

Groton Daily Independent

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Community Calendar

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.

Groton Daily Independent

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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. Hot Springs, 5 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 15

Girls Soccer hosts Sioux Falls Christian, 1 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.

Presidential Plane Plot

President Donald Trump hid in a container to switch planes while leaving Turkey last month, US officials have revealed. See footage of Trump boarding an older Air Force One model before covertly exiting via a catering truck.

Trump told reporters at the time they would return via the baby blue Air Force One as opposed to a newer model gifted by Qatar for "old time's sake." From there, Trump was secretly transferred onto a military jet and taken to Britain. The subterfuge was designed to avoid a potential missile threat from Iran. Journalists and White House staff members were not told about the threat or that Trump had left the plane they were on. Trump was then secretly transferred back onto it when the two groups landed in the UK.

The last known time a plane decoy was used was in 2000, when then-President Bill Clinton flew from India to Pakistan.

A Celestial Doubleheader

A total solar eclipse will sweep across the Arctic and parts of Europe today, the first visible from mainland Europe in nearly 30 years. Totality will last less than two and a half minutes at its longest.

The path of totality crosses northern Russia, Greenland, Iceland, Spain, and a sliver of Portugal, while a partial eclipse will be visible across much of Europe, Canada, and parts of the northern US. A total eclipse occurs when the moon passes between Earth and the sun, temporarily blocking the sun from view; visualize the path of every eclipse from 1900 to 2099. Eclipses can also affect wildlife behavior, with researchers documenting bees going quiet, owls hooting, and crickets chirping as the sky darkens.

Separately, the Perseid meteor shower peaks tonight, potentially producing up to 100 meteors per hour under dark, new moon skies as Earth passes through debris left by Comet Swift-Tuttle.

👉 **Humankind:** A nursing home chef asks one simple question—and suddenly, mealtime goes from lackluster to delicious.

Girls Without Schools

Approximately 2.4 million Afghan girls remain barred from secondary education five years into Taliban rule, according to a United Nations report published yesterday. Afghanistan is the only country in the world with formal bans on women's education.

The Taliban regained power in Afghanistan in August 2021, as US and NATO troops withdrew following two decades of war. By March 2022, the Islamic fundamentalist group had shuttered girls' secondary schools, and women were barred from universities in December 2022. The decision erased recent gains in female education, with girls' secondary school enrollment rising from a few thousand in 2001 to roughly 1 million in 2021. The UN believes the bans could reduce the female workforce by 600,000 over the next 40 years and increase the risk of early marriage.

Women are also prohibited from teaching boys, contributing to a teacher shortage. Afghanistan's literacy rate is among the world's lowest at roughly 37%.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

LeBron James debuts with Philadelphia 76ers against New York Knicks on NBA Opening Night, Oct. 20; full 2026-27 schedule will be published tomorrow.

British driver sets hydrogen-powered car speed record at over 406 miles per hour.

Ms. Rachel, a YouTube star who creates educational music for toddlers, to release her debut album alongside her composer husband on Sept. 25.

Taylor Swift, Lyle Lovett, and more to be inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame; Swift is the youngest writer ever to receive the honor.

Science & Technology

Anthropic to watermark content created by its AI models, including Claude, with invisible tags to comply with new EU regulations aimed at making AI-generated content easier to identify.

Aging may cause the brain's immune cells to secrete a protein that disrupts other brain cells, possibly contributing to age-related cognitive decline, memory loss, and neurodegenerative disorders.

Pre-Hispanic societies in Colombia likely built vast networks of canals and raised fields without centralized rule or rigid hierarchies; archaeologists believe roughly 800 volunteers constructed the networks in roughly two months.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close lower (S&P 500 -0.3%, Dow -0.3%, Nasdaq -0.6%).

Go down the stock market rabbit hole, including market bubbles and historic crashes.

AI startup Manus to resume independent operations after China forced Meta to unwind its \$2B acquisition.

Target appoints first-ever AI officer.

Dating app Bumble drops its signature women-message-first rule, allowing either person to initiate conversations after a match; change comes amid declining user engagement.

Politics & World Affairs

Sen. Darline Graham (R-SC), sister of late Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC), and Rep. Ralph Norman (R, SC-5) advance to GOP Senate primary runoff.

Democratic socialist Francesca Hong and moderate David Crowley locked in tight race in Wisconsin's Democratic gubernatorial primary; scroll for latest results.

Russia frees US military veteran Robert Gilman after more than four years of imprisonment; President Donald Trump says no prisoner exchange took place.

Ebola outbreak is the fastest-growing outbreak of its kind, killing at least 2,011 people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo—spreading nearly three times faster than the 2014-16 outbreak in West Africa.



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. Monday, August 10, 2026, to 6 a.m. Tuesday, August 11, 2026

Item	Sturgis	Rapid City District	District Total	Last Year to Date
DUI Arrests	43	11	54	53
Misd Drug Arrests	86	22	108	102
Felony Drug Arrests	41	5	46	46
Custodial Arrests	82	22	104	N/A
Total Citations	354	388	742	696
Total Warnings	1,300	724	2,024	1,909
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	4	4	8	9
Injury Accidents	8	13	21	35
Fatal Accidents	1	2	3	3
# of Fatalities	1	2	3	3

Fatal Crashes:

At 3:22 p.m. Monday, U.S. Highway 16A, mile marker 27: A 2002 Yamaha motorcycle, operated by a 63-year-old male, was traveling westbound on U.S. 16A near mile marker 27. The motorcycle left the roadway to the right, entered the westbound ditch, and overturned. The driver became separated from the motorcycle. The driver sustained fatal injuries.

At 3:34 p.m. Monday, Deerfield Road and Marshall Gulch Road, Pennington County: A 2008 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, operated by a 46-year-old male, was driving northbound on Deerfield Road near Marshall Gulch Road. The motorcycle passed a vehicle in a no-passing zone. The driver lost control when returning to its lane. The motorcycle entered the northbound ditch and rolled. The driver was not wearing a helmet and sustained fatal injuries.

Injury Crashes:

At 9:45 a.m. Monday, U.S. Highway 14A, mile marker 25: A 2006 Kawasaki motorcycle, operated by a 44-year-old female, was driving westbound on U.S. 14A near mile marker 25. The driver lost control of the motorcycle and became separated from the vehicle. The driver was wearing a helmet and was transported to Lead-Deadwood Monument Health with non-life-threatening injuries.

At 1:20 p.m. Monday, Wildlife Loop, mile marker 15, Custer State Park: 2003 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, operated by a 64-year-old male (Unit 1), was traveling southbound on Wildlife Loop near mile marker 15 with a group of motorcycles. The motorcycles in front of Unit 1 slowed. Driver 1 attempted to avoid collision and overturned the motorcycle. The driver was separated from the motorcycle. He sustained minor injuries and refused transport.

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At 1:26 p.m. Monday, South Dakota Highway 244, mile marker 30: A 2007 Harley Davidson motorcycle, operated by a 40-year-old male (Unit 1), was westbound on SD Highway 244 at mile marker 30. Unit 1 was negotiating a right-hand curve on a grade when the driver lost control and crossed the center line. A 2025 Harley Davidson motorcycle, operated by a 72-year-old male (Unit 2), was eastbound at this location with a 69-year-old female passenger. Unit 1 struck the side of Unit 2. All occupants sustained injuries and were transported Monument Health in Rapid City.

At 3:05 p.m. Monday, Nemo Road and Old Ridge Road: A 2016 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, operated by a 69-year-old male, was traveling east on Nemo Road. The driver failed to negotiate a curve in the roadway. He became separated from the motorcycle and left the roadway. He was transported to Monument Health in Rapid City with serious injuries.

At 3:30 p.m. Monday, U.S. Highway 16, mile marker 15: A 2008 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, operated by a 52-year-old male, was traveling eastbound on U.S. Highway 16 near mile marker 15. The driver lost control and slid into the north side ditch. The driver was separated from the unit and was transported to Monument Health in Custer for his injuries.

At 3:35 p.m. Monday, Junction Avenue and Park Street, Sturgis: A 2015 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, operated by a 46-year-old male (Unit 2), was stopped for the stop sign at the intersection of Junction Avenue and Park Street going southbound with a 47-year-old female passenger. A 2023 Toyota GR 86 passenger car, operated by a 27-year-old male (Unit 1), was southbound on Junction Avenue toward Park Street. Unit 1 struck the rear of Unit 2. A 2024 Honda HR-V SUV, operated by a 73-year-old female (Unit 3), was in the intersection of Park St and Junction Ave. Unit 1 struck the rear of Unit 2 and pushed it into Unit 3. Unit 2's passenger was transported to Monument Health in Sturgis with non-life-threatening injuries.

At 4:15 p.m. Monday, S Rochford Road and Divide Road: A 2001 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, operated by an 82-year-old male, was traveling northbound on S Rochford Road. The driver failed to negotiate a curve in the roadway. The motorcycle tripped and the driver was separated from the motorcycle. The rider was wearing a helmet. The driver sustained non-life-threatening injuries and was transported to Monument Health.

At 10:06 p.m. Monday, Vanocker Canyon Road and Galena Road: A 2024 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, operated by a 29-year-old male, was driving south on Vanocker Canyon Road near the intersection of Galena Road. The driver failed to negotiate the left curve and went off the road. The driver was separated from the motorcycle. He was not wearing a helmet and was transported to Monument Health in Rapid City with serious injuries.

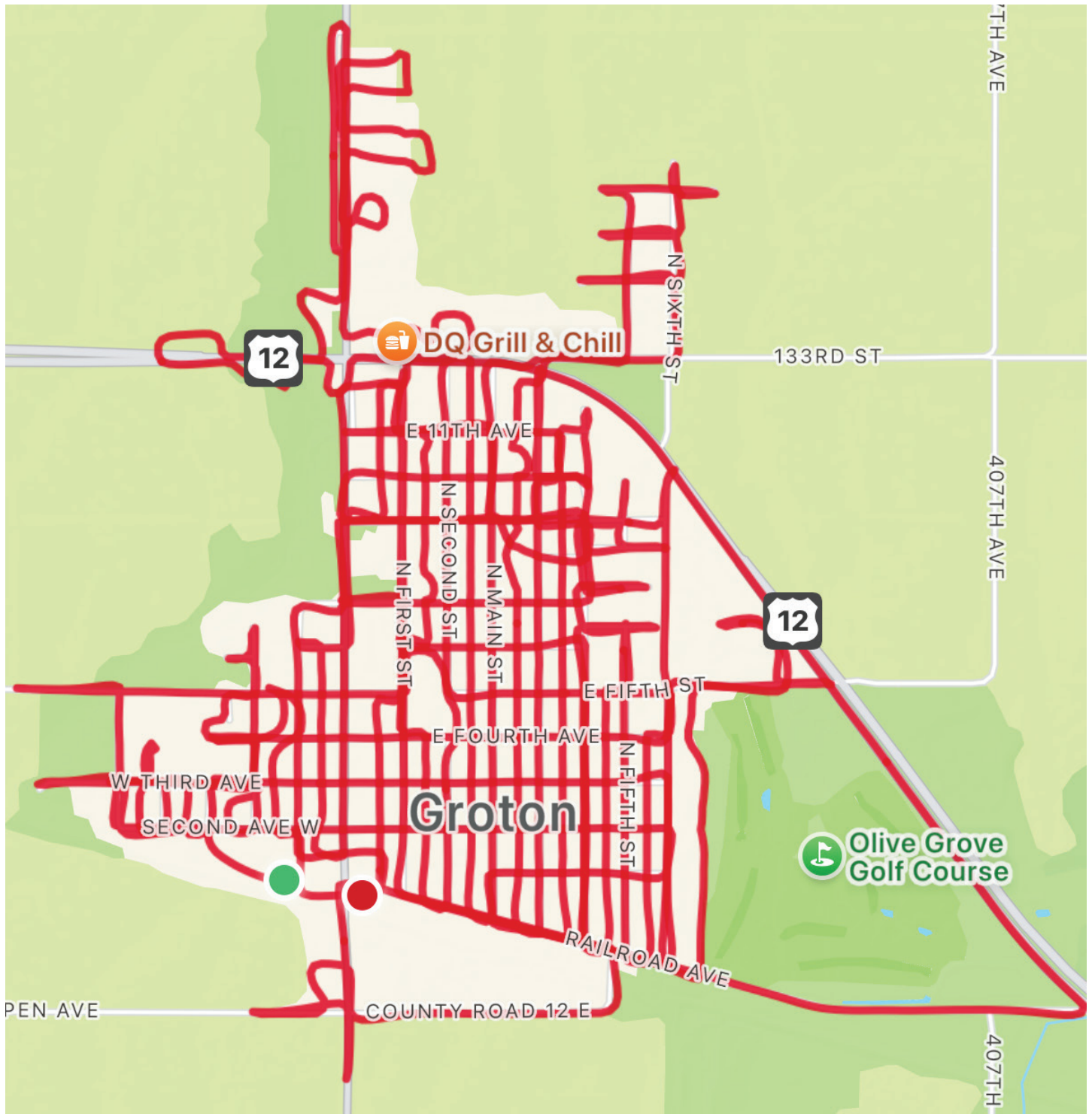
At 1:11 a.m. Tuesday, Sheridan Lake Road and Laveeda Drive: A 2019 Polaris RZR ATV, operated by a 42-year-old male, was traveling northbound on Laveeda Drive in Rapid City. The vehicle was traveling with three male passengers, ages 60, 32, and 56. The vehicle turned west on Sheridan Lake Road. The driver lost control and the vehicle overturned. The driver and two passengers sustained serious injuries and were transported to Monument Health in Rapid City. The third passenger was uninjured.

All information released so far is only preliminary.

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

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Adult Mosquito Control

The City of Groton conducted adult mosquito control Friday night. The temperature was started at 80 degrees and went down to 74 by with the wind out of the NE-E-SE at 3-6 mph. 10.1 gallons of MasterLine Kontrol 4-4 was used. Travel time was 2 hours and 52 minutes with a distance of 36 miles. Total cost of the application was around \$570.

POET and CoBank Donate \$10,000 to Support New Brown County 4-H Building

GROTON, S.D. (August 11, 2026) – POET Grain and CoBank are investing in the future of Brown County youth through a combined \$10,000 donation to the Brown County 4-H Leaders Association. The gift includes \$5,000 from POET and a matching \$5,000 contribution from CoBank and will help fund the construction of the new Brown County 4-H Community Building.

The new facility will provide a dedicated space for youth development, educational programming, and community events. Plans include flexible meeting spaces, a full kitchen, office space, and storage to support 4-H activities throughout the year.

For the past several years, POET and CoBank have partnered to donate matching funds to a local community.

"At POET, we're proud to give back to the communities that have given so much to us," said Jason Wambach, Commodity Manager at POET Bioprocessing – Groton. "We believe investing in youth is one of the best ways to strengthen our communities for generations to come. We're proud to partner with CoBank to help create a space where young people can develop leadership skills, explore new interests, and build lasting connections."

Name Released in Lawrence County Fatal Crash

What: Single-vehicle fatal crash

Where: U.S. Highway 85 at mile marker 35, 5 miles north of Deadwood, South Dakota

When: 4:41 p.m., Saturday, August 8, 2026

Driver 1: James Edward Skillett, 72-year-old male from Shawnee, Oklahoma, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2003 Harley-Davidson Electra Glide

Helmet Used: No

Lawrence County, S.D.- An Oklahoma man died Saturday in a single-vehicle crash near Deadwood, South Dakota.

Preliminary crash information indicates James Edward Skillett, the driver of a 2003 Harley-Davidson Electra Glide, was traveling northbound on U.S. Highway 85 in the left lane. Skillett braked as he approached a motorcycle turning left. He lost control of his vehicle and became separated from the Harley-Davidson. He was transported to Monument Health in Spearfish where he died from injuries sustained in the crash.

The investigation is ongoing. All information released is preliminary.

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

Roberts County Fatal Crash

What: Two-vehicle fatal crash

Where: I-29 at mile marker 232, 3 miles east of Sisseton, South Dakota

When: 3:34 p.m., Monday, August 10, 2026

Driver 1: 52-year-old male from Tower City, North Dakota, no injuries

Vehicle 1: 2024 GMC Sierra

Seat Belt Used: No

Driver 2: 34-year-old female from Brookings, South Dakota, fatal injuries

Vehicle 2: 2022 Honda Ridgeline

Seat Belt Used: No

Passenger: 13-year-old female from Brookings, South Dakota, no injuries

Seat Belt Used: Yes

Roberts County, S.D.- A Brookings woman died Monday in a two-vehicle crash near Sisseton, South Dakota.

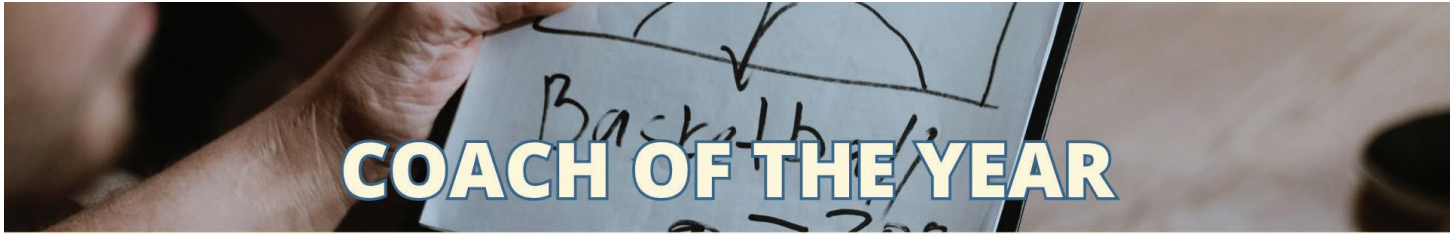
Names of the those involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2024 GMC Sierra was traveling northbound on I-29 while pulling a 48-foot header trailer. At the same time, the driver of a 2022 Honda Ridgeline was also traveling northbound. The Sierra switched into the passing lane and the Honda collided with the GMC's trailer. The driver of the Honda sustained fatal injuries.

I-29 was closed for approximately four and a half hours.

The investigation is ongoing. All information released is preliminary.

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



Boys' Athletic Assistant Coach

**Katie Anderson -
Aberdeen Central**

From the South Dakota High School Coaches Association Facebook Page

The South Dakota High School Coaches Association is proud to recognize Katie Anderson as the 2026 Boys' Athletic Assistant Coach of the Year!

For 19 years, Katie has been a dedicated coach at Aberdeen Central, helping lead the Golden Eagles in cross country and track & field while making a lasting impact on countless student-athletes.

Throughout her coaching career, Katie has helped guide teams to multiple ESD Championships, state podium finishes, and numerous school, conference, and state records. But what she's most proud of is the culture her teams have built—one rooted in hard work, resilience, teamwork, and supporting one another through every challenge.

Katie believes every athlete deserves the opportunity to grow, whether they're competing for a state title or participating for the first time. Her commitment to developing both successful athletes and outstanding young people has made a lasting difference in the Aberdeen Central program.

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That high utility bill may be telling July's story

If you opened your latest utility bill and your first reaction was, "Wow, what happened?" you probably aren't alone.

I've heard from a number of people who have commented about how high their utility bills are this month. When you first look at the bill, it is easy to wonder whether something is wrong.

But before blaming the meter, the electric rate or wondering if something in the house suddenly started using a lot more electricity, it might be worth looking at what Mother Nature was doing during the billing period.

Sometimes we forget that the utility bill we receive today is really a history lesson. It doesn't necessarily tell us what we are doing right now. It tells us what

we were doing during the month that just ended.

And July was a hot and humid one.

According to the weather records I keep here in Groton, the average temperature for July was 76.6 degrees. You have to go all the way back to July 2012 to find a July that warm.

The average humidity during July was 74 percent.

Compare that with June, when the average temperature was only 69 degrees and the average humidity was 68 percent.

In one month, the average temperature jumped 7.6 degrees and the average humidity increased by six percentage points.

That combination can make a noticeable difference in how much an air conditioner runs.

We tend to think of an air conditioner as simply cooling the air, but it also removes moisture. When warm, humid air passes over the cold evaporator coil, moisture condenses out of the air and drains away.

So during a hot, humid month, the air conditioner is doing two jobs — lowering the temperature and removing moisture.

That usually means longer run times.

And longer run times mean more kilowatt-hours.

The warm nights also play a role. When temperatures stay elevated overnight, homes don't get as much of a chance to cool naturally. The air conditioner may continue cycling well into the evening and overnight.

Humidity adds another layer to that. A 75-degree day with low humidity can feel comfortable. Put a lot of moisture in the air at that same temperature and it can feel much warmer.

That can lead people to lower the thermostat another degree or two just to feel comfortable, which adds even more air-conditioning use.

But the air conditioner isn't the only weather-related electrical load that has been busy this summer.

There is also the sump pump.

With the high water table around the area, many sump pumps have been running much more often than normal.

A sump pump is one of those appliances we generally don't think much about. It sits in the basement, turns on when the water reaches a certain level and shuts off when the pit has been pumped down.

Under normal conditions, it may run only occasionally.

But when the ground is saturated and groundwater continues flowing into the sump pit, the pump may cycle over and over again, day and night.

Each cycle may not use a tremendous amount of electricity by itself, but repeated cycles over days and weeks begin to add up.

And because the sump pump often operates quietly in the basement, it is easy to forget that it is using electricity every time it runs.

So this summer we've had two weather-related electrical loads working harder than normal.

Above ground, the heat and humidity have kept air conditioners busy.

Below ground, the high water table has kept sump pumps busy.

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And both are being recorded by the same electric meter.

Of course, there can be plenty of other reasons why one household uses more electricity than another. The size and efficiency of the air conditioner, insulation, windows, thermostat settings, dehumidifiers, water heaters, additional appliances and changes in household activity all make a difference.

The same goes for sump pumps. One home may have very little groundwater entering the basement while another may have a pump cycling constantly.

So we can't say that every increase in a utility bill is caused by the weather.

But when many people around the community are seeing higher bills at roughly the same time, it makes sense to look at the conditions everyone has been experiencing.

July gave us the warmest average temperature we've had for that month since 2012, along with high humidity and a high water table.

That is a combination that can keep electrical equipment running a lot longer than we realize.

Maybe that's the easiest way to look at this month's utility bill.

It isn't just a number.

It's a record of what your house had to deal with during July.

Heat above us.

Humidity around us.

Water beneath us.

And electrical equipment working to keep all three under control.

City Hall gets a summer refresh

Groton City Hall has been getting a fresh look inside and out this summer as several improvement projects have been completed around the building.

One of the larger projects involved a thorough cleaning of the ventilation system inside City Hall. Over the years, dust and debris can accumulate within ventilation ductwork, so the cleaning was undertaken as part of maintaining the building and improving the overall indoor environment for employees and visitors.

Work has also been taking place on the exterior of City Hall. The building received a fresh coat of paint, helping brighten its appearance and protect the exterior from the elements.

Meanwhile, Groton's summer crew has been busy improving the landscaping surrounding the building. The landscaping work is helping give the City Hall grounds a cleaner, more attractive appearance while complementing the freshly painted exterior.

Together, the projects represent a general summer cleanup and upgrade of one of the community's most visible public buildings.

City Hall is often one of the first places residents and visitors associate with the community, and the improvements are helping make sure the building and grounds remain both functional and welcoming.



Nick Groebelinghoff, Donovan Block, Aaron Severson and Gavin Englund are busily removing the rock from the east side of the building.



Aaron Severson, Nick Groebelinghoff (in back), Alex Abeln and Gavin Englund are removing rock from the north side of the building.



Pictured are Landyn, Tanya, Jackson and Dana Dargatz. (Courtesy photo)

Dargatz makes transition from Aberdeen to Groton **by Dorene Nelson**

Tanya Dargatz is the new 7th and 8th grade math teacher in Groton. "I've been teaching sixth grade math at Holgate in Aberdeen for twenty-two years," Dargatz explained, "with a total of twenty-three years with the district."

"In addition to teaching 6th grade math, I have also coached eighth grade girls' basketball, middle school cross country, and varsity and middle school track," she listed. "I've also been an advisor for Student Senate and MathCounts."

"I grew up on a farm north of Aberdeen, attended the public schools there, and attended NSU for both undergraduate and graduate programs," Dargatz listed.

"Our family now lives closer to Aberdeen where my husband, Dana, along with our two sons, ages 15 and 12, farm and raise black Angus cattle. In addition to farming and raising cattle, my husband is also a crop adjuster, and our sons enjoy spending their time in sports," she said.

Dargatz enjoyed her time working for the Aberdeen District but has decided it was time to make a change, to seek out new growth, and find new opportunities. She felt it was the right time to grasp a new opportunity and become a math teacher here in Groton.

"I appreciate how welcoming everyone has been in the Groton community, and I look forward to this opportunity to serve," she said.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Cattle producers cope with 'gut-wrenching' losses from July heat wave

BY MEGHAN O'BRIEN

George Kenzy said he did all he could to prepare his family's feedlot for extreme heat and humidity. That included extra water tanks, covering the ground with light-colored bedding to reduce heat absorption, and keeping the ground as wet as possible.

"And it seemed like Mother Nature just had the upper hand on this one," Kenzy said.

Thousands of cattle in South Dakota died of heat stress last month. Though locations across the state experienced unusually high temperatures, data from the Rapid City office of the National Weather Service help illustrate the historic nature of the heat wave: It was the city's second hottest July on record, according to several indicators, and the city experienced its highest-ever recorded temperatures on July 25 downtown (110 degrees) and at the airport (112 degrees).

July was also the warmest month on record for the contiguous United States, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, with an average temperature of nearly 77 degrees.

Days of heat, high humidity, a lack of wind and cooler nighttime temperatures created a dangerous mix, according to Warren Rusche, a South Dakota State University Extension feedlot management specialist.

"Heat stress is one of those issues we have to be ready for all the time in South Dakota," Rusche said. "What's different is we haven't seen widespread death losses like we saw in quite a few years. Normally the approaches we've taken have been successful enough that we've avoided some of these larger scale death-loss events."

Rusche estimates at least 2,000 cattle deaths across the state, though he said that's "likely too low." No official count is available and likely won't be for weeks as producers document their losses, he said.

Individual and overall financial impacts

South Dakota ranks seventh in the nation with 3.6 million cattle, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Brule County, which includes Chamberlain and Kimball, lost between 1,500 and 2,000 cattle from heat stress, Rusche said, which equates to about \$6 million of financial losses.

"As devastating as this is for individual ranchers, it's going to have minimal effect on our beef industry as a whole, just because a lot of producers didn't get hit with significant death loss," Rusche said. "The drought, probably, is going to play more of a role in cow numbers than the actual death loss events that we experienced."

Cattle producers should report their losses to their local Farm Service Agency office, Gov. Larry Rhoden said in a statement on social media. The U.S. Department of Agriculture offers livestock indemnity payments to producers who face "livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather." Those payments are equal to 75% of market value of the livestock lost.

Financial impacts are not the only thing on the minds of producers like Kenzy.

"Initially, it's shock and awe," he said. "It's the absolute gut-wrenching loss of life of the cattle that you've cared for so much, put so much work into and then, yeah, you have to clean up the carnage and move on."

Much of the impact spread through central and southeast parts of the state, including Kenzy's operation near Gregory. He did not specify how many cattle he lost.

Feeding operations were more heavily impacted by the heat than cow-calf operations, according to

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Warren Symens, past president of the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association.

"When you get a 1,500-pound animal that's been fed to gain fast and grow fast and be ready for consumers, they suffer a lot more because they're much bigger and they're in a different environment," he said. "They can't go stand in a water pond like a cow on a pasture can."

The nation's cattle herd is at a 75-year low, Symens said, "so, anything that's removing pounds of cattle from the system has an effect," including on the already high price of beef.

Rising temperatures across the state

South Dakota's average temperatures are climbing, according to State Climatologist Laura Edwards.

"Most of those increases are driven by warmer nights," she said. "So, really, that's not unusual to see warmer nights, but that stretch in July was really unusual, even for the trend that we're on."

The state's also seeing increased humidity levels due in part to a difference in row crops in recent decades, Edwards said. Some farmers have transitioned from spring wheat, which is usually harvested by this time of year, to corn and soybeans, which are continuing to pump water into the air, creating humid conditions, Edwards said.

"We see that it may be affecting humidity on a local scale, which could be a contributing factor to the cattle," she said. "But it's not enough on its own to really make that much of a difference, when we're talking about livestock issues that we've seen all across the region."

Larger-scale weather patterns, like hot air being pushed north from the Gulf of Mexico, creates more humidity than regional crop changes, Edwards said.

A Sioux Falls-based nonprofit, South Dakota Green Project, reported earlier this year that the state's average temperatures have increased by two degrees since 1900. Days with extreme heat are becoming more frequent, according to the report. Compared to the 1970s, Sioux Falls now experiences 10 more heat warning days per year and Mitchell experiences 16 more.

"As our climate continues to warm, bouts of extreme heat become longer, more frequent, and more intense, increasing the risk of heat-related illness and mortality," the report reads.

Encouraging producers to 'check on each other'

Symens, of the Cattlemen's Association, noted producers might have disagreements about issues affecting the industry, "but we're all in this together."

"With these losses, give your friends and neighbors a call and see how they're doing and just check on each other," he said. "We're pretty notorious for not asking for help when we need it. There's nothing wrong with reaching out to each other."

Andrea Bjornestad, a professor and mental health Extension specialist at SDSU, said cattle deaths and financial losses could cause chronic stress and anxiety for ranchers that manifest as physical symptoms — chest tightness, shakiness, rapid heart rate — and emotional symptoms such as feelings of hopelessness, guilt and shame.

Chronic stress can also push people to isolate themselves to avoid talking about their struggles with friends and family, and to avoid social activities.

"All of these things can contribute to stress on the body, the mind, as well as stress within relationships, whether it's family members or friends," Bjornestad said, "and contribute to a decline in mental health."

Bjornestad's been researching the mental health of farmers and ranchers for more than a decade. She's worked with producers during past major losses such as the ongoing avian flu outbreak that's killed millions of birds and during the COVID-19 pandemic when large pork packing plants closed, forcing farmers to reckon with euthanizing their pigs.

"The ranchers talk so much about their connection with their animals and how their animals actually help them have positive mental health," Bjornestad said. "So, I think to significantly lose animals in itself is such a huge loss, not just financially, but emotionally, because that connection is lost."

Counselors can be a "neutral party" for producers who want to talk about their struggles, Bjornestad said. SDSU offers a grant-funded agricultural behavioral health voucher program for five free counseling sessions for producers and their immediate family members.

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 appeals court protects longer petitioning time for South Dakota ballot questions

State immediately says it will seek full court review of three-judge panel's decision

BY MEGHAN O'BRIEN

A South Dakota group won another victory Tuesday in its effort to preserve adequate time for petitioning questions onto statewide ballots, but a state official immediately pledged to continue the fight in court.

A federal appeals panel upheld a lower court's ruling that state lawmakers violated the First Amendment when they moved up the deadline for submitting petition signatures by three months. After the three-judge appeals panel issued its ruling, South Dakota's attorney general said he will request a review by the entire 11-member 8th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Petitioners need 17,508 signatures from registered voters to put a proposed law on the ballot in South Dakota, and 35,017 signatures for a proposed state constitutional amendment. South Dakota lawmakers approved legislation last year that moved the deadline for filing signed petitions in a general election year from the first Tuesday in May to the first Tuesday in February.

A group that's been involved in numerous ballot questions, Dakotans for Health, challenged the law in federal court. Last August, a district court judge ruled the law violates the First Amendment, writing that moving the deadline three months earlier "arguably goes beyond merely inconvenient and enters the realm of severe." The state appealed that ruling.

During arguments heard by the three-judge appeals panel in June, the state's lawyer, Paul Swedlund of the state Attorney General's Office, said a shorter deadline gives more time for potential litigation over ballot questions to play out.

"The more time that you have to litigate a case, the better chance it is that you're going to get it finished," Swedlund said then.

Judge Raymond Gruender disagreed with that assertion, writing in Tuesday's opinion that "even if that were the case, however, nothing in the record indicates that the new deadline advances that interest in any meaningful way."

Gruender added that the state didn't provide "sufficient factual or legal support" for its argument that pre-election litigation on petitions would bolster the confidence of voters in the initiative and referendum process. Judge Jane Kelly joined Gruender in the decision.

In a dissenting opinion, Judge James Loken wrote, "the Constitution does not authorize this federal court micromanagement of state elections." The now-unenforceable law would have furthered South Dakota's "interest in election integrity by extending the time for pre-election petition litigation," Loken added.

Republican South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley highlighted Loken's comments Tuesday in a news release.

"While we respect the panel's decision, we still believe the South Dakota Legislature reached a fair solution to our petition process, without infringing on the First Amendment," Jackley said.

Law and litigation affect petitioning efforts

Rick Weiland of Dakotans for Health told South Dakota Searchlight in June that his group was still collecting signatures for two potential ballot questions. He believed there was no enforceable deadline, because state lawmakers had not passed any further legislation regarding the petition deadline as the lawsuit played out.

Though the group is still collecting signatures, the effort may be winding down soon, Weiland said. Counties face a Sept. 16 deadline to have ballots printed for the Nov. 3 general election.

"We're really far away from being able to close this loop in a quick, fast way," he said. "I think it's very unlikely we're going to be able to submit."

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The law “did have a chilling effect on our ability to raise the funds we needed, and to basically get volunteers engaged,” Weiland said. “It takes a well-funded, well-coordinated effort to be successful, and with that bill hanging over our heads and tied up in the courts, it’s very difficult to get that kind of support.”

His group is circulating two potential constitutional amendments that Weiland said would be a check on the power legislators have in Pierre.

The first of those amendments would protect voter-approved ballot measures from being changed by state lawmakers for seven years. Then, lawmakers would need a supermajority vote in both chambers and would still need voter approval.

The second would require that changes to the initiated ballot measure process that are approved by the Legislature — like regulations on how organizations or individuals collect signatures — would automatically be referred to voters at the next general election.

Legislators have placed four of their own proposed constitutional amendments on the ballot this year. Those amendments would allow the state to withdraw from expanded Medicaid if federal funding for it declines, clarify that a voter must be a U.S. citizen, establish a trust fund for unclaimed property proceeds, and require that future state constitutional amendments receive 60% support from voters rather than a simple majority.

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.

Governor awards \$500,000 to task force working on cybersecurity and infrastructure resilience

BY SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF

South Dakota Gov. Larry Rhoden announced Tuesday that he awarded \$500,000 from a fund under his control to support the continued work of his Governor’s Resilience and Infrastructure Task Force.

The money comes from the Future Fund, which employers support with fees they submit while paying taxes to support unemployment benefits.

The governor awards money from the fund at his discretion, although a state law that took effect July 1 places new restrictions on the fund, including a more detailed description of acceptable uses and a requirement that awards must be recommended by the Governor’s Office of Economic Development. One of the fund’s allowed uses is “development of infrastructure required to support economic development in this state.”

Rhoden established the Governor’s Resilience and Infrastructure Task Force last year, saying it would “serve as a strategic advisory body to develop policy recommendations, assess risks and vulnerabilities, and support long-term planning and investment in critical infrastructure systems across our state.”

The Future Fund money is going to the state Department of the Military, which supports the task force administratively in collaboration with the Governor’s Office and the state Department of Public Safety. A news release from Rhoden’s office said the money will “equip the task force to build effective communication tools for citizens, gather resources to collect and integrate geographic information system (GIS) data that will enhance statewide infrastructure planning, and work with industry and academic partners to strengthen South Dakota’s resilience efforts.”

The task force’s work includes cybersecurity. Several recent cybersecurity incidents have generated news coverage in South Dakota, including a cyberattack in Pennington County that disrupted some services for weeks, an attempted cyberattack on Rapid City’s wastewater system, and a reported email hacking incident affecting the city of Mitchell.

Rhoden’s other recent Future Fund awards have benefited industrial and business parks in Rapid City and Mitchell, a program helping paraprofessionals become teachers, the addition of a gunsmithing program to a technical college in Rapid City, and the establishment of a South Dakota Defense Institute seeking to bring more defense industry contracts to the state.

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SD Mines included in Trump announcement of \$180M for mining education

BY SAM GAUNTT

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said the federal government will fund \$180 million in grants for mining schools across the country, including South Dakota Mines, as part of his administration's goal of rebuilding the U.S. coal industry.

The grants, announced Friday, will include \$100 million from the Department of Energy spread across the 14 accredited mining schools in the U.S., while the Department of Defense will dedicate just over \$80 million for three major schools of mining and metallurgy: the Colorado School of Mines, South Dakota Mines and Johns Hopkins University.

The Johns Hopkins University grant will help to create a new "multi-material recycling innovation hub," while South Dakota Mines' funding will go toward establishing a consortium of workforce development programs alongside the University of Kentucky and Missouri S&T University.

South Dakota Mines, in Rapid City, said Tuesday it's slated to receive \$25 million to establish the Critical Minerals Merit Scholars Consortium.

"This funding accelerates our longstanding mission of producing highly skilled graduates ready to strengthen domestic critical minerals supply chains," said Mines President Brian Tande in a news release.

Trump framed the announcement as part of his ongoing effort to rebuild the U.S. coal industry and reopen mines, a central pillar of his energy policy. He has previously sought to shorten the regulation process for new mines and limit the impact of environmental regulations.

Trump stressed the national importance of funding mining programs, given that other countries, such as China, graduate students at a far higher rate. Accredited mining programs at U.S. educational institutions graduate less than 170 mining engineers each year, he said, while China graduates more than 3,000 annually.

"We're not doing you favors," Trump told a crowd, including miners and many of the schools' representatives, at a ceremony at the State Department building in Washington. "We're doing ourselves favors. We need your industry."

Half of the U.S. mining workforce is set to retire within the next three years, he added.

"That's why my administration is making an unprecedented financial commitment to our nation's mining schools," Trump said. "It's going to keep us nice and young and vibrant."

In addition to increasing support for mining education, Trump announced more than \$2 billion worth of new mining contracts and projects.

Those investments include \$150 million for Minnesota-based Niron Magnetics to develop rare-earth-free magnets that are domestically produced to support the defense industrial base and \$1.4 billion for Sila Nanotechnologies, a California-based firm, to "expand production of silicon-carbon battery anodes and build out a lithium-ion battery cell manufacturing facility to strengthen the supply chains of satellite operations, unmanned aerial systems, and munitions," according to a White House fact sheet.

Several of the speakers during the ceremony Friday, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick, highlighted the national security benefits of increasing U.S. mine production.

"At the core of this is our industrial strength," Rubio said. "But also our national sovereignty — that we never depend on other countries for things we need to prosper and to defend ourselves as a people."

The staff of South Dakota Searchlight contributed to this report.

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.

Trump taken via catering truck to secret flight amid Iran threats, report says

BY ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump covertly traveled across Europe in a military plane in July after Iran threatened his life, according to a bombshell report Monday night by The Washington Post that revealed press and White House officials remained on a decoy Air Force One.

The extraordinary episode unfolded July 8 after Trump boarded the former Air Force One following the NATO summit in Ankara, Turkey, after concerns reportedly arose about his safety on a new Air Force One, a retrofitted Boeing 747-8 jet donated to Trump by Qatar.

Trump had ordered a fresh wave of military strikes on Iran while attending the NATO summit, breaking a brief period of peace negotiations.

According to unnamed officials who spoke to The Washington Post, shortly after Trump waved to cameras as he ascended the older Air Force One, he was secretly taken to the back of a catering truck and shuttled to a nearby smaller Air Force C-32A plane.

Upon arriving at the Royal Air Force base in Mildenhall in eastern England, Trump was clandestinely ferried back into the former Air Force One and shortly thereafter descended the stairs in front of cameras.

Press corps members who routinely travel with the president, as well as White House officials, remained on the decoy flight from Turkey to eastern England under the impression that Trump was on board, according to officials. The Post granted the officials anonymity because they were not authorized to speak about the incident.

The Pentagon referred States Newsroom to the White House, which did not respond for comment.

The U.S. Secret Service did not respond to States Newsroom's request for comment.

The catering truck

Photos taken by the traveling press pool from the tarmac in Turkey show reporters boarding the back of the former Air Force One via stairs on the right side rear of the plane. A catering truck, with its rear container raised to plane level, can be seen toward the front of the jet on the opposite side.

Once on the plane, members of the press were instructed by the Secret Service to completely close their window shades, according to a July 8 press pool report and a later press account Tuesday.

A pool report is an official dispatch sent to thousands of news organizations to keep journalists and the public informed about the president's whereabouts and actions.

Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform that he was flying from Turkey to the United Kingdom on the old powder blue Air Force One "for old time's sake" and so that U.S. forces stationed in England could tour the newly retrofitted Air Force One bearing a navy blue and deep red design accented by gold stripes.

According to official press reports from the night of July 8, the old Air Force One touched down at Mildenhall Air Force Base at 10:16 p.m. local time and Trump descended the stairs at 10:56 p.m. The pool report noted that neither the president or any White House officials had spoken to the press on board while in flight from Turkey.

After greeting service members, Trump then ascended the stairs to the new Air Force One and gave a wave to the cameras at 11:01 p.m. local time. The plane was off the ground at 11:14 p.m., according to official July 8 pool reports.

'If I go, you go'

Trump spoke to reporters shortly after take-off from the United Kingdom and was peppered with questions about why he did not take the new Air Force One jet after the NATO summit concluded.

Trump denied any security concerns and said the new jet was sent early to the U.K., and "the whole base came out and saw the plane," according to official pool reports.

When asked why reporters were instructed to keep their window shades shut on the old jet, which they were led to believe the president was also on, Trump said, "Well, yeah, because you're probably on a dangerous flight because of the sleaze bags that we have to deal with," he said, referring to Iran, ac-

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according to the pool reports.

Reporters then pressed Trump on whether he was aware of a credible threat on his life from Iran.

"Well, I have a threat all the time. I'm number one on their list, before you. But if I go, you go. Right? Perhaps someday you want to change professions," Trump told reporters aboard the flight according to the pool reports.

The New York Times reported on July 8 that Trump had switched planes because of a security threat related to the conflict with Iran. The Trump administration swiftly served subpoenas two days later on the reporters in a sweeping effort to learn the identities of their confidential sources.

The administration dropped the subpoenas on July 27 after a federal judge sharply criticized the investigation.

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

With new tactics, ICE reaches new high in monthly arrests

BY TIM HENDERSON

Federal immigration agents are employing new tactics — from arresting academics at airports to setting up a checkpoint at a popular creek in a National Forest — to boost their arrest numbers, leading to more arrests in July than in any previous month of the Trump administration.

Though it is striving to fulfill the White House's demand for more arrests, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is still falling short of the Trump administration's announced goal of 2,000 arrests per day. And more arrests won't necessarily translate into more deportations, said Colleen Putzel-Kavanaugh, an associate policy analyst at the Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan think tank.

"The focus is so much on the arrest numbers that the mission seems a little confused to the general public," Putzel-Kavanaugh said.

She noted that many of the new arrests catch non-criminals in a legal "gray area," such as having an expired visa while applying for another legal status. Such people are hardly the "worst of the worst" the Trump administration has identified as its top targets, she said.

"Meeting some arbitrary arrest quota doesn't necessarily serve this larger purpose of deporting a larger number of people, so there's a disconnect about what the mission really is."

The Department of Homeland Security, which oversees ICE, told Stateline it arrested about 51,000 immigrants in July, up from 43,000 in June and the highest number recorded by the Trump administration. The administration did not release state specific numbers.

The department said that last month it arrested an average of 20-40 people per day at airports, as federal agents targeted passengers with expired visas. According to media reports, those arrested last month included a Cameroonian researcher at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore — a Fulbright scholar — and a University of Maryland instructor from Ethiopia who was detained as he returned from a conference where he accepted a Teacher of the Year award. Advocates suggested immigrants with expired visas should not travel without consulting an attorney.

Arrests based on expired visas are likely to continue and will accelerate in September when a new rule takes effect that sets stricter time limits on visas for students, exchange visitors and foreign media.

Michael Clemens, an economics professor at Johns Hopkins, has estimated that by limiting the number of international STEM students, instructors and researchers in the U.S., the new rule could cost the nation's economy as much as \$145 billion per year by 2035.

"Implementation of the rule will cause large numbers of highly-skilled students and scholars to fall out of status. We'll certainly be seeing a lot more cases like the seizure of Fatima Ameaka," Clemens said, referring to the Johns Hopkins researcher from Cameroon, an expert in disease outbreaks.

In an interview, Clemens said federal immigration authorities "see airports as an easy bottleneck because everyone in there is ID'd, so it's lower cost to seize people there than in any other place except a prison."

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Kate Angustia, supervisory policy and practice counsel at the American Immigration Lawyers Association, a trade group, said it's a "misconception" that the people being arrested at airports let their visas expire and therefore forfeited their legal status.

"Many of these folks are in a lawful period of authorized stay," Augusta said. "This means that longstanding policy and practice has been, for decades, to allow these people to remain here as their legal processes continue to be processed by the government."

DHS said in a statement to Stateline that "this administration is working diligently to ensure that aliens in our country illegally can no longer fly unless it is out of our country to self-deport."

An asylum seeker from Zambia, working as a registered nurse at a Portland, Maine, hospital, was released Thursday after her arrest at Boston Logan International Airport sparked protests.

"Nurses in Maine found out one of their own was locked up and sprung into action to get her out," Puneet Maharaj, a local nurse union representative, said in a statement.

On July 26, immigration agents set up a checkpoint near Wilson Creek in North Carolina, a site that is popular with Hispanic residents and is managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Federal agents arrested 13 people, according to the local sheriff's office.

There were local protests by Methodist clergy and relatives who said at least some of those arrested had no criminal record and entered the country legally, contradicting a social media post by Republican North Carolina Assembly Speaker Destin Hall calling those arrested "a gang of previously arrested illegal aliens."

The Sierra Club also protested the arrests.

"Bringing immigration enforcement into public recreation areas undermines the sense of safety and belonging that these spaces provide and could discourage people from visiting national forests and other outdoor spaces altogether," the organization wrote in a statement.

At the end of July, federal agents and state highway patrol officers conducted roadside checks of trucks in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and Ohio "to crack down on illegal, unvetted drivers and unsafe vehicles." DHS said it detained 51 drivers who were in the country illegally.

The agency has said it is "delivering on President Trump's promise to the American people to arrest and deport pedophiles, murderers, rapists, and other criminals." But less than a third of current detainees have a criminal conviction and 40% have never been accused of anything but non-criminal immigration violations, according to statistics reviewed by Stateline through early July.

The statistics also show that about 2,000 detainees a month have been freed after court-ordered bond hearings as many federal judges, some of them Trump appointees, have ruled against the Trump administration's policy of mandatory detention for many immigrants. The U.S. Supreme Court is likely to rule on the legality of the policy in its October term.

July also saw two immigrants shot and killed during traffic stops in Texas and Maine. After a brief pause, President Donald Trump ordered such traffic stops to continue, though ICE officers will now wear body cameras when they pull over drivers, according to border czar Tom Homan.

Also in July, a Mexican man who had a valid tourist visa was struck and killed by a truck after he fled ICE officers who pulled him over in St. Augustine, Florida.

Stateline reporter Tim Henderson can be reached at thenderson@stateline.org.

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

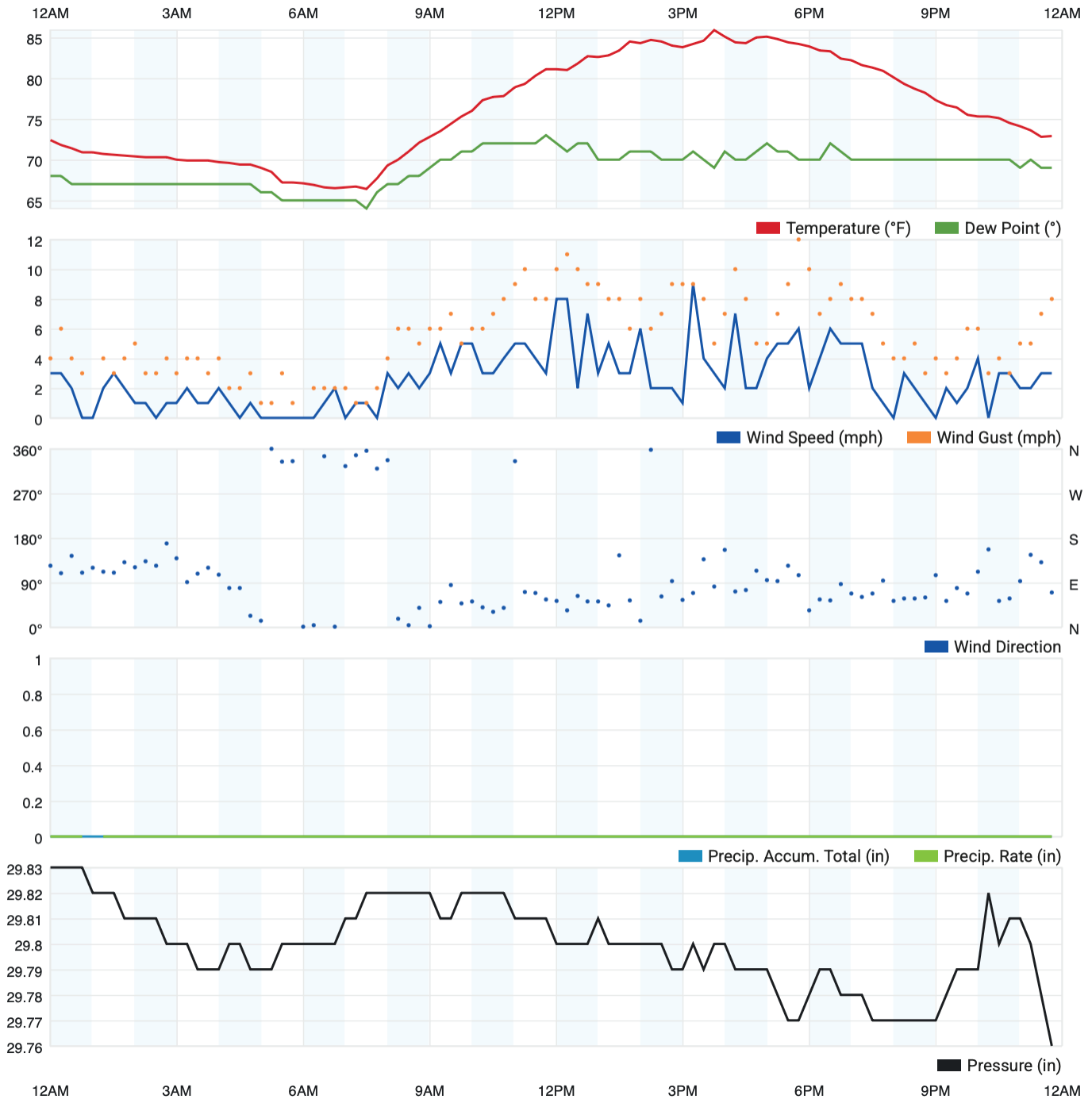
Tim Henderson covers demographics for Stateline. He has been a reporter at the Miami Herald, the Cincinnati Enquirer and the Journal News.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

August 11, 2026



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Wednesday



High: 83 °F

Chance
T-storms

Wednesday
Night



Low: 59 °F

T-storms
Likely

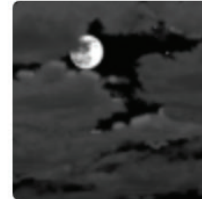
Thursday



High: 79 °F

Decreasing
Clouds

Thursday
Night



Low: 59 °F

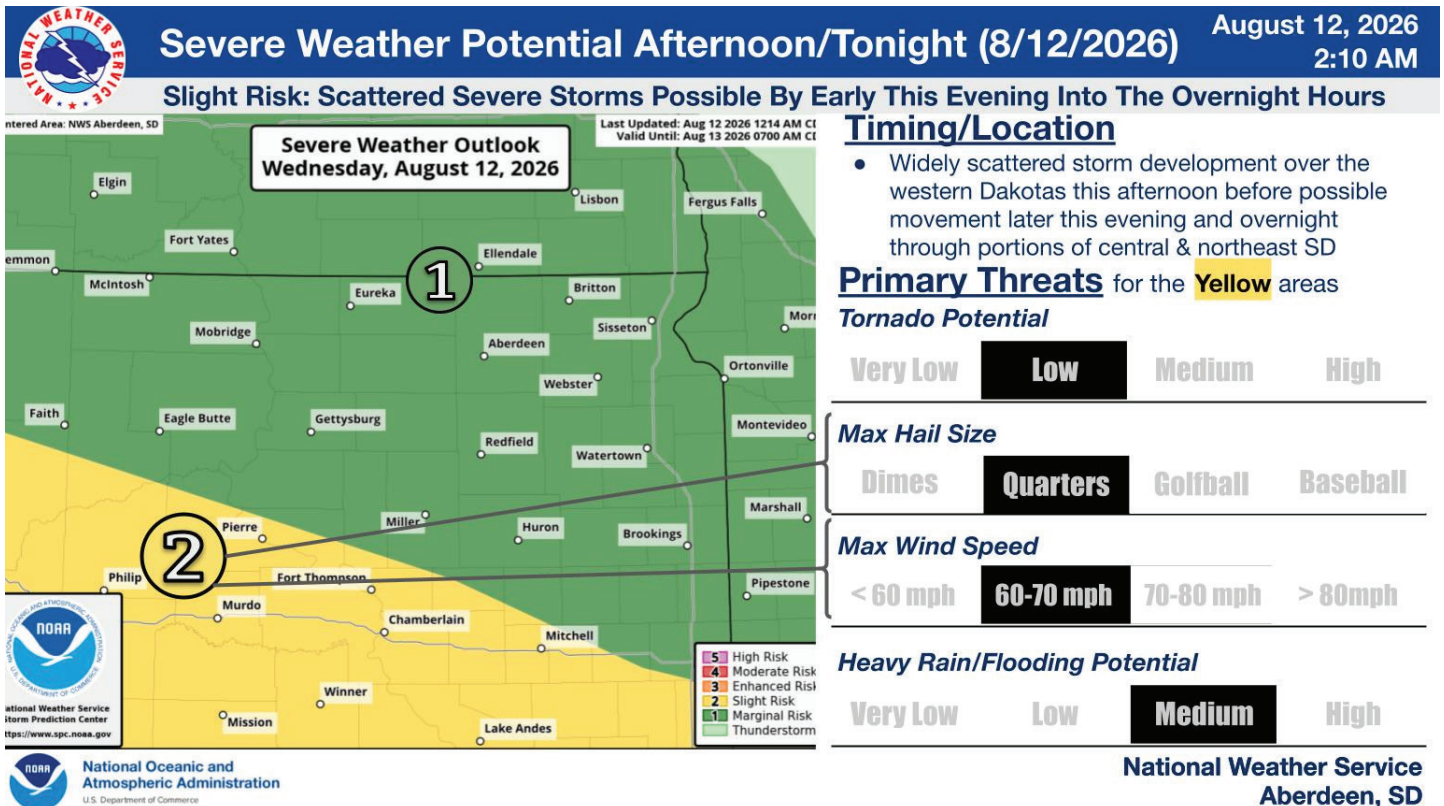
Mostly Cloudy

Friday



High: 78 °F

Chance
Showers



The next round of potentially severe thunderstorms may initiate as early as this afternoon across portions of the western Dakotas before making their way southeast through the northern plains this evening into the overnight. A Slight Risk (level 2 of 5) for severe weather is in place across portions of southwest, central and south central South Dakota for this afternoon into the early overnight hours. The primary threats include damaging thunderstorm wind gusts 60 to 70 mph and excessive heavy rainfall.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 86 °F at 3:44 PM

Low Temp: 66 °F at 6:40 AM

Wind: 13 mph at 5:38 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 102 in 1933

Record Low: 40 in 1898

Average High: 84

Average Low: 58

Average Precip in Aug.: 0.87

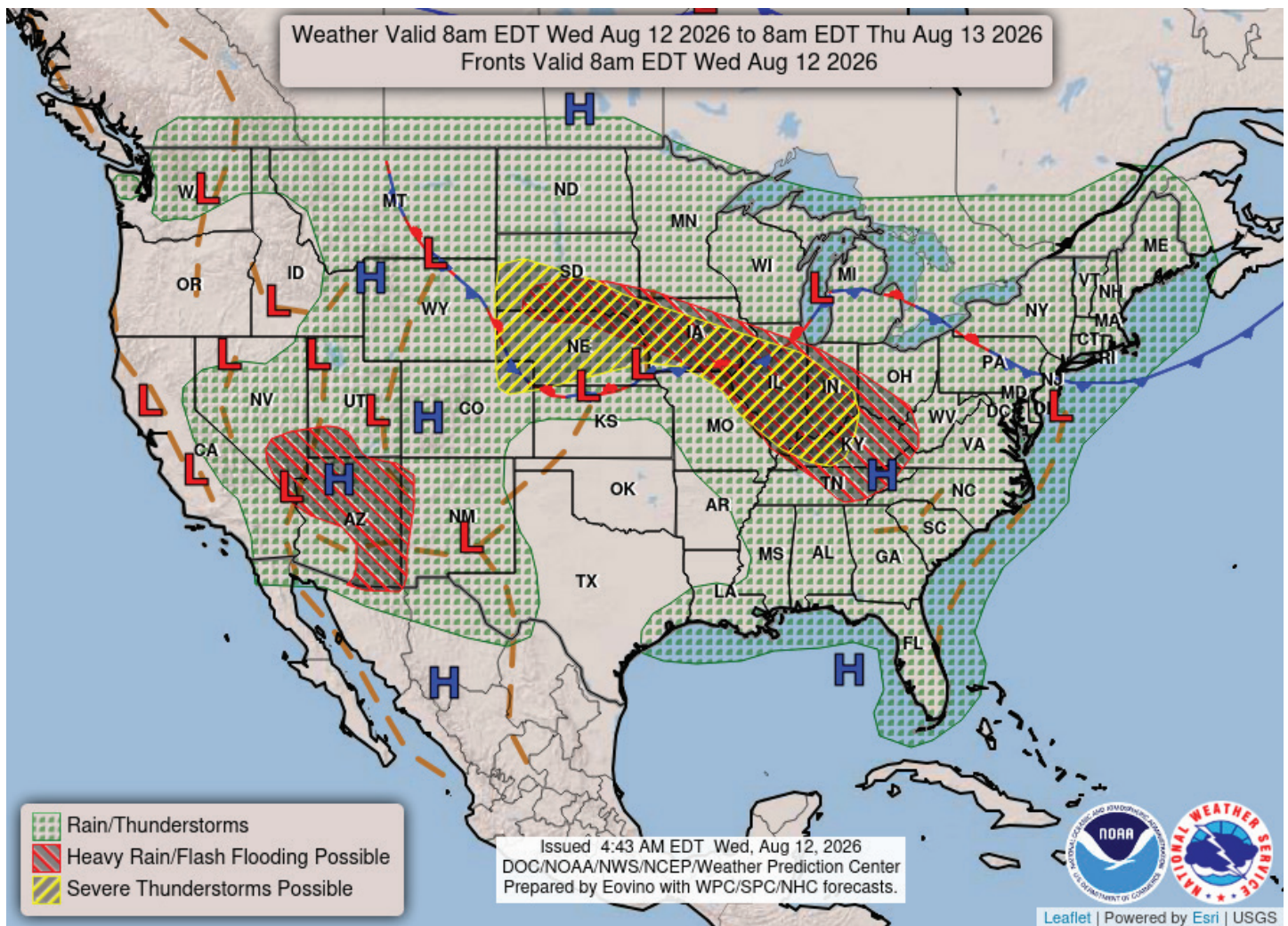
Precip to date in Aug.: 9.81

Average Precip to date: 14.97

Precip Year to Date: 19.28

Sunset Tonight: 8:45 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:30 am



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Today in Weather History

August 12, 1986: Thunderstorms produced 2.53 inches of rain in twenty minutes in downtown Rapid City. The heavy rain caused street and basement flooding. Golf ball size hail fell in Zeona, in Perkins County, which covered the ground.

1752 — The following is from the Journals of the Rev. Thomas Smith, and the Rev. Samuel Deane, published in 1849. "In the evening there was dismal thunder and lightning, and abundance of rain, and such a hurricane as was never the like in these parts of the world." This hurricane struck Portland, Maine.

1778 — A Rhode Island hurricane prevented an impending British-French sea battle, and caused extensive damage over southeast New England. (David Ludlum)

1933 — The temperature at Greenland Ranch in Death Valley, CA, hit 127 degrees to establish a U.S. record for the month of August. (The Weather Channel)

1936 — The temperature at Seymour, TX, hit 120 degrees to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1955 — During the second week of August hurricanes Connie and Diane produced as much as 19 inches of rain in the northeastern U.S. forcing rivers from Virginia to Massachusetts into a high flood. Westfield MA was deluged with 18.15 inches of rain in 24 hours, and at Woonsocket RI the Blackstone River swelled from seventy feet in width to a mile and a half. Connecticut and the Delaware Valley were hardest hit. Total damage in New England was 800 million dollars, and flooding claimed 187 lives. (David Ludlum)

1987 — Early afternoon thunderstorms in Arizona produced 3.90 inches of rain in ninety minutes at Walnut National Monument (located east of Flagstaff), along with three inches of pea size hail, which had to be plowed off the roads. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Fifteen cities in the northeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Youngstown OH reported twenty-six days of 90 degree weather for the year, a total equal to that for the entire decade of the 1970s. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Thunderstorms were scattered across nearly every state in the Union by late in the day. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 75 mph at Fergus Falls MN, and golf ball size hail and wind gusts to 60 mph at Black Creek WI. In the Chicago area, seven persons at a forest preserve in North Riverside were injured by lightning. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2004 — Hurricane Charley was the third named storm and the second hurricane of the 2004 Atlantic hurricane season. Charley lasted from August 9 to August 15, and at its peak intensity, it attained 150 mph winds, making it a strong Category 4 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale. It made landfall in southwestern Florida at maximum strength, making it the most powerful hurricane to hit the United States since Hurricane Andrew struck Florida in 1992.

2005 — A tornado strikes Wright, Wyoming, a coal-mining community, killing two and destroying 91 homes and damaging about 30 more in around the town.



Humility and Greatness

In a culture that idolizes success, we are called to something greater—using our gifts to serve Him.

Matthew 20:20-28: 20 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, bowing down and making a request of Him.

21 And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on Your right and one on Your left."

22 But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said to Him, "We are able."

23 He said to them, "My cup you shall drink; but to sit on My right and on My left, this is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father."

24 And hearing this, the ten became indignant with the two brothers.

25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them.

26 "It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave;

28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

What do you want Christ to do for you? That's the question Jesus asked the mother of James and John when she requested that her sons be given places of prominence and authority in His kingdom (Matt. 20:20-21). It's worth examining our own requests to Jesus—what are we asking Him for?

We live in a culture that equates greatness with power, visibility, and moving up the ladder of success. But Jesus taught something radically different: "Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant" (v. 26). In God's kingdom, greatness is measured by humble service to others, not earthly accomplishments or recognition.

True greatness, from heaven's perspective, is measured not on earth but in eternity. When we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, He'll be looking at how we served others in His name, not at our impressive résumés.

Humble people understand who they are—and who the Lord is. Their assignment while on earth is to use whatever He has entrusted to them in ways that glorify Him and benefit others. This is the pathway Jesus modeled for us—not grasping for position but serving with whatever gifts we've been given.

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.11.26

9 10 11 14 35 1

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 43 Mins 44
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.11.26

1 20 30 46 68 17

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$90,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 28
Mins 44 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: 16 Hrs 43 Mins 43
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.08.26

2 3 26 32 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$24,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 58 Mins 43
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.10.26

4 23 31 32 57 23

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 27 Mins 43
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.10.26

6 37 54 55 64 10

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$1,000,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 27 Mins 43
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Field of 68 organizes opening day marathon that features mid-major basketball programs

By The Associated Press undefined

The 2026-27 college basketball season will open with a marathon event featuring 16 mid-major programs. The Field of 68 is reviving a tipoff event that is similar to the one ESPN ran for nine seasons before ending it in 2017.

The Field of 68 has eight games scheduled for Nov. 2, beginning with High Point and Liberty at 12:01 a.m. Eastern. All of the games will stream on the Field of 68's YouTube channel and on X. Six of the games will be played in Rock Hill, South Carolina, with the other two in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

The full slate (all times Eastern):

12:01 a.m.: High Point vs. Liberty, Rock Hill.

3 a.m.: Grambling vs. Northern Illinois, Rock Hill.

6 a.m.: Appalachian State vs. Merrimack, Rock Hill.

9 a.m.: Winthrop vs. Queens, Rock Hill.

11:30 a.m.: Murray State vs. Tennessee State, Sioux Falls.

2 p.m.: UTEP vs. Northern Kentucky, Sioux Falls.

5:30 p.m.: UAB vs. McNeese State, Rock Hill.

8 p.m.: Furman vs. Bethune-Cookman, Rock Hill.

Tuesday's takeaways: No clear direction for Wisconsin Democrats

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and TOM BEAUMONT Associated Press

In a race that showcased Democrats' struggle between the ideological left and center, Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley managed a razor-thin victory over his democratic socialist challenger. The race was so close that neither side could claim a decisive victory.

In other contests, experience was rewarded in two governors' races and voters went for generational change in voting out a House incumbent.

For Republicans, a contest to replace the late Sen. Lindsey Graham pitted his sister, Darline Graham, against far more experienced candidates. But she also had the endorsement of President Donald Trump, and she secured a spot in a runoff election later this month.

Here are some takeaways from the night's elections.

In Wisconsin, verdict anything but clear for Democrats' direction

Crowley eked out a stunningly narrow, surprise win that did not become clear until the predawn hours of Wednesday, but that seemed to settle little in the party's national battle between party establishment candidates and an insurgent, populist movement from the left.

Crowley's win by less than a percentage point over state Rep. Francesca Hong, a democratic socialist, showed neither side of the party debate was winning the argument convincingly.

A week earlier, Michigan's Democratic primary for an open U.S. Senate seat came down to roughly 15,000 votes — a margin of a percentage point — as progressive candidate Abdul El-Sayed edged four-term U.S. Rep. Haley Stevens, who had the support of Michigan governor Gretchen Whitmer.

In both Midwestern battleground states, presidential elections have been decided by tiny margins in recent cycles, making midterm statewide elections proxies for the 2028 race for the White House.

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. The pressure will now be on Crowley to knit together the divergent wings of the party against Republican Rep. Tom Tiffany in November.

Democrats in neighboring Minnesota weren't as torn. They solidly supported progressive Lt. Gov Peggy

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Flanagan over centrist Rep. Angie Craig. But there are obvious differences — Minnesota has been reliably Democratic for several elections, albeit by smaller margins. And Flanagan has already won statewide elections before.

Nonetheless, Republicans are hopeful the divisive, bitter primary gives their candidate, sportscaster Michele Tafoya, a chance in November.

Family name + Trump nod = runoff spot for Graham in South Carolina

Darline Graham advanced to a runoff Tuesday night in the primary for her brother's seat. She was appointed to fill the remaining months of his current term after his death last month. While little was known about her, the family name and the goodwill toward her brother propelled her candidacy.

Trump then endorsed her in the GOP primary to occupy the seat for the next six years. He also praised her Tuesday night after returning to Washington. The role Trump chooses to play in the next two weeks could be decisive in a state where he is quite popular.

A who's who of conservative South Carolina politicians also competed for the rare prize of a Senate seat, and Rep. Ralph Norman, a durable conservative who finished second, will face off against Graham in two weeks. Both candidates will need to consolidate votes from the other challengers to win.

Another veteran Democrat goes down in race over generational change

Connecticut Rep. John Larson became the latest Democratic stalwart to lose his primary. The 78-year-old, who served 14 terms in the House, was defeated by former Hartford mayor Luke Bronin.

Larson's loss didn't have the ideological overtones that have dominated some other Democratic House primaries, where younger, socialist candidates ousted veteran House members in Denver and New York City. But there was a definite generational cast, with his 47-year-old challenger arguing voters deserved a different choice in the overwhelmingly Democratic district.

Larson is the 10th member of the House to lose a primary this year, in a sign of bipartisan fury with each party's veterans.

While that tally includes three Republicans, the rest are Democrats. After Joe Biden's collapse during the 2024 presidential election — and the deaths of four Democratic House members over the past 18 months — it's clear that Democratic voters are casting a very critical eye on elderly party members.

Minnesota Republicans reject MyPillow founder, a Trump favorite

Trump backed MyPillow founder Mike Lindell's campaign for his party's nomination for Minnesota governor. Lindell has been a prolific peddler of lies about American elections, including Trump's own false claims that fraud cost him the presidency in 2020. Lindell has claimed that elections in the United States have been "rigged" for decades.

Democrats were eager to have Lindell at the top of the ticket, hoping he'd drag down the entire state GOP. Instead, Minnesota Republicans chose a more traditional nominee, House Speaker Lisa Demuth.

It's yet another loss for Trump in Republican governors' primaries, after his preferred candidates fell short in Georgia and Iowa. And it improves Republicans' odds in Minnesota in what's shaping up to be a difficult year for the party, especially after Trump's immigration crackdown roiled the state's biggest city in January.

Experience and resume still mattered in some races

While much of this year's midterm campaign cycle has been animated by new candidates with provocative progressive messages and by the fact that being an incumbent seemed like a liability, Democratic voters in Connecticut and Minnesota gravitated toward the familiar in their respective choices for governor.

Connecticut's two-term Gov. Ned Lamont defeated his progressive challenger in the state's Democratic primary while Sen. Amy Klobuchar, who first won her seat 20 years ago, easily won her state's nomination for governor.

Their victories ran counter to any trend toward younger, more progressive candidates who had scored surprising wins in several House primaries, and notably, in the Democratic Senate primary in Michigan last week. Lamont began his political rise as an insurgent challenger to incumbent Sen. Joe Lieberman but is now considered establishment. Klobuchar has a reputation as a bipartisan consensus-builder.

Earthquake response strains Colombia's new government and rescuers as they race against the clock

By ASTRID SUÁREZ, MEGAN JANETSKY and MARKO ALVAREZ Associated Press

PEREIRA, Colombia (AP) — The search for survivors in the rubble of Colombia's powerful earthquake grew more desperate on Wednesday, two days after the quake brought down buildings, buckled roads and crushed cars.

The devastation has tested Colombia's new President Abelardo de la Espriella and his government as it scrambles to respond to the natural disaster and civil society as it pushes to provide aid to the vulnerable communities most affected by the quake.

By Tuesday, de la Espriella said the 7.4 magnitude earthquake had killed at least 181 people and left 2,595 more injured in the west of the country. He said at least 195 remained missing, but civilian-run databases put that number closer to 4,000.

Teams continued to pick through the rubble overnight in the hardest-hit cities of Cali, Pereira, Manizales and Quibdó, as time ticked away for victims to be found — and rescued — alive.

Aid agencies consider the first 48 to 72 hours crucial for retrieving survivors, though that threshold can be extended if they have access to food and water.

There have been scenes of joy amid the devastation: rescuers pulling a dust-covered baby through a crack in a concrete wall, and onlookers cheering as teams lifted a woman onto a stretcher.

In many areas, the official response to the devastation has been complicated by the ongoing crises of deep poverty and civil warfare that has forced displacement for decades.

"This earthquake compounds an already severe humanitarian situation, and there is a need for increased support for the humanitarian response," said Giovanni Rizzo, Colombia director for the Norwegian Refugee Council.

A 2016 peace accord between rebels and the government along with an ongoing armed conflict may allow aid organizations to distribute food and other emergency materials more quickly, said María José Torres, the U.N. resident coordinator in Colombia. Aid organizations are already in place in some conflict-torn centers because of the peace process, including Chocó at the epicenter of the quake.

"We have a presence on the ground. Therefore, our ability to be there, present with the people, I think, has increased exponentially," Torres said in a statement Tuesday.

At the same time, aid from other countries and nonprofits abroad continued to roll in.

The U.S. has offered over \$15 million in aid and Mexico's president said she is prepared to send hundreds of search and health workers, tons of health supplies and other equipment.

On Tuesday afternoon, Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele said his country would send two planes loaded with 100 tons of aid in the coming days.

"Our prayers are with the families of the victims, the wounded and all the Colombian people," Bukele wrote on X.

Trump says Secret Service and the military wanted him off Air Force One in Turkey due to threat

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Tuesday that he slipped away from Air Force One after a trip last month in Turkey because the Secret Service and military wanted him on a "different plane" due to a threat that he insisted didn't scare him.

Trump downplayed the extraordinary nature of the subterfuge involved in his flight, which saw him stow away in an airport catering container to sneak onto another plane while Air Force One was sent into the sky, essentially as a decoy.

He also downplayed the risk to the people — White House officials, security and support staff, and reporters — he left on the plane.

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"They wanted me to go on a different flight, different plane," Trump told reporters after returning from an event in Ohio, saying he had little choice in the matter.

"I guess there was a threat out there. I didn't really ask too much about it," he said. "I get a lot of threats."

His comments confirmed a report that first appeared in The Washington Post saying that Trump, following a NATO summit last month, was spirited onto a different plane because of a credible threat from Iran. The action was kept secret for weeks, until the newspaper's story.

"I think actually the plane that I flew on was at greater risk," Trump said Tuesday, who did not provide many details about the action. But he said the incident did not scare him.

"I don't worry about anything, to be honest," Trump said. "Whatever it is. You know my attitude? Whatever!"

Presidents often take secret trips — but not like this

Commanders in chief have sometimes kept overseas trips covert for security reasons, with schedules and logistics kept classified until after for safety reasons. But the fact that Trump's whereabouts were concealed at the time and for weeks afterward is believed to be unprecedented.

"We have absolutely seen the president fly on unmarked or decoy planes before, into Iraq, Afghanistan, other war-zone-like places," said Garrett M. Graff, author of "Raven Rock: The Story of the U.S. Government's Secret Plan to Save Itself — While the Rest of Us Die."

"But this was an ongoing secret that I don't think we've ever seen before."

After hiding in the catering vehicle and being moved to the other plane, Trump stopped in Britain, sneaked back aboard the presidential plane undetected, and even later scoffed when asked about potential danger.

"If I go, you go. Right?" he told reporters then — gliding past the fact that if the plane had been shot down, the president wouldn't have been aboard.

Many details about what happened remain unknown

The president's flight out of Turkey made headlines at the time because he had arrived aboard a luxury jet gifted by Qatar, which was not equipped with some of the same missile detection and countermeasure systems found on older presidential jets.

Trump ended up traveling in a smaller government aircraft from Turkey to the United Kingdom, only to secretly reboard the decoy jet, then descend from it and climb back aboard the Qatari plane.

Presidents have regularly tested the confines of their office, pushing their security advisers to visit war zones as a show of American presence and their own leadership. Usually, this happens in the form of trips that aren't announced until the president is deemed to be out of harm's way.

What's different this time is that Trump was covertly separated from the rest of his travelers — including the press pool meant to provide independent coverage of the president and his actions — and, instead of informing the public about what occurred once the risk had passed, the White House still hasn't fully revealed what took place.

Graff said the presence of the White House press corps is as much about protecting "the presidency and democracy" as it is about covering the story.

"This shows that the White House just fundamentally doesn't understand how important that role is," he said.

Officials have gone to great lengths to keep presidents safe on covert trips before

In 2023, a motorcade pulled away from the White House around 3:30 a.m. on a Sunday, and President Joe Biden later boarded an Air Force C-32, a modified Boeing 757 normally used for domestic trips to smaller airports, and flew to Poland. Biden then took a secret, 10-hour overnight train ride to Kyiv meant to show solidarity with Ukraine after Russia's invasion.

A press pool at the White House had been expecting a quiet Sunday for Biden in Washington. However, two journalists went to Ukraine with him and documented the trip, capturing images of Biden and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy walking together.

In Trump's first term, he made a secret Thanksgiving trip to Afghanistan in 2019, when officials kept a separate press pool and decoy plane in Florida to maintain the illusion that the president was spending

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the holiday at his Mar-a-Lago estate.

Instead, Trump and another group of reporters flew to the U.S. military base at Bagram, where the president served turkey to troops, gave a speech and met with Afghanistan's then-president, Ashraf Ghani, while journalists documented what was occurring.

When President George W. Bush made his first trip to Iraq in 2003, news was not released until he was in the air on the way back to the United States. President Barack Obama made a furtive nighttime visit to Afghanistan in 2010, when he was meant to be spending the weekend at Camp David.

Other risky trips featured presidential misdirection

President Bill Clinton went secretly from India to Pakistan in 2000, attempting to calm tensions in the disputed Kashmir region. He was seen talking with officials in front of a military plane that he appeared to board. Instead, Clinton ducked around the front of the aircraft to another jet parked nearby.

Both planes took off for Islamabad, as did a third jet painted with the familiar baby blue markings of Air Force One.

Joe Lockhart, a White House press secretary for Clinton, noted that reporters knew the president was on one of the planes, "but not which one." He said he and other officials had briefed the press pool ahead of time and "although they didn't know all the details, it was made clear" that Clinton "was not going to travel on the plane they were on.

"There was no attempt to hide anything, much less lie about it later," Lockhart wrote on social media.

Bush was visiting an elementary school in Sarasota, Florida, during the Sept. 11 attacks in 2001, and, after all commercial air traffic was grounded, officials wanted to move him to an undisclosed location.

The full White House traveling press pool flew with Bush from Florida to Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana, where officials reduced the number of reporters and staff on the plane. Bush and the smaller traveling party next flew to Nebraska's Offutt Air Force Base before eventually returning to Washington.

Bush's location remained secret throughout the day. However, the White House did not suggest that the president was somewhere he was not — unlike when Trump was whisked out of Turkey.

"You can imagine the different ways that this could have gone wrong, where, for a period of time, no one would have been able to independently corroborate the status of the U.S. president, or who was in charge of the U.S. government," Graff said. "And that's an incredibly dangerous moment for the world."

Iranian-backed Houthis kill 6 in attack on vessel, and other developments in the Mideast

By The Associated Press undefined

Yemeni authorities said six people were killed by Iran-backed Houthi rebels attacking a vessel in the Bab el-Mandeb strait, while U.S. forces fired on a ship they said was trying to break a blockade of Iran's ports.

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

4 crew members and 2 allied fighters killed, Yemen says

Six people were killed Tuesday by Houthis firing missiles on a vessel in the Bab el-Mandeb strait, Yemeni authorities said.

Yemen's coast guard said the dead included four crew members and two members of the government-allied National Resistance Forces. Houthis fired three ballistic missiles at the Yemeni commercial vessel, according to the Transportation Ministry of Yemen's internationally recognized government.

They are the first known deaths from Houthi attacks on shipping off Yemen in the latest bout of fighting in the Arab country.

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.

The deadly vessel strike came amid Houthi attacks on the government-held port city of Mokha on the Red Sea and other areas of the country. Dozens of government troops and civilians have been killed in

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attacks since last week, according to the Yemeni military.

The strikes are part of an escalation by the Houthis against government forces in Yemen and oil facilities in neighboring Saudi Arabia, which supports the Yemeni government, and the kingdom's shipping in the Red Sea.

The Houthi attacks could reignite Yemen's civil war following a 2022 truce, and open a new front in the Middle East war.

Mohammed Abdul-Salam, the Houthis' chief negotiator and spokesperson, accused Saudi Arabia in a social media post of exploiting the ceasefire to tighten an air and sea blockade it imposed in 2015.

He said the Houthis are open for negotiations but any settlement must include lifting the blockade.

US fires on ship it said was trying to break blockade of Iran

The U.S. military said Tuesday that its forces fired on a Panamanian-flagged ship in the Gulf of Oman that tried to evade the American blockade on Iranian ports. The move came as U.S. President Donald Trump tries to keep economic pressure on the Islamic Republic.

U.S. Central Command said the vessel had ignored warnings to stop, prompting an American helicopter to fire missiles into the engine room of the M/V Vela Nova, disabling the ship. The statement did not say whether the ship's crew suffered any casualties.

Trump on Tuesday night insisted that the U.S. military has "total control" over the Strait of Hormuz, despite the fact that Iran has kept up its attacks on ships in the waterway, largely impeding traffic there.

"Iran is going fine, going just absolutely fine," he told reporters after a trip to Ohio. "We totally control the Strait of Hormuz. We have control over it. Nobody else. Only us," Trump said.

Central Command said it has redirected 55 commercial vessels attempting to run the blockade, disabled three noncompliant vessels and boarded two. The U.S. Navy currently has more than 15 warships, including two aircraft carriers and an amphibious assault ship, stationed in the waters of the Arabian Sea.

Iran has refused to back down on demands that the U.S. end its blockade of Iranian ports, lift sanctions on the Islamic Republic and fulfill other conditions.

Iran effectively closed the strait after Israel and the U.S. attacked the country on Feb. 28. Attacks on the key waterway — through which roughly one-fifth of the world's traded oil supplies passed before the war — and uncertainty around its future have kept energy prices a major focus of U.S. politics ahead of November's midterm elections.

Pakistani official returns to Iran hoping to ease tensions with US

Pakistani Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi traveled Tuesday to Tehran for meetings with Iran's foreign minister and other officials.

Naqvi's visit aimed to encourage Iran to resume negotiations with the United States under an interim peace deal brokered by Pakistan in June, two officials said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi posted photos from his meeting with Naqvi on his private Telegram channel.

It is Naqvi's sixth trip to Iran as part of Pakistan's diplomatic efforts to ease tensions between Iran and the U.S.

—Munir Ahmed in Islamabad

Israel criticized at UN meeting over West Bank violence

Five European nations on the Security Council called a meeting Tuesday as Britain's new U.N. Ambassador Sarah MacIntosh condemned escalating violence across the West Bank, calling settler attacks on Palestinian villages, some alongside Israeli soldiers, "appalling."

Palestinian U.N. Ambassador Riyad Mansour said Israeli annexation of Palestinian territory is already "underway -- brutally and relentlessly." He urged international action to chart a path for Palestinian self-determination and "freedom."

Israeli U.N. Ambassador Danny Danon responded by saying: "Israel condemns all violence against Israelis and Palestinians" and "does not tolerate extremism — we confront it."

Danon said "extremist attacks" by Israelis are declining and accused council members of ignoring "ris-

ing" attacks by Palestinians.

Former Syrian President Assad sentenced to death in absentia

In Syria, a court sentenced former President Bashar Assad along with his younger brother to death for crimes against humanity and war crimes during Syria's 14-year conflict that left about half a million people dead.

Assad and his brother Maher, who fled to Russia after insurgents marched into Damascus in December 2024, were sentenced in absentia at the Fourth Criminal Court in the Syrian capital.

Indonesian rescuers evacuate dozens from a ferry fire that left at least 1 dead near Bali

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Crews rescued 172 people and recovered the body of a passenger from a ferry that caught fire in rough seas Wednesday near the Indonesian tourist island of Bali, authorities said.

The fire started about 4:15 a.m. while the Putri Yasmin ferry was en route from Padang Bai port in Bali to Lembar port on the neighboring island of Lombok in West Nusa Tenggara province, according to the search and rescue office in Mataram, the provincial capital.

The agency received an emergency report almost half an hour later and immediately deployed personnel and rescue vessels.

"Our top priority is the safety of all passengers and crew members," said Muhammad Hariyadi, who heads the Mataram Search and Rescue Office.

Initial reports said the ferry was carrying 131 people, including 17 crew members, based on the ship's manifest, when the fire broke out in the Lombok Strait. However, hours after the incident, officials said more people were aboard than listed. It is common in Indonesia for the number of passengers on a boat or ferry to differ from the manifest. The ferry was also transporting 44 vehicles and 53 motorcycles.

The National Search and Rescue Agency, or Basarnas, said rescuers evacuated 172 people from the burned vessel, including 2 Australian tourists, and recovered the body of a 19-year-old Indonesian girl.

Syamsurizal, head of the Lembar Port Authority, said at least two injured passengers were rushed to a nearby hospital.

"The response operation is ongoing, and authorities are continuing to account for all victims," said Syamsurizal, who like many Indonesians uses a single name.

Hariyadi said the rescue effort was supported by Indonesian navy ships, patrol boats and rescue vessels, and a helicopter to make an aerial survey. He said rough seas with waves reported as high as 4 meters (13 feet) complicated rescue efforts.

Wednesday's incident happened less than two weeks after another Indonesian ferry, the Mutiara Sentosa 2, caught fire in waters off the main island of Java, leaving at least five people dead.

Indonesia is an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands where ferries are a common method of travel. Disasters occur regularly, with weak safety enforcement often blamed.

David Crowley wins Democratic primary for Wisconsin governor over progressive Francesca Hong

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Moderate Democrat David Crowley won the Wisconsin primary for governor, defeating a democratic socialist who fell short of trying to deliver another win for progressives in a battleground state.

Crowley, who is vying to become Wisconsin's first Black governor, pitched himself as the candidate best positioned to win in November against Republican U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany, who is endorsed by President Donald Trump.

Crowley narrowly defeated democratic socialist Francesca Hong, who was hoping to ride the wave of recent victories by progressive candidates, including Abdul El-Sayed in neighboring Michigan's U.S. Senate

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race last week.

His win was the movement's first major success in a purple state. It also fed fears in the party's leaders that such candidates, farther afield and often carrying political baggage of past stances such as defunding the police, would struggle to beat Republicans and imperil the party's hopes of recapturing control of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House.

Crowley didn't address supporters Tuesday night but was expected at a unity event later Wednesday.

"Now, David is focused on bringing people together, earning the support of Democrats, Republicans, Independents, and anyone who believes Wisconsin is at its best when we work together and deliver results," Crowley's campaign manager Garren Randolph said in a statement.

Hong's loss in Wisconsin may have doused the momentum, but it's far from snuffing it out. A democratic socialist coming close to victory in a battleground state sends a clear message: There's unignorable angst among the party's voters.

"We have built something that will change politics forever," Hong told supporters as the outcome of the race hung in the balance late Tuesday. "The work we have done will be remembered forever. I know we don't have the final results right now, but what I do know is we are ready to keep fighting."

Her campaign manager Becky Cooper said after Hong conceded he race that she was "proud of the race we ran."

"Our team campaigned clean, our souls are intact and we really made meaningful change for the progressive movement," she said.

The Associated Press declared Crowley the winner once Hong's concession removed the possibility of a recount in the exceptionally close race.

Hong could have requested a recount since Crowley's margin of victory was less than 1 percentage point. But because it was wider than 0.25 points, Hong's campaign would have had to pay for it.

Sanders and other top progressives stayed out of the Wisconsin race

Progressives had wanted to notch a clear win, but national progressive leaders, most notably Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, sat out the race and did not endorse.

The movement is not entirely aligned. Not all candidates are democratic socialists or have endorsements from Sanders, but they are often tilling similar voter anger with politics and the party: over military aid to Israel, the amount of money wielded in campaigns, the Trump administration's immigration raids and the inexorable cost of daily life.

In New York City in the June primary elections, two democratic socialist candidates and a progressive came out on top, booting two Democratic incumbents from Congress in the process. All three were backed by the city's mayor, Zohran Mamdani, himself a democratic socialist who framed the upsets as a question of electing "better Democrats."

Democrats in Wisconsin are hoping to capitalize on low approval ratings for Trump in a state he won in 2016 and 2024 to retain control of the governor's office and flip both chambers of the Legislature to earn full control of Wisconsin state government for the first time since 2010.

Wisconsin Democrats are hoping to unite after tight primary battle

Both Hong and Crowley said in the waning days of the race that they expected Democrats to come together and unite to defeat Tiffany, a congressman from conservative, rural northern Wisconsin.

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

Democrat David Zimmerman, a 79-year-old retired industrial engineer professor in Madison, voted for Crowley on Tuesday. He said Hong's chance of beating Tiffany in November "worries me a lot."

"I think she's going to have trouble winning," he said.

The photo finish, and possible recount, is just the latest twist in a chaotic primary that saw two major candidates drop out amid scandals. Crowley had also dropped out in early July, but he got back in 10 days later with Gov. Tony Evers' endorsement.

Both of them crisscrossed the state in the final week, making the case that Crowley was the better matchup against Tiffany in a swing state known for close elections where independent, moderate voters

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often decide the outcome.

Democratic socialist shook up Wisconsin race, fueled by national movement

Hong, a single mother and former line cook, tapped into Democratic anger with the party's mainstream and Trump's "Make America Great Again" movement.

The 37-year-old known for sprinkling her comments with profanity and leaning into her edgy and sometimes humorous social media profile excited the liberal wing of the party. Hong called for free childcare and healthcare and a moratorium on artificial intelligence data center construction. But she also wrestled with her past support for defunding the police, saying at the race's only debate that she would not support cutting law enforcement funding.

She also drew criticism for past social media posts in which she called for canceling Thanksgiving because "we should stop celebrating colonialism" and disparaged Valentine's Day as "another day capitalism tells you how to show love."

Hong has since downplayed the posts as her attempt at making jokes.

Chaotic Democratic primary saw candidates drop, come back in

Evers' decision not to seek a third term created an open race for governor that initially had seven Democrats file to run.

Lt. Gov. Sara Rodriguez appeared to be making a move to consolidate mainstream Democratic support in July, but she dropped out in the middle of the month amid a campaign finance scandal. That led Crowley, who had dropped out a week earlier and endorsed Rodriguez, to get back in the race, this time with Evers' backing.

Former Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, who was seen as an early front-runner after nearly beating Republican U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson in 2022, bowed out less than two weeks before the election amid questions about inappropriate behavior.

In one more twist, reporting the results of about 28,000 absentee ballots from Milwaukee was delayed until early Wednesday morning after a human error related to uploading the data, the city's election leader said shortly before midnight Tuesday.

Thousands flee yearslong drought in Somalia as hunger deepens and aid shrinks

By MOHAMED SHEIKH NOR and OMAR FARUK Associated Press

BAIDOA, Somalia (AP) — After nearly two weeks on the road with her five children, Luul Mohamed finally arrived in the southwestern Somali city of Baidoa with no food and little sense of what would happen next.

Drought conditions had forced Mohamed and her family to leave Saakoow, a town in the Middle Jubba region more than 300 kilometers (186 miles) away. They moved from village to village before arriving in Baidoa, now a major hub for people fleeing drought, insecurity and food shortages, on Aug. 3.

"We are very hungry and in a desperate situation," Mohamed said. "We have nothing to eat and can only place our hope in God, as He is the one who sustains us through this ordeal that culminated in our trip."

The family's journey is one example of a deepening humanitarian emergency in Somalia, where years of drought, conflict and economic pressures are pushing more families from rural communities into displacement camps as hunger rises and humanitarian funding shrinks.

About 2 million people are facing emergency levels of food insecurity, more than double the number recorded last year, according to Plan International, which has provided assistance to more than 200,000 people in Somalia this year. The humanitarian group and Somalia's Disaster Management Agency are calling for increased international assistance, with concern that the crisis could be compounded by another climate shock later this year.

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization has projected a greater than 90% probability of El Nino conditions developing from mid-2026 and intensifying during Somalia's October-to-December rainy season, bringing the severe risk of flooding.

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Somalia is highly vulnerable to extreme weather and has experienced repeated cycles of prolonged drought followed by destructive flooding. The shocks have eroded livelihoods, displaced communities, contributed to disease outbreaks and worsened food insecurity.

In Baidoa, hundreds of thousands of people fleeing prolonged drought have gathered in sprawling displacement settlements on the outskirts of the city.

One of them, Habiba Adan, fled her settlement in Awdiinle in the Bay region after four consecutive years of drought destroyed crops and killed livestock. She eventually moved to Baidoa with her two older daughters and now lives in a displacement camp.

Adan would like to return home, but she said continuing drought and failed harvests there have left families with little prospect of rebuilding their lives.

"The drought we are experiencing has stretched for four consecutive years, and this year, most crops have again been decimated," Adan said. "Farmers were only able to harvest enough to sow their fields for the next season, leaving our future bleak. Here in these camps, we lack food and essential support. We have no food, water, or money, and we sit idly."

According to Plan International, the city is hosting about 1.6 million people, nearly half of them displaced. It says one in five families lacks reliable access to water, among the most immediate challenges facing displaced families. They are increasingly forced to buy trucked water at steep prices that many simply cannot afford.

Families have nothing left after years of drought

Reena Ghelani, the global CEO of Plan International, visited Baidoa last week, meeting drought-displaced families and visiting a malnutrition ward in the Bay region.

Ghelani said many of the families she met had tried to remain in their communities through successive years of drought, leaving only when their resources were exhausted.

Many fled "after waiting and waiting year after year of drought and just surviving," Ghelani said. "And now they say there's nothing left. They have no water. They have no stocks. The animals have died. There is literally nothing left anymore."

She said rising prices are placing additional pressure on families already struggling to find enough food.

Children are suffering from malnutrition

Data released in May by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, a global hunger monitoring system, showed that about half of children under 5 in Somalia were facing acute malnutrition.

Plan International, citing Save the Children, said the number of children receiving treatment for the most dangerous form of malnutrition in Baidoa had nearly tripled over six months.

Dr. Omar Abdikarin, a nutritionist in Baidoa, said patients are arriving for treatment from the Bay as well as the neighboring Bakool and Gedo regions.

"Malnutrition is prevalent in this region, and the majority of patients treated at this hospital suffer from malnourishment," Abdikarin said.

The health risks extend beyond malnutrition. Ghelani said she encountered children affected by outbreaks of diphtheria, measles, malaria, cholera and acute diarrhea.

The prospect of heavy rainfall later this year presents a new threat to communities facing multiple crises. Intense rainfall and flooding could wash away homes and farmland, contaminate drinking water and force families to move again. Aid agencies warn that the expected El Nino conditions will compound the crisis for countless families before they have had time to recover from prolonged drought conditions.

For families arriving in Baidoa such as Mohamed's, the most urgent question is where to find clean water and food.

Mohamed said her husband had left for farms on the outskirts of the city, in search of work or something for their children to eat. A day after arriving in the city, she was still waiting to find out whether her husband would return with good news.

Progressive Democrats get another win in Minnesota US Senate primary

By JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan won the Minnesota Democratic Senate primary on Tuesday in the latest victory for an insurgent progressive over the party's establishment.

Flanagan defeated centrist U.S. Rep. Angie Craig with a pledge to fight the influence of corporations and confront Republican President Donald Trump.

"For months now, I have been telling you that this campaign was about the many versus the money," Flanagan said as she celebrated her victory in Minneapolis. "Well guess what? The many just won."

The outcome was another sign of progressive energy among Democratic primary voters. It comes a week after Abdul El-Sayed won a bitter and divisive primary in Michigan that fired up the left and fueled anxiety among party leaders that Democrats will alienate moderate swing voters.

The result was less clear in Tuesday's primary for Wisconsin governor, where democratic socialist Francesca Hong and moderate David Crowley were in a tight race as of Wednesday morning.

Flanagan will be the front-runner in the general election contest against former NFL sideline reporter Michele Tafoya, who won the GOP primary Tuesday. Minnesota voters haven't elected a Republican to a statewide office since 2006.

Still, Republicans are hoping a fraud scandal involving the widespread theft of public funds will give them an opening up and down the ballot.

"We've had a crisis of leadership here. We've seen what career politicians have done in this state," Tafoya told reporters after casting her ballot earlier Tuesday in a Minneapolis suburb. "They've brought us to a place of national embarrassment, and this state is ready for change."

Meanwhile, Lisa Demuth won the Republican primary for Minnesota governor. Among the candidates she defeated was Mike Lindell, the Trump-endorsed pillow purveyor, who has been among the most persistent advocates of the lie that Trump's 2020 loss to Joe Biden was fraudulent.

Demuth, the state House speaker, will face U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, who defeated six others to win the Democratic nomination.

Race between Craig and Flanagan shaped by ICE, outside spending

In the race to replace retiring Democratic Sen. Tina Smith, Craig lined up support from Democratic establishment figures including House Speaker Hakeem Jeffries and former Speaker Nancy Pelosi, as well as senators from battleground states.

She pointed to her record of winning tough races in a closely divided House district in the suburban Twin Cities, saying she had the experience to bring the change voters are demanding to Washington.

"Donald Trump is a threat to our democracy, and Michele Tafoya would be nothing more than a rubber stamp to his dangerous agenda," Craig said, previewing the message Democrats will take into November as she conceded and urged her supporters to back Flanagan.

Flanagan was backed by popular progressives including Sens. Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, as well as Smith, who rallied with her in the campaign's final weeks.

Flanagan highlighted Craig's support from wealthy donors and blasted her vote for a Trump-backed immigration bill, which became a liability after immigration agents shot and killed Renee Good and Alex Pretti in Minneapolis.

The race was shaped by the killing of Good and Pretti by federal immigration officers in Minneapolis, confrontations that were caught on camera and fueled a backlash to Trump's immigration policies. Flanagan highlighted Craig's vote for the Laken Riley Act, an immigration bill that passed early in Trump's second term. Craig repudiated her support after Good and Pretti were killed.

U.S. support for Israel and the influence of corporations and wealthy donors also figured prominently in a race that attracted tens of millions of dollars in spending by allies of both women.

"I love that she doesn't take any corporate money, she doesn't take any money from AIPAC," said Andrea

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Ropella, a Flanagan supporter, referring to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, which supports pro-Israel candidates. "The things that she says, she believes in and she stands for."

Gov. Tim Walz declined to endorse either candidate, but late last month his wife, Gwen Walz, endorsed Craig over Flanagan, a move seen as a repudiation of her husband's running mate and governing partner for two terms.

Trump did not endorse a candidate on the Republican side, although Tafoya had support from the national GOP. Adam Schwarze, a Marine veteran and Navy SEAL, had the official backing of the state Republican committee and Royce White had an existing profile as a prior candidate, conservative commentator and a brief professional basketball career.

Lisa Demuth wins GOP governor primary over 'MyPillow Guy' Mike Lindell

Republicans had another crowded primary in the race for governor.

Lindell established his national profile from his TV advertising campaign as the "MyPillow Guy." He has been one of Trump's most outspoken supporters and a persistent proponent of myths about the 2020 election. He lost a defamation lawsuit last year and was ordered to pay \$2.3 million to a former employee of a voting systems company, whom he called a traitor.

In a post on social media Tuesday morning, Trump said Lindell "deserves a BIG WIN."

Trump's endorsement carries enormous weight in GOP primaries, and few of his favored candidates have lost so far this year.

Some prominent Minnesota Republicans worried Lindell was too toxic with independent voters and would drag down the entire GOP ticket. Even state GOP Chairman Alex Plechash raised doubts about Lindell's electability.

Jim Busche, 79, said he likes Lindell but agrees that he's probably too controversial to win a general election, so he cast his vote for Demuth.

"I wanted to vote for somebody that at least has a chance," said Busche, who is retired and lives in Independence.

GOP sees hope despite Minnesota's long blue streak

No Republican has won a statewide race in Minnesota since Gov. Tim Pawlenty was reelected in 2006, but the state is more closely divided than that history would suggest.

In 2016, Democrat Hillary Clinton beat Trump here by only 1.5 points, and in 2024, even with Walz on the ticket, Democrat Kamala Harris won the state by only 4 points.

In the state Legislature, Democrats hold just a one-seat majority in the Senate, and the House is split evenly between the parties.

Republicans think the fraud scandal, which led Walz to abandon his plans to run for a third term, gives them a rare opening to make inroads in an otherwise tough environment for the GOP.

At least 65 people have been convicted in a series of overlapping food fraud cases stemming from investigations that began during the Biden administration. One former nonprofit leader was sentenced in May to 42 years in prison in a \$250 million fraud case.

Trump pointed to the scandals as justification for launching a massive immigration crackdown that he initially said would focus on the state's large Somali community.

Video captures rescue of river tubing group stranded for 3 days, living off bark and flowers

By HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

Pushing through dense, shoulder-high brush near a river in west Michigan, a trooper yells out: "Make some noise!"

A boy's scream can be heard in the distance on body camera footage showing how rescue teams last week found two women and a 9-year-old boy who had been stranded for three days after their river tubing trip went wrong.

"We're coming, guys," says Cameron Wright, a conservation officer from Newaygo County, his breath

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heard in ragged gasps.

The team picks up their pace, pushing through sharp switchgrass and stinging nettle, the footage released by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources shows. A few moments later, they find Sarah Vida, 28, and her son Kayden Kovalcik, 9, along with Jazmin Hock, 28; wearing just their swimming suits.

Hock's legs are almost entirely covered in deep, red cuts from scrapes after trudging through the brush. They have a broken phone and a single water bottle with only a few sips left.

"You're talking about vegetation that's higher than your eyes and switchgrass that cuts you when you touch it and stinging nettles that makes your skin set on fire," Anna Cullen, a conservation officer from Muskegon County who helped with the rescue, said Tuesday.

The trio had been on a tubing trip on the Muskegon River in the small community of Twin Lake on Tuesday when they'd hit logs and their tubes popped, according to officials. They were reported missing after one of the women hadn't shown up to her dentist appointment.

"I was just in disbelief at finding them because we were just running out of ideas and places to search and it was nothing short of a miracle that we ended up finding them the way we did," Wright said.

For days, teams had scoured the river and rugged terrain.

The group was found Friday about 7 miles (11.27 kilometers) from where they entered the river, according to Wright. The rescuers had tracked them from a tube next to the river, following footprints, broken twigs and bent grass.

In the video, Kayden explains that they've been eating bark and flowers, while Hock says they had to drink river water.

They'd been tubing down the river and kept hitting log jams, Hock explains.

"The last one that we ran into just popped everything," she says.

They started walking and soon realized they were going in circles, she says.

Members of the rescue crew handed over their own shirts to protect them from the bugs swarming their cuts and put medical gloves on some of their hands and feet. Wright inflated his life vest for Hock to sit on. As she answered the rescue team's questions, her legs, lined with scratches, shook.

"There was not even an inch of their exposed skin that was not just covered in cuts and bug bites and mud and scrapes where they were just physically not able to go any further," Wright said, explaining that he still had cuts on his arms from the search.

Cullen said the women later explained that when they saw the rescuers, they thought they were hallucinating.

The two women couldn't walk, so the rescuers put them in Stokes baskets, a type of stretcher, to get them out of the brush, while Wright carried the boy on his back. They were taken to the hospital and treated for infections, dehydration and rashes, according to Lt. Pat Agema, a spokesperson for the Michigan State Police. As of Tuesday, they were all back home, he said.

Wright said the entire hike out, Kayden was telling him about everything he was going to eat and drink.

"He's just telling me about all of the root beer he's going to drink and the slushies and the pizza and doughnuts he's going to eat," said Wright.

He adds: "You would have no idea that he had just spent 72 hours in the woods from how happy he was."

Doctors say Trump's vaccine order will raise fears, cause confusion and endanger kids

By LAURA UNGAR AP Medical Writer

Doctors say President Donald Trump's new executive order on vaccines is misguided and likely to stoke fear and confusion among parents at a time when measles is raging, immunization rates are falling and children are heading back to school.

"Many families are finishing up that back-to-school checklist, and among those things is the medical checkup and assuring that their kids have their vaccines," Michigan pediatrician Dr. Molly O'Shea said. "To

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put into question the safety or efficacy of these vaccines right now is really unfortunate and ill-conceived."

The order, signed Monday, advocates separating the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine into three different single-disease shots and giving all childhood immunizations at separate appointments when possible. It also includes several changes to the childhood vaccine schedule already attempted by Trump's health department but blocked by a federal judge. The department is run by Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who helped lead the anti-vaccine movement for years.

Trump repeatedly suggested the number or timing of vaccines could play a role in rising rates of autism spectrum disorder, even though decades of studies have firmly concluded there is no link. He also strongly suggested that the MMR vaccine could be harmful or even deadly.

Dr. Paul Offit, a Children's Hospital of Philadelphia vaccine researcher and former government adviser, said the recommendations by Trump and Kennedy "are just not science based," and it's irresponsible to cast doubt on a vaccine that protects against measles when the nation is facing its biggest epidemic in more than 30 years.

"The harm that it will cause is ... to induce chaos and confusion into the system, so people aren't sure what they're supposed to do," he said.

Trump's order evokes fears

At one point before signing his executive order, Trump used the word "lethal" when talking about the current MMR vaccine, saying: "Together there could be a possibility they are quite lethal and separately, it looks like they are not at all lethal but just very effective."

Doctors strongly rejected this characterization, saying the current combination vaccine has gone through rigorous studies and years of safety tracking — like other childhood vaccines — and has been shown to be very safe. The diseases they protect against are the far bigger risk, they said.

"The suggestion that separating the measles, mumps and rubella vaccines one from another has value is incorrect in both science and in immune response," O'Shea said. "You actually get a better immune response giving them together. There's no value in separating them."

There are currently no separate vaccines for children against these diseases in the U.S., but Trump's order directs the health department to present a plan to offer them. Trump spokesperson Kush Desai has said that would give parents more options on timing and frequency, ultimately increasing vaccine uptake.

Doctors lamented that Trump revived debunked theories about vaccines and autism. Autism diagnoses have been rising for decades, with a recent count finding that an estimated 1 in 31 children in the U.S. have autism spectrum disorder. Scientists say that's in part because the definition has broadened with expanded understanding of its wide range of traits and symptoms. There's no single cause, they say, and genetic and environmental factors can play a role.

Dr. Andrew Racine, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said the potential link between childhood vaccines and autism has been studied in dozens of well-designed studies around the globe and there is "unequivocally" no link.

The fact Trump raised the issue, O'Shea said, "is really misguided and unfair to families."

Competing vaccine schedules raise confusion

Trump's comments and his order also cause confusion about which vaccines to give children and when, doctors said.

In the first year of Trump's term, Kennedy set out to overhaul immunization guidance, firing a 17-member vaccine advisory committee and installing replacements who made the restrictive recommendations halted by a federal judge. Those recommendations call for injections against 11 diseases, with additional vaccines separately categorized for at-risk children or as available through "shared decision-making" with a doctor.

The pediatrics academy, meanwhile, continued to recommend vaccines to protect against 18 diseases in its 2026 immunization schedule. O'Shea said that schedule "has been very well designed, carefully constructed and thoughtfully put together to provide safety and protection just as the baby or young child's immune system is ready to accept it."

Doctors said insurance coverage shouldn't be an issue. Medicaid and CHIP continue to cover the vac-

cines recommended before the current Trump administration took office. Through 2027, private health insurance plans generally will too, said Chris Regal of AHIP, the national health insurers' trade association.

Doctors say vaccine hesitancy, and dangers to kids, could grow

With confusion and fear rising, Racine said pediatricians expect to answer more questions from parents.

But many doctors fear vaccine hesitancy may still keep increasing. Federal data shows U.S. kindergarten vaccination rates have been dropping, with the share of children with exemptions hitting an all-time high in the 2024-25 school year.

Experts said they worry about families skipping necessary vaccines for their children or spacing out shots, since a vaccine-preventable disease could strike between doctor visits.

"Parents deserve clear, evidence-based guidance about how to protect their children, not competing recommendations issued through political processes," said Michael Osterholm, a University of Minnesota expert on infectious diseases. "When families receive conflicting messages, confidence in vaccination suffers, and children ultimately bear the consequences."

Western Canada fights growing wildfires as thousands more told to be ready to leave

By HAVEN DALEY and ROB GILLIES Associated Press

WEST KELOWNA, British Columbia (AP) — A deadly wildfire in western Canada that has forced some 20,000 people to flee grew overnight even without strong winds, challenging efforts to contain it and fully assess the damage, authorities said Tuesday.

One hundred firefighters from Mexico have joined the effort, bringing the number of firefighters battling the blaze to 193. The fire has destroyed homes and other properties near Okanagan Lake, killed an 80-year-old woman and burned toward Summerland, a community of about 12,000 people roughly 300 kilometers (185 miles) east of Vancouver.

The fire showed "quite significant growth" in some areas overnight even without strong winds, said Cliff Chapman, director of provincial operations for the British Columbia Wildfire Service. He added crews were working around the clock to establish control lines and make it safe for evacuated residents to return home.

"We recognized and we heard even last night that people obviously would like to go home. They would like to see the extent of the damage," Chapman said.

Provincial officials ramp up evacuations

Kevin Dunbar, British Columbia's executive director for emergency response and recovery operations, called it one of the largest evacuations in recent British Columbia history.

British Columbia officials said they had secured 1,600 hotel rooms and 1,000 group-lodging spaces for evacuees in Okanagan after some residents faced delays getting emergency assistance during the weekend evacuation.

Beyond those already forced to flee, another 10,000 people have been told to be ready to leave on short notice. More than 100 wildfires were burning across the province, and officials warned that dry lightning could spark new fires in the Central Interior and Okanagan. The province also asked the federal government for help expanding lodging for evacuees.

RCMP are investigating whether criminal activity played a role in the fire. Chapman said about 4% of wildfires in British Columbia over the past decade were suspected of having been deliberately set, but officials have not said the Bald Range fire was intentionally started.

Evacuated residents recount emotional experience

Lucille and Gordon Beach of Summerland were in Vancouver for the weekend wedding of a granddaughter when they heard the fire had started. "We didn't feel too celebratory," Lucille Beach said Tuesday.

The couple, staying for now in West Kelowna with their dog, haven't seen their home since leaving Friday but believed it was OK. It took a few days to adjust to the reality of what was happening, Lucille Beach said.

Carmen Bodzasy evacuated from Summerland, where she and her husband moved recently. She had to navigate evacuating on unfamiliar roads while he was away for work.

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Before leaving, "I cried my eyes out for a minute, and I thought, you know what, if I had to restart over, what would I take with me?" She took photos of her parents' wedding, of her children's families and of her and her husband. "I thought if I didn't have walls to go home to, at least I have memories to put up on my new one," she said.

Holding her small dog Tuesday, she was not sure of the status of their home but said whatever happens, she intends to stay in Summerland, a place where people wave at passing motorists and stop to ask how you're doing.

"I'll do whatever I can to help that town rebuild because everybody's so kind there," she said.

The lack of information has frustrated some Summerland residents, who have turned to photos and videos posted online from inside the evacuated community.

Firefighters battle blazes across the US

In the United States, firefighters in California were fighting a blaze that has burned nearly 5 square miles (about 12 square kilometers) in the Big Sur region of the state's rugged central coast.

Area state parks have closed and evacuation orders have been issued, including for a roughly 7-mile (11-kilometer) stretch of Highway 1, the state's iconic coastal route. Portions of the highway were closed on Tuesday due to the fire's spread and evacuations, according to the California Highway Patrol.

Along the Nevada-California border, a quick-moving blaze north of Reno spread to about 90.6 square miles (234.7 square kilometers), according to officials. More than 4,000 people and families were displaced, and a memory care facility had to be evacuated, Washoe County Sheriff Darin Balaam said during a news conference. Hot, dry and windy conditions were adding to the fire threat.

The fire has merged with another blaze that was burning on Freds Mountain. The Washoe County Sheriff's Office arrested a 47-year-old woman on a third-degree arson charge in connection with that mountain fire after she told crews responding to it that she had started it, the sheriff's department said in a post on social media Tuesday.

In Minnesota, a person involved in fighting a wildfire near the town of Ely died Tuesday following an unspecified medical emergency, the Superior National Forest said in a social media statement. Further details were not immediately released.

At least eight other people have died while helping with wildfires in the U.S. this year, including four firefighters who got trapped in a fire in western Colorado, a bulldozer operator who got overrun by flames in Oregon, two helicopter pilots who crashed while helping fight a fire in Utah and a helicopter pilot in Colorado who crashed into a reservoir.

Severe weather knocks out power in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio as 'ring of fire' strikes Midwest

By LAURA BARGFELD and ED WHITE Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Severe weather cut power to more than half a million people in the Chicago area and northwestern Indiana as perilous thunderstorms and tornadoes pummeled the region Tuesday, causing widespread damage and bringing lightning that injured people at an Ohio prison.

Tornado warning sirens howled as the skies darkened. All flights were temporarily stopped at Chicago's two major airports, and officials warned of delays as the backlog was cleared. In Ohio, power outages swept the state capital region, and at least one death was reported.

Sixteen incarcerated people were hospitalized, including one who was transported by helicopter, after lightning struck at a prison complex southwest of Cleveland, according to the Ohio Department of Corrections. The victims were injured as they returned from an evening meal at Grafton Reintegration Center, department spokesperson JoEllen Smith said in an email Tuesday evening. Their conditions weren't immediately known.

Two tornadoes touched down just south of Chicago, the National Weather Service said Tuesday night. Photos posted on social media from the Chicago area, and across the state line in Indiana, showed flooded roads, trees tangled in power lines and homes with gashes in their roofs.

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"No power. It was very scary. We were down in the basement," said Javid Jenkins of Homewood, a Chicago suburb. "We're built for snow. We're built for cold. We're not built for this."

Jenkins, 54, said he was driving around for gas to fire up a generator to preserve food in his refrigerator. Forecasters said a wind gust of 99 mph (159 kph) was recorded in Gary, Indiana. Elsewhere there were numerous reports of gusts of 80 mph (128 kph) or more at personal weather stations.

Preliminary information indicated that the intense system that swept from Iowa into Indiana over several hours qualified as a derecho, the weather service's Storm Prediction Center said Tuesday evening. Derechos are prolonged straight-line wind events that unleash heavy rainfall and travel far distances. The damage they cause is sometimes comparable to the destructive forces of tornadoes or hurricanes.

The weather service bluntly warned earlier in the day: "These are dangerous storms!"

More than 600,000 customers lost electricity in Illinois and Indiana, according to poweroutage.us. Lake and Porter counties in Indiana and Will County, south of Chicago, were especially hard hit. Farther east in Ohio, at least 250,000 customers were without power.

"Total devastation. No roof," said Kerry Hourigan, standing outside her home of 25 years in Tinley Park, another Chicago suburb. "Stupid thing, but my focus was I just bought a new barbecue grill, and I have no idea where that is. It's disappeared."

Meteorologist Scott Baker said the Midwest was on the outer edge of a "ring of fire," bringing waves of excessive moisture, instability and storms.

In Ohio, Gov. Mike DeWine said a resident of Roseville died during a health emergency when first responders, faced with flooded roads, couldn't get there. He warned that flood dangers would persist.

"This is not something that will end tonight," DeWine said of the severe weather.

Dayton, Ohio, set a daily rainfall record with 2.07 inches (5.25 cm), shattering a mark set in 1915, the weather service said. Forecasters said multiple rounds of rain would cause flood hazards in the Ohio Valley through early Friday.

Officials in Columbus, Ohio, sent local government workers home early ahead of another round of storms. The library in Westerville, Ohio, closed after rain poured into the atrium.

The fifth day of the 10-day Lake County, Indiana, Fair was canceled, disappointing fans who were hoping to see a professional wrestling event involving people under 5 feet (1.5 meters) tall.

Nearby in LaPorte County, Indiana, there was a "tremendous amount of tree damage," Commissioner Joe Haney said.

Judge again bars Trump administration from implementing order that sought to limit mail voting

By MICHAEL CASEY and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A federal judge on Tuesday ruled against President Donald Trump's executive order that sought to create a federal voter list and directly involve the U.S. Postal Service in election operations in a way that would limit mail voting.

U.S. District Court Judge Indira Talwani had already halted the order Trump signed in March, his second one attempting to set national election rules. On June 25, she sided with Democratic state attorneys general in granting summary judgment, preventing the core parts of Trump's order from taking effect.

Tuesday's ruling creates another legal hurdle for the Trump administration to overcome should it get the initial injunction lifted by the U.S. Supreme Court.

"That it is now less than 90 days before the November 3, 2026 midterm elections underscores the critical need for an injunction to prevent Defendants from changing election rules on the eve of the election," she wrote.

The Trump administration in late July requested that the Supreme Court halt lower court decisions that have blocked the sweeping changes in nearly half the country.

In the latest lawsuit, Talwani, who was nominated by Democratic President Barack Obama, sided with the League of Women Voters and other voting rights groups.

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Her ruling granting a preliminary injunction barred the Postal Service from taking any steps to implement the order for this year's midterm elections. She said the administration has so far declined to defend the constitutionality of the executive order.

"The executive branch has no authority to regulate elections," she wrote.

In response to the ruling, the White House noted that Trump has called for Congress to pass a stalled bill to restructure American elections,

"The entire Trump Administration will continue lawfully enacting the agenda President Trump was elected to enact — which includes the safety and security of American elections," White House spokeswoman Lauren Bis said in a statement. "This campaign pledge from the President is why millions of Americans sent him back to the White House."

Voting rights groups hailed the decision.

"This ruling is a victory for voters and for the Constitution," Marcia Johnson of the League of Women Voters said in a statement. "Neither the president nor the U.S. Postal Service has the authority to rewrite election rules."

Plaintiffs argued in two lawsuits, both filed in federal court in Boston, that the Republican president's order should be found unconstitutional because the states and Congress, not the president, have the power to set election rules. The League of Women Voters also argued that Trump lacked the authority to issue his order and the U.S. Postal Service and other defendants lack the authority to carry it out.

Trump's Republican administration, in its motions to dismiss the lawsuits, argued that the plaintiffs lacked standing to bring their claims. They also argued that the motions are premature and that plaintiffs lack the legal basis to bring their claim based on the Administrative Procedure Act, which governs how federal agencies develop and issue regulations.

Stephen Pezzi, a lawyer for the Trump administration, said the harms the plaintiffs referenced were subjective, because much can change with the voting list before it is made final. He also said no one would be prosecuted for violating the order.

Trump's executive order, the second one aimed at elections during his second term, comes as he continues to suggest that there is widespread voting by noncitizens. Along with his executive orders, Trump is pushing legislation in the Republican-controlled Congress to create a proof-of-citizenship mandate. The SAVE America Act has passed the House but has stalled in the Senate.

States already have detailed processes aimed at keeping their voter rolls accurate, and voting by non-citizens has been shown to be rare. It also is a felony that can be punishable by deportation.

Trump issued the order in March after a bill he supported to overhaul voting stalled in Congress. The order would have had the federal government create a list of eligible voters and then directed the U.S. Postal Service to deliver mail ballots only to those on the list. Election officials argued that it was ripe for abuse and could cause chaos, and the postal union has objected to the idea of mail carriers policing ballots.

The Postal Service had published a proposed rule required by Trump's executive order in the Federal Register, but it was put on hold by Talwani's first ruling.

In a separate lawsuit filed against the executive order, a federal judge in Washington in May agreed with the Trump administration that it was too early to block the order because it had yet to be implemented. That lawsuit was brought by Democratic and civil rights groups. In July, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia upheld the May ruling by U.S. District Court Judge Carl J. Nichols that said an injunction against the order was premature.

Other rulings have gone against the Trump administration's first executive order on elections, signed just months after he took office in his second term. That order would have required people to show documents proving their citizenship when registering to vote, among other changes.

Since his 2020 presidential election loss to Democrat Joe Biden, Trump has groundlessly claimed mail voting is rife with fraud and has launched a federal investigation into that year's vote, even though repeated audits and investigations, including ones run by Republicans, found it was free of widespread fraud. Trump also has said he wants to "take over" election administration in Democratic areas.

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3 states are set to hold executions on the same day, a first in the US since 2010

By KIM CHANDLER, TRAVIS LOLLER and JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Tennessee, Alabama and Oklahoma plan to execute inmates Thursday in what would be the first time in nearly 16 years that three people are put to death on the same day in the United States.

The executions come as a small number of states, including the three with scheduled lethal injections Thursday, drive execution numbers in the United States.

"You look at the country as a whole, you've just got this little pocket of five or six states that are using the death penalty, executing people, and a small number of states that are still imposing new death sentences," said Robin Maher, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center. Maher said it is highly unusual to have three executions on one day, although it is largely a scheduling coincidence.

Eleven states executed a total of 47 people in 2025, the highest number since 2009. Florida accounted for most of the surge with 19 executions. Alabama, South Carolina and Texas each carried out five. Tennessee carried out three. Oklahoma, Mississippi, Arizona and Indiana each carried out two. Louisiana and Missouri each carried out one execution.

The 19 executions so far in 2026 have occurred in four states. Florida, which again leads the country, executed two inmates on the same day in July.

The last time three executions were held on the same day was Jan. 7, 2010, when Louisiana, Ohio and Texas put inmates to death. Three executions were scheduled on the same day in 2018, but only one went forward after a Texas man was granted a reprieve and prison officials in Alabama had problems with the IV line.

Tennessee will attempt another lethal injection after IV problems

Tennessee plans to execute Anthony Darrell Hines three months after the attempted lethal injection of another inmate was called off because of problems inserting an IV. The aborted execution put a spotlight on issues states have sometimes had in establishing IV lines during lethal injections.

"All eyes really are on Tennessee at this moment because of the problem that happened," Maher said.

During the attempted execution of Tony Carruthers in May, the IV team established a primary line right away but then worked for more than an hour trying to insert a required backup line. The execution was ultimately called off and Carruthers was given a one-year reprieve.

Hines, 66, has seized on the problems with the previous execution, saying his health issues — including two strokes that left him partially paralyzed — increase the risk of difficulties at his execution. He has unsuccessfully asked the governor and courts to intervene, claiming the doctor who oversaw that execution was unqualified and is likely to botch his execution, as well.

Gov. Bill Lee has declined to take any action on Hines' requests, and last week the Tennessee Supreme Court ruled against a stay of his execution. The state has declined to say whether the same doctor will preside over the upcoming execution, but the court noted that Hines had not proved that doctor was unqualified.

Hines was convicted of stabbing Catherine Jean Jenkins to death in 1985 while the 54-year-old was working as a motel maid in Kingston Springs. He was sentenced to death in 1986, won an appeal for a new sentencing hearing, and was again sentenced to death in 1989.

Alabama inmate asks to be put to death for killing girl

Alabama is scheduled to execute Jeremy Williams, 42, by lethal injection for the 2021 rape and murder of a 5-year-old Georgia girl.

Williams, who pleaded guilty to killing Kamarie Holland, has asked for his death sentence to be carried out.

Prosecutors said Williams raped and strangled Holland after offering her mother \$2,500 for the child to perform oral sex on him. Williams filmed his attack on the girl and kept her body to continue to abuse, prosecutors said.

In 2022, Williams also was charged with the 2005 death of his infant daughter in Alaska.

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"This man left a trail of destruction of children," Russell County District Attorney Richard Chancey said. About 10% of executed inmates are so-called volunteers who drop appeals, according to the Death Penalty Information Center, but most of those have been on death row longer. The time between Williams' 2024 conviction and his scheduled lethal injection is unusually brief, Maher said.

It will be Alabama's first execution of the year if it goes forward. A nitrogen gas execution was halted in June after a federal judge ruled the method unconstitutional.

Oklahoma inmate says he doesn't want clemency

Oklahoma is scheduled to execute Carlos Cuesta-Rodriguez, 70, for the 2003 murder of his girlfriend.

If the lethal injection goes forward, he will be the third person executed in Oklahoma this year.

Prosecutors said Olimpia Fisher, 43, had been making plans to leave Cuesta-Rodriguez when he shot her in one eye and then waited about eight minutes as she screamed for help before firing the fatal shot into her other eye.

Oklahoma's Pardon and Parole Board voted 3-1 last month against recommending clemency for Cuesta-Rodriguez. Cuesta-Rodriguez's attorneys had asked the board to recommend he serve life in prison without parole, saying he had a difficult childhood and suffered from brain damage, post-traumatic stress disorder and major depression with psychotic episodes.

But Cuesta-Rodriguez told the board that he did not want clemency. He said he wanted Fisher's two daughters to know that he regretted what happened.

"I can't have been in my right mind to have done something so horrific," he said through a Spanish-language translator. "I have not been able to find any sense in all this."

Former US Marine held in Russia for more than 4 years on disputed charges has been released

By BEN FINLEY and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russia released an American military veteran on Tuesday, allowing his return to the U.S. after four years of what his family and U.S. officials allege was wrongful incarceration and abusive treatment that left him near death.

Robert Gilman, a 32-year-old Massachusetts teacher and former Marine, was freed after President Donald Trump said he spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin about his release, which Trump said was "very much on a Humanitarian Basis."

"We appreciate this decision, and the fact that Russia asked for no one in return — No exchange took place," Trump said on his Truth Social platform.

Arrests of Americans have become increasingly common in Russia in recent years. Concern has risen that Russia could be targeting U.S. nationals to use later as bargaining chips in talks to bring back Russians convicted of crimes in the U.S. and Europe. Five other Americans remain imprisoned in Russia with deteriorating medical issues, according to a news release from Global Reach, a group that's been working to free them.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio posted a photo on social media of a gaunt-looking Gilman draped in an American flag and surrounded by his family aboard an airplane.

"While we appreciate this positive step, we are still seeking the immediate return of all other unjustly detained Americans," Rubio stated.

Gilman will arrive at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland outside of Washington on Tuesday evening, Trump said in his post.

"I just spoke to him, and he had one request — A GREAT cheeseburger when he lands," Trump wrote. "I will take care of that!"

Gilman is bound for a military hospital in Texas, where he will be medically and psychologically assessed and treated, Eric Lebson, chief strategy officer of Global Reach, said in a statement.

Gilman had his prison sentence extended three times

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Gilman was detained in 2022 on charges of beating a police officer after being taken off a train for causing a disturbance. He was convicted and handed a 3.5-year sentence.

He later was convicted of attacking a prison inspector during a cell check, beating an investigator and assaulting a guard. In October 2024, he was sentenced to eight years and one month. His sentence was extended in December to 10 years after he was found guilty of assaulting prison guards.

Russian media reported that he pleaded guilty to the charges and apologized to the guards he was charged with assaulting. The business daily Kommersant said he explained his actions by saying he wanted to stay in the prison where he was serving his sentence and avoid being moved to another penitentiary.

Gilman's father has disputed the charges against his son, while the State Department has said the U.S. determined that Gilman was wrongfully detained,

Gilman's sister, Lexie Hudson, credited Trump and U.S. Sen. Ed Markey of Massachusetts with bringing about his release.

"There is no other reason that Robert is alive today other than that President Trump heard about the case and took action," said Hudson, who thanked Markey "for leading our advocacy efforts in Congress."

"The Russians treated my brother so badly," Hudson said. "They hurt him for no reason, other than that he was both an American and a Marine. What did they get out of this? Why did they do this to such a wonderful person?"

Russian officials did not immediately comment on Gilman's release. Russia's Federal Penitentiary Service did not respond to a request for comment on his health deteriorating behind bars.

Gilman was hospitalized before his release

Gilman's lawyer Irina Brazhnikova told the Russian news agency Interfax on Friday that Gilman was in a psychiatric ward of a civilian hospital, where he's been since early July.

He was there "due to a psychiatric condition," and according to doctors, his condition has worsened, but neither his defense lawyers, nor his family were allowed to visit, she said.

Before Gilman was flown out of Russia, he had been in "a dissociative stupor" for 47 days due to the abuse he had suffered in prison, according to Lebson. After Gilman was moved to the hospital, he was hooked up to a feeding tube and handcuffed to a bed.

Hospital reports conveyed Gilman's condition "as dire and life-threatening," pushing the U.S. government into action and leading to his release, Lebson said.

Markey had called on Russia and the U.S. to work together to get Gilman released. He was among at least eight Americans who remained in Russian custody after a series of high-profile prisoner exchanges with the U.S. in recent years.

Markey blamed Russia for Gilman's poor health, saying his return to the U.S. was long overdue.

"It is a tragedy that it took Robert's near-death condition for his case to receive the attention that it required for his release to be negotiated," Markey said. "Throughout his detention, Robert was subjected to physical torture, forced medication, and provocations by Russian authorities. There is no doubt that his treatment by Russian authorities is the reason Robert is in this precarious state today."

AP Exclusive: ICE plans to give officers gloves that can deliver painful electric shocks

By RYAN J. FOLEY Associated Press

Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers may soon be outfitted with gloves that can deliver painful electric shocks intended to gain compliance from combative individuals.

ICE plans to spend up to \$20 million to purchase thousands of "conductive distraction and de-escalation devices" for officers and agents by March, according to a notice published Monday by the Department of Homeland Security.

The devices are known as the G.L.O.V.E., which stands for Generated Low Output Voltage Emitter, and are manufactured by Compliant Technologies LLC of Lexington, Kentucky. They have been used in recent years by some jails and police departments.

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DHS said Tuesday that it was working on a response to an Associated Press inquiry and offered no immediate comment. Jeff Niklaus, the founder and CEO of Compliant Technologies, wrote in an email, "Unfortunately, we are unable to speak on this subject."

The notice said the solicitation for a no-bid contract could be published as early as Friday.

Civil rights advocates expressed alarm at the plan, saying ICE officers already face criticism for their use of force with little oversight or accountability while enforcing President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown.

Compliant Technologies says the devices function as a normal pair of patrol gloves until officers press a switch to activate their electrical mode. The gloves must be applied directly to someone's skin to deliver a pain stimulus that typically helps an officer gain compliance within seconds, according to the company.

"It's immediate and sharp, and it will distract you. I call it like a bee sting," said John Peters, president of the Institute for the Prevention of In-Custody Deaths, who is studying how the device has been used. "If the officer is getting any type of resistance from the person, this is certainly an effective tool."

Peters said he believed ICE's planned purchase would likely be the largest from the company to date. He said he could envision ICE officers using the gloves to help remove uncooperative subjects from cars and houses and in and out of detention facilities.

"For smaller officers or weaker officers or older officers, I think it has a great advantage" because it can produce faster takedowns and shorten confrontations, he said.

The manufacturer warns the device should not be used as punishment, against people merely exhibiting "verbal defiance or belligerence" or on high-risk populations such as children, pregnant women or elderly or disabled people.

Jenn Rolnick Borchetta, deputy project director on policing at the American Civil Liberties Union, said the public should have no confidence that ICE officers will use the devices appropriately. She questioned why the devices would be necessary for civil immigration enforcement and noted those getting shocked might have no advance warning.

"ICE spent the last year showing this country they are too quick to use force. Now they will be able to deploy electric shocks with the slight push of a button that maybe nobody else can see them do," she said. "Introducing gloves that can so easily be used to deliver terrible pain in encounters is a recipe for harm to the public."

Supporters say the devices are generally used in specific jail and transport situations, rather than broadly to patrol on the streets. They have been used to subdue violent suspects who are refusing to get into squad cars and inmates who are harming themselves and threatening officers, according to Compliant Technologies.

Peters said he expected the devices to be misused by a small number of employees, as with other policing technologies, but he said they are unlikely to cause injuries. He said it would be important for ICE to have robust policies and training in place.

To use the device, officers must complete a course and be recertified every two years, the manufacturer says.

As search for thousands of missing pushes on, Colombia earthquake tests new president

By ASTRID SUÁREZ, MEGAN JANETSKY and MARKO ALVAREZ Associated Press

PEREIRA, Colombia (AP) — Rescue crews and civilians in Colombia painstakingly searched through rubble Tuesday in the hopes of finding survivors trapped under debris after a powerful earthquake left thousands missing in dozens of cities and towns.

The 7.4 magnitude earthquake that hit western Colombia on Monday wreaked havoc, collapsing buildings, buckling roads, crushing cars and leaving devastated residents to console each other among the wreckage of their homes. Excavators and heavy machinery cleared heavy chunks of concrete, while buckets of rubble were passed hand-to-hand along a line of volunteers.

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Rescue crews and volunteers picked through flattened concrete buildings in affected cities, searching for signs of life. They raised their hands to call for silence when they thought they heard someone beneath the piles of debris. At least one woman was retrieved — alive — from the rubble.

Colombian President Abelardo de la Espriella said the earthquake killed at least 181 people and left 2,595 more injured. He said at least 195 remained missing, but civilian-run databases suggest that number could be closer to 4,000.

Crews race to find survivors

Authorities said the deaths were concentrated in the cities of Cali, Pereira, Manizales and Quibdo, but local leaders and families worried about casualties and damage in rural areas, from where very little information has emerged. Aid agencies consider the first 48 to 72 hours crucial for retrieving people alive, though that threshold can be extended if they have access to food and water.

De la Espriella said more than 1,000 homes were destroyed and yet more damaged.

Standing near the remains of his brother's collapsed apartment building in Pereira, Jairo Vargas said he made the 220-kilometer (135-mile) drive from Medellin, hoping to find him alive.

"I'm absolutely certain he's here. Absolutely certain," Vargas said, adding that his brother's car was still parked outside. But he fears his sibling did not survive.

"The debris surrounding my brother is soft," he said, as heavy machinery rumbled nearby. "It's possible that it's protecting him, but we can't hear any noises anymore. I don't know. I have little hope."

Colombia's new president faces his first serious challenge

The earthquake presents the first major test for first-time officeholder de la Espriella, who entered office just days before the natural disaster. The leader, who split the country in recent elections, now seeks to unite Colombia in its disaster response.

That challenge was particularly notable in Choco, the region at the quake's epicenter. It is one of Colombia's poorest and most neglected regions, often beset by warring armed groups. Much of Choco is accessible only by boat, through the jungle or by airplane.

Sterling Palacios, a religious and environmental leader in the region, said Choco's capital and smaller communities along the Atrato River were devastated. Homes were reduced to rubble and aftershocks continued to rumble, terrifying residents who slept in the streets overnight.

The Colombian Geological Service said it has documented more than 100 less powerful aftershocks since the initial quake.

"There are towns where people have lost everything, where people have died, where homes have been destroyed," he said. "We don't have a full panorama of the damage, but we know it's been massive."

De la Espriella traveled to Quibdo in Choco on Monday night where he announced he was mobilizing "the entire military and police apparatus," as well as deploying engineers, rescue workers and search dogs.

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

Palacios said the government's response has so far been "concentrated in the capital," and that authorities were flying the wounded from Quibdo to hospitals in the city of Medellin.

The biggest challenge, he said, remains towns in rural areas only reachable by boat — journeys that can take hours or days. That response is also complicated by a toxic slate of armed groups warring for control who, during the COVID-19 pandemic, blocked healthcare workers from traveling to remote areas.

"It's a risk and it's very difficult to predict" what could happen, he said, adding it could take weeks to fully assess the devastation.

Desperate residents seek news of their loved ones

Families posted information about missing loved ones on citizen-run websites.

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 quake's epicenter in San Jose Del Palmar.

Local authorities said 80% of El Cairo, a town of about 7,000 people, was damaged. Zamora said her uncle lived in a traditional house 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.

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

Mónica Sánchez, who lives in Pereira, one of the worst-hit cities, said when the quake happened a wall collapsed inside her clothing factory. Sánchez and her 12 employees escaped just in time.

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

On Tuesday, rescue workers pulled a woman alive from the rubble. Diana Troncoso lay on a stretcher, dusty and scraped up, with her eyes closed. Observers burst into applause as she emerged, but search teams raised their hand to call for quiet so they could continue their search for survivors.

Pereira and Cali enforced curfews Monday night to prevent looting, and private vehicles were banned from the roads of Pereira so ambulances, police and rescue workers were able to navigate what's left of the roads.

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

"This has been a tragedy for the whole city, for thousands of families," Pereira Mayor Mauricio Salazar told local media, his voice quavering. "But here we are, and we will continue forward with the hand of God."

At Lindsay Clancy trial, focus turns to medications prescribed before she killed her 3 children

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

Lindsay Clancy messaged one of her caregivers less than two months before she killed her three young children in 2023 to say she was having "intrusive thoughts I never had before," "feeling completely hopeless" and worried about becoming addicted to some medications.

Rebecca Jollotta, a psychiatric nurse practitioner at South Shore Health Perinatal Behavior Health Program, testified at the trial Tuesday she exchanged messages with Clancy regularly on a patient portal throughout in late November and December 2022. Much of their conversations revolved around Clancy reporting trouble sleeping, depressive symptoms she was having and her search for the right mix of medications to treat her symptoms.

Several times Clancy indicated to Jollotta either that she had not taken the full dose of a prescribed medication or that she wanted to reduce a dosage or change her prescription based on what she felt were intolerable side effects. Clancy also worried about being addicted to some medications like Ativan, but Jollotta said she was not.

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.

Struggle to find the right medications

"I really don't like the way I feel on the Remeron and I know that I can't stick with taking it," Clancy said in a December message asking to switch from the antidepressant, which also is used to treat anxiety and insomnia, to a previous prescription mix. "I started having very intrusive thoughts that I never had before."

Jollotta tried to assure Clancy that having intrusive thoughts is common with someone diagnosed with postpartum depression and anxiety and encouraged her to give the Remeron more time to work since she had only been on it a few days.

"This could be some postpartum anxiety. And I wanted to familiarize her with the symptoms, so that she had them written down and she could report them to me," Jollotta said.

Jollotta, who is among several providers that Lindsay and her former husband Patrick Clancy have sued over her care, repeatedly came up with alternative treatment plans for Clancy including a range of different medications, behavioral therapy, support groups and meditation. But she acknowledged that it was up to Clancy whether she chose to follow her advice.

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"I'm only making recommendations based on my education experience, training and what I'm seeing in terms of symptoms," Jollotta said. "The patient has the autonomy."

During their virtual and in-person visits, Jollotta said, Clancy never talked of having a plan to harm herself or her children. She also never showed signs of psychosis or mania.

But Jollotta acknowledged that Clancy did report having thoughts of suicide. She also suggested that Clancy might have underlying bipolar disorder — due to her days of going without sleep. But Patrick Clancy denied that was the case.

Suicidal thoughts

In mid-December, Jollotta had a call with the couple and was told Clancy had her "worst day" and was "having persistent, intrusive thoughts of suicide." Jollotta suggested she consider a higher level of care such as that offered by Massachusetts General Hospital. She settled on the Women and Infants Hospital postpartum program in Rhode Island but was soon discharged — with advice to stop taking one of her antipsychotic medication.

Jollotta, who was going on vacation, said she was concerned that Clancy had been discharged from the hospital, telling her in a message that she could "could benefit from the groups and added support separate even from medication changes."

She was worried the hospital wanted Clancy to go off Seroquel, the antipsychotic medications. Clancy was advised this could lead to "worsening of mood, worsening of sleep," but she insisted on going off the medication. Jollotta agreed to slowly reduce the dosage.

During cross-examination Clancy's attorney Kevin Reddington argued that Jollotta was not familiar with the care Clancy received elsewhere.

Jollotta never talked to one of Clancy's psychiatrist, Dr. Jennifer Tufts, nor did she access Tuft's medical records. She did not know how many times Clancy saw Tufts, noting that she only thought Tufts treated Clancy in September.

"Would it surprise you if I told you that she saw Dr. Tufts 14 times" during a four-month period ending in January, Reddington said.

Jollotta never talked to anyone from the Rhode Island hospital that admitted Clancy, nor did she have access to the records of McLean Hospital, a psychiatric facility that Clancy admitted herself into on New Year's Eve.

"If you're treating a person through all of this stuff that we've talked about and it's now apparent that things have decompensated so bad that they have voluntarily admitted her to a locked ward in a mental institution, is it important to Rebecca Jollotta to find out what the diagnosis and treatment was of their patient?" Reddington said.

Jollotta agreed it was but acknowledged that she never did find out.

Killer, or someone who was mentally ill

Clancy, 36, 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 from a second-story window, and she remains paralyzed from the waist down.

Prosecutors argue that the former labor and delivery nurse was an intentional killer who contrived to get her husband out of the house and 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 health and how the medical system treats women."

Clancy's attorneys do not dispute that she killed the children. But they say she should not be held criminally responsible because she was mentally ill, believing she heard voices ordering her to take their lives and her own.

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

US stocks edge further from their records as oil prices keep swinging

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks slipped a bit further from their records Tuesday, while oil prices kept swinging on uncertainty about when the war with Iran will allow crude to flow freely again.

The S&P 500 fell 0.3% for a second modest drop since setting its all-time high on Friday. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dipped 184 points, or 0.3%, and the Nasdaq composite sank 0.6%.

The action was stronger in the oil market, where the price for a barrel of Brent crude briefly jumped above \$90 in the morning before falling back below \$87. It eventually settled at \$88.91, up 1.4% from Monday.

Such erratic moves have become typical since the United States and Israel attacked Iran in late February, which led to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and kept much of the world's oil pent up in the Middle East. Last month alone, Brent's price veered between \$72 and \$102 per barrel.

Higher oil prices make inflation worse, and they've sent the average cost for a gallon of regular gasoline to \$4.01, according to AAA. That's up from less than \$3.14 a year ago, though it's down from last week's nearly \$4.09.

That has Wall Street's attention focused on Wednesday, when the U.S. government will release the latest monthly reading on inflation. Economists expect it to show inflation remains high but that it decelerated to 3.4% in July from 3.5% in June.

That could help the Federal Reserve, whose members are notably split on whether they should be raising the country's interest rates to keep a lid on inflation. While higher rates could help slow the increases of prices on store shelves, they would also slow the overall U.S. economy by making it more expensive for U.S. households and businesses to borrow money. They would also undercut prices for stocks and other investments.

Traders are betting on a coin flip's chance that the Fed will raise its main interest rate at its next meeting in September, according to data from CME Group. If it does, that would be the first increase in more than three years. It also could anger President Donald Trump, who has been lobbying for lower interest rates.

Treasury yields have jumped since the war with Iran because of higher oil prices and worries about inflation, sending long-term mortgage rates to their highest levels in a year.

The 10-year Treasury yield eased back Tuesday, falling to 4.69% from 4.72% late Monday. But it remains well above its 3.97% level from before the war with Iran.

On Wall Street, On Holding dropped 20.3% even though the Swiss sneaker company reported a better profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected. It gave a forecast for upcoming revenue that fell short of analysts' expectations, while saying it does not want to slash prices to drum up more sales.

Companies broadly have been blowing past analysts' forecasts, which Wall Street loves because stock prices tend to follow the path of corporate profits over the long term. Earnings per share for S&P 500 companies are on track to be 50% higher than a year earlier, according to FactSet, and that's a big reason U.S. stocks have been setting records recently despite worries about expensive oil, high inflation and other challenges.

Aramark, the food company and facilities manager, rallied 8.5% after reporting stronger profit and revenue for the latest quarter than analysts expected. Cardinal Health added 1.3% after topping analysts' profit expectations for the spring.

All told, the S&P 500 fell 24.91 points to 7,728.20. The Dow Jones Industrial dropped 184.13 to 53,791.85, and the Nasdaq composite sank 159.91 to 26,445.45.

In stock markets abroad, indexes were mixed in Europe and Asia. Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell 1.1% for one of the world's bigger moves.

Russian attacks kill 10 in Ukraine as Zelenskyy says Moscow is getting more North Korean missiles

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia attacked Ukrainian cities with missiles, drones and glide bombs Tuesday, killing at least 10 civilians, officials said, as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Moscow is getting new military help from North Korea for its more than 4-year-old invasion.

Zelenskyy said Russian forces used ballistic missiles supplied by North Korea in an overnight attack on the southeastern city of Zaporizhzhia, where a company said seven workers at its steel plant were killed and 21 injured.

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

In addition to the ballistic missiles, North Korea is preparing to deploy more of its troops to Russia, Zelenskyy said late Monday.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un signed a strategic partnership agreement in 2024, pledging mutual aid if either country faces aggression.

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

Ukraine says Russia is poised to escalate the war

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 preparing to recruit more troops 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, preparing for mobilization — all of this shows that Moscow is preparing not for peace, but for escalation," Zelenskyy said on social media.

In an unusual step, Ukraine's air force didn't say in its daily report how many missiles Russia launched overnight. It was not clear whether the omission was deliberate, and Kyiv officials made no immediate comment.

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

In an indication that Putin is determined to press on with the invasion, Russia's highest court on Monday ordered that Yabloko, the only political party opposing the war, to be excluded from the ballot in the Sept. 18-20 parliamentary election.

"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 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 Kyiv, 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 its forces overnight struck "military industrial facilities and transport and logistics centers" in Kyiv and Zaporizhzhia with "ground-based precision weapons."

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It said in a statement that it hit civilian storage facilities housing drones in Kyiv and a metallurgical plant in Zaporizhzhia.

Metinvest, a major Ukrainian mining and metals company with operations in Zaporizhzhia, said seven of its steel plant employees died as staff tried to reach shelters after a warning of an incoming ballistic missile.

The company, which employs tens of thousands of people, said in a statement that the attack damaged its blast furnace and other equipment and forced the plant to shut down.

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

Russia's biggest e-commerce company hit again

Meanwhile, the Russian Defense Ministry said its air defenses overnight intercepted nearly 400 Ukrainian drones over 14 regions and Crimea, the peninsula that Moscow illegally annexed from Kyiv in 2014.

Russia's biggest online retailer, Wildberries, said its logistical facilities in the Voronezh region near the Ukrainian border came under attack and caught fire. It added that the fire was extinguished and goods stored there were "largely undamaged."

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

Ukraine's General Staff said its forces struck an oil refinery in the city of Orsk in Russia's Orenburg region near the border with Kazakhstan, about 1,500 kilometers (930 miles) from Ukraine, causing a fire.

The refinery, with an annual processing capacity of about 44 million barrels of crude oil, produces gasoline, diesel and aviation fuel, among other products. The extent of the damage was being assessed, the military said.

Meanwhile, Romania's Ministry of National Defense said its navy destroyed two drones drifting in the Black Sea about 90 nautical miles (166 kilometers) from the port of Constanta.

The Gerbera-type drones were neutralized by divers using controlled detonations, and some pieces were recovered, the ministry said, adding that Ukraine said the drones were not theirs.

UN says over 16,000 civilians are being held by Russia

The United Nations, meanwhile, estimates that more than 16,000 civilians detained by Russia during the war are still being "deprived of their liberty," with many held incommunicado and on grounds that don't comply with international law.

"Widespread and systematic torture and ill-treatment" of both Ukrainian civilian detainees and prisoners of war by Russia are continuing, including sexual violence, said Claudia Fuentes Julio, the U.N. assistant secretary-general for human rights.

She spoke at an informal meeting of the U.N. Security Council on Monday to spotlight the plight of civilians and soldiers taken following the Russia invasion.

Congo says 2,000 people have died in history's fastest-growing Ebola outbreak

By CHINEDU ASADU and CONSTANT SAME BAGALWA Associated Press

BUNIA, Congo (AP) — At least 2,000 people have died in Congo's Ebola outbreak, the fastest-growing on record, according to the latest data, as rebel conflict, bad roads and work stoppages over payment issues challenge the urgent response in a remote region.

Government data published overnight into Tuesday showed the outbreak has 4,381 confirmed cases, including 2,011 deaths. Starting from the first confirmed case, the death toll was reached almost three times faster than in the 2014-16 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the worst on record.

The current outbreak was declared on May 15 but health authorities now say sequencing showed it began months earlier, in February.

It took about nine weeks for the outbreak to record the first 1,000 deaths, but it's taken just around three weeks for the figure to double, as experts say the crisis is moving faster than efforts to track and manage it.

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At the epicenter in eastern Congo's Ituri province, friends and family members gathered in tears on Tuesday for the burial of Jeannine Katusabe, 38, one of the latest to die.

Christophe Logo, a family representative, said Katusabe first sought traditional treatment at home and only went to the local Ebola treatment center after her condition worsened. "Unfortunately, she did not recover," he said.

Identifying cases early can be nearly 'impossible'

This is already the second-largest outbreak in history, behind the 2014-2016 outbreak's over 28,000 cases including over 11,000 deaths. The outbreak has been expanding across five eastern provinces near South Sudan, Uganda and Rwanda.

The ongoing outbreak has had a case fatality rate of 45.9%, more than the 39.6% rate recorded in the 2014-2016 outbreak.

This Ebola outbreak is unlike most previous ones. The rare Bundibugyo virus responsible for it has no approved vaccines or treatments. Clinical trials for those have begun in Ituri province.

Although the type of Ebola responsible for the 2014-2016 outbreak is considered the deadliest, government data shows this Bundibugyo outbreak has killed a higher percentage of people as care and support are not getting to patients quickly enough. Many people are reporting symptoms late or not at all.

"In the absence of an effective vaccine, control (for the outbreak) rests on identifying cases and then nursing them in secure facilities until they recover or sadly perish," said Paul Hunter, a professor in medicine at the University of East Anglia in the U.K.

In a remote region like this with an ongoing conflict and interrupted communications, routine surveillance can be very difficult and "identifying cases early enough to prevent spread can be impossible," Hunter said.

Authorities in eastern Congo have restricted public gatherings and shut the main airport in Ituri to limit spread of the disease. But mass movements due to trade, mining and displacements from conflict have continued.

The response has been behind from the start

The World Health Organization on Monday said some cases early in the outbreak were wrongly attributed to malaria and typhoid, and that early testing was conducted for the more common type of Ebola, delaying the realization of what was unfolding

Officials are "chasing the virus, the virus is ahead of us," the WHO regional director for Africa, Dr. Mohamed Yakub Janabi, told a news conference.

The new death toll is "alarming," said Dr. Jean-Marie Akandabo, who is helping manage patients at a clinic in Ituri.

Akandabo said the major challenges he's seen are limited care for patients and poor community engagement. Some people have described widespread misinformation about the virus in sometimes hostile communities that long have been wary of outsiders after years of attacks by rebel groups.

"We must not take this disease lightly, because it continues to kill and no one is safe," Akandabo said.

The current outbreak is the 17th — and largest — the Central African nation has faced. The first Ebola virus to be identified was in 1976 near the Ebola River in what is now Congo.

FACT FOCUS: Trump makes false claims as he signs order urging revisions around childhood vaccines

By MELISSA GOLDIN and LAURA UNGAR Associated Press

While issuing an executive order on Monday aimed at getting states to revise childhood vaccine recommendations, President Donald Trump and others in his administration repeated several false claims about those vaccines, as well as their relationship to autism.

The order recommends separating the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine into three separate single-disease shots and administering childhood vaccines at separate appointments whenever possible.

But many public health experts expressed concern about the recommendations, saying that spacing out the shots could increase the risk that children would become infected with a vaccine-preventable disease

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before returning for another visit. They noted that childhood vaccines and how they should be given have been rigorously studied around the world for decades, and continue to prove to be safe and effective at protecting children.

Here's a closer look at the facts.

TRUMP: "In many cases, we were requiring 72 jabs for our beautiful, healthy, lovely, delicate little children."

THE FACTS: That's misleading. In 2025, the government's childhood vaccination schedule recommended routine protection against 18 diseases. How many separate injections that added up to between birth and age 18 varied. It depended on things like the brand used, the availability of combination shots and the child's starting age. But unless you counted once-a-year flu vaccines (which some kids can get as a nasal spray) or COVID-19 shots, the number of injections was closer to three dozen.

Those shots have been proven to protect children from preventable and sometimes devastating diseases. Even so, vaccines were never "required," as families could opt out. States do require children to get certain vaccines before enrolling in school, but the state lists of school shots were narrower than the federal vaccine schedule, and many states offer different types of exemptions.

The Trump administration in January cut the national vaccine recommendations to injections against 11 diseases, with additional vaccines now separately categorized for at-risk children or as available through "shared decision-making" with a doctor. This drops the total number of injections to about 23 if children receive only the recommended-for-all vaccinations on the administration's new schedule.

TRUMP: "You have the MMR, we want it in three separate vaccinations given at separate times. Together there could be a possibility they are quite lethal and separately, it looks like they are not at all lethal but just very effective."

THE FACTS: This is false. Doctors say, and years of real-world evidence prove, that the current combination MMR vaccine is both safe and effective at protecting children from illness. Common side effects are mild and include a sore arm from the shot, fever, mild rash and temporary pain and stiffness in the joints. Doctors point out that separate vaccines for measles, mumps and rubella are not available in the United States.

"I'm concerned about an unintended consequence of people under vaccinating because of fear that giving a single dose of the MMR is going to put their child at risk when there's no evidence to suggest that's the case," said Dr. Aaron Milstone, pediatric director of infection prevention at Johns Hopkins Health System and a fellow with the American Academy of Pediatrics. "There are many, many, many years of scientific data highlighting the safety of vaccines in children."

TRUMP: "Large amounts of vaccine, large amounts of like vats of vaccine are currently pumped into your child's body."

THE FACTS: This is false. Dr. Molly O'Shea, a Michigan pediatrician, said amounts vary slightly by vaccine, but doctors give less than 0.5 milliliters per vaccine -- usually 0.1 to 0.3 milliliters per vaccine. By comparison, a teaspoon is about 5 milliliters.

"It's a teeny amount," she said. "So there are no vats."

Trump also said during the executive order signing: "I've seen proof of it. Where they have a vaccination that looks like the size of a bottle of soda poured into a little child's body." A typical plastic bottle of soda contains 500 milliliters, or about 2,500 times more than a typical vaccine.

TRUMP: "There's nothing that we lose with this. The worst thing that would happen would be nothing happens. We're not going to lose anything."

THE FACTS: 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. Doctors say, and real world evidence proves, that vaccinations save millions of lives.

"Vaccines are among the most thoroughly studied, effective tools we have to protect children from serious

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vaccine-preventable diseases,” said Dr. Willie Underwood, president of the American Medical Association. “Altering a proven vaccination schedule without credible evidence risks weakening public confidence and putting children’s health at risk.”

Dr. Andrew Racine, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said that “delaying or skipping shots is risky, especially as measles continues to spread and children go back to school.”

Measles was declared eliminated in the U.S. in 2000, but rates are now climbing as vaccination rates decline. The number of cases this year has already surpassed the record-breaking tally for all of 2025, which was the worst year for measles in more than three decades.

HEALTH SECRETARY ROBERT F. KENNEDY JR.: “In 1970, the biggest epidemiological study at that time in history was performed. And the university scientists from across this country looked at all the 8-year-olds in Wisconsin, about 900,000 children, and they were looking for autism. And they knew what autism looked like. And they came back with an incidental rate of .8 per 10,000. So less than one in 10,000. The rate according to CDC today in this country is one in every 31 children.”

THE FACTS: It’s true that in the 20th century, only 1 in 10,000 children were diagnosed with autism — the diagnosis was rare and given only to kids with severe problems communicating or socializing and those with unusual, repetitive behaviors. But the term became shorthand for a group of milder, related conditions known as “autism spectrum disorders,” and the number of kids labeled as having some form of autism began to balloon.

Health officials have largely attributed growing autism numbers to better recognition of cases, through wide screening and better diagnosis. In April 2025, the CDC said the diagnosis rate was 1 in 31 children.

During the executive order signing, Kennedy and Trump suggested that childhood vaccines may play a role in causing autism. But studies by the CDC and others have ruled that out. A fraudulent single study that claimed a link between the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine was later retracted by the journal that published it.

There are no blood or biologic tests for autism; it is diagnosed by making judgments about a child’s behavior. Research has looked at a variety of other possible explanations, including genetics, the age of the father, the weight of the mother and chemicals in the environment.

“No environmental factor has been better-studied as a potential cause of autism than vaccines,” said Dr. Alycia Halladay, chief science officer at the Autism Science Foundation. “That includes vaccine ingredients as well as the body’s response to the vaccines. All this research has determined that there is no link between autism and vaccines. This is consistent across multiple studies, repeated in different countries around the world, including those mentioned in today’s press conference.”

Last year, Kennedy promised to conduct exhaustive studies to identify any environmental factors that may cause the developmental disorder. He said on Monday that his department will deliver research findings “as soon as they are ready.”

Democratic Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs chooses former Republican Mayor John Giles as her running mate

By JACQUES BILLEAUD and JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Democratic Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs has picked a Republican-turned-independent to be her running mate in a tough reelection campaign, setting up a bipartisan ticket as voters elect the state’s first lieutenant governor.

Hobbs’ selection Tuesday of John Giles, a former mayor of Mesa, a Phoenix suburb that is Arizona’s third-largest city, is an overture to the Republicans and conservative independents she must win in a state that was once a GOP stronghold. Republicans have expanded their voter registration advantage over Democrats since Hobbs eked out a narrow win over Kari Lake, a fierce ally of President Donald Trump, in 2022.

Hobbs is considered the most vulnerable Democratic governor in the country. Giles, a registered Republican for decades, changed his party affiliation to independent on May 17 and voted in the Democratic

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primary last month, according to county voting records.

The Republican nominee is U.S. Rep. Andy Biggs, who last week picked Sine Kerr, a farmer and Republican former state lawmaker, to be his running mate. Kerr's rural roots balance Biggs' base in parts of metro Phoenix.

In an interview with The Associated Press before Hobbs publicly announced that she had picked Giles, he said he still considers himself to be a conservative and said he stuck around the Republican Party probably longer than he should have in a crusade to save it. "A few months ago, I realized that it was time to give up that crusade," Giles said.

Giles led a conservative city for a decade

Giles, who was Mesa's mayor from 2014 to 2025, has been a vocal Trump critic and has endorsed Democrats, including Trump's 2024 rival, then-Vice President Kamala Harris. Giles spoke in favor of Harris at the Democratic National Convention, saying Trump's policies would hurt Mesa.

Giles also backed Democrats running against Trump allies, including Hobbs in her 2022 race against Lake and the state's current U.S. senators, Mark Kelly and Ruben Gallego.

As mayor, Giles signed a proclamation promoting equal treatment for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender residents in housing and accommodations, a controversial move in the conservative city.

The Biggs campaign, in anticipation of Hobbs' announcement, launched a website highlighting Giles' support for Harris in 2024 and his participation in the Democratic convention. Drew Sexton, a senior adviser in the Biggs campaign, issued a statement early Tuesday saying Hobbs' selection of Giles "is of no surprise to Arizonans who have been paying attention. As Kamala Harris' favorite Arizona mayor, Giles is aligned with Hobbs on all the issues that have hurt Arizonans the most over the past four years."

Sexton also said Giles "has been an aspiring Democrat since he first voted for Joe Biden in 2020."

As a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Giles can be an ambassador for Hobbs. Church members make up about 6% of the Arizona population. Latter-day Saints, widely known as Mormons, have been a reliably Republican voting bloc for decades, but many have been ambivalent about Trump since his first run for the White House.

Democrats have been working to woo Latter-day Saints turned off by Trump's penchant for foul language and demeaning rhetoric toward women and people of color, which clashes with the church's values of humility, morality and compassion.

Biggs is also a member of the church.

Picking a Republican running mate hones the bipartisan image Hobbs has tried to create, contrasting with Biggs' background as a far-right congressman and, before that, the state Senate president. But it also risks inflaming tensions on the left.

In the AP interview, Hobbs said she takes a nonpartisan approach to her work in government. When she was asked whether some supporters might be frustrated because she picked a former Republican as her running mate, she said, "It shouldn't be a surprise."

Both Hobbs and Giles portray Biggs as an extreme partisan. Giles said it's disingenuous for Biggs to present himself as more of a moderate when he was "unapologetic about being the most conservative person in the room – in any room."

Arizona is electing a lieutenant governor for the first time

Arizona is one of just five states without a lieutenant governor position, along with Maine, New Hampshire, Oregon and Wyoming.

That will change in January.

Voters added the post in 2022 to more clearly define the line of succession. Until then, the secretary of state will continue to serve as the next in line to be governor.

Gubernatorial succession is especially relevant in Arizona, where five governors since 1975 have entered the office through succession rather than election.

In fact, of Arizona's 12 governors over the past 50 years, only one, Republican Doug Ducey, entered and left the office through the typical pathways of being elected and serving out a full term. Among the

others, one died, one was impeached and removed, one resigned after being convicted of fraud and two quit to accept presidential appointments.

Former Syrian President Assad sentenced to death in absentia for war crimes

By GHAITH ALSAYED and SAMAR KASSABALI Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — A Syrian court on Tuesday sentenced ousted President Bashar Assad and his brother in absentia for murder, torture and crimes against humanity committed before and during the country's 14-year civil war that left about half a million people dead.

The verdicts by a court in Damascus are the first against Assad or any members of his inner circle since his family's five decades in power came to an end 20 months ago. They are mostly symbolic, however, because Assad and his brother Maher had fled to Russia, where they received asylum after the Syrian government's stunning collapse in December 2024.

Six other former officials were also sentenced to death in absentia. The only former official sentenced to death and in custody is Assad's maternal cousin Atef Najib, who oversaw a crackdown on dissent that led to an uprising that sparked the civil war. Najib stood inside a cage wearing a prisoner's uniform as the judge read his sentence aloud, and a crowd gathered outside the heavily guarded courthouse.

Even though Assad is unlikely to ever face justice, the verdicts will be popular among many Syrians, especially those who have expressed frustration that the new government hasn't moved with enough speed or strength against Assad-era figures.

Some human rights groups, though, expressed concerns that the trials were rushed, potentially unfair and, at the very least, exposed flaws in Syria's justice system.

"Bashar Assad used state agencies to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity," said judge Fakhareddine al-Aryan during a court session that was aired live on state TV — a contrast with Assad-era trials, which were conducted in secret. The verdicts al-Aryan read aloud found Assad and the others guilty of premeditated murder, including against children, as well as other acts of brutality, including torture.

Al-Aryan said Najib could appeal.

"Today is the day of justice for all the wounded, martyrs, detainees and Syrians who were forced to leave their country," said attorney Adnan al-Masalmeh who represented families of Najib's victims. "Today marks a victory of right against injustice, a victory of the Syrian people against the ousted regime."

Najib is one of the highest-ranking security officials to be put on trial. He is a former army brigadier general who was in charge of political security in Syria's southern Daraa province.

During his tenure, more than a dozen teenagers who scrawled anti-government graffiti on a school wall were arrested and tortured. The case became a catalyst for mass protests against the repressive policies of Assad's security forces.

The protests were met by a brutal government crackdown in 2011 that spiraled into the civil war that ended with Assad's ouster in a lightning rebel offensive.

Some of Najib's victims were present at the courthouse, including two who were teenagers in 2011 and expressed their opinions to The Associated Press.

"Today we reached a point where the blood was not wasted," said Mouawiya Sayasneh, about those who died in the crackdown. Fifteen years later, "there is happiness that Atef Najib was sentenced to death," he said.

Another man, Nayef Abazeid, who was detained at the age of 13 in 2011, expressed his satisfaction with the sentence, adding that "our biggest happiness will be when Bashar Assad is executed."

Maher Assad was a former commander of the Syrian military's 4th Armored Division — which opposition activists have accused of killings, torture, extortion and drug trafficking, in addition to running its own detention centers.

"Today's scenes outside the courthouse reflect 15 years of pain and a justice long denied," said Hiba

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Zayadin, Syria researcher at Human Rights Watch. She said the rights group opposes the death penalty in all cases, including this one, because "it's cruel and irreversible, especially when a fair trial isn't guaranteed."

She said the appeal process for Najib "needs to meet fair trial standards." Real accountability for Assad-era crimes depends on Syria building a justice system that lasts, she said.

The Washington-based Syria Justice and Accountability Center described Tuesday's conviction of Najib as a "historical step in Syria's transitional period," but said it exposed major flaws in the justice system which likely jeopardized his right to a fair trial.

It said that SJAC's trial monitoring team attended Najib's trial and documented multiple issues such as rushed proceedings and witness testimony that did not connect Atef to the crimes he was charged with. SJAC said Najib's lawyer "lacked the capacity and willingness to meaningfully engage with the case or mount an adequate defense."

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.

The Post said Monday 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

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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 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 briefing on what happened.

"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."

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.

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.

Donald 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

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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 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 Tuesday, shares of Trump Media fell about 3.3% to \$9.08.

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 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

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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 HHS 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.

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.

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Trump's 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 Republican 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 Baghaei, 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 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

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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."

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 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

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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."

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 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 Likud party's 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

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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 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."

Today in History: August 12, Charlottesville car attack

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, Aug. 12, the 224th day of 2026. There are 141 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Aug. 12, 2017, a driver sped into a crowd of people peacefully protesting a white nationalist rally in the Virginia college town of Charlottesville, killing 32-year-old Heather Heyer and injuring more than a dozen others. (The attacker, James Alex Fields, was sentenced to life in prison on 29 federal hate crime charges, and life plus 419 years on state charges.)

Also on this date:

In 1867, President Andrew Johnson sparked a move to impeach him as he defied Congress by suspending Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, with whom he had clashed over Reconstruction policies. (Johnson was acquitted by the Senate.)

In 1898, fighting in the Spanish-American War came to an end.

In 1909, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, home to the Indianapolis 500, first opened.

In 1944, during World War II, Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., eldest son of Joseph and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy,

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was killed with his co-pilot when their explosives-laden Navy plane blew up over England.

In 1953, the Soviet Union conducted a secret test of its first hydrogen bomb.

In 1960, the first balloon communications satellite — the Echo 1 — was launched by the United States from Cape Canaveral.

In 1981, IBM introduced its first personal computer, the model 5150, at a press conference in New York.

In 1985, the world's worst single-aircraft disaster occurred as a crippled Japan Airlines Boeing 747 on a domestic flight crashed into a mountain, killing 520 people. Four passengers survived.

In 1990, fossil collector Sue Hendrickson found one of the largest and best preserved Tyrannosaurus Rex skeletons ever discovered; nicknamed "Sue" after Hendrickson, the skeleton, found in South Dakota, is now on display at Chicago's Field Museum.

In 1994, in baseball's eighth work stoppage since 1972, players went on strike rather than allow team owners to limit their salaries.

In 2000, the Russian nuclear submarine Kursk and its 118-man crew were lost during naval exercises in the Barents Sea.

In 2013, James "Whitey" Bulger, the feared Boston mob boss who became one of the nation's most-wanted fugitives, was convicted in a string of 11 killings and dozens of other gangland crimes, many of them committed while he was said to be an FBI informant. (Bulger was sentenced to life; he was fatally beaten at a West Virginia prison in 2018, hours after being transferred from a facility in Florida.)

In 2022, Salman Rushdie, the author whose writing led to death threats from Iran in the 1980s, was attacked and stabbed in the neck by a man who rushed the stage as he was about to give a lecture in western New York.

Today's Birthdays: Investor and philanthropist George Soros is 96. Actor George Hamilton is 87. Singer-musician Mark Knopfler (Dire Straits) is 77. Singer Kid Creole (Kid Creole and the Coconuts) is 76. Film director Chen Kaige is 74. Jazz guitarist Pat Metheny is 72. Actor Bruce Greenwood is 70. Basketball Hall of Famer Lynette Woodard is 67. Rapper Sir Mix-A-Lot is 63. Actor Peter Krause (KROW'-zuh) is 61. Tennis Hall of Famer Pete Sampras is 55. Actor-comedian Michael Ian Black is 55. Actor Yvette Nicole Brown is 55. Actor Casey Affleck is 51. Boxer Tyson Fury is 38. Actor Lakeith Stanfield is 35. NBA All-Star Khris Middleton is 35. Actor Cara Delevingne (DEHL'-eh-veen) is 34. Tennis player Stefanos Tsitsipas is 28.