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Community Calendar

Monday, Aug. 10

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, green beans, fruit, whole wheat bread.

First day of boys golf practice

First day of cross country practice

School Board meeting, 6 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

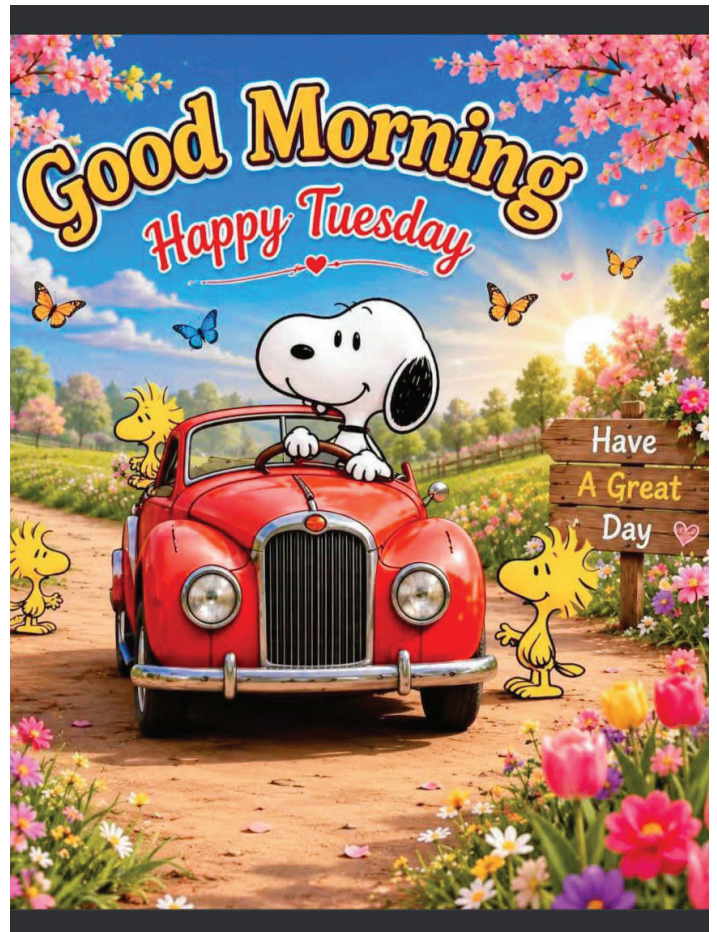
Senior Citizens meet at the Community Center, 1 p.m.

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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

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Tuesday, Aug. 11

Senior Menu: Beef and bean burrito, Spanish rice, corn, fruit.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Council, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, Aug. 12

Senior Menu: Chicken bacon ranch pasta, broccoli, fruit, whole wheat bread.

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

Groton Area Staff Development Day at NSU, 8 a.m.

Thursday, Aug. 13

Senior Menu: Meatloaf, au gratin potatoes, peas and carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.

First day of volleyball practice.

Friday, Aug. 14

Senior Menu: Grilled chicken sandwich, roasted sweet potatoes, California blend, fruit.

Girls Soccer at NSU vs. Dakota Valley, 3 p.m.

Boys Soccer at NSU vs. Custer, 5 p.m.

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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.

Quake Strikes Colombia

At least 111 people are dead as of this writing after a 7.4-magnitude earthquake struck western Colombia yesterday, leaving dozens more injured and others trapped beneath collapsed buildings. Colombia's strongest earthquake this century was also felt in Ecuador and Panama.

The quake was centered near San José del Palmar in Chocó, a remote region roughly 250 miles west of Colombia's capital, Bogotá. More than 1,500 homes, 50 schools, and 18 health centers were damaged, while over 60 buildings collapsed. Chocó is one of Colombia's poorest regions, with many jungle communities reachable only by boat or plane. The region sits along the Pacific "Ring of Fire," a horseshoe-like belt responsible for 75% of the world's volcanoes and 90% of earthquakes.

Elsewhere, Tropical Storm Dolphin is expected to bring heavy rain and flooding to eastern China. The storm made landfall as a typhoon Sunday, prompting over 1 million people to evacuate.

Tupac Trial, 30 Years On

Jury selection began yesterday for the man charged with killing rapper Tupac Shakur. Duane "Keefe D" Davis stands accused of first-degree murder in one of hip-hop's most famous killings.

Davis once led the South Side Compton Crips, a rival to the Bloods-affiliated gang associated with Shakur's record label. On Sept. 7, 1996, Shakur and others were seen assaulting Davis' nephew after a Mike Tyson fight. Later that night, Shakur was in a black BMW driven by his label's cofounder when he was fatally shot from a white Cadillac. Prosecutors allege Davis directed the killing but did not pull the trigger and was one of four passengers in the Cadillac (the other three have died). Davis acknowledged his involvement in a 2018 BET interview and 2019 memoir, but pleads not guilty and characterizes the memoir as fiction (free w/email). He previously accused Sean "Diddy" Combs of commissioning the murder, which Combs denies.

 **Humankind:** Bootmaker donates over \$25K worth of shoes to firefighters battling wildfires in Spokane, Washington.

Emotional Watchdog

Dogs can differentiate between a range of human emotions by reading our facial expressions, according to brain scan results published yesterday.

Researchers first put eight dogs into MRI scanners and showed them photos of people with happy or neutral expressions. The happy faces activated a brain region associated with reward processing, while the neutral faces did not. In a second experiment, 12 dogs were shown photos of people with happy, sad, fearful, and angry expressions. The MRI scans suggest they could distinguish happiness from the three negative emotions, and fear from both sadness and anger. But, for reasons still unclear, the dogs appeared unable to differentiate anger and sadness.

The study authors next want to understand how dogs might process emotions using nonvisual cues, given how heavily they rely on their sense of smell over sight. Dogs can smell about 1,000 to 10,000 times better than humans, and previous research has shown their noses can detect heat.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Ben Jones, who played Cooter on "The Dukes of Hazzard" and served as a US congressman (D, GA-4), dies of a heart attack at age 84.

Former President Barack Obama to host limited-run podcast featuring conversations with guests about the six books that most shaped his worldview; series debuts Sept. 24 (More, w/list of books)

Man arrested in connection with a burglary at Kim Kardashian's home in Hidden Hills, California.

How Kardashian's 2016 Paris robbery changed the way celebrities think about privacy.

Science & Technology

Meta unveils free-to-download and modifiable version of its most powerful AI model.

Mark Zuckerberg publishes a 6,500-word AI manifesto alongside the model; read the five takeaways.

Scientists release largest-ever 2D color map of the universe, containing nearly 4 billion celestial objects collected from more than 263,407 telescope exposures over 13 years.

Monkey study suggests one-time, triple-dose regimen may permanently clear HIV infections in human newborns; researchers hope to advance the treatment to clinical trials soon.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close lower (S&P 500 -0.1%, Dow -0.1%, Nasdaq -0.3%).

Nvidia and Wall Street asset firms reportedly strike \$500B financing deal for AI infrastructure.

Intel to offer \$15B of common stock.

US emergency oil reserve falls below 300 million barrels for first time since 1983 as war in Iran crunches global oil supplies.

Pharma giant Bristol Myers Squibb to build \$2.3B drug manufacturing campus in Houston, creating about 500 permanent jobs.

Politics & World Affairs

President Donald Trump signs executive order to administer measles, mumps, and rubella vaccines as three separate, spaced-out shots.

Mainland United States records its hottest month ever in July, averaging 76.9 degrees across states other than Hawaii and Alaska, edging out July 1936 during the Dust Bowl.

Taylor Farms voluntarily recalls prepared food products containing jalapeños over possible salmonella contamination; more than 345 people have gotten sick across 27 states, including 36 people hospitalized.



The City of Groton will be conducting adult mosquito control this evening (Tuesday, Aug. 11) starting around 8 p.m. If storms enter the area, the event could be postponed to Wednesday evening.

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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 Theory of a Deadman &
★ Sevendust, **Aug. 14, 8 p.m.**

 I do take **Venmo.**

 Text Paul at
605-397-7460
★ if interested. ★

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Highway Patrol Sturgis Rally Daily Information Compiled from 6 a.m. Sunday, August 9, 2026, to 6 a.m. Monday, August 10, 2026

Item	Sturgis	Rapid City District	District Total	Last Year to Date
DUI Arrests	31	9	40	38
Misd Drug Arrests	51	14	65	65
Felony Drug Arrests	22	2	24	33
Custodial Arrests	55	16	71	N/A
Total Citations	241	265	506	478
Total Warnings	900	512	1,412	1,286
Cash Seized	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Vehicles Seized	0	0	0	0
For Drug Poss.	0	0	0	0
For Serial No.	0	0	0	0
Non-Injury Accidents	3	3	6	7
Injury Accidents	4	7	11	20
Fatal Accidents	1	0	1	2
# of Fatalities	1	0	1	2

Fatal Crashes:

None

Injury Crashes:

At 2:29 p.m. Sunday, Deadwood Ave N & Tatanka Rd in Rapid City: A 2024 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, operated by a 50-year-old male (Unit 1), was driving westbound on Tatanka Rd attempting to turn south on Deadwood Ave with a 53-year-old female passenger. A 2009 GMC Yukon SUV, operated by a 43-year-old female, (Unit 2) was traveling southbound on Deadwood Ave. Unit 1 did not yield and collided with Unit 2 on the driver's side of the vehicle as it turned. Both the driver and passenger of Unit 1 were transported to Monument Health Rapid City with non-life-threatening injuries.

At 6:35 p.m. Sunday, South Dakota Highway 79, mile marker 61: A 2017 Chevrolet Trax SUV, operated by a 51-year-old female (Unit 1), turned north on SD 79 from Gumbo Lilly in front of a 2001 Jeep Wrangler SUV, operated by a 62-year-old male (Unit 2). Unit 2 had a 69-year-old female passenger. Unit 1 slowed due to a male being in the roadway. Unit 2 attempted to avoid a collision but collided with Unit 1. The passenger of Unit 2 received minor injuries.

At 7:54 p.m. Sunday, U.S. Highway 385, mile marker 118: A 2016 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, operated by a 51-year-old male, was traveling southbound near mile marker 118 on U.S. 385 with a 51-year-old female passenger. A deer entered the roadway and was struck by the motorcycle. Both the driver and passenger were transported to Lead-Deadwood Monument Health with non-life-threatening injuries.

At 6:03 p.m. Sunday, U.S. Highway 16, mile marker 39: A 1993 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, operated by a 32-year-old male (Unit 1), was traveling west on U.S. 16 near mile marker 39. A 1972 Pontiac LeMans passenger car, operated by a 77-year-old male (Unit 2), did not yield and crossed U.S. 16 from Reno Gulch Rd in front of Unit 1. Unit 1 collided with the side of Unit 2. Unit 1's driver was separated from his motorcycle. He was wearing a helmet and was transported to Monument Health of Rapid City with non-life-threatening injuries.

All information released so far is only preliminary.

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

Names Released in Pennington County Fatal Crash

What: Three-vehicle fatal crash

Where: U.S. Highway 385 at mile marker 89, 8 miles northeast of Hill City, South Dakota

When: 1:51 p.m., Thursday, August 6, 2026

Driver 1: Kurt D. Klockenga, 69-year-old male from Emden, Illinois, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 1953 Harley-Davidson

Helmet Used: Yes

Passenger: Regina K Klockenga, 69-year-old female from Emden, Illinois, fatal injuries

Helmet Used: Yes

Driver 2: Kendall D. Klockenga, 72-year-old male from Glendale, Arizona, serious non-life-threatening injuries

Vehicle 2: 1956 Harley-Davidson FLE 74CI

Helmet Used: Under investigation

Driver 3: Ann Mischell, 67-year-old female, no injuries

Vehicle 3: 2011 Toyota 4Runner

Seat Belt Used: Yes

Passenger: Nancy Turner, 62-year-old female, no injuries

Seat Belt Used: Yes

Pennington County, S.D.- Two people from Illinois died Thursday in a three-vehicle crash near Hill City, South Dakota.

Preliminary crash information indicates Kurt D. Klockenga, the driver of a 1953 Harley-Davidson, and Kendall D. Klockenga, the driver of a 1956 Harley-Davidson FLE 74CI, were traveling northbound on U.S. Highway 385 at mile marker 89. At the same time, Ann Mischell, the driver of a 2011 Toyota 4Runner, was in the northbound lanes, waiting for oncoming traffic to pass so she could turn onto Wrinkle Valley Road. A fourth vehicle was between the Toyota and the Harley-Davidsons. That vehicle passed the Toyota on the shoulder. The Harley-Davidsons attempted to stop and their brakes locked. Kendall laid his vehicle onto the road. Kurt's Harley-Davidson collided with the Toyota and caught fire, which spread to the Toyota.

Kurt and Regina Klockenga sustained fatal injuries. Kendall was transported to a Rapid City hospital with serious non-life-threatening injuries. Ann and her passenger were not injured.

U.S. Highway 385 was closed for approximately four hours.

The investigation is ongoing. All information released is preliminary.

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

Names Released in Lawrence County Fatal Crash

What: Two-vehicle fatal crash

Where: U.S. Highway 14A at mile marker 50, 2 miles south of Sturgis, South Dakota

When: 1:06 p.m., Thursday, August 6, 2026

Driver 1: Darry Warnock Stuart, 77-year-old male from Wrentham, Massachusetts, serious non-life-threatening injuries

Vehicle 1: 2013 Victory Jackpot

Helmet Used: Yes

Driver 2: Angelee Kay Glammeier, 46-year-old female from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, fatal injuries

Vehicle 2: 2013 Suzuki Gladius 650

Helmet Used: Yes

Lawrence County, S.D.- A Sioux Falls woman died Thursday from injuries sustained in a two-vehicle crash near Sturgis, South Dakota.

Preliminary crash information indicates Angelee Kay Glammeier, the driver of a 2013 Suzuki Gladius 650, was traveling eastbound on U.S. Highway 14A. At the same time, Darry Warnock Stuart, the driver of a 2013 Victory Jackpot, was traveling westbound and failed to negotiate a curve. He crossed into the eastbound lane and struck the Suzuki. Glammeier sustained fatal injuries. Stuart was transported to a Sturgis hospital with serious non-life-threatening injuries.

The eastbound lanes were closed for approximately one hour.

The investigation is ongoing. All information released is preliminary.

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

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GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT 06-6

2026-2027 Groton Area School District Back to School Information

Groton Area School District 06-6 – “Mission Statement”

Each school will foster a school climate conducive to learning by encouraging good behavior and citizenship, good attendance, a thirst for knowledge, and high academic standards. Teachers will employ strategies and approaches to instruction to meet the needs of all children assigned to them. With proper motivation and instruction, all children can learn!

Teacher Qualifications

All teachers of core academic subjects must hold at least a bachelor's degree, have full state certification, and demonstrate knowledge in the core academic subject they teach. For information regarding the qualifications of your child's teachers, you may contact the superintendent's office at 397-2351.

Registration and Schedule Changes

Anyone new to the District should contact the respective building principal(s) as soon as possible.

Shelby Edwards, 6-12 Principal
605-397-8381

Brett Schwan, Elementary Principal
605-397-2317

Shelby.Edwards@k12.sd.us

Brett.Schwan@k12.sd.us

Middle School and High School Schedule changes can be made on Tuesday, August 11 from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

School Supply Lists

Students' school supply lists for the elementary school (preschool – grade 5) are posted on the District's web site at www.grotonarea.com under the District Info Heading. Students in the middle school (grades 6-8) will be required to have the same color notebook, folder, and book cover for each class. Math will be green; English, blue; reading, red; science, purple; and social studies, black. The students can choose their own colors for PE, art, health, and computer classes.

Elementary Open House – Monday, August 17, 2026

Groton Area Elementary is hosting a Welcome Back Open House on Monday, August 17, 2026 from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Students and their families are invited to come and see their classrooms, meet the teachers, drop off supplies, and ask questions.

6th Grade Welcome Walk – Monday, August 17, 2026

Groton Area Middle School is hosting a 6th Grade Welcome Walk on Monday, August 17, 2026 from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Students and their parents are invited to come get a class schedule and other important information from the school office, find the student locker and classrooms, and begin to learn the new building. 6th grade students and parents are invited to a brief meeting with Ms. Edwards, 6-12 Principal, in the GHS Gymnasium at 4:30 PM.

Tablet PCs or Ipads Issued to All Students

Prior to being issued their tablet PC, students and their parents must sign and return the following documents: Laptop Computer Protection Agreement, the Student Pledge, E-mail Acceptable Use Agreement, the Groton Area School District Network/Internet agreement, and the Parental Consent to Publish Student Photos/Work. Required forms can be picked up in the School Office or will be sent home with students on the first day of classes.

First Day of School – Wednesday, August 19, 2026

The first day of school is on Wednesday, August 19. Buses will run and school lunch will be served. Each route driver will contact parents to confirm bus arrival times. Other bus route questions may be referred to Transportation Director, Damian Bahr, at (605) 397-8117. The GRASP (OST) program at the elementary school will be available on the first day of school.

Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten

The District offers all-day, every day kindergarten classes. Children may enter kindergarten if they are 5

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years of age on or before September 1 of the year in which they are to enter school. The District offers a junior kindergarten program each day from 12:15PM – 3:22 PM for students that are eligible to attend kindergarten but are not quite ready for kindergarten. Students enrolling in first grade must be 6 years of age on or before September 1 of that school year.

Non-Resident Enrollment

For out-of-district students, applications to open enroll may be accepted throughout the school year in accordance with state law. Applications are available from any school district administrative office. All open enrollment requests and related questions should be referred to School Superintendent, Joe Schwan, at (605) 397-2351.

2026-2027 School Hours

Groton Area Elementary	8:15 AM	Arrival Time (Supervision)
	8:21 AM – 3:22 PM	Classes in Session
Groton Area MS/HS	8:25 AM	First Bell
	8:30 AM – 3:30 PM	Classes in Session

GRASP (OST) Program

The GRASP program services children in junior kindergarten through grade five with before and after-school homework help, supervised learning activities, and snacks. The GRASP program will be held in the Groton Area Elementary School from 7:00 AM - 8:00 AM and 3:22 PM – 6:00 PM each day that school is in session. Rates are \$3.00 per hour, per child. Any OST questions or registrations may be directed to Elementary Principal/OST Director, Mr. Brett Schwan, at (605) 397-2317.

K-12 Breakfast and Lunch Program

The Groton Area School District participates in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. Guidelines for 2026-2027 applications for free and reduced priced meals were mailed out the week of August 3, 2026. Parents are encouraged to apply for free and reduced priced meals if there is a possibility they may qualify. New in 2026-2027: Due to changes in state law, students who qualify for reduced-priced meals will receive their meals at no cost.

The school provides breakfast and lunch for all students each day school is in session. All meals are on a cash basis (i.e. pay as you go), while recognizing the provisions for free and reduced-price meals. Prices are as follows:

Groton Area Elementary:

Daily Breakfast \$2.85

Daily Lunch \$3.85

Prices for second servings at the elementary are \$2.00.

Groton Area Middle School/High School:

Daily Breakfast \$3.35

Daily Lunch \$4.35

Prices for second servings at the middle/high school are \$2.00.

Activity Tickets

Activity tickets are intended to admit all students to regularly scheduled home activities or events, with about the only exceptions being tournaments and the Pops Concert. Students in grades 1-5 may purchase an activity ticket, if they wish. All students who participate in activities for which an activity stipend is paid are required to purchase an activity ticket as a condition of participation since they are the primary beneficiaries of the activity programs. For example, staff activity stipends include: all sports, marching band, forensics, cheerleading, drama, oral interp, DI, FFA, FCCLA, HOSA etc.

Activity Ticket prices for 2026-2027 are as follows:

Grades 1-5 \$30.00

Grades 6-12 \$35.00

Adults \$50 (10 events)

Adults – All Events \$75.00

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Admission Prices:

Adults = \$6.00; \$7.00 for double headers

Students, Grades 1-12 = \$5.00

School Cancellations

All school cancellations or early dismissals due to inclement weather or emergencies will be sent out via the Apptegy Messenger System. Within minutes, Apptegy automatically sends a pre-recorded message to every recipient on a selected list. Parents will be asked to provide phone numbers and e-mail addresses (when available) to the school so that a selected calling list can be created. Emergency cancellations will be broadcast over TV stations KSFY, KDLT, and KELO as well as the District Facebook page and website, www.grotonarea.com, and by push notifications on the District app (Groton Area Tigers, SD).

Groton Area Tigers, SD Mobile App

The Groton Area School District has a mobile application available for both Apple and Android devices. Search "Groton Area Tigers, SD" in your app store and download the free app. Be sure to set up the app to allow push notifications to receive timely and important updates from your child's school. The app includes event calendars, athletics schedules, staff contacts, school menus, access to up-to-date news and information and access to archived documents. We will continue to utilize the "Rooms" feature within the Groton Area Tigers Mobile App to facilitate communication between school staff and families during the upcoming school year.

Immunization Requirements (SDCL 13-28-7.1)

State law requires that any pupil entering school or an early childhood program in the state shall, prior to admission, be required to present the appropriate school authorities certification from a licensed physician that the new child has received or is in the process of receiving adequate immunization against poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis, rubeola, rubella, mumps, tetanus, and varicella, according to recommendations provided by the Department of Health. The Department of Health may modify or delete any of the required immunizations. As an alternative to the requirement for a physician's certification, the pupil may present:

- 1) Certificate from a licensed physician stating the physical condition of the child would be such that immunization would endanger the child's life or health; or
- 2) A written statement signed by one parent or guardian that the child is adherent to a religious doctrine whose teachings are opposed to such immunization; or
- 3) A written statement signed by one parent or guardian requesting that the local health department give the immunization because the parents or guardians lack the means to pay for such immunization.

Students enrolling in 6th grade are required to get one dose of Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (Tdap) vaccine and one dose of Meningococcal vaccine on or after their 11th birthday.

Harassment and Bullying Policies

The district has harassment & bullying policies in place in both buildings. Bullying among students can be defined as intentional, repeated hurtful acts, words or other behavior, such as name-calling, threatening and/or shunning committed by one or more students against another. This definition also includes "cyber-bullying" which is the sending or posting of cruel or harmful texts or images using the Internet or other digital media such as cell phones, etc. For a complete copy of the district's harassment or bullying policy, please contact the building principal.

Grievance Procedure

In an effort to maintain effective communications, if you have a particular concern about your child's progress or about what is happening on the bus, at school, in a class or activity, first discuss it with the driver, teacher, or director of the activity. If your concern or grievance remains unresolved at that level, or if there is a need to share your concern, contact the principal in charge of the school in which your child attends. If the concern/grievance remains unresolved at that level, contact the superintendent. If school policy is at issue or if the concern/grievance remains unresolved, you may request that the superintendent include the subject on the school board meeting agenda. To maintain confidentiality, student matters may

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be confined to an "executive session" with the Board and administration.

Complaint Policy for Federal Programs and Homelessness Policy

A parent, student, employee, or district stakeholder who has a complaint regarding the use of federal funds and is unable to solve the issue, may address the complaint in writing to the district's superintendent. Disputes addressing the enrollment, transportation, and other barriers to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness are also addressed under this procedure. For a copy of the complete policy, contact the school superintendent or refer to the District web site.

Child Find

Parents or guardians are to be informed that the Groton Area School District 06-6 continuously conducts a "Child Find" search to identify and evaluate District children ages 0-21, with special education needs. Persons who know of a child with un-served education needs may refer the child, by name, to the appropriate building principal. With the parent or guardian's consent, an evaluation will be made. After the evaluation has been completed, a placement committee will meet with the parent or guardian to determine if special assistance is needed.

Title I

The federal government provides funding to states each year for Title I services. The goal of Title I is to provide extra help in math and reading for eligible students. Students are selected for the program based on information provided by classroom teachers, parents, and achievement test results. Title I services in our district are provided to students in grades K-5, with a strong emphasis on students in grades K-3.

Title I Right to Know – Teacher Certification

As a parent or guardian of a student attending a school that is receiving Federal Title I dollars (Groton Area Elementary), you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the teacher(s) and instructional paraprofessionals who instruct your child. We are happy to provide this information to you. At any time, you may ask:

1. Whether the teacher met state qualifications and certification requirements for the grade level and subject he/she is teaching; 2. Whether the teacher received an emergency or conditional certificate through which state qualifications were waived, and; 3. What undergraduate or graduate degrees the teacher holds, including graduate certificates and additional degrees, and major(s) or area(s) of concentration.

You may also ask whether your child receives help from a paraprofessional. If your child receives this assistance, we can provide you with information about the paraprofessional's qualifications.

Federal Compliance Notice

Students, their parents, and employees of the Groton Area School District #06-6 are hereby notified that this school district does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, national origin, color, age, disability or religion in employment practices and educational activities. To ensure compliance with Section 427 of GEPA, effective steps shall be taken to remove potential barriers so as to ensure equity of access and participation in grant programs and to achieve high standards. Any person having inquiries concerning compliance or application of Title VI, Affirmative Action, Title IX, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act is directed to contact Federal Program compliance coordinator, Joe Schwan, Superintendent, Groton Area School District 06-6, Phone 397-2351 or, Department of Education, Civil Rights Office, 8930 Ward Parkway, Suite 2037, Kansas City, MO 64114; Phone: (816) 268-0550; TTD (800) 4370-0833; FAX: (816) 823-1404; Web link: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html?src=mr>

FERPA Notification of Rights

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the Groton Area School District receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent

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or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the Groton Area School District to amend a record should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service of function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Groton Area School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office

U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Protection of Pupil Rights (PPRA) Notification

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232h, requires Groton Area School District to notify you and obtain consent or allow you to opt your child out of participating in certain school activities. These activities include a student survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following eight areas ("protected information surveys"):

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parent; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

This parental notification requirement and opt-out opportunity also apply to the collection, disclosure

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or use of personal information collected from students for marketing purposes ("marketing surveys"). Please note that parents are not required by PPRA to be notified about the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions. Additionally, the notice requirement applies to the conduct of certain physical exams and screenings. This includes any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student. This does not include hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required by State law.

For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, the Groton Area School District will provide parents, within a reasonable period of time prior to the administration of the surveys and activities, notification of the surveys and activities, an opportunity to opt their child out, as well as an opportunity to review the surveys. (Please note that this notice and consent/opt-out transfers from parents to any student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.)

Student Directory Information

The Groton Area School District routinely discloses names, addresses, and telephone numbers to the South Dakota Board of Regents, South Dakota Technical Institutions, and upon request, to military recruiters, subject to a parent's or eligible student's request not to disclose such information without written consent. Parents or eligible students who wish to opt-out of the disclosure of this information may contact the school office for the appropriate document or may obtain it here.

Notice of Nondiscrimination

Applicants for admission and employment, students, parents, employees, and all professional organizations holding negotiated agreements or professional agreements with the school district are hereby notified that this district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, disability or age in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. The Groton Area School District provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

Title IX

The Groton Area School District has appointed Madi Neiber, Business Manager, as it's Title IX Coordinator:
Madi Neiber
502 N 2nd Street
PO Box 410
Groton, SD 57445
Madi.Neiber@k12.sd.us

Section 504

Section 504 is the part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that applies to persons with disabilities. Section 504 is a civil rights act that protects the civil and constitutional rights of persons with disabilities. It states that no person with a disability can be excluded from or denied benefits of any program receiving federal financial assistance. Section 504 and special education are two separate services.

Notification of Asbestos in School Building(s)

In compliance with the Asbestos-Containing Materials in Schools Rule, the Groton Area School District had its school buildings inspected on 1/24/2023 by an asbestos inspector, accredited by the state of South Dakota. During that inspection, areas of suspected asbestos (ACBM) were identified and inspected. The Groton Area School District has an Asbestos Management Plan which provides information on the periodic monitoring of the condition of asbestos (ACBM) remaining in the school buildings. Anyone that would like to see the Asbestos Management Plan can contact a building principal or superintendent.

Groton School Board discusses next steps for multi-million dollar middle/high school construction project

By Elizabeth Varin

The Groton Area School Board continued discussions Monday night on a proposed middle/high school building project and potential bond election, with the district working toward putting a proposal before voters in November.

The board, which was missing three members, held a relatively brief meeting but continued its discussion of the district's long-range facilities plans and the steps needed to potentially move forward with a bond election.

Superintendent Joe Schwan reviewed a timeline of possible public meetings and election deadlines leading up to the November ballot. The next step for taking the issue before voters will take place at a special meeting, scheduled for 6 p.m. Aug. 18.

The board will receive more information about the project and potential financing. A representative from Colliers Securities is expected to provide an update on the bond market and payment information, while a representative from construction manager Hausmann Construction will provide more detailed cost estimates.

The district has been working on a long-range facilities master plan since fall 2025, although concerns about the condition and needs of the middle/high school have been discussed for years. Some sections of the building are nearly 100 years old and have continued to deteriorate.

The overall master plan presented to the board in April consists of three phases and carries an estimated total cost of \$27 million.

Phase 1 would include construction of a two-story addition east of the middle/high school office to provide additional core academic classrooms. A portion of the high school known as the 1934 addition, located on the southern side of the building, would then be demolished.

Phase 2 would involve restructuring the southern parking lot, constructing a commons area and cafeteria east of the old gym and adding a wing on the southern portion of the building for agriculture and family and consumer sciences classrooms.

Phase 3 would include renovations to the old gym, career and technical education shop space, technology and science classrooms, as well as renovations to a science lab and music/choir room. Re-roofing work also is included in the third phase.

The estimated \$27 million cost for the three-phase master plan would be beyond what the district could cover through its capital outlay fund alone.

In addition to the project discussion, the board received an update on staffing heading into the new school year.

Superintendent Joe Schwan told the board about possible changes to the seventh through ninth grade language arts teacher position. If the position only taught at the middle school level, it would be easier to find qualified applicants as the current position requires middle school and high school certification.

There's also been interest from an individual in the agriculture teacher position, though Schwan didn't mention specific names.

The board made some personnel decisions Monday, approving fall sports volunteer coaches and hiring two bus drivers.

Kelsey Roberts and Quintin Biermann have been volunteering for a few years with the boys' soccer and football teams respectively. A new face on the volleyball court will be Josi Stevens, who will work with the volleyball team as a volunteer coach.

The board also approved hiring Jackson Bahr and Brandon Clocksene as bus drivers.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

State's expenses for Rushmore fireworks were greater than economic impact, Tourism Department says

BY MEGHAN O'BRIEN

The fireworks display last month at Mount Rushmore cost the state of South Dakota \$450,000 more than the event generated in economic impact, according to the state Department of Tourism.

The state spent \$2.8 million to plan and produce the July 3 celebration, which generated \$2.35 million of economic impact, the department said in a Monday press release. The department attributed the economic analysis to the research firm Tourism Economics.

Broadcast and digital media coverage generated nearly \$51 million in additional "publicity value" from 53.7 billion "audience impressions," according to the department, although the publicity value was not included as part of the economic impact. The department said the publicity included 107,000 views of the event's video livestream.

South Dakota Tourism Secretary James Hagen celebrated the numbers.

"It's an investment that strengthened our tourism economy while reinforcing South Dakota's place as one of America's most iconic destinations," Hagen said in the press release.

The costs included \$700,000 for pyrotechnics and lighting effects, according to a public contract between the department and California-based Pyro Spectaculars. The department said other costs included media production, shuttle bus contracts and cost recovery payments to the National Park Service. The Park Service manages Mount Rushmore as a national memorial.

South Dakota Searchlight sent questions to the department about whether the costs reported in the press release included expenses incurred by other public entities such as the city of Keystone, Pennington County and the U.S. Forest Service. The department said it would work on responses and supply them later.

The \$2.35 million economic impact estimate includes visitor spending, hotel room rentals and sales tax revenue, the department said in the press release. There were 4,800 tickets for the event, and the department said attendees came from 40 states.

The event, officially known as South Dakota's Freedom 250 Mount Rushmore Fireworks Celebration, featured a keynote speech from President Donald Trump — which he used to allege a "mortal threat" to the nation from communism — and a fireworks display above the carved faces of Mount Rushmore in South Dakota's Black Hills.

This year's event and past fireworks displays at the national memorial have drawn criticism for the wildfire threat to the surrounding national forest posed by stray sparks from fireworks, and for litter and pollutants from fireworks packaging and chemicals. There was no organized protest against the fireworks this year, but a group of Native Americans advocating for the return of the Black Hills to Lakota tribes protested the prior event in 2020.

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.

Federal judge dismisses legal challenges to South Dakota drug discount law

Drug companies, trade group oppose law barring contract restrictions

BY JOHN HULT

A judge has ruled in favor of a South Dakota law that helps rural healthcare providers buy discounted drugs and mark up their sale price to fill budget holes created by low Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement rates.

AbbVie, maker of the arthritis drug Humira, among other medications, sued the state in April 2025. The Chicago-based company argued that South Dakota lawmakers unconstitutionally regulated interstate commerce with Senate Bill 154, which they passed and Gov. Larry Rhoden signed into law earlier that year.

The drug company AstraZeneca filed a similar lawsuit last August, and the trade group Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America filed one in September.

The law, which took effect last year, blocks drug companies from restricting which pharmacies health care providers can use to access discounts through the federal 340B program. It requires drugmakers who want to participate in Medicare and Medicaid to offer steep discounts to hospitals and clinics that deliver care to underserved or vulnerable populations. Providers who qualify for 340B can then upcharge patients for the drugs, which helps them pay their bills when federal reimbursement rates are too low to cover the cost of providing service.

South Dakota among states to restrict drug company contracting

The 340B program initially required discounts for providers that serve mostly Medicaid clients. It was expanded to "sole providers" under the Affordable Care Act in 2010, which opened it up to rural healthcare providers in places like South Dakota. Federal guidance issued that same year also allowed participating providers to contract with an unlimited number of pharmacies. Until then, providers had to use one.

In response to the expanding 340B usage that followed, drug companies have moved to restrict the pharmacies through which providers can purchase discounted drugs.

Supporters of Senate Bill 154 argued that such restrictions can put 340B discounts out of reach for rural hospitals that need the financial boost of participation to stay open and serve their rural clientele.

Other states have passed similar laws, and faced similar lawsuits.

The laws amount to an unconstitutional "taking" of drug company property through forced discounts, the lawsuits have argued, as well as to state-level regulations on interstate commerce. They also argue that because 340B is a federal program, states can't regulate it.

Judge: South Dakota law is constitutional, protects 'legitimate interest'

The ruling from U.S. District Judge Roberto Lange dismissed all three lawsuits against South Dakota. Lange relied in part on appeals court rulings supporting similar laws in states including Arkansas and Missouri.

Lange noted that 340B participation is optional. Other courts, and now Lange, have ruled that drug companies cannot opt into a voluntary program and then argue that their products have been taken without just compensation.

The judge also ruled that South Dakota's law does not unfairly burden interstate commerce, in part because the state has a "legitimate interest in regulating the delivery of 340B drugs ultimately dispensed to its citizens."

To the argument that the state cannot change the setup of a federal program, Lange ruled that South Dakota's law deals with the delivery of drugs. It doesn't make any changes to the federal law, he wrote, because the federal law deals with drug pricing.

South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley praised Lange's decision in a press release.

"This ruling guarantees that our healthcare providers will continue to access these discounted medications and use them in ways that best serve their communities," Jackley wrote.

AbbVie appealed Lange's decision to the Eighth Circuit on Monday morning. AstraZeneca and Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America had not appealed as of Monday afternoon. Lawyers for

the latter two did not immediately respond to emails requesting comment.

John is the senior reporter for South Dakota Searchlight. He has more than 15 years experience covering criminal justice, the environment and public affairs in South Dakota, including more than a decade at the Sioux Falls Argus Leader.

Dakotas' only fair housing organization hopes crucial grant arrives by Sept. 1

BY JACK DURA

The only fair housing organization in the Dakotas is holding on until Sept. 1 for a key federal grant to arrive or it will furlough some of its staff.

The North Dakota-based High Plains Fair Housing Center has been awaiting the \$425,000 Fair Housing Initiatives Program grant since May. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded the three-year grant in 2023, but the third installment hasn't shown up.

Center Executive Director Michelle Rydz said North Dakota's congressional delegation is working to help address the grant funding, prompting the center's board to delay furloughing staff. Rydz said Friday HUD can't start the grant before Aug. 15, but the timing is still unclear.

"We don't have a definitive date, and so that is still stressful for half the staff," she said, noting that other organizations in the U.S. are in the same situation.

The Grand Forks-headquartered center expects to furlough four of its eight staff if the grant doesn't arrive. Seven employees are full-time; one is part-time. The center anticipated furloughing workers as early as July 31, but operations continue as usual. Rydz has been doing fundraising to help the center stay afloat.

The center assists people within the scope of the federal Fair Housing Act, which prohibits people from being treated differently because of a protected characteristic, including race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status or disability. The center investigates, mediates and resolves housing discrimination complaints, and assists with accommodations.

In 2025, the center fielded 958 total calls, more than one-third of which related to allegations of housing discrimination. The others dealt with landlord-tenant matters or general inquiries.

The center reached 204 resolutions for clients, about half of which were done without having to file a complaint.

In the last year and a half, the center has handled about 100 calls in South Dakota, which has no related organization, Rydz said. The center had a HUD grant that ended recently and was specifically for working with South Dakota organizations and educating people about the Fair Housing Act with the ultimate goal of a fair housing group emerging there, she said.

"The way the grant is set up now, it doesn't look like there's that possibility for a new organization to step into a fair housing role, so we are doing some fundraising in South Dakota and certainly trying to assist South Dakota as much as possible when they have a fair housing issue," Rydz said.

If the grant comes through, the center will keep handling South Dakota calls, she said.

North Dakota Monitor reporter Jack Dura can be reached at jdura@northdakotamonitor.com.

This story was originally produced by North Dakota Monitor, 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.

Jack Dura is a North Dakota Monitor reporter based in Bismarck. His coverage areas include state government, elections, politics and courts. He can be reached at jdura@northdakotamonitor.com.

Trump urges shift in childhood vaccine recommendations, calls for splitting up MMR vaccine

BY SHAUNEEN MIRANDA

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Monday signed a sweeping executive order that aims to reshape guidance surrounding childhood vaccines, standing alongside Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., and was met with immediate pushback.

The order — which calls on federal programs and funding to “support maximal parental choice over childhood vaccines” — came as Trump continued to erroneously connect vaccines with autism during the White House event and his administration has sought to de-emphasize childhood vaccinations’ importance.

“This updated recommendation finally aligns the United States with other advanced and developed nations around the world,” Trump said during a signing ceremony in the Oval Office, joined by Kennedy, a longtime opponent of vaccines, as well as National Institutes of Health Director Jay Bhattacharya and “Make America Healthy Again” advocate Jayme Franklin, also founder and CEO of The Conservateur lifestyle brand, and others.

“More importantly, it aligns us with common sense and knowledge,” Trump added.

What the order can legally accomplish was unclear as it’s up to states to decide which recommendations to follow.

GOP Sen. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, a physician and chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, rebutted the new order on social media. “I’m a doctor. This executive order is wrong. The President does not have the expertise to make these changes,” Cassidy said. “Vaccines are overwhelmingly safe. Vaccines are effective. Vaccines DO NOT cause autism.”

Splitting up MMR vaccine

The order recognizes “gold standard childhood vaccine recommendations” and divides the childhood immunization recommendations into three categories.

The order recommends all children receive immunizations for 11 diseases, including for “measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, Haemophilus influenzae type B, pneumococcal disease, human papillomavirus, and varicella.”

Immunizations recommended for certain high-risk groups or populations include: “respiratory syncytial virus monoclonal antibodies, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, meningococcal B, meningococcal ACWY, and dengue.”

The order also lists “hepatitis A, hepatitis B, rotavirus, meningococcal disease, influenza, and COVID-19” as immunizations “based on shared clinical decision-making.”

Trump’s executive order also calls for splitting up the combined measles, mumps and rubella, or MMR, vaccine into three separate single-disease shots and recommends that “all childhood immunizations should be administered at separate medical visits.” Such single-disease shots are not currently available in the United States, White House officials acknowledged on a background call, but said they believe work will occur in the private sector to make that option eventually available.

“For example, at one year, you should have five separate visits for vaccines rather than getting them all in the same day,” Trump said during the signing ceremony.

Trump said the order also directs the attorney general “to advance legal challenges against states that violate children’s rights to religious or medical vaccination exemptions.”

‘Uncertainty and fear and confusion’

Meanwhile, Dr. Andrew Racine, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, told reporters Monday during a press briefing after the Trump event that “the only thing that I can see is going to happen as a result of the announcement from today is an injection of greater amounts of uncertainty and fear and confusion, when there doesn’t need to be any of that.”

Many states rely on the AAP, rather than the federal government, for guidance surrounding childhood vaccines, according to the health research organization KFF, following earlier moves on vaccines during the Trump administration.

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Rep. Frank Pallone, ranking member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, blasted Trump's order, saying the effort "lets political appointees attempt to overrule decades of peer-reviewed science and dictate vaccine schedules to American families," in a statement.

The New Jersey Democrat added that "parents deserve accurate, trusted medical guidance, not a White House-curated list designed to rubberstamp Secretary Kennedy's radical anti-vaccine agenda."

Democrats from a coalition of states filed suit earlier this year over Trump administration changes to the federal vaccine guidelines, as did medical groups, but White House officials said Trump's recommendations were not related to the litigation and were within his authority.

Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom's Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.

Todd Blanche sworn in as attorney general after contentious Senate confirmation

BY SAM GAUNTT

WASHINGTON — Todd Blanche took the oath of office as U.S. attorney general at a brief ceremony in the Oval Office Monday, following the Senate's narrow vote to approve his nomination as the nation's top law enforcement official over the weekend.

Blanche, who served as acting attorney general and was President Donald Trump's personal lawyer before joining the government, succeeds Pam Bondi — whom Trump ousted in April — as head of the Department of Justice. Trump announced Blanche as his pick to permanently lead the department in June.

U.S Circuit Judge Emil Bove, another of Trump's former personal attorneys, administered the oath of office.

After the Senate voted, 50-49, to approve his nomination early Saturday morning, Blanche wrote on social media that he was "deeply honored by the trust and confidence President Trump has placed in me to lead the Department of Justice as our great nation's 88th Attorney General."

"To the dedicated public servants of the Department of Justice, thank you for your work each day to uphold the law and keep our country safe," Blanche wrote.

Blanche's nomination had drawn widespread concern and scrutiny from congressional Democrats, as well as some Republicans, over actions such as his role in establishing Trump's "anti-weaponization fund." The \$1.8 billion Justice Department fund aimed to compensate those "who suffered weaponization and lawfare," including many who faced prosecution related to the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Lawmakers of both parties have described it as a "slush fund," and Blanche has stated that it will not move forward under his tenure as attorney general.

Asked if the fund has a future after an executive order signing ceremony Monday afternoon, Trump said that it "will be up to Todd Blanche."

A contentious vote

In a vote early Saturday morning, every Senate Democrat voted against Blanche's confirmation. Republican Sens. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Susan Collins of Maine broke ranks from their party and voted against him.

Blanche ultimately won over several holdout Republicans, including Sen. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, who said Blanche had acknowledged his past "mistakes" and sought to halt the Justice Department fund. He also secured support from Sens. John Cornyn of Texas and Thom Tillis of North Carolina, both of whom are set to leave office after their terms end this January.

Speaking on the floor Friday evening before Blanche was confirmed, Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa, the Senate Judiciary Committee's chair, praised Blanche as a "tough, fair prosecutor dedicated to the rule of law."

"Between his proven track record, his presentation in committee and the support he's received from across the country, I am convinced that Mr. Blanche is the right choice to lead the Justice Department," Grassley said. "A vote for Todd Blanche is a vote for the safety of the American people."

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Congressional Democrats quickly denounced Blanche officially taking over the department.

Rep. Jamie Raskin, a Maryland Democrat and ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee, blasted Blanche's ascension as the nation's top law enforcement official on social media earlier Monday afternoon.

"Republicans in Congress voted to turn Trump's personal attorney, Todd Blanche, into Trump's personal Attorney General," Raskin wrote. "We need a DOJ committed to the rule of law, not the corrupt rule of a kleptocrat."

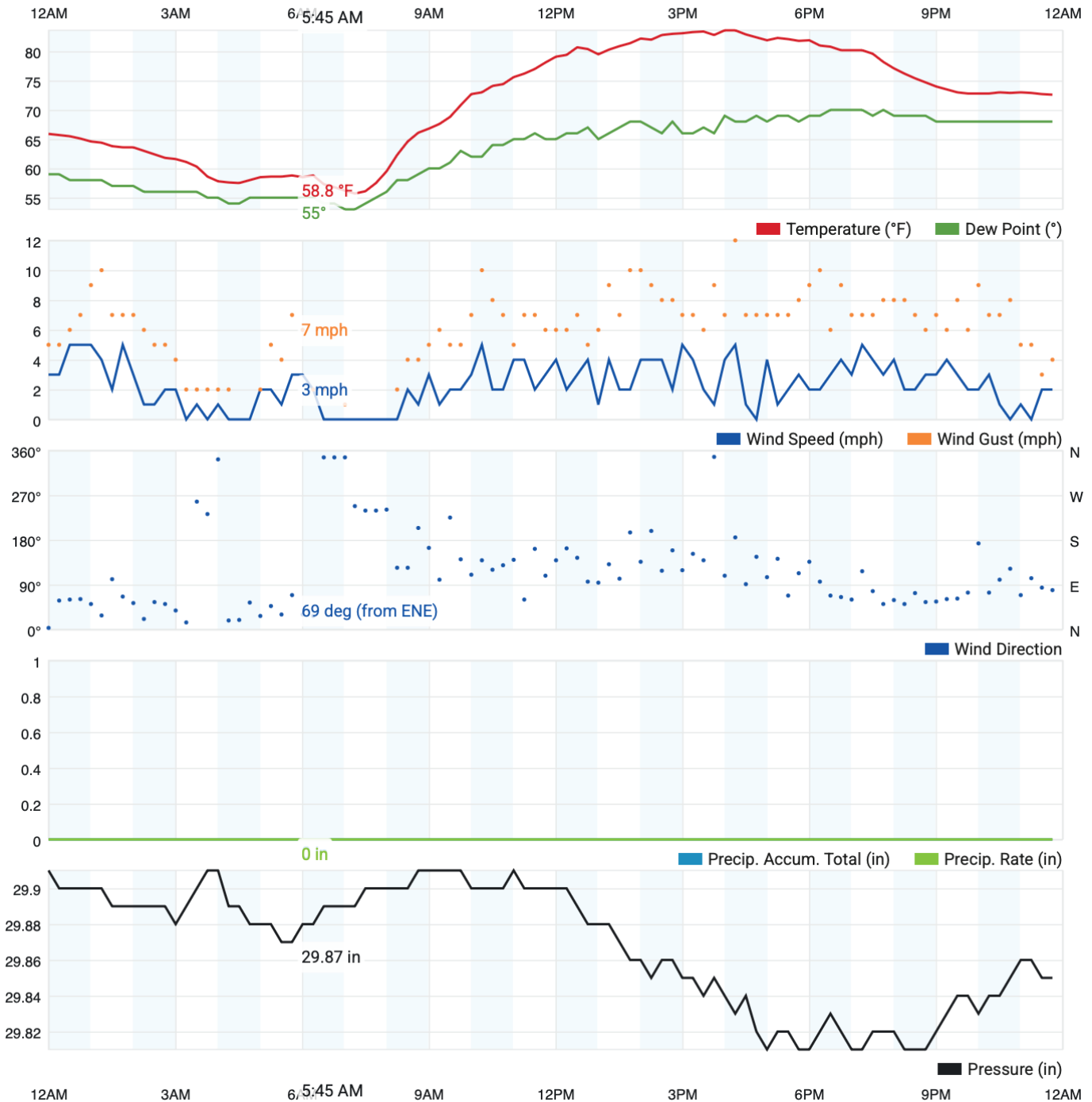
Sam Gauntt is an intern at States Newsroom's Washington bureau through the Dow Jones News Fund internship program. He is a senior journalism major at the University of Maryland and editor in chief of The Diamondback, the university's independent student newspaper. He previously interned with Maryland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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

August 10, 2026



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Today



High: 84 °F

Mostly Sunny

Tonight



Low: 61 °F

Chance
T-storms

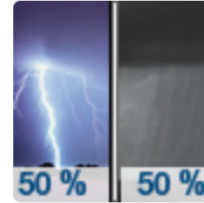
Wednesday



High: 81 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms then
Mostly Sunny

Wednesday
Night



Low: 59 °F

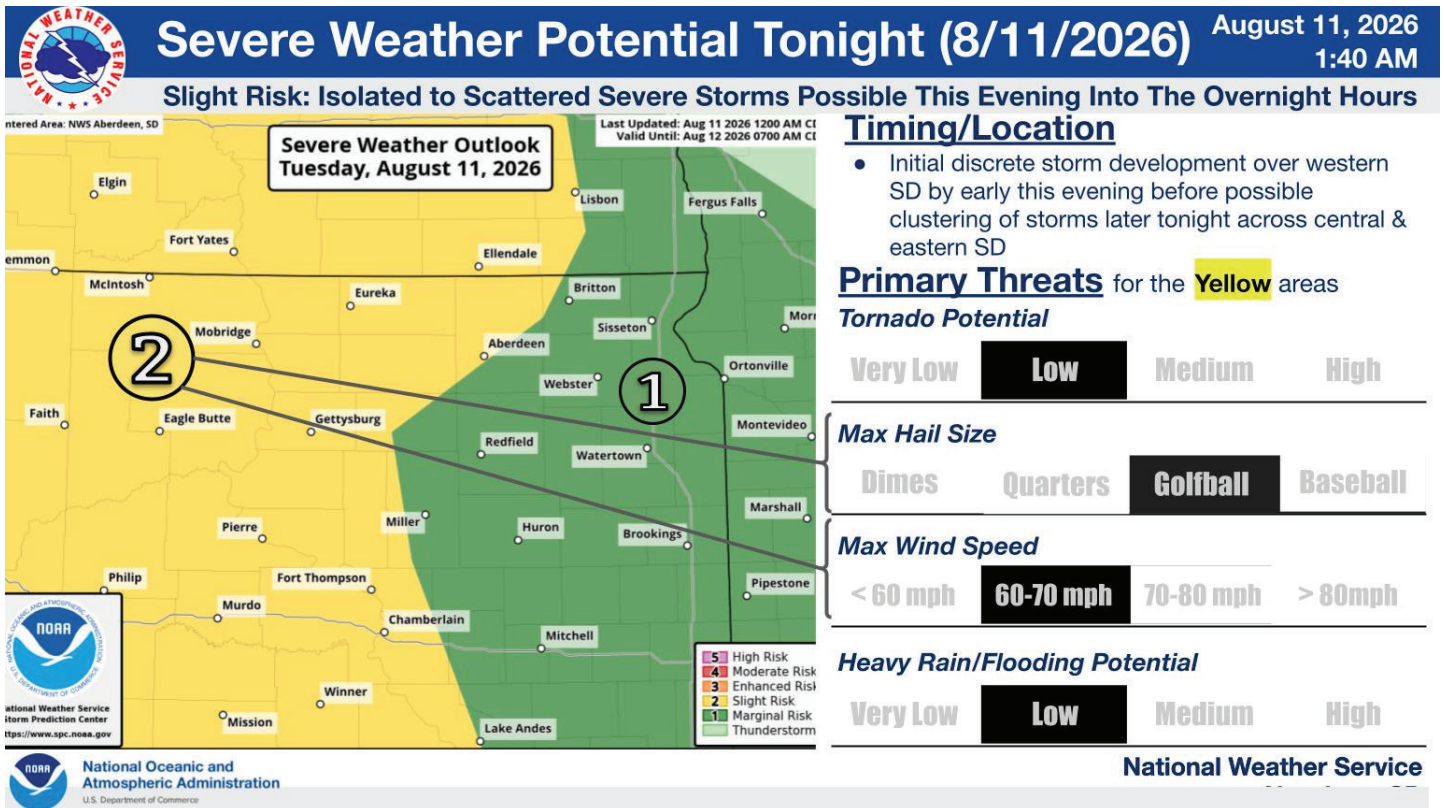
Chance
T-storms then
Chance
Showers

Thursday



High: 77 °F

Partly Sunny



The next potential round of severe thunderstorms could be developing by early this evening over the northern high plains, including the western Dakotas, continuing into early Wednesday morning over portions of central and northeast SD and west central MN.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 84 °F at 4:09 PM

Low Temp: 56 °F at 7:13 AM

Wind: 12 mph at 4:14 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 103 in 1988

Record Low: 34 in 1902

Average High: 84

Average Low: 58

Average Precip in Aug.: 0.80

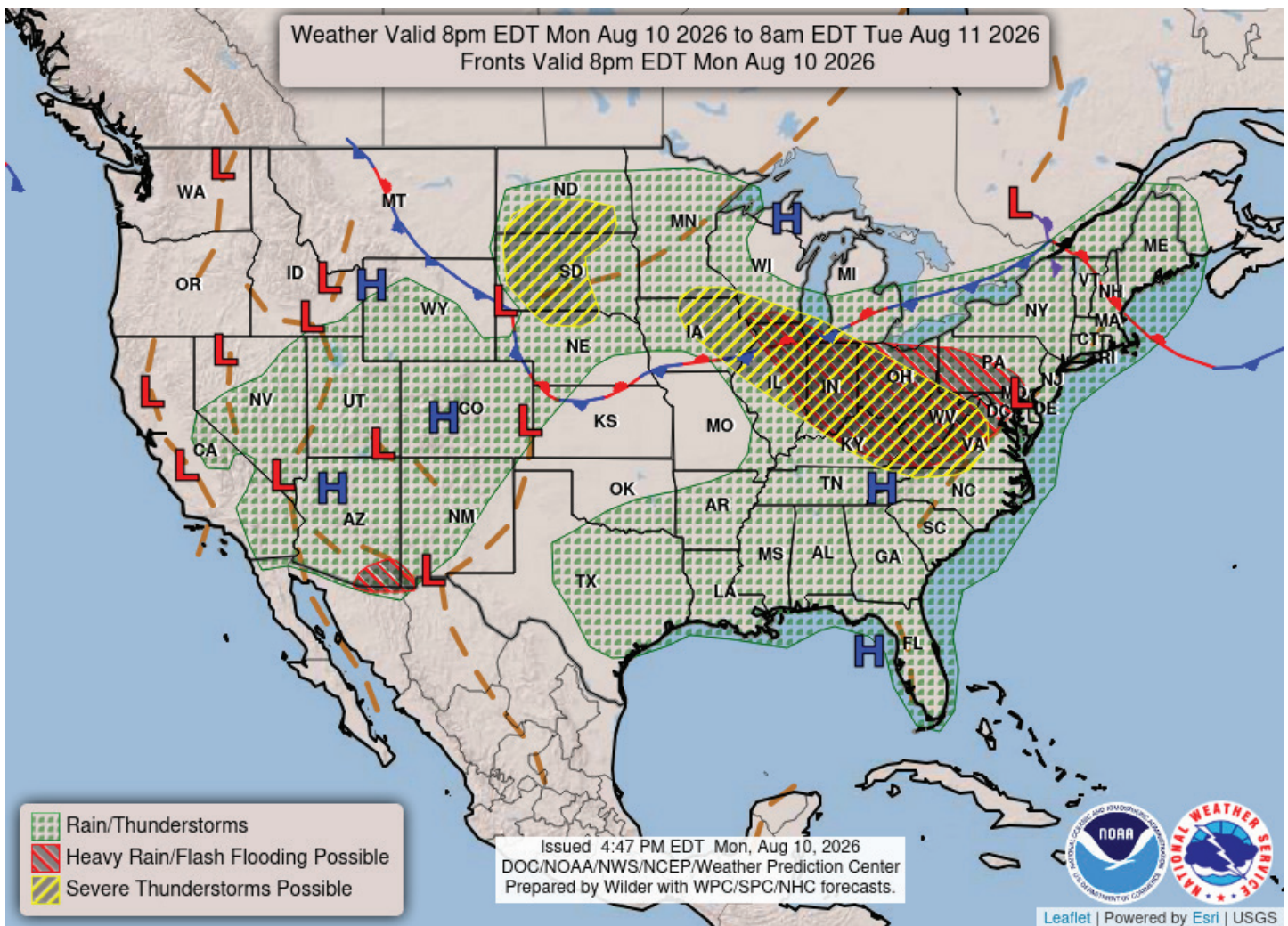
Precip to date in Aug.: 9.81

Average Precip to date: 14.90

Precip Year to Date: 19.28

Sunset Tonight: 8:46 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:29 am



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Today in Weather History

August 11, 1975: A line of thunderstorms raced across portions of central and eastern South Dakota during the early morning hours. Winds gusted to 70 mph, causing considerable damage to trees. At Canton, in Lincoln County, the winds were estimated as high as 70 mph. In Sioux Falls, the peak wind gust measured 69 mph. Wind damage was also reported in Miller and Ree Heights in Hand County, as well as in Selby and Mobridge in Walworth County.

August 11, 1985: Lightning set off eleven fires in the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation area. Twenty acres of grassland were burned two miles northeast of Bear Creek. About 600 acres of grassland were burned 8 miles southwest of Lantry. About 3,000 acres of grassland burned near Eagle Butte.

August 11, 2011: Severe thunderstorms brought hail up to the size of ping pong balls and damaging winds up to 90 mph to parts of central South Dakota. Jones and Lyman Counties received the brunt of the strong winds with eighty mph winds downing several grain bins along with knocking a few semis off of Interstate-90 near Murdo. The winds also downed some power lines and poles along with destroying a hanger. The two planes in the hanger were damaged at the Murdo Airport. Near Kennebec in Lyman County, eighty mph winds took shingles off the house and also damaged the deck. A barn was also destroyed with a horse being injured. Many tree branches were also downed.

1940: A Category 2 hurricane struck the Georgia and South Carolina coast. A 13-foot storm tide was measured along the South Carolina coast, while over 15 inches of rain fell across northern North Carolina. Significant flooding and landslides struck Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia during the system's slow trek as a weakening tropical storm, and then as an extratropical cyclone, through the Southeast. The landslides which struck North Carolina were considered a once in a century event. Damages relating to the storm totaled \$13 million (1940 USD), and 50 people perished.

1944 — The temperature at Burlington, VT, soared to an all-time record high of 101 degrees. (The Weather Channel) The Dog Days officially come to an end on this date, having begun the third day in July. Superstition has it that dogs tend to become mad during that time of the year. (The Weather Channel)

1980 — Clouds and moisture from Hurricane Allen provided a brief break from the torrid Texas heatwave, with daily highs mostly in the 70s to lower 90s. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — An early evening thunderstorm in Wyoming produced hail up to two inches in diameter from Alva to Hulett. Snow plows had to be used to clear Highway 24 south of Hulett, where hail formed drifts two feet deep. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — Moisture from what remained of Tropical Storm Beryl resulted in torrential rains across eastern Texas. Twelve and a half inches of rain deluged Enterprise TX, which was more than the amount received there during the previous eight months. Philadelphia PA reported a record forty-four days of 90 degree weather for the year. Baltimore MD and Newark NJ reported a record fourteen straight days of 90 degree heat. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — One of the most severe convective outbreaks of record came to a climax in southern California after four days. Thunderstorms deluged Benton CA with six inches of rain two days in a row, and the flooding which resulted caused more than a million dollars damage to homes and highways. Thunderstorms around Yellowstone Park WY produced four inches of rain in twenty minutes resulting in fifteen mudslides. Thunderstorms over Long Island NY drenched Suffolk County with 8 to 10 inches of rain. Twenty-three cities in the southeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. It was, for some cities, the fourth straight morning of record cold temperatures. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1999 — An F2 tornado touched down in the metropolitan area of Salt Lake City. The tornado lasted ten minutes and killed one person, injured more than 80 people, and caused more than \$170 million in damages. It was the most destructive tornado in Utah's history and awakened the entire state's population to the fact that the Beehive State does experience tornadoes.

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Daily Devotion

What It Means to Be a Servant

When we humbly serve others, we reflect the character of Christ.

Philippians 2:5-7: 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

The disciples gathered around a table to celebrate Passover with Jesus. And then Christ did the unexpected: He took water and a cloth, knelt before the 12 other men one at a time, and washed their feet.

Peter initially protested. It seemed backwards for the Master to serve His disciples this way. But Jesus explained that Peter would understand later what this act meant (John 13:7-8). In that moment, Jesus was demonstrating the heart of His entire mission: He came into this world as a servant (Matthew 20:28).

A bondservant was the lowest of household servants and had the distasteful job of washing the feet of anyone who entered. This is the very task Christ voluntarily performed that evening, right before His trial and sufferings would begin. The humility He showed in washing dust from His disciples' feet foreshadowed the greater service He would render the next day, taking upon Himself the shame and penalty of humanity's sin by dying on the cross.

Ephesians 2:10 tells us Christians are created for the purpose of good works. We were saved to serve our Master. When we surrender to the Lord, we begin to live a life marked not by self-promotion but by humble service that reflects His character.

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.10.26

2 24 30 40 51 5

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 44 Mins 53
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.07.26

17 20 32 54 57 23

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$80,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 29 Mins 52
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.10.26

16 19 33 39 41 10

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,500,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 44
Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.08.26

2 3 26 32 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$24,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 59
Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.10.26

4 23 31 32 57 23

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 28
Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.10.26

6 37 54 55 64 10

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$975,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 28
Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Trump used elaborate ruse to fly out of Turkey following summit because of Iran threat, report says

By The Associated Press undefined

President Donald Trump secretly flew out of last month's NATO summit in Ankara, Turkey, on an alternate military aircraft while the White House made it appear that the Republican president was flying on Air Force One, according to a report published by The Washington Post on Monday.

The Post said the operation was prompted by an Iranian assassination threat against Trump. The ruse was carried out as journalists and some White House staff members were led to believe they were on the same plane as the president as he began his journey back to Washington from the annual gathering of NATO country leaders.

The Post cited material reviewed by the newspaper, a U.S. official familiar with the operation and another person with knowledge of the president's travel. The Associated Press has not independently confirmed the report.

Trump had flown to the summit in a new Qatari-gifted and retrofitted red, white and navy blue jet. But ahead of departing Turkey, he said he would fly partway home on an older-model baby blue Air Force One plane instead.

The president at the time said the new luxury jet was being flown out ahead of his departure from Ankara to give some U.S. troops based in eastern England a chance to check out the new Air Force One.

In Ankara, Trump boarded the old Air Force One jumbo jet in view of television cameras ahead of the plane flying to Royal Air Force Mildenhall in the United Kingdom.

However, according to the Post report, after boarding the legacy Air Force One jet, he was secretly shuttled minutes later to a smaller plane — an Air Force C-32A — via an airport catering truck typically used to load meals and other supplies. Trump flew to Mildenhall on that smaller jet.

The White House did not respond directly to questions about the Post report of the secret operation to whisk Trump out of the country on a third aircraft, or the reported elaborate ruse to make it appear he was on the baby blue Air Force One jet flying to Mildenhall.

"As the President has said recently, there are many enemies of America who have their sights on him, and we use every tool at our disposal to address those threats," White House communications director Steven Cheung said in a statement.

The U.S. Secret Service declined to comment. The Air Force, which maintains the fleet of executive travel aircraft, referred questions to the White House.

There have been questions about the safety of the new Qatari-gifted plane

While Trump was in Turkey, the U.S. military conducted a series of large strikes in Iran in retaliation for its attacks on merchant shipping in the region.

The New York Times and CBS News reported last month that intelligence officials had raised concerns about a potential attack on the president or his jet, triggering additional precautions and the decision not to use the newly inaugurated aircraft gifted to Trump by Qatar for the first leg of Trump's trip home from Ankara.

The swap had spurred questions about the security of the Qatar-provided aircraft, and Trump said last month after the trip that it would undergo additional upgrades.

Cheung on Monday maintained that the new, Qatari-gifted plane was "a state-of-the-art aircraft that has been fitted with high-level security protocols that ensure the safety of the President and his staff."

The new Post report on clandestinely putting Trump on a third aircraft and quietly whisking him out of the country adds a fresh layer to just how seriously concerned U.S. security officials were about the threat against Trump during the ongoing war with Iran.

Paul Eckloff, a former special agent with the Secret Service, said such an unusual move could either

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reflect actionable intelligence or an abundance of caution given volatility in the region with the wars in Iran and Ukraine.

"I would not say unprecedented, but it is an unusual occurrence," Eckloff told The Associated Press.

The Post reported that to exit that plane without being seen by those uninvolved in the operation, Trump and several aides stepped aboard an airport catering truck, which was elevated planeside using hydraulics and positioned at a door on the opposite side of Air Force One's entrance.

The small group of reporters who thought they were traveling with Trump were advised to lower their window shades ahead of takeoff.

After arriving at Mildenhall, news photographers captured images of Trump getting off the presidential plane — suggesting he reboarded Air Force One out of sight of the pack of journalists who thought they were traveling with him.

Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal called for a congressional investigation.

"It is unprecedented and it is surreal," he said Monday on CNN, calling the incident "downright scary."

After the brief visit to the base at Mildenhall, Trump boarded the new Air Force One aircraft to fly the rest of the way to Washington.

During a gaggle with reporters aboard the aircraft, Trump was asked directly if there was any credible threats on Air Force One by Iran.

"Well, I have a threat all the time. I'm number one on their list before you," Trump said. He added to the traveling reporters, "But if I go, you go."

Iranian-backed Houthi rebels renew attacks on key port city, and other developments in the Mideast

By The Associated Press undefined

Iranian-backed Houthi rebels renewed their attacks Tuesday on government-controlled areas in Yemen as ongoing violence threatened to reignite the country's civil war and raised fears over new threats to shipping lanes.

Iran's foreign minister, meanwhile, underscored Tehran's stance against reopening the Strait of Hormuz until the U.S. meets its conditions, in comments that came after U.S. President Donald Trump said he was now demanding compensation from Iran "for all of the people that they have killed" in the past.

Here's a look at the latest developments in the Iran war and the wider Middle East. Full coverage can be found [here](#).

Houthis hit targets in central Yemen and Red Sea port city

Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen attacked the government-held port city of Mokha on the Red Sea coast and other areas of the country, deepening fears over threats to strategic shipping routes and a potential return to civil war.

Yemen's military said the rebels targeted both Mokha and the central province of Marib with missiles and drones but did not provide further details.

The Houthis struck Marib and the eastern province of Hadramout last week, killing dozens of government troops and civilians. They hit Mokha with missiles and drones over the weekend and killed at least seven people, including three troops, according to the Yemeni military.

Mokha is a main port under Yemen's internationally recognized government and has been renovated to handle shipping to avoid the Houthi-held port of Hodeida.

The strikes came as part of a recent escalation by the Houthis against government forces in Yemen and oil facilities in neighboring Saudi Arabia, which supports the internationally recognized Yemeni government, and the kingdom's shipping in the Red Sea.

With the Strait of Hormuz effectively shut down by Iran, there has been a renewed focus on the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb Strait at Yemen's southern tip, which is an alternate route for Saudi Arabia to ship its oil to open oceans.

The Houthi attacks could reignite Yemen's civil war after a four-year hiatus following a 2022 truce, and

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open a new front in the Middle East war.

Iranian foreign minister underline's Tehran's demands

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told reporters in Iran that the country had "astonished the whole world" in the war against the United States and Israel, proving "that it is a tough and invincible power."

Iran has refused to back down on its demands that the U.S. end its blockade of Iranian ports and fulfill other conditions before Tehran will consider reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran shut down the strait after Israel and the U.S. attacked the country on Feb. 28. The closure of the key waterway — through which roughly one-fifth of the world's traded oil supplies passed before the war — has kept energy prices a major focus of U.S. politics ahead of November's midterm elections.

Araghchi said on his Telegram channel that in a call with German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul late Monday, he had "emphasized that making the Strait of Hormuz secure requires an end to the United States' aggressive actions and unlawful interventions, including the naval blockade and other violations of U.S. obligations."

Wadephul said on X that he had emphasized "the Strait of Hormuz needs to be opened unconditionally ensuring free and safe navigation for all."

Trump said in a social media post he was directing his negotiators to include "compensation from Iran, for all of the people that they have killed and gravely wounded with their roadside bombs and many conflicts." That was after Iran demanded compensation for the devastation caused to the country by the U.S. and Israeli bombardment over the past five months.

The U.S. president also claimed Monday in an Oval Office exchange with reporters that the U.S. has "100% control" of the Strait of Hormuz, but that the situation remains complex.

He said the U.S. Navy's blockade of the strait is preventing Iran from selling its oil on the international market, a move that is effectively choking the Iranian economy.

"Now, can they make trouble? Yeah, they can make trouble, but they're broke," Trump said. "They have no money. You know, Iran is broke, totally broke. And they're not paying their soldiers."

Former Syrian President Assad sentenced to death in absentia

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — A Syrian court sentenced in absentia ousted Syrian President Bashar Assad along with his younger brother to death on Tuesday for crimes against humanity and war crimes during Syria's 14-year conflict that left about half a million people dead.

Also sentenced to death in the same case was Assad's maternal cousin Atef Najib for leading the crack-down in the southern province of Daraa that led to the uprising and later the civil war.

Amid tight security, Najib stood inside a cage wearing a prisoner's uniform as the judge read the sentence.

Assad and his brother Maher fled to Russia after insurgents marched into Damascus in December 2014.

Najib was later detained and became one of the highest-ranking officials to be put on trial.

Najib is a former Syrian army brigadier general who was head of the Political Security Branch in southern Syria's Daraa province under Assad in 2011.

In rejecting Trump's Gaza plan, Netanyahu reprises a balancing act he has mastered

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

It's possibly the most important job of any Israeli prime minister: maintain good relations with the United States while pushing back on demands seen as undermining Israel's security.

No one has managed the balancing act longer than Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving leader. But with the Iran war at a stalemate, and U.S. President Donald Trump looking to advance peace efforts elsewhere, Netanyahu's task is getting harder less than three months away from Israeli elections.

On Sunday, Netanyahu rejected Trump's latest plan to advance the stalled ceasefire in Gaza, saying Israel

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will not withdraw from any of the roughly 60% of the territory it controls until Hamas has been completely disarmed — something the militant group controlling the other 40% has long resisted.

Netanyahu risks angering Trump, who he has repeatedly said is the greatest friend Israel has ever had in the White House. But even a hint of compromise with Hamas could be fatal for Netanyahu's reelection in a country deeply traumatized by the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that happened on his watch.

Trump, meanwhile, is under pressure to deliver on his promise of being a global peacemaker as talks with Iran stall and gas prices stay elevated ahead of U.S. congressional elections in November.

Netanyahu says there will be no progress on Gaza ceasefire until Hamas disarms

The Gaza plan announced by Trump last month grew out of his October ceasefire deal, which ended major Israeli military operations there and brought about the release of all remaining hostages but has otherwise largely stalled.

Under the latest agreement, Hamas would gradually give up its weapons while Israeli forces halt their attacks and begin withdrawing from Gaza. Hamas accepted the deal, even as the group linked the surrender of its heaviest weapons to the creation of a Palestinian state, something Israel's current government and most of its political class adamantly reject.

Netanyahu rejected the plan, saying Israel would not retreat from any of its positions in Gaza until Hamas has been completely disarmed. That would leave other elements of the ceasefire, including the deployment of international forces and any reconstruction of the devastated territory, on hold.

At the same time, the Israeli military seems to have eased off on its strikes on Gaza that have killed over 1,250 people since the ceasefire came into effect, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

Israeli media reported that the authority for carrying out strikes has been limited to the army's chief of staff, apparently in a quiet gesture toward Trump's ceasefire efforts. The Israeli military did not respond to a request for comment.

"We are focused on actions, not rhetoric or politics," an official with the Board of Peace, the Trump-led entity overseeing the ceasefire, told The Associated Press. "There have been some results on the ground in the last few days," the official added, including "restraint from strikes" and new Israeli military procedures.

"There is constructive cooperation behind the scenes and our conversations continue," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk about the ongoing discussions.

Oct. 7 looms over a tough campaign for reelection

In his election campaign, Netanyahu has boasted of Israel's military achievements in the wars that followed the Oct. 7 attack. Israeli forces have seized territory in Gaza, Lebanon and Syria, and launched two major air wars against Iran and its disputed nuclear program.

But the "total victory" Netanyahu promised in Gaza has yet to materialize. Many Israelis blame him for the security failures that led to the initial attack, as well as previous attempts to contain Hamas that at times included allowing Qatar to deliver suitcases filled with cash to Gaza.

Netanyahu's far-right allies, who will likely be crucial to his ability to form a government after the elections, have welcomed his rejection of the Trump plan.

Trump "wants to see real steps taken toward rehabilitating Gaza, while Netanyahu's two right-wing partners and the Likud's faltering election campaign is keeping him from yielding even a millimeter," wrote Jonathan Lis, the diplomatic correspondent for Israel's Haaretz newspaper.

Ghaith al-Omari, a former Palestinian negotiator who is now a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said that even if the White House ignores Netanyahu's rejection of the plan, Trump is still stuck unless he can persuade the Israeli leader to change course.

Hamas is meanwhile winning the "blame game" by appearing to be the more reasonable of the two sides, he said.

Trump's standing in Israel has fallen as he has tried to wind down the Iran war

Trump was wildly popular in Israel during his first term, when he lent unprecedented support to Israel's claims to territory seized in war, including by moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem.

The trend continued in his second term, as he backed Israel's actions in Gaza and joined it in bombing

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Iran. The alliance was particularly beneficial to Netanyahu, whose political future remained uncertain. The prime minister relied on Trump to improve his image at home.

But the allies' interests diverged last spring, as Israel pressed for further strikes on Iran and against Hezbollah in Lebanon, while Trump looked to wind down the regional conflict in order to reopen the Strait of Hormuz to ease pressure on the world economy.

Since then, Trump has said that he would "likely" endorse Netanyahu ahead of the Israeli election but has not yet given his full backing. And while a formal endorsement from a U.S. president still carries weight in Israel, the rift between the two leaders suggests it could also complicate Netanyahu's campaign.

"A few months ago, a significant majority of Israelis assumed that when President Trump is making decisions, he's taking Israeli security interests into account. This is no longer the case," said Yohanan Plesner, head of the Israel Democracy Institute, a think tank in Jerusalem.

The closeness between Netanyahu and Trump "used to be an asset," he said, but not anymore.

Netanyahu has defied past US presidents, but the risks are greater now

Netanyahu has a long history of defying U.S. presidents, particularly Democratic ones. During his first term, in the late 1990s, he resisted efforts by President Bill Clinton to resolve the conflict with the Palestinians. He clashed publicly with President Barack Obama over the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran.

But that approach carries greater risks now, as Israel's military campaigns have left it increasingly isolated diplomatically and upended its historic support among Democratic voters in the U.S., leaving Trump as one of Israel's few strong allies.

Netanyahu's dependence on Trump is "tremendous," Plesner said, and voters will punish him if he is seen as mismanaging the key relationship.

"If Trump will insist on carrying on, I think Netanyahu will have no choice but to tag along rather than take on the president, since he's left Israel with very few diplomatic cards to maneuver."

Russian aerial attacks kill 9 in Ukraine as Zelenskyy warns Moscow is getting more North Korea help

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia bombarded Ukrainian cities with missiles, drones and glide bombs, killing at least nine civilians, officials said Tuesday, as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned that Moscow is receiving new military help for its more than 4-year-old invasion from North Korea.

Zelenskyy said Russian forces used ballistic missiles supplied by North Korea in their overnight attack on the southeastern Ukraine city of Zaporizhzhia, where local officials said six people were killed and 19 wounded.

A further three people, including a 15-year-old boy, were killed by Russian drones and artillery in the central Dnipropetrovsk region, local authorities said.

Russia has received additional ballistic missiles from Pyongyang and is preparing to deploy more North Korean troops, Zelenskyy said late Monday.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un signed a strategic partnership agreement just over two years ago. It vows mutual aid if either country faces aggression.

Kim has sent thousands of troops and huge supplies of weapons to support Putin's invasion of Ukraine. Some experts say the engagement with Moscow is helping improve North Korea's military capabilities, and Zelenskyy warned that the battlefield experience would help Pyongyang menace other countries in its region.

Ukraine says Russia is scaling up its production of ballistic missiles, aiming to exploit Kyiv's critical shortage of Patriot air defense interceptors that can stop them, and claims Moscow is readying an increase in recruitment for a new push on the front line that stretches 1,250 kilometers (775 miles) along eastern and southern Ukraine.

"Every step Russia takes — increasing ballistic missile production, bringing in North Korean equipment,

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preparing for mobilization — all of this shows that Moscow is preparing not for peace, but for escalation,” Zelenskyy said on social media.

U.S.-led diplomatic efforts to stop the war have fizzled as Washington grew frustrated with the lack of progress toward a settlement and its attention turned to the Iran war.

“The Kremlin will not enter serious negotiations or make meaningful compromises on its demands as long as Putin believes that he has a viable military path to achieving his full objectives,” the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, said in an analysis late Monday.

“Ukraine’s Patriot shortages offer Russia an opportunity to cause very serious damage to Ukraine over the coming winter and will therefore contribute to delaying meaningful negotiations and protracting the war,” it said.

Russia hits the grounds of a Kyiv children’s hospital

Russian forces also struck parts of the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, overnight, according to officials. One strike hit the grounds of a children’s hospital, leaving two craters and shattering windows, the State Emergency Service said. Children and medical workers were in bomb shelters and nobody was hurt, it added.

At another location in the capital, a Russian strike started a fire in a warehouse that spread across about 1,200 square meters (nearly 13,000 square feet), according to emergency officials.

The Russian Defense Ministry said that its forces overnight struck “military industrial facilities and transport and logistics centers” in Kyiv and Zaporizhzhia with “ground-based precision weapons.”

It said in a statement Tuesday that it hit drone storage facilities in Kyiv and a metallurgical plant in the city of Zaporizhzhia.

Russia targeted Zaporizhzhia and Kyiv with Zircon anti-ship missiles and Iskander ballistic missiles, while launching 120 long-range strike drones of various types across the country, Ukraine’s air force said.

Russia’s biggest e-commerce company hit again

Meanwhile, the Russian Defense Ministry said that its air defenses overnight intercepted almost 400 Ukrainian drones over 14 Russian regions and occupied Crimea.

Russia’s biggest online retailer, Wildberries, said in a statement that its logistical facilities in the Voronezh region on the border with Ukraine came under attack and caught fire, but it said the fire has been extinguished. It said goods stored at the facilities were “largely undamaged.”

Ukraine has repeatedly struck Wildberries warehouses and has also bombarded Russian oil facilities in what it says is a strategy to compel Putin to negotiate an end to the invasion.

Russian independent online outlet Astra said an oil refinery in the city of Orsk, some 1,300 kilometers from the border with Ukraine, was hit and published images of smoke billowing over it. There was no official confirmation of an attack on the Orsk oil refinery, which has been targeted before.

Extreme heat is reshaping Italy’s sparkling wine industry with early harvests and nighttime picking

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

CORTE FRANCA, Italy (AP) — Workers fan out before dawn to clip clusters of grapes destined to be transformed into Italy’s prized Franciacorta sparkling wine a full 10 days earlier than anticipated, as scorching temperatures brought the fruit to maturation earlier than ever.

Climate change is narrowing the window for harvesting wine grapes, forcing winemakers to make quick decisions when even a few days can mean the difference between a good vintage and a bad one.

“These are delicate, frantic moments, and everything has to work perfectly,” said Berlucchi CEO Arturo Ziliani, whose father, Franco, and estate owner Guido Berlucchi became the first winemakers in the northern Italian region of Franciacorta to produce sparkling wine using the “classic” method famously employed by France’s Champagne makers.

“We did not expect such an early harvest or such an acceleration in ripening,” Ziliani said.

Heat forces predawn picking under floodlights

Weeks of temperatures reaching highs between 37 and 38 degrees Celsius (99 to 100 degrees Fahrenheit)

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heit), combined with below-average rainfall, have pushed some winemakers in Franciacorta to record the earliest start on record — 10 days earlier than last year and about a month earlier than three decades ago.

Berlucchi, the oldest producer of Franciacorta, which is made using the traditional method of secondary fermentation in the bottle, began harvesting Aug. 2 as part of an industrywide effort to preserve grape quality in the face of increasingly extreme weather.

Experts say several factors combined to push Franciacorta's harvest so early this year. A relatively mild winter meant the vines produced buds earlier, while hailstorms damaged some of the yield, lightening the fruit and bringing it to earlier maturation.

Even in late July, Berlucchi was targeting an Aug. 10 harvest date, but it quickly became clear that Pinot Nero used for sparkling blends and rosé was ready to be picked, signaled by rapidly rising sugar levels. Within two days, workers were mustered and the presses were readied.

The midday heat has been so extreme that workers are forced by regional labor rules to stop between 12:30 p.m. and 4 p.m., but winemakers say it has been too hot for the afternoon shift. To gain time and bring grapes to the presses before they are overheated, Berlucchi last week started the harvest at 4 a.m., with workers picking under the blaze of floodlights.

"The grapes are perfectly healthy," said Ferdinando Dell'aquila, an oenologist who is Berlucchi's technical director. "We just have to work as quickly as possible, harvest them and preserve their acidity."

Sparkling wine requires complex calculations

It is not just Franciacorta that is starting early. Sicily began the wine harvest for still wines in late July. Small parts of Tuscany also started picking, as well as most sparkling wine regions.

The calculation is most complex for the makers of Champagne-style sparkling wines, which require a delicate balance of much higher fixed acidity, much lower pH and lower sugars than for still reds and whites.

"Early-ripening varieties such as Chardonnay require great care, because a delay of just a couple of days can leave you with grapes unsuitable for sparkling wine. Sugar rises too quickly and acidity falls too quickly," said Attilio Scienza, a professor emeritus at the University of Milan.

High outdoor temperatures require the grapes to be cooled before being gently pressed in stainless steel machines to extract the highest quality free-run juice, a crucial step in sparkling wine production that cannot be rushed. Berlucchi operates up to 24 presses a day, often late into the night, to process the unusually early harvest.

Berlucchi remains Franciacorta's largest producer, making about 4 million bottles annually, about 20% of the Franciacorta consortium's total production of about 20 million bottles. About 90% are sold in Italy, with the remainder exported to markets including Germany, Switzerland, the United States and Japan.

Winemakers adapt to a new harvest calendar

"Climate change and the African weather systems settling over Europe are bringing extraordinary temperatures and forcing early picking, not only in Italy, but also in France and Germany," said Paolo Castelletti, secretary general of the Italian Wine Union trade organization.

With earlier harvests becoming a trend, winemakers say they will have to begin monitoring the fields even earlier to make sure they don't miss the best harvesting moment.

"A good oenologist can manage situations like this. I can say with confidence that wine quality is not compromised. It simply requires a different organization of work than in past years," Castelletti said.

Trump told Ukraine it had no cards. Then Kyiv took the war to Russia

By EMMA BURROWS, JOHN LEICESTER and ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

The meeting in the Oval Office between U.S. President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was a diplomatic car crash.

"Your country is in big trouble. You're not winning," Trump said, dressing down Zelenskyy in front of the world's media. "You don't have the cards."

The blowup in February 2025, three years into the war, was more than just a heated public exchange:

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The Ukrainian delegation was asked to leave the White House, and Washington briefly suspended intelligence sharing with Kyiv. In the ensuing months, as Russia made slow but steady gains on the battlefield, Trump warmly welcomed Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska and seemed ready to push Ukraine into an unfavorable peace deal, including forcing it to give up territory.

But even as Zelenskyy sat next to Trump, his forces were preparing an operation that would reveal Ukraine's ability and ambition to take the war to Russia: Months later, drones smuggled into the country attacked Russian bombers, destroying or damaging planes worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

Since then, Kyiv has ramped up a campaign of longer-range strikes inside Russia and in areas Moscow has seized, increased production of weapons, targeted Russian air defenses, and hit oil infrastructure and the warehouses of a major retailer in a bid to ensure ordinary Russians feel the impact of the conflict.

In an embarrassment to Putin, Ukrainian drone strikes sent thick plumes of smoke billowing over St. Petersburg shortly before the opening of an international economic forum in June. Concern over Ukraine's attacks led Russian authorities to scale down the May 9 military parade commemorating the defeat of Nazi Germany. Strikes on oil refineries have caused a summer fuel crisis.

By the time Trump and Zelenskyy met at a NATO summit in July, the American president said the Ukrainian leader had "been very effective" in the war. "We've actually developed a good relationship," Trump added.

But as Ukraine's strikes have intensified, so have Russia's — and Kyiv faces major challenges in defending against them because of shortages of American Patriot air defense missiles.

In the first six months of the year, 1,396 civilians were killed in Ukraine, according to the U.N. Meanwhile, the world body said Russian authorities reported 250 civilians killed in the same period. On Monday, a strike that Ukraine said hit an oil refinery in Russia killed 13 people, according to local officials.

And while Ukraine's effort appears to have shifted the narrative about the war in Washington, it's still not clear if it will be able to push Putin toward the negotiating table.

Ukraine's strikes are aimed at undermining the idea that Russia can afford to "just let this roll," said Jack Watling, a senior research fellow at the London-based RUSI think tank.

The question of whether it will succeed depends on how much pain Ukraine can exact. "Logically, above a certain threshold, it does work but whether they can reach that threshold is an interesting question" — and one that depends at least partly on factors outside Kyiv's control, like continued European financial support, he noted.

Ukraine brings the war to Russia

While most of Ukraine's strikes have a range of less than 200 kilometers (125 miles), its longer-range attacks have increased dramatically this year. It launched three times as many of those strikes in July as it did in January, according to data from ACLED, an independent conflict monitor. Repeatedly hitting deep into Russia has forced its military to stretch air defenses over a larger area.

Many of its strikes have focused on four key categories of targets, according to an Associated Press analysis of hundreds of Ukrainian attacks this year — compiled from statements by Russian officials and state media and the Ukrainian military.

As the Iran war pushed up energy prices, leading the U.S. to ease sanctions on Russian oil, Kyiv ramped up strikes on oil infrastructure to deny the Kremlin revenue from fuel exports and force shortages on ordinary Russians. It is also striking defense manufacturing to damage Russia's long-term ability to produce weapons, targeting air defenses to clear a path for its own arms, and hitting retail warehouses to bring the effects to ordinary Russians.

— As part of the campaign against oil infrastructure, Kyiv said it hit Russia's largest oil refinery, more than 2,500 kilometers (1,550 miles) from Ukraine.

— Kyiv has also targeted defense manufacturing centers. It hit a factory making navigation systems multiple times, including with its own Flamingo missile.

— In July and August, Ukraine struck Wildberries warehouses. Kyiv said the company helps supply the Russian military. Moscow denies that.

— Many of Ukraine's strikes on Russian air defenses and radar are around Russian-held Crimea and are often carried out with drones.

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Maj. Robert "Magyar" Brovdi, the commander leading Ukraine's drone war, told the AP its strikes in Crimea are also aimed at rendering the peninsula unusable as a staging ground for Russian forces.

Starlink gives Ukraine an advantage — for now

It's not always clear if Ukraine's attacks are effective — and some may have resulted in minimal or no damage. In May and June, Ukraine said it hit several satellite, reconnaissance or signals intelligence facilities in Russia, but satellite images analyzed by AP did not show major damage.

Still, Ukraine has one advantage that can help it strip back Russian air defenses and make its drone strikes more precise.

It has access to Elon Musk's satellite communications service Starlink — which means its operators can control drones in real time in Russian-held Ukrainian territory. Russia has been blocked from using Starlink.

But Russia is also building its own version of Starlink, and is installing jamming systems that hamper Starlink connectivity, Brovdi said.

Ukraine is investing heavily in weapons production

Even before the Oval Office meeting, Ukraine scrambled to invest in new weapons — but that moment was "a real wake-up call," said a European military official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the front-line situation in detail. It became clear that U.S. support could be stopped "from one day to the next."

Ukraine doubled down on production, churning out a growing array of weapons in larger numbers and shortening traditional research and production cycles from decades to years or even months.

Even so, Ukraine is still not able to produce as many missiles as it needs. It also took Ukraine time to make systems that could target facilities precisely enough that Kyiv felt comfortable using them to strike deep into Russia, Watling said.

And while Ukraine has begun to resolve navigational issues with its missiles, such as the Flamingo, those weapons are still not as accurate — or as stealthy — as their Western analogues. That often means hundreds of drones must be fired to overwhelm Russian air defenses to allow a missile to get through.

It's an expensive and time-consuming way to wage war since only 5% to 9% of what Ukraine fires gets past Russian air defenses, according to Watling.

But, although Russia's weapons are more powerful, Zelenskyy suggested at the NATO summit that Putin is "losing the initiative" in the war as Ukraine has moved the fight from the stalled battlefield to the sky.

Sitting next to Trump at the summit, the Ukrainian leader even cracked a joke, demurring when Trump asked him if he would accept Moscow as a venue for peace talks, as Putin has suggested.

"There are a lot of Ukrainian drones in the air," Zelenskyy said. "It would be dangerous."

For Nigel Farage, success brings new pressures and a showdown with Count Binface

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Nigel Farage depicts himself as an outsider taking on the establishment, but now the tables have turned.

The leader of anti-immigration party Reform UK is running in an election as the incumbent favorite, and his main opponent is a man dressed as a garbage can.

Farage, an ally of U.S. President Donald Trump, triggered Thursday's special election in the English seaside town of Clacton by quitting his seat in the House of Commons last month. Facing awkward questions about his finances, Farage said he would let voters judge him in a "people versus the establishment" contest.

But the other main parties called it a stunt and refused to take part, leaving Farage running against an assortment of independents, jokers and single-issue candidates led by Count Binface, a comic space alien with a trash can on his head. In that field, it's Farage who looks like the mainstream politician.

Simon Usherwood, professor of politics and international studies at the Open University, said Farage's appeal is built on his image as a straight-talking individualist, "the kind of bloke you can have a pint with

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down the pub."

"It's that very charismatic aspect of Farage that is both his strength and his weakness," Usherwood said. "He has fallen into a trap of thinking that he is somehow immune from the kind of scrutiny that would undo other politicians."

Farage built his brand on Brexit and immigration

For two decades, the populist Farage has led small parties with an outsized impact on British policy.

His charisma — and, critics say, his distortions — were key to securing victory for the "leave" side in Britain's 2016 European Union membership referendum. After Brexit, Farage switched his focus to migrants crossing the English Channel in small boats, a stream that he has called an invasion.

In 2024 he was elected to Parliament at his eighth attempt, representing the strongly Brexit-backing town of Clacton in eastern England.

Becoming a lawmaker brought unwelcome scrutiny of his finances. Parliament's standards watchdog is investigating an undeclared donation of 5 million pounds (\$6.7 million) to Farage in 2024 from Christopher Harborne, a Thailand-based cryptocurrency billionaire. Farage says he didn't need to declare the money because it was a personal gift he used to fund his security and came before he was elected.

Newly elected lawmakers must declare gifts worth more than 300 pounds (\$400) received in the previous year if they are related to political activities.

Farage is also facing an investigation into his financial relationship with George Cottrell, an aristocratic crypto-gambling entrepreneur who served eight months in a U.S. prison for fraud a decade ago after offering to launder money for undercover agents posing as drug traffickers.

Cottrell, 32, remains close to Farage and has reportedly given him money for security and staff. U.K. media report that Cottrell and his mother have been interviewed by police as part of a probe into donations to Reform UK, though they have not been arrested.

Farage is standing by the man he calls "Posh George," saying Aug. 3: "I don't ditch my allies."

Farage faces off against Count Binface

The governing Labour Party and opposition Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and Greens all declined to run in Clacton. But it is still a crowded field, with almost three dozen candidates, including representatives of Rejoin EU, the Everyone is God Party and the Monster Raving Loony Party.

By far the best known is Count Binface, a frequent comedy candidate whose platform includes the pledge "I will not accept 5-million-pound gifts from crypto billionaires (on Earth)." He says his main appeal is "I'm not Nigel Farage."

Farage doesn't find it funny. He and his party claim Binface, alter ego of comedian Jon Harvey, is just another representative of a hostile political establishment.

"The establishment is using every means available, fair and foul, to undermine Farage before the country gets a chance to elect him," Gawain Towler, Farage's former press officer and now a Reform UK board member, said in a blog post.

Farage won handily in Clacton in 2024, and most observers expect him to win again. If he does, the parliamentary investigation of his finances will resume. A finding of wrongdoing could lead to Farage being suspended from Parliament and trigger yet another special election for the seat.

Reform UK has just seven lawmakers — eight if Farage is included — but led nationwide opinion polls for more than a year. But the party has recently suffered setbacks, losing a string of special elections, including one in June that brought now- Prime Minister Andy Burnham to power.

After months of flagging popularity, Labour senses a "Burnham bounce." Meanwhile, Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch has found her feet after a shaky start. And Restore Britain, a far-right party with just one lawmaker but a loud social media presence amplified by Elon Musk, is nibbling away at Reform's support.

Farage, 62, has a history of walking away from parties he led. He stepped down from both the UK Independence Party and its successor, the Brexit Party, in the last decade.

He has earned more than 2 million pounds (\$2.7 million) outside of Parliament in the past two years from speeches, promotional work and television appearances, far more than he makes as a lawmaker. He might be tempted to quit politics again if he remains under sustained pressure.

Martin Farr, a contemporary historian at Newcastle University, said Farage will probably come out of the election strengthened, at least in the eyes of his supporters.

"To his supporters, this will be an example of how he's fearless and he's prepared to fight against, as he will put it, the tyranny of the majority, the tyranny of the establishment," Farr said. "To his opponents, it suggests a thin-skinned demagogue who has reacted petulantly to scrutiny and has been embarrassed by the fact that no one else has taken his stand seriously."

Trump scoffs at Iran's demand for war reparations and other Mideast developments

By The Associated Press undefined

U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday scoffed at Iran's demand for reparations for devastation caused to the country by the U.S. and Israeli bombardment over the past five months — a demand he said Tehran's negotiators hadn't raised until now.

Here's a look at the latest developments in the Iran war and the wider Middle East. Full coverage can be found [here](#).

Trump demands Iran pay for decades of US military deaths

Trump's social media post Monday came after Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei stressed that Iran will not reopen the Strait of Hormuz until the U.S. meets its conditions.

Tehran wants the U.S. to end its blockade of Iranian ports, lift economic sanctions and release Iran's frozen assets. It also said the U.S. must pay compensation for war damage.

"It is up to the U.S. side to stop and make amends for its illegal and destructive actions," Baghaei said.

Trump responded that he is now demanding "compensation from Iran, for all of the people that they have killed and gravely wounded with their roadside bombs and many conflicts."

The U.S. government has blamed Iran-backed militants for the deaths and injuries of hundreds of Americans over several decades. They include a 1983 bombing that killed 241 U.S. military personnel at a Marine compound in Beirut and the deaths of at least 603 U.S. troops in Iraq between 2003 and 2011.

Trump said he also wants Tehran to compensate the families of Iranian protesters who were killed.

"I have instructed my representatives to put this firmly into any, and all, future negotiations," Trump said in his post.

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz — through which roughly one-fifth of the world's traded oil supplies passed before the war — has kept energy prices as a major focus of U.S. politics ahead of November's midterm elections.

Iran's supreme leader is said to want unity amid signs of division

Iran's president said the country's supreme leader is calling for "unity and cohesion" as the Islamic Republic faces economic hardships and sanctions stemming from its war with the United States.

President Masoud Pezeshkian described a nearly seven-hour meeting with Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei in an interview with Iranian state television that aired amid apparent tensions among the Islamic Republic's leaders.

Pezeshkian told the state-run IRIB that he and Khamenei discussed "people's livelihoods, the state of the market, employment, people's housing," as well as "problems that are now being created as a result of the (U.S.) sanctions." He didn't say when or where they met.

Most important, he said, was Khamenei's emphasis on unity.

"All of the enemy's plans are aimed at creating division," Pezeshkian said. "What we have to do is prevent divisions from emerging."

It is only the second time the Iranian president has said he has met with the new supreme leader since Khamenei was appointed in March following a U.S.-Israeli strike that killed his father. Khamenei, believed to have been wounded in the same attack, has not appeared in public since then.

Iran names former Revolutionary Guard leader to top security post

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Iran on Sunday appointed Mohsen Rezaei, a military adviser to its new supreme leader, to head its powerful Supreme National Security Council.

Rezaei commanded Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard from 1981 to 1997, a period that includes Iran's 1980s war with Iraq. The 71-year-old hard-liner last week threatened American forces with "serious risks and casualties" if the U.S. did not lift its blockade of Iranian ports.

Rezaei replaces Mohammad Bagher Zolghadr, who will become a political adviser to Khamenei.

While Rezaei appears willing to negotiate with the U.S. to "secure Iran's maximalist aims, including control of the Strait of Hormuz," he has also been "unwilling to present any Iranian concessions," wrote the Institute for the Study of War, a U.S.-based think tank.

Israel declares closed military zone in Taybeh

Israel's military said Monday it had declared a Christian-majority town in the occupied West Bank a closed military zone to keep out Israeli settlers and other non-residents.

The new tactic is designed to keep Israelis out of Taybeh, which has been subject to arson, vandalism and settlers coming onto private and village property. The army said Palestinian residents and journalists would be allowed unless soldiers determine their presence poses a threat. The army said its troops would detain suspects and disperse gatherings to keep the peace.

The designation comes after months of the army and police struggling to maintain order throughout the territory, where at least 87 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli settlers or soldiers in 2026, according to the Ramallah-based Palestinian Health Ministry.

Yemen says the Houthi attack on a Red Sea town Sunday killed 7

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels attacked a Red Sea port town controlled by government forces on Sunday, killing seven and injuring 30 people. Yemen's Defense Ministry — which operates under its internationally recognized government — said four military personnel and three civilians were killed.

Clashes continued Monday near the village of Taiz. The Houthi group said a 13-year-old child was killed by artillery shelling and another child was injured.

The attack on Mokha is the latest in one of the largest waves of Houthi strikes on Yemeni military positions and areas held by the Saudi-backed government since a 2022 truce. It comes as threats to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz have renewed focus on the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb Strait at its southern tip.

Colombia searches for its missing after a powerful earthquake kills more than 100

By ASTRID SUÁREZ, MANUEL RUEDA and MEGAN JANETSKY Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — Search and rescue efforts were underway early Tuesday in dozens of cities and towns in western Colombia after a powerful earthquake struck the region, killing at least 111 people and leaving many trapped under the debris of damaged and destroyed buildings.

Monday's 7.4 magnitude earthquake rattled Cali, Quibdó, Pereira and numerous other cities and towns. Around 1,600 buildings were reported damaged or collapsed. Soldiers, rescue personnel and families picked through the rubble, removing and passing large pieces of concrete by hand down lines of volunteers.

President Abelardo de la Espriella said Monday afternoon at least 111 people had died.

Families posted information about missing loved ones on citizen-run websites. By Monday night, more than 2,700 people had been reported missing.

Dana Carolina Zamora posted an image of her missing 60-year-old uncle, Miguel Ángel Zamora, cradling his dog. The farmer was living in a rural area of El Cairo, not far from the epicenter of the quake in San Jose Del Palmar.

Local authorities said 80% of El Cairo, a town of about 7,000 people, was damaged. Zamora said she worried because her uncle lived in a traditional but fragile house made of sticks and mud.

"We are afraid. We hope that is not the case, that he is all right and that it is only a communication failure. But we haven't heard anything from him," Zamora said.

Choco, the region surrounding the quake's epicenter, is one of the poorest and most neglected regions

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of Colombia, often beset by warring armed groups. Much of Choco is accessible only by boat, through the jungle or by airplane. Little was known about the extent of the damage there.

De la Espriella traveled to Choco's capital, Quibdó, on Monday night to assess the damage and announced he had mobilized "the entire military and police apparatus" to respond, deploying engineers, rescue workers and search dogs. He announced rental subsidies for those whose homes were damaged while they undergo repairs.

"Choco will never again be the 'land of the forgotten,'" he said.

The earthquake presents the first major test for de la Espriella, who was sworn in as Colombia's leader on Friday. De la Espriella is a divisive figure because of his pledge of an all-out crackdown on criminal groups.

The U.S. State Department announced it would provide \$15.5 million for emergency shelter, food and other aid. Governments across Latin America also lined up to help.

The earthquake left many in the Andean nation unnerved after two back-to-back quakes devastated neighboring Venezuela in late June, destroying hundreds of buildings and killing more than 6,300 people.

Many Colombians were only beginning to grapple with the disaster's longer-term consequences.

Mónica Sánchez owns a small company that makes work uniforms. Her home city, Pereira, was one of the worst hit, and a wall inside the factory collapsed. Sánchez and her 12 workers were able to get outside just in time.

"It was shocking — the city fell down around us," she said.

What to watch Tuesday: Primaries in Wisconsin and Minnesota showcase Democratic divide

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and TOM BEAUMONT Associated Press

The latest battle over the Democratic ideological divide this year shifts to the upper Midwest on Tuesday as nominating contests for governor in Wisconsin and U.S. senator in Minnesota pit left-wing candidates against more traditional ones.

In Wisconsin, state Rep. Francesca Hong, a self-described democratic socialist, is the front-runner for the party's nomination for governor in a swing state where winning the governor's mansion is central to Democrats' hopes for 2028 and beyond. In Minnesota, Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan is running for the nomination for an open Senate seat against centrist Democratic Rep. Angie Craig.

The left vs. center theme is on display in Democratic primaries in multiple states voting Tuesday, with other significant races in places like Alabama and South Carolina.

Here's what to watch Tuesday night.

Does the left keep surging in swing states?

Left-leaning candidates have consistently won primaries, capitalizing on Democratic voter frustration at party leadership. Most wins came in reliably liberal urban areas, ranging from New York City to Denver. But last week, progressive candidate Abdul El-Sayed broke new ground by winning the party's nomination for a competitive Senate race in swing state Michigan.

Now Hong and, to a lesser extent, Flanagan are trying to claim even more purple terrain for the left.

President Donald Trump won Wisconsin in 2024 and its state legislature has long been in the hands of the GOP, but Democrats have been bullish about reversing that trend. Hong has maintained a steady lead in public polls against Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley, despite his endorsement by the state's current governor, Democrat Tony Evers. Hong is also helped by the presence on the ballot of multiple more traditional candidates who will split votes against her, including former Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, who dropped out of the race late last month.

Hong has a trail of controversial statements, including vocal support for defunding the police in 2020, a position she now disavows. Prominent Democratic strategists fear that she can win the primary by appealing to the party's base but is a risk in the general election. The winner of the Democratic primary will face Republican Rep. Tom Tiffany in November.

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The stakes are high in the race for Democrats nationally, not just Wisconsin residents. Democrats are hoping to win control of the state legislature, and the governor's mansion would give them an ability to redraw Wisconsin's map to counter the edge the GOP built up in this year's mid-decade redistricting. Without that, their path to a House majority in 2028 becomes challenging.

Democrats will also likely need to win Wisconsin to retake the White House in 2028, and the governor will have a key role in certifying the winner of the election. In 2020, Trump tried to claim Wisconsin despite it being won by Joe Biden, only to be blocked in part by Evers. Tiffany, who has been endorsed by Trump, supported the president's attempt to overturn the election.

Democrats have reliably won Minnesota during the Trump years, but by shrinking margins, and Republicans believe they have a shot at claiming the open Senate seat given the primary battle there. Craig represents a swing district and has taken more moderate stances, and Flanagan has slammed her for being supported by establishment Democrats and being too accommodating to Trump, especially on immigration.

Lamont won as an insurgent. Now he's establishment

When the Democratic establishment was worrying about insurgents from the left a generation ago, it fretted about the man who is currently Connecticut's governor, Ned Lamont.

A wealthy former entrepreneur, Lamont was an obscure Greenwich selectman when he mounted a primary challenge against the state's senior senator, Joe Lieberman, in 2006. Lamont argued that the centrist Lieberman, who had been the party's vice presidential nominee in 2000, wasn't a loyal enough Democrat and leaned too far to the right.

Lamont won that primary, but Lieberman ran in the general election as an independent and kept his Senate seat. Lamont kept running for office and eventually was elected governor in 2018. Now 72, Lamont is being challenged from the left by State Rep. Josh Elliott, 41, who alleges the governor hasn't fought Trump hard enough and that the solidly Democratic state deserves better than Lamont's fiscally moderate approach.

For months, Lamont largely ignored Elliott and focused on burnishing his own image. But in a sign of a potentially tightening race, he's begun to advertise against his challenger.

An incumbent cast as too old and too tied to big money

Also in Connecticut, Rep. John Larson faces his first primary challenge after 14 terms in the House from former Hartford mayor Luke Bronin.

The race follows familiar contours, as Bronin, 47, argues that Larson, 78, is too old and too tied to big money donors. Larson argues his experience and seniority put him in the best position to deliver for his voters.

There is also a growing list of longtime Democrats upset by younger challengers. Will one more name get added on Tuesday night?

In a Wisconsin House district, a rematch is likely

Democratic voters in a swath of western Wisconsin are expected to renominate Rebecca Cooke to face two-term Republican Rep. Derek Van Orden in Wisconsin's 3rd District, setting up a rematch for one of the more competitive seats in the U.S. House.

In 2024, Cooke, a nonprofit executive and small business owner, lost narrowly to Van Orden, who was elected in 2022 and has been a devout supporter of Trump.

The district is a mix of Wisconsin farmland where Republicans have improved over the past decade and mini-metros with state universities giving them small but influential Democratic bases.

Cooke, of Eau Claire, faces Eau Claire City Council President Emily Berge on Tuesday, but Cooke has Democratic institutional support, including from the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. Cooke has also raised roughly \$8.6 million, far exceeding Berge's roughly \$729,000.

Van Orden is unopposed in Tuesday's Republican primary.

In South Carolina, it's a famous name vs. experience

For a state with little mystery expected in November, South Carolina is again in the spotlight, this time holding primaries to nominate candidates for a special U.S. Senate election.

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South Carolina voters voted on June 9 for nominees to statewide office, and then cast ballots in the June 23 primary runoffs for contests where no candidate reached 50% of the vote. And there were several, including GOP nominations for governor and nominations for several congressional seats.

Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham's death on July 11 at age 71 of an aortic rupture to his heart ensured South Carolina voters were not finished deciding who would be on the November ballot. Voters on Tuesday will be deciding who will succeed the four-term Graham as the Republican nominee in the GOP-heavy Southern state.

They will be choosing from Graham's sister Darline, who was appointed to fill the vacancy by Gov. Henry McMaster and who has been endorsed by Trump, as well as U.S. Reps. Russell Fry and Ralph Norman, former Rep. Mark Sanford and six other candidates.

If no one reaches 50% of the vote Tuesday -- that's right -- there will be another runoff, this one on Aug. 25.

Trump pivots back to sanctions for Iran as other strategies to end his war fizzle

By JOSH BOAK and FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump likes to say that he started his war with Iran after 50 years of economic pressure had failed to stop its nuclear weapons ambitions — but he's now betting that another financial squeeze can bring an end to that war.

The Trump administration is hoping that months of bombing have pushed Iran's economy to a breaking point that will force its leadership to cave to demands to end its nuclear program and fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz to oil and natural gas tankers.

The president on Monday said that since Iran is seeking compensation as part of any peace talks, he now intends to demand the same for the U.S. side. It's part of a larger pivot this weekend by Trump to argue that Iran is now on the cusp of financially collapsing, even though it has already endured decades of financial sanctions, which are often a longer-term strategy rather than an immediate tool of warfare that can halt a conflict.

The shift comes as U.S. stockpiles of key weapons have dwindled and as stop-start talks seem again to have stalled. But Trump insists the pressure can lead to a breakthrough.

"Yeah, they can make trouble, but they're broke," Trump told reporters. "They have no money. You know, Iran is broke, totally broke. And, they're not paying their soldiers. They have inflation of 300%."

Inflation is running high in Iran, although Trump's estimates were higher than what administration officials have been citing to reporters. But the prospect of a longer war also carries inflation risks for other nations, including the U.S. — where the war and higher gasoline prices are unpopular.

Crude oil prices climbed on Monday as investors interpreted Trump's comments as a sign that fewer ships would be traversing the Strait of Hormuz, continuing to limit global supplies of gasoline, jet fuel, natural gas and other forms of energy. The Iran war largely closed the waterway involved in shipping roughly 20% of global oil supplies before the conflict — and attempts to reopen the strait have been short-lived as it has become a source of leverage for the Iranians in negotiations.

Iran does not appear to be publicly intimidated by the prospect of more financial sanctions.

"Whenever Washington proves itself incapable of pursuing diplomacy, it retreats into sanctions; and whenever those sanctions fail to produce results, it simply increases the dose," said Esmail Baqaei, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, on social media. "The real risk is that American politicians, clinging to this bad habit, will instead strangle their own remaining chances of a less humiliating exit from a crisis of their own making."

The White House has called this 'Operation Economic Fury'

The president didn't say what additional financial pressure would be applied, but the administration has since April 16 been engaged in what it calls "Operation Economic Fury" against Iran. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent called this component the "financial equivalent" of a bombing campaign as the countries

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that buy oil from Iran or bank with it could be sanctioned.

But one problem with this pivot is that the sanctions are unable to bite as quickly as the impact of the largely shuttered strait, said Richard Nephew, a senior research scholar at Columbia University who helped direct Iran sanctions strategy in the Obama administration.

Nephew stressed that the value of sanctions as a tool is limited because Trump has not articulated clear strategic goals for the war, at times stressing that it can't have a nuclear weapon, then emphasizing the strait and then talking about ballistic missiles. Instead, Trump has engaged in a massive series of aerial assaults and a level of destruction that has not produced the quick end that he initially promised.

"Economic pressure is a possible element in his strategy, but he's yet to explain the purpose," Nephew said. "Trump has systematically weakened his own hand through his inadequate use of force, inarticulate elucidation of an objective, and vacillation on negotiations."

Still, the sanctions and the ongoing U.S. naval blockade of Iranian ports give the U.S. economic and financial leverage, said Juan Zarate, a deputy national security adviser in the George W. Bush administration. Zarate said the U.S. sanctions threatening third-party countries doing business with Iran also have an impact. But these things take time, he noted.

"The ultimate question will be how far the United States is willing to go to constrict Iran's oil trade and threaten third countries with severe sanctions -- and whether it has the patience to test whether the economic pain will change the regime's behavior," Zarate said.

Past presidents used sanctions. Trump has said they didn't go far enough.

Trump's latest pivot to economic issues with Iran is something of a flip-flop. Trump has long derided past presidents who used sanctions to limit Iran's economic ability to pay for its military and nuclear development. In a speech last week in Las Vegas, he defended the bombing, missiles and drone attacks that began on Feb. 28 by indicating that the sanctions from previous administrations that date back to November 1979 had failed to succeed.

"It's been 47 years, but really, it's been 50 years because they've been saying 47 for three years, it's been 50 years," Trump said. "And no other president has done what you should have done a long time ago, because Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon, can't have it."

The Iranian economy has suffered gravely because of the war, with the International Monetary Fund estimating the overall economy shrinks by 5.4% and the Iranian government recently reporting an annual inflation rate of 88.6%. The U.S. Treasury Department said average loadings of Iranian oil have decreased from 1.8 million barrels per day before the war to less than 500,000 barrels per day over the past month.

The U.S. economy — the world's largest — has continued to grow, but inflation is elevated and borrowing costs have risen in ways that have hurt Trump's popularity and led to disapproval of the Iran war.

A senior U.S. official, insisting on anonymity to discuss strategy, said the U.S. military has set back Iran's ability to produce, sell and ship oil and other energy resources. The administration sees the naval blockade of the strait and sanctions as effective and views Trump as having additional options that can be cranked harder in the weeks and months ahead.

Trump is essentially arguing that U.S. voters are better able to tolerate any economic inconveniences than Iranians, who have been in a state of economic hardship for years.

"It's not just what the military can do — we've got the most powerful economy in the world as well," Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Monday in a joint appearance with Bessent. "And when you've got a motivated treasury secretary who can pull a lot of levers because he knows how to do it, you can put a lot of pressure on adversaries."

As Trump Media scraps some businesses, it's doubling down on Truth Social and the president

By BERNARD CONDON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The president's media company has tried its hand at a half-dozen new lines of business to lift its stock, but nothing has worked.

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Now it's getting back to its roots.

In a conference call with investors Monday, the company behind Truth Social said it will be unwinding much of its expansion and doubling down on its original media business by selling a form of White House access, a move that has raised big ethical questions among Democrats and government watchdogs.

Trump started Truth Social after he was kicked off Twitter and Facebook, but the two reinstated him more than three years ago, so the company has had to transform itself. Instead of a "free speech" forum, it now acts more like a "hear it here first" site, a second White House press office where people get scoops from the president on everything from the Iran war to tariffs to the future of the U.S. central bank.

But shares of the parent company, Trump Media & Technology, kept falling so it decided to become more than a media company, and branched into unrelated industries like online betting, finance, investment funds, buying and storing bitcoin and nuclear energy.

Now it's returning to its original mission, with a twist: It's offering a special new service that grants fast access to President Trump's posts for a fee.

The new business could double or triple revenue

In a conference call with investors, the company's new chief executive, Kevin McGurn, said it had already signed up several high speed trading firms, each paying between \$60,000 and \$100,000 a month.

"We're in the early innings," said McGurn, noting that the potential market included data center companies, news organizations and developers of large language models, not just traders, and he was talking to them all.

McGurn has rejected the idea that the new business is an ethics quagmire as good-government groups have said, noting that other social media companies provide a similar service. As for the White House, it denies conflicts even exist between Trump the president and Trump the businessman where his private interests may influence his public policy.

Traders on Wall Street can make big money if they get White House news faster and so are signing up — 10 in the week since the service began, which may seem like a tiny number but translates into a major boost for the company. The monthly customers collectively are paying as much as \$7 million and \$12 million annually — two to three times the revenue the company took in for all its businesses last year.

Trump Media needs the money — and a lot more.

It's lost more than \$1 billion since the start of last year, and its earnings report released Monday for the three months ended June 30 showed relief is not on the horizon. It lost another \$238 million, though much of that was due to paper losses from the plunging value of its bitcoin holdings.

Time is running out

The clock is ticking to fix the company.

Trump Media depends partly on outside funding, specifically \$1 billion raised from lenders with a special agreement that allows them to get paid back early. They can demand the company buy back their convertible notes on Nov. 30, 18 months before the loans mature.

That cashout date is just after the November midterms, which could impact the company should Democrats get control of Congress. Several current members, including Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, say they will hold formal investigations of Trump's businesses, including Trump Media, should they take over.

A third deadline is farther out, but the most consequential — the end of Trump's presidency.

Trump is a big draw for the platform's users, but it's not clear how many will read his posts after he leaves office, much less why traders will pay as much \$1.2 million a year for sneak peeks at his posts if he's no longer able to declare on the site that the Strait of Hormuz is open or that he's hiking tariffs on dozens of countries.

Would Vance in the White House help Truth Social?

The special, high-speed service, called Truth API, includes posts from other top posters on the site, but no one comes near the president in popularity. He has 13 million followers. The second biggest poster, his son, Donald Jr., has 7.5 million.

Other heavily followed posters include Trump administration members who also may fall in popularity

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once out of office, including FBI director Kash Patel and Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

A wild card is JD Vance, who will be out of his vice presidential job in 2028 but, if he runs for president and wins, may continue to post on the site where he has five million followers.

The other business line that McGurn is choosing to hold onto is nuclear fusion, a technology still not commercially available but that is getting a big boost by the current administration.

The U.S. government has a helping hand

In June, the U.S. Department of Energy released a "road map" committing to government funding to speed the development of nuclear fusion as a national priority and calling for public-private partnerships.

Despite the help, investors still aren't convinced Trump Media has a rosy future.

After closing at about \$62 shortly after it went public in 2024, the stock has plunged into the single digits, wiping out billions in stock market value.

On Monday, Trump Media dove again, down 8% to \$9.39 a share.

US prosecutors want Tate brothers to remain in custody as they fight extradition to the UK

By DAVID FISCHER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Prosecutors want social media influencers Andrew and Tristan Tate to remain in federal custody, arguing Monday that the brothers are a flight risk and a danger to the community, as they fight extradition to the United Kingdom, where the brothers are accused of rape and sex trafficking.

Three days after defense attorneys filed a motion for release, prosecutors filed their response in Miami federal court, where a hearing on Thursday will determine if the brothers should stay in jail or be released during what could be a monthslong extradition process.

The brothers have repeatedly denied wrongdoing.

The detention hearing is likely to be the first time the Tates leave the Federal Detention Center in Miami since making a brief court appearance two days after their July 18 arrest. The Tates have become among the world's most polarizing internet personalities with their promotion of wealth, male dominance and misogyny through their social media empire. The new allegations are the latest in the Tates' long-running international legal saga spanning the U.S., Britain and Romania.

Prosecutors claim a 'heightened risk of flight'

According to the U.S. Attorney's Office filing, the Tates should be detained pending their extradition hearing because they cannot overcome the strong presumption against bail in international extradition cases.

The serious pending U.K. charges involving human trafficking and violent rapes and assaults against multiple victims, along with allegations in Romania that the Tates attempted to intimidate witnesses, present a clear public safety concern, prosecutors say.

"That the Tates also claim to maintain multiple passports and identities, have access to excessive wealth and influence in numerous countries, and are stridently unwilling to voluntarily return to face prosecution in the United Kingdom, collectively demonstrate a heightened risk of flight that no amount of bond could overcome," the filing says.

The defense motion filed Friday acknowledges there is a presumption against bond in extradition proceedings but argues that release can be granted in special circumstances. It says the Tates' high profile makes it nearly impossible for them to flee, and that they regularly post updates about their locations on social media.

While prosecutors call the brothers a flight risk, their attorneys said they have proved they are not by complying with all pretrial restrictions in Romania, where they are accused of luring women for sexual exploitation.

The U.K. has until mid-September to provide evidence to the State Department to support extradition, meaning the brothers could spend months in FDC Miami before the proceedings are resolved, the defense motion says. No date has been set for an extradition hearing. They are being held in a special unit for their own protection.

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Legal troubles follow the Tate brothers

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

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

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

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

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

The Tates' attorneys have said the Romanian court has granted a U.K. request for extradition that will take effect after Romanian proceedings conclude.

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

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

Tristan Tate, 38, has worked with his brother on multiple businesses, including the production of online webcam pornography.

Magnitude 7.4 quake rocks western Colombia, killing at least 111 people

By ASTRID SUÁREZ, MEGAN JANETSKY and JUAN DÍAZ Associated Press

CALI, Colombia (AP) — A powerful 7.4 magnitude earthquake struck western Colombia on Monday, killing at least 111 people, damaging hundreds of buildings and leaving many trapped under debris while their loved ones and rescue workers searched through rubble.

Search teams and civilians picked through the remains of destroyed buildings in the country's third-largest city, Cali, passing large pieces of concrete and other rubble down a long line of volunteers.

"Our building has basically been left in ruins, and the building next to ours? Completely collapsed," said Álvaro López, who cradled his dog as he watched the search. The desperate scene recalled the searches still ongoing in neighboring Venezuela weeks after that country was devastated by two powerful earthquakes.

Besides Cali, the quake ravaged cities across western Colombia, including Pereira, Quibdó and Manizales, and was felt in neighboring Ecuador and Panama. The epicenter was in San Jose del Palmar, a community of about 4,800 people in the Choco region about 250 miles (400 kilometers) west of Bogotá, the U.S. Geological Survey said.

Colombia's President Abelardo de la Espriella said at least 87 people were injured and around 1,600 buildings were damaged, including at least 61 that completely collapsed. He declared an emergency to expedite funding for the quake recovery.

"We aren't going to leave people alone. They are in our hearts and we are going to tend to people with our full determination," he said.

Most powerful quake recorded in Colombia this century

Colombia's Geological Service said Monday's quake was the country's strongest recorded "in the 21st century," and that it was followed by several aftershocks.

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Colombia's Pacific region around the epicenter lies along the "Ring of Fire," the line of seismic faults encircling the Pacific Ocean where most of the world's earthquakes occur. The Pacific, particularly the Choco region, is one of Colombia's poorest, nestled in dense jungle. Much of Choco is only reachable by boat or plane, which may pose difficulty in assessing the wider toll.

Local authorities said the death toll included at least 40 people who were killed in the Risaralda region, where Pereira is located, and 27 people in the Valle del Cauca region, where Cali is located, including three children. Authorities also confirmed nine people killed in Choco, two in the Caldas region and a 73-year-old in the Antioquia region. It was not immediately clear where the other 32 people died.

The earthquakes left many in the Andean nation unnerved after two back-to-back quakes devastated neighboring Venezuela in late June, destroying hundreds of buildings and killing more than 6,300 people.

By Monday afternoon, people had begun reporting their loved ones missing on digital databases just as civilians did following Venezuela's earthquakes. One database had more than 2,000 people, mostly in Cali and Pereira, with the number steadily climbing.

Photos of the missing included a young mother and her baby in Pereira; another showed an 80-year-old woman in Cali whose family was desperately looking for details after her building collapsed.

Cities left devastated

Jorge Moncayo, a 64-year-old taxi driver in Cali, said he saw plumes of dust shoot up across the city as buildings collapsed. Residents and rescue workers were searching the rubble for survivors. The local government said that people remained trapped in a number of the city's 380 damaged buildings.

"My entire house shook. I've never lived through such a powerful earthquake," he said. "We're thanking God we're alive."

Little was known about the extent of the damage in Choco, a remote region where officials reported dozens of injured people and damaged buildings but few other details. Phone signals were out in many parts of the region's capital, Quibdo. The town closest to the earthquake's epicenter, San Jose del Palmar, has no airport, and is located on top of a mountain ridge along a highway linking the cities of Cali and Pereira.

In Pereira, further south in the coffee-producing mountains of Colombia, photos and videos on local media showed pieces of the airport ceiling falling onto travelers taking shelter and screaming. People ran through rubble and plumes of dust, and residents said collapsed stores, residential buildings and homes lined the city. Pereira Mayor Mauricio Salazar told a local radio station there were at least 15 collapsed buildings where people were feared trapped.

In nearby Manizales, one of the towers of the neo-Gothic cathedral collapsed and fell on the nave. Mayor Jorge Eduardo Rojas asked residents to stay outside in case of aftershocks. Authorities said flights were suspended at the airports in Manizales, Quibdo, Armenia, Cartago, Buenaventura and Pereira as they assessed damage.

Offers of aid pour in from across the Americas

Small earthquakes, known as "temblores," are common in central and western Colombia, but those above 6.0 magnitude are rare. In 1999, a 6.2 magnitude quake near the city of Armenia killed more than 1,100 people.

Response to the earthquake presents the first major challenge for de la Espriella, a Trump ally who was sworn in as president over the weekend. A divisive figure because of his pledge of an all-out crackdown on criminal groups, de la Espriella said he had personally taken charge of the government's response to the emergency.

On Monday night, the U.S. State Department announced it would provide \$15.5 million for emergency shelter, food and other earthquake response aid. Governments across Latin America also lined up to help.

El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum — whose countries were among the largest providers of aid to Venezuela following its recent crisis — said they were ready to assist Colombia.

"From El Salvador, we are in communication and ready to provide immediate support with our rescue teams, medical personnel, paramedics, supplies, or any other assistance that our Colombian brothers and

sisters deem necessary," Bukele said.

Chilean President José Antonio Kast said Chile, one of the region's most earthquake-prone countries, "knows the pain and the challenge left by earthquakes" and pledged help.

Canada puts the military on standby as British Columbia wildfires kill 1 and displace thousands

By ROB GILLIES and JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Canada put its military on standby Monday to help battle deadly wildfires in British Columbia as a local mayor warned that one of the blazes had wreaked destruction on his community. A woman has died and some 20,000 people have fled their homes.

For days, scores of wildfires have burned across the province, nearly half of them out of control in hot, windy weather and prolonged drought. Thousands have fled on jammed roads as officials said even more communities could be threatened.

The mayor of Summerland — home to about 12,000 people, which was ordered evacuated on Saturday night along with about 8,000 people in and around nearby Peachland — warned that the affected areas remained too dangerous to enter and that it was impossible to determine the scope of the destruction.

The blaze, known as the Bald Range wildfire, remained out of control after racing toward Summerland and other communities along Okanagan Lake over the weekend.

"We need to brace ourselves for that bad news when it's time to go back. Everybody will know somebody who has lost a home," Summerland Mayor Doug Holmes said.

Canada's defense minister says the military is ready to respond

Defense Minister David McGuinty said the Canadian Armed Forces were in constant contact with provincial and federal officials and were ready to respond if British Columbia formally requested assistance. The federal government has already approved provincial requests for help with shelter and accommodations.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said an 80-year-old woman died while trying to escape the fire near Summerland. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said the death was heartbreaking and that the federal government would continue supporting British Columbia.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said the cause of the wildfire is under investigation.

The British Columbia Wildfire Service said the fire had grown to about 60 square miles (156 square kilometers). Officials warned clearer skies and direct sunlight could increase fire activity.

Hugh Murdoch, an incident commander on the fire, said about 99 wildland firefighters and 120 structure protection personnel were working the blaze, along with heavy equipment and helicopters. He said 100 firefighters from Mexico were expected to join crews Tuesday morning.

Ravi Parmer, British Columbia forestry minister, said 19 helicopters were assigned to the Bald Range wildfire but that its intensity made it impossible to halt the blaze.

"We could have put a thousand more helicopters and a thousand more people on the ground, and it wouldn't have made a difference," he said.

British Columbia Wildfire Service spokesperson Nicole Bonnett said the smoke lingering over the fire has reduced visibility, limiting the use of air tankers and water-skimming aircraft.

Bonnett said the blaze has been fueled primarily by extremely dry conditions rather than wind, and grew explosively Friday, reaching 19 square miles (50 square kilometers) within three hours.

Evacuated residents face uncertain prospects for return

Graham Statt, chief administrative officer of Summerland, said residents will be allowed to return to their neighborhoods in phases but he did not say when.

Holmes, the mayor, was more blunt, saying residents would not be going home "anytime soon" and that the process could not begin until the fire was brought under control.

Kyla Gaudioso, a resident of the tiny community of Faulder, said her home was likely destroyed as she had received a photo showing the ridge where it stood engulfed in flames

She described the community's evacuation as "pandemonium" and said she was now staying with a

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friend in the town of Penticton.

"It doesn't really seem real," she said. "I have to see it to believe it."

Canada has endured increasingly destructive wildfire seasons in recent years, forcing mass evacuations and repeatedly sending smoke across large parts of the country and neighboring United States.

Summerland — a farming community that grows cherries, peaches and apples, and also boasts some vineyards — is in a mountainous area where past wildfires have occurred.

Holmes said the blaze started around 5:30 p.m. Friday and was within the city limits in just a couple of hours. By midnight, it was so out of control that people were unable to flee on the highway north, so they began evacuating to the south, he said.

"People said they've never seen a fire move so fast," he said.

Firefighters still battling blazes across the US West

In California, evacuations have been ordered for areas along the famous Big Sur coast as a wildfire burns in the nearby steep, rugged mountains. The Timber Fire in Monterey County started Sunday and had grown to about 2 square miles (5 square kilometers) by midday Monday, according to Cal Fire.

By Monday, a quick-moving blaze just north of Reno, Nevada, had forced about 5,500 people to evacuate, according to the U.S. Wildland Fire Service. Fueled by hot, dry and windy conditions, the Bug Fire grew to nearly 27 square miles (69 square kilometers) after igniting Saturday in California.

Firefighters in Spokane, Washington, have strengthened containment lines around three destructive blazes in recent days, allowing some evacuated residents to return home.

Washington Gov. Bob Ferguson said he visited some of the burned neighborhoods and met a couple who lost everything. They told him that losing their home was terrible, but losing the community was worse, he said.

"It's our job to rebuild that community," Ferguson said.

Oregon, meanwhile, is experiencing its worst year on record for land burned by large wildfires, with 3,671 square miles (9,508 square kilometers) scorched, said Northwest Interagency Coordination Center spokesperson Jean Nelson-Dean. That beats the state's previous record set in 2024.

Ben Jones, good ol' boy 'Dukes of Hazzard' actor and 2-term US House member, dies at 84

By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

Ben Jones, who played the good ol' boy mechanic in "The Dukes of Hazzard" TV series and parlayed his fame into a political career and two terms in the U.S. House, has died. He was 84.

Jones had a heart attack in his home Sunday in Washington, Virginia, as he was waiting to watch his beloved Atlanta Braves play baseball, his wife, Alma Viator, said on social media. Rappahannock County Sheriff Connie Compton confirmed his death.

Jones' fame came from his role as Cooter Davenport, the mechanic who got the Duke boys out of jams as they tried to do the right thing and fight the corrupt Boss Hogg in the fictional Hazzard County, Georgia.

After playing Cooter for all seven seasons of the series from 1979 to 1985, Jones turned to politics and was elected to the U.S. House from a district near Atlanta in 1988. The Democrat served two terms before he was redistricted out of the seat.

Jones was born in North Carolina and in college got involved in acting and civil rights, he wrote in his autobiography "Redneck Boy in the Promised Land: The Confessions of 'Crazy Cooter.'"

Acting took over his life. Jones performed in numerous stage productions and had a few minor TV and movie roles in Atlanta during the 1970s before his life-defining break came on a TV show Jones defended as a modern-day morality tale and a fine example of Southern values.

For seven seasons, Jones was one of a small band of friends and family helping Bo and Luke Duke in "The Dukes of Hazzard." The cousins were on probation for running moonshine and were constantly trying to clear their names and stop the crooked and powerful Boss Hogg from stealing or cheating.

The Duke boys drove a modified 1969 Dodge Charger called the General Lee with a Confederate flag on

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its roof. Cooter owned "Cooter's Garage" in the town square. Nearly every episode involved a car chase with jumps and stunts and a patrol car badly in need of repairs.

Cooter was often on the CB radio in his pickup truck saying "Breaker one, Breaker one. I might be crazy but I ain't dumb. Crazy Cooter coming at you."

"The Dukes of Hazzard" was a hit for CBS and its popularity never waned. It went into syndication and later became a prominent fixture on cable's The Nashville Network.

Jones also credited the series with pulling him out of a self-destructive, alcoholic lifestyle that led to the failure of several marriages.

"It was like being in a Beatles movie," Jones said. "Our lives changed."

Tom Wopat, who played Luke Duke, said Jones was an integral part of making the series work.

"Ben Jones was a fine friend and a fierce advocate of all the best things we can offer in the entertainment business. He will be sorely missed," Wopat wrote on Instagram.

After "The Dukes of Hazzard," Jones went into politics. He kept his aw shucks personality, but took the issues seriously. In his four years in Washington, Jones was known as a Democrat who could buck his party. He was liberal on social issues and conservative on economics.

But even in politics, he made a splash. After losing in 1992 in his redrawn district, Jones ran for Congress again in 1994. He lost to Newt Gingrich in the elections that elevated the Republican to the Speaker's Office.

Jones would file an ethics complaint that Gingrich used tax-deductible donations to fund his partisan college course leading to a House reprimand and Gingrich's decision to leave the body.

Jones always embraced his role as Cooter. After moving to Virginia, he would open at least three "Cooter's" country stores in Nashville and Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, and near his home. They sold plenty of T-shirts, key chains and insulated tumblers and included Dukes of Hazzard memorabilia like one of the 300 or so General Lee cars used and abused in the TV series.

The show and Cooter lived on because it was funny, had plenty of action and car chases and had a good, family-friendly heart, Jones told the Richmond Times-Dispatch at a 2001 car show where he played in a band, signed autographs and met fans.

"The show reflects the values of the heartland of America. The good guys always win," Jones said.

Former gang leader accused of ordering Tupac Shakur's killing goes on trial. Here's what to know

By JESSICA HILL Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The trial of a man accused of orchestrating the killing of Tupac Shakur started this week with jury selection, almost 30 years after the rap legend was gunned down near the Las Vegas Strip.

Attorneys began vetting potential jurors Monday for the case, which centers on one of the hip-hop world's defining moments and enduring mysteries. Seven potential jurors were asked to return Thursday afternoon as attorneys continue the selection process Tuesday and Wednesday. A total of 16 jurors will be selected for the monthlong trial.

Duane "Keffe D" Davis, 63, has pleaded not guilty to murder with a deadly weapon with the intent to promote, further or assist a criminal gang in the rapper's death. At the time, Davis was a leader of the South Side Compton Crips in California.

Family members of Shakur were among those who gathered at a Las Vegas courthouse for the beginning of jury selection, which could continue through much of this week.

"Whoever had anything to do with it, whoever set it up, whoever had any hand in it should be locked up in prison," said Shakur's cousin, Kendrick Lesane.

Thirty years after his death, Shakur remains a cultural icon and is considered one of the most influential and versatile rappers of all time.

Shakur's death at age 25 came as his fourth solo album had sold 5 million copies.

He was in a BMW on Sept. 7, 1996, with music mogul Marion "Suge" Knight when a white Cadillac pulled up at a red light. Shakur, who was in the passenger seat, was shot multiple times and died six days later,

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while Knight survived.

The case went cold until recent years, when public statements and a tell-all memoir from Davis in 2019 revived it. He was arrested in 2023.

Trial is unlikely to answer who killed Tupac Shakur

Davis sat next to his attorney during the trial in Clark County District Court while Nevada Judge Carli Kierny asked a group of 75 potential jurors whether they have any medical issues, language barriers or conflicts with serving in a trial scheduled to last about a month.

Binu Palal, the county's chief deputy district attorney, listed names of people involved in the case to see if potential jurors were familiar with them, including Knight and Sean "Diddy" Combs.

Questions posed to the potential jurors included their favorite books and movies, if they had any connections to a gang, and whether they had listened to Shakur's music. One man said he used to.

Meanwhile, Davis sat quietly and appeared calm, occasionally whispering to his defense attorney, Michael Sanft, as jurors responded to questions.

Davis said that if he's convicted, he wants the judge to decide his sentence, not the jury.

Prosecutors are not accusing Davis of pulling the trigger that night, and the trial likely won't confirm who did. Instead, prosecutors plan to show that Davis made the calls that led to Shakur's death and provided the gun.

Davis co-wrote the memoir "Compton Street Legends," which vividly describes the shooting. The book says Davis obtained a handgun from an associate and tossed it into the back seat of the Cadillac but did not say who fired the fatal shots.

Orlando "Baby Lane" Anderson, Davis' nephew, has long been considered the suspect who pulled the trigger, but charges were never brought against him. He died two years after Shakur in an unrelated gang shootout in Compton.

Two others — Deandrae "Freaky" Smith and Terry "Bubble Up" Brown — were in the car with Davis and Anderson, but they have since died as well.

A three-decade wait for answers about Tupac's killing

Fans of the rapper expressed relief in social media posts that the trial was finally underway.

"This case been hanging over hip hop for so long, feels strange to see it actually moving," said one commenter on a Reddit forum for Tupac fans.

"He'd only be 55 if he was alive now," another Reddit user wrote. "Brings it home how young he was, imagine how much music he would have made by now, how many movies."

Who is expected to testify in Las Vegas trial

Prosecutors expect to call between 35 and 45 witnesses, ranging from people who saw Shakur moments before he was shot to those who were in both Shakur and Davis' orbits at the time.

The witness list includes former Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman and members of Shakur's family. However, not everyone on the list will testify.

Prosecutors expect to call Denvonta Lee, who was affiliated with the South Side Crips.

In grand jury testimony, Lee said that rival gangs, the Crips and Mob Piru, were tied to dueling record labels Death Row Records and Bad Boy Records.

Though he wasn't there that night, Lee also testified that Anderson didn't have a clear shot, so Smith took the gun and did the shooting. He also said Davis was in charge and gave the gun to Anderson, who then gave it to Smith.

Davis' defense attorney is expected to call a handful of witnesses, including one expert in the area of false confessions and coercive interrogation techniques.

Celebrities could be at the Tupac trial

One of the potential witnesses is in a California prison. Knight is serving a 28-year sentence for running over and killing a Compton businessman in January 2015. He previously said he would not testify in Davis' case.

As the only other living eyewitness who was in one of the two vehicles that night, Knight's testimony

could be key.

Sanft, Davis' defense attorney, told The Associated Press that Knight would be a good witness for Davis' defense if he testifies.

Fans have also speculated whether Combs will testify, but his name isn't on any witness lists. He is serving a four-year prison sentence in New Jersey following his conviction of prostitution-related charges.

In his book, Davis alleged Combs wanted Knight and Shakur dead and offered Davis money to kill them. Combs has long denied any involvement.

Wisconsin and Minnesota primaries next to feature progressive clash with Democratic establishment

By SCOTT BAUER and JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Progressive candidates for governor in Wisconsin and U.S. Senate in Minnesota are making their final pushes ahead of Tuesday's election, increasing the pressure on a Democratic establishment that has spent the year on its heels.

The primaries come a week after Abdul El-Sayed narrowly defeated Rep. Haley Stevens in Michigan's divisive and costly U.S. Senate primary. El-Sayed's victory has energized the left while stoking fears among Democratic Party leaders that the shift to the left, particularly in battleground states like Michigan and Wisconsin, will make it more difficult to win in November.

Wisconsin's chaotic primary pits progressive against governor's pick

In Wisconsin, democratic socialist Francesca Hong is trying to win a four-way Democratic primary for governor where her top opponent has been endorsed by popular Gov. Tony Evers, who isn't seeking a third term.

Evers got behind Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley on July 18, the same day Crowley reentered the race after dropping out 10 days earlier. Crowley rejoined after the candidate he backed, Lt. Gov. Sara Rodriguez, ended her candidacy amid a campaign finance scandal.

Evers and Crowley were crisscrossing the state together in the last days before final ballots are cast Tuesday.

"I feel like we caught lightning in a bottle," said Crowley, standing next to Evers at a stop to thank campaign volunteers in Madison on Monday. "Momentum is just growing and growing and growing."

Evers and more establishment Democrats were hoping to finally coalesce around Crowley in the final days of the chaotic primary that saw two other candidates drop out, most notably former Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes on July 29.

Barnes and Rodriguez, who were both seen as potential front-runners, remain on the ballot and absentee votes already cast for them can't be undone.

Republicans are spending to influence the Democratic primary

Republicans are putting money behind Hong, thinking she will be the better matchup for Republican U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany in November. The Republican Governors Association has spent nearly \$3.6 million through its Right Direction Wisconsin PAC on ads contrasting Hong with President Donald Trump and playing up her liberal policies.

Crowley and other Democrats argue the ads are meant to bolster Hong's standing in the primary because Republicans see her as the easier opponent.

Evers projected confidence at a rally that attracted hundreds of people in Hong's hometown of Madison on Sunday night, saying Crowley was the best chance Democrats had to defeat Tiffany.

"We're going to win this thing," Evers said, telling the Crowley supporters that Tiffany would be "the worst governor in the history of Wisconsin."

"If Tom Tiffany wins in November that will be like electing Donald Trump as governor of the state of Wisconsin," he said.

Crowley urged Democrats to come together after the primary to beat Tiffany.

"Our ultimate goal is to make sure we don't have a MAGA extremist occupying the governor's office,"

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Crowley said.

Hong, speaking to supporters Monday afternoon, said the coalition she built isn't just about winning the primary.

"We have to come together to defeat Tom Tiffany," she said, adding that she would welcome Evers campaigning with her after the primary.

"This is about uniting," she said.

Tiffany, one of the most conservative members of Congress, is endorsed by Trump.

The president called Hong a communist in remarks on Wednesday, where he mentioned a 2020 social media post by Hong calling for Thanksgiving to be canceled. Asked about the post this week, Hong reversed herself and said that Thanksgiving was her favorite holiday.

Trump won Wisconsin in 2016 and 2024, and Republicans have held majorities in both chambers of the Legislature since 2011. Holding onto the governor's office is key to Wisconsin Democrats' effort to gain full control of state government for the first time in 16 years.

In the race to replace Tiffany, U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy's son-in-law Michael Alfonso is in a five-person Republican primary. Alfonso, who is trying to represent Duffy's old congressional district, has Trump's endorsement.

The president joined a telephone rally for Alfonso on Monday night, calling him "a fantastic young guy who's going to be a star in Washington."

Minnesota primary comes in wake of immigration enforcement surge

In neighboring Minnesota, voters are choosing between moderate U.S. Rep. Angie Craig and progressive Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan in a Democratic U.S. Senate primary that's playing out in the aftermath of Trump's aggressive immigration enforcement surge in the state.

The race has been shaped by the killing of Renee Good and Alex Pretti by federal immigration officers in Minneapolis, confrontations that were caught on camera and fueled a backlash to Trump's immigration policies.

Both Craig and Flanagan spent the weekend traversing the Twin Cities metro area.

In a driveway in suburban Eagan on Sunday, Craig spoke to the angst among Democratic primary voters who feel that Washington isn't working for them. Members of Congress need to stop trading stocks and becoming lobbyists when they leave office, she said, and the U.S. needs to restrict the flood of corporate campaign spending.

"But the only way we pass any of the progressive policies that all of us here support is by winning elections and taking damn majorities," she said.

Unlike in Wisconsin, where the incumbent governor has endorsed a candidate in the race to succeed him, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz has not gotten involved in the Senate primary. But his wife, Gwen Walz, has endorsed Craig and campaigned with her on Sunday.

Flanagan campaigned Saturday with U.S. Sen. Chris Van Hollen, a Maryland Democrat, who helped her make the case that Washington needs a shake-up to root out the deep-pocketed forces propping up a broken status quo.

"It is big corporations, it's special interests who are putting their thumb on the scale in our elections across the country," Flanagan said. "And it's not just Republicans. It's Democrats, too."

The race has been one of the most expensive Minnesota has seen, with millions of dollars backing both candidates, but disproportionately falling in Craig's favor.

Whoever wins the primary will be the front-runner to replace retiring Democratic Sen. Tina Smith in November. Minnesota voters haven't elected a Republican to a statewide office since 2006.

Mike Lindell, the founder of MyPillow, is a top Republican candidate in the governor's race. He's endorsed by Trump, and he was a prominent promoter of falsehoods about election fraud. U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar is in a six-person primary on the Democratic side.

Democratic struggles also on display in other states' primaries Tuesday

Two veteran Democratic incumbents in Connecticut face challenges from the left.

Moderate Democratic Gov. Ned Lamont is running for a third term but faces progressive state Rep. Josh

Elliott. The Democratic nominee will face Republican state Sen. Ryan Fazio in November.

Longtime Democratic U.S. Rep. John Larson, 78, is running for a 15th term and his age and health have been major issues in the four-person race.

Former Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin narrowly won the party's endorsement at its state convention in May. Other candidates are Hartford Board of Education member Ruth Fortune and state Rep. Jillian Gilchrest.

In Vermont, two Democrats are running in for a chance to take on Republican Gov. Phil Scott.

Former child advocacy organization CEO Aly Richards boasts endorsements from former Democratic Govs. Howard Dean and Madeleine Kunin. She faces economist Amanda Janoo.

Zuckerberg manifesto sketches out Meta's ambitions for world-changing AI technology

By KELVIN CHAN and BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Business Writers

Meta Platforms CEO Mark Zuckerberg laid out a vision Monday of what he said artificial intelligence can do for the world, imagining a future where everyone has their own, all-knowing AI agent that strives to improve all aspects of their lives.

Zuckerberg detailed his ambitions for the technology in a 6,500-word essay published online where he also outlined why he favors open-source AI technology, in which developers make key components accessible for anyone to examine, modify and build upon.

In a document derided by critics as fantastical, Zuckerberg said his company is working toward an era where everyone will have the tools to create new businesses, receive Ph.D.-level tutoring and provide personalized lifestyle tips. His 8-year-old daughter, he wrote, can already code her ideas and quickly produce videos.

"Everyone will soon have invention superpowers," Zuckerberg wrote.

Zuckerberg warned of risks if control of advanced AI is concentrated with a select few companies, institutions or governments. On Monday, Meta also announced the release a new open-source AI model, Muse Glimmer, which can run on a personal computer, and Zuckerberg said the company would also provide a way for developers to access a more powerful AI model, Muse Spark 1.2.

Meta makes AI models, like several other tech companies, and uses them to power platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. The Menlo Park, California, company also makes them available to developers who can create their own apps and features.

Skeptics urge a slower pace of AI development

Critics said Zuckerberg was not reckoning fully with the risks inherent in AI's rapid development.

Noting recent incidents where AI models, including Meta's own, hacked other companies on at least three separate occasions, Anthony Aguirre, president and CEO of the AI safety nonprofit Future of Life Institute, asked "what on Earth makes Meta think they — or anyone — could control something exponentially smarter, faster, and more capable?"

"Meta's chosen path is ultimately one of human replacement and disempowerment, but there is an alternate, pro-human path -- one that brings about individual flourishing and scientific breakthroughs with controllable AI tools. What's urgently needed now is for governments to facilitate a pause on advanced AI development and steer us onto the pro-human path — before it's too late," Aguirre said.

Meta chief says AI should be broadly distributed

In his essay, Zuckerberg outlined why he thought open source is a better path for fair development of AI. He warned that if control of AI "superintelligence" is too concentrated, it will lead to less favorable outcomes for everyone else. The key, he wrote, is finding a balance that ensures advanced AI is "broadly distributed" to empower billions of people equitably.

Meta has long been a proponent of open-sourcing its AI models, but has struggled to keep up with rivals such as OpenAI, Anthropic and Google that have not taken the same approach.

Zuckerberg made what could be a veiled reference to Meta's rivals without naming specific companies.

"Most other labs are focused on building AI for companies, governments, or other institutions, so if those

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labs lead, then the balance of power will favor larger institutions over individuals," he wrote.

Zuckerberg also included policy recommendations for keeping the U.S. ahead of rivals, including China. The United States and its allies need to speed up building energy capacity and infrastructure to stay competitive, he said.

Zuckerberg called for authorities to reconsider their position on "distillation," which involves training a less capable model on the outputs of a stronger one. The Trump administration has vowed to crack down on Chinese AI companies using distillation to extract technical features from U.S. AI models. Anthropic earlier this year accused China's DeepSeek of using distillation.

"Some have tried to frame distillation as harmful, but I think it is important to protect the principle that you can learn from anything you can observe," Zuckerberg said. "This is how the world works, and the U.S. will not be able to lead if we restrict ourselves on this front."

Critics see a self-serving message from Meta

Matt Lane, senior policy counsel at the nonprofit digital rights advocacy group Fight for the Future, called Zuckerberg "annoyingly out of touch on his best day," but said the CEO is right about the importance of open-source AI.

Shared access to open-source AI systems is important for protection in a world where AI can be used to hack into electronic systems, like voting systems and benefits infrastructure, he said.

But he said only Meta will benefit if everyone were to use Meta-designed AI systems, even if they are fully open-source. "Open source AI needs to be supported beyond these corporate interests. We, unlike Zuckerberg, hope for as much competition as possible," he said.

Trump signs order calling for spacing out childhood vaccines, against medical groups' guidance

By ALI SWENSON and COLLIN BINKLEY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Monday signed an executive order calling for revamped childhood vaccine recommendations that promote his long-held but discredited theory that childhood shots should be spaced out into separate medical visits.

The order advocates separating the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine into three different single-disease shots and administering all childhood immunizations at separate appointments whenever possible. It also directs the nation's health department to improve research on vaccines, which are already extensively studied, and present a plan to offer separate measles, mumps, and rubella vaccines for children, since that is not currently an option in the United States.

The renewed focus on vaccines marks a departure from the Trump administration's recent efforts to emphasize less controversial health policies related to healthy eating, drug price negotiations and medical fraud crackdowns ahead of November's midterm elections.

Public health experts have raised concerns that spacing out shots as Trump suggests can lead to an increased risk that children become infected with a vaccine-preventable disease before returning for another visit. Childhood vaccines — and how and when to give them in combination — go through rigorous studies, and safety tracking continues for years as the shots are used.

Trump called the announcement a "major victory for parents rights, religious and constitutional rights, and for the gold standard science."

Speaking about the order at the Oval Office on Monday, Trump repeatedly suggested the number or timing of vaccines could play a role in rising rates of autism spectrum disorder, even as scientific consensus and decades of studies have firmly concluded there is no link. The order also includes several changes to the childhood vaccine schedule that his health department has already attempted, but that have been blocked by a federal judge. A White House official who insisted on anonymity to brief reporters said Trump was within his right to provide his own recommendation through the executive order and said the lawsuit blocking the health department's schedule was a separate issue.

Dr. Andrew Racine, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said the announcement spreads

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uncertainty, fear and confusion where "there doesn't need to be any of that." He disputed Trump's recommendations and said previous ones should stand.

"Science about vaccines and their efficacy has not changed," he said. "The distribution of viruses and other pathogens in our environment has not changed. Children in this country have not changed in the last 48 hours."

Sen. Bill Cassidy, the Republican chair of the Senate health committee, slammed the executive order in a social media post, saying vaccines are safe and do not cause autism.

"I'm a doctor. This executive order is wrong," the Louisiana senator wrote. "The President does not have the expertise to make these changes."

Who is in charge of vaccine policy?

Even as the order calls for revised vaccine recommendations, states, not the federal government, have the authority to require vaccinations for schoolchildren. The order advises states with school vaccine mandates to consider updating their laws to reflect the administration's preferred schedule, according to a White House fact sheet.

Last December, Trump ordered the Department of Health and Human Services to review how peer nations approach vaccine recommendations and consider revising U.S. guidance accordingly. The department responded by cutting the number of vaccines it recommends for every child, a move that has since been blocked in court.

Changes to federal childhood vaccine recommendations customarily require approval from the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The newly Senate-confirmed CDC director, Dr. Erica Schwartz, oversaw policies promoting vaccination of service members while in a leadership position at the U.S. Coast Guard.

However, public health law expert Lawrence Gostin at Georgetown University said the Supreme Court's interpretation of Trump's power may allow him to supersede Schwartz if she does not agree to new recommendations.

"This is clearly the first test for Dr. Erica Schwartz," Gostin said in an email. "The President is placing her in an untenable position."

Asked on a call with reporters why the president was advocating splitting MMR into three single-disease vaccines, the White House official did not provide any studies supporting the decision. They said that was Trump's long-held view and that some countries provide individual measles vaccines in certain circumstances.

Kush Desai, a Trump spokesperson, told The Associated Press that the president is "one of countless parents who have voiced questions and concerns about the combined MMR vaccine" and said the plan to develop single-disease vaccines would "give parents more options on timing and frequency for their children," ultimately increasing vaccine uptake.

Studies of babies and toddlers in the U.S. have shown that the use of combination shots for childhood vaccines, rather than single ones, increased the likelihood of completing all recommended vaccinations by the age of 2.

Announcement follows other Trump administration vaccine actions

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., an anti-vaccine activist before he entered politics, set out to overhaul immunization guidance at DHS in the first year of Trump's term. He fired an entire 17-member vaccine advisory committee, installing replacements who made far more restrictive recommendations that have since been halted by a federal judge. He also personally directed the CDC to abandon its position that vaccines do not cause autism, without supplying any new evidence to support the change.

Throughout his second term, Trump has been fixated on connecting autism to vaccines. He has recently ramped up pressure on Kennedy to identify the cause of autism, something Kennedy had pledged to do with new research unveiled last year. Trump publicly prodded the health secretary for an update on autism research in a Cabinet meeting last month.

"How are you doing on the autism research?" Trump asked.

"We will have an answer for you," Kennedy said.

Scientific consensus and decades of studies have firmly concluded there is no link between childhood vaccines and autism. Racine reiterated that point on Monday, noting that the potential link had been studied in "over 40 methodologically well-designed studies in over seven countries involving over 5 million children."

"I'm not sure that there is anything that has been as thoroughly looked at as this question," he said. "And the answer is unequivocally no."

In the Oval Office, Kennedy repeated his assertion that he believes an unknown environmental factor is to blame for rising autism diagnoses and said that his department will deliver research findings "as soon as they are ready."

Monday's order comes as students are returning to classrooms around the country and the nation contends with a measles outbreak that experts say could result in the U.S. losing its measles elimination status.

Doctors have raised concerns that Trump's falsehoods on vaccines could stoke vaccine hesitancy. Federal data shows U.S. kindergarten vaccination rates have been dropping, with the share of children with exemptions rising to an all-time high in the 2024-25 school year.

Defense lawyer takes aim at psychiatrist's care before Lindsay Clancy killed her 3 kids

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

Lindsay Clancy's lawyer probed her psychiatrist's expertise, prescribing decisions and overall treatment as the defense sought Monday to suggest that the mental healthcare system mishandled the Massachusetts mother's decline in the months before she killed her three young children.

In questioning Dr. Jennifer Tufts, defense lawyer Kevin Reddington spotlighted her use of 25-minute video appointments with limited time for talk therapy, the computerized forms that documented her observations, and the series of pharmaceuticals she recommended as Clancy reported various side effects, symptoms and concerns about taking medications.

Reddington portrayed Clancy's care not as common practice in U.S. mental healthcare, but rather as inadequate and indifferent treatment of a deteriorating patient. At one point, Reddington implied that the doctor was a box-checking "robot."

"What did you do? You had a woman who was telling you she felt hopeless," he asked as they discussed an appointment about two months before the killings.

"I told her that this was something we could address, that there was hope, that there are treatments, that there are different types of programs," Tufts said, "so she knew that she still had options and a reason to hope."

"Did you ever suggest to her that 'maybe you should come in and see me, rather than on the computer?'" Reddington asked.

"Talking to her over the video didn't seem like an issue. It didn't seem like there was something I was missing," Tufts replied.

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

Clancy's camp says she tried everything to get help

Clancy, 35, has pleaded not guilty to murder charges in the deaths of Callan, Dawson and Cora Clancy, who ranged from 8 months to 5 years old. They were found in the basement of the family's home in coastal Duxbury, Massachusetts, where their mother was lying in the yard. She had jumped out a second-story window and remains paralyzed from the waist down.

Prosecutors argue that the former labor and delivery nurse was an intentional killer who connived to get her husband out of the house, then strangled the children with exercise bands on Jan. 24, 2023. Prosecutor Shanan Buckingham has urged jurors not to view the trial as "a public debate about women's mental

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health and how the medical system treats women.”

Clancy’s attorneys don’t dispute that she killed the children. But they say she shouldn’t be held criminally responsible because she was mentally ill, believing that she heard voices ordering her to take the children’s lives and her own.

The defense contends that she was in the grip of bipolar disorder and postpartum psychosis, a rare postpregnancy condition that can alter women’s sense of reality. A forensic psychiatrist diagnosed her with those conditions after the killings.

Her attorneys say Clancy did everything she could to seek help: She turned to multiple outpatient providers, tried various drugs they prescribed, called a suicide hotline, went to an emergency room, and approached but wasn’t accepted into a hospital-based, full-day treatment program for women with postpregnancy mental health problems. Clancy then even checked herself into a psychiatric hospital for several days.

Rather than improving, her condition worsened on the ever-remixed cocktail of psychiatric medications, some of them problematic for bipolar patients, her attorneys and family say. Tufts noted that it can be difficult to tell whether such conditions as depression are continuing because of a medicine or despite it.

Psychiatrist says Clancy never indicated she’d harm her kids

Tufts saw Clancy, via video, from September 2022 until the day before the killings. Her diagnosis: generalized anxiety disorder and an adjustment disorder with depressed mood.

The psychiatrist testified that Clancy never told her about manic episodes, a criterion for bipolar diagnoses, nor about hearing voices or having other signs of psychosis.

Clancy at times said she was “close” to feeling suicidal, hopeless or like she was going to die, Tufts recalled. But she said Clancy denied having a plan to take her own life or harm anyone else and never revealed — as the defense says she did to her husband — that she had thoughts about harming the children.

“I would have been very concerned if I had heard that,” Tufts said.

Clancy is suing Tufts and other practitioners in civil court.

“I do not believe that I’ve been negligent,” Tufts testified in the criminal trial Monday as Reddington questioned how much experience she had treating postpregnancy conditions before Clancy came to her. Tufts finished her psychiatric residency training in July 2022 and joined a private practice the month before Clancy’s first appointment.

Nurse-practitioner testifies about treating Clancy

As Tufts left court after two days of testimony, Clancy sat still in her wheelchair with her knitted hands to her face, looking downward at the defense table.

Prosecutors went on to question psychiatric nurse-practitioner and nurse midwife Julie Paul, a pregnancy and postpregnancy specialist whom Clancy consulted briefly in November 2022. Their interactions spanned about 10 days, as Paul was leaving for another job.

Paul testified that Clancy came to her with concerns about medications she’d been using for sleep, and that led to a few reshufflings as Clancy continued reporting various symptoms and seeking new solutions by the day. Trial-and-error switching isn’t unusual in psychiatry, said Paul, who also said Clancy never told her of any thoughts of harming herself or her children or having any hallucinations.

Reddington will have his chance to question Paul on Tuesday.

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

What we know about the death of Tasia Fortune in Mississippi

By SOPHIE BATES and TERRY TANG Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — The hanging death of Tasia Fortune, whose body was found outside an abandoned house, has shaken her family and community in Mississippi, where two other people have been found hanging from trees in less than a year.

Police have not indicated whether they consider the 29-year-old Black woman’s death suspicious, saying

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only that they are actively working "to determine the circumstances surrounding the death."

A week after Fortune's body was found, a pink and white memorial honoring her life stood as a bright spot Monday in the otherwise overgrown backyard of the abandoned house in Jackson.

Feet from where rainbow pinwheels, white flowers and teddy bears surrounded a photograph of Fortune, empty chip bags and discarded plastic bottles littered the ground. Nearby, an entrance to the home gaped open, a tarp, foam pad and other debris scattered outside.

Jackson police officers responded to the home on Aug. 3 and discovered a body hanging in the backyard. Hinds County chief medical examiner investigator Jeremiah Howard later confirmed the identity as Fortune.

Her body is now in the custody of the Mississippi State Medical Examiner's Office, where an autopsy will be conducted to determine the cause and manner of death.

Here's what we know so far about Fortune's death:

What was Fortune doing when she was last heard from?

Christy Spivey, Fortune's mother, told ABC News on Sunday that she last saw her daughter on July 26. Fortune, a mother of four who had lived in Mississippi for more than 10 years, had traveled to Kentucky for a family reunion.

She described her daughter as a loving mother who was not behaving out of the ordinary.

"She did not do this to herself," Spivey told the outlet. "I know my daughter, and she did not do this to herself."

On Wednesday, Jackson City Councilman Kenneth Stokes wrote a letter to Mississippi U.S. Attorney Baxter Kruger asking for assistance in the case. In the letter, Stokes referred to Fortune as a murder victim.

Do authorities have any suspects?

Jackson police have commented very little on Fortune's death. They have not identified any suspects or person of interest.

Local media report that a man interviewed by investigators said he had argued with Fortune but had no involvement in her death. Police have not disclosed how the man, who was arrested last week on an unrelated charge of being a felon in possession of a firearm, is acquainted with Fortune.

Where were the other hangings in Mississippi?

Fortune's death comes less than a year after the hanging deaths of 21-year-old Trey Reed, a Black student at Delta State University in Cleveland, and Cory Zukatis, an unhoused white man in his 30s, in Vicksburg.

Police in Cleveland concluded Reed's death was a suicide. Autopsy results were consistent with a preliminary examination of the body by the Bolivar County coroner, which found no evidence of foul play.

Reed's family and their attorneys called for an independent autopsy and for authorities to share security camera recordings.

The Mississippi State Medical Examiner determined Zukatis died by suicide.

Why are the Mississippi cases attracting interest?

How law enforcement agencies in Mississippi, a state with a tumultuous civil rights history, handle death investigations of Black residents has drawn extreme interest in recent weeks with the case of Nolan Xavier Wells.

The 18-year-old joined friends on a Fourth of July boat excursion to an island off Mississippi's Gulf Coast but did not return with them. His body was found two days later.

Wells' parents say how their son died remains a mystery and there have been conflicting stories and missing details.

Spivey, Fortune's mother, told ABC News she "does not want her name associated with" the death possibly being racially motivated.

Bernice King, daughter of the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., cautioned people to "not rush to conclusions." At the same time, Fortune's death is triggering.

"We also cannot dismiss the fear and painful history these circumstances evoke for Black communities, especially in Mississippi," she said in a statement. "That history makes transparency, thoroughness, and truth essential."

Contiguous US breaks its record for hottest month ever, NOAA says

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

KENSINGTON, Maryland (AP) — The contiguous United States sizzled to its hottest month ever last month, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

July averaged 76.89 degrees Fahrenheit (24.94 degrees Celsius) across the Lower 48 states, eclipsing the Dust Bowl's July 1936 by an eighth of a degree. Records go back to 1895.

"It's not good when you're breaking records from the Dust Bowl, which we are in this case," said meteorologist Jeff Masters of Yale Climate Connections. "And that was a crazy sort of situation where you put tens of millions of people in motion. You had this great migration because of the drought and the heat that hit the center of the U.S. — just a cataclysmic event in U. S. history. If we're exceeding records from The Dust Bowl, that says that we're in deep trouble."

Although it was unusually cool in Alaska, hotter-than-normal conditions blanketed the Lower 48, with the most excessive heat in the Mountain West, Southwest, Northern Plains and Southeast. The heat was so widespread that every one of the Lower 48 states was at least 1 degree Fahrenheit (nearly 0.6 degrees Celsius) warmer than the 20th century average, said Russ Vose, chief of monitoring at NOAA's National Center for Environmental Information.

The heat in the Dust Bowl years was more concentrated in parts of the Midwest and was aggravated by agricultural practices at the time, Vose said.

What's happening now is due to the burning of coal, oil and gas, scientists said.

"Extremely high temperatures across the continental U.S. this summer, along with intense drought and fire conditions, are absolutely consistent with the climate change signal," said Katharine Jacobs, a climate scientist at the University of Arizona.

The biggest driver of the record heat was nighttime lows that smashed the old mark for hottest minimums by 0.7 degrees, NOAA said. Hotter nights are a classic sign of human-caused climate change, according to scientists and several studies in peer-reviewed literature. NOAA's calculation is based on averaging 24 hours of temperature, not just highs or lows.

"If you're talking heat waves, that nighttime low is incredibly important for determining total heat stress," Masters said. "So if it doesn't cool off at night, your body doesn't have time to readjust to all the heat."

As nighttime temperatures increase, more people die and lose sleep, studies show.

The years 2021 and 1936 tie for America's hottest summer, which is June through August. Through July, 2026 is a shade cooler than 2021, which was powered by record heat in June.

Because of climate change, Masters said, "this may be one of the coolest years we're gonna experience for the rest of our lives."

What's needed, Masters said, is "to stop burning so many fossil fuels. We also need to be spending money to adapt to the new climate that we've put in place."

US stocks edge down from their record after oil prices climb 5%

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. stock market edged down from its all-time high on Monday, while oil prices rose on uncertainty about when the Strait of Hormuz could reopen and get the global flow of crude going again.

The S&P 500 slipped 0.1% from its record set on Friday. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dipped 60 points, or 0.1%, and the Nasdaq composite fell 0.3%.

Momentum slowed for stocks following a rally powered by soaring profits for big U.S. companies. Reports are on track to show earnings per share leaped 50% in the spring from a year earlier for companies in the S&P 500, according to FactSet. That would be the best growth since five years ago, when the economy

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was roaring out of the chasm created by COVID.

Berkshire Hathaway is one of the latest companies to deliver a stronger profit for the last quarter than analysts expected, and the company built by legendary investor Warren Buffett said over the weekend that it's also invested some of its massive pile of cash into stocks under its new CEO, Greg Abel.

Berkshire Hathaway has been famous for buying stocks at what it considers low prices, and criticism has been high that U.S. stocks generally look too expensive. But when they report strong profits, it helps them look less pricey.

Berkshire Hathaway's stock rose 1.5%.

MarineMax jumped 46.1% after the retailer, marina operator and superyacht services provider said it agreed to sell itself for about \$1.5 billion in cash to a portfolio company of Blackstone.

Varex Imaging leaped 48.8% after Teledyne Technologies said it would buy the maker of X-ray imaging components for \$18.90 per share in cash.

But Intel helped offset such gains and fell 4.1% after saying it may sell \$15 billion of its stock. Such a move would dilute the ownership stakes of shareholders, and Intel said it would likely use the cash for investments to take advantage of the huge spending underway on artificial-intelligence technology.

All told, the S&P 500 slipped 4.53 points to 7,753.11. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dipped 60.95 to 53,975.98, and the Nasdaq composite sank 85.26 to 26,605.36.

In the oil market, the price for a barrel of Brent crude rose 5% to \$87.72. It had swung between \$72 and \$102 last month as hopes rose and fell that the United States and Iran could reach an agreement that would allow oil tankers to freely exit the Middle East again to deliver crude worldwide.

But hopes are turning toward caution again, and the price of Brent is back to where it was earlier this month, as well as in mid-July, mid-June and in the first week of the war in March.

Higher oil prices push inflation upward, and the main event for Wall Street this week will likely be Wednesday's update on how bad inflation was last month. Economists expect it to show inflation slowed to 3.4% from 3.5% in June.

A slowdown would mean less pressure on the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates.

Higher rates would help keep a lid on inflation, but they would also slow the economy by making it more expensive for U.S. households and companies to borrow money. They would also undercut prices for stocks and other investments.

A report on Friday showing unexpectedly weak hiring across the United States lowered Wall Street's expectations for an upcoming hike to interest rates. But traders still see a nearly 52% chance the Fed will raise its main interest rate at its next meeting in September, according to data from CME Group.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 4.70% from 4.65% late Friday. That's up from 3.97% before the war with Iran, and the climb has already sent rates for mortgages and other kinds of loans significantly higher.

In stock markets abroad, indexes were mixed in Europe after rising in much of Asia. Japan's Nikkei 225 jumped 2.1% for one of the world's bigger moves.

Washington grapples with a National Guard deployment extended until 2029

By GARY FIELDS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's been 12 months since President Donald Trump announced a crime emergency in Washington, pledging to make the city "safe and beautiful" and deploying the National Guard.

But a mission that seemed temporary has been extended through January 2029. Residents and a new cadre of local officials see in it an unacceptable attempt by the federal government to restrict the heavily Democratic city's autonomy and, a year in, still question why having troops on the streets of the nation's capital is necessary.

"There's a deep irony that here we are in the capital of the free world, and our president is treating it like a police state," said Scott Michelman, legal director of the ACLU of the District of Columbia. "D.C. residents

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have lived with our National Guard troops in our neighborhoods for about a year, despite the absence of any genuine emergency and really any reason for them to be here.”

The continued deployment will be a major test for a new batch of political candidates expected to take office after the midterms this fall. Residents will look to them to push back on the Republican president’s encroachment into the city’s affairs — although they’re limited in what they can do to counter it.

Temporary deployment goes on and on

On Aug. 11, 2025, Trump announced he was launching a federal law enforcement surge in Washington aimed at fighting crime. As of Aug. 4, more than 4,600 military personnel from D.C. and 24 states and territories were still deployed alongside unknown numbers of less visible federal law enforcement officers. Some are expected to be withdrawn toward the end of the summer.

Small groups of armed guard members have become a routine presence on the streets. They have supported arrest operations but are also seen patrolling tourist areas, such as along the Tidal Basin during the Cherry Blossom Festival and in neighborhoods such as Georgetown where violent crimes are rare. They’ve helped with medical emergencies, snow removal and beautification projects — initiatives that have received support from some residents.

Extending the deployment into 2029 will cost about \$1.4 billion, the Defense Department estimates. Exact figures on what’s been spent so far are unavailable, but the Congressional Budget Office projected in a report earlier this year the total cost for the first year of the deployment would be around \$660 million, based on a monthly troop level of about 2,900, a figure that’s fluctuated throughout the mission.

“President Trump has transformed D.C. from a crime-ridden city into a safe and beautiful haven for residents and visitors alike,” White House spokeswoman Abigail Jackson said in an email.

Figures released Monday by the U.S. Marshals Service showed over 16,000 arrests have been made since the surge began, including 35 homicide suspects and 3,200 narcotics arrests. Authorities also have seized nearly 2,000 illegal firearms.

Attorney General Todd Blanche said in a statement that the arrests and weapons seizures “mean safer neighborhoods and lives protected.”

Crime, which was falling before the surge began, continues to drop. Metropolitan Police Department statistics show overall crime was down 20% through Friday, compared with the same period in 2025. That includes a 32% drop in homicides, from 97 to 66.

But there’s a debate over how much of that success is owed to Trump’s mission or to yearslong local efforts to chip away at the crime rate.

What’s certain is locals feel the weight of the deployment and don’t see a clear way to push back against it. National Guard deployments to other cities have been blocked by courts, and a lawsuit challenging the deployment is pending, but critics of the surge aren’t hopeful.

“The fact that we still have the National Guard walking our streets a year later with no end in sight is really demoralizing,” city council member Brianne K. Nadeau said.

Autonomy is a top priority for newly elected candidates

Because Washington is a congressionally established federal district, Trump has much greater influence over the police and D.C. National Guard, which he controls directly, including its commander.

The Home Rule Act, passed in 1973, allows residents to vote for local leaders, including the mayor and council members. Congress has oversight over the local budget and review authority of all laws passed and the ability to summon district officials to the Capitol routinely to explain themselves. The D.C. delegate to Congress is a nonvoting position.

The city’s governmental structure under home rule made it easy for Trump to do what he has done, Nadeau said.

“There isn’t really any political liability for national leaders to mess with D.C. because nobody really cares,” outside of those directly impacted, she said.

The law enforcement surge played a major role in Democratic primary elections in June, which elevated candidates who have made Washington’s autonomy and statehood top priorities.

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Janeese Lewis George, a democratic socialist who in the overwhelmingly Democratic city is likely to be its next mayor, has already rankled Trump. He threatened to put the city under federal control if she wins.

Robert White Jr., another pro-statehood candidate, won the Democratic primary for the city's seat in Congress.

And while they are hamstrung by the city's status, both hope they have strategies that can help fight back against the president and the deployment.

White told The Associated Press he plans to build "an army of residents" and allies to target swing districts and work at "un-electing" people critical of the district and "electing those who do support D.C."

The action is similar to one a former D.C. congressional delegate, Walter Fauntroy, successfully pursued in 1972, mobilizing Black voters and allies against a South Carolina Congress member who had long opposed D.C.'s independence.

"He didn't deploy that strategy a bunch of times, but it sent a signal to people to lay off of D.C.," White said.

The city's outgoing mayor, Muriel Bowser, avoided the kind of biting rhetoric and personal attacks typical of other high-profile Democratic leaders, despite the unprecedented intervention into her city. A major part of that was to avoid raising Trump's ire and threaten what independence the city has.

In a statement Monday, Bowser called the surge an "unprecedented federal intervention" that highlighted D.C.'s lack of "statehood and autonomy."

She credited her actions during the surge, including working with the federal government, with protecting home rule and keeping the federal emergency that gave control of the local police to the president from being extended.

"Still, unmitigated ICE activity in American cities and out-of-state National Guard troops in D.C. remain problematic," she said. "Like all Americans, Washingtonians deserve local control and accountability. My North Star remains clear: protect Home Rule, protect D.C.'s autonomy, and protect D.C. residents."

Concerns over troops in the city during elections

Donna Powell, who is living part time in the city, said she and her husband walk and metro everywhere. "We're already safe and beautiful," she said. "We don't need all these National Guard here."

The money could be better spent "on healthcare and food for families that need it."

The National Guard deployment has raised concerns among some over what the upcoming midterms and the 2028 presidential election will look like with troops on the streets.

"The last time this president was supposed to come out of power, Jan. 6 happened," said Alex Dodds, co-founder of FreeDC, an activist group that has protested the deployment by following and filming National Guard troops in quiet areas of the city far away from crime concerns. "Imagine if that happens again but this time he has 5,000 troops standing at the ready to be part of that situation. You know, that's our worry."

Todd Blanche is sworn in as attorney general after bruising confirmation fight

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's former personal lawyer, Todd Blanche, was sworn in Monday as attorney general after a bruising confirmation fight that exposed bipartisan concerns about the Justice Department's direction under the Republican president.

Another former Trump attorney — Emil Bove, now a federal appeals court judge — administered the oath of office to Blanche at the White House following early Saturday's Senate confirmation vote by the narrowest of margins. Shortly after, the newly sworn-in attorney general arrived at Justice Department headquarters to cheers from employees lined up along the entrance.

Blanche, a former federal prosecutor in New York, is officially taking command of a Justice Department he has been leading in an acting capacity since Pam Bondi's firing in April.

With the confirmation battle behind him, Blanche now faces the challenge of having to navigate the demands of a president who has made no secret his desire to use the law enforcement agency to target

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his political foes. Blanche will do so with an agency that has been hollowed out by resignations, firings and voluntary departures while also confronting mounting pushback from the courts.

Blanche was confirmed in a 50-49 vote, opposed by two Republicans who cited concerns about what they described as increased politicization of the department under Trump.

Under deputy attorney general and later as acting attorney general, Blanche has overseen the investigations of numerous Trump foes, including former FBI Director James Comey, whom the Justice Department indicted in April for a second time since Trump returned to the White House last year.

Blanche has strongly defended the Trump administration against accusations that it has weaponized the Justice Department. Blanche has said he feels no pressure to placate Trump and insists he sees no problem with the president's interest in Justice Department matters, calling it the president's "right" and "his duty."

Blanche entered the president's orbit when he left his law firm in 2023 to represent Trump against multiple criminal cases, including two brought by the Justice Department under Democratic President Joe Biden. Blanche has said that experience afforded him a firsthand look at what he contends was the weaponization of the criminal justice system against Trump.

Blanche's defenders say the close relationship he developed with Trump as his defense lawyer can make him more successful than Bondi was at pushing back on the president's demands.

Blanche's nomination was almost scuttled over bipartisan concerns about Trump's controversial settlement of his lawsuit against the Internal Revenue Service. His nomination only moved forward after he confirmed in writing, under pressure from Republicans, that the administration was rescinding plans to create a \$1.8 billion fund to compensate Trump allies who believe they were wronged by the department.

WHO says Congo's fast-moving Ebola outbreak started months before it was declared

By CONSTANT SAME BAGALWA and MARK BANCHEREAU Associated Press

BUNIA, Congo (AP) — The fastest-growing Ebola outbreak on record started in February, months before it was officially declared in mid-May, the World Health Organization said Monday as responders in eastern Congo struggle to catch up.

The WHO regional director for Africa, Dr. Mohamed Yakub Janabi, told a news conference that sequencing indicated the outbreak's start. He said some cases early on were wrongly attributed to other diseases, including malaria and typhoid.

"So we are chasing the virus, the virus is ahead of us," Janabi said.

Dr. Thierno Balde, WHO's incident manager for the Ebola response, said the genetic sequencing was conducted under the leadership of Dr. Steve Ahuka, head of the virology department at Congo's National Institute for Biomedical Research.

Confirmed cases of Ebola in this outbreak have reached 4,200, including over 1,900 deaths, according to the latest government figures.

WHO assesses the global risk of spread as low because Ebola does not travel through the air, making it much harder to spread than respiratory viruses. Cases detected outside the affected region have so far been quickly identified and contained without leading to sustained transmission, according to the agency.

The outbreak declared on May 15 is unlike most previous ones for Ebola because the rare Bundibugyo virus responsible for it has no approved vaccines or treatments. Early testing was conducted for the more common type of Ebola, contributing to delays.

The outbreak is unfolding in some of the most challenging conditions imaginable, with strikes by some unpaid health workers, threats by rebel groups, anger from long-traumatized communities and misinformation asserting that Ebola isn't real. Health teams travel remote, unpaved roads and have reported shortages of protective gear, while a vast population of displaced people struggles to find reliable water sources for washing hands.

This Ebola outbreak has killed more people at a quicker rate than any other, including the 2014-2016 outbreak in West Africa that is considered the worst on record with over 11,000 deaths out of at least

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28,000 cases. That one took about eight months to reach 1,000 deaths.

Ebola is rare but highly contagious and can be contracted from bodily fluids such as vomit, blood or semen and with contaminated surfaces and materials such as bedding and clothing. The disease it causes is severe and often fatal.

Last week, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesu said Ebola is spreading faster than efforts to fight it. New cases are doubling in some hot spots, Tedros said on X after meeting with officials in the capital, Kinshasa.

Health authorities have said between 60% and 70% of new cases are recorded outside of contacts being monitored, and that the outbreak is spreading at an "alarming" rate.

Access to healthcare in the region already had been challenged by years of rebel conflict in one of Congo's most remote and vulnerable areas, near the borders of South Sudan, Uganda and Rwanda. Now some pregnant women and others are avoiding health centers for fear of the virus, at risk to their lives.

Several past Ebola outbreaks have also been declared weeks or months late, including the 2014-2016 West Africa outbreak. That outbreak was declared in March 2014, although the first human case later was found to have occurred in December 2013.

Trump officials propose new requirements for food additives and ingredients

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. health officials on Monday proposed a rule change that would require food manufacturers to notify regulators before introducing new ingredients or additives into processed or packaged foods.

The proposal would change a decades-old policy that advocates have called a regulatory loophole, blaming it for allowing thousands of unvetted ingredients into the U.S. food supply.

Under the proposed rule from the Food and Drug Administration, companies would have to document and submit their safety rationale for new ingredients, giving regulators the opportunity to investigate if they see a potential risk. Currently companies can decide for themselves if an ingredient or additive is "generally recognized as safe," or GRAS, and there is no requirement to notify or submit evidence to the FDA, although some firms do.

"Shifting to a mandatory notification system closes a decades-old information gap, giving the FDA the comprehensive visibility needed to enhance postmarket safety," acting FDA Commissioner Kyle Diamantas told reporters on Monday.

The FDA will take comments on the proposal for 120 days.

Susan Mayne, former director of FDA's food program, said the new requirement would give the FDA a clearer picture of the vast number of ingredients on the U.S. market, though only a small portion would actually undergo review.

"This is a reasonable first step towards a more complete inventory, but most self-affirmed GRAS ingredients will still not be reviewed for safety by the FDA, with food ingredient safety continuing to be risk-based," said Mayne, who is now a public health expert at Yale University.

The FDA also plans to publish a list of company-submitted ingredients. Mayne said Americans should understand that "inclusion on the list would not mean FDA thinks the ingredient is safe."

Scrutiny of ultraprocessed food continues, but with few details

In a separate move, the FDA said it has completed work on the federal government's first-ever definition of ultraprocessed food, but did not release any details or the proposed language. The agency said it submitted the definition to the White House for further review.

Health advocates consider an official definition of ultraprocessed food a key step toward bringing greater scrutiny to meals that are blamed for multiple chronic health problems afflicting Americans. A government-backed definition could pave the way for more federal research and, eventually, possible warning labels or other restrictions.

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Neither of Monday's announcements are likely to immediately impact American diets, which are packed with fats, sodium and sugar and are blamed for a host of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease. But both initiatives are top priorities for Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who entered government vowing to crack down on artificial colors, additives and other ingredients.

"These two actions will change how the federal government oversees what's in our food and how we understand the foods that Americans eat," Kennedy said at an event Monday at HHS headquarters.

Ultraprocessed foods are made using industrial processing and additives, colors, preservatives or other ingredients not found in home kitchens. The foods include sugary cereals, sodas, chips, frozen pizzas and other grocery items.

Scientists have been working to define and classify processed foods for well over a decade. But sweeping definitions come with downsides. They can be applied to foods like whole grain bread, yogurt and granola that are all highly processed but still considered nutritious. Some recent efforts to define ultraprocessed foods include carve-outs for foods that meet nutrition standards, despite having processed ingredients.

FDA proposal would bring new insights on additives used by food companies

In the U.S., an estimated 10,000 additives are allowed in food, including thickeners, preservatives and packaging ingredients.

Consumer advocates have long argued that many of those ingredients have never been properly vetted because of the FDA's policy allowing manufacturers to certify for themselves that additives are "generally recognized as safe," or GRAS.

FDA's Diamantas stressed Monday that the new policy would not require all new ingredients to undergo FDA review. He said mandatory reviews would need to be enacted by Congress.

"What we're doing is requiring companies that utilize the pathway to notify us of their conclusions so that we have greater visibility," Diamantas said.

Under the proposal, the FDA would be expected to review new ingredient submissions within 180 days. If regulators had safety concerns they could request additional information or ask the company to delay introducing the ingredient.

Consumer advocates who have long pushed for changes said FDA's proposal should require more than giving advance notice.

"It must also include strong, science-based safety standards and thorough, independent FDA review before chemicals are allowed in our food," said Melanie Benesh of the nonprofit Environmental Working Group.

Kennedy said the Trump administration would ask Congress to grant FDA additional powers over ingredients.

"Congress needs to give FDA the additional tools it needs to keep pace with the changing food supply and protect the American people," Kennedy said.

A rule change in the 1990s created what advocates call a loophole

Any substance intentionally added to food is supposed to undergo formal review — unless the additive is considered safe. Since the late 1950s, the government recognized that many common ingredients in foods, such as spices and vinegar, were widely consumed and understood to be safe for consumption.

The FDA policed the GRAS exemption for years, but it took time and resources. Starting in 1997, the FDA began allowing companies to independently determine that a new additive is safe based on publicly available scientific evidence and the consensus of qualified experts.

However, the list of products deemed GRAS by companies grew to include many synthetic and natural additives, all incorporated into the food supply without independent review.

The process has created a "secret GRAS loophole," according to the Center for Science in the Public Interest and other health groups.

Food industry officials contend their internal reviews of additives are as rigorous as the FDA's own process.

Russian court bars from parliamentary ballot the only party opposing the conflict in Ukraine

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia's highest court on Monday ordered the only party opposing the Kremlin's military action in Ukraine to be removed from the ballot in next month's parliamentary election.

The Supreme Court annulled the registration of Yabloko — which is Russian for "apple" — after an appeal from a pro-Kremlin party. Last month, the Central Election Commission had initially allowed Yabloko on the ballot along with 10 other parties.

Once a leading liberal voice in parliament and often critical of the government, Yabloko later lost its bloc of seats in the State Duma as the Kremlin tightened its grip on Russian politics.

In recent years, Yabloko was the only registered opposition party that opposed sending troops into Ukraine.

Its campaign slogans included "For a ceasefire agreement, diplomacy and peace!" "Our goal is to prevent nuclear war!" and "For a Russia free from fear and political repressions!"

Veteran liberal politician Grigory Yavlinsky, who co-founded Yabloko in the 1990s and chairs its political committee, deplored the ruling and said the party would appeal it.

"Barring Yabloko from the election means a refusal to engage in dialogue with those who ask questions that make the authorities uncomfortable," Yavlinsky said in an online statement. "We hope the authorities will heed the public demand for peace, freedom, and life without fear, and change their policy."

Yabloko's platform draws strong support

Many Russian opposition figures in exile had urged voters to back Yabloko, including Yulia Navalnaya, the widow of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, and politicians Ilya Yashin and Vladimir Kara-Murza.

"I believe it's morally and politically right to support the Yabloko party," Navalnaya said in an Aug. 6 statement on Telegram, noting the party's anti-war stance.

Yabloko chairman Nikolai Rybakov, who was in the courtroom Monday, sought to distance the party from what he described as unwarranted support from Navalnaya and other Kremlin foes living abroad in an apparent attempt to prevent its removal from the ballot.

In the meantime, social media buzzed with videos supporting Yabloko. Many didn't contain political slogans but instead showed young men and women holding apples when asked their voting preference for the Sept. 18-20 election or dancing to Russian songs that referenced apples.

Rybakov told the court the party wasn't paying for the videos, saying that people who posted it were backing Yabloko "simply because they want to live in Russia and don't want to get killed."

The authorities likely initially allowed Yabloko on the ballot to give Russians an outlet for their discontent while also showing, through the party's traditionally low vote count, that few people support its stand on Ukraine, said Nikolay Petrov, senior research fellow at the NEST Centre, founded by exiled Russian tycoon and opposition figure Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

But Yabloko's campaign for peace struck a chord and upended the Kremlin's calculations.

Now "the Kremlin is facing a rather difficult task, to come out of the situation with minimal losses," Petrov said, because kicking the party off the ballot is effectively "demonstrating that they're afraid of what Yabloko stands for."

Yavlinsky said the court's ruling "speaks volumes about the importance of our platform — far more than any official election results ever could."

He added that "the public demand for peace and freedom today has proven far stronger than the authorities anticipated."

Kremlin-aligned parties bash Yabloko

Several Kremlin-aligned parties have assailed Yabloko for its stance on Ukraine, and some even urged authorities to investigate it.

Sergei Mironov, head of A Just Russia Party, called on the Prosecutor General's Office and the Justice Ministry to "look closely" at Yabloko and "give a legal assessment to their actions."

"A party that openly opposes the special military operation, promises a shameful peace, and supports

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foreign agents is running for the State Duma," Mironov said, using the Kremlin's term to describe the 4-year-old conflict.

Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov said Yabloko is not supporting President Vladimir Putin's policies and has not helped "those suffering, those fighting on the front line."

The Motherland Party filed the lawsuit with the Supreme Court demanding Yabloko's removal from the ballot. It accused Yabloko of copyright infringement and exceeding campaign spending limits. The party also viewed Yabloko's stance on Ukraine as unlawful and tantamount to calling for the violation of Russia's territorial integrity.

Rybakov and lawyers representing the party in the Supreme Court on Monday rejected the accusations.

A crowd of supporters greeted Rybakov and other Yabloko representatives with applause as they entered the courthouse in central Moscow.

Yabloko members faced a Kremlin crackdown

Yabloko has faced increased pressure in recent years as the Kremlin ramped up its crackdown on dissent to levels unseen since the Soviet era.

Several prominent Yabloko members were jailed or designated as "foreign agents" — a label that brings additional government scrutiny and aims to discredit the recipient. As a result, its most prominent members were not on the ticket.

Maxim Kruglov, a deputy chairman and former member of the Moscow city council, was convicted in June of spreading false information about the Russian army and sentenced to seven years in prison.

Another senior member of the party, Lev Shlosberg, is on trial for similar charges in his native city of Pskov, facing up to 10 years in prison if convicted. It's the third criminal case brought against Shlosberg in the last two years. He has also been designated a "foreign agent."

That designation was also slapped on Boris Vishnevsky, another Yabloko deputy chairman, in 2024. The designation forced Vishnevsky to step down from the St. Petersburg city council after legislation was adopted later that year, barring "foreign agents" from participating in elections or holding public office.

Ukrainian drone attack on an oil hub deep inside Russia kills 13, officials say

By The Associated Press undefined

Ukraine attacked the petroleum hub of Nizhnekamsk in central Russia's Tatarstan region on Monday, killing 13 people and injuring 78 others, local authorities said, in one of the deadliest attacks in the country in the 4-year-old war.

The Ukrainian military said it hit an oil refinery in Nizhnekamsk, which is about 1,200 kilometers (750 miles) east of the Ukrainian border and has a population of about 240,000.

Russian officials didn't say what the drones targeted, but the city is home to two refineries and a petrochemical plant. Ukraine has targeted Russian oil facilities with long-range drones almost daily in recent months. The campaign has caused fuel shortages in Russia, eaten into its refining capacity and unsettled the population.

Previous Ukrainian attacks on Russian soil with high death tolls have come in the border region of Belgorod. In December 2023, Ukrainian shelling of the region's capital, also called Belgorod, killed 25 people and wounded over 100, local officials said. Five months later, a Belgorod apartment building partially collapsed after shelling, killing at least 13, according to Russian authorities.

Also on Monday, several Ukrainian drones sparked a fire at an industrial facility in the Tyumen region of western Siberia, said Gov. Alexander Moor, without offering any details.

Ukraine's General Staff said its forces damaged part of a petrochemical complex in Tobolsk, in the Tyumen region. The plant produces rocket fuel components, aviation fuel, composite materials for drones and high-octane gasoline, it said in a Telegram post.

Last month, Ukrainian drones hit a refinery in Tyumen, more than 2,400 kilometers (about 1,500 miles) east of the border with Ukraine.

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Ukraine says its strikes aim to push Russia into peace talks

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says his country is trying to force Russian President Vladimir Putin to the negotiating table and stop his full-scale invasion, launched in 2022. Russia is one of the world's biggest energy producers.

Ukraine's General Staff said its forces struck a Taneco oil refinery in Nizhnekamsk, starting a fire.

The city came under a "massive" drone attack targeting industrial and civilian facilities, according to the press service of Tatarstan's head, Rustam Minnikhanov.

One of the drones hit a hostel, killing nine of the 13 victims, including citizens of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, officials said. Uzbekistan's consular office in Tatarstan said seven of its nationals were killed.

A child was among the dead, along with the 75 injured, the press service said, adding that Monday was declared a day of mourning in Tatarstan.

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

Russia's Foreign Ministry urged foreign governments and international organizations to condemn Ukraine for the attacks.

Russia has also regularly battered Ukraine from the air using missiles, powerful glide bombs and drones, hitting civilian areas and causing thousands of civilian casualties, according to the United Nations. In the first six months of this year, 1,396 civilians were killed and 7,978 injured in Ukraine, the U.N. office in Kyiv said last week. That was a 37% increase from the same period last year, it said.

A Russian glide bomb struck the city of Zaporizhzhia in southern Ukraine, injuring 24 people, authorities said Monday. The city is the capital of a region of the same name that is partly occupied by Russian forces.

The World Health Organization's European office said that one of its warehouses in the central Dnipro region of Ukraine was hit twice in less than 24 hours. The attacks destroyed emergency supplies worth an estimated \$500,000 that were intended for front-line health facilities, it said in a statement. No casualties were reported.

Ukraine's drones have struck deeper inside Russia

Ukraine's domestically developed long-range drones have flown increasing distances deep inside Russia, with some now reaching Siberia, around 2,000 kilometers (1,200 miles) from the border.

"We do deliver entirely justified responses, and every Russian strike will be met with our response. Russia's war will be felt more and more at their own home -- in Russia," Zelenskyy said late Sunday on social media.

"The only reason this is still continuing is Russia's unwillingness to end this war."

As part of a parallel campaign to disrupt Russian military supply lines leading to the front line in eastern and southern Ukraine, Kyiv's forces struck road, rail and pontoon bridges in six regions last month, the Defense Ministry said Monday.

By repeatedly striking routes for fuel, ammunition and reinforcements, Ukrainian commanders say they have made Russian logistics slower, costlier and hard to organize. That has helped stall Russian advances and enabled Ukrainian counterattacks, they say.

Repairing the stricken refineries also is complicated for Russia. Ukraine's attacks have damaged specialized equipment that is often imported, making repairs time-consuming and expensive as workarounds or replacements are sought by evading international sanctions.

Taylor Farms recalls jalapeno products over salmonella concerns

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN AP Business Writer

Taylor Fresh Foods, parent company of Taylor Farms, is voluntarily recalling some products that include jalapenos because of worries about a possible salmonella contamination.

The announcement comes a few weeks after Taylor Farms voluntarily recalled its iceberg lettuce products sourced from central Mexico because of a potential link to a multistate cyclospora outbreak that has sickened people across the U.S.

Taylor Fresh Foods said that it was pulling some products including jalapenos from stores shelves after

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finding out that Coast Citrus Distributors was voluntarily recalling fresh jalapeños due to a potential salmonella contamination.

Guacamole, pico de gallo and taco dip are some of the prepared foods included in the recall. The list of recalled products were distributed by Taylor Farms in multiple states with a "Best If Used By" date up to and including Aug. 16, 2026. The products were sold at stores including Kroger, Stop & Shop, Target, Whole Foods, Trader Joe's and Walmart.

Taylor Fresh Foods said that the Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were working with state and local partners to investigate illnesses in a multistate outbreak of salmonella infections linked to fresh jalapeños supplied by Coast Citrus Distributors. The company said that a grower in Sinaloa, Mexico, a supplier to Coast Citrus Distributors, was identified as the potential source in the outbreak.

Taylor Fresh Foods said that it is no longer sourcing products from the farmer and will be filling orders from alternative suppliers. The company is currently not aware of any reported illnesses linked to its products containing jalapeños.

Consumers who have any recalled product are advised to discard it immediately and not eat it. Refunds are available at the location of purchase.

Consumers with any questions can contact Taylor at 855-455-0098 Monday through Friday from 8am-5pm PT.

From Uniqlo to Zara, clothing brands try to win over Gen Z with a needle and thread

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Encouraging customers to mend worn clothes instead of buying new ones might seem like a self-defeating sales strategy. But in-store repairs and sewing workshops are becoming essential retail services for clothing brands as they try to appeal to young consumers who want to save money and the planet.

While luxury fashion houses and select specialty retailers like Patagonia have offered product repairs for decades, the concept has caught on. Jeans giant Levi Strauss & Co., casual wear chain Uniqlo and budget retailer Primark are some of the apparel companies hoping to win over Generation Z shoppers with a needle and thread.

Levi's created a handstitching course for high school students after determining that many Gen Zers lacked the sewing skills to match their interest in thrift store shopping and sustainability. Employees spend 90 minutes instructing teenagers on four tasks: sewing on a button, hemming, patching a hole and fixing a tear.

The Wear Longer program, which the San Francisco-based company is expanding across the U.S., builds on the repair and customization services Levi's offers at hundreds of stores worldwide.

"We think it's important to empower the people who buy our clothes with the skill sets to maintain them, to get them to that second life," Paul Dillinger, Levi's head of global design innovation, said.

Detroit resident Chloe Halprin, 25, is the kind of consumer retailers hope to attract with a "fix it, don't ditch it" message.

In high school, Halprin shopped at inexpensive, trendy stores. Fixing a big rip felt beyond her limited sewing ability. If she damaged a top or skirt from Forever 21, "I might just throw it away."

These days, Halprin buys most of her clothes secondhand. She recently learned to hem with a sewing machine and hopes to tackle projects like turning a skirt into a shirt.

"I try to be conscientious of my carbon footprint," Halprin, a nonprofit grant writer, said. "I really don't like waste. I'm trying to save money as well."

Mending is a tiny part of cutting the world's mountains of textile waste

The evolution of mending from an economic necessity and traditional craft to a method for cultivating customers didn't happen overnight. The fashion industry as a whole has come under intensifying pressure

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to reduce its contributions to environmental pollution and climate change.

Textile waste — which includes manufacturing remnants, unwanted clothes and linens, and unsold products — is one of the industry's most pressing challenges. Each year, the world generates fabric waste at a rate equivalent to a garbage truck's worth getting dumped or incinerated every second, the United Nations Environment Program estimates.

Researchers broadly agree that repairing and reselling clothes can reduce a garment's environmental impact, especially if it delays or replaces a new purchase. But many caution the practices remain too limited to offset continued growth in clothing production and consumption.

Clothing production roughly doubled between 2000 and 2015, while the average number of wearings per garment declined by about 36%, according to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation. The sustainability nonprofit estimated that less than 1% of discarded clothing material got recycled into new apparel.

Enter Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012. It's the generation that grew up with fast fashion and e-commerce, then had school years and young adulthoods shaped by the coronavirus pandemic and post-pandemic inflation.

Whether due to limited budgets or a rejection of materialism, Gen Z has helped the preowned clothing market grow much faster than retail apparel sales in the U.S., independent market intelligence firm GlobalData estimated in a report with resale platform ThredUp.

For companies that make new clothes, mending programs and classes address "some deeper consumer needs and consumer behaviors at the moment," GlobalData retail analyst Neil Saunders said.

"It puts a halo on the brand," he said.

Skeptics say the environmental impact of retailer repairs is limited

The hands-on response from mass-market retailers, especially fast-fashion chains like Primark, Zara and H&M, has generated interest as well as skepticism.

Zara, which has its headquarters in Spain, launched a digital platform in 2022 for customers to resell their used pieces and to request basic alterations and repairs. The program is available in 17 of the nearly 100 countries where the trend-driven retailer operates.

Ireland-based Primark has focused more on customer education. The value-focused retailer hosts free "Love It For Longer" events where customers are taught skills like replacing zippers and buttons.

"Learning how to repair and care for clothing is probably one of the most simplest but absolutely totally effective ways that we can reduce waste and also extend the lifetime of whatever we buy," Vicki Swain, Primark's product longevity & partnership lead, said.

The company has held the workshops — more than 730 altogether — in nine of the 17 countries where Primark has stores, including the U.S. Primark also tested in-store repairs at three U.K. locations this year.

Swain argues that affordable clothes can be just as durable and repair-worthy as more expensive ones. Half the items Primark sells annually are basics like socks, underwear, T-shirts, and jeans, she said.

"There is nothing throw away about our products," Swain said.

Uniqlo, which focuses on wardrobe staples, offers a range of aftercare services, including repairs, decorative sashiko mending, embroidery and creative restyling.

Available in 75 of the Japanese mass-market retailer's roughly 2,500 stores, the services are promoted as a natural extension of product life cycles. The program also strengthens Uniqlo's connection with customers, said Jean-Emmanuel Shein, director of global corporate responsibility at Uniqlo USA.

Kate Fletcher, a professor of sustainability, design and fashion systems at England's Manchester Metropolitan University, said she thinks popular retailers are well-meaning, but she doubts their repair initiatives will have much environmental impact.

"The fashion sector's primary source of impact is due to the overproduction of pieces and growing volumes of garments created," Fletcher said. "Repairing a garment in store happens in addition to these growing production volumes, not instead of them."

Companies want tax incentives to make repairs and secondhand sales more profitable

The question facing the fashion industry is whether repairs can evolve from niche service to commercially viable.

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Sweden's H&M Group, which has more than 4,000 stores in over 80 countries, has been unusually candid about one of the biggest obstacles: the economics. The company has argued that repair and resale are desirable goals, but manufacturing new garments costs less than keeping existing ones in use.

H&M experimented with mending and redesign studios in several European cities, but in-store repairs now are offered only at its Paris flagship, a spokesperson said. The company, which is majority owner of an online consignment platform called Sellpy, also sells preowned pieces at selected stores in 13 cities.

In May, H&M joined Primark, ThredUp and dozens of other fashion and textile businesses in signing a statement that urged governments in North America and the European Union to adopt tax policies that would make eco-friendly services profitable.

Making mending work in retail is challenging because it's labor intensive and must be priced low enough to entice customers, Saunders, of GlobalData, said. Signals from consumers also are mixed, he said.

"I think younger shoppers still shop fast fashion because even though it goes against some of their principles, it is one of the most accessible parts of the market," Saunders said. "But what they're doing as well, though, is they're buying into alternative channels like resale. And they're having things repaired."

A blocked Iranian flight to Yemen set off Houthis' latest spiral with Saudi Arabia

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — A volley of fire between the Iranian-backed Houthis and Saudi Arabia has threatened to upend a 2022 truce in Yemen and open another front in the already expanding war in the Middle East after the collapse of the ceasefire deal between the U.S. and Iran.

"Yemen today faces a greater risk of renewed large-scale conflict than at any point since the U.N.-brokered truce of April 2022," U.N. envoy Hans Grundberg warned.

The escalation, he said, risks "jeopardizing the gains of the 2022 truce ... while also drawing the country into a broader regional confrontation, with devastating consequences for its people."

Grundberg said he has engaged in intensive talks with Yemeni parties and regional governments to avert further escalation.

The Houthi turned down a compromise offer

The tit-for-tat attacks started July 13 with a Saudi airstrike that hit the runway of the airport in Yemen's capital, Sanaa, preventing the landing of an Iranian flight carrying a high-ranking Houthi delegation.

Flying a flight without prior permission from the Saudi-led coalition — a decade-long, war-related requirement — was an attempt by the Houthis to establish a new reality on the ground, challenging the coalition's control over Yemeni airspace.

The rebels, apparently emboldened by the fallout of the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran, sought to gain political and economic concessions from Saudi Arabia, and insisted on lifting the Saudi blockade on territories they control in Yemen.

They turned down an offer by the Saudi-backed internationally recognized government in Yemen to facilitate the Houthi delegation's travel to Sanaa on a non-Iranian airline, said government and Houthi officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the talks.

The Houthis proceeded with the flight operated by Iranian-privately owned, U.S.-sanctioned Mahan Air, forcing the Saudi-led strike that disabled the Sanaa airport.

The Saudi-led coalition eventually allowed the flight to land in the Houthi-controlled city of Hodeida, as part of Omani-led effort to avert an escalation, said a Gulf official, who demanded anonymity to discuss the matter.

Yasmeen al-Eryani, an analyst at the Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, argued that the Mahan Air flight saga is part of Iran's escalation of the war.

"By activating the Yemeni front, Tehran reiterates the strategic value of that pressure lever and signals that attacks on Iran can produce costs elsewhere, particularly for Saudi Arabia and the Gulf," she said.

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Following the Sanaa airport strike, the Houthis attacked the Abha airport in southwestern Saudi Arabia and announced a blockade on Saudi shipping in the Red Sea. They attacked Saudi vessels as well as oil facilities inside the kingdom, adding further disruption to the global economy.

The Saudi-led coalition responded with strikes on Hodeida and Kamaran, Yemen's largest island in the Red Sea. It has also reinforced Yemeni troops along the front lines in Yemen to launch a ground offensive on Houthis, the Yemeni officials said.

Anticipating a ground offensive, the rebels launched dozens of missiles and drones on military camps in central and southern Yemen, which killed dozens of troops and civilians. They also attacked the Red Sea city of Mokha, severely damaging the city's crucial port, which remains under the control of the internationally recognized government.

A broader shift in Houthi priorities

In recent years, the Houthis have faced growing internal challenges stemmed from deteriorating living conditions in their territories.

"A prolonged situation of 'no war, no peace' has raised public expectations for tangible economic and living improvements, generating growing internal pressure on the group," Salah Ali Salah, a Yemeni researcher, said.

They sought to turn the blame on Saudi Arabia for its air and naval blockade on their territories and framed the escalation as an extension of the Yemen war, rather than a new front in the Iran war, he said.

The blockade was part of the war efforts by the Saudi-led coalition that entered the conflict in March 2015, six months after the Houthis descended from their northern stronghold and took control of Sanaa, forcing the government to flee to the south then to Saudi Arabia.

The war has turned Yemen to one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, and people living in the Houthi-held territories are the most hungry.

The conflict eventually deteriorated into a stalemate and the warring parties reached a truce in April 2022 that ended major fighting across the country and stopped Houthi missile and drone attacks on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which quit the coalition over a year ago.

The Omani back-channel talks focused on averting the collapse of the 2022 truce, but have yet to produce a compromise.

Ahmed Nagi, a senior Yemen analyst at the International Crisis Group, said the escalation reflected a broader shift in Houthi priorities, from attempting to extract confidence-building measures, such as payment of salaries to civil servants in Houthi-controlled areas, to clearly casting the conflict as being about Yemen's sovereignty over its airspace, ports and territorial waters.

"By taking direct action to reassert this view, the Houthis have raised the political stakes and made future compromise considerably more difficult," he said.

UK and France prepare for another heat wave as western Europe sets new temperature record

By STEFANIE DAZIO and SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The U.K. and France are bracing for the fifth heat wave of the season, adding to an intense stretch of hot weather that has repeatedly sent temperatures soaring across Europe since May.

National weather agency Météo-France is warning about temperatures approaching 40 C (104 F) from Tuesday onward in southeastern France. And in the U.K., an amber heat health alert for most of England will be in place beginning Tuesday as temperatures are forecast to climb to 36 C (96.8 F) later this week.

Across Europe, the extreme heat began in May and has contributed to major wildfires, prolonged drought and new national temperature records, as well as thousands of projected heat-related deaths.

Globally, so far this is the third-hottest year, behind 2024 and 2025, climate statistics show. But 2026 still has time to catch up. Thanks to the one-two punch of accelerated human-caused global warming and a supersized El Nino — a periodic warming of parts of the Pacific that leads to temperature variations around

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the globe — there's an increasing chance that by the end of the year, 2026 could become the hottest year on record, scientists said.

Last month saw the highest average sea surface temperature ever recorded for July across the extrapolar oceans, or the oceans free of seasonal sea ice, according to the European climate agency Copernicus.

That was partially fueled by developing El Nino conditions in the equatorial Pacific, the service said. The new average record for July is 20.96 degrees Celsius (69.73 degrees Fahrenheit), which beat the 2023 record of 20.89 C (69.60 F).

But last month's average surface air temperature globally was 16.90 C (62.42 F), making it only the joint second warmest July on record, tied with July 2024, Copernicus reported.

Western Europe sets new record

In Western Europe, meanwhile, the average temperature record for the June-July period hit 21.62 C (70.92 F), Copernicus said, toppling the 2022 record.

"Persistent high-pressure systems trapped heat over western Europe, the extreme temperatures also amplified widespread drought. As soils dry out, they lose their ability to provide natural cooling, allowing heat to build more readily," said Samantha Burgess, strategic lead for climate at the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts.

"This is a clear example of how climate change is intensifying heat extremes, with heat and drought increasingly reinforcing one another."

In France alone, heat wave alerts were issued for the first time on record in May, when more than half the country recorded new monthly temperature highs. The heat intensified in June, a period during which at least 5,700 more deaths than usual were recorded, according to France's public health agency.

Météo-France said June 23 was the hottest day ever recorded in the country. Temperatures climbed as high as 44.3 C (111.7 F) in the southwest.

Two other heat wave episodes were recorded in July, amplifying a historic wildfire in southwestern France that forced 220,000 people to flee their homes in one of the continent's biggest evacuation efforts since World War II.

Spain battles wildfires

Temperatures were slightly cooler in the U.K. on Monday but the country readied for its fifth heat wave in an exceptionally hot and dry summer, with half of England and all of Wales plunged into drought.

Provisional data show that England and Wales have had their driest July in records dating back to 1836, with 19 counties of England seeing no rain for the entire month.

The heat alert warns that significant impacts on health services, including a rise in deaths among older and vulnerable people, are likely.

Two record-breaking heat waves in May and June led to more than 2,800 excess deaths linked to extreme temperatures.

An 18-year-old died after getting into difficulty in the sea at Camber Sands beach in southern England on Sunday, the latest of dozens of deaths recorded in open waters in recent months.

In Spain, firefighters were battling multiple blazes, including one that broke out on Friday in Tírig, Valencia, that has burned more than 3 square miles (8 square kilometers) and has involved more than 300 personnel and 21 aircraft to combat it.

A separate wildfire in the southern Huelva region had affected a similar sized area since it broke out on Thursday. While temperatures across Spain remained high, some parts of the country were expecting thunderstorms Monday afternoon that could bring strong gusts of wind.

Ukraine's push to cripple Russia in Crimea is just getting started, drone chief tells AP

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

EASTERN UKRAINE (AP) — The commander leading Ukraine's drone war says his country's recent strikes in Crimea are the first phase of a campaign aimed at rendering the peninsula — illegally annexed by Russia in 2014 — unusable as a staging ground for Russian forces.

Maj. Robert "Magyar" Brovdi, one of Ukraine's most prominent commanders among a new generation of soldiers, said his forces could strike seven times more military targets in Crimea if the money pledged by Western allies came faster.

"Crimea falls within the key conceptual pillars on the path to ending the war," Brovdi told The Associated Press in an interview.

Despite that shortfall, Ukraine's summer campaign in Crimea has already inflicted significant damage: striking rail bridges, oil depots and power infrastructure to disrupt supply lines and blind Russian air defenses as drones fly in.

Brovdi said his forces are equipped at just 14% of what they would need to carry out the Crimea campaign at full capacity.

A firm believer in numbers since his past life running an international grain trading business, Brovdi joined Ukraine's territorial defense as a volunteer in the war's opening days. He rose quickly, commanding one of the country's most effective drone brigades before being tapped to lead a force with no precedent before this war — Ukraine's Unmanned Systems Forces.

"It's not that the production capacity of Ukrainian manufacturers doesn't allow us to make the necessary quantities" of drones, Brovdi said. "It's the banal problem of untimely financing, which our partners do allocate, but which moves significantly slower than our plans."

A lover of the arts

A devoted patron of the arts, Brovdi's underground command post resembles a museum, with pieces of Ukrainian art on display, including by renowned painter Maria Prymachenko — each with small placards noting their titles and a QR code linking to more information. "Please don't touch the sculpture," reads a sign beneath one piece.

The artwork sits against a backdrop of dozens of screens streaming live footage from the front, along with real-time data that drives decisions on the battlefield. Soldiers can grab good coffee, pick a book, work out or rest in sleeping pods — a culture that feels closer to a Silicon Valley office than a war room.

They work around the clock to try to prevent Crimea from functioning as a staging ground for the Russian military, said Brovdi, whose call sign, Magyar, nods to his ethnic Hungarian roots in Zakarpattia, the western Ukrainian region bordering Hungary.

He pointed to one sign of progress — in four recent large-scale Russian missile barrages from the peninsula, only five missiles were launched in total, a drop he credited to the systematic destruction of Russian air defenses there. The AP couldn't independently verify the claim.

To open that "window" for drones to strike the peninsula without being shot down en masse, his forces destroyed more than 300 air defense assets over recent months — surface-to-air systems, radar stations, electronic warfare equipment.

The window metaphor sends him into a sidetrack about something personal — he loves sleeping with one open, a pleasure he rarely gets anymore as one of Russia's most hunted men, who spends most of his time in underground bunkers.

Forcing Russia out of Crimea

Much of Russia's Soviet-era air defense hardware runs on the power grid, which is one of the reasons Crimea's electrical infrastructure has become a recurring target. Russian soldiers become "blind," left with just machine guns and rifles, he said. The tactic has also impacted access to power for civilians, and Brovdi said he has twice publicly apologized to Ukrainians living in Crimea for the disruptions.

Wherever Starlink connectivity reaches across Crimea, his forces can now destroy even the most heavily

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defended target using an average of just three drones, mixing munitions with different characteristics and warheads depending on what's being hit. He described the strikes as deliberately calibrated — different munitions for a bridge pier than for a fuel truck or a moving train — and said his forces avoid hitting civilian infrastructure.

"Creating conditions that make it impossible for any kind of military capability ... to remain there will make Crimea uninteresting ... as a military staging ground," he said.

Ukraine is also working to dismantle Crimea's role as a naval base — a blow to Russia's presence near NATO's borders, he added.

The campaign's early results have not been made public, Brovdi said. But roughly two weeks into the offensive that began in late June, he said Ukrainian intelligence indicated Russian authorities had ordered all military commands and security services to relocate off the peninsula, along with a covert order to remove secret archives and artworks. The AP could not independently verify the account.

Threats from Russia

Meanwhile, Russia is working to counter Ukraine's edge. It is installing jamming systems at a scale that will, to some degree, degrade Starlink connectivity, Brovdi said.

Russia is also building its own satellite communications system to rival Starlink, he said. "This is a risk for the entire planet," Brovdi said, "because a dictatorship will gain access to information across the whole globe."

He also pointed to other threats facing Ukraine. The concentration of jet-powered Shahed drones, which are much harder for Ukraine to shoot down, has increased two and a half times in recent weeks, he said.

Russia's military can currently fire a simultaneous salvo of 77 ballistic and cruise missiles, he said, and plans to increase that to 200. That is one of Ukraine's most vulnerable points, since the country is running short of interceptors for the U.S.-made Patriot — the only system Ukraine has in its arsenal against ballistic missiles — meaning dozens fired by Russia during mass barrages get through and hit their targets.

"Even if they only manage half of that, it will all be flying at us," Brovdi said. The only way to bring the number down, he said, is by striking every facility involved in producing those missiles — underscoring the importance of Ukraine's long-range strikes deep inside Russian territory.

Ukraine's plan for Russia's Wildberries

Ukraine has increasingly targeted Wildberries, Russia's largest online marketplace sometimes described as the country's answer to Amazon, and Brovdi named it as a target.

"Wildberries is, first of all, a supply platform — it's the war's quartermaster," he said, noting the company runs a dedicated section selling goods for Russia's military.

The Kremlin has denied the site supplies the Russian military and has accused Ukraine of striking civilian targets. Russia regularly attacks Ukrainian logistics and retail facilities.

At the same time, Brovdi said, the strikes on Wildberries are meant to make ordinary Russians feel the war directly, in hopes the resulting desire to end it could weigh on Russia's ability to keep fighting.

Brovdi declined to give a timeline for the Wildberries campaign, saying only that the strikes will continue "until it becomes impossible for it to recover quickly."

"Ultimately, Wildberries is, forgive the expression, a consumer gambling addiction," he said, arguing that losing access to it — like restrictions on social media — creates an intrusion on one's personal life that most Russians feel.

"It turned out to be a sensitive sensor of the comfort of Russia's massive population — people who consider themselves completely untouched by the actions of the aggressor country," he said.

Suspected Irish crime boss lands in Dublin after extradition from Dubai to face allegations

LONDON (AP) — The alleged leader of an Irish organized crime gang was extradited to Ireland from Dubai on Sunday to face allegations that he ran an international drug smuggling and money laundering empire with tentacles that stretched to Britain, Spain and the U.S.

The Irish Air Corps plane carrying Daniel Kinahan, 49, landed at an airport on the outskirts of Dublin on Sunday evening after courts in Dubai refused to block his extradition.

Kinahan was taken to the Special Criminal Court in Dublin where he was charged with directing the activities of a criminal organization. He was ordered to remain in custody at the high-security Portlaoise Prison about 90 miles (145 kilometers) southwest of the capital. His next court appearance is scheduled for Oct. 5.

Ireland's Special Criminal Court handles all organized crime and terrorism cases, as well as others where prosecutors believe the ordinary courts are inadequate to ensure the "effective administration of justice." Cases are heard by a panel of three judges without a jury.

Large security operation for Kinahan's transfer to Dublin

Irish media reported that a huge security operation was underway to ensure Kinahan faces justice. It included armed police, members of the armed forces and the prison service — which recently acquired a bombproof escort van to transport organized crime suspects, terrorists and other high-risk prisoners, Irish broadcaster RTE reported.

The security precautions came after Kinahan's family members were linked to a bloody gang war with another Irish organized crime group. U.S. authorities said in 2022 that the feud had resulted in 18 murders as they announced a reward of up to \$5 million for information leading to the disruption of the Kinahan organization or the arrest and conviction of Daniel Kinahan.

"Since February 2016, the (Kinahan Organized Crime Group) has been involved in a gang war with another group in Ireland and Spain, resulting in numerous murders, including of two innocent bystanders," the U.S. Treasury Department said when it sanctioned six members of the Kinahan gang and three businesses linked to it.

Irish police, with the help of authorities in Britain, Spain and the U.S., have been pursuing members of the Kinahan gang since at least 2016, when the feud led to a daytime shooting during the weigh-in for a boxing match at a Dublin hotel. Kinahan was a boxing promoter at the time.

The authorities allege the gang smuggled tens of millions of dollars in illegal drugs, including cocaine and cannabis, as well as guns into Europe, then used a network of apparently legitimate enterprises to launder the profits.

'Large quantities of cocaine' from South America

Kinahan is believed to have run the day-to-day operations of the gang from his base in Dubai, the U.S. Treasury said. That includes buying "large quantities of cocaine" from South America, organizing its distribution in Ireland and attempting to smuggle drugs into the U.K., Treasury said.

Kinahan has also instructed gang members to deliver money to a number of people in prison, including one who was convicted of attempting to murder someone on behalf of the organization, the agency said.

He was detained by Dubai authorities in April on an Irish arrest warrant.

During a phone interview with Scottish podcaster James English last week, Kinahan denied being an organized crime boss and described himself as the victim of a conspiracy to tarnish his reputation. While he said the extradition proceedings were expedited due to a deal between the Irish and Dubai governments, he said he hoped his trial in Dublin would help clear his name.

"I believe, in a way, I am a scapegoat," he said in the interview posted on TikTok. "And anyone that looks into this so-called feud that they say they have created, then you will see, you will see things yourself if someone has the time to look into it."

In March 2022, the head of the Kinahan organization in Britain, Thomas "Bomber" Kavanagh, was sentenced to 21 years in prison after he was convicted of orchestrating drug shipments into the U.K. Two

other men were sentenced to 20 years and 19 1/2 years for their part in the crimes.

In the course of their investigation, police found 15 kilograms of cocaine and 220 kilograms of cannabis inside asphalt removal equipment fitted with a tracking device at the port of Dover on the English Channel, Britain's National Crime Agency said when Kavanagh was sentenced.

Kavanagh lived in a mansion equipped with bulletproof glass and reinforced doors in Tamworth, north-east of Birmingham. When police raided the property in 2019 they seized numerous weapons and 35,000 pounds of cash in various currencies, including Emirati dirhams and euros, as well as British pounds, the crime agency said.

Congressional Democrats launch probe into efforts to deport US military members and their families

By JACK BROOK and SAFIYAH RIDDLE Associated Press/Report for America

Congressional Democrats said they are investigating the Trump administration's efforts to deport military service members and their families after The Associated Press found more than 50 active-duty troops' spouses and parents have been detained by immigration authorities.

In a letter sent Sunday evening to the Department of Homeland Security, the Defense Department and the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Democrats said they will investigate whether the Pentagon and DHS are coordinating to deport military service members and their families.

"These efforts imperil military readiness, weaken service members' morale, and betray America's promises to the people who put their lives on the line for our nation," according to the letter, which was signed by more than 60 lawmakers and provided to the AP.

The Pentagon declined to comment, stating it would "reply directly to the authors of the letter."

DHS told the AP that it values service members' contributions and "U.S. military service alone does not automatically grant lawful immigration status, or exempt aliens from the consequences of violating U.S. immigration laws."

The VA did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In their letter, the Democrats provided an extensive list of questions to the agencies. They said the apparent collaboration between DHS and the military to deport troops' families "raises both ethical and legal concerns."

"Donald Trump is breaking our country's promises to service members by tearing apart dozens of military families who were promised immigration protections," Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren said. "That's just plain cruel, and it's hurting our military readiness and morale."

Warren's office is leading the probe alongside Connecticut Sen. Richard Blumenthal, Illinois Sen. Tammy Duckworth and several House Democrats.

The AP investigation found President Donald Trump's administration has rolled back protections for military families and departed from longstanding bipartisan consensus to carry out its mass deportation agenda. Service members have been forced to take leave of their duties, including delaying deployment, to care for their children after their spouses were detained.

The lawmakers pressed the administration on why military recruiters are still promoting immigration protections.

Citing the AP's reporting, the lawmakers urged the Trump administration to restore policies that had previously shielded military service members' families from immigration enforcement while allowing them to adjust their legal status.

"This report is appalling and shows the unbelievable cruelty at the center of the Trump immigration agenda," said Blumenthal, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. "We will be demanding answers and accountability."

The Republican chairs of the armed services and veterans' affairs committees, Mississippi Sen. Roger Wicker and Kansas Sen. Jerry Moran, did not respond to requests for comment.

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Last week, Trump established the Military Spouse Commission, chaired by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's wife, Jennifer Rauchet, to develop policies and recommendations for improving life for troops' spouses.

"Military spouses are intrinsically linked to the good order, readiness, and retention of our military," Trump stated in a letter published in the Federal Register on Aug. 6. "Their support and contributions to our Armed Forces are crucial to mission success."

The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

The Defense Department said in a December letter to Democratic lawmakers, obtained by the AP, that it had not implemented any recent policy changes for noncitizen family members in the military and has not conducted analysis on how deportations impact troop readiness and morale.

Danitza James, president of Repatriate Our Patriots, an organization providing support to military families and veterans facing deportation, said troops are being betrayed.

"Our military service members are the ones that sign on the dotted line to go and defend our country and maybe not come back," James said. "They trust our government to take care of their families, and they're not doing that."

Today in History: August 11, Alcatraz takes first federal prisoners

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, Aug. 11, the 223rd day of 2026. There are 142 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Aug. 11, 1934, the first federal prisoners arrived at Alcatraz Island, a former military prison, in San Francisco Bay; the island would be home to more than 1,500 prisoners over the next three decades, including gangsters Al Capone and James "Whitey" Bulger, before closing in 1963.

In 1919, Germany's Weimar Constitution was signed by President Friedrich Ebert.

In 1929, Babe Ruth became the first baseball player to reach 500 career home runs with a homer at Cleveland's League Park.

In 1949, President Harry S. Truman nominated Gen. Omar N. Bradley to become the first chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In 1952, Hussein bin Talal was proclaimed King of Jordan, beginning a reign lasting nearly 47 years.

In 1956, abstract painter Jackson Pollock died in an automobile accident on Long Island, New York, at age 44.

In 1965, rioting that claimed 34 lives and lasted six days broke out in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles.

In 1972, the last U.S. ground combat troops left South Vietnam to return to the United States.

In 1973, at a house party in the Bronx, 18-year-old DJ Kool Herc began extending the musical breaks of the records he was playing and speaking over the beat, marking the (unofficial) birth of hip-hop music.

In 1992, the Mall of America, the nation's largest shopping and entertainment center, opened in Bloomington, Minnesota.

In 1997, President Bill Clinton made the first use of the line-item veto, rejecting three items in spending and tax bills. (The U.S. Supreme Court later struck down the veto as unconstitutional.)

In 2012, more than 300 people were killed and more than 3,000 injured after earthquakes struck near Tabriz, Iran.

In 2014, Academy Award-winning actor and comedian Robin Williams died in Tiburon, California, at age 63.

Today's Birthdays: Magazine columnist Marilyn Vos Savant is 80. Country music singer John Conlee is 80. Computer scientist and Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak is 76. Musician Joe Jackson is 72. Playwright David Henry Hwang is 69. Actor Viola Davis is 61. Actor Embeth Davidtz is 61. Actor-host Joe Rogan is 59. Actor Anna Gunn is 58. Actor Sophie Okonedo (oh-koh-NAY'-doh) is 58. Rock guitarist Charlie Sexton is 58. Hip-hop artist Ali Shaheed Muhammad (A Tribe Called Quest) is 56. Actor Will Friedle is 50. Rock singer Ben Gibbard is 50. Actor Merritt Wever is 46. Actor Chris Hemsworth is 43. Rapper Asher Roth is 41. Political commentator Tomi Lahren is 34. Actor Alyson Stoner is 33.