park Police for five hours after stopping by the pool during a bike ride on June 19. He said that he reached in to examine the pool's newly peeled coating and briefly touched a chunk attached to the side of the pool but that he obeyed a park worker who told him to let go of it.

Hearn, who's from Bethesda, Maryland, competed in three Summer Olympics, earning his best finish, ninth, at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee says on its website.

Ebola death toll in Congo rises to at least 930, including dozens of health workers

BUNIA, Congo (AP) — The death toll in Congo's Ebola outbreak has risen to at least 930, the country's Ministry of Health said on Monday, with 37 new deaths reported in a 24-hour span Friday into Saturday, one of the highest totals.

The deaths were recorded out of the 2,344 cases confirmed as of Saturday, the health ministry said.

The Ebola outbreak that was declared in eastern Congo on May 15 is the fastest-growing Ebola outbreak on record. The Bundibugyo virus responsible for the outbreak is less common than others that cause Ebola disease, and there is no approved vaccine or treatment.

Ebola is highly contagious and can be transmitted to people from wild animals. It spreads in the human population through contact with bodily fluids such as vomit, blood or semen, and with contaminated surfaces and materials such as bedding and clothing. The disease is rare but severe and often fatal.

The surge in deaths comes as safety fears have restricted the response in the worst-affected province of Ituri. A total of five provinces have been affected, all in the eastern region where rebel violence is rampant.

At least 12 attacks — mostly fueled by skepticism and rumors — have been recorded against health facilities and teams since the outbreak was declared in mid-May, authorities said Saturday. Many health workers meanwhile have walked off their jobs as they protest lack of payment.

At least 36 health workers infected with the virus have died.

The World Health Organization last week expressed concerns that 80% of new Ebola cases were emerging from unknown chains of transmission, a sign the outbreak is spreading faster than health officials can track despite an expanding response.

In the more than two months since the outbreak started, it recorded an average increase of about 272 cases and 111 deaths per week, according to data from Congo's Health Ministry. The data also show that

the weekly increases accelerated over time, particularly in July, when both reported cases and deaths rose more rapidly than in the earlier weeks.

The ministry's latest update said in its latest update that 724 patients are currently in isolation and in hospitals, and that it is intensifying response efforts in affected health zones.

"Patient care and support capacities are consolidating, with 22 new recoveries recorded in 24 hours," the ministry said.

Ukraine fires 400 drones toward Moscow as Zelenskyy grapples with protests

By The Associated Press undefined

Ukraine fired more than 400 drones toward Moscow in its latest major attack on the Russian capital, the city's mayor said Monday.

The blitz came hours after Russia bombarded Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities with ballistic missiles in a relentless cycle of tit-for-tat strikes that make a settlement to end Moscow's more than 4-year-old all-out invasion appear a distant possibility.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, meanwhile, said he would hold "key talks" Monday as he tries to defuse a domestic political crisis, after last week's government reshuffle exposed a deep split between the military's old guard and young innovators over how to fight the war.

Zelenskyy needs to reassure Ukrainians that sacrificing 35-year-old Mykhailo Fedorov as defense minister and keeping faith with 60-year-old Soviet-trained Gen. Oleksandr Syrskiy as armed forces chief won't derail the fight against Russia.

Days of street protests in favor of Fedorov and against Syrskiy followed Zelenskyy's move.

Ukraine hits another Russian oil depot

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyannin said over 400 Ukrainian drones were sent toward the Russian capital from late Sunday until early Monday, with most downed far from the city and 85 intercepted near it.

Moscow regional Gov. Andrei Vorobyov said 10 people were wounded by Ukrainian drones, while several residential buildings and civilian infrastructure facilities were damaged.

The attack started a fire at the Yuzhnye Vrata industrial park, about 30 kilometers (18 miles) south of Moscow, according to Yevgeniya Khrustaleva, the head of the Domodedovo area of the Moscow region.

The Astra news outlet reported the assault also caused a fire at an oil depot in Podolsk, about 20 kilometers (12 miles) south of Moscow, but there was no official confirmation of the strike.

Ukrainian forces hit logistics facilities and an oil depot in the Moscow region, Zelenskyy said, adding that Kyiv's forces hit two vessels belonging to Russia's so-called shadow fleet transporting sanctioned oil and four dry cargo ships in the Black Sea.

A drone struck a passenger bus in Shebekino in Russia's Belgorod region bordering Ukraine, killing five people — four women and a boy — and injuring 23 others, according to acting Gov. Alexander Shuvayev.

It was not possible to independently verify either side's claims.

Ukraine's long-range drone technology has evolved during the war, posing a problem for Russia, whose huge land mass is hard to protect fully. Kyiv's forces have aimed especially at Russian oil facilities, causing fuel shortages and embarrassing Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In May, the Russian Defense Ministry said air defenses downed 1,054 Ukrainian drones in a 24-hour period.

Russia uses ballistic missiles more frequently

As Kyiv pleads with foreign partners to supply it with sophisticated interceptors that can counter Russian ballistic missiles, which are much harder to stop than drones or cruise missiles, Moscow's forces have sought to take advantage of the weaknesses in Ukraine's air defenses.

Ballistic missiles fly faster than the speed of sound and can reach Kyiv in minutes, giving air defenses little time to react and civilians to reach shelter.

Russia has stepped up its use of ballistic missiles recently. Ukrainian officials said Sunday that Moscow's bombardment killed at least six people and wounded dozens.

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"Russian forces have launched more ballistic missiles against Ukraine thus far in July than Russia reportedly produces each month," the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, said late Sunday.

"Russia appears to be dipping into its stockpiles to continue increasing the number of ballistic missiles it launches against Ukraine, as these missiles have a higher success rate than drones and cruise missiles," it noted.

Ukraine's air force said Russia fired two missiles and 94 long-range drones at Ukraine overnight. It said air defenses jammed or intercepted 81 drones, while nine drones and a missile caused damage at nine locations.

Russia's Defense Ministry said Monday its forces struck fuel tanks in the southern Ukrainian port of Odesa overnight.

A Russian strike on Pavlohrad in Ukraine's central Dnipropetrovsk region injured 13 people, according to military administration head Oleksandr Hanzha. Eleven people were hospitalized, including a 13-year-old girl, he added.

A cargo ship attack killed 10 sailors off Odesa

Ukraine's Sea Ports Authority said a cargo vessel under the flag of the West African country of Guinea Bissau was hit by Russian forces on Sunday shortly after it left the port of Odesa, killing 10 of its crew, including five sailors from Syria. Eight people were rescued from the ship, which was carrying Ukrainian corn, it added.

Syria's General Authority for Borders and Customs said it "strongly condemns the repeated attacks targeting commercial vessels with Syrian sailors and crews aboard in Ukrainian ports and nearby maritime areas in the Black Sea, and the resulting deaths and injuries among Syrian sailors."

The Syrian statement did not mention Russia. Moscow has built relations with the new Syrian government since former President Bashar Assad was ousted in December 2024 in a rebel offensive led by now-interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa.

How to keep babies safe when temperatures soar

By The Associated Press undefined

Infants, toddlers and young children need outdoor activity to build strong bodies and minds, but they also require extra care in the heat.

In the summer months, those twin imperatives can make parents anxious. How long should kids be out? How do I know they're OK? What should I avoid?

Human-caused climate change is making heat waves longer, stronger and more widespread. Much of the U.S. sweltered last week under a heat dome.

That shift makes questions about keeping babies safe more pressing, said Dr. Katherine Williamson, a pediatrician with Rady Children's Health in Orange, California.

"We talk about drowning and choking with toddlers, and now we're starting to add in heat," she said. "It's become something that's more commonplace as a potential injury."

Here is why children are more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses, and some do's and don'ts to keep them safe:

Regulating body temperature is a challenge

Children sweat less than adults and have a higher metabolism that makes them hot faster. In extreme heat, their higher surface area-to-mass ratio increases heat absorption.

Kids also tend to spend more time outdoors.

On hot days, parents need to be vigilant about the signs of heat illness. A lack of tears or regular wet diapers could indicate your baby is dehydrated. Parents should feed infants in smaller quantities more frequently to make sure they are getting enough fluid.

Though not necessarily signs of illness, fatigue and flushed skin likely mean your child needs a break to cool off. Williamson said increased irritability could also indicate your child is too hot.

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Tips for keeping them safe

Avoid going out during the hottest parts of the day, dress kids in loose, light-colored clothing, apply sunscreen and make sure they are getting enough fluids. Water-rich fruits such as watermelon and strawberries are great snacks in the heat.

"If you're hot, your baby sure is going to be hot," said Dr. Debra Langlois, a pediatrician at the University of Michigan Health C.S. Mott Children's Hospital.

Langlois said parents and other caregivers should limit the amount of time infants and toddlers are outside in hot weather, but she doesn't advise remaining strictly indoors at any point.

Don't put blankets or other covers on a stroller

That advice seems counterintuitive. After all, doesn't it make sense to shield children from the sun?

But blankets and other coverings, even thin ones, prevent air from circulating and trap heat that can raise the temperature in the stroller. Instead, use a canopy for shade.

Williamson also advises parents to check metal parts that can heat up and burn children.

Don't leave kids in the car

Even in the shade and with open windows, car temperatures can rise dramatically in a short amount of time. In 2025, 31 children died of heat stroke in vehicles, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The agency recommends caregivers leave a purse or other personal item in the back seat, write a note or place a stuffed animal on the passenger seat to ensure they don't forget a child inside.

If you return to a parked car with your baby on a hot day, ensure the metal parts of the car seat are also not too hot. For extra comfort, use a sun shade to keep the interior cooler and turn on the air conditioning in advance.

To cool a hot car, experts recommend opening the windows for 10 to 20 seconds while running the air conditioning.

Today in History: July 21, verdict reached in Scopes 'Monkey Trial'

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, July 21, the 202nd day of 2026. There are 163 days left in the year.

Today in History:

On July 21, 1925, the so-called "Monkey Trial" ended in Dayton, Tennessee, with John T. Scopes found guilty of violating state law for teaching Darwin's Theory of Evolution. (The conviction was later overturned.)

Also on this date:

In 1861, during the Civil War, the first Battle of Bull Run was fought at Manassas, Virginia, resulting in a Confederate victory.

In 1944, American forces landed on Guam during World War II, capturing it from the Japanese some three weeks later.

In 1954, the Geneva Conference concluded with accords dividing Vietnam into northern and southern entities.

In 1969, Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin blasted off from the moon aboard the ascent stage of the lunar module for docking with the command module.

In 1970, construction of the Aswan High Dam in Egypt was completed.

In 1972, the Irish Republican Army carried out 22 bombings in Belfast, Northern Ireland, killing nine people and injuring 130 in what became known as "Bloody Friday."

In 2002, golfer Ernie Els won the British Open in the first sudden-death finish in the 142-year history of the tournament.

In 2008, former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic (RA'-doh-van KA'-ra-jich), one of the world's top war crimes fugitives, was arrested in a Belgrade suburb by Serbian security forces. (He was sentenced by a U.N. court in 2019 to life imprisonment after being convicted of genocide, crimes against humanity

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and war crimes.)

In 2011, the 30-year-old space shuttle program ended as Atlantis landed at Cape Canaveral, Florida, after the 135th shuttle flight.

In 2012, Turkish-American Erden Eruc became the first person to complete a solo, human-powered circumnavigation of the globe; his journey lasted more than five years.

In 2023, the "Barbenheimer" buzz reached its peak as the films "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" opened in theaters; the critical and public acclaim for both films led to the fourth-largest weekend box office of all time.

In 2024, President Joe Biden dropped his bid for reelection following a disastrous campaign debate with Donald Trump that raised doubts about the Democratic incumbent's fitness for office. (Trump would go on in the fall to defeat Vice President Kamala Harris, who took Biden's place in the presidential race.)

Today's Birthdays: Singer Yusuf Islam (also known as Cat Stevens) is 78. Cartoonist Garry Trudeau is 78. Author Michael Connelly is 70. Comedian Jon Lovitz is 69. Retired soccer player Brandi Chastain is 58. Rock-soul singer Michael Fitzpatrick (Fitz and the Tantrums) is 56. Actor/singer Charlotte Gainsbourg is 55. Actor Justin Bartha is 48. Actor Josh Hartnett is 48. Reggae singer Damian Marley is 48. Basketball Hall of Famer Tamika Catchings is 47. Former MLB All-Star pitcher CC Sabathia (suh-BATH'-ee-uh) is 46. Singer Blake Lewis ("American Idol") is 45. Latin singer Romeo Santos is 45. Actor Betty Gilpin is 40. Actor Juno Temple is 37. Actor Rory Culkin is 37. Actor Joseph Zada is 21.