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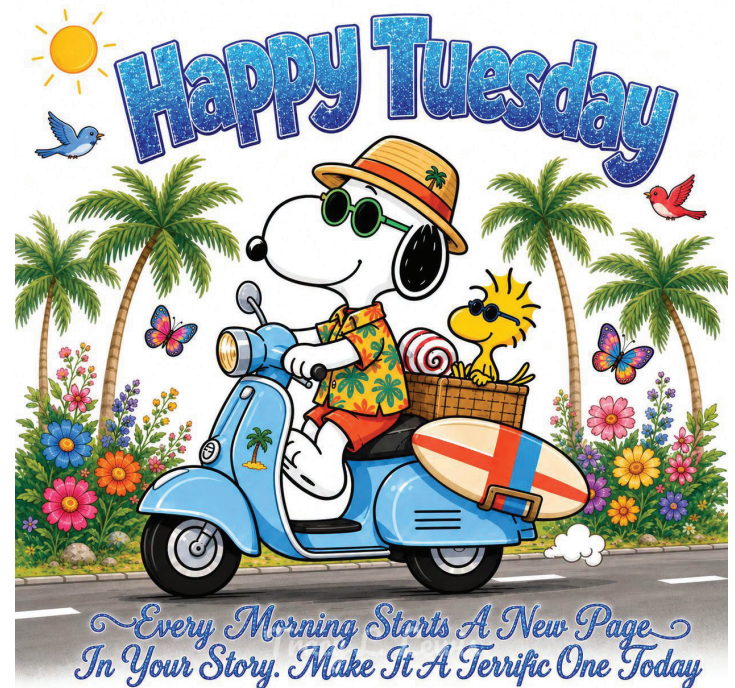
25- News from the Associated Press

Brown County Fair Tickets Available

The Groton Daily Independent has some Brown County Fair Tickets available for \$50 each. 2 each of Cooper Alan & Jackson Dean, Aug. 12, 8 p.m.; 2 each of Tyler Hubbard & Blackhawk, Aug. 13, 8 p.m.; 2 each of Theory of a Deadman & Sevendust, Aug. 14, 8 p.m.; and 2 each of Lee Brice & George Birge, Aug. 15, 8 p.m. I do take Venmo. Text Paul at 605-397-7460 if interested.

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

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Community Calendar

Tuesday, Aug. 4

Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes with ham, carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.

Wrestling Camp, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., GHS Gym and Arena

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

State B Legion Tournament in Madison

Wednesday, Aug. 5

Senior Menu: Swedish meatballs, mashed potatoes with gravy, winter blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

Wrestling Camp, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., GHS Gym and Arena

Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

Groton Chamber meeting, noon, City Hall

Thursday, Aug. 6

Senior Menu: Tuna noodle casserole, peas, fruit, whole wheat bread.

First day of football practice

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

Family Fun Fest, 5:30-7:30 p.m., downtown Groton

Summer Smash, 7:30 p.m., GHS Parking Lot

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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.

Michigan Primary Matchup

Michigan voters head to the polls today for statewide races, including the most expensive Democratic Senate primary in US history. The winner will face Republican Mike Rogers in November for the seat being vacated by Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI).

More than \$60M has been spent on the Democratic primary, with pro-Israel lobby AIPAC directing nearly \$30M to support four-term Rep. Haley Stevens (D, MI-11). Stevens has highlighted her work on former President Barack Obama's recession-era bailout for Detroit's automobile industry. She faces Abdul El-Sayed, a former Detroit public health official who emphasizes a progressive agenda, including Medicare for All. The race is largely seen as a referendum on Israel; a recent poll found nearly 60% of Democrats, including El-Sayed, believe the party is too supportive of the country.

The latest polls largely show El-Sayed leading Stevens. A recent poll found El-Sayed trailing Rogers by 10 points, and a closer race between Rogers and Stevens.

Whale Song and Dance

Male humpback whales appear to synchronize different parts of their songs with specific stages of their dives, according to research published yesterday. The findings offer the first evidence linking underwater movements to the structure of the elaborate courtship songs males sing during breeding season.

Researchers attached temporary sound-and-motion tags to 16 humpback whales off Maui between 2018 and 2024, tracking both their dives and vocalizations. The whales repeated distinct song "themes" during specific phases of a dive, with some singing continuously for up to 16 hours. Scientists believe some themes evolved to attract mates, while others reflect physical constraints such as oxygen consumption and buoyancy. The findings could help researchers infer a whale's depth and behavior from acoustic recordings alone.

Whale songs are among the few animal vocalizations passed down culturally rather than genetically, with new songs spreading across ocean populations. Could humans one day communicate with whales?

👉 **Humankind:** French postal workers serve as lifelines, checking on older residents during a dangerous heat wave.

Antarctic Time Capsule

A study published yesterday reveals a rich community of microorganisms living in the water flowing through Antarctica's Blood Falls, suggesting the crimson waterfall may have ancient marine origins.

Genetic analysis of roughly 167 water, sediment, and air samples suggests that the newly discovered microbes belong to organism groups commonly found in the ocean. They are likely descendants of a marine community that became trapped beneath the Taylor Glacier when seawater flooded a valley millions of years ago. The trapped seawater appears to have formed a hypersaline brine with a lower freezing point, allowing the microbes to survive as Antarctica grew increasingly cold. Scientists believe the microbes have remained isolated and relatively unchanged since the flood, providing a rare glimpse into life before the modern Antarctic ice sheet.

Prior research found that the waterfall's color comes from iron in the brine, which rusts when it comes into contact with oxygen.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Mauricio Pochettino to continue coaching the US men's national soccer team through the 2030 World Cup. Philadelphia Phillies land three-time batting champion Luis Arraez and Boston Red Sox snag three-time All-Star catcher Adley Rutschman ahead of MLB trade deadline (More, w/all trades graded)

Ariana Grande pulls out of London musical and steps back from the public eye, citing public scrutiny; the 33-year-old singer has faced ongoing commentary about her physical appearance.

Science & Technology

Michigan reports first two US deaths in cyclosporiasis outbreak, which has surpassed 6,700 confirmed cases; both deceased patients had underlying health conditions.

Neural activity suggests the brain turns inward during REM sleep, tuning out sensory information from the outside world while continuing to process internal signals.

Researchers devise technique to place delicate molecules into microchips, potentially enabling ultrasmall, faster computing technologies.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +1.5%, Dow +1.3%, Nasdaq +2.1%); Dow hits record as Big Tech stocks rise and oil prices fall.

Amazon becomes fifth company to top \$3T market cap as its shares reach a new all-time high.

Data analytics software giant Palantir reports stronger-than-expected quarterly earnings and revenue, sees US government revenue grow 90% year-over-year.

Visa to buy AI-powered fraud detection company BioCatch for \$2.4B.

Politics & World Affairs

Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche rescinds \$1.8B anti-weaponization fund and limits IRS audit immunity for President Donald Trump, earning support for his confirmation from holdout Republican senators.

Washington state wildfires force at least 60,000 people to evacuate, destroy more than 600 homes and structures across Spokane County.

Court case begins over South African law allowing the government to seize private land to address economic inequality, in some cases without compensating the owner.



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Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

August 4, 2026 – 7:00pm
City Hall – 120 North Main Street

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

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. 14U Legion Baseball Season Recap and Thank You
4. Authorization to Begin Accepting Statements of Qualifications for Architectural/Engineering Services for the Park Saferoom and Appoint a Review Committee
5. Department Reports
6. Discussion Regarding Bleachers at Baseball Complex
7. IT Management Discussion
8. Minutes
9. Bills
10. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
11. Adjournment

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BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA GENERAL MEETING

TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 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. Richmond Dam Update
5. Public Hearing for Boys & Girls Club of Aberdeen Temporary Alcohol Permit for Special Event
6. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign amended Fair Contract
 - a. Keith Raymond – Magic Show
7. Chris Hemen, Weed & Pest Supervisor
 - a. Quotes for Truck Mounted Weed Sprayer
8. Randy Zens, Building Superintendent
 - a. Quotes for Floor Scrubber and Attachments
9. Dirk Rogers, Highway Superintendent
 - a. R-O-W for Basin Construction
 - b. Department Update
 - c. Discuss Road Use Agreement
 - d. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign 2027 Bridge Improvement Grant (BIG)/Local Federal Bridge Application for BR #145 & BR #266
10. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes of July 28, 2026 and Canvass Minutes of July 30, 2026
 - b. Claims
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Travel Requests
11. Other Business
12. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
13. Adjourn

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

You can also dial in using your phone. United States: [+1 \(872\) 240-3311](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](#)

BROWN COUNTY BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA POST ELECTION AUDIT

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2026, 5:00 P.M.

COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS

COURTHOUSE ANNEX – 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD

POST ELECTION AUDIT HELD THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2026 AT 5:00PM

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ROWDY
IN THE STIX



ABERDEEN, SD

AUGUST 10-16, 2026

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2026 South Dakota American Legion State Class "B" Sr. Baseball Tournament

Friday - July 31, 2026

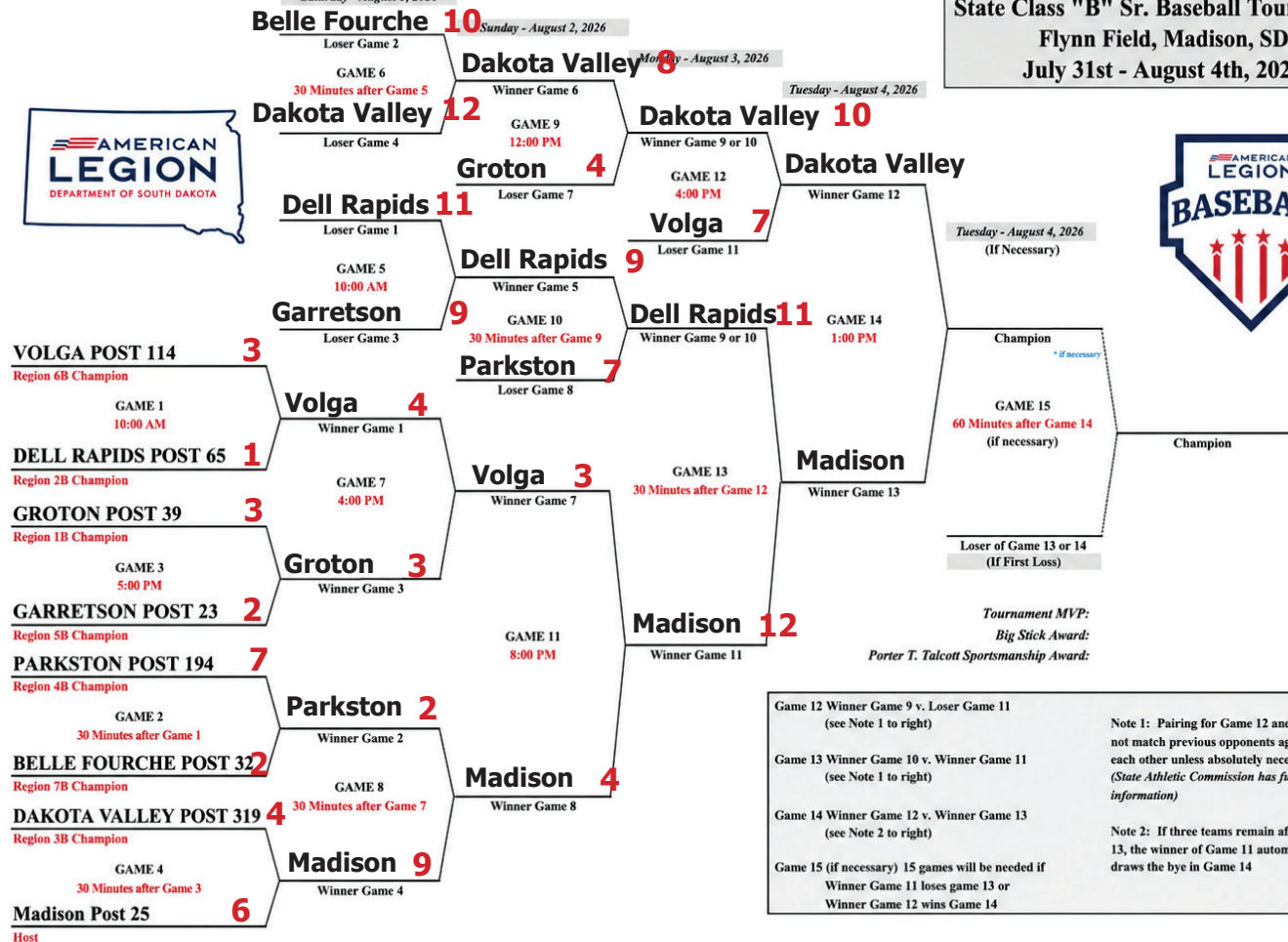
Saturday - August 1, 2026

Sunday - August 2, 2026

Monday - August 3, 2026

Tuesday - August 4, 2026

South Dakota American Legion
State Class "B" Sr. Baseball Tournament
Flynn Field, Madison, SD
July 31st - August 4th, 2026





Walking Taco and a drink
Free Will Donation
Proceeds go to Groton's Angel Tree
15 N Main, St. #103
Groton Daily Independent
Suggested Donation: \$5

Family Fun Fest -Thursday, Aug. 6 ~ 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Governor and attorney general appeal to defend South Dakota's ban on abortion-pill advertising

BY MEGHAN O'BRIEN

South Dakota Gov. Larry Rhoden and Attorney General Marty Jackley, both Republicans, filed an appeal Monday in defense of a new law that criminalizes abortion-pill advertising in the state.

They're seeking to set aside a lower court's order blocking enforcement of the law while the litigation plays out.

Nancy Turbak Berry, who formerly served as a Democratic state legislator from Watertown, and New York-based nonprofit Mayday Health filed a lawsuit in May against Rhoden and Jackley. Rhoden signed the legislation into law in March after lawmakers approved it, but it wasn't scheduled to take effect until July 1.

In mid-July, a federal judge in Rapid City ruled the state could not enforce the new law while the lawsuit played out. On Monday, Jackley and Rhoden appealed that decision to the U.S. Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

South Dakota already had a near-total ban on abortion, except when it's necessary "to preserve the life of the pregnant female."

The new law prohibits the dispensing, distribution and advertising of abortion pills and other abortion-related items, and makes violations punishable by felony prosecutions and fines.

Mayday Health and Turbak Berry say the law illegally restricts Turbak Berry's free speech. As an example, the lawsuit says the prohibition on advertising would prevent her from wearing a sweatshirt sold by Mayday. The sweatshirt says abortion pills can be obtained in all 50 states and encourages people to learn more on Mayday's website.

"Unless this court grants relief, Turbak will be deterred from wearing the sweatshirt," and thereby deterred from engaging in First Amendment-protected speech, the lawsuit says.

U.S. District Judge Camela Theeler wrote in her July ruling that the state's lawyers have "not shown that Mayday advertises with the specific intent that another person engage in specific criminal conduct and thus have not shown that Mayday's advertising is integral to criminal conduct."

In court documents filed Monday, Jackley and Rhoden criticized Theeler's ruling and Mayday's advertising, which formerly included placards at gas station pumps in the state.

"The Court has legalized the solicitation and aiding and abetting of an illegal drug and erroneously broadened the scope of the term advertising," the state said in its court filing, adding that the ruling "could just as easily protect the solicitation and aiding and abetting of online methamphetamine sales by groups who claim to simply 'provide information' about methamphetamine and offer consumers the 'choice' to



South Dakota Gov. Larry Rhoden, left, delivers his annual budget address on Dec. 2, 2025, at the Capitol in Pierre while state Attorney General Marty Jackley, right, listens from the floor of the House of Representatives. (Photos by Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

commit an illegal act.”

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

South Dakotans condemn endangered species rule change as state government takes no position

Regulation rolls back former federal protections for habitat

BY JOSHUA HAIAR

The state of South Dakota did not submit official comments on a major change to the federal Endangered Species Act that will roll back protections for forests, wetlands, deserts and other habitats where endangered species live.

The new rule will open some landscapes to development, logging, mining, and oil and gas drilling, due to a more limited definition of “harm” as actions that directly injure or kill endangered species. A previous definition included harm to habitats where endangered species live.

Some South Dakotans blasted the rule change, which was finalized July 10. Their comments were among more than 350,000 submitted during the public comment period.

The South Dakota Ornithologists' Union submitted comments saying the rule change will “wantonly put us on a path to massive loss of species.”

Lester Flake, a distinguished professor emeritus of wildlife at South Dakota State University, described the new rule as “a crazy move by President Trump that must be stopped.”

Caitlin Kane described herself as “a voter from South Dakota, where a large part of our livelihood depends on maintaining healthy ecosystems and protecting endangered species of all kinds, both plant and animal.”

“I beg you, please do the right thing, and strengthen and maintain regulations protecting our native species here in South Dakota and across the country!” Kane wrote.

John Weidler, a biologist for the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, submitted personal comments calling the move “incredibly harmful to wildlife.” He criticized the new rule’s more limited definition of “harm” as actions that directly injure or kill endangered species. The previous definition included harm to habitats where those species live.

“To define ‘harm’ as only directly harming a plant or animal is pretty stupid from a biological point of view, because no organism can survive without habitat,” Weidler wrote. “Destroy the habitat and the organism will eventually die.”

The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks did not submit an official departmental comment on the rule; nor did the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Game, Fish and Parks spokesperson Nick Harrington replied to South Dakota Searchlight with a written statement, but he did not address Searchlight’s questions about the department’s position or whether the department has the staffing and funding to adequately protect endangered species under the new rule.

“Our department maintains a list of state threatened and endangered species, but also tracks those on the federal list as some can overlap,” Harrington wrote. “Conservation efforts for all wildlife is the responsibility of GFP and biologists and managers of multiple disciplines engage in these conservation activities.”

Some other states expressed concerns about the proposal, saying it would threaten their plans to safe-



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated the northern long-eared bat, found in the Black Hills, as an endangered species. (Courtesy USFWS)

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guard endangered species.

At least one state contradicted itself.

North Dakota's Game and Fish Department submitted comments against the change, saying "there is clear consensus that habitat loss, destruction, and fragmentation are significant contributors to species declines" and "there can be no doubt that the loss of habitat-focused programs and strategies for species recovery would ultimately lead to further declines."

But North Dakota's Department of Agriculture submitted comments in favor of the change, especially the narrower "harm" definition. Doug Goehring, North Dakota's agriculture commissioner, wrote that the new definition "will restore and protect private property rights and further positive land development."

Federal officials described the rule as a move to give state leaders freedom to manage wildlife without burdensome federal regulations. States that wish to continue protecting habitats can do so under state law, the Interior Department and other federal agencies wrote in their new regulations.

But some legal experts and many wildlife veterans say that almost no states have endangered species laws on the books that allow state officials to prevent habitat destruction in the name of saving wildlife. Many states have laws to stop poaching, but the protection of nesting trees, spawning streams and other resources has long fallen to the federal Endangered Species Act.

Portions of this story were written by Alex Brown and originally published by Stateline, which is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit news network that includes South Dakota Searchlight and is supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity.

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.

Online prediction markets rile up state lawmakers

They say Kalshi and Polymarket are more like sportsbooks than commodity markets

BY KEVIN HARDY

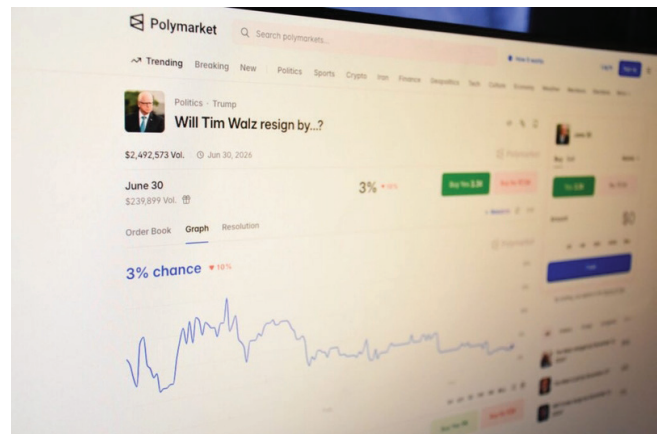
CHICAGO — The escalating feud between states and online prediction markets was on full display at a summit of state lawmakers this week as legislators publicly scolded Kalshi and Polymarket, the two most prominent platforms.

Prediction market platforms say they are like commodity markets that offer contracts to speculate on the future price of corn or oil — not sportsbooks that allow gamblers to place bets. But many states reject those justifications, arguing the platforms are a backdoor to skirt state gambling regulations, particularly on sports.

The issue has sparked action from state regulators, new legislation, and a flurry of lawsuits from states, prediction markets, and the Trump administration, which has sought to sideline state oversight.

During a sometimes-heated panel discussion at the annual gathering of the National Conference of State Legislatures in Chicago, Iowa Republican state Sen. Dan Dawson told the audience that a group of students at his son's high school recently enrolled in Kalshi to bet on World Cup matches. In Iowa, people must be at least 21 to participate in legal online sports betting.

"States are the ones that pick up the pieces," Dawson said as a Kalshi executive looked on.



Online prediction markets such as Kalshi and Polymarket are attracting scrutiny from state lawmakers, who argue the platforms are undermining state gambling regulations. (Photo by Alyssa Chen/Minnesota Reformer)

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Dawson has previously raised concerns about the public health consequences of prediction markets. While an industry representative pledged to work with states, Dawson said a legislative subcommittee that recently studied the issue could not get even basic information from the prediction markets about their reach in Iowa.

"We couldn't get one answer," he said.

In March, Kalshi preemptively sued to block Iowa Attorney General Brenna Bird, a Republican, from taking civil or criminal enforcement action against it. In its suit, Kalshi claimed there was "a substantial risk that the attorney general of Iowa will bring an enforcement action."

Regulation of prediction markets

Sara Slane, Head of Corporate Development at Kalshi, told lawmakers in Chicago that the company was committed to building relationships with the states. But she said the prediction markets are not subject to state oversight, as they are regulated by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, which regulates derivatives such as futures contracts on stocks.

She said prediction markets require a national standard rather than a "state-by-state regulatory patchwork."

"This was exactly what the commodity exchange was set up for," she said.

The five-member, presidentially appointed CFTC currently has four vacancies. But it has aggressively sought to exclude states from overseeing prediction markets, suing red and blue states alike to maintain its jurisdiction over the markets.

Earlier this week, a coalition of 44 state attorneys general wrote to the agency, arguing it does not have the power to regulate sports-related event contracts, which they say are subject to state gambling regulations.

In addition to encroaching on state-regulated and state-taxed sports gambling, states argue that prediction markets are subject to potential insider trading, lack consumer oversight and can fuel problem gambling.

Slane said her firm works to prevent money laundering and allows people who have problems with gambling to block themselves from the site. She said Kalshi also works with major sports leagues to prevent athletes and referees from trading on sports events.

"We take this very seriously," she said. "We want to promote integrity around our exchange."

But prediction markets continue to gain national attention for allowing people to unfairly bet on the outcome of events by leveraging nonpublic information.

This week, the White House announced the president's teleprompter operator was no longer on staff after he was accused of using inside knowledge to make bets about presidential speeches on Kalshi.

Minnesota Democratic Gov. Tim Walz on Tuesday signed an executive order prohibiting state employees from using inside information to bet on prediction markets. At least eight states, including Arizona, California, Maryland and Wisconsin, have implemented similar restrictions.

Mick Mulvaney, executive director of the Gambling is Not Investing Coalition, said he was sympathetic to the argument that prediction markets want to avoid a regulatory patchwork across the states.

"That being said, there've been two areas where the states have almost always been entirely sovereign: That's on booze and gambling," he said.

Mulvaney, a Republican, represented South Carolina in the U.S. House and served as acting White House chief of staff during President Donald Trump's first term. His organization argues that prediction markets should be subject to the same state and tribal regulations as other forms of gambling.

With litigation flying, he said there's no question the debate is heading toward the U.S. Supreme Court. Mulvaney said it's unclear how the conservative court will rule, given its recent decisions. Some of those rulings have allowed the expansion of federal executive power, while others have tilted toward the states.

"So that will be fascinating to see how it shakes out at the Supreme Court," he told Stateline. "But I have every expectation that this is going all the way up."

Threat to tribal casinos

Casino gambling has been the sole economic engine for many Native American tribes for years, said Mi-

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chael Hoenig, vice president and associate general counsel for gaming at the Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation in Southern California.

He said tribes have built up the gambling industry over the last 40 years — sometimes in cooperation with states, other times “in friction with the states.”

“This is just a profound affront to tribal sovereignty, tribal self-government,” he said. “Tribes are supposed to have the sovereign right to decide who gets to operate gaming on their lands and who doesn’t.”

Aside from regulatory concerns, state leaders worry about how the rise of prediction markets may impact the financial and mental health of their residents. Since a 2018 U.S. Supreme Court ruling opened the door for states to legalize sports gambling, 39 states and the District of Columbia have done so.

Advocates, researchers and lawmakers are already raising alarms about how the burgeoning market could fuel gambling addiction and hurt household finances.

Aside from regulation, there is little difference between the potential impacts of prediction markets and online sports betting, said Rachel Volberg, a professor emerita of epidemiology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Volberg, who has studied gambling addiction for 40 years, told lawmakers in a separate presentation that the research is clear about how over involvement in gambling can hurt individuals and families. However, she told Stateline that legal sports gambling is too new for researchers to fully measure how much the high-speed and accessible world of online gaming has changed the dynamics.

In North Carolina, a new poll found that most people generally approve of sports betting, but a majority wants the state to ban prediction markets.

In the Meredith College poll released Tuesday, 51% of registered voters said they were satisfied with state regulation of sports gambling. Only 11% said they were dissatisfied, while 38% said they didn’t know.

In that poll, two-thirds of registered voters said they would support state legislation banning prediction markets, while 24% said they should be legal.

Though sports fans, policymakers and the researchers continue to grapple with the quickly evolving landscape, experts gathered in Chicago were clear that this industry is here to stay.

“It’s not going anywhere,” said Anthony D’Angelo, who leads responsible gaming efforts at Fanatics Betting & Gaming.

D’Angelo said his company’s sportsbook invests heavily in providing assistance for problem gamblers, flags potentially problematic transactions and incentivizes customers to set and stick to betting limits.

He said lawmakers can help keep people away from illegal and offshore betting platforms that have no oversight or consumer protections.

“We all want the same things to happen,” he said. “I think we want a sustainable, long-term industry where customers are protected.”

Stateline reporter Kevin Hardy can be reached at khardy@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.

Kevin Hardy covers business, labor and rural issues for Stateline from the Midwest.

Legal services contract expires, and unaccompanied immigrant children face deportation

BY ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — More than 20,000 unaccompanied immigrant children Monday lost their legal representation because the Trump administration has not entered into a new agreement to take over their legal services after it let a longstanding contract with a nonprofit expire.

Without legal representation, fewer than 10% of immigrant children win the right to remain in the United States while their case goes through immigration court. Immigration attorneys and advocates worry the loss in legal aid will put children on a fast track to deportations.

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"Right now we're all in the dark, and the secrecy is a big part of the problem," said Shaina Aber, the executive director of the Acacia Center for Justice, which previously held the contract that expired July 31.

The Department of Health and Human Services, which issues the contract, did not respond to several emails from States Newsroom asking which new organization will take over legal services in immigration courts for unaccompanied kids.

HHS has also not submitted any request for new contractors to provide legal services to unaccompanied minors, according to a States Newsroom review of the federal government's website for contracts.

Additionally, Scott Ehlers, the director of the Texas Indigent Defense Commission, an organization that the Trump administration was initially eyeing to take over legal services for unaccompanied minors, told States Newsroom it had not been awarded a contract from HHS and had not been contacted by the department regarding one.

Aber said that HHS has not informed Acacia who the new contractor will be, implemented a transition of children's cases to new attorneys, or paid the organization for completed legal work since December.

HHS has not reimbursed \$65 million to Acacia, which distributes the federal funding to roughly 100 organizations across the country who provide legal representation to unaccompanied children in immigration cases.

Struggle over sensitive information

The Trump administration let the contract with Acacia expire after attorneys refused to hand over sensitive case information about their clients, such as whether a child has a pending visa.

Aber said since January, immigration attorneys have seen government attorneys try to use visa information in order to place children in deportation proceedings.

"The government has come up with this novel idea that they're using in the immigration court proceedings that if a visa is pending for a child, that means it's purely speculative that the child would ever have status, and therefore they are ordering deportations for kids who actually have pending T visas, that's a trafficking visa, kids who have pending special immigrant juvenile status, kids with U visas," she said. "All of those kids are being ordered removed by the courts, even as their visas are awaiting them."

U nonimmigrant status, or U visas, are set aside for immigrants 21 and younger who were the victim of a crime, or helped provide information to prosecutors about criminal activity.

Separately, a special immigrant juvenile status is extended to immigrant children who have been "abandoned, abused, or neglected" by a parent, and that visa provides a pathway for a green card.

A nonprofit in Pennsylvania, the Jewish Family and Community Services of Pittsburgh, recently filed a lawsuit on behalf of several immigrant children against the Trump administration's practice of targeting children with pending visas for deportation.

Aber said she is worried that the next organization to obtain the contract will hand over that sensitive information to the Trump administration.

"We are very concerned about any agreement that the government has entered into with a new contractor about sharing confidential details or privileged information contrary to children's interests," she said.

Confusion about legal services

Aber said HHS is still working on accepting a transition proposal, meaning that Acacia and providers in



A 10-year-old Honduran immigrant who came into the United States as an unaccompanied minor carries her baby cousin on April 25, 2021, after reuniting with extended family in Sellersburg, Indiana. (Photo by John Moore/Getty Images)

its network cannot even begin having conversations with children to inform them that someone else will be representing them in immigration court.

"To have those really sensitive conversations with the child, where you're saying, 'Hey, I'm not going to be able to represent you anymore, or like these are your options in terms of representation' we can't start having those conversations with kids without that information," she said.

She added that officials at the Office of Refugee and Resettlement, the agency within HHS that houses some unaccompanied immigrant children, are still reaching out to Acacia and its legal services providers even after the contract expired, asking for legal services for newly arrived children. Almost 1,800 children are in ORR's care, according to agency data from June.

"They keep on reaching out to our legal service services network, asking if someone could please go over on their own dime to talk to new arriving children," Aber said.

Some of the organizations that partner with Acacia have been able to dip into reserves to continue providing services to kids, but others have had to stop providing the services altogether, Aber said.

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

Spending deal freezes Trump proposal to gain power over federal grants, extends highway law

BY JACOB FISCHLER

WASHINGTON —The U.S. Senate voted Monday to advance a bipartisan measure to keep the federal government funded through Dec. 11 and pause the Trump administration's effort to add controversial new criteria for federal grants.

The agreement — which Senate Appropriations Chair Susan Collins, a Maine Republican, and Vice Chair Patty Murray, a Democrat from Washington state, released Sunday — would avoid an Oct. 1 government shutdown and keep federal spending at current levels, punting debates about full-year spending past the midterm elections. It would also extend authorization for the federal fund for highway and transit.

The Senate bill, which advanced 89-4, differs considerably from the more partisan stopgap spending measure the House passed last month, with Republicans providing nearly all the votes in support.

The Senate was scheduled to take a procedural vote Monday evening to advance the bill and, if that attracts more than 60 yes votes, would likely consider final passage this week.

In a statement, Collins said she worked with committee members of both parties and that the measure, known as a continuing resolution, or CR, excludes provisions that would doom its chances in the consensus-driven Senate.

"This CR is straightforward," Collins wrote. "It continues current government funding levels until December 11th and includes necessary adjustments for programs like the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), vital national security programs, including shipbuilding across multiple vessels, and the Disaster Relief Fund. The CR also avoids any poison pills."

Murray championed Democrats' success in blocking provisions of the House bill that would increase spending for military action in Iran and allow transfers for immigration enforcement, while adding sections to extend housing and food assistance programs and a section blocking the proposed rule on grant funding.

"This bill includes important extensions and language that House Republicans' CR did not, and it rejects Trump's frivolous war spending wish list," Murray wrote. "Importantly, we closed the loophole in House Republicans' CR that would have allowed the Trump administration to transfer funding provided for other programs to Border Patrol, which desperately needs reform, not more money."

The Senate bill would keep nearly all federal spending steady until Dec. 11, which would save lawmakers from the painstaking work of cobbling together the 12 annual spending bills — and taking potentially difficult votes on them — while freeing more time to campaign ahead of the November elections.

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OMB proposal paused

It would also freeze until Dec. 11 the White House Office of Management and Budget's proposed rule that Democrats have criticized for giving immense decisionmaking power to executive branch political appointees who would be empowered to confirm that federal grants align with the administration's policy priorities.

House Appropriations ranking Democrat Rosa DeLauro said she was pleased to see the Senate bill block the rule from taking effect into December, but wanted a more permanent ban.

"While the bill temporarily blocks the proposed OMB rule, the fight must continue," she wrote Sunday. "The Senate bill forces OMB to continue reviewing the half-million comments that were submitted, but Congress must permanently prevent this corrupt, harmful power grab before the new deadline of December 11."

A draft of the rule, posted May 29, said the policy aims to downplay criteria based on diversity, equity and inclusion goals "and make merit-based decisions."

Some Democrats, including those in Maryland's congressional delegation, criticized the policy, saying it would create "arbitrary standards that are ripe for abuse" and "seeks to prohibit freedom of association, speech, and ... international collaboration."

More broadly, Democrats and some moderate Republicans objected to the power the rule would centralize in OMB and other executive agencies.

"The proposed rule would systematically politicize federal funding and allow Trump officials to cancel grants at any time for any reason," Murray wrote. "Enabling this rule would only give Trump the greenlight to take even more federal funding hostage."

In a July letter to OMB Director Russ Vought, Collins said she agreed with the principles of awarding grants based on merit, but that the rule would add a level of bureaucracy to grants that have already been approved by the scientific community and weaken Congress' power over spending decisions.

"While I agree these principles should guide the administration and oversight of Federal funds, the rule would impose new, burdensome requirements on award recipients that would harm small and rural communities, undermine scientific and biomedical research, and conflict with Congress' control over the federal funding process," Collins wrote.

Road funding extended

The stopgap measure would also extend the major federal transportation trust fund through the duration of the bill.

The Highway Trust Fund sends set funding to state departments of transportation and local authorities to finance road and transit infrastructure.

Its authority to collect revenue, mostly through the federal gas tax, and send it to states is set to expire at the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30. The continuing resolution would keep in place the contract authority level, about \$80.2 billion per year, Congress approved in a 2021 law.

It would not, however, include the "advance appropriations" from the 2021 law that provided additional funding to several Transportation Department programs that disperse money to states and local governments.

Murray said she sought to have the \$36.8 billion annual program extended, but was rebuffed by committee Republicans.

White House spokespeople did not immediately return a message seeking comment Monday.

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.

Blanche asserts 'anti-weaponization' fund is dead, wins key GOP support in US Senate

BY ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche's nomination to be attorney general appeared on track Monday after he submitted a written assurance to Senate Judiciary Committee lawmakers that the administration's nearly \$1.8 billion "anti-weaponization" fund that could potentially pay pardoned violent Jan. 6 defendants is dead.

Blanche's signed statement that an order establishing the fund is "rescinded" and accompanying unsigned memo, released via social media late Sunday, comes after two Republican senators on the committee, John Cornyn of Texas and Thom Tillis of North Carolina, withheld support for Blanche's nomination to lead the Department of Justice.

The late-night announcement of a deal appeared to be enough to secure both senators' support ahead of a crucial Tuesday vote on Blanche's nomination in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Neither the Blanche statement or the memo was signed by President Donald Trump.

The memo Blanche posted to the X platform just after 11 p.m. Eastern also contains a line regarding Cornyn's concerns about an IRS settlement agreement provision that releases Trump and some of his family members from future tax audits and enforcement. That deal only applies "retroactively," according to the memo.

Cornyn and Tillis issued a joint statement Monday morning expressing they were "pleased that the Department of Justice has issued a formal order terminating the anti-weaponization fund."

"Additionally, the Department has acknowledged in a binding written order that the audit settlement is limited to the plaintiffs and the scope does not extend beyond the defendants in the lawsuit, the IRS and the Treasury, addressing concerns that multiple of our Republican colleagues share."

"We want to express our gratitude to Mr. Blanche and his staff for working with us on this, and we look forward to voting to advance his nomination out of the Senate Judiciary Committee soon," Cornyn and Tillis said.

Court ruling

Blanche and the department had so far declined to issue a written order, even when directed by a federal judge, to formally end Trump's "anti-weaponization" fund created in exchange for the president voluntarily dropping his \$10 billion lawsuit against the IRS.

Rather, Blanche, who worked as Trump's former criminal defense lawyer, maintained that his previous statements during a House Appropriations subcommittee hearing in June amounted to the fund's formal end.

"For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in his Order is intended to contradict or otherwise be contrary to prior representations by the Department of Justice that the fund is not operative," according to Blanche's two-paragraph signed statement on Sunday night.

"No Members were appointed; no funds were transferred; no process for receiving claims was established; no claims were paid. Nevertheless, several frivolous lawsuits have been filed challenging the Fund, and at least one court has declined to dismiss those claims as moot," the statement continued.

Almost immediately after Trump's May 18 settlement with the IRS, the fund became a lightning rod



Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche appears at his confirmation hearing in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill July 15, 2026 in Washington, D.C. (Photo by Eric Lee/Getty Images)

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for criticism and legal challenges because of the potential for pardoned Jan. 6 rioters who assaulted law enforcement to reap financial compensation from the government.

The fund attracted numerous lawsuits, including from two police officers who deployed to the U.S. Capitol during the Jan. 6, 2021, attack, and by a former Justice Department official who prosecuted Jan. 6 and was subsequently fired under the Trump administration.

Trump defended the "anti-weaponization" fund Friday online and during his Cabinet meeting. His personal lawyers on Friday also appealed a court order from a Florida federal judge who did not recognize the validity of Trump's settlement with his own administration — but rather said that he used his presidency to "manipulate" the courts.

Blanche's Sunday night statement defended his earlier comments about the fund. "The Acting Attorney General stands by all of his July 15, 2026 Senate Judiciary Committee testimony, including answers to questions asked by Senator Cornyn related to the scope and applicability of the May 19, 2026 order," according to the statement, which refers to Blanche's hourslong confirmation hearing before the committee.

Blanche did not post a copy of the original settlement agreement displaying any modifications to the original language.

IRS deal

Blanche did not sign the May 18 settlement agreement that was negotiated with the personal lawyers representing Trump, his two sons Eric and Don Jr. and the Trump Organization. The Trumps and their private venture sued the Internal Revenue Service last year over a 2019 leak of tax returns by a government contractor, who was already convicted and sentenced in 2024.

Rather, Associate Attorney General Stanley Woodward Jr. and Frank Bisignano, IRS chief executive officer, a position created by Trump, signed the nine-page settlement that created the nearly \$1.8 billion fund to be run by five commissioners. The panel members were to be chosen by the attorney general — one with the input of Congress — and could be removed by Trump at any time without cause.

Per the agreement, commissioners would accept and decide claims through Dec. 15, 2028 from victims who allege the government subjected them to "Lawfare and/or Weaponization." Any money left in the settlement fund at the sunset date would automatically transfer to the Department of Commerce, according to the agreement.

Blanche signed a two-page May 18 order setting the fund in motion, with a directive that the U.S. Treasury provide \$1.776 billion within 60 days to a "designated account."

On May 19, Blanche issued a sweeping order enacting part of the settlement agreement that indefinitely absolves Trump, his sons and the Trump organization from any tax audits or enforcement related to the tax returns and information leaked in 2019.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, has rescheduled a committee vote to advance Blanche's nomination for Tuesday morning.

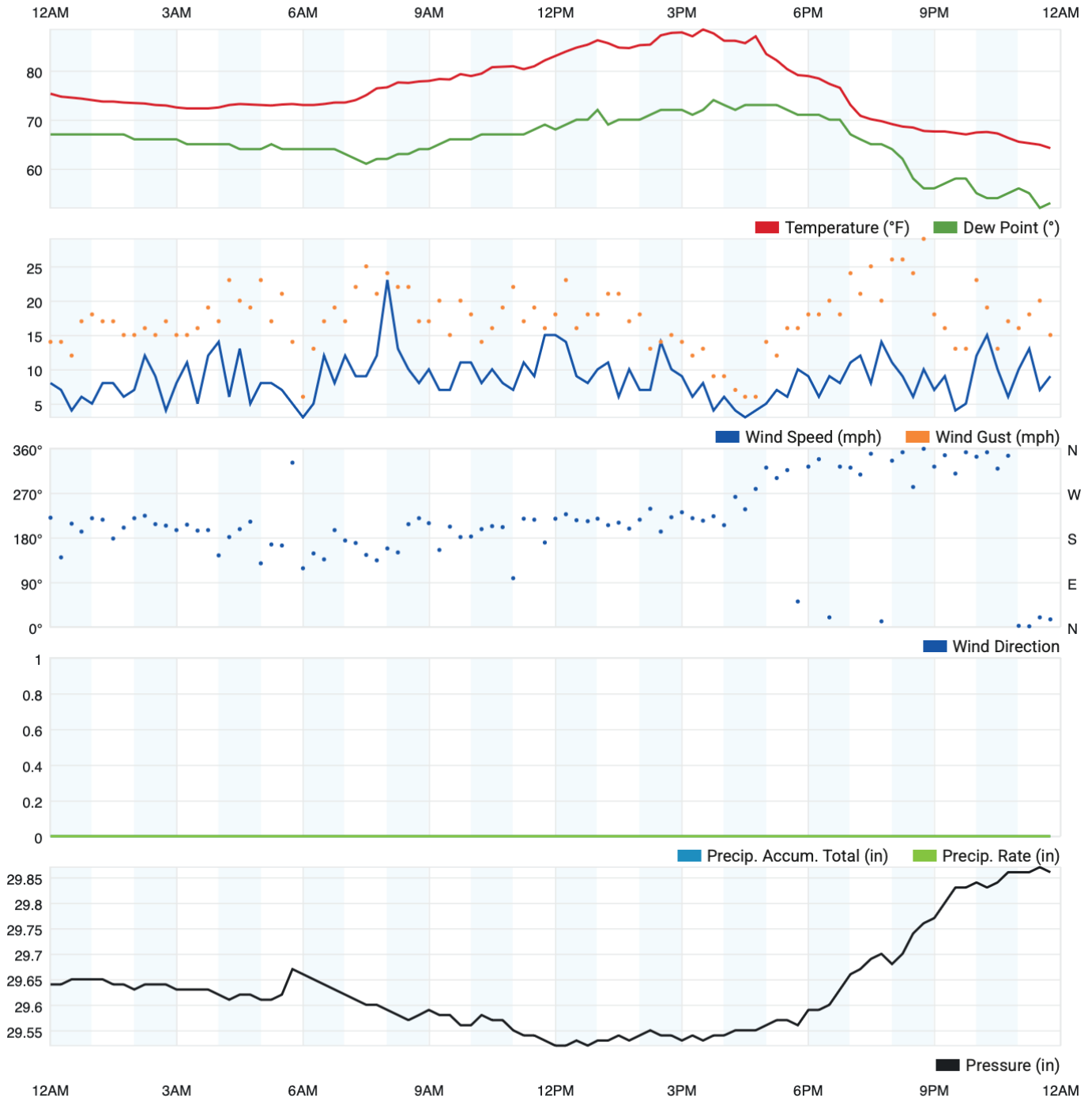
Ashley Murray covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

August 3, 2026



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Today



High: 75 °F

Patchy Smoke
then Mostly
Sunny

Tonight



Low: 51 °F

Mostly Clear

Wednesday



High: 82 °F

Mostly Sunny

Wednesday
Night



Low: 59 °F

Mostly Clear

Thursday



High: 86 °F

Sunny



**Cooler Today &
Wednesday, Then
Warming Again**

Today



70-78°

Wed



77-87°

Thurs



81-92°

Fri



83-93°

Sat



81-95°

www.weather.gov/abr

August 4, 2026 3:01 AM

Cooler air will be in place across the region today behind yesterday's passing cold front. Expect mostly dry conditions across the region, although a few sprinkles or light showers could affect southern SD. Winds will be lighter over the area as surface high pressure builds in. Temperatures will gradually heat up again towards the end of the week, with widespread 80s and 90s settling back in.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 89 °F at 3:29 PM

Low Temp: 65 °F at 11:29 PM

Wind: 29 mph at 8:39 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 107 in 1934

Record Low: 42 in 2017

Average High: 85

Average Low: 59

Average Precip in Aug.: 0.30

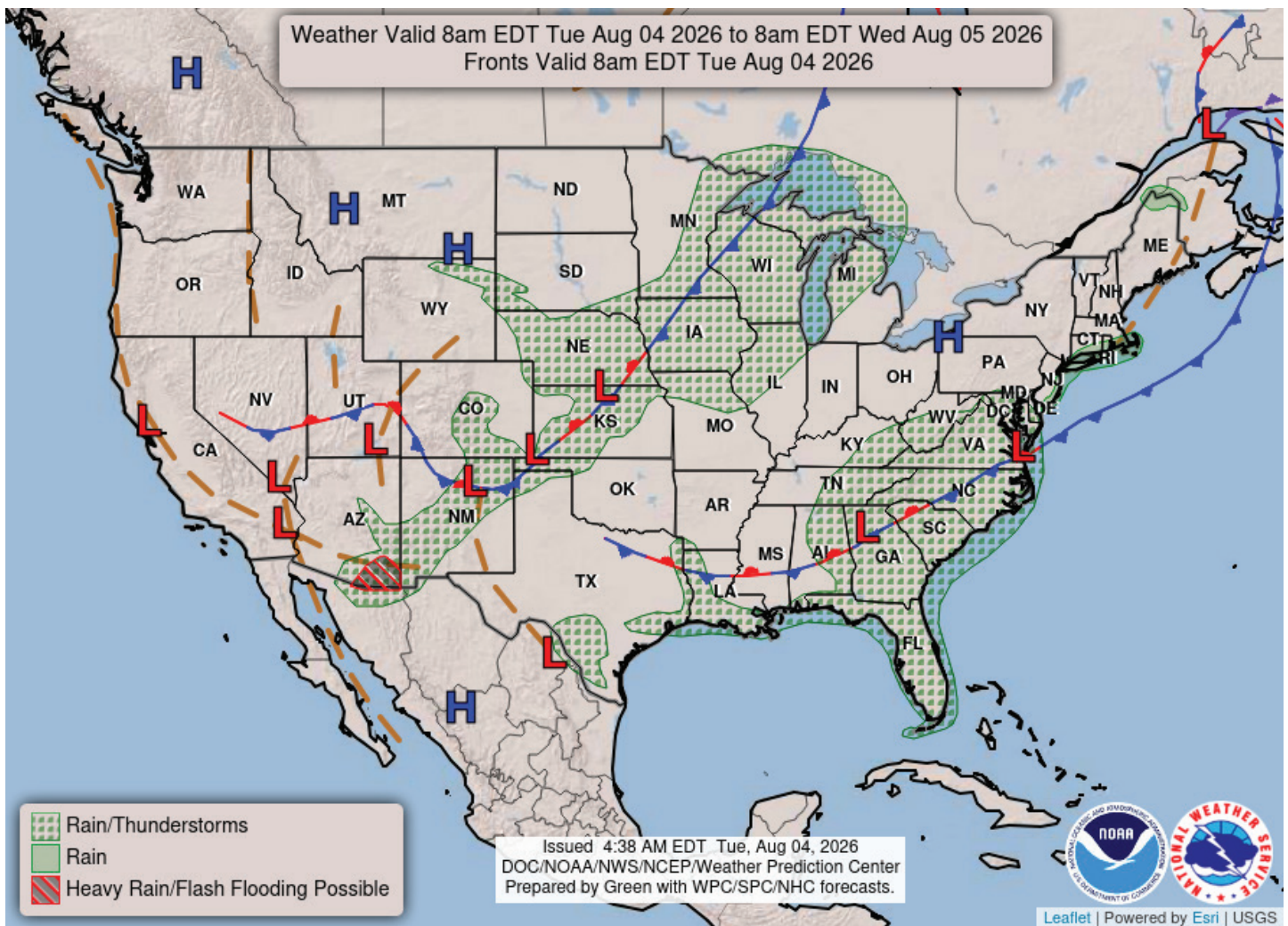
Precip to date in Aug.: 9.79

Average Precip to date: 14.40

Precip Year to Date: 19.26

Sunset Tonight: 8:56 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:12am



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Today in Weather History

August 4, 1960: At Draper in Jones County, three-inch hail caused substantial damage to roofs, building windows and automobiles. Losses estimated at 100,000 dollars. About 1,000 chickens and turkeys killed on nearby farms.

August 4, 2000: Tennis ball size hail along with high winds caused a lot of damage throughout Selby. Many east and north windows were broken along with many vehicle's windshields. Also, many cars were dented, house siding was damaged, gardens were destroyed, and many acres of crops around Selby were destroyed. Softball hail broke windows and caused extensive damage to a few vehicles and homes west of Faulkton. Baseball size hail and high winds had broken out about every window on all of the buildings at the Brentwood Colony in Edmunds County. The large hail and strong winds also damaged many of the buildings.

1882 — A vivid aurora was visible from Oregon to Maine, down the east coast as far as Mayport FL, and inland as far as Wellington KS. Observers at Louisville KY noted merry dancers across the sky, and observers at Saint Vincent, MN, noted it was probably the most brilliant ever seen at that location. (The Weather Channel)

1930 — The temperature at Moorefield, WV, soared to 112 degrees to establish a state record, having reached 110 degrees the previous day. Widespread drought after April of that year caused some towns to haul water for domestic use, and many manufacturing plants were barely operational. (The Weather Channel)

1961 — Spokane, WA, reached an all-time record high of 108 degrees. Kalispell, MT, set an all-time record with a reading of 105 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1980 — A record forty-two consecutive days of 100 degree heat finally came to an end at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport. July 1980 proved to be the hottest month of record with a mean temperature of 92 degrees. There was just one day of rain in July, and there was no measurable rain in August. There were 18 more days of 100 degree heat in August, and four in September. Hot weather that summer contributed to the deaths of 1200 people nationally, and losses from the heat across the country were estimated at twenty billion dollars. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 — A cold front brought relief from the heat to a large part of the Midwest, while hot weather continued in the south central and eastern U.S. Morning thunderstorms in Nebraska deluged the town of Dalton with 8.71 inches of rain, along with hail three inches in diameter, which accumulated up to four feet deep near the town of Dix. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather from eastern Iowa to Lower Michigan during the afternoon and evening hours, producing golf ball size hail and spawning several tornadoes. A thunderstorm at Maquoketa, IA, produced wind gusts to 75 mph. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather from eastern Nebraska and northeastern Kansas to the Great Lakes Region, with 150 reports of large hail or damaging winds during the afternoon, evening, and nighttime hours. Thunderstorms produced tennis ball size hail at Claremont, MN, and wind gusts to 75 mph at Milwaukee, WI. Thunderstorms representing what once was Hurricane Chantal produced five inches of rain at Grant, MI, and deluged Chicago, IL, with more than three inches of rain in three hours. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2008: Severe storms moved across northern Illinois and Indiana with tornadoes and stiff winds reported. With tornado sirens blaring, the game at Wrigley Field between Cubs and Astros was stopped as fans were told to evacuate to the lower concourse. Passengers at O'Hare International Airport were evacuated to lower levels of buildings as well. An estimated 350 flights were canceled.

2009: The strongest tornado to hit Quebec since the same date in 1994 ripped through Mont-Laurier. The F2 tornado tore through the small western Quebec town severely damaging about 40 homes. Two men were taken to the hospital with minor injuries.

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Daily Devotion

Made for Praise

God is worthy of your worship. Come before Him with a heart ready to praise.

Psalms 100:1-5: 1 Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth.

2 Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing.

3 Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

4 Enter His gates with thanksgiving And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name.

5 For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting And His faithfulness to all generations.

Have you ever considered how you treat the Lord? Some people lift prayer request after prayer request and yet fail to give Him glory and praise. When that's the case, they may be attempting to use the Lord to fulfill their needs and desires without demonstrating love for Him.

1 Peter 2:9 says God's people should "proclaim [His] excellencies." Our concerns are of great importance to Him, but He also wants us to come to Him with a worshipful heart, not an attitude of self-centeredness.

You may ask, "What's the point of praise?" When you begin to extol the Lord, your focus shifts to Him. Then you will start recalling the ways He's impacted your life. As Psalm 105:5 says, "Remember His wonders which He has done." Praising the Lord is one of Scripture's principal themes. We're told to do so joyfully (Ps. 100:1), all throughout the day (Psalm 113:3), and in the presence of others (Psalm 108:3; Psalm 111:1).

Take some time today to reflect on the Lord's mighty work of salvation in your life. Praise the Father for His faithfulness and righteousness. When your heart is full of praise, worries will diminish, and you'll trust God to provide for your needs in His own timing.

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

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The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.03.26

6 7 17 44 46 2

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 54 Mins 1 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.31.26

4 18 26 43 51 4

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$60,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 39 Mins 1 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.03.26

3 11 27 41 48 7

All Star Bonus: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,350,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 54 Mins 1 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.01.26

6 16 20 30 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 9 Mins 1 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.03.26

11 15 21 28 33 6

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 38 Mins 1 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.03.26

8 30 41 48 54 4

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$786,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 38 Mins 1 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

Guatemala evacuates villages due to an eruption of the Fuego volcano

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — Authorities in Guatemala have ordered evacuations in some southern communities around the Fuego volcano, which is erupting.

Claudinne Ogaldes, executive secretary of the Guatemalan disaster managing agency, CONRED, confirmed on Monday evening to The Associated Press that the eruption started on Monday morning and increased during the day, which led to evacuation orders for two villages around the mountain.

Live images of the situation showed big clouds of gas and ash over the volcano as lava and pyroclastic flows rolled down the slopes at great speed.

"The eruption increases its explosiveness level. A fountain of lava of between 200 and 300 meters (650 to 1,000 feet) has developed over the crater," according to a report from the Guatemalan Seismology, Vulcanology, Weather and Water Institute.

CONRED said in a press statement that authorities were evacuating El Porvenir and the hamlet of Las Lajitas as a preventive measure. That would be around 50 families or 250 people. The agency declared an orange alert and warned of ashes spreading to nearby towns.

A major highway that passes close to the volcano, National Route 14, was closed. The Education Ministry suspended classes in nearby towns.

Hundreds of people were killed and a whole village was destroyed during a previous eruption on the Fuego volcano in June 2018. That episode affected up to 1.7 million people, according to authorities.

The Fuego volcano is one of the most active in Guatemala. Another eruption in June last year spurred preventive evacuations.

Oil prices gain and global shares are mostly higher after a rally on Wall Street

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Global shares were mostly higher Tuesday following a rally on Wall Street that was helped by easing oil prices.

Regional investors were still weighing the impact from last week's joint U.S.-Japan currency intervention, analysts said.

France's CAC 40 added 0.3% in early trading to 8,643.50, while the German DAX surged 0.9% to 26,232.04. Britain's FTSE 100 edged up nearly 0.4% to 10,897.75.

U.S. shares were set to drift higher with Dow futures up 0.1% at 53,409.00. S&P 500 futures rose 0.2% to 7,644.00.

In Asia, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 gained 0.3% to finish at 63,957.53, as the U.S. dollar rose to 157.80 Japanese yen from 157.18 yen. The euro cost \$1.1513, inching down from \$1.1514. The dollar was trading at 160-yen levels before regulators stepped in to boost the yen's value after it fell to nearly 40-year lows.

Some analysts said the effectiveness of such an intervention remains uncertain as it doesn't address the fundamental economic reasons behind the currency fluctuations, including inflation, interest rates and the relative strengths of the economies.

"A U.S.-backed operation carries far more signaling weight than Tokyo acting alone, and the pledge of further action will give speculators pause. But any U.S. contribution will probably be constrained by size," a report by BMI, a unit of Fitch Solutions, said.

Matthew Ryan, head of market strategy at global financial services firm Ebury, noted the latest effort could have some impact because it appears to signal a real change in monetary policy rather than just a one-time defensive move.

"This is an historic and meaningful development for the yen, which materially improves confidence in

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our mildly bullish call for the currency," he said.

South Korea's Kospi gained 1.6% to 6,358.95. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 added 1.4% to 9,145.80. Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell 0.6% to 25,852.92, while the Shanghai Composite gained 0.3% to 3,822.28.

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude gained 15 cents to \$80.49 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, jumped 98 cents to \$84.75 a barrel.

A day earlier, oil prices dropped more than 5% after U.S. President Donald Trump said over the weekend that he had decided to hold off on new strikes against Iran.

Brent's price careened between \$72 and \$102 last month as worries rose and fell over the war in Iran and when oil tankers would be allowed to freely exit the Persian Gulf again to deliver crude to customers worldwide.

Runaway online rumors sparked frantic rush by migrants to the Spanish territory of Ceuta

By AKRAM OUBACHIR Associated Press

FNIDEQ, Morocco (AP) — It started with Instagram posts that suggested Spain's border with Morocco was opening up. Then came Facebook users tracking coast guard patrols and TikTok videos showing where to swim.

After many shares and comments, thousands of Moroccans became convinced that Europe was suddenly within reach.

Within hours, young people began heading toward the border with the Spanish territory of Ceuta in North Africa. Packed buses rolled into the neighboring Moroccan city of Fnideq. Regional trains filled up. Taxis did too.

By the time authorities reacted, an estimated 60,000 people had reached Ceuta in just a few days, the largest migration surge between Morocco and Spain in years. More than 80 migrants died on both sides of the border, including some who drowned and others who were killed in a stampede, authorities said.

Nearly all of the surviving migrants soon returned, but the fallout from last week's events will linger.

Rumors started online

In the northern Moroccan city of Larache, about 93 miles (150 kilometers) from Ceuta, three friends watched a video posted by an Instagram account called Haraga Ceuta claiming the border would be open. Haraga refers in Moroccan dialect to young migrants who destroy their identification papers and try crossing illegally into Europe.

The post convinced Anas Amrani, Yahya Harak and Ismail Atik that it was worth risking the journey.

For migrants hoping to reach Spanish territory, the most common route begins in Fnideq, where many attempt the roughly 3-mile (5-kilometer) swim around the border breakwater. Others leave from the nearby village of Belyounech.

One TikTok video mapped the exact route swimmers should follow.

On Facebook groups such as Fnideq Bab Sebta, users shared screenshots from vessel-tracking platforms to identify moments when coast guard patrols appeared lighter. Some sought advice on using inflatable boats. Others advertised wetsuits for sale.

"I saw online that the border was open, and I decided to go," said 17-year-old Omar Danbor from Fnideq, walking back exhausted along the coast.

It's unclear who was behind the claims that the border was open or who operated many of the social media accounts, several of which were deleted soon after the crossings. The Associated Press contacted several accounts but received no response.

Chaos unfolded at the breakwater

As migrants reached the shores of Ceuta, mass chaos erupted at a narrow concrete breakwater where many tried to climb onto land.

According to multiple migrants interviewed by AP, people rushed to scramble over the slick rocks at the same time, pushing and climbing over one another. Several said they saw people knocked back into the

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water and forced beneath others, leaving them unable to resurface as migrants sought to reach land.

"I stepped on the face of a dead man while I was climbing out. I hope God forgives me and all those whose bodies were found," said Lahcen Kalouch, a Moroccan migrant who reached Ceuta before returning home distraught.

At least 72 people died on the Spanish side of the border. Another 11 died on the Moroccan side.

Tens of thousands of migrants have since returned to Morocco, either after being expelled or leaving by choice because of a lack of shelter, food and water in Ceuta.

Some misinterpreted Spain's new migration measures

Some migrants misunderstood recent legal developments in Spain, including Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's immigration regularization measures and a court ruling limiting authorities' ability to immediately return migrants who swim into Ceuta.

Sánchez's recent efforts to regularize migration were meant only for people already living in Spain prior to Jan. 1, the majority of whom hail from Latin America and entered Spain legally but overstayed their visas. But some in Morocco misinterpreted his policy, believing they would be allowed to stay. That belief spread online.

"Pedro Sánchez is a liar. He told us if we came, we would get jobs and papers, but they sent us back," said Adam Assil, a migrant from Casablanca, even though Sánchez never made such a promise.

While attempts to reach Ceuta are common, migration activists said this episode was different because of the way rumors snowballed online, encouraging thousands of people to head toward the territory at the same time instead of in smaller, scattered groups.

Failures happened on both sides of the border

Moroccan authorities said the migration wave was not spontaneous. The Interior Ministry blamed the "exploitation of the digital sphere" and "the spread of misinformation." Officials offered no evidence but said an investigation had been opened. Spain's government made similar statements.

Ceuta officials said they had warned the Spanish government of a surge in arrivals before the massive crush on Thursday. The Spanish Interior Ministry said Monday that it had not received "any report or warning regarding the mass arrival of people in Ceuta," and it praised cooperation with the Moroccan authorities in sending most of the migrants back.

"Nobody addressed how these individuals managed to breach the border," said Mustapha Azaitraoui, a Moroccan geographer specializing in migration dynamics. "If a large group of people can cross the border under these circumstances, it suggests a broader security issue that has yet to be acknowledged publicly."

Migrants reject government claims of smuggling

Both Morocco and Spain blamed the Ceuta crisis on human smugglers and trafficking networks, saying organized criminal groups encouraged the mass crossings.

But returning Moroccan migrants interviewed by AP largely rejected that explanation.

"No one smuggled me there. I wanted to go of my own free will, but that country is not worth all this sacrifice," Kalouch said.

"There are no mafias. The border was open, and I crossed. But now I regret it," said Danbor, his clothes still wet after making the journey back.

The Spanish Interior Ministry said investigations into smuggling networks are ongoing and noted that Spain and Morocco have carried out joint operations against trafficking groups. The Moroccan Interior Ministry did not respond to questions about smuggling networks.

Several politicians and experts have suggested it would be impossible for so many to cross without Moroccan complicity. A high-ranking Moroccan diplomat appeared to push back against that.

"It would be reductive to say that Morocco should have used force to stop the migrants," said the diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the issue is highly sensitive in Morocco. "We are not Europe's police."

The lack of jobs is a key factor

Morocco's economy is projected to grow by 4.5% this year, boasting major factories, advanced ports

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and ambitions to become a regional hub for the car industry.

Yet for many young Moroccans, that transformation has not translated into stable work. Youth unemployment remains high, with 37% of people ages 15 to 24 out of work. Among university graduates, unemployment stands at nearly 20%. The dream of migration is often reinforced by stories of relatives who left and returned with cars, new clothes and foreign currency.

One of those who breached the border was a 16-year-old who grew up a few dozen miles from Ceuta. Europe had always seemed a dream close enough to see, yet impossibly far.

So when he saw a post on Facebook suggesting the border was open and thousands were making it across, he joined the rush.

Days later, he was back on the Moroccan side, crying as he asked strangers for money for a taxi home. "They fired tear gas at me and beat me with batons. There's nothing for me there," said the teen, who spoke on condition of anonymity out of fear of being stigmatized following his failed border crossing attempt. "I just wanted to provide for my mom," he said, wiping his tears.

Cargo ship reports being struck in Strait of Hormuz as US, Iran claims about talks diverge

By ELENA BECATOROS and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — A British maritime monitoring agency said a cargo ship reported being hit by a projectile overnight off the coast of Oman in the Strait of Hormuz, while the United States and Iran made opposing claims about whether they were holding talks.

U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday said the two sides are resuming talks to wind down the war. But Iran insisted it only was talking with Oman and the discussion focused on the Strait of Hormuz.

Here is a look at the most important developments in the Middle East on Tuesday.

Cargo ship reports strike in Strait of Hormuz

The cargo ship reported being "hit by an unknown projectile" at 2 a.m. local time while it was 37 kilometers (23 miles) northeast of Al Khasab in Oman, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations Center said.

The UKMTO did not provide further information on the ship, including what flag the vessel was sailing under or whether it was carrying cargo.

The ship suffered damage, according to British maritime security firm Ambrey, which did not elaborate.

The town of Al Khasab sits on the tip of the Arabian Peninsula that juts into the Strait of Hormuz, the crucial waterway at the mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of the world's oil and natural gas passed before the war.

The strait has been effectively shut by Iran's attacks on shipping since the start of the war in February, while the U.S. also has imposed a blockade on Iranian ports in the waterway.

US and Iran offer conflicting claims about talks

Trump said Monday that talks with Iran had resumed, a day after saying he called off massive strikes he had threatened to unleash on the country. Trump said he pulled back at the urging of Gulf allies Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Whether "Iran wants to admit it or not, we are, in fact, talking," Trump maintained.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said Monday that no negotiations were being held with the U.S., adding that Tehran's talks were only with Oman and focused on establishing a route for safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump voiced frustration with Iran, suggesting Tehran had asked for the talks, which are critical to ending the monthslong conflict and reviving stalled cargo traffic through the strait.

"Iranian Leadership is unbelievably duplicitous!" the U.S. president vented on Truth Social, his social media platform.

"They ask for a meeting, some would say 'beg,' talks begin, with more scheduled in the immediate future, and they say, openly and proudly, that they're not having any discussions, that nothing is being talked about, and they're only dealing with 'Oman,'" he wrote.

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Gaza plans mass funeral for people killed in 2023 airstrike

Gaza residents are expected to hold a mass funeral Tuesday for 112 Palestinians whose bodies were recovered after nearly three years under the rubble in Gaza City. They were among more than 300 people killed on Nov. 22, 2023, when Israeli warplanes flattened a residential block in the city's Sabra neighborhood.

First responders recovered the bodies over the weekend after digging through the rubble for 136 hours, according to the Civil Defense, a rescue agency operated under Gaza's Hamas-run Interior Ministry.

The bodies included 40 children, 30 women and seven people with disabilities, the Civil Defense said in a statement, adding that another 157 people remained missing under the rubble.

The Gaza war began on Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel, killing around 1,200 people and taking 251 hostage.

Israel's military offensive in Gaza has since killed 73,375 people, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. Its figures do not distinguish between civilians and combatants but they are considered generally reliable by the United Nations and other international organizations.

Arson suspect arrested as Spokane battles devastating wildfires

By LINDSEY WASSON, ED WHITE and GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — A man from Spokane, Washington, was arrested Monday and charged with setting one of the three devastating wildfires that are burning through the region.

The Spokane County Sheriff's Office said Aaron F. Farinacci, 37, was arrested and booked on suspicion of first degree arson in connection with the Old Trails Fire, the largest of the three blazes around Spokane.

Together, the fires have destroyed at least 700 buildings and forced some 67,000 people to evacuate around the state's second-largest city. Authorities haven't stated a possible cause for the other two fires.

The wildfires are still completely uncontained, fire officials said on Monday.

Sheriff says suspect was seen near where fire started

A tip from a community member who saw a nervous-looking man bent by the side of the road near some grass initially led authorities to Farinacci, though they released him after initial questioning, Sheriff John Nowels said Monday night.

Later, when major crimes detectives started investigating using body worn cameras and reports, they again identified Farinacci and determined that the fire had started where the witness had seen him, Nowels said. Farinacci had matches and a butane lighter when he was detained, Nowels said.

"As it happens in so many critical cases, it was citizens who were paying attention to their surroundings, being aware and willing to step up and say something that led to the relatively quick apprehension of Mr. Farinacci," he said.

Farinacci's first court appearance will be Tuesday, according to Spokane County Prosecutor Preston McCollam. It wasn't immediately clear if he had an attorney who could speak on his behalf. He has been convicted of felony manslaughter in Arizona.

Some residents are returning to destroyed homes

The Old Trails Fire sparked Saturday northwest of downtown Spokane, eventually jumping over the Spokane River and ripping through neighborhoods.

Earlier Monday, some residents returned to find their homes leveled by wildfires that erupted across a parched landscape over the weekend, covering yards in charred debris. In some cases, only chimneys were left standing.

"There's nothing to save," Miriam Sim, 76, said Monday as she and her husband, Daniel Sim, surveyed the ruins of the home where they had lived since 2005.

"At our age, do we want to rebuild?" her husband asked.

Together, the three fires burned about 12.5 square miles (about 32 square kilometers) by Monday. The sky filled with smoke and haze. Calmer winds and lower temperatures arrived to help firefighters, but it was expected to be hot and dry again by midweek.

In one Spokane neighborhood, blackened vehicles, a boat twisted by the heat and melted plastic recycling

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bins remained. Across the street, lawns were still green and houses were spared, as residents continued to run hoses or sprinklers to water their properties.

"Hundreds of people have completely lost their homes and farms, and many are prohibited from returning to their homes or neighborhoods as crews continue to extinguish smoldering embers," the state's entire congressional delegation wrote Monday in asking President Donald Trump to approve an expedited emergency declaration.

No deaths or major injuries have been reported so far

Cpl. Mark Gregory, a spokesperson for the Spokane County Sheriff's Office, said the county initially received nearly 300 reports of missing people, but by Monday they had cleared all but 14.

Those outstanding reports more likely represented people who had not been in contact since evacuating than people who were truly missing or in danger, authorities said.

More than 1,000 firefighters, many from out of state, arrived by Monday, and that number was expected to double in the next few days.

The fires were among dozens across the Western U.S. stretching the ability of federal, state and local agencies to fight them. At least 390 square miles (1,000 square kilometers) has burned across Washington, which has contended with severe drought and a paltry snowpack.

Authorities warned people not to fly drones near the burned areas, saying it could force them to delay aerial firefighting operations.

Homes, cars and possessions have been lost in flames

Angela and Wayde Deatherage, both 49, evacuated shortly after 3 p.m. Saturday with a son, grabbing a few bins of family photos and heirloom rings but not much else. Roughly 30 minutes later, their security camera was sending fire notifications to Angela's phone.

Wayde Deatherage took some back roads and returned by early evening. He stopped at the end of the street and called his wife: "Our house is done."

Deatherage, however, wasn't done with his neighborhood. He propped a hose at another house so it sprayed the property. That home survived.

The couple returned to their property Sunday.

"It's just ash," Angela Deatherage said of the home where they had lived for nearly 22 years. "It's like our house sunk down in the basement. ... There's just so much loss for so many people."

Karen Faggioli, 61, figured she would be returning to her home. She recalled how other recent fires had been brought under control. But a relative texted her the bad news: Her house and three vehicles were destroyed. A daughter lost her nearby house, too.

"Why cry? What's crying going to do? I've been through so many tragedies myself," said Faggioli, who is recovering from breast cancer. "This is nothing. Like I told my granddaughter, 'We're strong — and now we get all new things.' I'm emotionally numb."

Authorities arrest arson suspect in connection with one of the devastating Spokane wildfires

By LINDSEY WASSON, ED WHITE and GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Authorities on Monday arrested a 37-year-old man they suspect of starting one of the devastating wildfires tearing through eastern Washington state as many residents were left wondering if their homes had survived.

The Spokane County Sheriff's Office said 37-year-old Aaron F. Farinacci was arrested and booked on suspicion of arson in connection with the Old Trails Fire. He is being held on \$1 million bond. It wasn't immediately clear if he had an attorney who could speak on his behalf.

The fire that sparked Saturday is one of several burning around Spokane, the state's second-largest city. They are among the most destructive blazes in state history, together destroying at least 700 structures and forcing roughly 67,000 people to evacuate.

Earlier Monday, some residents returned to find their homes leveled by wildfires that erupted across a

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parched landscape over the weekend, covering yards in charred debris. In some cases, only chimneys were left standing.

"There's nothing to save," Miriam Sim, 76, said Monday as she and her husband, Daniel Sim, surveyed the ruins of the home where they had lived since 2005.

"At our age, do we want to rebuild?" her husband asked.

The fires jumped roads and rivers and had burned about 12.5 square miles (about 32 square kilometers) by Monday. The sky filled with smoke and haze. Calmer winds and lower temperatures arrived to help firefighters, but it was expected to be hot and dry again by midweek.

In one Spokane neighborhood, blackened vehicles, a boat twisted by the heat and melted plastic recycling bins remained. Across the street, lawns were still green and houses were spared, as residents continued to run hoses or sprinklers to water their properties.

"Hundreds of people have completely lost their homes and farms, and many are prohibited from returning to their homes or neighborhoods as crews continue to extinguish smoldering embers," the state's entire congressional delegation wrote Monday in asking President Donald Trump to approve an expedited emergency declaration.

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Those outstanding reports more likely represented people who had not been in contact since evacuating than people who were truly missing or in danger, authorities said.

The Spokane-area wildfires were completely uncontained, fire officials said. More than 1,000 firefighters, many from out of state, had arrived by Monday, and that number was expected to double in the next few days.

The fires were among dozens across the Western U.S. stretching the ability of federal, state and local agencies to fight them. At least 390 square miles (1,000 square kilometers) has burned across Washington, which has contended with severe drought and a paltry snowpack.

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Friends and relatives of fire victims posted online appeals for money, clothes and basic necessities.

Grassland burns in Idaho, Oregon and Utah

Spokane was hardly the only place struggling to contain fires.

A lightning-caused fire that has burned over 530 square miles (about 1,370 square kilometers) of grassland

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in western Idaho and eastern Oregon continued to grow Monday. The area is home to cattle ranches, and authorities said the fire is threatening more than 600 homes and 800 other structures.

In central Utah, a blaze quadrupled in size over the weekend to nearly 109 square miles (282 square kilometers) by Monday afternoon. More than 100 cattle have been killed, according to law enforcement.

Heavy winds helped flames jump containment lines, but forward progression was slowed toward Fillmore, a town of about 2,600 people and the seat of Millard County, officials said. Mandatory evacuations were ordered Sunday evening for the town's southern portion, and inmates at the county jail were transferred.

Spokane sets up shelter for impacted residents

In Spokane, about 400 people were staying at city's main convention center, which was turned into a shelter, officials said.

Spokane Public Schools opened a free emergency drop-in camp for children on Monday. Trials at the county court were pushed to Aug. 10.

Several larger fires continued to burn in less populated areas northwest of Spokane.

Man from El Salvador dies in immigration jail in New Jersey, ICE says

By HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

A man from El Salvador has died at an immigration jail in New Jersey that has been the target of months of protests over living conditions for people detained there, federal officials said Monday.

Edwin Lopez-Cornejo, 41, had been held at Delaney Hall in Newark after being arrested June 18, according to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Lopez-Cornejo, whom the government accused of entering the U.S. illegally, died Saturday, the agency said. His official cause of death will be released following further medical examination, according to ICE.

Democratic politicians and civil rights groups in New Jersey questioned whether the death was preventable, saying they had little confidence people detained at the 1000-bed facility were receiving proper care.

"This is not the first death of a detainee at Delaney Hall, and absent decisive action, it will not be the last," Democratic U.S. Sen. Cory Booker said in a statement. "I have visited the facility myself and witnessed these conditions firsthand, so I say this plainly: Delaney Hall must be closed immediately and permanently."

ICE said Lopez-Cornejo "received proper medical care and was seen by medical professionals" while he was in custody.

The death is the second at Delaney Hall since the beginning of President Donald Trump's second term, according to tracking by The Associated Press. Another 41-year-old man, Jean Wilson Brutus, a Haitian national, died suddenly after collapsing in December in what a medical examiner ruled was a natural death due to a lung blockage.

In all, at least 56 people have died in ICE custody during Trump's second term. Lopez-Cornejo is the second native of El Salvador, following the September death of Norlan Guzman-Fuentes, who was killed during a sniper attack on an ICE field office in Dallas.

People held at the Newark facility have asked for improved living conditions and better medical care, as they say some are being denied medication. Earlier this year, some launched a hunger strike, according to Cosecha, an immigrant advocacy group.

The facility has also been a key flashpoint for protests against Trump's immigration crackdown, with demonstrators trying to block vehicles from entering or leaving the facility.

Trump and his deputies have defended the center's operations and denied there is any hunger strike, abuse or poor conditions inside.

The facility is owned by Geo Group, a private prison contractor that runs multiple detention centers across the country. The contractor did not immediately respond to an email requesting comment.

New Jersey Gov. Mikie Sherrill, a Democrat, said her administration is working to better understand the facts surrounding his death.

"At the same time, we continue to face obstruction in our efforts to conduct a full health inspection of

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the facility," she said in a statement. "Every effort to block oversight raises serious questions about what is happening inside Delaney Hall and what those operating the facility are trying to hide."

Musk likely to face tough questions during SpaceX's first earnings call as a public company

By BERNARD CONODN AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Investors in Elon Musk's space company get a chance to question him Tuesday after SpaceX issues its first quarterly earnings since going public.

SpaceX shares are down by half from their June peak as investors worry Musk may have oversold them on its future prospects. They're also bracing for volatile trading as some company insiders get the opportunity to sell shares after the expiration of what's known as a lockup provision later in the week.

Part visionary engineer, part stock salesman, Musk is likely to be asked about when he expects to finish testing SpaceX's giant Starship rockets that NASA hopes to use to put men on the moon again, his plans for its satellite network and the prospects of putting football-field sized datacenters in orbit.

Given rumors of SpaceX possibly merging with Musk's Tesla car company, he may also face questions about that tie-up but that is likely to yield few details. Neither company has confirmed plans for a combination and Musk has parried questions before by noting securities regulations bar him from discussing the issue.

SpaceX is losing money fast, with net losses for its first half this year expected to exceed more than the \$5 billion in losses for all of last year. Some analysts have penciled in a strong rebound for the rest of the year that will return it to profitability.

For the second quarter ended June, SpaceX is expected to report a net loss of \$1.9 billion, or 23 cents a share, according to a FactSet survey of analysts.

SpaceX insiders were barred from selling in the public offering in June but that prohibition begins to ease on Thursday when more than 900,000 shares are released for trading, more than doubling the amount currently available for trading. The prospect has weighed on the shares, which closed Monday at \$114.46, down from both the peak of \$225 in June and also the IPO price of \$135.

The lockup release is the first of several tranches of stock that will be freed to trade over the next several months.

After an abandoned launch, the Starship rocket successfully deployed satellites in orbit during a test late last month. Future tests could include trying to use giant arms at its Starbase launching site in Texas to grab the rocket and its booster upon its hovering return to earth.

SpaceX's satellite communication business, Starlink, is a big cash generator for the company with contracts around the world. The company also runs a money-losing AI business, known for its Grok tool, as well as the social media platform X, the renamed Twitter.

Trump optimistic Iran talks will reopen strait, and other developments in the Middle East

By SAMY MAGDY, ELENA BECATOROS and JOSHUA BOAK Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — After calling off a fresh round of strikes against Iran, U.S. President Donald Trump said Monday that the two sides are resuming talks to wind down the war, even as Iranian officials claimed their diplomatic efforts were focused on neighboring nations.

Talks between the U.S. and Iran are critical to ending the monthslong conflict and reviving stalled cargo traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial waterway through which about a fifth of all traded oil and natural gas passed before the war.

Trump, who has made a habit of threatening strikes on Iran only to dangle the prospect of a last-minute diplomatic reprieve, said the negotiations would be the "last chance " for Iran to forge a deal to reopen

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the strait and address his concerns about its nuclear program.

But Iran's foreign ministry said it's negotiating with Oman, not the U.S., prompting Trump to criticize the country's leadership, which has grown increasingly divided over the war's endgame.

Whether "Iran wants to admit it or not, we are, in fact, talking," Trump maintained.

Elsewhere, Israel bombed the Gaza Strip and the Syrian president met in Damascus with the Iraqi Kurdish regional leader over security concerns. In Iran, the government executed two men it claimed were Israeli spies.

Here is a look at the most important developments Monday in the Middle East.

Trump announces renewed talks

Trump said Sunday that he decided against carrying out major strikes against Iran at the urging of Gulf allies Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

He said a plan was in place for U.S. forces to carry out "the biggest attack since World War II," but he decided to give diplomacy more time after hearing from key Gulf leaders and fielding requests from unnamed Iranian officials. He did not provide further details or say who would be involved in the talks.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry maintained that the country was not currently holding negotiations with the United States.

Esmail Baghaei, an agency spokesperson, said Monday that ongoing talks were with Oman, the country on the other side of the strait, and were focused only on establishing a temporary route for safe navigation through the channel.

Nine vessels transited through the strait Sunday, most of them using an Iranian-controlled route, according to trade data and analytics platform Kpler.

Trump voiced frustration at Iran's public posturing, suggesting the country's leaders begged for the discussions, despite their claims of only wanting to deal with Oman.

"Iranian Leadership is unbelievably duplicitous!" the U.S. president vented on Truth Social, his social media platform.

Iran's top delegates head to Iraq and Pakistan

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi arrived Monday in Iraq's holy city of Najaf to participate in the Arbreen commemorations, an annual pilgrimage for Shiite Muslims, his office said on social media.

Araghchi's trip comes as Iraq has been walking a tightrope between Iran and the U.S., an act that has only grown more fraught since the U.S. and Israel went to war with Iran in February.

Meanwhile Iran's Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade, Mohammad Atabak, headed Monday to Pakistan for a two-day visit expected to focus in part on ways to ease transit bottlenecks and move more Iranian containers through Pakistani ports during the U.S. naval blockade.

Syrian and Iraqi leaders discuss security concerns

Syrian interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa and Iraq's Kurdish regional president met Monday in Damascus to discuss ways of improving mutual cooperation and contributing to regional security.

The meeting between al-Sharaa and Nechirvan Barzani came amid regional tensions as Iranian-backed Iraqi militia groups carried out multiple drone strikes targeting American interests across Iraq, including the country's Kurdish region.

Syrian state media reported last month that authorities at the country's border with Iraq thwarted an attempt in June to smuggle weapons believed to have been headed to the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon. Hezbollah denied the charges.

Iran executes 2 men it says spied for Israel

Iran's judiciary said it executed two men Monday after convicting them of spying for Israel during both last year's 12-day war and the ongoing conflict.

The judiciary's Mizan news agency identified the two as Omid Behzad and Pouria Safvat, who were accused of providing military coordinates, images and other intelligence used in attacks on Iranian targets. The agency did not specify where the executions took place.

Last week, Iran publicly hanged two men convicted of killing four police officers during nationwide anti-government protests in January.

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Gaza official urges Israel to halt attacks

A top official overseeing Gaza's postwar transition met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday, in part to press him to halt military attacks on the territory.

Nikolay Mladenov, the high representative for Gaza on the Board of Peace, also discussed with Netanyahu the need to decommission all weapons in the enclave, the international body established by the U.S. said in a statement.

An Israeli strike Monday evening hit a car in Gaza City, killing two men, according to Shifa Hospital, where the casualties were taken. Over the weekend, Israeli attacks left at least 17 people dead, including children, according to hospitals in Gaza.

The Israeli military said the weekend strikes targeted militants. It confirmed Monday's strike and said it would release more information later.

Days earlier, the U.S. and Hamas reached a deal to disarm the militant group, a potential step toward ending the war in Gaza.

Gaza residents swelter in tents

Soaring temperatures in Gaza this summer have turned the makeshift tents sheltering hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians into suffocating ovens. Made of plastic sheets, the shelters trap heat during the day and offer little ventilation, forcing many families to spend hours outside.

The extreme weather compounds an already dire humanitarian crisis. With limited access to clean water, electricity and sanitation, residents of the overcrowded camps are at high risk of dehydration, heat-related illnesses and the spread of skin infections, diarrheal diseases and other communicable illnesses, humanitarian agencies warn.

"There is no breeze, nothing," said Aida Abu Hadeesha, a woman displaced from the town of Rafah, near the border with Egypt. "Our kids are suffering."

El-Sayed and Stevens close Michigan Senate primary offering different visions for Democrats

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI and JACQUELINE GANUN Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — U.S. Rep. Haley Stevens and Abdul El-Sayed spent the final hours of Michigan's fiercely contested Democratic Senate primary making their closing pitches in settings that reflected the starkly different campaigns they have run for more than a year.

In Detroit, El-Sayed posed for photos and participated in interviews with content creators at a backyard pool party before a final rally with supporters. He projected confidence about Tuesday's result, already looking ahead to a general election against Republican Mike Rogers.

"We have an opportunity to continue to build this movement. We got 13 weeks left to work," El-Sayed said at his final event of the primary campaign in Detroit.

On the state's west side, Stevens was barnstorming in the final hours with events in Muskegon Heights and Grand Rapids alongside Michigan Democratic officials. She continued to frame herself as the only candidate who could defeat Rogers.

It was a fitting final contrast in a race that has become one of the clearest tests yet of where Democratic voters want their party to go. El-Sayed, a progressive backed by Sen. Bernie Sanders and other leaders on the party's left, has run against much of the Democratic establishment. Stevens, a four-term congresswoman backed by Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer and many of Michigan's top Democrats, has made electability and experience central to her case.

Tens of millions of dollars have poured into the race, much of it from outside groups supporting Stevens. But the contest now comes down to which candidate can assemble enough of Michigan's Democratic coalition to win Tuesday.

El-Sayed opted to focus in his campaign's final days on Detroit, which he called a "spiritual home" and a place where he wanted to "demonstrate what this movement is and what it could mean."

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Stevens, meanwhile, spent time in Detroit before heading to the state's west side. She called the final push the "last word phenomenon."

"Everyone's trying to get in their last points," she said.

Both candidates focused on Detroit-area churches and union halls Sunday

Both candidates have spent parts of the campaign's final days in Detroit, where Black voters have long been crucial to winning Democratic primaries.

El-Sayed began Sunday by sitting alongside his wife and Black political leaders in a packed Detroit church, clapping as the congregation sang and the pastor preached. Then he stood before the room and asked for their votes.

"I believe in the kind of America where no matter where you grow up, the color of your skin, how you pray, you deserve equal rights in this country," El-Sayed told the congregation at Kingdom Covenant Church.

"You deserve to go to a good school, you deserve to get healthcare, you deserve to graduate and get a good job," he added.

El-Sayed was joined by Democratic Reps. Summer Lee of Pennsylvania and Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts, as well as Yusef Jackson, the son of the late Rev. Jesse Jackson who is president of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition.

Pastor David A. Johnson II said welcoming a political candidate was not something he typically did, but "this particular season, it's time for us to do something different."

For Robin Robertson, a 59-year-old Detroit resident, El-Sayed's visit came just in time. Robertson said she had gone back and forth over whom to support, waiting until the campaign's final days to decide.

She ultimately settled on El-Sayed, saying Stevens "had a good run."

"His agenda seems to match more for me the things that we need right now," Robertson said. "And then, he's here in my little church. That was confirmation that I'm going to vote for him."

Stevens, meanwhile, emphasized her longstanding connections to Detroit-area churches.

At a church in Pontiac on Sunday afternoon, Stevens stayed after the service to speak individually with congregants, greeting many like familiar faces.

"I come here year-round. This isn't just a campaign thing," Stevens said. "Our churches are places of community refuge, community connection."

Stevens and her allies have also made a direct appeal to Black voters through advertisements highlighting her ties to former President Barack Obama and her work as chief of staff for his administration's auto rescue effort from 2009 to 2011.

Her campaign acknowledges that a strong showing among Detroit voters will likely be necessary for her to win Tuesday.

Reggie Williams, a longtime constituent who was supporting Stevens at an Oakland County event Sunday evening in a union hall, said he continues to back her because she "has always been there for the people."

"She is out and about in the community, always has boots on the ground," Williams said.

Stevens, El-Sayed focus on different parts of Michigan on final day of campaigning

After spending much of Sunday pursuing some of the same Democratic constituencies, El-Sayed and Stevens took different paths across Michigan for the final full day of the primary.

For El-Sayed, that meant leaning into a volunteer operation his campaign says has grown to 12,000 people statewide. Stevens is relying on the broader institutional support she has accumulated across the state, including endorsements from many of Michigan's most prominent Democratic officials, such as Sen. Gary Peters and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

El-Sayed remained in Detroit, trying to turn enthusiasm in the state's largest city into votes. Monday evening he closed his campaign with a voter mobilization event in Detroit, alongside other candidates running for Congress and state office.

Stevens' Monday included a stop at a soul food restaurant and bakery in Muskegon Heights, where she addressed just over 20 people and positioned herself as the only candidate who can win against Republican Mike Rogers in November.

Sharri J. Lane, who owns a jewelry business and grew up in Muskegon Heights, was in attendance and

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had already voted for Stevens.

"I hope that she will keep her word and will do things that will benefit so many communities like ours," Lane, 54, said while standing next to a rack of her earrings for sale. "Sometimes we're forgotten about, you know, after the voting ends."

Can Michigan Democrats come back together after Tuesday?

The primary has been bruising and expensive. And after Tuesday, Michigan Democrats will have to figure out how quickly they can put it behind them.

The winner will immediately face the task of bringing together supporters of two candidates who have offered different visions for the party and whose campaigns have grown increasingly contentious in the closing weeks.

El-Sayed and his allies have sharpened their attacks on Stevens. He told Semafor in July that a pro-Israel group backing her needed to "teach her how to string together two coherent sentences." Stevens escalated her own criticism in the campaign's final days, responding to a clip of El-Sayed on July 31 by saying, "Everyone in America understands you want to blame all of your problems on Jewish Americans."

Michigan Democrats are hoping to begin the process of coalescing almost immediately. The party plans to bring its nominees from across the state together in the days after the primary for a general election kickoff aimed at presenting a united front heading into November.

Hundreds of migrant children are stranded in Spain's Ceuta after mass crossing

By BERNAT ARMANGUE and JOSEPH WILSON Associated Press

CEUTA, Spain (AP) — The teenage girl made it through the waves to Spanish territory. Her little brother did not, drowning in the Mediterranean, while their mother disappeared in the chaos when tens of thousands of people surged through the breakwater, trying to leave Morocco behind.

The tragic story of a 17-year-old from Tangier is representative of the plight of many of the more than 800 minors who four days after the collective push by migrants into Ceuta face a scary present and an uncertain future.

She told an Associated Press photojournalist how she and her family joined the massive crowd that tried to swim around a border fence to reach the Spanish territory on Thursday. Like many, she said they did so seeking better opportunities. The AP is withholding her identity because she is a minor in a vulnerable situation.

She described how she saw Spanish police pull the body of her 8-year-old brother from the water.

She made it to the shore but became separated from her mother, and has spent the last four days on her own. She said some locals gave her food and some clothing, with one woman taking her into her home so she could bathe. She then went to a center for youths run by the government for some help, but found it was full.

"I saw people stepping on the dead," she said through a translator since she doesn't speak Spanish. "Now we are children begging on the street."

She is one of some 860 minors who remained in Ceuta on Monday after crossing over, according to local officials. AP journalists saw other minors asking for food.

Those minors now make up a large part of the 3,000-5,000 migrants who have avoided expulsion from Ceuta of the original 60,000 who came across. Spanish authorities confirmed 72 people died, mostly in the water, during the crossing. Morocco reported 11 deaths which are not included in the Spanish total, the Spanish interior ministry said.

Minors must be cared for under Spanish law

Spanish law says that adult migrants can apply for asylum. If rejected, they will face expulsion procedures. The bar is normally very high for Moroccans to be granted humanitarian protection.

Migrant minors who are unaccompanied by adults, however, are supposed to be granted protection and

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taken care of by Spanish authorities.

An AP journalist witnessed Spanish soldiers escorting an unaccompanied Moroccan boy who was crying and begging not to be sent back to Morocco. A few meters before reaching the border, and due to pressure from local residents who insisted he was a minor, as well as the presence of the media, a lieutenant colonel in the Spanish Army stopped the repatriation and transferred the boy to the Spanish Civil Guard.

Most of the Moroccan adults have either voluntarily gone home or were pushed back by Spanish police. Among those who remain in Ceuta are significant numbers of people from other countries, including Sudanese fleeing their war-torn country, Palestinians from Gaza and Afghans, as well as people from several African nations.

The city's migrant center with a capacity for 600 people is completely full. Food is scarce among the migrants, according to reporting by AP journalists.

"The strategy is that hunger, thirst and exhaustion forces these people to finally decide to voluntarily return to Morocco," said local migration activist Ramsés Mohamed Azumik of Asociación Elín.

Many migrants sleep or rest on the beach or hills surrounding the speck of Spain. In the hazy distance, mainland Europe, their ultimate goal, lies across the sea.

MLB trade deadline: Red Sox, Phillies, Padres are the biggest buyers at the buzzer

By DAVID BRANDT AP Baseball Writer

The Boston Red Sox and Philadelphia Phillies took big swings Monday ahead of baseball's trade deadline, with the Red Sox adding three-time All-Star catcher Adley Rutschman a few hours after the Phillies picked up three-time batting champion Luis Arraez.

The pair of aggressive moves highlighted a hectic day of swaps, featuring dozens of deals in the hours leading up to Monday's 6 p.m. EDT deadline. Among Monday's other fireworks: the Houston Astros added veteran outfielder Daulton Varsho from Toronto in exchange for right-hander Spencer Arrighetti, and the Chicago Cubs got pitcher Clay Holmes from the New York Mets.

The San Diego Padres made multiple moves to deepen their pitching staff, picking up former Cy Young Award winner Robbie Ray in a deal with the San Francisco Giants and right-hander Casey Mize from the Detroit Tigers.

The Los Angeles Dodgers woke up already looking like the deadline's biggest winners after adding two-time Cy Young Award winner Tarik Skubal to a loaded roster Sunday. The Dodgers are chasing a third straight World Series title.

Here are Monday's biggest deals.

Rutschman gives Red Sox young catching star

Rutschman was the No. 1 overall pick in 2019 out of Oregon State and has largely lived up to the high expectations with five quality seasons with the Baltimore Orioles.

Now he moves to the Red Sox, who started slow this season but revitalized their playoff hopes with a franchise record-tying 15-game winning streak in July. The 28-year-old Rutschman — who is under team control for one more season in 2027 — has had a bounce-back season at the plate with a .762 OPS, which helped him earn his third All-Star nod.

Rutschman is currently on the injured list with left wrist inflammation. He's also dealt with an ankle injury and a concussion this year.

The Red Sox also received catcher Jake Rogers and cash considerations in the deal. The Orioles got catcher Carlos Narváez, minor league right-handed pitchers Anthony Eyanson and Kyson Witherspoon, minor league outfielder Eddy Azocar, and a player to be named later or cash considerations. Eyanson is one of the top pitching prospects in baseball.

Later in the day, the Red Sox also acquired left-hander Erik Miller and minor league outfielder Carlos Gutierrez in exchange for infielder Marcelo Mayer.

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Arraez gives Philly an elite contact hitter

Arraez comes to the Phillies from the San Francisco Giants, and he'll be expected to create RBI opportunities for sluggers Bryce Harper and Kyle Schwarber.

Arraez is hitting an NL-best .324 in a resurgent season after signing a \$12 million, one-year deal with San Francisco early in spring training. The 29-year-old has his highest batting average since 2023, and he's played better defense at second base after questions about his glove hindered his market in free agency.

Philly also got reliever Caleb Kilian back from the Giants in the trade for two minor leaguers, and it swung a separate deal for left-handed reliever Brooks Raley with the Mets.

Padres load up on starting pitching

The Padres have won eight of nine to move one game back of the final wild-card playoff position, and this latest surge in their up-and-down season apparently prompted general manager A.J. Preller to trade yet another chunk of his severely depleted farm system for a chance to win now.

Ray is 10-6 with a 3.08 ERA and 107 strikeouts in 122 2/3 innings this season, his third with San Francisco.

San Diego gave up right-hander Miguel Mendez and 17-year-old shortstop Joniel Hernandez for the 34-year-old Ray, who will be an unrestricted free agent this winter. The Padres also got cash in the deal.

The 26-year-old Mize has a 4-6 record and 2.70 ERA this season over 16 starts. The Tigers received left-handed pitching prospects Kash Mayfield and Jackson Wolf.

Dodgers keep adding after landing Skubal

The Dodgers added 2025 All-Star left-hander Kris Bubic from the Kansas City Royals for minor league right-hander Carlos Duran.

Bubic is on the 60-day injured list with shoulder and elbow issues, but the Royals had expected him to return in late-August, which would put him in line to pitch out of the bullpen for Los Angeles during the playoffs. He is 3-2 with a 4.11 ERA in nine starts this season. Duran is 3-2 with a 3.38 ERA for the Dodgers' Triple-A affiliate in Oklahoma City.

Los Angeles also re-united with a pair of backup catchers in Ben Rortvedt and Hunter Feduccia. The Dodgers acquired Rortvedt at last year's deadline from Tampa Bay in a trade that sent Feduccia to the Rays. On Monday, Los Angeles got Rortvedt back from the Mets for right-hander Chayce McDermott, and swung a deal with the Rays for Feduccia. Starting catcher Will Smith has been out since June with neck inflammation.

Varsho helps Astros in AL West pursuit

The 30-year-old Varsho has had a disappointing offensive season with a .682 OPS over 99 games with the Blue Jays, but he earned a Gold Glove award in 2024 and remains an excellent defender.

Houston came into Monday's games with a 58-55 record, which is good for first place in the AL West. The Astros took over the division lead for the first time since April after a three-game sweep of the Rangers over the weekend.

The Blue Jays received Arrighetti, who is 7-5 with a 4.60 ERA over 17 starts this season.

Guardians add Adell, Griffin, Lowe

The Cleveland Guardians picked up a power bat and some outfield versatility by adding Jo Adell from the Angels, who received minor league catcher Jacob Cozart. Later in the day, they acquired veteran lefty Foster Griffin from the Washington Nationals and slugger Nathaniel Lowe from the Cincinnati Reds.

The 27-year-old Adell has 16 homers and 62 RBIs this season, one year after hitting a career-best 37 homers with 98 RBIs. Adell has spent his entire career with the Angels after being the 10th overall pick in the 2017 amateur draft.

The 31-year-old Griffin has been excellent for the Nats this season with a 12-3 record and 3.06 ERA. He's back in the big leagues after a three-year stint playing in Japan.

The 31-year-old Lowe is having a bounceback season with a .266 average, 12 homers and 37 RBIs. He'll add more thump from the left side.

Other trades of note

— The Pittsburgh Pirates added veteran right-hander Luke Weaver from the Mets. Weaver is in the first season of a two-year, \$22-million deal. He had been one of the few bright spots this season for the last-

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place Mets, going 2-1 with a 1.84 ERA with one save in 42 appearances. The Pirates also added veteran right-hander Kirby Yates in a deal with the Angels.

— The Cubs got left-hander Braxton Garrett from Miami for two minor leaguers. Garrett — the former seventh overall draft pick who turns 29 on Wednesday and will be under club control for two more seasons after this — suffered a torn UCL midway through the 2024 season. His only two big league starts since then came in mid-May, when he struck out five while allowing seven runs over 4 1/3 innings. He has since been at Triple-A. The Cubs also added righty Ryan Zeferjahn from the Los Angeles Angels for minor league catcher Moisés Ballesteros and minor league right-handed pitcher Mason McGwire, the son of former MLB slugger Mark McGwire.

— The Seattle Mariners acquired outfielder Taylor Ward from the Orioles in exchange for minor league right-handers Alex Hoppe, Brock Moore and Harrison Kreiling. Ward, 32, is hitting .246 with seven home runs and 30 RBIs in 111 games.

— The New York Yankees added outfielder Heliot Ramos from the San Francisco Giants in exchange for minor league infielder Kaeden Kent and left-hander Henry Lalane. The 26-year-old Ramos has hit .264 with nine homers and 34 RBIs in 74 games this season for the Giants.

— The Milwaukee Brewers added right-handed starter Dustin May and left-handed reliever JoJo Romero from the Cardinals in exchange for prospects Alexander Frías and Josiah Ragsdale. May has a 5-7 record and 4.38 ERA over 21 starts. Romero has a 3.35 ERA over 44 appearances. The Brewers also acquired right-handed reliever Antonio Senzatela in a deal with the Rockies, who received infielder Juan Martinez and left-hander Mark Manfredi.

— The Blue Jays bolstered their rotation with an eye on 2027 by acquiring right-hander José Soriano from the Angels for three prospects. The 27-year-old is 9-6 with a 3.29 ERA and has a 3.72 ERA over four big league seasons. He's under team control through 2028. Infielder Arjun Nimmala, a 2023 first-round pick, headlined the minor leaguers going to Los Angeles, along with outfielder Eddie Micheletti Jr. and right-hander Angel Rivero.

— The Rays added catcher Liam Hicks in a trade with the Marlins while Miami received prospects RHP Jacob Kisting, SS Adrian Santana and INF Brayden Taylor. Hicks, 27, is in his second big league season and batting .282 with 14 homers and 62 RBIs. He's under team control for the next four seasons.

— The Minnesota Twins added reliever Jeff Hoffman from the Toronto Blue Jays in exchange for three prospects, including lefty Dasan Hill, right-hander John Klein and infielder Dameury Pena.

— The Chicago White Sox acquired outfielder Brenton Doyle from the Colorado Rockies for a pair of prospects. Doyle, who recently came off the injured list due to a bruised oblique, is hitting .214 with a homer and nine stolen bases. He's won two Gold Glove awards for his work in center field. The Rockies received right-hander Mason Adams and infielder Carlos Vielma. The White Sox also added righty reliever Huascar Brazobán from the Mets for minor league right-handers Gabe Davis and Zach Franklin. The 36-year-old Brazobán is 5-2 with a 2.56 ERA over 46 games this season.

— The playoff-chasing Arizona Diamondbacks got a left-handed bat that can fill a spot in left field with the acquisition of Lars Nootbaar from St. Louis for prospects. Nootbaar has hit .234 with three home runs and 16 RBIs in 48 games since his season debut in early June after heel surgery last offseason.

— Toronto got utility player Josh Smith and minor league right-hander Josh Stephan from Texas for rookie left-hander Adam Macko. Smith, who in 2024 won a Silver Slugger as a utility player, was at Triple-A Round Rock. He went into this season with the chance to be the Rangers' everyday second baseman, but he hit .213 in 45 games and missed 37 games because of injuries and a bout with viral meningitis.

— The Atlanta Braves acquired veteran left-handed reliever Brent Suter from the Angels for minor league infielder Nacho Alvarez Jr. The 36-year-old Suter provides some bullpen depth for the NL East leaders. He was 1-2 with a 4.12 ERA over 63 1/3 innings in 41 appearances for Los Angeles. The Braves also traded outfielder Eli White to the Red Sox for right-hander Tyler Uberstine and dealt backup catcher Joey Bart to the White Sox for right-hander Duncan Davitt. Both Uberstine and Davitt were optioned to Triple-A Gwinnett.

— St. Louis got left-handed reliever Caleb Ferguson from Cincinnati in exchange for \$250,000 of international bonus pool space. The 30-year-old Ferguson is 1-0 with a 4.01 ERA in 26 games this season. In

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359 games over eight big league seasons with six teams, he is 25-17 with seven saves and a 3.69 ERA. — Last offseason, the Orioles included right-hander Michael Forret in a deal to acquire starter Shane Baz from Tampa Bay. On Monday, Baltimore went and got Forret back by trading reliever Tyler Wells to the Rays.

Man who killed top Minnesota lawmaker and her husband makes first state court appearance

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

The man serving two life terms plus 40 years after pleading guilty to federal charges related to killing a top Democratic lawmaker and her husband made his initial appearance Monday in state court where he faces similar charges.

The state case against Vance Boelter had been on hold pending resolution of the federal case.

Monday's procedural state court hearing came less than two weeks after Boelter's sentencing in federal court. He pleaded guilty to the federal charges related to the killing of former House Speaker Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark, as well as critically wounding state Sen. John Hoffman and his wife, Yvette.

Boelter, 59, agreed to plead guilty to the federal charges in June, almost a year after the Minneapolis-area attacks, so federal prosecutors would not seek the death penalty.

Boelter told the judge at Monday's hearing that over a span of eight years he had met with Minnesota elected officials in Washington, D.C., including U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, the Minnesota Star Tribune reported.

"We have found no record of my ever meeting or speaking with this murderer who will be spending the rest of his life in prison," Klobuchar said in an emailed statement. "This is the second time he has falsely brought me into his tormented web and no one should be giving him more attention."

"Does this court have the authority to bring her in to testify?" Boelter asked Hennepin County Judge Juan Hoyos. "Or is she above the law?"

Boelter also told the judge that his rights had been violated during the 14 months he has been in federal custody, the Star Tribune reported. The judge told Boelter that any arguments he wants to make about his case could be made at future hearings by his attorney.

If convicted of the state charges, Boelter could face mandatory life in prison without the possibility of parole. Minnesota abolished capital punishment in 1911 and has never had a federal death penalty case.

In state court, Boelter faces two counts of murder for killing the Hortmans, four counts of attempted murder, impersonating a police officer and animal cruelty. The Hortman family's golden retriever was gravely injured in the shootings and had to be euthanized.

Hoffman and his family also filed a personal injury lawsuit against Boelter in April.

Boelter's next state court appearance is set for Sept. 2.

Trump says Pirro 'folded like an umbrella' in bid to drop Reflecting Pool vandalism charges

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Monday that U.S. Attorney Jeanine Pirro "choked" and "folded like an umbrella" in moving to drop charges against a former Olympian accused of vandalizing the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool.

Speaking at an unrelated Oval Office event, Trump ducked questions about whether he'd fire Pirro, a former Fox News host and longtime ally he handpicked as top federal prosecutor in the nation's capital. But the president kept up his drumbeat of sharp criticism, saying he remained disappointed by her assessment that damage to the Reflecting Pool was the result of shoddy construction, not vandalism.

"Frankly, I think she choked because the judge was really vicious. Instead of going after the people that did it, the judge went after her and went after her department, and I guess she choked," Trump said in response to a reporter's question after he signed an executive order for military spouses. "I don't know

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what the hell happened.”

The move to dismiss charges against David Hearn was an embarrassing setback for the Justice Department and marked a rare moment during Trump’s second term of an aide or political appointee openly defying him.

After initially posting on social media over the weekend, “I disagree 100% with Jeanine Pirro,” Trump was still fuming two days later, insisting for several minutes that vandalism had marred the troubled project.

“I was disappointed with Jeanine Pirro, really disappointed,” the president said Monday. “She folded like an umbrella.”

Pirro seen later at the White House

Though she has not commented publicly since Trump’s initial social media post criticizing her, Pirro was spotted walking into the White House on Monday evening. Also spotted was Interior Secretary Doug Burgum, who has been outspoken in defending the president’s suggestions that vandalism was to blame.

Hearn has said he was on a bike ride June 19 when he reached in to examine the pool’s newly peeled coating and briefly touched a chunk attached to the side of the pool. But he said he obeyed a park worker who told him to let go of it.

Republican Louisiana Sen. John Kennedy said of Pirro, “All I know is, you better not go before a federal judge and make allegations you can’t back up.”

A lawyer who sits on the Senate Judiciary Committee, Kennedy added, “They are very serious about it.”

“I think he’s going to sue” or file for compensation under the Federal Tort Claims Act, Kennedy said of Hearn. “I mean, I would.”

Trump denies knowing the contractor, contradicting his own past comments

Meanwhile, charges also have been dropped against three other people charged in the same D.C. court with misdemeanors for allegedly removing pieces of paint from the Reflecting Pool, according to online court records.

Justin Carreno, Cameron Thiers and Sophie Dennison-Gibby all pleaded not guilty during their initial court appearances last month. They had been accused of destruction of property with a value less than \$1,000.

The president further used his Monday comments to distance himself from the troubled project, which he had touted as part of his overarching efforts to spruce up the nation’s capital.

Trump said in April that he had consulted with a trio of firms that had worked on swimming pools at his properties and that the one he picked for the Reflecting Pool project had done work at his golf course in Northern Virginia. That firm was Virginia-based Atlantic Industrial Coatings, which was awarded a \$14.7 million no-bid contract to repaint and waterproof its concrete floor.

“I have a guy who’s unbelievable at doing swimming pools,” Trump said then. “He looked at it. He called me up. He said, ‘Sir, we can do something on it.’”

But the president insisted Monday that “I didn’t know the contractor” and for the first time hinted that he wasn’t pleased by the work that was done to get the Reflecting Pool ready in time for Independence Day celebrations.

“I’m not saying I was 100% thrilled with the contractor, but the contractor was rushing. We wanted to get it open for July 4th,” he said.

Crews drained the Reflecting Pool weeks ago to launch a new round of repairs. The White House hasn’t said when those might be finished or how much more they will cost, but the Trump administration did not seek new bids from other companies on the new round of repair work.

Trump also said Monday that the Reflecting Pool would be “fixed” and reopened in the next week and a half to two weeks — without providing further details.

Authorities seek a motive in the mass shooting at an Idaho In-N-Out Burger

By MICHAEL BIESECKER and DAVE COLLINS Associated Press

A driver charging his electric taxi and a former law enforcement officer who tried to intervene were

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among the seven people wounded in a mass shooting at an Idaho fast food restaurant that also left three people dead, according to friends and relatives of the two men.

The attack Saturday at a new In-N-Out Burger in Twin Falls ended when the gunman, identified by police as 24-year-old Chad Williams, shot and killed himself. On Monday, police were still trying to determine why Williams carried out the attack, which happened early in the afternoon in a busy shopping plaza in the southern Idaho city.

Many details about Williams' life were still unknown Monday, but an initial search of court records in Idaho and Arizona, where he used to live, didn't show any criminal cases matching his name and birth date.

Man who knew gunman says he was 'pretty chill'

Elijah Moseley, who lived across the hall from Williams in a College of Southern Idaho dorm a few years ago, described him as "an introvert" and "a pretty chill guy."

"I was never scared or weirded out by him," he said.

Moseley said he considered Williams a relatively close friend, though they lost touch a couple of years ago.

"I'm shocked by this and sick to my stomach about this," he said.

Detectives are confident that Williams acted alone, Police Chief Matthew Hicks said Sunday, noting that Williams' family is cooperating fully with the investigation.

Two of the wounded victims were treated at a hospital and released, three were listed as stable, and two others were in critical condition, police said Sunday.

During the attack, an off-duty state trooper and a civilian fired on Williams and diverted him from the restaurant, the chief said. Police haven't disclosed their names or those of the victims, but some victims have been identified by friends and relatives. Twin Falls spokesperson Josh Palmer said Monday that police were still trying to identify next of kin.

A vigil is planned for Tuesday evening at Twin Falls City Park, Palmer said.

In-N-Out employee among those killed

The attack happened at an In-N-Out that opened late last month as part of the California chain's Idaho expansion, and an employee at the burger joint was among those killed, the fast-food chain's owner, Lynsi Snyder, said in a statement. She didn't identify the worker.

Kimberley Castaneda confirmed to The Associated Press that her brother, Christopher Claunch, was among those killed, but she declined to discuss him further.

Garren Taylor, one of Claunch's friends, said that two years ago, Claunch completed a rehab program for alcohol abuse at Renaissance Ranch Recovery Center in Rupert, Idaho, and was immediately hired there. Taylor said Claunch, known to those close to him as "Toph," had since then dedicated his life to helping others get sober.

"He helped hundreds of people," Taylor recalled Monday. "He was just a gift to anyone he came in contact with. It wasn't about the paycheck, his attitude was: 'I get to help someone today.'"

Renaissance Ranch declined to comment Monday.

Wounded man moved closer to gunfire to help

In a Facebook post, Marcus Scott said his son Austin "A.J." Scott was critically wounded in the attack and faces a long recovery. He said his son was shot after he moved "toward the danger" when he heard gunfire in an effort to protect others.

"We are incredibly thankful that God spared his life and that his wife and friend were there to provide immediate care until he could get to the hospital," he wrote.

Marcus Scott said in a message to the AP on Monday that his son used to work as a law enforcement officer for the Twin Falls police and the Idaho State Police. He declined to comment further on his son's actions, saying it is his son's story to tell.

Terry Dudley, a driver for North Star Taxi, was shot as he was charging one of the company's Teslas in a parking lot next to the In-N-Out Burger, said James Palmer, who owns the taxi service and is Dudley's friend.

Palmer said Dudley called him to tell him he was shot after he couldn't get through to 911. He said Dudley was flown to a hospital in Boise and remained there Monday with serious injuries, he said.

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"It's a lot, man," Palmer said. "It's daunting, to say the least, to even try to gather the scope of all this. It's been absolute chaos."

He said Dudley was "kind of like my right hand."

Gunman left local college before graduating

Williams attended the College of Southern Idaho from August 2022 and December 2023, according to the school's president, L. Dean Fisher. He didn't graduate or earn a certificate from the school, which has about 10,000 students.

Williams served in the student senate but was unanimously impeached by his fellow senators in February 2023. Moseley, who served as the senate pro-tempore at the time, said Williams was ousted because he wasn't very active or engaged in student government.

Michigan reports the first 2 US deaths related to a diarrhea-causing parasite

By MIKE HOUSEHOLDER and SUDHIN THANAWALA Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Two people have died in the cyclospora outbreak in Michigan, state health officials announced Monday, the first deaths confirmed in the U.S. related to the microscopic parasite.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services said both people had underlying health conditions that may have been impacted by the intestinal illness and dehydration. The department said it would not provide additional information about the deaths.

Cyclospora is a microscopic, spherical parasite that commonly causes watery diarrhea "with frequent and sometimes explosive bowel movements," according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Outbreaks tend to occur most often in the late spring and summer.

The CDC says the illness, called cyclosporiasis, is rarely deadly.

The heat-loving parasite infects the bowels and spreads through feces. In the past, people have been infected by consuming fruits or vegetables that were exposed to feces-contaminated irrigation water.

Dr. Joel Kammeyer, the division chief of infectious diseases at Wayne State University and the Detroit Medical Center, called the deaths a "tragedy" but noted that despite thousands of cyclosporiasis cases, only two people have died.

"For someone who comes into an urgent care and cyclosporiasis is their only issue, it's relatively easy to treat," Kammeyer said. But for people who are struggling with other illnesses, he said, "it stands to reason that there are some patients that might not be able to withstand the dehydration that can come with severe cyclosporiasis."

Cyclosporiasis is less common than other foodborne illnesses, including salmonella and E. coli. Many cases are never linked to a specific food or other source and, for years, few U.S. cyclospora outbreaks were reported. But the number started rising about a decade ago, with a particularly notable spike in 2018 and 2019.

Previously, 2019 saw the most reported U.S. cyclosporiasis cases, with about 4,700.

The CDC said it is aware of more than 18,000 confirmed or suspected cases in the current surge. But CDC numbers can lag state reports, which suggest the number is more than 20,000 nationwide.

Federal health officials have identified lettuce from Mexico served at Taco Bell locations in nine states as a source of the widespread outbreak. As of late July, the number of cases linked to the lettuce was 1,947, including at least 98 people who had to be hospitalized, according to the CDC.

The agency has said other "brands, restaurants, retailers, or distribution channels" could be tied to the outbreak as the investigation continues.

Board of Peace envoy meets with Netanyahu on Gaza disarmament deal and urges a halt to strikes

By JULIA FRANKEL and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

JERUSALEM, Israel (AP) — The Board of Peace official overseeing Gaza's postwar transition met on Monday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, according to a statement, in part to discuss a new disarmament deal the board had reached with the militant Hamas group.

Nikolay Mladenov, the high representative for Gaza, held "constructive and detailed" talks with Netanyahu and his team, the Board of Peace said in a statement.

"The goal is clear and is not in question: the complete decommissioning of weapons in the Strip and the transition away from rule by the gun to civilian governance," it said, referring to the embattled enclave.

Mladenov also pressed Netanyahu to halt Israeli strikes in the Gaza Strip, according to two people familiar with the meeting. Mladenov and his team, including senior adviser Aryeh Lightstone, are pressuring Israel to stop striking Gaza as they push ahead with the agreement to decommission the weapons held by Hamas.

In a statement Monday, Hamas said the group and various other Palestinian factions "remain committed to what was agreed regarding the implementation of the second phase of the ceasefire agreement, including all parties' obligations."

Hamas added it was awaiting "a clear and official response" from Mladenov and the mediators regarding what was agreed upon.

Meanwhile, in Washington, members of the Board of Peace met with U.S. congressional staff on Monday to detail their ongoing efforts and to work with Congress "to advance peace, security, governance, and reconstruction in Gaza," according to a brief statement released by the board.

President Donald Trump had announced the agreement, which is part of a broader ceasefire deal reached last year, on Thursday. It calls for Israel to cease its military operations and for Hamas and its allies in Gaza to halt all militant activity. The agreement also laid out in general terms what the decommissioning process would look like.

After the text of the agreement was released, Israel said it had "serious security concerns" and that it shared those with the United States. It also ramped up its strikes in Gaza, killing 17 people overnight Saturday and into Sunday, according to local health officials. No airstrikes were reported in Gaza on Monday.

Israeli attacks have killed 1,250 people since the ceasefire deal was reached in October, an agreement that ended major fighting in the Israel-Hamas war that had raged for two years.

Egypt, Qatar and Turkey — mediators in the Gaza truce negotiations — denounced the latest Israeli strikes in a statement Monday, saying that the particular targeting of healthcare facilities, medical infrastructure and resulting civilian casualties constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law.

The mediators also called on the international community to continue to pressure Israel to fulfill its end of the deal.

The war began on Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel, killing around 1,200 people and taking 251 hostage.

Israel's military offensive in Gaza has since killed 73,375 people, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. Its figures do not distinguish between civilians and combatants but they are considered generally reliable by the United Nations and other international organizations.

25 states sue over Trump's new tariffs, calling them 'pretext' to replace his old ones

By PAUL WISEMAN and MAE ANDERSON AP Business Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Twenty-five states sued the Trump administration Monday over its latest tariffs, calling them a pretext for replacing import taxes the Supreme Court struck down in February.

The United States last month imposed double-digit tariffs on 59 countries and the European Union,

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charging that they had not done enough to crack down on imports produced by forced labor. The new tariffs took effect just as the clock ran out on temporary tariffs President Donald Trump had turned to after the Supreme Court defeat.

"After losing at the Supreme Court, the administration is once again trying to illegally raise taxes on families and businesses with a new round of tariffs," said New York Attorney General Letitia James.

Joining New York in the lawsuit announced Monday are Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

Trump, who argues that high tariffs will revive American manufacturing, last year overturned decades of U.S. policy that favored lower tariffs and ever-freer trade. Invoking the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act, or IEEPA, he imposed double-digit tariffs on imports from almost every country, saying America's longstanding trade deficit amounted to a national emergency.

But the Supreme Court ruled that IEEPA did not authorize tariffs. The decision forced the administration to send refunds to importers who'd paid the tariffs. Eager to make up the lost revenue, Trump turned to temporary 10% worldwide tariffs. But they expired at midnight July 24.

Now he's tapping more durable tariffs under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, which permits the president to impose import taxes and other sanctions against countries found to engage in unfair trade practices. Trump used Section 301 to impose big tariffs on China in his first term, and they survived court challenges.

The administration invoked Section 301 to impose the forced-labor tariffs, which range from 10% to 12.5% and hit countries that provide 99% of American imports.

"The United States is using its lawful authority to obtain the elimination of unreasonable acts, policies, and practices that burden U.S. commerce," White House spokesman Kush Desai said. "A foreign country's failure to impose and effectively enforce a prohibition on the importation of goods produced with forced labor is unreasonable and burdens U.S. commerce, including American workers, and must be addressed. Section 301 tariffs have proven to be a legally durable tool since the President's first term, and they remain so now."

The states' lawsuit follows two other lawsuits filed in The Court of International Trade in July by small businesses that also challenged the 301 tariffs.

Both of those lawsuits argue that the government didn't adequately establish its case against each specific economy or spell how the tariffs will eliminate the specified practice they are being levied for, as required by Section 301.

Barry Appleton, a law professor and co-director of New York Law School's Center for International Law, said the challenges stem from the fact that the 301 tariffs are the third time the administration has tried to impose similar worldwide tariffs under different statutes, and their "nearly copy-pasted" nature could pose a challenge to defend in court.

However, he said while the statutes that the administration implemented tariffs under previously were novelties and hadn't been used before for that purpose, Section 301 has been used before.

During Trump's first term, he cited Section 301 to impose tariffs on Chinese imports, which survived legal challenges.

"Presidents have used it for decades, and Congress built it with real guardrails: investigation, consultation, a public record," Appleton said. "The government's defense won't be 'I had no power to do this.' It will be, 'I stayed inside the lines Congress drew.' That is a real fight, not a formality, and it is the one that will decide this case."

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US stocks rally near a record as falling oil prices ease Wall Street's worries about inflation

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. stock market rallied to the edge of its all-time high on Monday after easing oil prices helped calm Wall Street's worries that inflation could get even worse.

The S&P 500 jumped 1.5% and is just 0.1% below its record set earlier this summer. It was coming off a frenetic July, where it swung up and down as oil prices shot higher because of the war with Iran, before ultimately ending the month just about where it started.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average, which measures a narrower slice of the U.S. stock market, climbed 693 points, or 1.3%, to an all-time high, while the Nasdaq composite leaped 2.1%.

Stocks got a lift as the price for a barrel of Brent crude sank 4.7% to \$83.77. It dropped after President Donald Trump said over the weekend that he decided to hold off on new strikes against Iran at the urging of allies in the region.

Brent's price careened between \$72 and \$102 last month as worries rose and fell about when the war with Iran would allow oil tankers to freely exit the Persian Gulf again to deliver crude to customers worldwide. The latest acquiescence by Trump helped to ease worries about the global flow of crude, and Treasury yields correspondingly fell in the bond market.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury sank to 4.68% from 4.75% late Friday. It, though, remains well above its 3.97% level from before the war with Iran.

Higher yields threaten to undercut prices for stocks and other investments, while slowing the economy by making borrowing more expensive for U.S. households and businesses. The average long-term U.S. mortgage rate has already leaped to its highest level in a year.

Monday's ease in oil prices helped airlines and other companies with big fuel bills lead the market. United Airlines flew 5.8% higher, while American Airlines climbed 5%. Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings steamed 6.6% higher.

Boeing jumped 8% after U.S. regulators certified its 737 MAX-7 planes, clearing them for commercial service.

Tyson Foods rose 2.8% after the meat company reported a slightly stronger profit for the spring than analysts expected. CEO Donnie King said strength is continuing in the company's chicken business and its prepared foods, which include brands like Jimmy Dean and Hillshire Farm.

It joined a lengthening list of big U.S. companies to deliver a bigger profit for the spring than analysts expected. That's imperative for Wall Street because stock prices tend to follow the path of corporate earnings over the long term, and worries were rising that U.S. stock prices may have broadly already shot too high.

Companies in the S&P 500 are on track to deliver earnings per share for the spring that are 47% higher than a year before, according to FactSet, with more than half of the companies in the index having already reported. If that ends up being the case, it would be the strongest growth since the spring of 2021, when the economy was roaring out of the COVID pandemic.

Also offering encouragement for profits was a report on Monday showing that growth for U.S. manufacturing accelerated to its strongest level since 2022.

Keeping Wall Street unsettled, though, were swings for stocks of companies that make computer chips. They've been veering up and down for weeks on worries about whether their surging revenues because of the artificial-intelligence boom are sustainable.

If AI ends up producing less profit and productivity than hoped, Big Tech companies could curtail their spending sprees on data centers that have helped chip stocks soar to tremendous heights.

Micron Technology went from a drop of 6.4% to a gain of 1.7% through the day before ending with a gain of 0.8%, for example. It's up roughly 190% for the year so far.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 110.78 points to 7,600.50 and finished just shy of its all-time closing high of 7,609.78. The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 693.38 to 53,178.41, and the Nasdaq composite ral-

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lied 540.04 to 25,913.90.

The manic swings for AI stocks have been most dramatic in South Korea, where the Kospi index is dominated by just two tech titans, Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix.

Seoul's Kospi fell 5.1% Monday, coming off Friday's 17.9% surge that was its best day in history.

In neighboring Japan, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 fell 0.9% after the United States and Japan confirmed they had moved together to prop up the value of the Japanese yen against the dollar. A stronger yen would help to limit inflation in Japan, but it could also potentially hurt Japan's exporters.

WestJet reaches tentative deal with flight attendants after strike snarled weekend traffic

By The Associated Press undefined

Canada's second largest airline, WestJet, has agreed to a tentative agreement with flight attendants to end a strike that led to hundreds of flight cancellations and thousands of stranded passengers over the weekend.

The union representing the flight attendants said Monday that if the deal is ratified, the work that flight attendants do before flights take off will be recognized.

The union, CUPE 8125, said that flight attendants will be returning to work now that the strike is over. The tentative agreement still faces a ratification vote.

WestJet canceled 495 flights Sunday, snarling travel plans in Canada in the middle of a long holiday weekend.

A key issue in the dispute was how flight attendants should be paid for duties performed while still on the ground. The union said some of that work is unpaid, while the company said that staff was indeed compensated, citing pay through a "credit hour" system rather than an hourly rate.

"This tentative agreement represents meaningful progress," CUPE 8125 President Alia Hussain said in a statement. "It evolves the flight credit system by recognizing more of the work cabin crew are required to perform and with general increases to compensation for that work."

The Canadian Union of Public Employees represents the 4,400 cabin crew at the airline.

The deal comes after 250,000 travelers had their trips canceled, according to WestJet. Some struggled to find accommodations while they were stranded away from home, and others were left unable to re-schedule flights.

"We are pleased to have reached a tentative agreement that reflects the hard work and professionalism of our cabin crew," WestJet CEO Alexis von Hoensbroech said in a statement. "We know this disruption has been frustrating for our guests and WestJetters and we're sorry for that. Our teams are working hard to restore service and get our guests on their way to their destinations as quickly as possible and we appreciate everyone's patience as we get back to normal."

Before the strike began, WestJet had made a proposal that included a 13% wage increase in October, increases of 2.5% each January for the next three years, retroactive wage payment to last January, additional pay for all hours worked, and upgrades to other benefits, according to WestJet. Hussain had said that although negotiators tried until the very last minute to get a fair deal, what the airline proposed didn't go far enough.

Hussain said at a news conference in Calgary on Monday that the proposed deal addresses the issue of duties performed on the ground.

John Gradek, a faculty lecturer on aviation management at McGill University in Montreal, said that with the federal government watching and hundreds of thousands of passengers already affected by the dispute, both sides felt the urgency to get a deal done.

"There was a lot of pressure," Gradek said. "The Sword of Damocles was hanging over them. They had to basically cut a deal, otherwise the wrath both of Canadians as well as the government would be a very difficult cross to bear."

Whether the agreement gets ratified depends on if the union membership is satisfied with what was

reached on the work flight attendants do before takeoff, he said.

He expects it will take until Wednesday for WestJet to have all its planes and flights back. The airline will then face the huge backlog of passengers affected by the dispute.

Last summer, flight attendants at Air Canada, the country's largest carrier, stranded more than 100,000 travelers during peak travel season with a strike partly over the same issue of unpaid groundwork. That work stoppage lasted three days before the sides came to an agreement.

New talks are 'last chance' for Iran to forge a deal and avoid escalation of US strikes, Trump says

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has played this hand before during the 5-month-old Iran war — but this time, he insists it's different.

The president on Monday said that new talks between Washington and Tehran are the "last chance" for Iran to forge a deal and avoid an escalation of U.S. strikes on the country.

Trump, speaking at the Oval Office, said he expects negotiations will focus on reopening the Strait of Hormuz and create a pathway for Iran to address the United States' concerns about its nuclear program. He told reporters they would likely learn about the status of the negotiations "today or tomorrow."

"The first phase is the opening of the straits. The second phase will be the denuclearization," the Republican president said. "And that will take a little while."

While Trump has reveled in the U.S. military decimating layers of Tehran's leadership and devastating its air force and navy, Iran is betting it can outlast Trump as he faces diminished stockpiles of munitions and the difficulty of executing a war that's unpopular with the American electorate ahead of November's midterm election.

Trump said he decided to hold off on ordering American forces to carry out new massive strikes against Iran at the urging of Gulf allies Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

He said a plan was in place for U.S. forces to carry out "the biggest attack since World War II" on Sunday. But he decided to scrap the plan and give diplomacy more time to play out after hearing from key Gulf leaders — including Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman — as well as at the request of unnamed Iranian officials.

But Trump reiterated that he's running out of patience with Iran.

"This the last chance for them to sign a good document," Trump said.

Earlier Monday, Trump had criticized Iran on social media as being "unbelievably duplicitous."

His ire was raised by Iran claiming that its meetings with Oman on Monday were focused solely on establishing a temporary route for safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical waterway for the global oil trade.

"They ask for a meeting, some would say 'beg,' talks begin, with more scheduled in the immediate future, and they say, openly and proudly, that they're not having any discussions, that nothing is being talked about, and they're only dealing with Oman," Trump grumbled.

Trump said whether "Iran wants to admit it or not, we are, in fact, talking" about preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

Trump has threatened to escalate attacks on Iran only to edge away from his threats several times since the start of U.S. and Israel strikes on Feb. 28.

Asked by a reporter how Americans view him repeatedly making grim threats on Tehran before backing away, Trump responded that he's showing patience out of a consideration for Iranian life.

"I want to give them every last chance before decapitation," Trump said. He added, "Hopefully, they'll come to their senses."

Critics see Trump reaching for a reset button as a pattern

Trump may still come to the conclusion that a massive escalation in the conflict with Iran is necessary.

But critics say his hesitation also might reflect an unspoken understanding inside the administration that

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U.S. military might alone may not be enough to compel Iran to back down and bring an end to a now monthslong war that Trump had earlier downplayed as a weekslong excursion.

"I think what we're seeing here is a president who has an approach that's just rather erratic," said Sen. Mark Kelly, an Arizona Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, on CBS News' "Face the Nation." "At this point, he's trying to get us back to February. And I think if he could — if he had a big reset button he could hit — he would certainly take that option."

There have been several moments over the course of the conflict when Trump has demonstrated his proclivity for the bellicose only to back off at the last minute, while declaring his threats spurred progress:

— In early April, the United States and Iran agreed to a two-week ceasefire in an announcement that came less than two hours before a deadline Trump had set for Tehran to capitulate or face attacks on bridges and power plants — strikes he said would mean "a whole civilization will die."

— After days of dire threats against Iran, Trump announced on May 18 he was holding off on a major planned military strike because "serious negotiations" were underway, crediting Gulf allies for persuading him to show restraint.

— Then in June, Trump threatened on social media to hit Iran "VERY HARD" and seize Iran's energy base on Kharg Island to "assume total control of their Oil and Gas Markets," only to call off the strikes in another post after claiming that peace negotiations had progressed with high-level Iranian leaders.

Call with Saudi crown prince affected Trump's decision

With this latest episode, Trump suggested that the Saudi crown prince played a particularly important role in him turning away from escalating the fight.

The U.S. president spoke by phone with the de facto leader of the kingdom on Saturday before announcing he was halting planned strikes.

The crown prince conveyed that an escalation in fighting could have a severe impact on the global economy if Tehran responded to a new U.S. bombardment by targeting some of the United States' Gulf allies, according to a person briefed on the call who was not authorized to comment publicly and insisted on anonymity.

Saudi officials, the person added, have underscored in their engagements with the Trump administration that the kingdom is in a good position to defend itself against further potential Iranian strikes — as are fellow energy titans Qatar and the United Arab Emirates — but that Kuwait could be more vulnerable to attacks by Iranian-backed militias in Iraq.

As Trump threatens escalation, Republicans face tough polling

Trump has insisted that November's midterm elections aren't shaping his approach to the conflict, which has spurred unease across the global economy.

But it's certainly on the minds of his fellow Republicans.

About two-thirds of U.S. adults say the war with Iran has not been worthwhile, according to polling from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research published last week. That includes the vast majority of Democrats and independents, as well as about 37% of Republicans.

One of Trump's most outspoken allies on Capitol Hill suggested on Sunday the administration needs to modulate its approach on Iran.

Louisiana Sen. John Kennedy said on NBC's "Meet the Press" that the debate in Washington has lost perspective on the devastation the U.S. military has inflicted on Iran since the start of the war.

Still, the Republican lawmaker acknowledged that further escalating the conflict could lead to another surge in already elevated energy prices and "a lot of inflation for the American people."

Kennedy made the case that tightening sanctions and targeting Iran's nuclear program — rather than escalating the conflict — might be the best bet for the moment.

"They're all hellish choices," Kennedy said. "But for the moment I'd maintain the status quo."

GOP holdouts say they will back Blanche's attorney general nomination after striking deal over fund

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two Republican senators who threatened to block acting Attorney General Todd Blanche's confirmation to lead the Justice Department said Monday that they will support his nomination, ending an impasse over plans to create a fund to compensate allies of President Donald Trump.

The endorsement from GOP Sens. John Cornyn and Thom Tillis paves the way for the Senate Judiciary Committee to advance Blanche's nomination on Tuesday after the Justice Department and lawmakers reached a deal to formally rescind the \$1.8 billion "Anti-Weaponization Fund" proposed to settle Trump's lawsuit against the Internal Revenue Service.

Cornyn and Tillis had refused to back Blanche's bid for the permanent post without official confirmation killing the fund meant to compensate people who believe they were unfairly prosecuted by the Justice Department. Blanche's written order, issued late Sunday, came after the days of negotiations between the Justice Department and the Republican senators who are leaving Capitol Hill when their terms end in January.

"We want to express our gratitude to Mr. Blanche and his staff for working with us on this, and we look forward to voting to advance his nomination out of the Senate Judiciary Committee soon," Cornyn, of Texas, and Tillis, of North Carolina, said in a statement.

DOJ order says 'beyond any doubt' that fund is dead

Blanche has repeatedly said that the Justice Department was scrapping plans for the fund, which sparked bipartisan outcry over the possibility that violent rioters who attacked police at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, could be considered for payments. But skeptical lawmakers said they were concerned that could be revived without a commitment in writing, especially because Trump has continued to defend the idea.

In his order posted on social media late Sunday, Blanche wrote that the department was confirming "beyond any doubt, that there is no Fund."

Since the settlement of the president's lawsuit against the IRS was announced, "No Members were appointed; no funds were transferred; no process for receiving claims was established; no claims were paid," the order said. "This order establishes, beyond any doubt, that there is no Fund."

Cornyn and Tillis had also pressed the Justice Department to limit the scope of a separate piece of the settlement that provided broad immunity for Trump and members of his family from tax audits.

Under the deal, the Justice Department clarified in writing that the tax audit immunity agreement "applies by its terms only retroactively" to claims open at the time of the settlement and does not protect the president from examination of future tax filings. It also makes clear that only the parties that brought the lawsuit — Trump, two of his sons, and the Trump Organization — are covered by the tax agreement.

Cornyn and Tillis said in their statement that they were "pleased" with the concessions made by Blanche.

"From the outset, we were clear that we needed a written document addressing our concerns on the IRS audit agreement and the anti-weaponization fund that included constraining the scope of audit protection by limiting it to the parties of the Settlement Agreement and legally ending the anti-weaponization fund," they wrote.

Democrats, however, noted that the order rescinding the fund doesn't stop the Trump administration from compensating Jan. 6 rioters through a previously established process that allows people to file claims for damages if they believed they were wronged by the government.

"This supposed 'deal' doesn't prevent payouts to violent insurrectionists in the future," Democratic Sen. Adam Schiff said in a social media post. Schiff added that it also "leaves in place a tax-immunity deal that could help Trump skip taxes on the \$2.3 billion he made last year, and still leaves it vague who and what is covered."

Cornyn, Tillis echo GOP colleagues' concerns as they blocked Blanche nomination

Blanche's nomination was thrown into doubt last week after the Judiciary Committee postponed a vote that had been scheduled for Thursday morning as Tillis and Cornyn said they needed more from the ad-

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ministration before they could provide the necessary votes.

After the Thursday vote was delayed, Trump said in a social media post that he might pull Blanche's nomination and resubmit it after Cornyn and Tillis leave office next year. And on Saturday the president threatened to push forward with the fund if the two Republicans blocked Blanche's nomination.

On Sunday evening, Trump said that people who had faced charges from the Jan. 6, attack on the Capitol and could have benefited from the fund had "their lives destroyed."

"This would be a reimbursement for the pain that they suffered," Trump said. "A lot of people like it."

Blanche, who served as Trump's defense lawyer in his criminal cases, entered the Justice Department last year as deputy attorney general. He was elevated to the top post after Pam Bondi was fired in April by Trump, who was frustrated by her failure to successfully prosecute his political enemies.

Though Blanche insisted he wasn't auditioning for the permanent job, he has moved quickly since taking the reins of the department to promote the Trump administration's agenda and accelerate investigations into the president's perceived foes.

Idaho fast food restaurant shooting leaves 3 dead and 7 injured, city spokesman says

By REBECCA BOONE, MARTHA BELLISLE and SARAH RAZA Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Three people were killed and seven more were injured, some critically, in a shooting at an In-N-Out Burger restaurant in southern Idaho on Saturday afternoon, a Twin Falls city spokesman said.

Police who responded to the shooting found the body of the suspected gunman in an area near the restaurant, Twin Falls city public information officer Josh Palmer said. He did not know if the suspect was included in the fatality count.

Officials were still working on notifying the family members of victims and so were not yet releasing the names, ages or other details about the people hurt in the shooting, Palmer said. Some of the people injured are in critical condition, Palmer said.

Police were still trying to determine the shooter's identity and motive, Twin Falls Police Chief Matthew Hicks said in a news conference earlier Saturday.

"We believe the threat to the community is over," Hicks said. "It was a very chaotic scene."

Palmer said investigators were still interviewing witnesses to the shooting. The restaurant is in a busy shopping plaza, and hundreds of people were in the area when it happened around 2 p.m.

Lane Koehn, 34, said he was at a stoplight near the In-N-Out when he saw a person with an AR-style rifle emerge from the drive-thru. A man with a pistol started firing at the shooter.

He then saw someone in an In-N-Out uniform drag a person, also uniformed, bleeding from a gunshot wound in her chest across the parking lot. The employee, Koehn and the man with the pistol stayed until paramedics arrived for her.

"She was pretty bad off, but I don't know. I hope she made it," Koehn said.

Koehn said he was told by police to evacuate because the shooting was still active.

He also said the shooter fired at least three or four rounds and it was not clear whether or not anyone in particular was targeted.

Video taken by a driver from across the street captured a shooter, who appeared to be dressed in black, walking up to a white car carrying a long rifle, opening the driver-side door and popping the trunk. The person then walked to the trunk and reached inside. At that point the driver who shot the video left quickly, fearing that the man might be getting more weapons.

Twin Falls resident Haley Dodaro, 43, and her mother went to In-N-Out for lunch Saturday afternoon. While waiting in the drive-thru line, they saw people running across the road and workers bolting out of the restaurant. At first Dodaro thought there might have been a fire, but then a man directing traffic in a reflective vest said there was a shooter.

"So that's when we knew there was a shooting. People were running out crying and screaming. It was very scary," Dodaro said in a text message to The Associated Press.

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Nayeli Rodriguez, 40, of Burley, was inside waiting for food with her daughters when she heard shots from the kitchen. An employee said it was a shooting and told people to get down. Rodriguez said an older man tried to protect her and her daughters, and they were among the last to run outside.

"We were trying to get as far as we could and some angels let us in their car," Rodriguez said, also via text message. "I left my car there in the parking lot."

The In-N-Out opened just about a week earlier, on July 24, as part of the company's recent expansion to Idaho.

Police said multiple people were taken to St. Luke's Magic Valley Medical Center. Hospital spokesperson Taylor Marschner said in a statement that it was "working closely with law enforcement and emergency responders as they manage the situation."

Twin Falls, a city of about 56,000 people, is about 130 miles (205 kilometers) southeast of Boise and about 40 miles (64 kilometers) north of the Nevada border.

Suspect in shooting at Idaho fast-food restaurant died from self-inflicted gunshot wound, police say

TWIN FALLS, Idaho (AP) — The suspect in a fatal shooting at a fast-food restaurant in Idaho died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, police said Sunday, crediting an off-duty officer and a citizen with firing shots that diverted him.

Investigators are confident that the gunman, identified as 24-year-old Chad Williams, acted alone during the shooting Saturday at an In-N-Out location in Twin Falls, Police Chief Matthew Hicks said at a news conference.

In all, four people died, including Williams, and seven others were injured at the recently opened restaurant in the southern Idaho city of about 56,000 people. Authorities said Sunday that two of the injured were treated at a hospital and released, three were listed as stable, and two were in critical condition.

Hicks said an off-duty state trooper and an armed citizen — whose identities weren't immediately disclosed — both fired back and diverted the gunman from the restaurant.

"We believe their actions helped drive the suspect away from the scene, preventing further casualties," the chief said. "We want to take a moment and commend the actions of the off-duty officer and the citizen, and their heroic action to stop this incident."

Hicks said detectives are working to determine Williams' motives, and said the suspect's family was cooperating fully with law enforcement. Officials asked potential witnesses or anyone with information to contact police.

The chief also warned of misinformation spreading online identifying a different man as the shooter, saying that person had "no involvement in this incident whatsoever."

In-N-Out worker among the victims

One of those killed was an employee, the fast-food chain's owner said.

"My heart is broken, my chest is heavy, my eyes burn from the tears I've shed. We lost one of our beautiful Associates tonight," In-N-Out owner Lynsi Snyder said in a statement released early Sunday on social media. "In-N-Out will be mourning with the families and praying for them as they tread through a very painful season."

The FBI on Sunday encouraged the public to submit images and videos related to the shooting Saturday in Twin Falls that left seven other people wounded, some critically.

The In-N-Out had opened just about a week earlier, on July 24, as part of the California-based company's recent expansion to Idaho.

Snyder did not identify the worker. Officials were still trying to notify relatives of victims and so were not yet releasing the names, ages or other details about the people hurt in the shooting, Twin Falls spokesperson Josh Palmer said Saturday.

Police who responded to the shooting found the body of the suspected gunman in an area near the restaurant, Palmer said.

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Palmer said investigators were interviewing witnesses to the shooting. The restaurant is in a busy shopping plaza, and hundreds of people were in the area when it happened around 2 p.m.

Witnesses describe chaotic scene

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He then saw someone in an In-N-Out uniform drag a person, also wearing a uniform, bleeding from a gunshot wound to her chest across the parking lot. The employee, Koehn and the man with the pistol stayed until paramedics arrived for her.

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"So that's when we knew there was a shooting. People were running out crying and screaming. It was very scary," Dodaro said in a text message to The Associated Press.

Employee told people to get down

Nayeli Rodriguez, 40, of Burley, was inside waiting for food with her daughters when she heard shots from the kitchen. An employee said it was a shooting and told people to get down. Rodriguez said an older man tried to protect her and her daughters, and they were among the last to run outside.

"We were trying to get as far as we could and some angels let us in their car," Rodriguez said, also via text message. "I left my car there in the parking lot."

Twin Falls is about 130 miles (205 kilometers) southeast of Boise and about 40 miles (64 kilometers) north of the Nevada border.

US companies are stepping up to cut reliance on China for critical minerals used in key weapons

By DIDI TANG, JOSH FUNK and RODRIQUE NGOWI Associated Press

EXETER, N.H. (AP) — Tucked inside a New Hampshire office park, a small refinery zaps mining waste with electricity to tease out critical minerals needed for key U.S. weapons systems, including missiles used in the Iran war.

It can play a part in helping America break the chokehold China has on processing critical minerals, but it will take up to a year and a half to build a new factory as the Trump administration pushes to expand domestic production. The company, Phoenix Tailings, recently got a \$500 million loan from the Pentagon to ramp up its work, after starting out eight years ago as a backyard lab seeking a cleaner metal-refining method. It's just the latest critical minerals company the government has backed.

The task that workers carry out in heat-resistant suits and sealed face masks has become more urgent as the Iran conflict draws down key munitions such as Tomahawk cruise missiles and THAAD interceptors. While the White House is demanding military contractors speed up production, it's also imposing stricter rules banning them from sourcing critical minerals from China.

"It will be a tall order and a challenge to replenish these stocks and scale up in the timeframe needed to meet defense demand and regulations," said Anthony Balladon, chief commercial officer and a co-founder of Phoenix Tailings. He said the company is working hard to boost capacity.

Although the U.S. is quickening its pace to build domestic supplies of critical minerals free of control from

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its most formidable rival, it will likely take years for companies across the industry to build new mines and boost production of the high-powered magnets essential in many high-tech applications. Extracting some of the hard-to-pronounce elements from existing mine waste can help satisfy the growing demand in the meantime, but it will likely take several companies to do that.

Critical minerals industry has big plans, but it will take time to ramp up

Phoenix Tailings taps waste from traditional mining as well as recycled magnets and disk drives as raw materials, working to counter China in processing where it has the strongest hold on the supply chain.

The company based in the Boston-area city of Woburn, Massachusetts, plans to build a bigger facility to extract and produce critical metals needed in not only defense but also the aerospace and automotive industries.

"We call it the freedom facility because, ultimately, the purpose of this is to ensure that the entire Western Hemisphere, the United States and its allies are free of Chinese influence within the rare-earth space," Balladon said.

On a recent afternoon, two technicians in heat-resistant hazmat suits were operating an apparatus of cylinders, tubes, funnels and control panels set up on a platform with bright yellow railings. A chemical process involving electricity removes oxygen and turns the material into a grayish metal that can be used to make the extremely strong permanent magnets used in fighter jets, missiles, radar systems and drones.

The metals that Phoenix Tailings refines and other critical minerals play "an outsized role" in defense systems, Balladon said. A \$150 million weapons system won't work if it's missing critical minerals that may be worth only \$20,000 to \$30,000, he said.

The defense sector is particularly reliant on the metal samarium and needs 50 to 100 tons each year, but U.S. capacity is very limited, he said.

Phoenix Tailings is among the few companies capable of producing the final metal, according to Balladon, but its capacity is only about 200 kilograms (440 pounds) a year. He said the company will scale up to about 5 tons in the next three months but that it will be next year or 2028 before it reaches its goal of 120-ton capacity.

Another US magnet maker looks to France for raw materials

Arnold Magnetic Technologies for years relied on China for samarium to produce the extremely strong, stable-in-high-temperatures magnet that goes into precision-guided missiles such as Tomahawks.

That doesn't work anymore. For Arnold, the solution to getting the critical minerals it needs has come from a relic of Europe's past rare-earth industry — abandoned mining dirt in the French city of La Rochelle.

Solvay, a Belgium-headquartered chemical company, stopped separating and processing rare earths from the mined dirt in the 2000s. That was when China was building up most of the world's processing capacity with a determination to dominate the industry.

China weaponized that near-monopoly last year by choking off its flow of processed critical materials and forcing the U.S. government to back off during a trade war. Solvay then restarted work and has added other rare earths this year, including samarium.

"This ramp-up is driven by several factors: rapidly growing demand for permanent magnets, increased geopolitical focus on supply chain security, and strong customer demand in Europe and the United States for more diversified, resilient and traceable sources of supply," a Solvay spokesperson said.

For Arnold Magnetic Technologies, paying more to get its supply from Solvay instead of China has not been a deal-breaker, because the samarium-cobalt magnets it makes account for only a small cost in a weapon system, said Matt Blake, Arnold's CEO.

"They are not the absolute cost drivers," he said.

Plus, the company says the surge in demand for magnets has worked in its favor.

Some concerns remain. The U.S. is dependent on imports of the critical mineral tungsten, with China controlling roughly 80% of the global mine supply and an even larger share of processing, according to Brodie Sutherland, CEO of Patriot Critical Minerals Corp.

Sutherland, whose company seeks to explore and mine tungsten in the U.S., is concerned that America will not be able to get by without China-sourced tungsten after a Pentagon-imposed deadline of Jan. 1, 2027.

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Efforts to ramp up U.S. production will take years, he said, and in the meantime, the Pentagon and its defense contractors will need to rely on existing inventories, expanded recycling and limited non-China sources.

The Iran war and Trump's China order create pressure and opportunity

The need to increase production has become more urgent as renewed fighting with Iran digs into the U.S. military's already diminished stockpiles of advanced missile interceptors, including Patriots and THAADs, according to a recent analysis from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank.

It also has raised concerns that the military would have diminished firepower in any potential future conflict with China. CSIS warned in May that it could take at least three years to replenish stockpiles of Tomahawks, Patriots and THAADs, or Terminal High Altitude Area Defense interceptors.

At the same time, President Donald Trump has announced stricter controls on defense contractors sourcing critical materials from China.

"It is the policy of the United States that not only the finished equipment deployed by our military, but also the critical materials and components necessary to manufacture, maintain, sustain, and repair that equipment, are sourced domestically or from allied nations," the July 20 executive order says.

Lockheed Martin, which makes THAADs and many other weapons systems, said "we continuously assess the global rare earth supply chain to ensure access to critical materials that support our customers' missions." Several other major U.S. defense contractors, including Raytheon Technologies and Northrop Grumman, didn't respond to requests for comment.

Balladon, of Phoenix Tailings, was confident in U.S. companies.

"Ultimately, with the right support and partners across the industry, we think we can make it happen," he said.

Russia blasts southern Ukrainian city with glide bombs while Ukrainian drones kill 9

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian planes dropped eight powerful glide bombs in a span of 90 minutes on residential districts of the southern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia, killing one person and wounding dozens of others, regional chief Ivan Fedorov said Monday.

Meanwhile, six people were killed by Ukrainian drone debris in Arkhipo-Osipovka, a small town on Russia's Black Sea coast in the Krasnodar region, regional governor Veniamin Kondratyev said, adding that 40 others were wounded.

Three other people were killed and two were wounded in Ukraine's overnight attack on the illegally annexed Crimea, said the peninsula's Russian-installed head, Sergei Aksyonov. He gave no details.

Neither side's claims could be independently verified.

Zelenskyy outlines Ukraine's war strategy

Ukraine's innovative long-range drone technology developed during the war has enabled Kyiv to sign military cooperation agreements with nine countries, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Monday.

Under the deals, Ukraine receives long-term funding for its defense industry while partner countries get new defense capabilities, he said, adding that agreements with 15 other countries are being negotiated.

Ukraine is using its long-range strike drones to hit targets deep inside Russia in an effort to push Russian President Vladimir Putin into seeking a peace settlement, Zelenskyy said in a speech to Ukrainian diplomats.

"We will work very hard to make that happen this fall," he said.

Ukraine wants countries to adopt heavier international sanctions on Moscow, but existing sanctions also need tightening to prevent Russian companies from exploiting loopholes, he said.

Zelenskyy also announced he is appointing Rustem Umerov, who has been involved in U.S. diplomatic efforts to stop the war, as head of the Foreign Intelligence Service.

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Russia's glide bombs are big and hard to stop

Russia has used glide bombs against Ukrainian towns and cities since it invaded its neighbor more than four years ago. The Soviet-era bombs are retrofitted with guidance systems and can carry up to 3,000 kilograms (6,600 pounds) of explosives, leaving huge craters. Ukraine has no effective countermeasures.

The Sunday evening onslaught on Zaporizhzhia killed a 71-year-old woman and wounded 31 people, including a 16-year-old girl, as the glide bombs damaged 22 apartment buildings in four districts of the city, Fedorov said.

While Moscow's forces have captured the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant and hold other parts of the region, its capital city of the same name remains in Ukrainian hands. It is one of the four regions, along with Donetsk, Kherson and Luhansk, that Russia illegally annexed in September 2022 even though its forces do not completely control them.

Other large-scale damage of civilian areas has resulted from Russian ballistic missiles, and late Sunday Zelenskyy made another urgent plea for countries to send Ukraine more U.S.-made Patriot air defense systems.

Only Patriot interceptors can reliably stop ballistic missiles, but they are in short supply due to the Iran war.

"The United States knows what we need. Europe knows what we need. Anti-ballistic missiles must protect people — not sit in stockpiles," Zelenskyy said on social media.

U.S. President Donald Trump last week appeared to back off from his earlier commitment to give Ukraine a license to make Patriots itself. He said Friday that he hasn't made a final decision.

Zelenskyy has suggested an alternative to Trump whereby Elon Musk allows Ukraine to use Starlink satellites to target ballistic missile launch sites inside Russia. Officials haven't publicly said whether that is being considered.

Russia attacked Ukraine with 181 long-range strike drones overnight from Sunday to Monday, according to the Ukrainian air force. It said air defenses jammed and intercepted 163 drones, but 14 caused damage at 13 locations.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its forces struck four bulk carriers carrying cargo for the Ukrainian armed forces, including three in waters of the Black Sea and one in the port of Mykolaiv, but provided no further information.

Ukraine's long-range drone strikes cause more damage

Ukrainian drones also struck another major warehouse belonging to Wildberries, Russia's biggest online shopping company. The strike was part of a campaign that has hit more than a dozen of the retailer's distribution hubs and severely disrupted its business.

A Wildberries warehouse in the Vladimir region east of Moscow caught fire in the latest attack, the company said Monday. Three people were injured, Vladimir Gov. Alexander Avdeyev said.

Ukrainian drones also struck the Saratov oil refinery in southwestern Russia, Zelenskyy said. Kyiv has repeatedly targeted that refinery, and many others, since last year as it tries to choke fuel supplies to the Russian army and deny Moscow income from oil exports.

Zelenskyy said the Engels military air base near Saratov, the main base for Russian nuclear-capable strategic bombers, and other places inside Russia, including fuel storage tanks at the Lyudinovskaya oil depot in Russia's Kaluga region, were targeted.

The Russian Defense Ministry on Monday reported that its air defenses overnight intercepted 131 Ukrainian drones over a number of Russian regions, as well as Crimea and the Black Sea.

Russian Embassy in Rome blames Ukraine for deadly Italian restaurant bombing in Moscow

MOSCOW (AP) — The Russian Embassy in Rome on Monday blamed Ukraine for a deadly weekend bombing at a Moscow restaurant, describing it as an attempt to intimidate the Italian community in Russia.

The embassy said "Kyiv terrorists" wanted to "scare the Italians working in Russia and to show them

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that they too are in the crosshairs and could become the scoundrels' next victims."

It said the Saturday night attack on the Balzi Rossi restaurant killed five and injured 19, adding that its Italian chef and his staff were unhurt only thanks to a Russian security guard's "vigilance and selfless dedication to his professional duty."

There was no immediate comment from Ukrainian authorities.

The National Anti-Terrorism Committee, which coordinates various security agencies, initially reported a lower death toll in a statement issued shortly after the attack. It said the bomb killed three people, including a woman who carried the explosive device into the restaurant, a guard who stopped her, and a guest inside. It said 21 others were injured when the bomb detonated near the restaurant's entrance.

The committee didn't say who was the target or name the mastermind.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin on Sunday described the bombing as a "brutal terrorist act," but did not say who was responsible for the blast at the upscale restaurant, which is located on the ground floor of a high-rise apartment building that is one of seven skyscrapers in the city that date to the era of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin.

The Russian Foreign Ministry reposted the embassy statement without comment. It did not respond to a request for comment or explain the higher death toll.

Several Russian media outlets claimed the bombing targeted a Russian general who was celebrating his birthday at the restaurant. Some claimed that the general was Col.-Gen. Alexander Chaiko, who led the troops that made a botched attempt to storm the Ukrainian capital in 2022 and recently was appointed the chief of Russia's aerospace forces. The claims could not be independently verified.

The business daily Kommersant reported that the bomb, hidden in a gift box, was probably detonated remotely and the woman carrying it could have been unaware of the content. Kommersant said the bomb contained about 1 kilogram (2.2 pounds) of explosives and contained metal balls for lethality.

Russia blamed Ukraine for past attacks on military officials

Russian authorities have blamed Kyiv for a series of bombings and other attacks against senior military officials after Moscow sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022. Earlier this year, Russia's Federal Security Service said authorities would tighten security around senior military and government officials following the attacks.

In February, Lt. Gen. Vladimir Alexeyev, the deputy head of the GRU military intelligence service, was shot three times at a Moscow apartment building, but survived. Ukraine denied its involvement.

In December, a car bomb killed Lt. Gen. Fanil Sarvarov, head of the Operational Training Directorate of the Russian Armed Forces' General Staff, in southern Moscow. Ukraine refrained from comment.

In April 2025, another car bomb that Moscow blamed on Kyiv killed Lt. Gen. Yaroslav Moskalik, a deputy head of the main operational department in Russia's General Staff. Ukraine didn't claim the attack but hinted at its involvement.

And in December 2024, a bomb hidden in a scooter killed Lt. Gen. Igor Kirillov, who headed the Russian military's nuclear, biological and chemical protection forces, one of the few attacks Ukraine openly acknowledged.

Among other prominent victims of bombing attacks in Russia were Daria Dugina, the daughter of influential nationalist thinker Aleksandr Dugin, and Vladlen Tatarsky, a well-known pro-Kremlin military blogger. Kyiv denied involvement in the attack on Dugina, and remained coy about the attack on Tatarsky.

A Putin critic leaves Russia after he is barred him from running for parliament

By The Associated Press undefined

Opposition politician Boris Nadezhdin, who criticized Russia's war in Ukraine and tried to challenge President Vladimir Putin in the 2024 election, said Monday he has left Russia, a move that follows a crackdown that barred him from a race for parliament this year.

Nadezhdin, 63, shared a video on Telegram, showing him standing in front of the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

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"Good news: I'm alive and free. Unfortunately, not in Russia for the time being," he said, adding that he needs "to look around and figure out life going forward."

In July, a Russian court fined Nadezhdin about \$13 for displaying "extremist symbols," charges that he rejected as absurd. The accusations stemmed from a 2023 online video that briefly showed a picture of the late opposition leader Alexei Navalny, convicted of extremism in a case widely seen as politically motivated.

Earlier that month, Nadezhdin also was designated a "foreign agent" — a label that brings additional government scrutiny as well as stigmatizing connotations in Russia.

That and a fine on an extremism-related charge barred him from running in September's parliamentary vote, which is expected to be tightly controlled by the Kremlin.

The ruling United Russia party is seeking to preserve its dominance in the lower house of parliament in a race against the Communist Party and a couple of other parties that vote in sync with the Kremlin on key issues. The campaign comes amid signs of growing public fatigue with the war in Ukraine as fuel shortages and economic pain increase, an environment that reduces the authorities' tolerance for even token opposition.

In January 2024, Nadezhdin collected thousands of signatures in his run for president as he openly called for an end to the war in Ukraine. But he was kept off the March 2024 ballot after Russia's Supreme Court ruled that more than 9,000 signatures submitted by his campaign were invalid — enough to disqualify him. Putin faced only token opposition in the election and easily gained a fifth term.

A veteran politician, Nadezhdin worked in the government in the 1990s when he was an adviser to Sergei Kiriyenko, now a top Putin aide. He also served as a lawmaker and more recently became a member of a municipal council. He was one of the few high-profile Putin critics still living in Russia.

Earlier this year, Nadezhdin declared his bid to run for the lower house of parliament, the State Duma, and vowed to continue his symbolic campaign even after the Justice Ministry branded him with the "foreign agent" designation.

Another blow came when police briefly detained Nadezhdin and charged him with displaying "extremist symbols." The politician said he was considering a move abroad but was barred from leaving Russia. It wasn't clear from his Monday video statement whether the ban has since been lifted, or if he left the country despite it.

After the Kremlin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, authorities ramped up their crackdown on dissent and free speech, relentlessly targeting rights organizations, independent media, members of civil society organizations and Kremlin critics. Hundreds of people have been jailed and thousands of others fled the country.

Today in History: August 4, massive explosion rocks Beirut

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, Aug. 4, the 216th day of 2026. There are 149 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Aug. 4, 2020, nearly 3,000 tons of ammonium nitrate that had been improperly stored for years in the port of Beirut, Lebanon, exploded, killing more than 200 people, injuring more than 7,000 and devastating nearby neighborhoods; it was one of the largest non-nuclear explosions ever recorded.

Also on this date:

In 1790, the U.S. Coast Guard had its beginnings as President George Washington signed a measure authorizing a group of revenue cutters to enforce tariff and trade laws and prevent smuggling.

In 1916, the United States reached agreement with Denmark to purchase the Danish Virgin Islands for \$25 million in gold.

In 1936, Jesse Owens of the United States won the second of his four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics as he prevailed in the long jump over German Luz Long, who was the first to congratulate him.

In 1944, 15-year-old diarist Anne Frank was arrested with her sister, parents and four others by the Gestapo after hiding for two years inside a building in Amsterdam. (Anne and her sister, Margot, died at

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the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.)

In 1960, Burkina Faso (known then as Upper Volta) declared its independence from France after more than 60 years of colonial rule.

In 1964, 44 days after their murders, the bodies of missing civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner were found buried in an earthen dam in Mississippi.

In 1972, Arthur Bremer was convicted and sentenced in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, to 63 years in prison for his attempt on the life of Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace (the sentence was later reduced to 53 years; Bremer was released from prison in 2007).

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter signed a measure establishing the Department of Energy.

In 1984, the album "Purple Rain," by Prince and the New Power Generation, began its 24-week run at the top of the Billboard 200 record chart.

In 1987, the Federal Communications Commission voted 4-0 to abolish the Fairness Doctrine, which required radio and television stations to present balanced coverage of controversial issues.

In 1993, a federal judge sentenced Los Angeles police officers Stacey Koon and Laurence Powell to 2 1/2 years in prison for violating Rodney King's civil rights.

In 2009, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il pardoned American journalists Laura Ling and Euna Lee for entering the country illegally and ordered their release during a surprise visit by former U.S. President Bill Clinton.

In 2017, former pharmaceutical CEO Martin Shkreli, who became notorious for a price-gouging scandal, was convicted of federal charges that he deceived investors in a pair of failed hedge funds. (Shkreli was later sentenced to seven years in prison; he was released in 2022.)

In 2019, a masked gunman fired on revelers enjoying summer nightlife in a popular entertainment district of Dayton, Ohio, leaving nine people dead and 27 wounded; police said officers shot and killed the shooter within 30 seconds of the start of his rampage.

In 2022, American pro basketball star Brittney Griner was convicted in Russia of drug possession and sentenced to nine years behind bars after police said they found vape canisters containing cannabis oil in her luggage at Moscow's airport. (She would be freed and sent home in the politically charged case in exchange for the U.S. releasing Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout in December 2022.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor-singer Tina Cole is 83. Football Hall of Famer John Riggins is 77. Actor-screenwriter Billy Bob Thornton is 71. Actor Kym Karath (Film: "The Sound of Music") is 68. Hall of Fame track star Mary Decker Slaney is 68. Actor Lauren Tom is 65. Former President Barack Obama is 65. Retired MLB All-Star pitcher Roger Clemens is 64. Actor Crystal Chappell is 61. Author Dennis Lehane is 61. Actor Daniel Dae Kim is 58. Former race car driver Jeff Gordon is 55. Rapper-actor Yo-Yo is 55. R&B singer-actor Marques Houston is 45. Britain's Duchess of Sussex, the former actor Meghan Markle, is 45. Actor Abigail Spencer is 45. Actor/director Greta Gerwig is 43. Country singer Crystal Bowersox (TV: "American Idol") is 41. Actors Dylan and Cole Sprouse are 34. Singer Jessica Sanchez (TV: "American Idol") is 31. Actor Tinsley Price is 14.