

Groton Daily Independent

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Community Calendar

Tuesday, July 28

Senior Menu: Lasagna bake, mixed vegetables, fruit, whole wheat bread.

United Methodist Vacation Bible school, 5 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.

Elementary Volleyball Camp, 8 a.m. to noon, GHS Gym and Arena

Junior Legion Regional Tournament at Sisseton: Winners play at 2 p.m., losers play at 5 p.m., third game 30 minutes after the 5 p.m. game.

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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

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Wednesday, July 29

Senior Menu: Baked pork chop, mashed potatoes and gravy, broccoli, fruit, whole wheat bread.

GHS Golf Fundraiser Lunch

Emmanuel Lutheran: Women's Guest Night Meal and speaker, 6 p.m.

Junior Legion Regional Tournament at Sisseton: Championship game at 2 p.m. If second game is needed, it will be played 30 minutes after the first game.

Thursday, July 30

Senior Menu: Tater tot hot dish, corn, fruit, whole wheat bread.

1st-3rd Grade BB Camp, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., GHS Arena

Friday, July 31

Senior Menu: Baked fish, oven roasted potatoes, peas, fruit, whole wheat bread.

1st-3rd Grade BB Camp, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., GHS Arena

State B Legion Tournament in Madison through August 4th.

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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.

Migrant Protections End

More than 300,000 Haitians and roughly 4,000 Syrians have lost their ability to work and live in the US legally after a temporary protected status expired yesterday. The lapse comes after a Supreme Court ruling in June empowered the Trump administration to end protections.

Haiti—the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation—first received temporary protected status in 2010 following a deadly 7.0 magnitude earthquake. Haiti has since faced overlapping crises, including widespread gang violence (with armed groups controlling about 85% of the capital, Port-au-Prince) and repeated political upheaval, including the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse. Syria first received TPS in 2012 after civil war erupted, and despite the fall of the decades-long dictatorship of Bashar al-Assad in 2024, parts of the country remain unstable.

Nearly 200,000 Haitians and 2,000 Syrians with TPS are part of the workforce, with the two groups contributing roughly \$5.9B to the US economy.

New World Heritage Sites

UNESCO has added D-Day's landing beaches and Mount Olympus to its list of World Heritage sites this week, among others—including three added on an emergency basis. The status signals the sites have universal value—natural, cultural, or both—and are worthy of preservation.

The designation program dates back to the 1970s, when Ecuador's Galápagos Islands and the US' Yellowstone National Park were among the first 12 sites to receive the honor. Since then, member countries have nominated hundreds of sites in an effort to attract tourism, raise conservation funds, or both. A decade after its 2008 listing, Mount Sanqingshan National Park in China saw annual visitors jump from 1.5 million to 24 million.

The World Heritage Committee is composed of representatives from more than 20 countries on a rotating basis. To be accepted, a nominated site must meet at least one of 10 criteria.

Chilean Fugitive Arrested

Chilean police have captured a fugitive convicted of kidnapping and murdering musician and activist Victor Jara 53 years ago.

Nelson Haase Mazzei, 80, fled in 2023 after he and six other former soldiers were convicted in absentia of murdering Jara and a Chilean official in 1973. Jara was a leading figure in Chile's New Song movement, which backed socialist politician Salvador Allende's successful 1970 presidential bid. The murder occurred five days after Augusto Pinochet overthrew Allende in a military coup and ushered in a nearly 17-year dictatorship. Jara's widow and daughter pushed to reopen the murder case nearly a decade after Pinochet's dictatorship ended, ultimately leading to the 2023 convictions. Haase Mazzei was the last fugitive; one of the other men died by suicide, and the remaining five are serving prison sentences.

Jara's 1971 song "The Right to Live in Peace", originally an anti-Vietnam War anthem, was revived during Chile's 2019 protests against economic inequality.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Kansas City Chiefs offensive coordinator's son, 27, is arrested and charged with shooting his mother, who is in stable condition as of this writing.

Judge rules there's enough evidence for singer D4vd to stand trial in killing of teen girl.

Carly Simon, 83, shares Parkinson's disease and skin cancer diagnosis.

Stanford University football players form first campus chapter of the College Football Players Association, a step toward potential unionization and collective bargaining.

Science & Technology

Scientists find first direct evidence that genetic makeup influences how cancer tumors form and evolve after environmental DNA damage, possibly explaining why smoking and UV rays cause cancer in some and not others.

Injectable drug lets 36% of children with multiple food allergies safely eat allergy-triggering foods after one year; researchers say an oral immunotherapy may offer similar benefits, though participants reported it carried more side effects.

Saber-toothed cats likely developed spinal deformities and rare tumors linked to inbreeding as their population declined, a factor that may have contributed to their eventual extinction.

There's no such thing as a saber-toothed tiger.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 +0.0%, Dow +0.5%, Nasdaq -0.2%).

Apple (\$4.94T) overtakes Nvidia (\$4.76T) as world's most valuable public company after shares reach record high.

China chipmaker CXMT shares surge 466% in Shanghai trading debut after becoming Asia's largest initial public offering this year.

Cracker Barrel CEO Julie Masino, who oversaw controversial 2025 logo redesign, to step down, remain in advisory role until October.

Politics & World Affairs

Bryan Kohberger—the man accused of killing four University of Idaho students in November 2022—seeks to reverse his guilty plea, claims he was misled into confessing to the murders.

Three people are killed and four others are wounded in a shoot-out at a Seattle food festival; one 15-year-old suspect was arrested, another died at the scene, and a third is believed to still be at large as of this writing, with no motive publicly identified.

Trump administration files emergency Supreme Court appeal to reinstate parts of March executive order that would tighten mail-in ballot rules ahead of November midterms.

GROTON
CUSTOMER APPRECIATION



Walking Tacos!

11 am - 2 pm
Groton Bank

TUESDAY, JULY 28

DACOTAH BANK

MEMBER
FDIC

BROWN COUNTY FAIR

GETTIN'
ROWDY
IN THE STIX



ABERDEEN, SD

AUGUST 10-16, 2026

TICKETS ON
SALE NOW!



Follow the QR code
for more info!

browncountysdfair.com

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Children's
Miracle Network
Hospitals



Treat your team.
Help local kids.

BUY A BLIZZARD®
MAKE A *Miracle!*

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

THURSDAY

JULY

30

We're celebrating
Miracle Treat Day®
at the DQ® restaurant
11 East Hwy 12
Groton, SD



All the proceeds from every
Blizzard® Treat sold on Miracle
Treat Day® will be donated to
Children's Miracle Network Hospitals
to support Sanford Children's Hospital.



IT'S A WIN-WIN!



Boost team morale
with a sweet treat



Support an amazing cause
right here in our community

PLAN AHEAD & SAVE!

Pre-order Blizzard® Treats
for your team!



Email your order to
grotondq@nvc.net
by 6 PM on Tuesday, July 28th



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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SOUTH DAKOTA AMERICAN LEGION "B" JUNIOR BASEBALL

REGION 1B

SISSETON LEGION POST 50

JULY 27TH - JULY 29TH, 2026



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Groton falls in Region 1B opener, faces Claremont in elimination game Tuesday

SISSETON – Groton Post 39 Junior Legion will look to keep its postseason hopes alive Tuesday after dropping a 3-1 decision to Badgers Post 229 in the opening round of the Region 1B Junior Legion Baseball Tournament in Sisseton.

Groton and the Badgers battled through a tightly contested pitchers' duel Monday, with the game tied at 1-1 heading into the bottom of the sixth inning. Badgers Post 229 broke the deadlock when Ayden Nelson delivered a two-run single, providing the eventual winning margin.

Badgers Post 229 scored first in the third inning when Martino Cochran drew a bases-loaded walk. Groton answered in the top of the sixth, taking advantage of a Badgers error to even the score before Nelson's clutch hit put the Badgers back in front.

Alex Abeln turned in a strong performance on the mound for Groton, allowing just one run on five hits over 5 1/3 innings while striking out 10 and walking five. Connor Ohm earned the win for Badgers Post 229, giving up one unearned run on three hits over 6 2/3 innings with five strikeouts.

Zach Fliehs, John Bisbee and Lincoln Shilhanek each collected a hit for Groton, while Nelson drove in two runs for the Badgers. Avier Hughes and Nick Hoffman each finished with two hits for the winners.

Elsewhere in Monday's opening round, Sisseton Post 50 defeated Claremont Honkers Post 262/VFW JH, 7-4.

Sisseton took control early, scoring in each of the first three innings. Hank Hanson doubled home the first run of the game in the opening inning before Jackson Stickland's RBI single helped extend the lead to 3-1 in the second. Sisseton added another run in the third and finished with 11 hits in the victory.

Luke Nielsen earned the win for Sisseton, allowing four runs on five hits over six innings. Nick Cutler pitched a complete game for Claremont, surrendering seven runs on 11 hits while striking out three.

Case Reints led Claremont offensively with a 2-for-4 performance and two RBIs. Sisseton's Rylan Anderson paced the attack by going 3-for-4 with three RBIs, while Nielsen, Stickland and J.J. Hamm each added multiple-hit games. Sisseton also played error-free defense.

Tournament play continues Tuesday with Big Stone City taking on Sisseton at 2 p.m. Groton will meet Claremont in an elimination game at 5 p.m., with the winner advancing to face the loser of the Big Stone City-Sisseton matchup approximately 30 minutes after the conclusion of the Groton-Claremont game.



Starting Groton Jr Legion pitcher Alex Abeln winds up on the mound.

(Photo courtesy Bruce Babcock)



Left fielder Xavier Ellenbecker fields the ball.

(Photo courtesy Bruce Babcock)

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TC Schuster leads off while infielder from Big Stone looks on. (Photo courtesy Bruce Babcock)



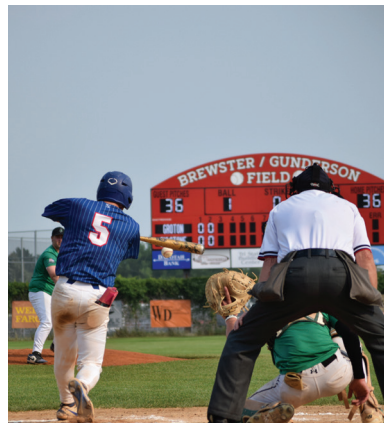
The Sisseton American Legion Color Guard opens the ceremony of the American Junior Legion Class 1B in Sisseton Monday afternoon.

(Photo courtesy Bruce Babcock)



Coach Aaron Severson confers with both Groton baserunners Braeden Fliehs and Ryder Schelle.

(Photo courtesy Bruce Babcock)



Alex Abeln successfully makes contact as he bunts. (Photo courtesy Bruce Babcock)

(Photo courtesy Bruce Babcock)



Groton catcher Kason Oswald looks on while his pitcher and infielders warm up prior to start of the game.

(Photo courtesy Bruce Babcock)



Groton TC Schuster stands ready in the batters box.

(Photo courtesy Bruce Babcock)

Lawrence County Fatal Crash

What: Single-vehicle fatal crash

Where: I-90 at mile marker 19, 1 mile east of Spearfish, South Dakota

When: 5:45 p.m., Saturday, July 25, 2026

Driver 1: 56-year-old male from Spearfish, South Dakota, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 1995 Harley Davidson FLHTCU

Helmet Used: No

Lawrence County, S.D.- A Spearfish, South Dakota man died Sunday from injuries sustained in a single-vehicle crash Saturday near Spearfish.

Names of the those involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 1995 Harley Davidson was traveling west on I-90 when he started to lose control of the motorcycle and laid it down. In the process, he became separated from the motorcycle. The driver was taken to a Spearfish Hospital before being transferred to a Rapid City hospital.

The driver died from his injuries on Sunday, July 26, 2026.

The investigation is ongoing. All information released is preliminary.

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

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BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA GENERAL MEETING

TUESDAY, JULY 28, 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. Jeff Forsting, Brainard Township
 - a. Drainage Issues
5. Richmond Dam Update
6. First Reading of Ordinance #331 – County Gross Receipts Tax & A Use Tax
7. Second Reading/Possible Adoption of the following Ordinances:
 - a. Ord. #328 – Rezone for Stanley & Carol Gage
 - b. Ord. #329 – Amending Title 4 Zoning
 - c. Ord. #330 – Amending Title 5 Subdivision Regulations
8. Authorize Karly Winter, States Attorney, to sign documents for VOCA & DASA Grants
9. Budget Hearing
10. Approve FY2027 Provisional Budget – Set Hearing Date/Authorize Advertising
11. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign Payment #3 for Landfill Cell #5
12. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes of July 21, 2026
 - b. Claims/Payroll
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Travel Requests
 - e. Lease Agreements
 - f. Auditor's Report of Accounts for June 2026
 - g. Zoning Ordinances – Set Hearing Date/Authorize Advertising
 - h. Final Plats
 - i. Reints First Addition
 - ii. Mark Erickson's Third Subdivision
 - iii. Zeck Family First Addition
 - iv. Rath Second Addition
 - v. McNeil-Randall First Addition to Elm Lake
13. Other Business
14. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
15. 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](tel:+18722403311) - 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](#)

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EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: Have we already begun to see a significant sea level rise as a result of climate change?

-- Martin Smith, Detroit, MI

According to the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), sea levels have been relatively well-documented throughout the course of human history, making the recent sea level rise particularly noticeable. Since 1880, the global average sea level has risen by around eight to nine inches. According to the NOAA, sea level rise may be caused by factors such as "ground settling, upstream flood control, erosion [and] regional ocean currents" on a more regional level.

On a world-wide scale, global warming due to extensive human emissions of greenhouse gases has led to the atmosphere increasingly trapping heat, and warming the ocean. As seawater gets warmer, it expands, increasing the sea level. Similarly, per SeaLevelRise.org. glaciers and ice sheets melt rapidly when faced by warmer seawater, which intensifies the rate of sea level rise. In a CNN interview, Benjamin Hamlington, a scientist in the Sea Level & Ice Group at NASA stated, "It's like we're putting our foot on the gas pedal," regarding the rate of sea level rise due to global warming. While natural climate cycles contribute to sea level rise, it is exacerbated by human action.

However, sea level has consistently fluctuated with the Earth's climate cycles, rising during warm periods and sinking during cool ones. With the definitive global increase in sea level, and the accelerated rate at which it is occurring, it's clear that climate change and its human-driven exacerbation are at least partially responsible for sea level rise. Greenland's and the Antarctic ice sheets are particularly concerning with regard to the animals there. Polar bears rely on sea ice for hunting, mating and resting. The glacial loss that contributes to sea level rise has resounding impacts for biodiversity across Earth. Further, it is likely that the global sea level will continue to rise in the coming decades, with scientific assessments projecting roughly another six to seven inches in growth of the global average sea level by 2050. This rapid sea level rise would likely lead to more high-tide flooding, storm surges, and pressure on coastal ecosystems.

Yet, sea level rise is not yet a catastrophe. Collective action can still significantly limit long-term damage. By cutting emissions through a rapid transition to clean energy, increased efficiency, and protecting valuable ecosystems, we can slow warming and its impacts. In this time coastal communities can expand their resources and infrastructure, planning for the slow sea level rise coinciding with the Earth's natural climate cycles. To help support these efforts, advocate for reduced emissions in your own community, and coastal communities near you. Supporting communities already impacted by sea level rise can help ameliorate the impacts of the rapidly changing climate, reducing their burden.



While natural climate cycles contribute to sea level rise, it is exacerbated by human action. Credit: Pexels.com.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Estimated cost of proposed eastern South Dakota water pipeline is at least \$8.4 billion

Project is one of several proposals to tap the Missouri River

BY JOSHUA HAIAR

SIOUX FALLS — One of several proposed pipeline systems to deliver Missouri River water in South Dakota could cost \$8.4 billion to \$10 billion, according to estimates shared Monday.

Dakota Mainstem Regional Water System Executive Director Kurt Pfeifle was on a panel speaking to the Rotary Club of Downtown Sioux Falls.

"That includes about a 30% contingency, but right now, there's just so many unknowns," Pfeifle said, referring to a cost estimate buffer.

The system's proposed pipeline would serve nearly 60 water providers across much of eastern South Dakota and portions of three neighboring states, with a capacity of 195 million gallons per day.

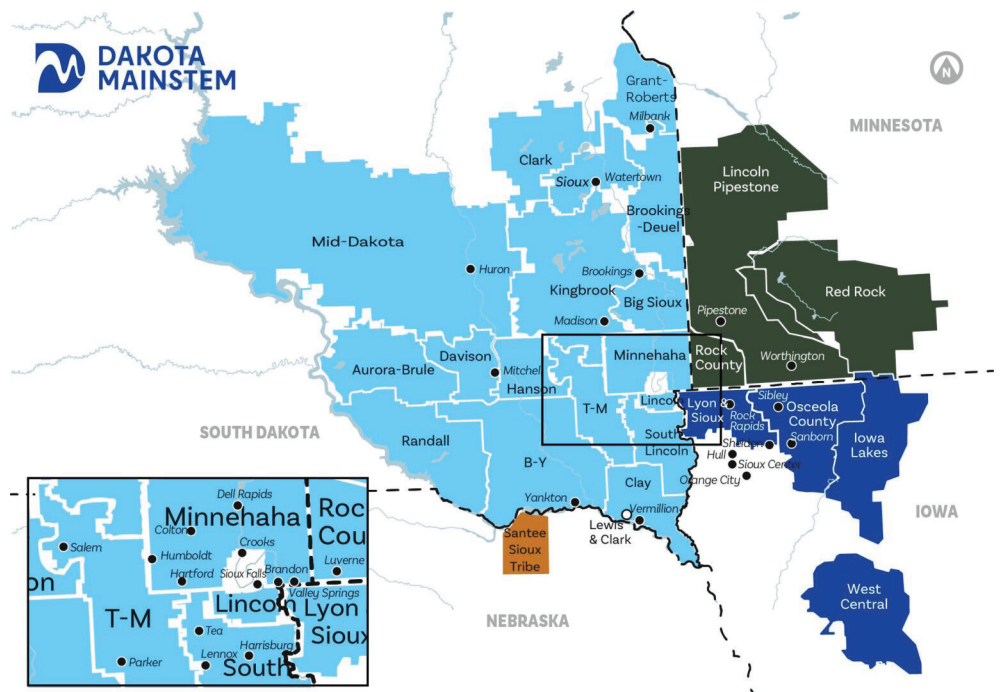
Pfeifle said the organization recently completed an initial study to arrive at those numbers and is beginning a \$4.2 million feasibility study expected to take about two and a half years.

Pending federal legislation sponsored by South Dakota's congressional delegation would provide funding to help with that study and two other studies for the proposed Western Dakota Regional Water System pipeline, which has an estimated projected cost of \$4 billion, and a planned expansion of the Lewis & Clark Regional Water System in southeast South Dakota, which has an estimated project cost of \$2.5 billion.

Lewis & Clark Regional Water System Executive Director Troy Larson and Minnehaha Community Water Corporation Executive Director Scott Buss were also on the panel.

Construction began on the Lewis & Clark system in 2003 and is ongoing, although the constructed portion already serves 20 member cities and rural water systems. Completion of the three-state, 44-million-gallon-per-day "base system" is estimated to cost \$825 million, with completion sometime in 2028. Federal funding covers 80% of the cost.

Larson said the planned expansion will increase capacity to 60 million gallons per day by 2030. But he



A map of water providers that would be served by the proposed Dakota Mainstem Regional Water System pipeline project. (Courtesy of Dakota Mainstem)

said the system's members already project they will need an additional 95 million gallons per day over the next 40 years.

"That's 60 plus 95, not 60 and then get to 95," Larson said.

The projects are driven by industry and population growth.

Minnehaha Community Water is a member-owned utility that receives water from the Lewis & Clark pipeline and the Big Sioux River aquifer, and delivers it to 5,300 rural customers and seven cities. Buss said the system has approached its limits during recent summers — particularly during droughts — and has rejected some economic development opportunities because it could not guarantee it would be able to deliver enough water.

Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

Governor of South Dakota seeks federal help for damages from summer storms

BY MAKENZIE HUBER

Gov. Larry Rhoden has asked the federal government to help pay for nearly \$4.6 million in damage to public property in South Dakota caused by storms late last month and early this month.

Wind gusts of 100 miles an hour or more tore through central and eastern South Dakota between June 28 and July 3, hitting Hyde and Beadle counties the hardest.

Hyde County estimates \$2.8 million in damages to public property due to a June 29 "mini-derecho," as classified by the National Weather Service's Storm Prediction Center. Wind gusts of up to 131 miles per hour downed trees and powerlines, snapped wind turbine towers in half and left Highmore residents without power for days.

A July 3 storm in east-central South Dakota left

"devastation" in Huron as well, Rhoden said in a press release, where a tornado with peak winds of 90 mph followed by wind gusts of up to 106 families toppled trees and damaged multiple buildings in areas including the South Dakota State Fairgrounds. Beadle County suffered almost \$897,000 in public property



Inmates assist with the cleanup effort at the South Dakota State Fairgrounds in Huron in early July 2026 after a tornado and wind-storm hit the area. (Courtesy of the South Dakota Department of Corrections)

damage.

Bennett, Buffalo, Day, Hand, Hughes and Stanley counties, along with the Crow Creek and Lower Brule reservations, were also included in the request.

Rhoden's disaster declaration, signed on Wednesday, opens the door to possible assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. If FEMA approves the declaration, it would pick up 75% of the price of repairs to public property. Counties would pay 15%, and the state would pay 10%.

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a 2024 finalist for the national Livingston Awards.

Trump urges Thune to hold off on August recess until SAVE America Act passes

BY JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Monday called on the U.S. Senate to cancel its five-week August break, keeping lawmakers in session to advance several of his priorities, despite not having the votes.

Trump wrote in a social media post that he wanted Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., to keep the chamber open, preventing vulnerable Republicans facing reelection from the campaign trail, to pass a voter identification bill, among other measures.

"John Thune should not allow the United States Senate to 'leave town' until it passes The Save America Act or, far better still, TERMINATES THE FILIBUSTER, where Republicans can then

quickly pass everything they ever dreamed of, including a full and deep throated SAVE AMERICA ACT, the Budget, and the ever looming Debt Ceiling disaster, 1929!" Trump wrote. "The Democrats will do it on day one, and can't believe how lucky they got with this Senate leadership. Remember, stupidity always brings LOSING & DEATH!"

Trump followed up with another post about 15 minutes later, writing that whichever political party eliminates the rule that requires at least 60 senators vote to limit debate, known as the legislative filibuster, will hold an advantage in the Senate.

"Whichever Party Terminates the Filibuster FIRST will be the Party that survives and thrives," Trump



President Donald Trump speaks to the media as Senate Majority Whip John Barrasso, R-Wyo., and Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., look on after a meeting at the U.S. Capitol on June 24, 2026 in Washington, D.C. (Photo by Andrew Harnik/Getty Images)

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wrote. "If the Democrats win this race, however, America will rapidly become nothing more than a Third World Nation!"

SAVE America Act

Thune has said repeatedly that there aren't enough votes to remove the filibuster or to advance the SAVE America Act, which would require people provide proof of U.S. citizenship to register to vote and show a photo ID before casting a ballot, among other provisions.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., wrote in a social media post that there was no path for Republicans' voter ID bill to become law.

"It's a new week in Washington, but one thing remains the same: The SAVE Act is dead on arrival in the United States Senate," Schumer wrote. "It will not pass—not now, not ever."

The Senate is set to leave for its recess on Aug. 6 and return on Sept. 14. The House left on July 23 and will return on Aug. 31 for four days before taking a week-long break. Then both chambers will be in session for three weeks before breaking for five weeks in October and early November.

Trump said aboard Air Force One later in the day that he hasn't considered trying to have Senate Republicans oust Thune as their leader and replace him with someone else.

"I haven't even thought of it," he said.

GOP senators

Trump's comments followed calls from a few Republican senators over the weekend to keep the chamber in session until certain bills make it to the president's desk.

".@LeaderJohnThune, I hereby object to any effort to put the Senate into recess in August—at least until such time as the Senate has passed the SAVE America Act—and hereby request a roll call vote," Utah Republican Sen. Mike Lee wrote on Sunday. "Do not assume you have my consent. You do not."

Lee's post, however, isn't actually an objection under Senate procedure. In order to do that, he'll need to stand on the floor and object when Thune or another Republican asks for "unanimous consent" to break for the August recess.

Florida Republican Sen. Ashley Moody wrote she believes "there are things we need to get done for the American People."

"The Senate needs to stay in session until we can get the SAVE America Act to the floor and passed," she wrote.

Florida Republican Sen. Rick Scott wrote he supports efforts to try to keep the Senate in session.

"I will vote to stay in session unless we have passed the SAVE America Act," Scott wrote. "The American people expect us to deliver. They deserve secure elections."

Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

Administration asks US Supreme Court to uphold sweeping Trump order restricting vote-by-mail

BY JACOB FISCHLER

The Trump administration on Monday asked the U.S. Supreme Court to halt a district court ruling that blocked President Donald Trump's broad March 31 executive order restricting vote-by-mail.

The move came just two days after a federal appeals court denied the administration's request to resume the controversial plan, which would force significant limits and voter information collection requirements on states in regard to vote-by-mail.

It also sets up a high-stakes confrontation at the high court between the administration and the 23 states that sued over the Trump order, a little more than three months before the midterm elections that will determine control of Congress.

"The district court has issued an extraordinary injunction barring federal agencies from implementing an Executive Order promoting election integrity in the upcoming federal elections in November," wrote

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Solicitor General D. John Sauer in his petition to the high court.

Sauer argued the executive order should not be blocked because, among other things, the U.S. Postal Service has not yet come up with a final rule on how it would be implemented.

Appeals court ruling

A three-judge panel of the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals agreed with a lower court ruling last month that blocked the order because the U.S. Constitution grants states — not the president — authority to administer elections.

The executive order “directs unprecedented levels of involvement by federal officials in how states administer elections,” two appeals judges, Gustavo A. Gelpí and Julie Rikelman, wrote in a Saturday order. Both were appointed by President Joe Biden.

Gelpí and Rikelman considered and rejected the administration’s argument that states could not challenge the order because the Postal Service rule was not finalized.

The order directed the agency’s final rule to contain a requirement that states start submitting citizenship rosters 60 days from the general election, which is Sept. 4 this year. Allowing the order to go into effect would force states, which have been preparing for the election for months, to use considerable time and funding to create a new election system in mere weeks.

“The Government has failed to convince us that the impact of the (executive order) on the Plaintiff States is ‘hypothetical,’” Gelpí and Rikelman wrote.

The panel’s third judge, Joshua D. Dunlap, concurred in part and dissented in part, noting that the Postal Service rule mandated by the executive order had not been finalized. The timeline suggested by the order, though, would have required states to take immediate action related to mail ballots, he added.

Consequences for states

Time is running out for Trump’s administration to successfully place the restrictions on vote-by-mail before November’s midterm elections 99 days from Monday.

The 1st Circuit panel pointed to the approaching midterms as a reason to block the order for now. A full analysis of the executive order could be considered on a longer timeline, but state election officials faced imminent consequences if they did not begin preparing for the order’s requirements in time for the November general election and September primaries, the judges found.

The order directed the U.S. Postal Service to require states to notify the agency 90 days before an election if they plan to use mail-in ballots and, if so, to send the federal government a list of eligible voters at least two months before the election and before sending ballots to those voters.

Democratic officials in 23 states — California, Massachusetts, Nevada, Washington, Arizona, Colorado,



A mail ballot drop box is seen at a polling station on Nov. 4, 2025 in Arlington, Virginia. (Photo by Alex Wong/Getty Images)

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Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania — and the District of Columbia brought the suit challenging the executive order.

Twelve states with Republican attorneys general — Alabama, Missouri, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Montana, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota and Texas — joined the appeal on the federal government's side.

Citizenship lists

The executive order also required the Department of Homeland Security, with help from the Social Security Administration, to compile lists of voting-age citizens living in each state, and then provide that information to state officials at least 60 days before each federal election.

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

The district court judge, Indira Talwani, said the executive order did not cite relevant constitutional or legal authority to support the creation of the lists.

Trump erodes faith in mail ballots

Trump has consistently raised unfounded concerns about mail-in voting, which nearly every state allows and some use exclusively.

The practice, especially common in Western states, enjoyed strong bipartisan support until Trump sought to undermine its credibility during the 2020 election cycle.

In 2018, the Pew Research Center found 71% of voters, including 57% of Republicans, supported vote-by-mail.

By the time of an April 2026 poll, Democrats' favorable opinion of vote-by-mail remained high, but Republican support cratered to 34%.

In the executive order, Trump said restricting mail-in voting would limit voting by noncitizens, another voting issue Trump has often raised without offering evidence it has created a significant integrity problem in any election.

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

Landmark federal housing law tries new ways to boost local building

BY ROBBIE SEQUEIRA

Championed as one of the most consequential and bipartisan federal housing laws in decades, the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act enacted this month makes significant changes across federal housing policy.

Included in the 139-page law are a host of provisions that will restrict some institutional investors from buying homes, ease rules for manufactured housing and expand assistance for veterans. But some of its most notable provisions give local governments greater flexibility in using federal grants while introducing new financial rewards and penalties tied to housing production.

This is especially important because states and cities — not the federal government — control most housing choices through zoning and land use regulations. So the law tries a new approach to nudge cities toward more housing.

The law allows certain federal block-grant funding to pay for new affordable housing construction, which previously had been forbidden. And for the first time, it provides incentives and penalties for cities to build faster.

"The federal government is going to give you a whole lot of carrots, a whole lot of support, and just a couple sticks, in order to encourage these communities to start building more housing," said Ben Harrold,

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senior manager of public policy at the National Apartment Association.

The measure made it through a divided Congress in part because it “doesn’t actually come with a ton of new money for these programs,” said Andy Winkler, the managing director of housing and infrastructure policy at the Bipartisan Policy Center.

“There’s not one huge idea that’s going to change the dynamics of the housing market, but there are tons of small bills and provisions and programs that collectively really could have an impact.”

The most immediate impact of the law could be making existing federal housing dollars easier to use for municipalities.

Mark Kudlowitz, senior policy director for the Local Initiatives Support Corporation — a national nonprofit that finances affordable housing and other projects in urban and rural communities — said localities can now make decisions on where to spend existing federal dollars to increase supply. They also can start readying their local policies for potential funds from new incentive-laden programs.

“When we make it easier for the jurisdictions to deploy the funding, it’s doing everyone a favor, from the jurisdictions that have to manage these dollars to the federal government and then the developers that are ultimately receiving it,” said Kudlowitz. “It’s just decreasing costs and creating more efficiencies within the process.”

Although Hartford, Connecticut, Democratic Mayor Arunan Arulampalam wishes the law contained more new funding for programs, he praises a \$200 million annual competitive grant program for municipalities that increase housing supply. He also welcomes a pilot grant project to help more municipalities convert vacant and abandoned buildings into housing.

“The thing that this bill actually does is make existing federal dollars more efficient and maybe more useful,” Arulampalam said.

The new Innovation Fund will reward communities that demonstrate increases in housing supply with \$200 million in annual competitive grants from fiscal 2027 through 2031. The housing increases can come from local governments and tribes reducing parking requirements, revising minimum lot sizes and building height, creating incentives for dense development, changing zoning laws, streamlining regulatory and environmental requirements, or eliminating restrictions on accessory dwelling units.

“The Innovation Fund for flexible spending, which I think is the core of what the federal government



An apartment complex under construction on Oct. 25, 2025, in Rapid City, South Dakota. (Photo by Seth Tupper/South Dakota Searchlight)

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should be doing for communities like Hartford that are actually building housing, it's an exciting program," Arulampalam said.

Block grant changes

The new law also makes significant changes to the Community Development Block Grant program that could make it easier to use the money to build affordable housing. The CDBG program helps states, cities and counties finance improvements to housing, but funds also can be used for infrastructure, economic development and other projects that are geared toward low and moderate-income residents.

The new law now allows some grants to be used for construction. And it will reduce the money given to cities that don't meet certain construction thresholds.

Under the CDBG State Program, states receive federal money and distribute grants to eligible smaller communities. Jenna Pomponi, director of advocacy and federal programs at the Council of State Community Development Agencies, said cities under 50,000 residents and counties with fewer than 200,000 residents, known as non-entitlement communities, especially rely on state agencies to conduct environmental reviews and administer complicated federal requirements.

"In a lot of small communities, they don't have the capacity to do all the compliance work that's required for a government to review, so the state agencies do that for them," Pomponi said.

The new law now allows the construction of affordable housing to be eligible for CDBG grants, capped at 20% of the amount allocated to a recipient. Before the law, CDBG funds were used for public facilities and infrastructure, rehabilitation of existing housing, public services and economic development. Congress provided \$3.3 billion for the CDBG program in fiscal year 2026.

"It streamlines some really outdated requirements that were adding administrative burdens onto administering these grants, so I think essentially it'll just make the money that we have go further in communities," Pomponi said. "In the past, folks mostly used CDBG just to repair older homes, but now they can construct new affordable housing."

Under the law's Build Now provision, which applies to cities and urban counties receiving CDBG entitlement funding, funding will be based on the rate at which housing has grown. Recipients at or above the median growth rate will receive bonuses, while recipients below the median generally will face a 10% reduction.

Exemptions apply to municipalities that meet its thresholds for both lower rents and home values, places where rental vacancy rates are above the national average, areas recently impacted by a major disaster or emergency declaration within the previous three years, and those that lack legal authority to update zoning or permitting ordinances.

"This is the first time to my knowledge that the federal government will condition resources on the actual construction of new homes," said David Garcia, deputy director of policy at UC Berkeley's Turner Center for Housing Innovation. "So this goes even a step further from other programs, which provide money to cities and states to just do reforms. This is actually tying money to outcomes."

Garcia said that the Build Now provision and changes to CDBG funding will make cities, notably bigger and high-cost cities, motivated to do what's necessary to get housing production moving and avoid any loss of funding.

Ultimately, zoning can only go so far, as Garcia noted that economic conditions and the price of building could still make construction very costly.

"Cities don't control interest rates, they don't control tariffs, they don't control the labor pool ... so there may be instances where you actually have cities working in really good faith to try and get more homes out of the ground, but the broader economic conditions are just not in their favor."

Before the law passed, six organizations representing states, counties and local development agencies urged Congress to remove the Build Now provision, warning that tying CDBG dollars to short-term housing growth could make funding less predictable and that the metrics used to gauge growth could be slow and misleading.

"The idea was to put the squeeze on local governments to play ball, so to speak, as far as, looking at some of their zoning reform or their local housing strategies," said Jared Grigas, associate legislative direc-

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tor for community, economic and workforce development at the National Association of Counties, which signed the letter.

These funding conditions don't factor in until fiscal year 2029 and remain in effect through fiscal year 2043.

Grigas said the final version of the law, with the three-year implementation window and exemptions, made the provision more agreeable.

"That gives us three years to get the word out to our folks that, 'Hey, you might find yourself in this new universe where this might impact your CDBG allocations,'" Grigas said. "And here's how you can plan ahead."

'Next battle'

Federal funding for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development staffing was reduced by 24% in fiscal year 2026. And the guidance and implementation of at least 35 new or updated programs and regulations from the new law will be assigned to HUD — including the Innovation Fund and the Build Now provisions, according to the Urban Institute.

Winkler, from the Bipartisan Policy Center, said the "next battle" in the realization of the ROAD Act is swift implementation of the new law from HUD to the local agencies.

Some are skeptical that HUD — without new funding for staffing — can manage the workload that comes with such an expansive to-do list.

"A lot of this will hinge on HUD's ability to implement this law," Pomponi said. "Some of us are concerned because HUD cut back so much of their staff last year when the administration changed over, and now they're being handed this huge law to implement."

Arulampalam, the Connecticut mayor, said Hartford will continue pursuing options such as office conversions and vacant lot development while waiting to see whether Congress funds the law's new programs.

"We are coming up with as many creative solutions as we can to solving the housing crisis," he said. "The thing that limits us the most is the dollars we can put into it."

Stateline reporter Robbie Sequeira can be reached at rsequeira@stateline.org.

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

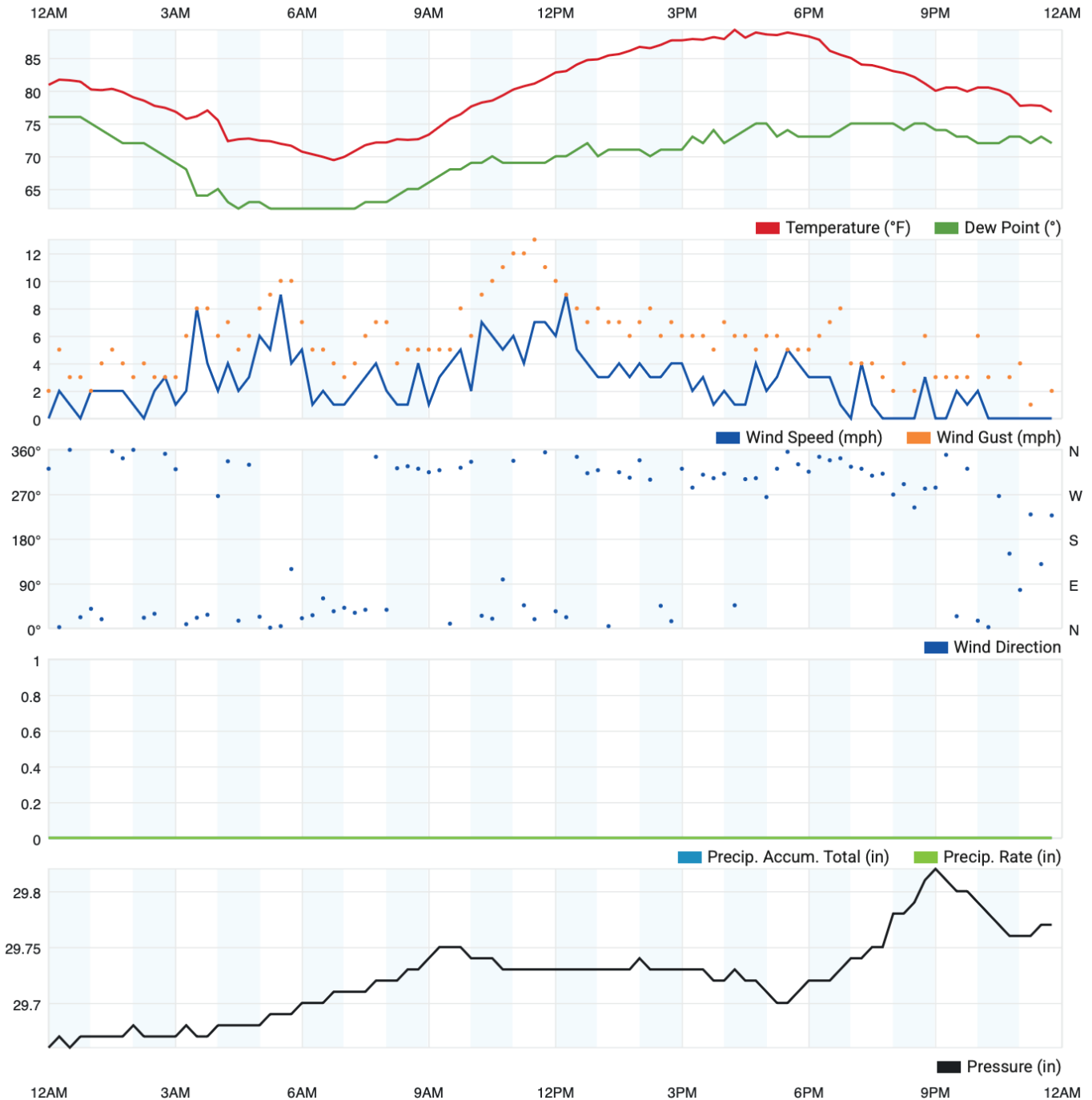
Robbie Sequeira is a staff writer covering housing and social services for Stateline.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

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Today



High: 92 °F

Patchy Smoke

Tonight



Low: 68 °F

Chance
Showers then
Patchy Smoke

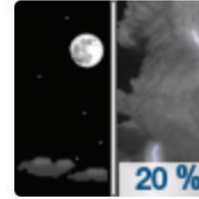
Wednesday



High: 95 °F

Patchy Smoke

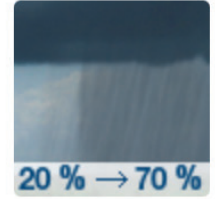
Wednesday
Night



Low: 70 °F

Mostly Clear
then Slight
Chance
T-storms

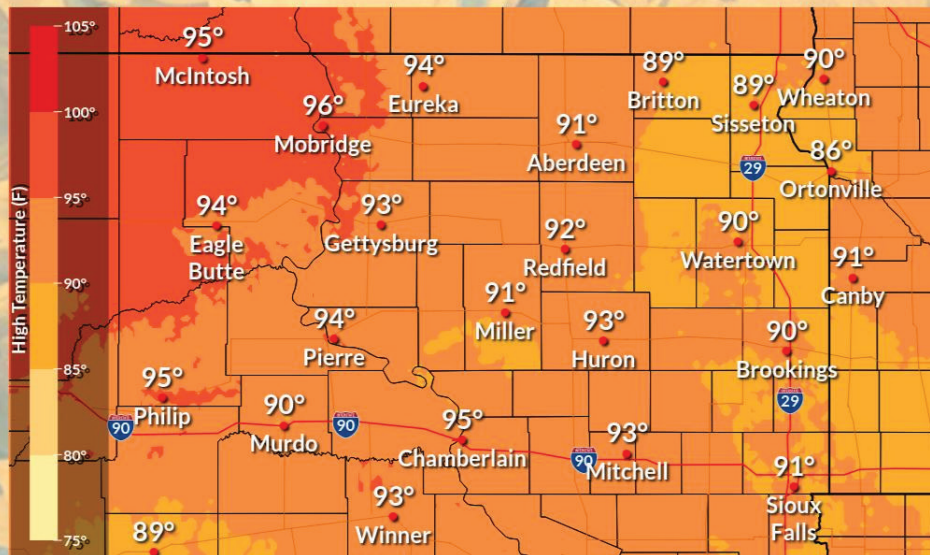
Thursday



High: 89 °F

Slight Chance
Showers then
Showers
Likely

High Temperatures Today: upper 80s to mid 90s



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

weather.gov/aberndeen

Temperatures today will top out in the upper 80s to mid 90s today. Patchy smoke will remain across portions of the region. Check out the latest EPA air quality values at <https://fire.airnow.gov/>

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 89 °F at 4:15 PM

Low Temp: 69 °F at 6:41 AM

Wind: 13 mph at 11:19 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 109 in 1975

Record Low: 40 in 2013

Average High: 85

Average Low: 60

Average Precip in July.: 2.84

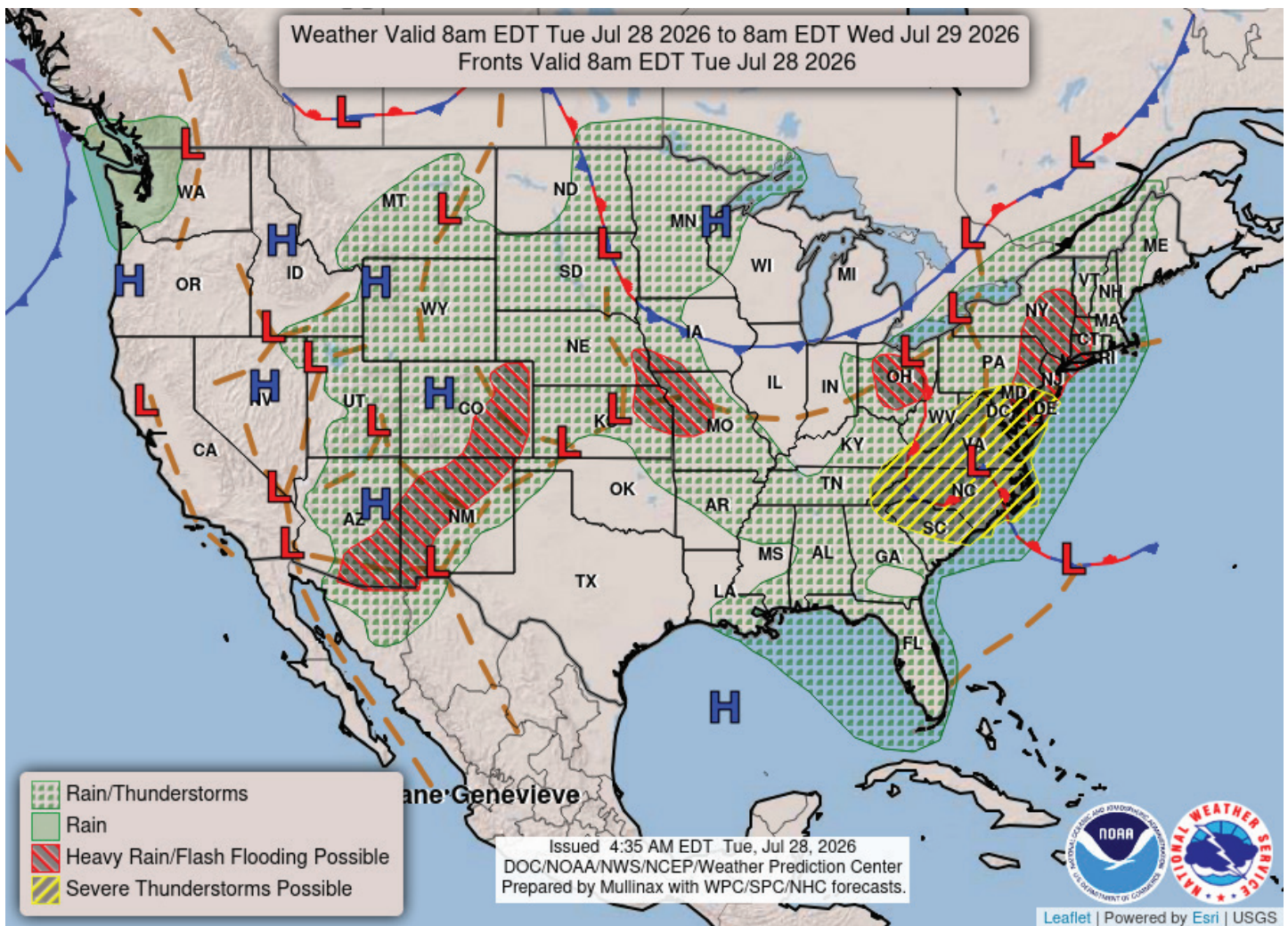
Precip to date in July.: 6.13

Average Precip to date: 13.85

Precip Year to Date: 15.60

Sunset Tonight: 9:05 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:12 am



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Today in Weather History

July 28, 1986: Very intense thunderstorms developed in South Dakota and Nebraska and moved into Iowa. The first of these storms produced a tornado that crossed into Iowa south of Sioux City and slammed into a coal-burning power plant. This storm caused between 25 and 50 million dollars damage to the plant. The tornado continued across farmland, then damaged a store and flattened a motel in Sloan before lifting up.

1898: A severe thunderstorm produced considerable hail (some stones to 11 ounces) in Chicago, Illinois business district. Some people were hurt, not by hail, but by several hundred runaway horses spooked by the hailstones.

1926 — A hurricane came inland near Daytona Beach, FL. The hurricane caused 2.5 million dollars damage in eastern Florida, including the Jacksonville area. (David Ludlum)

1939 — The temperature at Lewiston, ID, hit 117 degrees to establish an all-time record high for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1943 — On a whim, and flying a single engine AT-6, Lieutenant Ralph O'Hair and Colonel Duckworth were the first to fly into a hurricane. It started regular Air Force flights into hurricanes. (The Weather Channel)

1976: At 3:42 AM, an earthquake measuring between 7.8 and 8.2 magnitudes on the Richter scale flattens Tangshan, a Chinese industrial city with a population of about one million people. An estimated 242,000 people in Tangshan and surrounding areas were killed, making the earthquake one of the deadliest in recorded history, surpassed only by the 300,000 who died in the Calcutta earthquake in 1737, and the 830,000 thought to have perished in China's Shaanxi province in 1556.

1987 — Thunderstorms in Minnesota spawned a tornado which moved in a southwesterly direction for a distance of thirty miles across Rice County and Goodhue County. Trees were uprooted and tossed about like toys, and a horse lifted by the tornado was observed sailing horizontally through the air. Thunderstorms drenched La Crosse, WI, with 5.26 inches of rain, their second highest 24 hour total of record. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Hot weather prevailed in the north central U.S. Williston, ND, reported a record high of 108 degrees. Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the eastern U.S., and in southeastern Texas. Richland County, SC, was soaked with up to 5.5 inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in the southwestern U.S. Yuma, AZ, experienced their most severe thunderstorm of record. Strong thunderstorm winds, with unofficial gusts as high as 95 mph, reduced visibilities to near zero in blowing dust and sand. Yuma got nearly as much rain in one hour as is normally received in an entire year. The storm total of 2.55 inches of rain was a record 24 hour total for July. Property damage due to flash flooding and high winds was in the millions. (Storm Data)

1989 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather from Wisconsin and northern Illinois to New England, with 103 reports of large hail and damaging winds through the day. Thunderstorms in Wisconsin produced hail three inches in diameter near Oshkosh, and wind gusts to 65 mph at Germantown. (The National Weather Summary)

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Daily Devotion

Walking With Christ

Life takes us down unexpected roads. But with God as our guide, we can walk with confidence wherever He leads..

Colossians 1:9-12: 9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously

12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

The pathway of faith has divine purpose, and we're to obey the Lord, no matter what. But even when God's direction is perplexing, we can count on the fact that He is good.

Walking obediently with Christ doesn't guarantee an easy life, which is obvious when we consider the apostle John. In his later years, he was exiled to the island of Patmos—a Roman penal colony—simply for preaching the gospel (Revelation 1:9). Isolated from the churches he loved and served, John could have questioned God's plan. But it was during this exile that he received the revelation that became the final book of the New Testament.

Remember, though, that God is sovereign and works through every circumstance we face. He can bring strength and growth even from difficult seasons, using what we endure as part of His larger purposes.

Choosing obedience and trust is the only way to true peace. Even in exile, John experienced God's presence and purpose in ways that would encourage believers for centuries to come. The Lord never lets go of His children, whom He will continue to protect and guide throughout life. This is the pathway of faith: believing in Almighty God and following wherever He leads.

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

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Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.27.26

8 21 29 49 53 3

TOP PRIZE:

\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 16 Mins 7
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.24.26

2 5 42 44 60 1

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$800,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 1 Mins 7
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.27.26

15 20 27 45 46 3

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,200,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 16
Mins 7 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.25.26

4 8 28 33 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 31
Mins 7 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.27.26

17 25 59 61 69 14

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 7
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.27.26

6 26 46 58 65 25

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$663,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 7
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

AP Decision Notes:

What to expect in South Dakota's state primary runoff

By ROBERT YOON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — South Dakota Republicans will decide in a primary runoff Tuesday whether to nominate Gov. Larry Rhoden for a full term or to instead tap businessman Toby Doeden to represent the party on the ballot in November. The two were the top vote-getters in the June 2 primary, but neither candidate reached the 35% vote threshold needed to win the nomination outright.

The winner of the runoff will enter the general election against Democratic former state Sen. Dan Ahlers with a significant advantage in the reliably Republican state that hasn't had a Democratic governor since the 1970s.

Rhoden was lieutenant governor when he assumed the top job in early 2025 after then-Gov. Kristi Noem stepped down to join President Donald Trump's Cabinet. In addition to Rhoden and Doeden, the primary field included U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson and state House Speaker Jon Hansen.

Doeden placed first in the primary with about 31% of the vote with a close three-way race for the second runoff slot. Rhoden received about 25% of the vote, followed by Johnson at 23% and Hansen at about 21%.

Two key counties to watch are on opposite ends of the state. Minnehaha County on the eastern border is home to Sioux Falls. Pennington County on the western border is home to Rapid City. Together, they are home to a third of the state's registered Republicans and helped Doeden secure his first-place primary showing.

Doeden narrowly edged Johnson in Minnehaha County and had about a 7-point lead over second-place Rhoden in Pennington County. Doeden also carried most of the small, rural counties across eastern South Dakota.

Rhoden helped secure a runoff berth with his wins across central and northwestern South Dakota, including key leads in Meade, Lawrence and Hughes County, which includes Pierre, the state capital. The three counties combined are home to about 10% of the state's registered Republicans.

Lincoln County in the suburbs south of Sioux Falls could be another key battleground in the runoff. It's the state's third-most populous county and has the highest population of any county where neither Doeden nor Rhoden placed first or second.

Here are some of the key facts about the election and data points the AP Decision Team will monitor as the votes are tallied:

When do polls close?

Polls close at 7 p.m. local time, which is 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. ET. Polls in most of the state are in Central time and close at 8 p.m. ET, but some polls are in Mountain time and close at 9 p.m. ET.

What's on the ballot?

The Associated Press will provide vote results and declare winners in the Republican primary runoff for governor.

Who gets to vote?

Only registered Republicans may vote in the Republican primary runoff for governor. Republicans who did not vote in the June 2 state primary may still vote in the runoff.

How many voters are there?

As of June 1, there were about 676,000 registered voters in South Dakota, including about 322,000 active registered Republicans, about 137,000 active registered Democrats, about 157,000 active independent voters or those not affiliated with any political party, and about 57,000 inactive voters not identifiable by party. The rest were affiliated with other parties.

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How many people actually vote?

About 136,000 votes were cast in the Republican gubernatorial primary on June 2.

How much of the vote is cast early or by absentee ballot?

About 19% of the 2024 primary vote and about 20% of the 2022 primary vote was cast before primary day.

When are early and absentee votes released?

In South Dakota, counties tend to release results from all voting methods together over the course of the night. Roughly four out of every five counties in South Dakota release at least some in-person Election Day results in their first vote updates, along with results from mail voting and early in-person voting.

How long does vote-counting usually take?

In the June 2 Republican primary for governor, the AP first reported results at 9:01 p.m. ET, or one minute after polls closed. About half the total vote had been counted by 10:57 p.m. ET. The last vote update of the night was at 3:36 a.m. ET with almost every vote counted.

When will the AP declare a winner?

The AP does not make projections and will declare a winner only when it's determined there is no scenario that would allow a trailing candidate to close the gap. If a race has not been called, the AP will continue to cover any newsworthy developments, such as candidate concessions or declarations of victory. In doing so, the AP will make clear that it has not yet declared a winner and explain why.

How do recounts work?

Recounts in South Dakota are automatic only in cases of tie votes. Losing candidates for statewide office may request a recount if the vote margin is 0.25% or less of the total votes cast. The AP may declare a winner in a race that is subject to a recount if it can determine the lead is too large for a recount or legal challenge to change the outcome.

Are we there yet?

As of Tuesday, there will be 98 days until the 2026 midterm elections.

WORKERS AT SOUTH DAKOTA STATE PENITENTIARY JOIN TEAMSTERS

Local 120 Continues Organizing Streak in South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D., July 27, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Maintenance workers at the South Dakota State Penitentiary have voted overwhelmingly to join Teamsters Local 120.

"We didn't fold when DOC administration tried to intimidate us with meetings and high-level pressure — we stood our ground," said Chris Pick, a maintenance worker at the South Dakota State Penitentiary and new member of local 120. "We were done being ignored and done working without a real, enforceable contract. So, we took a stand, stuck together, and won our vote. We've earned better, and we're done settling for less. That's why we joined North America's strongest union. We're proud to be Teamsters — and we're ready to fight for the contract we deserve."

The new Teamsters work at the largest prison in the state of South Dakota and are responsible for the upkeep of the facility and handling repairs, while ensuring the highest level of safety and security.

"Working at a Level IV correction facility is no easy task," said James Heeren, a business agent at Local 120. "These workers' labor is essential to prison operations — and now, as Teamsters, they will have a collective voice to ensure they are treated as so by management. We look forward to getting them the strongest possible contract and continue organizing workers across South Dakota."

Teamsters Local 120 proudly represents over 15,000 workers in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

A magnitude 7.1 earthquake shakes part of southern Japan but no tsunami detected

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — An earthquake registering a magnitude of 7.1 shook Kumamoto on Japan's southern main island of Kyushu late Tuesday afternoon and a tsunami advisory was temporarily issued, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

The agency said the advisory covered the nearby Ariake and Yatsushiro Seas on the western coasts of Kumamoto, Nagasaki, Fukuoka and Saga prefectures about 900 kilometers (560 miles) southwest of Tokyo. The advisories were lifted within two hours.

The U.S. Geological Survey initially said the earthquake had a magnitude of 7.1, but revised it later to 6.8.

Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, in a message posted on X, urged residents to avoid the coastline where a tsunami of up to 1 meter (3 feet) was predicted. She said her government has set up a task force to gather information, assess possible damage and prepare for rescue operations if needed.

Takaichi later told reporters that there have been reports of a number of injuries and damages to roads, bridges and buildings, as well as blackouts and fire, though details are still unclear. Takaichi warned people cooking to be careful with fire and with shards of broken glass.

"We are putting people's lives as the top priority," Takaichi said, urging residents in the strongly shaken areas to use caution in light of possible strong aftershocks.

Shinji Kiyomoto, JMA's Earthquake and Tsunami Countermeasures planning officer, told a news conference that the shallow earthquake was triggering active seismic activity in the area, urging residents to especially be cautious over the next two to three days for another big quake. He said, however, that no tsunami was observed from the inland quake.

Japan's Fire and Disaster Management Agency said there were no reports of damage to major public facilities and infrastructure in the region, though authorities were still assessing the extent of damage from the quake. Local fire departments received many emergency calls.

Japan's Nuclear Regulation Authority said no abnormalities were found at three nearby nuclear power plants.

Shinkansen bullet trains and local trains in Kyushu have been suspended for safety checks, while the runway at the Aso Kumamoto Airport was closed, with "no prospect of resuming operations" according to a notice on the airport's website.

The Japanese Defense Ministry said it dispatched aircraft to the area to assess the situation.

Kumamoto was hit with a deadly quake in 2016 that left more than 50 people dead, 1,800 injured and tens of thousands of homes damaged or destroyed.

World shares are mixed, while South Korea's Kospi sinks nearly 11% on heavy selling of chipmakers

By CHAN HO-HIM and ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writers

HONG KONG (AP) — South Korea's Kospi index plunged nearly 11% on Tuesday on heavy selling of computer chipmaking stocks that have been battered recently by waves of fears that the boom in artificial intelligence may turn out to be a bubble.

European shares opened moderately higher after a day of losses for most Asian markets, while U.S. futures were mixed.

Oil prices declined more than 2%.

Trading was temporarily halted at times as Kospi dropped to its lowest level since April, closing 10.8% lower at 6,023.66. Shares in chipmaker Samsung Electronics sank 13.4% while those of SK Hynix tumbled 14.7%.

In early European trading, Germany's DAX gained 0.6% to 25,511.93, while the CAC 40 in Paris added 0.5% to 8,450.71. Britain's FTSE 100 picked up 0.6% to 10,846.42.

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The future for the S&P 500 slipped 0.1% while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 0.3%. On Monday, SK Hynix's U.S.-traded shares fell to below the \$149 initial public offering, or IPO, price for its Wall Street debut earlier this month, closing at \$143 a share.

A key factor driving the selling of AI-related shares, analysts said, is the expectation that rising competition from Chinese AI startups and chipmakers might undermine gains for leading global companies whose shares have skyrocketed in the past months due to the AI frenzy.

A 466% jump in the price of Chinese memory chipmaker CXMT in its trading debut Monday underscored such concerns. CXMT raised at least \$8.6 billion in its IPO in Shanghai. But its shares dropped 4% Tuesday.

Tuesday's chip stock sell-off also followed a report in the technology news publication The Information that China has begun mass production of homegrown deep ultraviolet, or DUV, chipmaking tools. Such equipment is used to print minute circuit patterns onto silicon wafers.

"We believe the market was likely spooked by the progress of China's chipmaking equipment capabilities, and was worried that this progress would threaten the competitive position of global chipmaking and chip equipment leaders," said equity analyst Jing Jie Yu of Morningstar.

"That said, we believe the sell-off today is largely a knee-jerk reaction and overdone," he said. The dominant position of global chipmaking leaders is unlikely to be threatened meaningfully, he said.

Elsewhere in Asia, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 dropped 4% to 62,364.92. The Taiex in Taiwan skidded 4.7%, with shares of leading chipmaker TSMC, or Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co, falling 3%.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 0.4% to 25,310.85, while the Shanghai Composite index lost 1.2% to 3,813.31.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 gained 0.6% to 8,947.80.

India's Sensex edged 0.1% lower.

Oil prices extended their declines as the U.S. and Iran refrained from strikes in their on-again, off-again war. Regional officials said Monday that mediators had made progress in getting the U.S. and Iran back to negotiations after they paused attacks.

Brent crude, the international standard, fell 2.2% to \$84.03 a barrel. It was trading around \$72 per barrel before the Iran war began in late February.

U.S. benchmark crude oil lost 1.7% to \$81.20 a barrel.

On Monday, the benchmark S&P 500 gained less than 0.1%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average ended 0.5% higher, while the technology-heavy Nasdaq composite edged 0.2% lower.

Shares of several major chipmaking stocks declined, pulling benchmarks lower. Shares of AMD, or Advanced Micro Devices, sank 5.2%, Nvidia dropped 5%, and Micron Technology fell 2.3%.

In other dealings early Tuesday, the U.S. dollar rose to 163.82 Japanese yen from 163.75 yen. The euro fell to \$1.1367 from \$1.1369.

France orders 4,000 more evacuated as heat threatens fragile hold on vast wildfire

By THOMAS ADAMSON, MARK CARLSON and EMMA DA SILVA undefined

LEGE-CAP FERRET, France (AP) — French authorities ordered nearly 4,000 people evacuated Tuesday from tourist sites on the Atlantic coast as returning heat threatened firefighters' fragile hold on a vast wildfire west of Bordeaux.

The new evacuations deepened a wildfire emergency of exceptional scale across southwestern Europe. Fires in France and Spain have forced roughly 330,000 people to evacuate, while Spain entered its fourth heat wave of the summer with several blazes still out of control, including its largest on record.

Firefighters had held the French blaze in check through a calm night, bringing flare-ups near coastal dunes under control and keeping the burned area unchanged at 420 square kilometers (162 square miles).

Authorities described the Gironde fire as stabilized, not fixed — meaning it could still spread again as temperatures rose and humidity fell.

The precautionary evacuation order covered campsites, holiday villages, tourist residences and leisure

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parks around the resort of Lacanau, including Lacanau Ocean and both shores of Lacanau lake, Gironde regional authorities said.

"We are at a point of fragility," Eric Brocardi, spokesperson for France's national firefighters federation, told BFMTV on Tuesday. "We will continue attacking this fire despite the forecast rise in temperatures."

The blaze, raging since last week, has been wildly unpredictable, transforming at times into a self-feeding firestorm as it burned through an area four times the size of Paris and forced 220,000 people to evacuate homes and vacation accommodation.

Even after 24 hours without further advance, officials warned that smoldering vegetation, rising temperatures and falling humidity could produce fresh outbreaks along the vast perimeter.

Firefighters and military engineers resumed work early Tuesday on tactical firebreaks designed to prevent the flames from spreading. Authorities said 103 kilometers (64 miles) of firebreaks had been completed.

Ninety-three firefighters have been injured while battling the blaze, the prefecture said.

The A63 highway remained partly closed, while rail traffic south of Bordeaux was suspended except on the route toward Toulouse.

Thousands return as progress is made on second fire

The overnight holding action in Gironde contrasted with a clearer sign of progress in neighboring Landes, where thousands of evacuees were allowed home after a separate wildfire was fixed. The fire had displaced more than 30,000 residents and vacationers.

"The fire is fixed, which is good news in the Landes," French President Emmanuel Macron said Monday evening. Regional authorities said that meant its advance had been stopped and no new fires were breaking out.

About 15,000 people were authorized to return home Monday night in Sanguinet, Parentis-en-Born and some parts of Biscarrosse.

Residents of Biscarrosse's aviation village and a large campground were among those allowed back, although several other neighborhoods remained inaccessible.

The return marked a significant step for communities that emptied as flames swept through forests and tourist areas during the height of the summer vacation season.

Authorities warned that the Landes fire was not extinguished.

Residual hot spots, wind and drought could cause flare-ups, and surveillance and damping-down operations were expected to continue for days or possibly weeks.

Heat returns

The gains in both fire zones faced an immediate test Tuesday as temperatures began climbing again.

France's national weather service placed Gironde under a yellow heat warning from midday, forecasting inland temperatures of 33 to 35 C (91 to 95 F). Southeast winds were expected across the department, with westerly sea breezes along the coast.

More than 116,000 hectares have burned across France so far this year, according to the Interior Ministry.

Western Europe recorded its hottest June on record, with extreme heat and widespread dryness helping fires spread and intensify in France and Spain, the European Union's Copernicus climate service said.

Spain braces for worsening states

Hundreds of firefighters backed by military emergency brigades and water-dropping aircraft continued battling several major wildfires in Spain, including the largest ever recorded in the fire-prone country.

Spanish Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska said Tuesday that nonstop work through the night left him "reasonably positive," but warned that conditions could deteriorate as temperatures rose again.

Spain's national weather service said the country was entering its fourth heat wave of the summer Tuesday, with temperatures expected to exceed 40 C (104 F) in some areas.

Authorities have evacuated some 79,000 people and ordered another 30,000 to remain in their homes during an unprecedented crisis that prompted the government to declare a national emergency for wildfires for the first time.

The greatest concern remained two large fires that had at times come close to merging into a single

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mega-blaze in wooded hills about an hour's drive west of Madrid.

Another fire in the eastern province of Castellón also forced mass evacuations.

A fire burning through hilly, rural terrain in Ávila, west of Madrid, has become Spain's largest on record, scorching more than 500 square kilometers (193 square miles), the government said. That is five times the size of Barcelona.

"Look at how the valley is burned. Look at the houses, the people," said David Gonzalez, a 48-year-old gardener who used his van to deliver supplies to firefighters in Ávila.

"We are feeling a lot of anger and helplessness. It's something inhuman," he said.

Fires have burned 1,530 square kilometers (590 square miles) this year in Spain — six times the area scorched by blazes in the first half of 2025, said Sara Aagesen, the ecology minister.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has called for a national pact to fight wildfires made worse by climate change.

Zelenskyy will visit Trump at the White House before Sen. Graham's funeral

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will meet Tuesday ahead of Sen. Lindsey Graham's funeral, their second sit-down this month and after a far-right activist with the U.S. president's ear had a widely publicized change of heart on Russia's war against Ukraine.

Trump is set to welcome Zelenskyy to the White House as the Ukrainian leader travels to Washington to honor Graham, whose final act as a public official was visiting Kyiv and securing an agreement on a package of sanctions that seek to punish countries that purchase Russian oil, gas and other exports.

Zelenskyy posted on X early Tuesday that he had arrived in the U.S. and listed the goals for his visit.

"Our schedule includes meetings with President Trump, his team, and those who can support our defense," the Ukrainian leader said. "Our number one priority is anti-ballistic defense and strategic cooperation with America. Peace needs to be brought closer."

Zelenskyy is now being bolstered by an unusual source: Laura Loomer, known primarily for her incendiary social media posts and her influence with the president. Traveling through Ukraine, Loomer has witnessed Moscow's barrage firsthand and interviewed Zelenskyy while admitting she was "bamboozled by Russian propaganda."

Loomer said she spoke to Trump after she met with Zelenskyy in Ukraine last week, and she also expects to meet with the U.S. president once she returns from her trip.

"It's looking good for Ukraine, right?" Loomer said during an interview with The Associated Press. "Going into this meeting next week at the Oval Office is looking pretty good."

Ahead of the meeting, Zelenskyy has also warned that Russia has been aiding Iran as the war persists by capturing satellite imagery of U.S. bases in the Gulf region that later appear in Iran. The Ukrainian president also asserted that there was a "clear correlation" between Russia's images and subsequent Iranian strikes.

"The purpose is clear," Zelenskyy said earlier this month. "None of us in the world should turn a blind eye to one very simple fact: Evil always seeks ways to make things worse and spread further."

On Monday, Trump downplayed any impact of potential Russian assistance for Iran.

"I don't think they've been doing it, certainly not at a high level," Trump told reporters on Air Force One as he traveled to Michigan. "And if they have, it has been very un-impactful."

Still, he said he would raise the issue with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Zelenskyy has a busy itinerary during his latest visit to Washington. In addition to his White House meeting, Zelenskyy will head to the Capitol to meet with senators on Tuesday evening after Graham's funeral at Washington National Cathedral, according to a person with knowledge of the meeting who was not authorized to discuss it publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Republican leadership is hoping to advance Graham's sanctions legislation this week, although the Senate is juggling several other priorities before lawmakers leave Washington for the August recess.

The bill has dozens of backers from both parties and is seen as the main policy tribute to Graham, who died unexpectedly this month from a tear in his aorta. It imposes tariffs on goods from the world's top five purchasers of Russia oil or natural gas, including China and India.

The legislation also includes sanctions against Putin, senior Russian political and military leaders, and Russian financial institutions and energy projects.

Trump met with Zelenskyy on the sidelines of the NATO summit earlier this month in Ankara, Turkey, and announced that the U.S. will give Ukraine a license to make Patriot air defense systems, a long-running request from Kyiv in order to counter Russian missile attacks.

The air defense systems are expensive to make and are in high demand. Noting that he and Zelenskyy have "actually developed a good relationship," Trump said the U.S. will help Ukraine produce the Patriots and that the country would be able to produce them "pretty quickly."

A shootout that killed 3 at a food festival near Seattle's Space Needle may have been gang-related

By GENE JOHNSON and HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — There were at least three suspects involved in a shootout at a crowded food festival near Seattle's Space Needle over the weekend, police said Monday. One of them was among those killed in the violence.

In a document filed in juvenile court in Seattle, where a 15-year-old arrested in the case waived his initial appearance Monday, police said they believe there were at least three shooters: the 15-year-old, an acquaintance who died at the scene and "at least one other unknown suspect." Authorities had earlier said they believed there were two.

Nicole Powell, the Seattle Police Department's assistant chief of investigations, said at a news conference Monday afternoon that investigators believe the shooting may have been gang-related, with two groups firing at each other. The deceased shooter was 19.

A judge ordered the 15-year-old held in juvenile detention for investigation of firearms violations and first-degree assault. The King County prosecutor's office said it expected to receive the case from Seattle police on Wednesday for a charging decision.

The gunfire erupted around 6 p.m. Sunday in the waning hours of the Bite of Seattle, leaving the 19-year-old shooter and two others dead. At least four others, including a toddler, were injured. The annual three-day festival draws hundreds of food and retail vendors and performers to Seattle Center, a sprawling park in the shadow of the Space Needle. Many attendees rushed into campus buildings or ran from the park at the sound of the shots.

Officials provided confusing statements about the shooting

News that there were at least three suspects followed a series of confusing statements from city officials concerning the shooting.

On Sunday, the police department waited five hours to share with the public that one shooter had been arrested and that they believed another to be on the loose. Earlier, Mayor Katie Wilson had announced two people were in custody, a statement she retracted.

At a news conference before the court hearing Monday, Police Chief Shon Barnes said investigators weren't sure if the second shooter was among the dead. Neither he nor the mayor made any reference to additional shooters. Barnes had been out of town Sunday, attending a conference of Black law enforcement executives in Dallas.

The officials defended their handling of the case, saying they were trying to ensure they provided accurate information about chaotic events.

The victims included a father of three

The King County Medical Examiner's Office on Monday identified the dead as Carlos Israel Sanchez Villalba, 44; Ashley Whitehead, 56; and Junior Cee Niko Semo, 19.

Villalba was a husband and father of three known for his kindness and willingness to help others, ac-

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cording to a GoFundMe campaign launched Monday to help his family with funeral expenses. He died from a gunshot wound to his torso, while Whitehead died from a gunshot to her pelvis and Semo died from multiple gunshot wounds, according to the medical examiner's office.

Whitehead had just moved to Washington from Alabama a year ago and was enjoying the festival with one of her adult daughters when she was shot, her cousin Michelle Whitehead told The Associated Press. She was taken to the hospital and died in surgery, she said.

Ashley Whitehead adored her two adult daughters, and also loved nature and arts and crafts, her cousin said.

"I would consider her just a free spirit. She had the best sense of humor, the best gorgeous smile," she said.

During a vigil Monday night at the center, Michelle Whitehead stood among dozens of others with a sign that said "Whitehead Strong" as the group held a moment of silence and raised up flashlights on their phones to honor those that had been killed. Candles and flowers were arranged around them.

The four wounded included a 2-year-old boy, two men, ages 23 and 27, and a woman, 39, all of whom were discharged, a hospital spokesperson said.

One of the victims was walking a bicycle when struck, the court document said. The toddler was with his mother.

Vendors returned to venue to clean up

Vendors were allowed to return to the campus Monday morning to collect their equipment. Skewered squid on grills, roasted ducks in ovens and plates full of food were among the items left behind as people fled.

Near the spot of the shooting, a stain of what appeared to be blood was still visible.

Dozens of officers were providing security at the event and responded in seconds, with at least one observing a suspect firing, authorities said. Police searched an IMAX theater on the grounds where they initially believed a second shooter had fled.

Adam Lombardo, who had a Burmese food stand at the festival, described the panic of fleeing people as a "stampede." As he gathered his equipment Monday, he described how police escorted food vendors back to the crime scene to turn off their ovens and stoves.

"They just came to enjoy a food festival with people, with friends, with new friends, and they lost their lives in just what sounds like meaningless bloodshed," he said.

A nearby resident offered shelter to people fleeing

Moises Perez, 30, was cooking in his apartment next to the Seattle Center when he spotted people running and yelling outside his window. When he opened his door, he heard gunshots and started ushering more than a dozen people, mostly women and children, inside.

"I was like, 'OK, we need to help these people,'" said Perez, a construction worker who had attended the food festival that morning. He said losing his brother to gun violence in Mexico years ago made him determined to help the people trying to get to safety.

He and his roommate, William Large, 25, made sure the door was locked and started directing people to the bathroom and hallway, and told them they could stay as long as they needed.

"They were definitely in shock. I know that a lot of people were crying, people were screaming, people were just in complete fear," said Large, who works in social services.

About 30 minutes later, Perez walked out to see what had happened. He found a woman shot in the leg being helped by emergency officials.

The festival started in 1982 and draws 350,000 attendees, according to its website.

Netanyahu's first meeting with Trump since the Iran war began is a chance to smooth over strains

By ERIN CUNNINGHAM and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's meeting with President Donald Trump on Tuesday is the first since the two leaders launched a joint war against Iran and a chance for Netanyahu

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to smooth out strains in their relationship.

The meeting comes as both face growing pressures at home. Netanyahu is up for reelection and is embattled in part because of his deteriorating relationship with Trump. Trump is under pressure to end an unpopular war that has wreaked economic havoc and driven prices higher ahead of midterm elections this November.

The two leaders also plan to discuss the framework agreement the U.S. and Israel signed with Lebanon over the Israel-Hezbollah war and the expansion of the Abraham Accords, according to a White House official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to preview the meeting.

"We have a little difference," Trump said Monday when asked by reporters if he and the Israeli prime minister were on the same page with Iran. "But pretty close, yeah."

Trump and Netanyahu's relationship has ebbed before

Trump has had a hot-and-cold history with Netanyahu over the years, but upon his return to the White House last year, their alliance seemed stronger than ever. When they started the war together in February, it was with a united front, touting their respective militaries as acting in lockstep to take out Iran's leadership and pave the way for a government more friendly to the West.

But as Iran fought back — sending drones and missiles slamming into U.S. bases and high-rises in cities in the Gulf, and choking off the Strait of Hormuz — Trump came under immense pressure both at home and by allies in the region to end the conflict.

Since then, Netanyahu, who wanted to continue the fighting in Iran and against its ally, Hezbollah, in Lebanon, has been sidelined as Trump sought a deal with Tehran. His visit to the White House this week comes as the disagreements with Trump and Vice President JD Vance have burst into the open over the war in Iran and more.

"The Americans are making it clear to the Israelis they are the ones who are running the war," Israeli journalist and political analyst Amit Segal wrote Monday in the daily newspaper, Israel Hayom. "It is clear to everyone that Israel has been put in the back seat."

Netanyahu keeping focus on Iran's nuclear program

With U.S.-Iran tensions flaring again in recent weeks, Netanyahu plans to share with Trump Israeli intelligence on Tehran's nuclear program, according to a person familiar with Netanyahu's visit, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

On Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morning Futures" with Maria Bartiromo, Netanyahu said he hoped to sit down with Trump "to hear what he has in mind" for Iran.

"Because I think, in many ways, it's his decision" on how to move forward, Netanyahu said. "If he can do so without returning to intense military fighting, that's fine. Why not?"

"But one way or the other, they have to end their nuclear program," he said of Iran.

Netanyahu also used the interview to warn Iran against attacking his country, saying Israel's response would be "very forceful."

Steps to allow other forces in Gaza and in Lebanon

But even as Netanyahu sees an opportunity, he also needs to persuade Trump that he won't play spoiler to U.S. diplomatic and reconstruction efforts in Gaza and in Lebanon, where the president has previously complained that "too many people are being killed" by Israeli strikes.

Israel has taken recent steps in both places.

In Lebanon, where the Israeli military occupies much of the south, Israel agreed to allow the Lebanese army to deploy to some villages as part of a "pilot program" testing their ability to secure areas where Hezbollah once operated. The U.S. State Department said Monday the next round of talks between Israel and Lebanon will take place next week in Rome with a focus on expanding the program.

On Gaza, Israel's security cabinet green-lit on Sunday a measure that would, in theory, grant entry to the first members of an international stabilization force outlined last year in a U.S.-backed ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas.

Few countries have pledged troops for the force, however, and Israel would approve their entry into

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Gaza on a case-by-case basis.

The troops — including from Morocco and Uganda — would only be allowed to operate in a small, desolate area in Rafah in the south, where the plan is to vet and house some displaced Palestinians.

The Israeli military continues to carry out strikes it says target militants but that have also killed civilians.

Support for Israel has eroded

Israel has lost a significant amount of bipartisan support in the United States, particularly over its conduct in Gaza.

In June, Vance warned Israeli officials that Trump was their only friend among world leaders. Vance is expected to attend the meeting with Netanyahu, according to a person familiar with the plan who was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

An AP-NORC poll published earlier this month found a dramatic erosion of support among American adults for Israel.

"We've lost America. Thank you, Bibi," wrote Ben Caspit, a political commentator for Israel's Maariv newspaper.

Wisconsin voters begin casting ballots at the polls in chaotic Democratic governor's race

By SCOTT BAUER and CYBELE MAYES-OSTERMAN Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Early in-person voting begins Tuesday in swing state Wisconsin's chaotic Democratic primary for governor, with a democratic socialist trying to overcome the incumbent governor's choice to replace him.

Democrats are hoping to retain control of the governor's office and flip both chambers of the Legislature to earn full control of Wisconsin state government for the first time since 2010. But they have failed to coalesce around one candidate for the top job, spurring fears that they could miss an opportunity to win in November.

Early in-person voting begins as Democrats meet for only debate

The five Democratic candidates are scheduled to meet for their only debate Tuesday night ahead of the Aug. 11 primary.

Insurgent democratic socialist Francesca Hong has garnered strong support among the most liberal wing of the party. Former Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, who narrowly lost a 2022 U.S. Senate race, is hoping that voters in his hometown of Milwaukee help him overcome Hong, whose base is in Madison. Those two cities hold the largest number of Democratic voters in Wisconsin.

Also in the race is Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley, who is running with the endorsement of Gov. Tony Evers. Crowley had dropped out of the race on July 8, but got back in on July 17, the day after Lt. Gov. Sara Rodriguez dropped out amid a campaign finance scandal.

Both Crowley and Barnes are trying to become Wisconsin's first Black governor.

The winner of the Democratic primary will advance to take on Republican U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany in November. Tiffany, who is running with the backing of President Donald Trump in a state Trump won in 2016 and 2024, faces only nominal opposition in the primary.

Judge hearing arguments over canceling already-filed absentee ballots

And hours after polls open for early voting, a judge was scheduled to hear arguments in a Democratic lawsuit seeking to allow voters who already returned their ballots to cancel those and cast a new one. As of Monday, more than 100,000 ballots had already been returned by mail.

The lawsuit was filed last week with support from the Wisconsin Democratic Party. They are seeking an order from a judge to immediately allow for already-cast ballots to be canceled, a rarely used practice known as ballot spoiling.

Democrats argue it's necessary given that Rodriguez and former state economic director Missy Hughes ended their campaigns, and Crowley got back in the race, after tens of thousands of ballots had already been returned.

Hughes and Rodriguez's names remain on the ballot.

In-person absentee voting, which began Tuesday, runs through Aug. 9. All absentee ballots must be received by the time polls close on election day Aug. 11 in order to be counted.

Senate expected to confirm Jay Clayton as next intelligence director

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate is expected to confirm Jay Clayton on Tuesday to become head of the nation's intelligence agencies, ensuring that a permanent director is in place as the midterm elections approach.

Clayton is expected to be confirmed along party lines after a contentious hearing two weeks ago in which he repeatedly refused to say that former President Joe Biden won the 2020 election. Still, Democrats have said they have more confidence in Clayton than they do in Trump's temporary pick for the job, Bill Pulte, who has no known intelligence experience and investigated the president's perceived enemies in his previous post as a federal housing regulator.

Senators from both parties have expressed concerns about Pulte, who took over on an interim basis last month after Tulsi Gabbard resigned. Pulte was in charge when Trump delivered a speech from the White House earlier this month doubling down on his false claims about the 2020 election, which he lost, and released classified documents that he said were relevant to his arguments.

Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, the top Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee, said he had worked in the past with Clayton, who is the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York and a former Securities and Exchange Commission chairman. After the hearing, Warner said he would oppose Clayton's nomination but acknowledged that Democrats are "between a rock and a hard place" with Pulte in the job.

The Senate voted 51-43 along party lines on Monday to advance Clayton's nomination.

Clayton won't say Biden won the election

The Democratic pushback on Clayton comes as Trump has made revisiting 2020 a primary focus, repeatedly trying to cast doubt on that election and amplifying debunked theories about Biden's win.

Clayton told senators that he had no involvement with Trump's primetime speech, but he said repeatedly that the election was "certified" for Biden, declining to say outright that the Democrat won.

Warner said at the end of the hearing that he was "bitterly disappointed." Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said he thought Clayton's performance was "abysmal," and that "makes it much less likely that he will get Democratic votes."

Republicans tried to quickly confirm Clayton

Republicans were hoping to confirm Clayton in June so he could replace Gabbard without Pulte serving as interim. But Trump delayed Clayton's nomination before the Senate left for a two-week recess, allowing Pulte to take the job temporarily.

Clayton did not mention Pulte in the confirmation hearing. But he emphasized his own government and national security experience, attempting to assuage senators in both parties.

"I saw firsthand how a strong national security apparatus depends on decisive judgment, discipline, integrity, and effective communication and cooperation across different branches of the government," Clayton said. "If confirmed as Director of National Intelligence, I will commit to upholding these principles every day."

Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Tom Cotton, R-Ark., who expressed frustration last month when the hearing was delayed, said that Clayton has a reputation for operating with "morality, decency and integrity" in his previous positions.

"Jay Clayton is a highly qualified nominee with a deep experience combating a wide range of national security threats," Cotton said.

Lindsey Graham's funeral to draw Trump remarks and world leaders in Washington

By LISA MASCARO, MEG KINNARD and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Lindsey Graham, the son of pool hall owners who rose to become one of his generation's more influential U.S. politicians at home and abroad, will be eulogized Tuesday during memorial services across Washington.

Graham's remains will arrive at the U.S. Capitol, where the Republican served for more than 30 years as an indefatigable dealmaker who talked and laughed and badgered his colleagues into action. Later, a funeral service will be held at Washington National Cathedral with lawmakers and foreign leaders, a testament to his stature on the global stage.

President Donald Trump is expected to deliver remarks at the cathedral, alongside Fox News' Sean Hannity and other conservative leaders. Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu and Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy are planning to be in attendance, a nod to Graham's role as a foremost believer in the power of the U.S. and its military to intervene in the world's problems.

It's the start of two days of services, with burial Wednesday in his home state of South Carolina. Graham died suddenly on July 11 at his home in Washington of a likely aortic tear, according to preliminary findings. He had just returned from a whirlwind trip to a NATO summit in Turkey, where he celebrated his birthday, and a visit to Ukraine. He was 71.

A place of honor to 'say our final goodbyes'

The morning service in the Capitol Rotunda provides a place of tribute where former presidents and military leaders and other prominent Americans have been memorialized. In recognition of his service in the Air Force, an Armed Forces Body Bearer Team will carry Graham's remains into the Capitol. Vice President JD Vance is expected to speak.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune said earlier it was only fitting to give Graham a special Capitol honor "as we say our final goodbyes."

"For so many of us in the Senate and the House, myself included, Lindsey was more than a colleague, he was a friend," Thune said.

First elected to Congress in the 1994 Republican revolt that swept the GOP to power, Graham was part of a new era of conservatives to take their seats in the House — and among the first Republicans from his Southern state since Reconstruction.

He quickly rose to prominence as a manager in Bill Clinton's presidential impeachment, and was elected to the Senate in the 2002 election. There, he formed alliance with Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Sen. Joe Lieberman, I-Conn., in what would become the "three amigos" globetrotting the world focused on national security issues.

For decades, Graham had been at the center of the action — a member of virtually every bipartisan gang in Congress — with a relentless ability to shapeshift and adapt to political realities, particularly when it came to Trump.

The 'Trump whisperer' had one last mission: Russia sanctions

Perhaps nowhere was Graham's political dexterity on display as when he navigated his on-again, off-again relationship with Trump.

Graham had denounced Trump as a "kook" who was "unfit for office" when the two were early rivals during the 2016 presidential primary campaign.

Once Trump was elected, Graham gradually situated himself alongside the new president — until Trump sparked the mob who stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, trying to overturn Joe Biden's election.

"Count me out. Enough is enough," Graham said that night in a fiery floor speech.

Weeks later, Trump invited Graham to the president's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, rekindling their alliance. The senator had said he wanted the president to be successful, and as Trump won a second term in 2024, Graham also wanted to remain relevant.

Graham had become what Sen. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., called the "Trump whisperer," someone other

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senators — and even world leaders — relied on to understand the president's thinking.

Days before his death, Graham had won Trump's support for a long-fought bipartisan proposal to impose sanctions on Russia over the war in Ukraine, one of the strongest U.S. efforts yet to hamper Russian President Vladimir Putin's ability to prolong the conflict.

Senators said as a tribute to Graham they should quickly approve the Russian sanctions package, and they were scheduled later Tuesday to take a first procedural vote. Zelenskyy is expected to be on hand and meeting with senators in the evening.

Graham's champions and potential successors

At the Washington cathedral, a roster of socially conservative and anti-abortion leaders are expected to participate in the services, including Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council, Marjorie Jones Dannenfelser of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America and the Reverend William Franklin Graham III.

Graham never married, but he helped support his younger sister, Darline Graham, who is now a potential successor in the Senate.

She has been appointed by the state's governor to fill the remainder of his term in the Senate, and is running in a potentially crowded primary field for the fall election. The filing period for the special primary election closes Tuesday, with voting set for Aug. 11.

While Graham was at college, his mother died of Hodgkin lymphoma. Months later, his father died and Graham started his first semester of law school. He became the guardian for his sister, who was then 13, and later in life often extolled the benefits of Social Security that helped keep them financially afloat.

Graham went on to serve as a judge advocate general in the Air Force, and remained a reserve or National Guard member for decades. In the Senate, Graham briefly switched back to active status to help advise the Air Force during the Iraq War. He was awarded the Bronze Star medal for service in 2014 before formally retiring as a colonel in 2015.

Mediators see progress in efforts to halt Iran war as drone attacks rattle region

By SAMY MAGDY and ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Mediators have achieved progress in getting the United States and Iran back to negotiations, regional officials said Monday, after both sides paused attacks following a period of rapidly escalating tensions. But scattered attacks by armed groups across the region underscored the lingering tensions.

Saudi Arabia said it had shot down drones fired by Iran-backed militias in Iraq that had targeted its petroleum facilities. Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen meanwhile claimed to have attacked Saudi oil facilities as part of a separate but related conflict. It was unclear if they referred to the same attack.

Neither the U.S. nor Iran reported carrying out any attacks for three days — a respite after about two weeks of sustained bombardments that led to increasing fears of a return to all-out war.

U.S. President Donald Trump said Iran had asked for more discussions, reaching out directly "because we've been hitting them very hard." Iran has said there are no direct talks underway.

"We're having good talks, so we'll see what happens," Trump told reporters Monday on Air Force One. "I think there's a good chance that something could happen. And if it does, good. If it doesn't, we go back to doing what we were doing two days ago."

The two regional officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the closed-door talks, said mediators led by Qatar and Pakistan were working to bridge the gap between Washington and Tehran to return to an interim ceasefire deal that had collapsed after exchanges of fire.

No strikes over the weekend

In addition to the attack on Saudi Arabia, two drone attacks were reported against a Kurdish Iranian dissident group in Iraq on Monday, and Jordan said it had shot down two drones, without saying where they originated. There were no reports of casualties or damage.

Iran and Ukraine, meanwhile, have been publicly feuding since Ukraine fired on at least one Iranian

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vessel in the Caspian Sea over the weekend. Iran, which said a sailor had been killed in the attack, is an important ally of Russia in its war against Ukraine and helped Moscow build up its drone expertise.

The U.S. paused attacks after targeting Iranian coastal areas and infrastructure in a nearly two-week escalation sparked by Iran's firing at ships trying to transit the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial waterway for global oil shipments. Iran had responded to the strikes with missile and drone attacks on countries hosting U.S. troops, killing at least three service members at a base in Jordan and one in Iraq.

Iran halted its attacks following the American pause, Tehran's army spokesperson told Iranian state TV on Sunday.

Questions about US munitions stockpile

The Iran war has drawn down the U.S. stockpile of key weapons systems like missiles and interceptors, analysts say.

Asked if the U.S. munitions stockpile was running low, Trump said both that it was "in very good shape," and "I'd like to have more, to be honest." Experts have questioned how long both the U.S. and Iran can afford to keep up attacks.

Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has told Trump that the state of the country's stockpile could have an impact on military operations in Iran, a U.S. official said.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive conversations, said this message was delivered as part of Caine's regular duties of providing military advice and options to Trump.

Caine told lawmakers at a hearing last week that "airpower has its limits" in achieving military objectives. The U.S. military has employed airstrikes almost exclusively against Iran.

Regional officials cite progress in talks

One of the regional officials who spoke to AP on Monday described the progress made in mediation efforts as "significant." He said mediators were working with Iran and Oman on a mechanism for managing vessels' transit through the Strait of Hormuz, the flashpoint for the latest strikes and counterstrikes.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Esmail Baghaei, said during a news conference in Tehran on Monday that "mediators may convey messages to us from the American side" but that there were no direct negotiations.

He said Iran and Oman, which lies on the other side of the Strait of Hormuz, talked Friday and Saturday on how to manage ship traffic through the waterway.

Their aim is to "develop mechanisms to ensure safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz while respecting the sovereign rights and sovereignty of both coastal states, as well as Iran's security and national interests" Baghaei said. He stressed that the waterway remains closed.

Tehran has asserted that the interim deal with the U.S. allows it to manage shipping on the waterway and potentially charge fees, and it has objected to U.S. efforts to support an alternative route that passes close to Oman. The strait was open to all without fees before the war.

The U.S. military on Monday said its recently reimposed naval blockade against Iran continued, with 17 commercial ships redirected, two disabled and two boarded.

The 60-day period established by the interim deal in mid-June is now well into its second half, and major issues that were meant to be negotiated — notably Iran's nuclear program at the heart of tensions — have been set aside as mediators try to keep both sides talking.

Shipping traffic on the strait is at a 3-week low

Concerns have grown about shipping through another crucial waterway in the region, the Bab al-Mandeb strait to the Red Sea. The Houthis last week threatened a blockade of Saudi shipping there, and fired on at least one Saudi tanker.

Global energy supplies and the economy remain in the balance as gasoline prices have risen again.

Commercial shipping traffic in the Strait of Hormuz was at a three-week low, a maritime body overseen by the U.S. Navy said Sunday, adding that no new attacks had been confirmed in the past 72 hours. It said traffic remained steady through Bab el-Mandeb.

Netanyahu says he 'fully' backs Trump's efforts

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he plans to meet with Trump in Washington on Tuesday. They last met in Washington in February, weeks before they launched the war that killed Iran's senior leaders, including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon fired at Israel two days after the war began, and Israel responded with airstrikes and a ground invasion.

The U.S. State Department said Monday that the next round of talks between Israel and Lebanon will take place next week in Rome with a focus on expanding "pilot zones" in which Israeli forces will withdraw and turn over security to the Lebanese Armed Forces.

Talks between the two countries have been going on for months in an effort to eliminate the Hezbollah movement as a force in Lebanon.

Wisconsin tornado causes extensive damage and cuts power to thousands of homes

By SCOTT BAUER, CYBELE MAYES-OSTERMAN and JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — A tornado struck northeastern Wisconsin on Monday, blackening the midday sky and sending workers sheltering in office basements as fierce winds splintered homes, scattered twisted metal across a highway and knocked out power to more than 30,000 people.

There were no reports of fatalities or injuries as of Monday evening, but emergency officials were still searching, said Gordon Hintz, Winnebago County's top elected official.

The National Weather Service confirmed a tornado in Winnebago County, about 90 miles (145 kilometers) northwest of Milwaukee. Damage was reported in cities including Appleton and Menasha, where Police Chief Matt Albrecht said some homes and businesses were "severely impacted."

The twister was spun off by a large storm system that moved through the Great Lakes, fueled by a buildup of heat and humidity, National Weather Service meteorologist Scott Berschback said.

Hintz said it could be several days before power in the stricken area is restored.

Heather Schroeder said she heard cracking and popping all around her as the tornado tore apart a laundromat, a bakery and a neighborhood tavern that were clustered around a street corner in Menasha, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) south of Green Bay.

Rescue workers pulled someone out of one of the buildings, said Schroeder, who works nearby. She said it wasn't clear if the person had survived. Cars were turned upside-down, and there was a gas leak at the laundromat, she said.

"There's nothing left," Schroeder said.

The twister ripped roofs off homes and flipped vehicles in one neighborhood in Menasha, just blocks from the shores of Lake Winnebago. Video showed a trail of destruction, with some homes reduced to their outer walls.

Greg Van Driest was working in downtown Appleton when the sky got as dark as night.

"The word we all were using was 'ominous,'" he said. "It's like, 'Whoa, look at that.' ... You looked outside and you thought it was three in the morning, it was that dark."

No reports of deaths or injuries, but searches continue

Hintz said he's received multiple reports of buildings destroyed and vehicles overturned. All storm warnings that could be made ahead of time to get people to safety were activated, he said.

"Obviously when you look at the damage, Mother Nature doesn't really care," he said.

Weather service meteorologist Holley Kamba said the agency was receiving reports of damage in southern Outagamie County and eastern Winnebago County,

"We have been receiving calls of damage with a lot of trees down, power lines down," Kamba said. "We've been searching for some pictures of the structural damage."

Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers said the state "is ready to assist communities however we can."

Weather service meteorologists in Green Bay issued a tornado warning at 11:59 a.m. for the Fox Cities region, which includes Appleton, Menasha and Neenah. It warned of flying and dangerous debris, damage

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to mobile homes, vehicles and trees, while warning people to seek shelter.

The area had already been under a severe thunderstorm warning for about 45 minutes, and meteorologists indicated the storm was capable of producing winds up to 60 mph (97 kph).

Extensive damage and an entire city without power

Images on social media showed extensive damage in Appleton, including homes stripped of roofs, a car tossed onto a lawn, and streets littered with tree limbs.

The Appleton Police Department said on social media that it was aware of "several downed trees and large tree limbs throughout the city." Traffic signals were out and some roads were "heavily backed up," the department said.

Outagamie County Executive Tom Nelson said he didn't have any confirmation of fatalities or injuries in the county, which includes Appleton. But he said there was "extensive and severe damage" in Menasha and Fox Crossing.

"All indications are that this was a devastating system that has caused extensive damage," Nelson said.

In Menasha, the electric utility said the entire city of about 18,000 people was believed without power. Authorities were opening a shelter at a church.

The storm hit Menasha and the east side of neighboring Fox Crossing at around 12:20 p.m., Albrecht said.

"At this point, we are unaware, unsure of how bad the damage is because many roads in those same areas are impassable," Albrecht said, adding emergency crews were seeking to enter the affected area to "look for injuries, look for victims" and clear the roads.

He urged people to stay away from the hard-hit areas: "Right now, there are many downed power lines, downed trees, multiple hazardous situations. Please stay out."

Later Monday the storm was clearing out of Wisconsin and moving south of Milwaukee through the Chicago area as it began to dissipate, he said.

Trump administration urges Supreme Court to allow order targeting mail-in voting before midterms

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration asked the Supreme Court on Monday to clear the way for an executive order from President Donald Trump that could dramatically change mail-in voting ahead of November's midterm elections.

The Justice Department asked the justices to halt for now lower court decisions blocking the sweeping changes in nearly half the country.

The request comes shortly after Trump delivered a primetime address elevating his yearslong push to raise doubts about the legitimacy of elections, and could be one of several voting-related challenges before the court ahead of the high-stakes midterm contest.

Trump ordered the government in March to create a "state citizenship list" of eligible voters and deliver mail ballots only to people on that list.

Democratic officials in 23 states and the District of Columbia sued, saying the Constitution gives states and Congress the authority to set election rules, not the president. Their attorneys have said Trump's proposed changes are ripe for abuse and could cause chaos.

A judge in Massachusetts blocked the executive order for the plaintiff states, and a divided 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals panel left her ruling in place over the weekend.

The executive order calls for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the commissioner of the Social Security Administration to send state officials federal citizenship lists to determine eligible voters. It tells the U.S. Postal Service to deliver mail ballots only to people on the lists.

The order also calls for ballots to have secure envelopes with unique barcodes for tracking. Federal funding could be withheld from states and localities that don't comply.

The appeal argues that Trump's order lays out "general policy guidance" and doesn't directly dictate how states run their elections. Solicitor General D. John Sauer asked the high court to freeze the judge's

order as lawsuits play out, calling it indefensible.

"And the injunction is especially indefensible because the agencies are still deliberating over how (if at all) to implement the Order, yet the district court preemptively decided that whatever the agencies may choose to do will necessarily be unlawful," Sauer wrote.

He urged the high court to move quickly, arguing that any new policies would have to be in place as soon as August to be effective for the November elections. A response to the appeal is due Aug. 3.

Mail balloting has long been a favorite target for Trump, even as he has used the method to cast his own votes. He has blamed it for his loss to Democrat Joe Biden in 2020 and has claimed without evidence that it opens the door to fraud. He returned to that theme Monday during an appearance at a General Motors facility in Michigan as he was making an appeal for Congress to pass his voter ID and proof-of-citizenship bill.

"And hopefully there will be no mail-in ballots," he said, calling them "inherently corrupt."

Using mail ballots has become increasingly popular with voters of both parties, with about 30% of all ballots cast that way during the 2024 presidential election, according to federal data. The process also is secure. A 2025 Brookings Institution study found only about four cases of fraud out of every 10 million mail ballots cast.

The Supreme Court has ruled against the Trump administration before on mail-in ballots, finding in June that states can count ballots that arrive after Election Day.

Trump has promoted the proposed changes in his executive order as safeguards to keep non-U.S. citizens from voting. He's also repeatedly pressed for the passage of the legislation that requires proof of citizenship to vote.

Noncitizen voting has been shown to be rare, and is a felony that can be punishable by deportation.

U.S. District Court Judge Indira Talwani in Boston, who was nominated by Democratic President Barack Obama, agreed in June to halt implementation for the Nov. 3 elections.

Her ruling differed from that of another federal judge based in Washington. U.S. District Judge Carl Nichols, who was appointed by Trump, found in May that it was too early to block the order because it had not yet been implemented.

The office of California Attorney General Rob Bonta, who is leading the lawsuit for the states, did not immediately comment on the Trump administration's appeal. New York Attorney General Letitia James' office declined to comment.

The Postal Service also would not discuss its plans regarding implementing Trump's order or its rule, citing the ongoing litigation. In Kansas, Republican Secretary of State Scott Schwab's office said it has not heard from the Postal Service about plans going forward.

Judge rules singer D4vd must stand trial in killing of 14-year-old Celeste Rivas Hernandez

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A judge ruled Monday that there is enough evidence to put D4vd on trial in the killing and dismemberment of 14-year-old Celeste Rivas Hernandez, who authorities said had threatened to expose their relationship and crater the indie-pop singer's rising career just a few days before his debut album dropped.

"i will end ur career and ur life," she told him in a text message sent the night before her death.

Los Angeles Judge Charlaine Olmedo decided that evidence presented during a preliminary hearing provided probable cause for a trial on charges of murder, continuous sexual abuse of a child under 14 and unlawful mutilation of human remains.

The dark and disturbing details presented over five days brought tears, gasps and horror to the courtroom. The evidence included grisly autopsy photos, explicit descriptions and depictions of sexual abuse and a stark picture of the final texts she sent minutes before she died and her phone went permanently silent.

The ruling was a major step in the 10-month investigation and prosecution of D4vd that began when the dismembered and decomposing body of a girl was found in the trunk of his Tesla in the Hollywood

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Hills in September while he was on tour.

D4vd shows no emotion as decision is read, and now heads to trial

D4vd, the 21-year-old whose legal name is David Burke, showed no emotion when the judge issued her ruling, watching calmly and intently in his orange jail clothes and glasses as he had throughout the proceedings.

He has pleaded not guilty. His lawyers argued that the murder evidence was insufficient, but did not argue against the other two charges. They declined to comment outside court.

Prosecutors argued that the evidence was overwhelming.

"Based on the mountains of evidence presented," Deputy District Attorney Beth Silverman said, "all of the allegations have been proved way beyond the standard required."

Los Angeles District Attorney Nathan Hochman said outside court that prosecutors presented only a "small fraction" of the evidence they have. They are still weighing whether to seek the death penalty, but Burke is eligible for it after Olmedo also found probable cause for lying in wait, killing for financial gain and killing a potential witness, special circumstances in a crime that allow for a death sentence.

Olmedo ordered that Burke continue to be held without bail. An arraignment is to be held on Aug. 31, and a trial could happen as soon as 60 days later.

The last night of Celeste Rivas Hernandez

Before the decision, prosecutors gave a moment-by-moment account of Rivas Hernandez's last night.

As she neared his Hollywood home shortly after 10 p.m. on April 23, 2025, in an Uber he had sent to pick her up, she sent her final text: "girly pop i'm almost there open ur door if ur home."

Prosecutors allege Burke stabbed her to death when she came through the door.

The night before, the two argued via text about his relationship with a woman. She sent him an angry and profanity-riddled text saying she will tell her dad so many lies about him and that she would "end ur career and ur life." She had sent several similar messages around the same time.

Prosecutors said that Burke met Rivas Hernandez when she was 11, began sexually abusing her when she was 13 and he was 18. A year before her death, the pair also exchanged messages about how she had become pregnant — she assured him the baby was his — and that she had an abortion.

During the preliminary hearing, prosecutors introduced photos of the two of them kissing and lying in bed. The pictures showed that she had "David" tattooed in red ink on a finger — one of two that had been cut off when her body was found.

Prosecutors said they have records showing Burke ordered chain saws and wading pools that he used to dismember her body in his garage, and that her DNA was found there on blood stains.

They said he then drove around for weeks and even months with the body in his trunk before the seemingly abandoned Tesla was towed from the Hollywood Hills.

Defense argues there's insufficient evidence for murder

The defense argued that the evidence didn't show the kind of malice that was required for murder.

"There's no evidence that Mr. Burke harbored a deliberate intent to kill Miss Hernandez," said Burke's attorney, Marilyn Bednarski.

She said the communications between Burke and Rivas Hernandez showed "no threat, no evidence of a history of violence" and that he had "the opposite of homicidal malice" toward her.

She argued that a medical examiner ruling that her death was a homicide from two puncture wounds was too vague and inconclusive to be evidence of murder. The defense did not directly give an alternative theory on how she died and isn't required to.

The defense also established that she had asked seven times to come to see him in the days before her death, and he reluctantly agreed only after she demanded it, and that she had threatened to kill Burke and to mutilate him.

Silverman told the judge that "the defense tried numerous times throughout these proceedings to dirty up the victim" despite her being a child.

Farrell, the detective, also said under defense questioning that the parents of both Burke and Rivas Hernandez knew about their relationship, that he had attended church with members of her family and

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that her parents had given their consent for her to go to London with him for a week.

Patrick Steinfeld, an attorney for Rivas Hernandez's family said after the hearing that they were "horrified that the defense attorneys brought up evidence to put the blame on a 14-year-old girl."

Her parents sat in the front row through most of the hearing, but sat out some of the more graphic parts and left in the middle of the sexual testimony after her mother began crying.

D4vd's career was reaching new heights at time of killing

D4vd (pronounced "David") became an online musical phenomenon as a teen with a blend of indie rock, R&B and lo-fi pop. He had huge followings on TikTok, Soundcloud and Spotify, where his top songs, including his 2022 breakthrough "Romantic Homicide," have more than a billion plays.

In 2024 he played the Coachella music festival and released his first full-length album, "Withered," two days after authorities say Rivas Hernandez was killed.

US looks to boost anti-China spending worldwide by hundreds of millions, documents say

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration is preparing to ramp up funding by hundreds of millions of dollars for programs designed to counter China's growing influence around the world, after it had put a halt to many of those initiatives last year during a flurry of budget and personnel cuts.

The administration notified Congress late last week that it intends to spend \$175.8 million to replace outdated and aging undersea telecommunications cables in the Caribbean and Central America to prevent China from moving in. The Associated Press obtained a copy of the notification on Monday.

The administration has expressed deep concern about China's activities in the Americas, pushing back on Chinese ownership of ports at either end of the Panama Canal, infrastructure projects funded by China's Belt and Road initiative in the region, and Chinese investment in the telecommunications sector.

A State Department official said China's economic activities in the Western Hemisphere pose risks to U.S. national security and prosperity. The official, who was not authorized to speak publicly to the subject and spoke on condition of anonymity, said China's offerings may seem cheaper but in the end wind up being more expensive due to cost overruns, hidden maintenance fees and poor performance.

The underseas cable funding appears to be part of a broader push to restore support for initiatives aimed at blunting Chinese influence globally that would cost many hundreds of millions of dollars more. That is even as President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping put on a show of cooperation and Xi prepares to visit the U.S. this fall.

US weighs wider spending to counter China globally

The State Department is considering spending nearly half a billion dollars more on programs aimed at China throughout the Western Hemisphere, Africa and Asia, according to an internal State Department document obtained by AP.

"The United States must respond to the CCP's growing economic, technological, and diplomatic leverage around the world which undermines our national interests," the document says, using the acronym for the Chinese Communist Party.

Many of those proposed programs are designed to "reclaim diplomatic leverage" through investments in areas where the U.S. had previously been spending money but stopped as the Elon Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, carried out deep government budget and personnel cuts last year.

Those cuts, which dismantled the U.S. Agency for International Development and eliminated several hundred diplomatic posts worldwide, also affected previously approved projects, including some aimed at countering China.

A senior U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss future administration plans, confirmed the Trump administration's intent to boost funding on countering China but could not speak to specifics. The official acknowledged discussions of large-scale projects but said many were still in the discussion phase.

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Congress told about undersea cable project to keep China away

The program described to Congress on Friday is called the "Countering CCP Control of Caribbean and Central America Undersea Cables project."

It will "fund the installation of strategically-selected undersea cable infrastructure" and support foreign governments in partnering with private sector undersea cable installers, according to the notification. The money will "support replacement of outdated undersea telecommunications cables in the Caribbean and Central America region with secure, U.S. and trusted alternatives," it said.

Even as it pursues the war with Iran and peace efforts in Gaza and Lebanon, the Trump administration has put a focus on the Western Hemisphere, capturing Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro earlier this year, ramping up pressure on Cuba's socialist government in the months since and imposing severe sanctions on the government in Nicaragua.

Under the new program, funding is anticipated to be given to or in support of undersea cable projects benefiting El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Haiti, the document said. The U.S. has tenuous ties with Nicaragua and would not be working with the government there.

China's embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Other anti-China efforts could focus on cyber and critical minerals

At the same time, the administration has drawn up plans to spend more than \$340 million for over 50 specific anti-China projects around the world, including many in the Western Hemisphere, according to the internal State Department document outlining various proposals.

The administration notified Congress in May that it had spent several hundred million dollars in counter-China funding from the 2024 budget that was approved by the Biden administration. However, many other projects funded for 2024 and 2025 had been put on hold.

Among the plans to be resurrected are the creation of security operations centers in Argentina and Belize to monitor Chinese threats to critical infrastructure and cyber platforms throughout the region. Also coming back would be initiatives to protect Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay from alleged Chinese attempts to infiltrate port operations and illegally exploit offshore fishing and critical minerals extraction.

More broadly, the proposal, which is still under consideration, would work against Chinese influence in the selection of a successor to the Dalai Lama "by developing proprietary technology to ensure secure communications and information collection." It also would go after international support for China's space program and push back against Chinese firms seeking to export surveillance and censorship technology.

The document did not describe the initiatives in detail.

Trump is expected to meet with Xi in September around the time of the annual U.N. General Assembly gathering of world leaders in New York. To prepare for that meeting, Secretary of State Marco Rubio met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi last week at a regional security conference in the Philippines.

Trump has oscillated between anger and elation with Xi, whom the U.S. leader has sought to cultivate as an ally even while China pursues goals antithetical to many of his administration's. The ultimate impact of the proposed new programs won't be known for many months or years.

Lindsay Clancy goes on trial over whether postpartum psychosis drove her to kill her 3 children

By MICHAEL CASEY and LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

PLYMOUTH, Mass. (AP) — In the months after the birth of her third child, Lindsay Clancy's mental health collapsed. Unable to sleep and stricken with thoughts of harming herself, she sought care from experts in postpregnancy mood disorders, was put on multiple psychiatric medications, and when nothing worked, checked in to a psychiatric hospital.

Nineteen days after she was discharged, she strangled her three children at their Massachusetts home.

A jury heard opening statements Monday in Clancy's murder trial, featuring dueling views about her

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mental state. Both sides agree she killed her children. They disagree over whether she should be held criminally responsible for their deaths.

The first witness was her former husband, who found the children's bodies after returning home on the day of the killings in January 2023. He has said in interviews that he forgives his wife, who he viewed as ill, not evil.

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.

Patrick Clancy testified that a month before the killings, his wife began to describe intrusive thoughts of harming the children and of suicide. He said the situation was "very confusing" because moments later, she would be making the children lunch or playing with them.

"I never saw Lindsay harm the kids," he told jurors.

Despite months of psychiatric care, changing medications and new providers, her condition worsened, he said. She became more depressed and lost weight.

The trial will hinge on Clancy's mental state

Lindsay Clancy's lawyer, Kevin Reddington, said she had postpartum psychosis, a rare mental illness linked to the stress, sleep deprivation and hormonal changes that follow childbirth. He said she also had bipolar disorder and that antidepressants prescribed after the birth of her third child worsened her condition.

"She loved those children right up to the time of their death," Reddington told jurors.

Prosecutor Shanan Buckingham argued Clancy "acted intentionally, rationally and swiftly" and bears full responsibility for the deaths.

"This was not a woman in the throes of psychosis," Buckingham said. "This is not a public debate about women's mental health and how the medical system treats women. This case is about this defendant, Lindsay Clancy."

If convicted of murder, Clancy faces life in prison without parole. If found not guilty due to a lack of criminal responsibility, she would be committed to a state mental health facility.

A grieving father testified about their last days as a family

Patrick Clancy breathed heavily as photos of his children were projected for the jury.

Cora, 5, was shown in one image wearing a red bow and skirt. Her dad said she loved princesses. Dawson, 3, loved fire trucks and "Paw Patrol." Eight-month-old Callan "was just a happy baby," his father said.

Clancy worked as a labor and delivery nurse at Massachusetts General Hospital, and Patrick testified that her anxiety about being separated from her children increased as she got closer to the end of her maternity leave.

Patrick Clancy testified that after his wife was discharged from the psychiatric hospital, the family tried to carry on with everyday life. They celebrated Cora's birthday and visited the Museum of Science and a water park, where jurors saw video of Lindsay Clancy playing with the children. Patrick said she had returned to the gym and her mood appeared steadier.

"I was hopeful," Patrick Clancy told the jury. "She seemed much better."

On the day of the killings, Lindsay Clancy took Cora to a doctor's appointment while he stayed home with Dawson and Callan. The couple exchanged photos of the children by text — Dawson had just dressed himself for the first time and Cora was behind a mask in the doctors office. Later, Lindsay Clancy built a snowman with her children and worked on art projects.

"She was having one of her best days," Patrick Clancy said.

Then, after he left the house to run errands, Lindsay Clancy strangled her children with exercise bands and tried to end her own life. She remains paralyzed from the waist down after jumping from a second-story window.

That day, Clancy said she heard voices telling her, "This is your last chance. Kill the children so you can kill yourself," according to her lawyer.

Seated in a wheelchair, Clancy wiped her eyes with a tissue at times as lawyers discussed her children. Postpartum psychosis is a rare diagnosis

Elyse Hershon, a Boston criminal defense attorney and legal analyst, said the verdict will likely depend on how the jury views Clancy's "intent and mental capacity."

"Whenever there are deaths of children, it rattles emotions," Hershon said. "Some people naturally will identify and sympathize with Clancy and her postpartum depression, and others will not be able to understand how one could end their children's lives, and demand responsibility."

While postpartum depression is fairly common among women who have given birth, postpartum psychosis affects an estimated 1 to 2 women per 1,000 births and can include hallucinations, delusions and paranoia. Most women with the condition do not harm their children.

Similar cases have led to insanity verdicts

Possibly the best-known is Andrea Yates, who drowned her five children in a bathtub in Texas in 2001. Her attorneys said she suffered from postpartum psychosis and believed killing her children would save them from hell.

Her initial murder conviction was overturned, and in a retrial she was found not guilty by reason of insanity and committed to a state mental hospital.

Dr. Nicole Cirino of Baylor College of Medicine said women in the grip of postpartum psychosis often believe they are helping their children.

In their own minds, "they may be saving their children from damnation," Cirino said.

Awareness of postpartum psychosis has grown since the Yates case, but Cirino and other maternal mental health advocates said it's rarely considered in criminal prosecutions. Illinois is the only state with a law allowing for undiagnosed or untreated postpartum depression or postpartum psychosis to be a mitigating factor in sentencing.

Savannah Guthrie makes an emotional plea to her mother's kidnappers

By The Associated Press undefined

"Today" show host Savannah Guthrie says in a new video that her family is living an unending nightmare nearly six months after her mother's disappearance and pleads with her kidnappers: "Tell us where to look for her."

The video released Monday is the latest public plea from the journalist about 84-year-old Nancy Guthrie since her disappearance on Feb. 1 from her home just outside Tucson, Arizona. Savannah Guthrie said her family will never stop looking for her.

"The world can be a cruel and unforgiving place, and I know that you have tried to do things the right way," she said. "So I'm asking you, begging you, to do the right thing now. Make the right choice. Help us find her. Tell us where to look for her. I truly believe it is never too late to do the right thing."

Authorities believe Nancy Guthrie was kidnapped, abducted or otherwise taken against her will on Feb. 1. They found blood near the front doorstep of her home just outside Tucson, and the FBI later released surveillance videos showing a masked man on the porch that night.

Volunteers and search teams scoured the nearby desert terrain filled with cactuses, bushes and boulders in the weeks after she vanished. A volunteer group recently searched for her body near the Arizona-Mexico border. Authorities have not said how many purported ransom demands were made after Guthrie's disappearance, though three news organizations reported receiving such notes and turned them over to investigators.

The FBI has discounted some of the ransom notes as nothing more than extortion attempts, but said it's still evaluating others that might be legitimate. The federal agency hasn't specified which ransom notes might be genuine.

Savannah Guthrie has previously made a series of social media postings about her mother after she went missing. In the days after the disappearance, Savannah Guthrie and her siblings acknowledged they were

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aware of media reports of a supposed ransom letter and were ready to talk and listen, but wanted proof their mother was alive. Weeks later, Savannah Guthrie said her family was offering a \$1 million reward for information leading to the recovery of her mother. She also acknowledged for the first time that her mother might not be alive, but added that there was still hope.

Trump defends his sweeping tariffs and watches 'America First' drag races during Michigan stop

By WILL WEISSERT and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

MILFORD, Mich. (AP) — President Donald Trump came to Michigan on Monday and argued that his economic policies have revived the auto industry and American manufacturing, even as some businesses contend that the sweeping tariffs he's imposed have actually hurt the state.

Trump visited a sprawling General Motors facility in the Detroit suburb of Milford that is a testing ground for its vehicles. He pumped a fist after watching a trio of drag races that involved muscle cars and luxury vehicles like the Corvette Z06, Cadillac Escalade V, and EV Hummer — events the announcer promised were "all America First power."

It was the kind of thundering speed the president is expecting at an IndyCar race in Washington next month, which is part of America's 250th birthday celebrations.

In a subsequent speech inside a design facility, the president cheered GM's plans to expand production domestically in coming years and declared himself a president who was standing up for auto workers "at long last."

"I've done more for you than your parents, OK?" he joked.

Michigan was one of the 2024 battlegrounds Trump flipped after it backed Democrat Joe Biden in 2020. But the state has seen parts of its economy affected by the president's tariffs, including on imported cars and auto parts. Automakers have long said tariffs increase the cost of doing business, which leads to higher prices for consumers.

Company officials led Trump on a tour where he saw various GM models, including the latest versions of the Chevrolet Suburban, GMC Sierra and Chevrolet Silverado — the production of which he argued had been boosted by tariffs.

At one point, POTUS grabbed a pen and signed the hood of a white Corvette that was made specifically for America's 250th birthday.

"They've come a long way," he said to reporters about the Detroit-based automaker during the tour. "It's amazing what tariffs are doing for GM." Trump said he's been good to the company but he declined to say more.

"The rest of the world doesn't love me, but that's OK," he said, alluding to tariffs. "It's called 'America first.'"

Trump's visit previews Michigan's Aug. 4 primary

The president's speech lasted more than an hour and was wide ranging — hitting on the economy, the war in Iran and the U.S. military operation that toppled the leader of Venezuela.

He also touched on communism, crime rates, his administration's efforts to transform the nation's capital and even how carefully he treads to keep from tripping while on stage or deplaning from Air Force One.

With early primary voting already underway, Trump called on stage Republican Reps. Lisa McClain, Tom Barrett and Tim Walberg, as well as gubernatorial candidate John James and Senate candidate Mike Rogers.

Rogers is unopposed in the Senate primary, but the GOP gubernatorial contest pits James, who is backed by Trump, against Perry Johnson, a businessman turned politician who has launched unsuccessful campaigns before, including for president in 2024.

Trump's new Canada tariffs could hurt Michigan

A new round of steep import levies is taking effect on dozens of U.S. trading partners. Yet Trump has singled out Canada with tariffs as high as 50% on a wide array of its products, including cars.

The GM facility he toured is in Oakland County, which encompasses much of Detroit's northern suburbs.

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Once a Republican stronghold, it has increasingly leaned Democratic, backing Biden against Trump in 2020 and Vice President Kamala Harris against Trump four years later.

GM says its facility is the oldest dedicated vehicle testing operation in the United States, where 4,200 employees work to refine nearly every vehicle the company makes before they reach consumers. It has more than 150 miles of test roads and the early innovations perfected on site include the first mass-produced automatic transmission, known as the "Hydra-Matic."

Michigan's economy relies heavily on Canada, meaning the new tariffs — coupled with inflation still running high and gas prices rising again as the already unpopular war in Iran escalates — have created additional economic concerns statewide. Some advocacy groups citing import and tariff data, says tariffs have cost Michigan businesses billions of dollars just since last spring.

The latest tariffs come at a time when voters across the country were already increasingly dissatisfied with Trump's handling of the economy.

Jason Roe, a former executive director of the Michigan Republican Party who tried unsuccessfully to distance it from Trump's "Make America Great Again" movement in 2021, said that more than coinciding with his new round of tariffs, Trump's visit is a function of Michigan's relatively late primary and is meant to ensure that James secures the nomination.

But Roe also said it was a risk for the president to tie himself too closely to top Republicans before the general election, calling it "kryptonite to November voters."

Trump, who won the White House on a promise to lower the cost of living, also has seen his approval ratings sag, meaning kitchen table issues could be a liability for Republicans trying to hold control of Congress in the Nov. 3 elections.

"We're happy to have the president here, campaigning with Republicans. We think it highlights the fact that the only thing they care about is Donald Trump and refuse to stand up to him," said Curtis Hertel, chairman of the Michigan Democratic Party. "It's good for us every time the president is here because he's incredibly unpopular."

The US and Canada have squabbled over a new border bridge

The Supreme Court struck down many of Trump's sweeping tariffs, but his administration has tried to find ways around that, including by arguing that he can impose them on Canada because that country is discriminating against American exports of products including automobiles.

But Trump's latest round of tariffs came after he voiced frustration with Canada for having retaliated and imposed its own levies on U.S. imports in response to Trump's initial tariffs last year. Trump launched the first round after alleging Canada should do more to stop fentanyl smuggling.

In January, he visited a Ford plant in Dearborn and addressed the Detroit Economic Club, offering a defense of tariffs even as auto industry leaders blamed them for increasing the cost of doing business. The president marked his second term's first 100 days with a rally in Warren, where he mostly mentioned grievances left over from the 2024 campaign,

Monday's visit coincided with the opening of a new bridge linking Detroit and Windsor, Ontario, that was beset by tensions between the U.S. and Canadian governments.

Canada canceled a planned joint celebration for the \$4.7 billion Gordie Howe International Bridge and instead held its own event after Trump announced the new Canadian tariffs.

Tate brothers will remain in jail at least 2 more weeks as they fight extradition to the UK

By DAVID FISCHER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Social media influencers Andrew and Tristan Tate will remain in jail at least two more weeks until their next hearing as they fight extradition to the United Kingdom, where the brothers are accused of rape and sex trafficking, a federal judge said Monday.

U.S. Magistrate Lauren Louis set a detention hearing for Aug. 13 to determine whether the Tates should stay in jail or be released during what could be a monthslong extradition process.

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The brothers weren't in court Monday or required to be there and have remained in jail since making a brief court appearance two days after their July 18 arrest.

The Tates have become among the world's most polarizing internet personalities with their promotion of wealth, male dominance and misogyny through their social media empire. 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.

Attorneys for the brothers said Monday that they want the U.S. government to turn over documents that U.K. officials submitted to secure their arrest.

"They don't have anything but the accusations," attorney Joseph McBride said after the hearing. "It's just their word against our word right now."

The U.K. has until mid-September to turn over all of its materials to the State Department, Assistant U.S. Attorney Alejandra López said in court.

The brothers have long claimed that their violent and misogynistic statements have been taken out of context or were intended as jokes.

Jackie Perczek, another one of their attorneys, said the Tates have shown they are not a flight risk by returning to Romania every month after they were accused there of luring women for sexual exploitation.

"For three years they have not fled," she said. "They've traveled the world and every month they return to Romania."

The former professional kickboxers, who have dual U.S. and U.K. citizenship, have millions of social media followers and are vocal supporters of President Donald Trump. The White House has said the brothers shouldn't expect any help from the president.

McBride said shortly after the Tates were arrested that "they've never done nothing wrong. They shouldn't be extradited for crimes they did not commit," he said.

McBride said the extradition attempt was politically motivated, though he provided no details.

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

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

The brothers moved to Romania in 2016 and 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.

Andrew Tate, 39, 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, including YouTube, TikTok and Instagram, for violating hate speech guidelines. 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.

Comey says seashells post was political speech - not a threat - as he presses to dismiss charges

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former FBI Director James Comey urged a judge on Monday to throw out federal charges against him, arguing that a photo of seashells arranged on a beach he posted on social media was not a call to violence against President Donald Trump but protected political speech.

Comey's lawyers argue the government cannot prove the Instagram photo of seashells in the numerical arrangement of "86 47" constituted a "true threat" against the Republican president, who fired Comey in 2017 and has publicly called for his prosecution. The slogan — which has long meant to "get rid of" or

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"eject" — has been featured on thousands of items sold online and regularly displayed at protests, defense lawyers wrote in court papers.

"But the government now singles out Mr. Comey to prosecute one of the President's most prominent critics for publishing another person's statement of political opposition," his attorney's wrote. "That attempt to suppress core political speech contravenes both the statutes at issue and the First Amendment."

The seashells case against Comey was the second in months targeting the ex-FBI director, a long-running Trump foe whom the president over the years has called a "corrupt piece of garbage" and other pejorative names.

An earlier case in Virginia accusing Comey of lying to Congress was dismissed last November after a judge concluded that the prosecutor who charged him and another Trump adversary, New York Attorney General Letitia James, was illegally appointed to the job.

More broadly, the case is part of a retribution campaign by the Trump administration Justice Department, which has initiated investigations across the country into individuals the president does not like. Comey has long drawn Trump's ire for his role overseeing the early months of an investigation into whether Trump's 2016 campaign had coordinated with Russia to sway the outcome of that year's election.

The two-count indictment charges Comey with "knowingly and willfully" making a threat to "take the life of, and to inflict bodily harm upon" Trump and with transmitting a threat in interstate commerce. It does not provide evidence that Comey knowingly threatened Trump, especially since Comey has said the opposite, but suggested a "reasonable recipient who is familiar with the circumstances would interpret" the message as a threat.

Comey was interviewed by the Secret Service last year over the post after Trump administration officials asserted that he was advocating the assassination of Trump, the 47th president. Comey deleted the post shortly after it was made, writing: "I didn't realize some folks associate those numbers with violence" and "I oppose violence of any kind so I took the post down."

"Even if '86 47' could implausibly be read to suggest violence, a reasonable observer would still understand Mr. Comey's post as mere political hyperbole, not a true threat," Comey's lawyers wrote. "The Supreme Court has rejected threats prosecutions based on speech far more directly threatening than Mr. Comey's seashells post here."

The Justice Department has not elaborated on any evidence of intent the government has. But acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said earlier this year that prosecutors in every case prove intent with "witnesses, with documents, with the defendant himself to the extent it's appropriate."

"And that's how we'll prove intent in this case," Blanche said in April, shortly after he was elevated to lead the department after Pam Bondi's firing.

Trump, in a Fox News Channel interview last year, accused Comey of knowing "exactly what that meant."

"A child knows what that meant," Trump said. "If you're the FBI director and you don't know what that meant, that meant assassination. And it says it loud and clear."

Republicans decry a new Democratic Socialists of America platform as Dem primaries split the party

By ALI SWENSON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A new platform from a progressive group that's notched several recent primary victories is becoming fodder for Republican attacks, as the GOP looks to frame Democrats as extremists and communists ahead of November's midterm elections.

Although the Democratic Socialists of America's Workers Deserve More platform doesn't necessarily line up exactly with the candidates' own agendas, prominent Republicans over the weekend decried it. The DSA platform proposes drafting "a new constitution" with significant changes to the structure of the U.S. government, including abolishing the Senate, replacing the president and the Supreme Court with leaders picked by Congress and allowing all permanent U.S. residents to vote. Alongside those changes, the platform, published earlier this month, calls for a number of social reforms.

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"The barbarians are inside the gate — and Democrats are WELCOMING them in," House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., wrote on X. "Communism is no longer a far fetched threat. It is here on our SHORES!"

The Wall Street Journal's conservative-leaning editorial board also warned about the agenda, calling it radical and writing that the job of Republicans and willing Democrats is to educate the country about it. But it cautioned Republicans to avoid communism attack lines, saying they wouldn't resonate with younger generations.

Progressive and DSA-backed candidates running in Democratic primaries across the country don't all subscribe to the group's full agenda. The left is also split between progressive and moderate wings that have different ideas about the best policies to carry the Democratic Party forward. But the DSA platform has created an opening for Republicans to attack Democrats with a broad brush as they look for an edge in races that will determine which party has a majority in Congress next year.

President Donald Trump this year has returned to an old habit of calling Democrats communists, saying they want to "destroy the traditional American way of life." Other Republicans have followed suit, turning to more comfortable territory after months spent defending their party as disgruntled Americans fume about foreign wars and the high cost of living.

DSA agenda calls for dramatic overhaul of government and society

The DSA's vision for the country laid out in mid-July proposes major changes that the group says can in part be achieved under the current system but ultimately would require "building a new society from the ground up."

Among the suggested changes are expanding voting rights, publicly financing all elections, replacing the two-party system with a multi-party democracy, establishing public ownership of large corporations and expanding rights for immigrants while ending Immigration and Customs Enforcement detentions and deportations.

In a recent appearance on "Fox News Sunday," the group's co-chair Megan Romer confirmed various aspects of the agenda while acknowledging that some of the proposals, like abolishing borders and prisons, would be considered parts of a long-term plan.

The Republican National Committee over the weekend called attention to the platform in a post that several GOP lawmakers seized on to raise alarm.

"These people are insane," Texas Sen. Ted Cruz replied on X.

"Watch this clip closely," wrote Rep. Steve Scalise, the No. 2 House Republican. "These ideas could be coming to your community sooner than you think."

Progressive candidates have succeeded in recent races

The DSA's agenda comes as aligned candidates have triumphed in several recent Democratic primaries. They've capitalized on voter anger at the party establishment and rising skepticism of the U.S. alliance with Israel to edge out moderates in House races in New York and Colorado.

Democratic socialist candidates also have succeeded in mayoral elections in major U.S. cities, including Washington, D.C., New York and Seattle. An upcoming Missouri primary pitting a DSA-backed former congresswoman against the moderate Democratic incumbent will further test the movement's momentum.

In other elections, progressive candidates have outlined where they differ from the DSA's agenda. In an upcoming Michigan Senate primary, for example, progressive candidate Abdul El-Sayed has distanced himself from socialism, saying that he believes in capitalism but that it needs to be regulated.

Meanwhile, establishment Democrats including former Democratic National Committee chair Jaime Harrison have forcefully pushed back against DSA candidates who run in the party's primaries while criticizing the way the party is going.

"I say this with no ill will or animosity: if you hate the Democratic Party, then please don't run for our nomination," Harrison wrote in a social media post in June. "Don't use our resources. Don't rely on our volunteers. Don't use our infrastructure. Don't ask Democrats to invest their time, money, and energy in your campaign. Focus on building the party you actually support."

Zelenskyy and Britain's new leader discuss drone projects and missile defense for Kyiv

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and new U.K. Prime Minister Andy Burnham met Monday at a British naval base and discussed joint drone projects and Ukraine's urgent need for ballistic missile interceptors to counter Russian attacks.

Zelenskyy's visit was the first by a foreign leader since Burnham took office a week ago, and the prime minister said it signaled the U.K.'s "unwavering" support for Kyiv to defend itself against Russia's 4-year-old, full-scale invasion.

His predecessor, Keir Starmer, was in the Ukrainian capital less than two weeks ago in his last overseas trip before leaving office, and Burnham said he planned to visit soon.

Burnham is the fifth British prime minister Zelenskyy has dealt with since Russia launched the war in 2022.

"You are the first leader I have welcomed in person since taking office, and that is no accident," Burnham told Zelenskyy. "It is intended to send a very clear message: we are with Ukraine 100%, I am personally with you 100%, and I will honor every commitment this country has made to Ukraine in full."

Zelenskyy said the two countries' relationship was "stronger than ever."

The meeting, aboard the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth docked at Portsmouth on England's south coast, came a day before Zelenskyy is expected to visit U.S. President Donald Trump in Washington.

Burnham said they had "talked at length" about Kyiv's need for more interceptors to shoot down Russian ballistic missiles, "particularly in terms of Ukraine protecting critical national infrastructure during the winters."

"We've taken away some things that we will now follow up with our partners," Burnham said after the meeting.

Russia has intensified strikes on gas stations, power facilities and other infrastructure this year in a broad campaign to strain Ukraine's logistics and energy networks.

Zelenskyy said on X that the leaders also discussed "joint defense production." Britain and Ukraine already have a deal to work together on new drones, and Zelenskyy told Sky News beforehand that he hoped to build a "big, big factory" in Britain.

They also met more than 200 Ukrainian military personnel who have spent three weeks in Britain for an exercise aimed at strengthening their fighting capabilities and measures to counter mines in the Black Sea, the U.K. government said.

Burnham announced that the U.K. will give Ukraine the intellectual property behind its new "Stone Cloak" electronic warfare system, which is capable of jamming Russian air defenses to stop drones from being detected.

Ukraine has expanded its campaign of frequent drone attacks deep inside Russia that have targeted oil facilities, military factories and, most recently, logistical centers, bringing the war home to millions of Russians and raising pressure on President Vladimir Putin.

The raids have shattered Putin's narrative of the conflict as something that doesn't affect the lives of ordinary people in his country. But he has remained undeterred and Russia has ramped up its aerial campaign, regularly bombarding Ukraine with missiles and drones.

Russia and Ukraine trade drone attacks

Russia again attacked Ukraine overnight with 147 long-range drones, according to Ukraine's air force, which said it intercepted or jammed 123 of them.

In Zaporizhzhia, one person was killed and two injured in attacks on the city that damaged a residential high-rise and several private homes overnight, according to regional administration head Ivan Fedorov.

A Russian strike on the town of Balakliia in the Kharkiv region killed one person and wounded eight, according to Vitalii Karabanov, head of the city military administration.

In the Nikopol district of the Dnipropetrovsk region, Russian strikes damaged a kindergarten, residential buildings and infrastructure, injuring a woman and a 6-year-old boy, according to administration head

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Oleksandr Hanzha.

In the eastern Kharkiv region, regional council member Oleksandr Skoryk said Russian forces destroyed every gas station along the highway between Kharkiv and Poltava, a distance of about 150 kilometers (93 miles). The highway is a key supply route linking Kharkiv, the country's second-largest city and a regional hub close to the Russian border, with central Ukraine.

Romania's Ministry of National Defense said a drone briefly entered its airspace before crossing the river border into Ukraine, where explosions were subsequently reported. It said two F-16 fighter jets were deployed to monitor airspace.

The drone's incursion into Romanian airspace marked the fourth such incident in as many days. The three previous drones were all shot down by the NATO member.

In Moscow, Russia's Defense Ministry said air defenses downed 276 Ukrainian drones overnight.

Rostov regional Gov. Yuri Slyusar said five people, including a child, were killed when a Ukrainian drone hit an apartment building in Rostov-on-Don. Ukraine's military General Staff said Ukrainian forces struck an export terminal in Rostov-on-Don, setting it ablaze.

The Ukrainian military said other strikes in the Moscow-held part of the Kherson region targeted a ground relay station used to control drones and a bridge over the Henichesk Strait that Russia uses for military logistics. Russian fuel and supply depots were also hit.

In the city of Belgorod in southwestern Russia near the border with Ukraine, a Ukrainian drone attack injured 12, including two children, according to regional emergency officials.

Iran vows retaliation after Ukrainian attack on a ship

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Ukraine struck an Iranian vessel in the Caspian Sea, killing a sailor.

In a statement on X on Sunday, Araghchi denounced the attack as a "blatant U.N. Charter violation done at Israel's behest to drag Europe into its war." He said he made it clear in calls with the European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov that the attack "can't go unanswered."

Zelenskyy said on X that Ukrainian long-range strikes in the Caspian Sea over the weekend achieved "very good results," adding the targets included "vessels involved in transporting military cargo linked to Iran, as well as a warship."

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha rejected Iran's threats of retaliation as unjustified and groundless, saying Tehran's weapons supplies to Russia have made it a direct accomplice to Moscow's aggression. "Iran has no standing to pretend to be a victim," he posted on X, and called its references to the U.N. Charter "absurd."

Sybiha said Iran's statements were an attempt to divert attention from Russia's attacks on civilian shipping in the Black Sea, which would be a focus of an emergency U.N. Security Council meeting Monday.

Chiefs assistant Eric Bieniemy's son charged in shooting of his mother in Virginia, authorities say

By DAVE SKRETTA AP Sports Writer

ST. JOSEPH, Mo. (AP) — The son of Chiefs assistant coach Eric Bieniemy has been arrested and charged with the shooting of his mother, Mia Bieniemy, the wife of the Kansas City offensive coordinator, authorities in Virginia said Monday.

The Loudon County Sheriff's Office said deputies responded late Sunday to a shooting in Ashburn, Virginia, where the couple still had a home from Bieniemy's time coaching the Washington Commanders. They found the 57-year-old Mia Bieniemy with multiple gunshot wounds, and she was transported to a hospital where she was in stable condition Monday.

Elijah Zion Bieniemy, the 27-year-old son of the couple, was arrested early Monday in connection with the shooting. He has been charged with malicious wounding, use of a firearm in commission of a felony and discharge of a firearm inside a dwelling, and is being held without bond at the Loudoun County Adult

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Detention Center.

The sheriff's office said the investigation was ongoing.

Eric Bieniemy was with the Chiefs at training camp in St. Joseph, Missouri, earlier Sunday. He was not present for Monday's workout involving rookies, quarterbacks and a few veterans, which was closed to the public.

"Our hearts go out to Eric Bieniemy and his family. Thoughts and prayers with them," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said afterward. "I can't get into details on it, but things happen sometimes, and Eric will work through it. He has a great support group here, as does his family, as needed, and we'll just let time take care of it from there. But Mia is stable, which is a plus.

"She's a saint, we all know that, those of you that know her. One of God's great blessings," Reid added. "But things happen. And you have to work through it. That's where we're at right now. Time will have to be involved in this to help heal."

Reid did not know how long Bieniemy would be away from the team. Pass game coordinator Joe Bleymaier and offensive line coach Andy Heck will take over his duties as the Chiefs continue with offensive installations during training camp.

"On these things, real life. So you take care of that," Reid said. "We'll be able to keep it moving here, but the most important thing is EB has an opportunity to spend some time there and take care of that business."

Eric Bieniemy was part of Reid's initial staff in Kansas City in 2013, and spent five seasons as the running backs coach before he was promoted to offensive coordinator. Over the next five seasons, the demanding but popular Bieniemy helped the Chiefs to reach three Super Bowls and win two of them while directing one of the NFL's best offenses.

He interviewed for several head-coaching jobs but was continually skipped over, so Bieniemy went to the Commanders in 2023 in hopes of burnishing his resume. But the team struggled and coach Ron Rivera's staff was let go, and Bieniemy spent one season as the offensive coordinator at UCLA before spending last season as the running backs coach with the Bears.

Bieniemy returned to the Chiefs this season to replace Matt Nagy as the offensive coordinator. He was present for offseason workouts in Kansas City over the summer, and he was with the team when it began to report to training camp last week.

The Chiefs are off Tuesday. The first full-squad workout at Missouri Western State University is Wednesday.

"It's great to have (Bieniemy) back in the building," Reid said last week. "He always brings great energy. I've told you, he's one of the more phenomenal guys I have been around at being a leader of men. He is doing that. He's in there cranking — works his tail off, and I appreciate that. Doesn't let anything slide by. Does a good job with that."

Gunmen attack a community in Nigeria and kill 30 people, residents say

By DYEPAZAH SHIBAYAN Associated Press

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — Gunmen attacked a community in northwestern Nigeria, killing at least 30 people and injuring several others, residents said Monday, in the latest violence in the conflict-hit region.

The attack occurred late Sunday night in the Naridon village in Kaduna state's Kaura council area, said Derek Christopher, chairman of the civil society group Southern Kaduna Peace and Security Network.

"The same community was attacked last year around this time," Christopher said in a statement, suggesting that the government has abandoned any intention of protecting the area from attacks by armed groups. "I don't know who these people have left to fight for them," he said.

Raphael Joshua, a resident who was helping the injured, told The Associated Press that bodies of the victims had been deposited at a nearby hospital and that arrangements were being made for their burials.

The commissioner for home affairs and internal security in Kaduna State, Sule Shu'aibu, said that he had not been briefed on the attack. Authorities are often slow to acknowledge attacks in the West African nation as violence has escalated in recent years.

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No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

Armed groups, known as 'bandits', regularly carry out raids and kidnappings for ransom in the northwest and north-central parts of Nigeria. Authorities have said the bandit groups include mostly former herders who took up arms against farming communities after clashes between them over increasingly strained resources.

Alongside attacks by bandits, Nigeria is also plagued by an insurgency fought by the Boko Haram extremist group and its splinter faction, the Islamic State West Africa Province. Both groups are mostly active in northeastern Nigeria.

In the past year, Nigeria has been in the crosshairs of the U.S. government, which has accused the Nigerian government of not protecting Christians in the country, leading to a diplomatic rift. The U.S. launched an attack against alleged Islamic State group members on Nigerian territory on Dec. 25 with the cooperation of the Nigerian government.

Days disrupted: 7 people around the world share how the Iran war has reshaped their lives

By ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Across seven countries, seven people woke up to days that no longer looked the way they once did.

The war in Iran began months ago and thousands of miles away. But its effects quickly ricocheted across the world — oil markets first, sending fuel prices higher. Then the shock moved outward — into farms, factories and family budgets. Into the fabric of life.

The global economy remains tethered to fossil fuels that also drive climate change. A severe shock to that system could push 45 million more people into poverty, the United Nations Development Program warned.

For those far from the battlefield, the war arrived not as missiles or air raids, but through the disruptions of everyday life: businesses that no longer worked, goodbyes filled with fear, and livelihoods pushed closer to the edge.

Here are a few of their stories.

The Philippines: Bathing with laundry soap

WHO/WHERE: Edgar Funelas, Manila

DAY OF DISRUPTION: April 10

Funelas bathes beside his vehicle, moving quickly before the city wakes. He pours water over his head from a green pipe. Behind him, his jeepney stands still and worn. His 10-year-old daughter is asleep inside.

He uses laundry soap — harsher, but cheaper — to wash his body and his clothes in the same motion, stretching what little money he has. Even before the war in Iran, he was living on the margins. A fire took their home and their belongings, forcing them to move into the brightly colored minibus he drove.

He'd hoped to be able to rent a room by now. Then diesel prices surged and he could no longer afford the fuel to run his jeepney.

He hasn't earned a single peso in days. There will be no breakfast. Hunger gnaws, but it's the small rituals of privacy that he misses most: to be able to wash out of sight, to sleep behind walls, to keep his desperation from being laid bare.

That morning, after rinsing himself, he hopes to find work as a dispatcher at a nearby jeepney terminal — organizing the line of vehicles, calling drivers forward in turn, and packing passengers into each jeep.

For weeks, he and his daughter have been eating only what others can spare. She has already left school. At night, he drinks water and leaves the food for her, so she can go to bed with a full stomach.

Before the war, he made about \$8 a day driving, sometimes twice that on good days. Now, for each vehicle he fills, he will earn about 16 cents — barely enough to buy a piece of bread.

"This is what we do. Coping and hoping prices will get lower. Hoping that the war will end. And to try to find ways to earn, so we can at least eat."

United States: Balancing budget and family

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WHO/WHERE: Marlyn Garcia, New York

DAY OF DISRUPTION: June 30

On a Tuesday morning, Garcia, 25, steps out of a food pantry with two bags filled with rice, pasta, fresh produce and other staples. The groceries will help feed her family through another week.

The food is free — a small reprieve for a household budget strained by higher gasoline prices after the war in Iran. But Garcia also has to calculate her days: doctor's appointments, her 3-year-old son's occupational therapy session, picking up her daughter, making dinner.

And before any of that, there is parking. Finding a street spot can take up to an hour. Each slow lap around the block burns fuel as the meter keeps ticking.

She came to New York from the Dominican Republic as a child and spent part of her teens in the city's shelter system with her mother. Today she works part time as a breastfeeding peer counselor in the Bronx. Her partner, Steven Espaillat, lost his job as a legal assistant in March and now picks up Uber shifts while searching for permanent work.

Their Toyota Camry has become indispensable. Three adults share it. Garcia and Espaillat use it the first half of the week; her mother-in-law uses it the second. That Monday, she bought gas at \$3.97 a gallon (\$1.05 per liter). With fuel prices in flux, every mile now has to be planned.

The family lives in a rent-stabilized apartment that costs \$800 a month. Government food assistance helps fill the refrigerator. Higher gas prices are eroding their savings and she has begun taking every extra shift she can, especially those she can work from home.

Garcia still hopes to start graduate school, inspired by her son's developmental needs to help families like hers. She reminds herself that others have it worse. But the arithmetic of survival keeps getting harder.

Still, she keeps making the numbers work because of the two small children waiting at home. "It's summer so they always want an ice cream and I want to make sure I have that extra cash there for them," she says. "They shouldn't be able to suffer because of whatever is going on around the world."

Nigeria: Trying to keep the generator running

WHO/WHERE: Oluwatosin Awodunmila, Lagos

DAY OF DISRUPTION: June 5

Awodunmila and her husband, co-owners of a printing business in Somolu, a mixed-income residential suburb in central Lagos, arrive early as usual, after dropping their two children at school.

The street is silent, partly because the day is just beginning and partly because there was no electricity. The machines in the shops are off.

Awodunmila scans the shop and the leftover projects to make — lip gloss, key holders, paper bags. But she has to wait for electricity, which hardly comes nowadays. The other option is to fire up the medium-sized generator outside the shop. But since the war began, the price of fuel per liter has nearly doubled from 800 naira to 1,400 naira (60 cents to \$1).

This jump in price has brought business to almost a halt. In Nigeria, the retail price of fuel determines the price of everything else. If they use the generator, the profit margin thins to almost nothing. They had decided not to increase the price of their service to keep their customers.

So they wait for electricity and sit, like on this morning, while customers lodge complaints about slow delivery. On Monday, four days earlier, there was no electricity until 7 p.m., and the fuel consumption for that day alone was 30,000 naira (\$21.85), more than half of what they had hoped to earn on the day's jobs.

Recently, they changed their delivery policy from one business day to three to five working days.

"My biggest wish right now is a 24-hour supply of electricity and the war in Iran to end — and, of course, the cost of fuel should come down."

Nepal: Worried for an absent loved one

WHO/WHERE: 54-year-old mother, Kathmandu

DAY OF DISRUPTION: May 19

The house is quiet again. She checks her phone, hoping her son has landed. It is still too early to expect a reply. Somewhere between Nepal and Abu Dhabi, he is returning to the hotel where he works after a

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visit home.

She asked not to be identified, fearing her son could face repercussions at work.

The war in Iran has made this goodbye harder. Images of missiles and airstrikes, and reports of migrant workers killed in the conflict, have left her agonized. She reaches for her phone again.

That morning, the house was full. Friends and relatives gathered to see her son off. She moved between the kitchen and the prayer room, serving tea and praying for his safe journey. Incense, conversation and the ringing of a prayer bell filled the house. The dog barked, unaware a farewell was underway.

They drove to Kathmandu's international airport, where departures are measured as much in embraces as boarding passes. She hugged her son tightly before he joined a queue of young men bound for the Gulf, whose remittances account for about 10% of Nepal's GDP.

She stood there until he disappeared from view, tears streaming down her face.

The 54-year-old is a cleaner at a bank, but her son's income is essential. Her husband, who owned a small soap factory, died of COVID in 2021, leaving much of the family's financial burden to their children. Her daughter works for a finance company in Kathmandu but, like her brother, hopes to build a future overseas.

As the United States and Iran negotiate a permanent end to the war, there is little the mother can do but wait. She keeps her phone close, hoping it will ring and confirm her son is safe.

"I am wondering how he is going to live. We can't just say, don't go. But at the same time, it is necessary that he goes."

Chile: Searching for passengers

WHO/WHERE: Felipe Molina, Santiago

DAY OF DISRUPTION: July 10

Molina clicks his seat belt into place, shifts his yellow-roof taxi into gear and eases into Santiago's evening traffic.

In the rearview mirror, the 50-year-old wears the look of someone trying to solve an impossible equation. He can keep driving, burning diesel in search of passengers, or pull over and hope they find him. Either way, he loses.

The Peruvian has lived in Chile for more than 25 years and spent 17 behind the wheel of one of the city's traditional taxis. Over that time, he has weathered traffic jams, recessions and the pandemic. But soaring fuel prices since the war in Iran have turned every shift into an effort to lose less.

He drives passengers. He delivers packages. On the radio, a commentator's voice rises as Spain takes on Belgium in the World Cup. At a red light, a street performer in clown makeup waves burning flares between rows of idling cars. Molina inches forward, piecing together enough fares to keep his taxi on the road.

In March, Chile's government announced one of the country's largest fuel price increases in recent years as global oil prices climbed. Molina now spends about 70% more to fill his tank.

The higher fuel costs have compounded existing pressures. Ride-hailing services such as Uber and the Chinese company Didi are luring away passengers with lower fares. Meanwhile, licensed taxi drivers cannot raise prices because fares are regulated by the government.

Chile responded with monthly subsidies for taxi drivers and other public transport drivers, froze public transport fares and expanded programs to help drivers replace older vehicles.

But for Molina, the support hasn't changed the equation.

"In the end, we spend hours on the road without picking anyone up, and the fuel keeps running out," he says. "That means I have to fill up again, and the cost is simply too high."

Turkey: A dried-up market for carpets

WHO/WHERE: Ali Osman Aykul, Istanbul

DAY OF DISRUPTION: June 24

Most days, Ali Osman Aykul has only his cat for company.

The grey cat, Prince, sleeps on a stack of hand-woven carpets while Aykul, 48, smokes cigarettes, sips tea and watches football. Richly colored Turkish carpets line the walls. Their intricate patterns radiate

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warmth. Occasionally, footsteps drift in from the bazaar outside, but most pass by.

It wasn't always like this.

Before the war in Iran, the shop was where wealthy collectors from around the world and especially the Gulf gathered. Then the fighting began. Within 10 days, business fell by 90%. Airports closed; international customers vanished. Now, a handful might wander in each day — but mostly to buy cheap souvenirs, not the handmade carpets.

The bills have not stopped. Electricity, rent and his daughter's school expenses — she is studying health-care — still need to be paid. To cope, Aykul doesn't buy new clothes, cooks his meals in the shop and listens to music there rather than going out.

He holds out his newly issued passport with hope, tempered by doubts about whether, even if the war ends, trade will return to what it was. Before the pandemic, he traveled regularly to international fairs, where collectors sought him out. Now he waits for his visa, hoping that if customers can no longer come to his carpets, he can go to them.

"After a while, it starts to weigh on you every day," he says. "The music you listen to begins to feel like torture, and even the tea you drink stops giving you any pleasure."

Italy: Rising costs make farming harder

WHO/WHERE: Enzo Garbaglia, Fiumicino (Rome)

DAY OF DISRUPTION: June 12

His blue tractor still needs fuel. What has changed is how Enzo Garbaglia buys it.

For years, the farmer outside Rome bought gasoline in bulk, bringing home 1,500 to 2,000 liters (400–530 gallons) at a time and storing it for the season ahead. Now he buys only enough to keep the tractor moving.

Fuel is only the beginning. Irrigation costs more. Fertilizer costs more.

Garbaglia tries to shield customers, but many are struggling too. They buy less, produce goes unsold and prices fall. By the time he brings his harvest to market, a day's work yields little profit, if any.

Across the 105-year-old family farm, there are other signs of sacrifice and strain. The machines Garbaglia uses to harvest potatoes are the same ones he has relied on for years. There is no money to replace them. At home, the family avoids unnecessary expenses. Even a few weeks off in the summer to recover from long days in the fields is a luxury.

His children do not plan to take over the farm. For a time, his daughters seemed poised to continue the family tradition. Their farm-to-table shop drew customers from Rome and the surrounding coast. But after years of struggle, they concluded farming no longer offered a future and walked away. The decision hurt but he was also relieved they had chosen a different path.

Now, Garbaglia is left tending the land his family has worked for over a century, driven by passion for farming, loyalty to customers and pride in offering quality.

But he knows what comes next. The family business will likely end with him.

"One hundred and five years of history can't be sold," he says. "When it ends, it ends. That's it."

Questions mount after deadly Berlin Pride attack. Here's what to know

By STEFANIE DAZIO and GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Berliners mourned Monday after the deadly attack near the city's Pride festival as questions mounted over how the suspect was able to move freely following a conviction linked to his ties to the Islamic State group.

The 21-year-old Abdul Ballout, a German citizen, was killed following a search that lasted nearly 24 hours after Saturday night's attack in downtown Berlin. He was suspected of driving a van into a crowd near the Pride festival before apparently cutting others with a machete in what authorities believe was an extremist terror attack.

One woman was killed. Berlin Mayor Kai Wegner said she was a Polish citizen who was in Berlin with her daughter. Twenty-nine people were injured.

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Chancellor Friedrich Merz on Monday wanted to know how the attack could have been prevented. Prosecutors said Ballout previously sought to join IS.

"We must do everything to protect people in Germany as best possible from such criminals, from dangerous people who for whatever reason can't be taken into custody," Merz said.

Here's what we know:

Officials seek answers about suspect's sentencing

Ballout, who was born in Germany and has Lebanese roots, traveled to Lebanon in 2025 with the goal of going to Syria to join the Islamic State group, Berlin prosecutors said. He made contact with several people who were presumed members — or at least he believed them to be, prosecutors said.

He was arrested in Lebanon and sentenced by a military court to three months' imprisonment for offenses including incitement to religious and sectarian conflict. He returned to Germany after completing his sentence, where he was arrested at the Berlin airport.

In May, a juvenile court in Berlin convicted Ballout of preparing a serious act of violence endangering the state, as well as publishing Islamic State propaganda on his Instagram account and other charges, prosecutors said. He was sentenced to one year and 10 months in youth custody, which Berlin prosecutors appealed.

Offenders who are 18 to 21 can be prosecuted in Germany's juvenile system.

Officials have said Ballout was given a suspended sentence. The Berlin courts, however, said his sentence had not been suspended but they had been determining whether it should be.

The court said it released him because he was no longer in pretrial detention, which had been particularly long, and he did not meet statutory requirements governing flight risk, reoffending and other factors.

Some German officials questioned the court's decision. They vowed to investigate how Ballout ended up free and whether juvenile sentencing, sometimes seen as too lenient, needs to be reformed.

Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt, in an interview with public broadcaster ZDF, said that considering Ballout's conviction and history of supporting the Islamic State group, it did not make sense why he was on the streets.

"You can assume that it certainly would have made sense to put this person in custody," he said.

During an interview with regional broadcaster RBB, Berlin's mayor said he didn't want to question the court system's independence but in this case, "words fail me."

Deradicalization experts believed he was unwilling to change

The court ordered Ballout to attend a deradicalization program for high-risk offenders. He was evaluated twice by the Berlin-based Violence Prevention Network, which works with people at risk from right-wing extremism and Islamism. The organization defines deradicalization as a person successfully detaching from extremism ideology and distancing themselves from violence.

Ballout was scheduled to meet with their staff Monday for his third and final evaluation, according to Cornelia Lotthammer, the nongovernmental organization's public relations director.

The staff expected to tell the court that Ballout was not a candidate for their program because he sought to misrepresent himself as a friendly person who was not an extremist and therefore did not need to be deradicalized.

"Normally high-risk people are very convinced of themselves and of their ideology, and they would propagate it within those sessions," Lotthammer said. "And then it's easier to work with them. This is not a typical incident."

Ballout appeared to try to anticipate what the staff wanted to hear, she said.

"They could see that he is a problem. I mean, everybody knew that he was a high-risk person," she said. "But still, if he does not work together with our colleagues, then we can't do anything."

She added: "But nobody would have said, 'He's not a threat, just let him go.'"

He did not seem to be planning any attacks, Lotthammer said. If the staff had any indication otherwise, they would have involved law enforcement.

Ballout would have had to find another organization to work with, or he might have been sent back to

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prison, Lotthammer said.

She declined to comment on whether their organization believed Ballout should have been released from detention, calling that the court's jurisdiction.

Tragedy comes ahead of major German elections

Three German states including Berlin hold elections in September. The attack is likely to feed into campaigning, and there are fears that anti-migrant rhetoric could boost the far right.

A string of deadly attacks committed by immigrants was one factor in the 2025 national election in which the far-right Alternative for Germany, or AfD, finished second.

AfD has assailed the government over migration and capitalized on discontent with other issues. In the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt, it hopes to get its first state governor.

Kristin Brinker, AfD's local leader in Berlin, asked on X how a supporter of the Islamic State group was able to move freely in Germany after being in custody.

"Who bears responsibility for that in the city government?" she said.

What to know about the historic wildfires in France and Spain

By JUSTIN SPIKE and THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Heat waves and scant rainfall in Europe have contributed to historic wildfires in France and Spain that have forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes in one of the continent's biggest evacuation efforts since World War II.

Rising temperatures later this week could complicate efforts to battle the blazes that have scorched an area four times the size of Paris in southwestern France and are raging near Spain's capital, Madrid.

Climate data shows Europe is heating faster than anywhere else on earth. The continent has already faced extreme heat events multiple times this year.

Firefighters in Spain have called the blazes so violent that they could not be tackled head on. But the first glimmer of hope emerged Monday in France that the spread of a giant fire in the southwestern Gironde region may have slowed.

Here's what to know.

Climate change makes summers hotter and drier

Europe's above-average temperatures, with a prolonged heatwave in June, have contributed to drought conditions. Record-breaking temperatures in Western Europe compounded low rainfall levels as the extreme heat drew moisture from vegetation, creating abundant fuel that allows flames to spread faster and burn more intensely.

A study released in June by World Weather Attribution found that the record-breaking heat in recent weeks would not have been possible without climate change.

France's national meteorological service Météo-France said June was the hottest on record there, averaging 3.8 degrees Celsius (6.8 degrees Fahrenheit) above normal, while rainfall was nearly 50% below average.

Spain is used to forest fires in warmer months, but climate change has made its summers hotter and drier. That, combined with the decline in farming and industries that once used forest materials, has turned large swaths of wilderness into a tinderbox.

Wildfires this year surpass previous records

While estimates vary, national and European Union authorities are reporting fires of record scope this year. The EU's European Forest Fire Information System estimates that over 300,000 hectares (3,000 square kilometers or 1,160 square miles) have burned in France and Spain.

France's Interior Ministry says 13,566 fires have swept across over 116,000 hectares (1,160 square kilometers or 448 square miles) since January, the highest annual figure in the country's modern records.

Spain's Minister for the Ecological Transition, Sara Aagesen, said the 153,000 hectares (1,530 square kilometers or 591 square miles) burned this year is six times the amount that burned through the first half of 2025.

Contributing to this year's total was Spain's largest and third-largest fires ever, with a blaze in the rural

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terrain of Ávila west of Madrid burning over 50,000 hectares (500 square kilometers or 193 square miles), some five times the area of Barcelona. Earlier this month, 13 people died in a blaze in southeastern Almería, Spain's deadliest fire in recent memory.

Over 300,000 people have been evacuated

Over 300,000 people have been displaced from their homes in France and Spain in what the EU on Monday called "one of the biggest evacuation operations in Europe."

More than 250,000 people have been evacuated in France, with 220,000 of them in the southwestern region of Gironde. With France about to enter its peak August tourist season, Gironde authorities took steps to keep vacationers away, banning holiday camps for children and for people with disabilities.

In Spain, 79,000 people have been evacuated from their homes in villages west of Madrid and in Castellón, a province on the eastern coast, while 30,000 others have been confined to their homes, the government said.

Help is coming from other countries

European Commissioner for crisis management Hadja Lahbib said Monday that the EU had sent seven planes and four helicopters from Czechia, Croatia, Germany, Portugal, Slovakia, Sweden and Turkey to France, and another six planes from Greece, Italy and Turkey to Spain.

"No country should ever have to face a disaster of this scale alone," Lahbib said. "To the people of France and Spain: Europe will stand with you until the fires are out."

The 27-nation bloc's Copernicus satellite program is providing emergency authorities with up-to-date maps of fire risk.

French wildfire created a monster cloud, unleashing lightning that ignited more fires

By THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — A wildfire in southwest France grew so powerful that its smoke column became a thunderstorm, generating lightning that struck the ground and ignited new fires beyond the original blaze, French officials said.

Put another way, that means the inferno was no longer simply being propelled by the weather. It was making its own. The thundercloud also produced violent, erratic winds capable of driving the flames in new directions.

The phenomenon, called a pyrocumulonimbus, or pyroCb, is rare in Europe and more commonly documented in North America and Australia, where it occurs only over some of the most extreme fires. France's national firefighters federation said it had never before recorded one in the country.

The blaze erupted near Saumos on July 22 and has since burned more than 420 square kilometers (162 square miles) of forests and scrubland, damaged or destroyed more than 240 homes and forced 220,000 people to evacuate in Gironde.

At about 6:20 p.m. Friday, two days after the fire began, the departmental fire and rescue service said it had generated a pyrocumulonimbus. The cloud weakened overnight as humidity rose, then formed again several times.

An electrified black thundercloud

Repeatedly, heat and smoke have surged upward into a vast black thundercloud, electrified and lit from within.

"Imagine a campfire so large and hot that the smoke rising off it turns into a storm-like cloud," said Theodore M. Giannaros, a fire meteorologist at the National Observatory of Athens.

"That is a pyroCb — a storm cloud born from the intense heat that a wildfire produces."

It takes more than a big fire.

There is no set temperature at which one forms, Giannaros said; what is needed is the kind of atmosphere that breeds dry thunderstorms — very hot, very dry air near the ground, with cooler and moister air above it.

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Hot air loaded with smoke and moisture then rises rapidly from the flames. As it climbs and cools, water vapor condenses around particles of ash.

Above the freezing level, droplets become ice crystals whose collisions separate electrical charges, as in an ordinary thunderstorm.

Lightning and more destruction follow

Beneath this storm lies a landscape already primed to burn. The cloud then amplifies the disaster that created it.

Rising air pulls powerful winds toward the fire, while downdrafts punch gusts back to the surface.

Those shifts can turn the flames, divide them into several fronts or send them racing in a new direction.

"It's a feedback loop, not a one-way effect," Giannaros said. "Once it forms, the cloud becomes its own weather system, sitting on top of the fire and making it harder to predict."

The systems can also spin up whirling columns of flame — usually a fire whirl, which Giannaros describes as a dust devil made of fire and heat instead of dust.

True tornadoes are rarer, though one struck Redding, California, during the 2018 Carr Fire with winds equivalent to an EF-3, killing a fire inspector.

For firefighters, escape routes can close without warning as fresh outbreaks appear beyond their crews and equipment.

Direct attack may become impossible, forcing crews to retreat and defend communities.

The danger, Giannaros said, is fire moving faster than evacuations can be organized.

Until now, pyroCbs have been essentially an Australian and North American phenomenon. Canada alone produced a record 142 of them in 2023.

In Europe, pyroCbs have been rare

Portugal recorded one during its deadly 2017 fire season. France has now joined the list.

The continent is heating faster than any other on Earth — at roughly twice the global average since the 1980s, according to the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service and the World Meteorological Organization — with heat waves growing more frequent and severe and drought spreading across the south, curing forests into fuel.

Hotter and drier conditions give extreme fires more opportunity to form them, Giannaros said, but scientists still lack enough long-term data to establish a trend.

The European research project ROSETTA aims to close that gap.

The most common misunderstanding, he said, is that the cloud is merely a side effect. As long as it hangs above the flames, it is helping decide where the fire goes next.

Philippine president slams China in veiled rebuke in his state of the nation speech

By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. denounced China in a veiled rebuke Monday in his state of the nation speech, vowing that his government will defend a 2016 arbitration ruling that invalidated Beijing's expansive claims in the disputed South China Sea, and saying that Filipinos "do not yield" to conquerors.

On domestic issues, Marcos disclosed that a special anti-graft prosecutor would soon file charges against former House of Representatives Speaker Martin Romualdez, who has been implicated in a corruption scandal that the president exposed in his state of the nation speech last year.

Marcos highlighted China after media editorial he called racist

Marcos did not mention China by name or elaborate on his criticism of Beijing, which was applauded by many lawmakers. He said that "of late, our very humanity has been called into question" and reminded detractors that "Filipinos are a noble ... and a great race. We are not greedy. We are not racists. We are not liars."

Marcos summoned Chinese Ambassador Jing Quan to his office in Manila last week after the China Daily,

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a Chinese state-owned media outlet, depicted Filipinos as monkeys in an editorial video and cartoons. The animations centered on Beijing's rejection of the arbitration ruling that invalidated China's claims in the South China Sea.

The Philippine government strongly condemned the AI-generated images as "racist and dehumanizing" and demanded that they be taken down.

In Beijing, however, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said last week that the video "does not represent the official position and I have no comment on it."

He said, however, that China viewed the South China Sea arbitration as "a political farce disguised as a legal proceeding." He added that "the so-called award is illegal, null and void and has no binding force," reiterating China's longstanding position.

Marcos said the ruling, which he said was final and binding, was a "definitive benchmark for the interpretation and application" of the 1982 U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, which was the basis of the decision. The Philippines initiated the arbitration in 2013 after a tense standoff between Chinese and Philippine ships in a disputed shoal, but China refused to participate and rejected the decision as a sham.

"Your government will do all that is necessary to continue upholding this award, utilizing every peaceful and legal means available to the republic against any attempt, foreign or domestic, to undermine this achievement," Marcos said, adding that Filipinos "do not yield."

Territorial confrontations in the disputed waters have become more prevalent in recent years, particularly among Chinese, Philippine and Vietnamese forces and fishing fleets. The long-simmering disputes in the strategic waterway, a key global trade route, also involve Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

Marcos says being family won't protect his cousin and ally

Marcos did not identify Romualdez, his cousin and key political ally, by name but was obviously referring to him when speaking about the corruption charges to be filed.

"This is painful to me, but we have to do the right thing," Marcos said. "I'm not a president for my family. I'm not a president for my friend."

Romualdez, who resigned as House speaker last year but remains as a member of Congress, reiterated in a statement that he did not violate the law and he was ready to prove it.

Romualdez, along with several House members and senators, was accused of pocketing huge kickbacks from flood control projects in government and congressional investigations. Others have been charged and detained for large-scale corruption, including an incumbent and a former senator, a former public works secretary, who served under Marcos, and several government engineers and construction company executives, but to date not Romualdez.

Nearly 25 billion pesos' (\$410 million) worth of cash and properties belonging to some of the suspects have been recovered or frozen by the government and some have been returned to the national treasury, Marcos said.

Marcos suggested Philippines should now reconsider nuclear power

Marcos also spoke at length about his administration's efforts to cushion the impact of fuel price hikes caused by the war in Iran for ordinary Filipinos. In a bid to boost energy security, Marcos said that "perhaps it is time for us to revisit nuclear energy production."

"We will make sure it's safe," Marcos said, without elaborating. "We will also make sure that we can explain well to the public the good benefits of nuclear power."

The Philippines built its first and only nuclear power plant in Bataan, a coastal province in an earthquake-prone region about 120 kilometers (75 miles) northwest of Manila, in the 1970s but it was left idle due to safety concerns and corruption.

Gunther von Hagens, the German anatomist behind the 'Body Worlds' exhibition, dies at 81

By GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Gunther von Hagens, the German anatomist who generated both fascination and revulsion around the globe with his "Body Worlds" exhibits of preserved human corpses, has died. He was 81.

Von Hagens' family and the Institute for Plastination, which he founded, said he died on Friday. A statement they issued on Monday gave no further details. Von Hagens had announced in 2010 that he was living with Parkinson's disease.

Von Hagens trod a fine line between science, entertainment and commerce with his touring exhibits, as well as headline-grabbing actions such as a public autopsy.

At the heart of von Hagens' work was the so-called plastination process — replacing body fluids with liquid plastic that then hardens. That technique, which he started developing in the 1970s, prevented decay, left tissues intact and allowed him to display preserved corpses and their inner organs.

The resulting exhibition, "Body Worlds," first went on show in Japan in 1995.

Two years later, the collection of partly skinless corpses went on display in von Hagens' homeland, overcoming an attempt by local church leaders to block its opening on the grounds that it was disrespectful. Von Hagens said he was helping viewers understand how their bodies work.

The anatomist "is forced in his daily work to reject the taboos and convictions that people have about death and the dead," von Hagens said of his work.

"I touch here a taboo, which is our body, and nothing is so near as our body is to us," he said.

The shows used the corpses of people who agreed to donate their bodies for plastination. Critics argued that von Hagens bordered on sensationalism with his works, which included a corpse riding a plastinated horse, and a pregnant woman with an eight-month-old fetus inside.

Von Hagens "plays with the corpses like a child plays with dolls," the Rev. Ernst Pulsfort, spiritual rector of Berlin's Catholic Academy, said when the show first opened in the German capital in 2001. He argued that it catered to a "public lust for sensation."

During a "Body Worlds" show in London in 2002, the anatomist — wearing, as ever, his trademark black fedora — conducted Britain's first public autopsy in 170 years before a sellout crowd of hundreds, defying government warnings that it might be illegal.

Von Hagens declared it a "huge success." The British Medical Association's head of ethics, Dr. Michael Wilkes, said it was "degrading and disrespectful."

The "Body Worlds" exhibits were shown in several American cities after making their U.S. debut in Los Angeles in 2004.

Von Hagens' "Plastinarium," where bodies are prepared, opened in the eastern German town of Guben in 2006.

The anatomist was born Gunther Liebchen on Jan. 10, 1945, in what is now western Poland.

He went to medical school in Jena in East Germany, but increasingly questioned the communist system and made a failed attempt to flee to the West. He was detained before West Germany bought his freedom in 1970, a regular practice at the time.

He continued his medical studies at the University of Luebeck and, in the 1970s, began working at Heidelberg University's pathology and anatomy institute. He married a former classmate, Cornelia von Hagens, and took her surname.

His second wife, Angelina Whalley, heads his Heidelberg-based Institute for Plastination and curates his exhibitions, and he had three children from his first marriage.

Monday's statement said it was von Hagens' wish that his body be made available for plastination and "his family will respect and carry out this wish."

Kat Lieu uses black sesame and miso for an Asian spin on Rice Krispie Treats

By KAT LIEU Voracious

I make these Black Sesame-Brown Butter Rice Krispies Treats, excerpted from my book "108 Asian Cookies," with my mother in mind.

Growing up, I ate my fair share of Rice Krispie Treats because they were one of the few Western sweets my mom made over and over again. Maybe it was because they were so easy to make and helped her feel a little closer to the typical mothers we saw on American sitcoms and primetime TV. Or maybe she just liked their chewiness.

But for whatever reason, my mom never gave her Rice Krispies Treats an Asian spin. She always followed the recipe directions on the cereal box to a T.

But she loves black sesame desserts, especially sweet black sesame soup. As a child, I remember her telling me how black sesame would keep our Chinese hair black and long. We both have short hair peppered with gray now, but we still have a thing for desserts that sport a lovely shade of gray or black.

Black Sesame and Brown Butter Rice Krispie Treats

Makes 12 to 16 Rice Krispie Treats

Start to Finish 55 minutes

Ingredients

6 tablespoons unsalted butter

One 12-ounce bag mini marshmallows

1/4 cup black sesame seeds

2 1/2 tablespoons black sesame paste

1 teaspoon red miso

6 cups Rice Krispies cereal

1/3 cup freeze-dried strawberry slices or haw flakes (optional)

Directions

1. Crumple, then uncrumple a large sheet of parchment paper and use it to line a 9-inch-square cake pan with some overhang. Smooth and press down the parchment paper with your hands. Alternatively, generously grease the baking dish with butter or toasted sesame oil.

2. To make the brown butter, melt the butter in a heavy saucepan or pot over medium heat while whisking continuously until the butter foams, the foam subsides, the butter is golden, and brown (not black) bits form on the bottom, at least 5 minutes. You're looking for a nutty aroma and not a burnt smell. Reduce the heat to low and add the marshmallows. Stir until the marshmallows have melted into one thick fluff, like foamy, melty mozzarella cheese, a few minutes. There should be no lumps of marshmallow. Add the black sesame seeds, black sesame paste, and miso and mix to combine. Turn off the heat and dump in the cereal, about 2 cups at a time, while stirring; if you like, add the freeze-dried strawberries or haw flakes as well. Stir and mix with a spatula or wooden spoon until all the ingredients are thoroughly coated with gray-black melted marshmallows.

3. Transfer the mixture to the prepared pan and flatten into a leveled square. I find it easier to do this with a layer of parchment paper on top and pressing down with a fondant smoother. You can also use a greased spatula or your clean hands when the mixture is cool enough to touch.

4. Cover and let it rest on the counter at room temperature for about 30 minutes to let the mixture set. Then, use a sharp knife to cut into 12 to 16 equal pieces.

Years of scandals haven't stopped Ken Paxton.

Can James Talarico change that?

By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

Eight years ago, during a campaign for Texas attorney general, Justin Nelson ran television advertisements with security camera footage of Ken Paxton pocketing an expensive pen that didn't belong to him.

Four years ago, George P. Bush went after Paxton by putting up billboards that said "he's a crook" next to his mugshot from when he was charged with securities fraud.

And earlier this year, U.S. Sen John Cornyn said "judgment day is coming" as he tried to fend off a Republican primary challenge from Paxton.

All of them lost. Now the question is whether James Talarico, who topped Rep. Jasmine Crockett in an expensive and fiercely contested Democratic primary, will have any more luck as he faces off against Paxton in one of the country's most closely watched U.S. Senate races.

"The guy's ability to take shots and just keep moving on and stay in elected office is unlike anything I've ever seen in my career, in 25 years of running campaigns," said Ash Wright, who worked as a senior adviser to Bush.

Paxton has never been convicted, and he's survived by championing conservative legal battles over immigration, abortion and transgender issues in a Republican-dominated state. Much like President Donald Trump, he's long portrayed himself as the victim of political persecution.

Former Paxton challengers and a half dozen campaign strategists who worked against him warned that Texans may tune out any attempt to revive scandals that they've heard about for years, especially when rigid partisanship has convinced voters to be extraordinarily forgiving of candidates' trespasses.

However, Talarico's team has studied the previous races and is attempting its own version of the playbook by trying to paint Paxton as part of a broader culture of corruption that has failed to improve people's lives.

Paxton's campaign suggested Talarico's claims were aimed at distracting voters from a record of "out-of-touch views."

"Every time a fighter, like President Donald Trump and now Ken Paxton, stands up to the permanent political class, even after they are completely acquitted of wrongdoing, people like James Talarico continue pushing the same accusations and claiming corruption," Paxton campaign spokesperson Madison Cercy said.

Paxton won first reelection narrowly, despite indictment

Paxton was first elected as Texas attorney general in 2014, and Nelson ran against him in 2018. A Democratic lawyer from Austin, Nelson made Paxton's indictment on charges of securities fraud central to his campaign, and he poked fun at him for picking up another lawyer's \$1,000 pen after finding it at a courthouse security checkpoint.

"Vote Justin Nelson for Texas attorney general," the narrator said. "He will fight on behalf of all Texans. And he won't steal your pen."

Nelson argued that his approach was effective, reflected in Paxton's narrow margin of 3.6 percentage points in a year when Republican Greg Abbott was reelected as Texas governor by more than 13 percentage points. Nelson's campaign spent roughly \$6.5 million, about half of what Paxton's campaign spent.

"My message was working," Nelson said. "I just needed to go louder and longer."

In 2022, Paxton faced a Republican primary challenge from George P. Bush, the Texas land commissioner and the grandson and nephew of two former presidents from the state.

The securities fraud case was ongoing, and Paxton was also under federal investigation over accusations that he abused his position to benefit an Austin real estate developer, took bribes and retaliated against whistleblower employees.

Paxton responded by portraying himself as a Trump-era Republican and Bush as the heir to a privileged political legacy.

Pro-Paxton organizations spent more than \$20 million, about twice as much as Bush and his allies. The race went to a runoff, in which Paxton defeated Bush by 34 percentage points.

Paxton ran against Rochelle Garza, a Democratic civil rights lawyer from Brownsville, in the general

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election. She said her campaign had a 300-page opposition research file on Paxton but it was difficult to figure out how to approach his past because voters had heard about it for years.

"The amount of potential hits on Paxton can make message discipline challenging," Garza said.

Paxton ran as the leading legal opponent of President Joe Biden, promoting a string of lawsuits against Biden's Democratic administration on immigration, abortion and gender policy.

Overwhelmingly outspent, Garza lost by roughly 10 percentage points.

Some supporters see Paxton as a 'flawed' fighter

There was more trouble ahead for Paxton.

He split with his wife, who later filed for divorce "on biblical grounds." He was also impeached by the Texas House, although the Senate acquitted him in 2023 and allowed him to remain in office. The securities fraud case ended in 2024, and Paxton was directed to pay nearly \$300,000 in restitution.

Throughout the years, he's maintained strong support from Republican voters like David and Nancy Lapp, a retired couple from the small town of Wolfforth. They described him as a conservative warrior who has been a victim of persecution.

"He's had his share of scandals, and almost all of them have, so it's not necessarily disqualifying anymore," said David Lapp, 76. "He's a flawed person, no doubt about it, but he fights for traditional American ideals."

He added that "nowadays, as long as you're not in jail, they'll elect you."

Biden's Justice Department in 2024 decided not to prosecute Paxton after the yearslong federal investigation, and Paxton went on to challenge Cornyn for his Senate seat.

Cornyn and his allies vastly outspent Paxton, blanketing the state with more than \$90 million in advertising. After the race went to a runoff, Trump endorsed Paxton, and he won decisively.

Talarico hopes Waco case sparks new scrutiny

Talarico promised at a rally in Houston the day after the Republican runoff to "prosecute the case" against Paxton, whom he called "the most corrupt politician in America."

Since then, he has sought to introduce a newer question about Paxton, one that involves his office's handling of a child sexual abuse case this year.

The attorney general's office was assigned the felony case involving Waco lawyer Adam Hoffman after the county district attorney recused himself over a potential conflict of interest. After a hung jury trial last year, Hoffman agreed to state lawyers' offer in April to plead guilty to a misdemeanor charge. Prosecutors said the victim did not want to testify a second time. Hoffman served 60 days in jail and was not required to register as a sex offender.

Talarico said the plea agreement shows Paxton is willing to allow preferential treatment at Texans' expense.

"He is everything that's wrong with this broken, corrupt political system," Talarico said of Paxton at a rally in Del Rio last week. "This is the rot at the core of this broken political system. It's why we can't get ahead, no matter how hard we work, no matter how much we save, because the system is rigged against us."

Talarico reported having \$21.5 million available last week, while Paxton reported having \$7.5 million.

The Democrat's fundraising advantage could help him broadcast his message further than Paxton's previous opponents have been able to do, Nelson said.

"Even a little bit more money would have helped me," he said. "I think James has a legitimate shot."

China memory chipmaker CXMT's shares soar in a blockbuster share listing in Shanghai

By CHAN HO-HIM AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — Shares of CXMT, China's largest memory chipmaker, shot skyward Monday as they began trading in Shanghai in mainland China's biggest initial public stock offering in recent years.

CXMT's shares surged 466% in their first day of trading. The company has become the most valuable one listed on a mainland Chinese exchange, with an estimated market capitalization of about 3.3 trillion yuan (more than \$487 billion). But that's still smaller than those of South Korean and American memory chipmakers like Samsung Electronics, SK Hynix and Micron Technology.

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CXMT, or ChangXin Memory Technologies, is among many chipmakers that have profited mightily from the boom in artificial intelligence. Its business is thriving as China pushes for greater self-sufficiency in leading edge technologies while contending with limited access to advanced chipmaking machines due to American-led restrictions.

The company raised at least \$8.6 billion with the offering, priced at 8.66 yuan (\$1.3) per share, in its listing on the Shanghai Stock Exchange's Nasdaq-like STAR market, also known as the Science and Technology Innovation Board.

It was mainland China's second largest IPO after the \$22.1 billion share offering of Agricultural Bank of China in Shanghai and Hong Kong in 2010.

Founded in 2016 in the eastern city of Hefei, CXMT is one of the world's largest makers of DRAM, or "dynamic random access" memory chips, a kind of semiconductor used in everything from AI servers to autos and consumer electronics like smartphones and personal computers.

"CXMT plays a critical role in China's AI push, particularly in the face of U.S. export controls," said Kyle Chan, a fellow at the Brookings Institution and an expert in China's technology policies. U.S. restrictions have also barred China from importing powerful HBM, or high-bandwidth memory chips – a high-performance type of DRAM.

The company's revenue surged to 50.8 billion yuan (\$7.5 billion) on jumping demand from the rapid rise of AI in the first three months of 2026, a more than 700% rise year-on-year.

Soaring use of AI has led to a global memory chip shortage, driving up prices for some computers and smartphones. One big question, Chan said, is whether CXMT could help with the broader shortage.

CXMT is seen as China's best shot at developing its own cutting-edge HBM chips to power Chinese AI models, Chan said. But it also faces many challenges, including supply chain bottlenecks in scaling up manufacturing capacity, since its access to the world's most best chipmaking tools is highly restricted, forcing it to depend on Chinese equipment makers.

According to Counterpoint Research, a technology research firm, CXMT was the world's fourth biggest DRAM memory chipmaker in 2025 by shipments, taking up roughly 8% of the global market. Samsung Electronics accounted for 36%, SK Hynix 29% and Micron about 24%.

In the first three months of this year CXMT accounted for approximately 9% of global shipments. By 2028, its market share is forecast by Counterpoint Research to reach about 11%. But the research firm estimated CXMT will likely need at least a 15% global market share to be competitive in the long term.

"Trade restrictions on tools are remaining as the key challenge for CXMT," said MS Hwang, a research director at Counterpoint who specializes in memory semiconductors. Some U.S. lawmakers have also recently called for President Donald Trump's administration to block American companies from buying CXMT's memory chips over national and economic security concerns.

CXMT is one of many Chinese companies the Pentagon says have links to the Chinese military. Beijing has rejected such designations in most cases.

CXMT's public share offering followed a \$26.5 billion IPO by South Korea's SK Hynix on the Nasdaq earlier this month.

Today in History: July 28

US Army airplane crashes into Empire State Building

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, July 28, the 209th day of 2026. There are 156 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On July 28, 1945, a U.S. Army B-25 bomber crashed into the 79th floor of New York's Empire State Building, killing 14 people.

Also on this date:

In 1794, Maximilien Robespierre and Louis Antoine de Saint-Just were executed by guillotine during the French Revolution.

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In 1914, World War I began as Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia.

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson announced he was increasing the number of American troops in South Vietnam from 75,000 to 125,000.

In 1976, an earthquake devastated northern China, killing at least 242,000 people, according to an official estimate.

In 1984, the Los Angeles Summer Olympics officially opened; 14 Eastern Bloc countries, led by the Soviet Union, boycotted the Games.

In 1995, a jury in Union, South Carolina, rejected the death penalty for Susan Smith, sentencing her to life in prison for drowning her two young sons (Smith will next be eligible for parole in November 2026).

In 1996, 8,000-year-old human skeletal remains (later referred to as Kennewick Man) were discovered in a bank of the Columbia River in Kennewick, Washington.

In 2004, the Irish Republican Army formally announced an end to its armed campaign against British rule in Northern Ireland.

In 2015, it was announced that Jonathan Pollard, the former U.S. Naval intelligence analyst who had spent nearly three decades in prison for spying for Israel, had been granted parole.

In 2018, Pope Francis accepted the resignation of U.S. Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, the emeritus archbishop of Washington, D.C., following allegations of sexual abuse, including one involving an 11-year-old boy. Both died in April of 2025.

In 2019, a gunman opened fire at a popular garlic festival in Gilroy, California, killing three people, including a six-year-old boy and a 13-year-old girl, and wounding 17 others before taking his own life.

Today's Birthdays: Music conductor Riccardo Muti is 85. Former Senator and NBA Hall of Famer Bill Bradley is 83. "Garfield" creator Jim Davis is 81. TV producer Dick Ebersol is 79. Actor Sally Struthers is 79. Architect Santiago Calatrava is 75. CBS TV journalist Scott Pelley is 69. Actor Lori Loughlin is 62. Jazz musician-producer Delfeayo Marsalis is 61. UFC president Dana White is 57. Actor Elizabeth Berkley is 54. Basketball Hall of Famer Manu Ginobili is 49. Actor John David Washington is 42. Actor Dustin Milligan is 41. Rapper Soulja Boy is 36. England soccer star Harry Kane is 33. Pop/rock singer Cher Lloyd is 33. Golfer Nelly Korda is 28.