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Community Calendar

Saturday, Aug. 22

Soccer at St. Thomas More/Rapid City Christian (girls at 11 a.m., boys at 1 p.m. MT)

Sunday, Aug. 23

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion and baptism, 9 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m., at Zion, 11 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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

BE YOURSELF
people don't have to
like you



and you don't
have to care

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

Monday, Aug. 24

Senior Menu: Ground beef stroganoff with noodles, peas, fruit, whole wheat bread.

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

Senior Citizens meet at the Community Center, with potluck at noon

Tuesday, Aug. 25

Senior Menu: Egg salad sandwich, tomato spoon salad, fruit, cookie.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

NEC Boys Golf Meet, 10 a.m., Olive Grove Golf Course

Volleyball at Hamlin (C match at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity)

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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.

Supercentenarian Secret

People age 100 and older appear to have elevated levels of a rare immune cell that kills cancerous cells, according to a study published this week. The finding suggests that late-age immune adaptations may play a role in longevity.

Researchers in Japan tested blood samples from 28 adults divided into three age groups: 70 to 99, 100 to 109, and 110 and older. They found that the older participants, on average, exhibited a higher ratio of CD4 CTLs, a rare immune cell also found in people fighting cancer. However, these older participants showed no signs of cancer. The researchers believe elevated levels of CD4 CTLs may signal a new stage of immune development that emerges around age 100 and helps the body eliminate abnormal cells, which become increasingly common with age.

Yesterday was the 117th birthday of the world's oldest living person, an Englishwoman named Ethel Caterham. The oldest living person on record died in 1997 at the age of 122 years and 164 days.

Hong Kong's Tiananmen activists convicted in national security trial.

Hong Kong's High Court yesterday convicted two pro-democracy activists of inciting subversion for organizing annual vigils remembering Beijing's 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown. Such vigils were effectively outlawed in 2020 with the enactment of a China-imposed National Security Law, which criminalizes a wide range of dissenting acts. The activists face a maximum of 10 years in prison.

IndyCar race hits the streets around DC's National Mall this weekend.

The first-ever motor race in the nation's capital is part of celebrations for the US' 250th birthday. Top drivers, including 2026 Indianapolis 500 winner Felix Rosenqvist, will race 147 laps around a 1.66-mile course at speeds up to 180 mph. Preservationists have raised concerns that vibrations from the race could damage paintings in museums and historic buildings.

FIFA suspends four players, one official for World Cup final brawl.

Argentine midfielder Leandro Paredes was fined \$90K and suspended for 10 matches, effectively sidelining him from Argentina's national team for a year. It ranks alongside a 2014 sanction against a Uruguayan player as one of the most severe in World Cup history. Two of Paredes' teammates, one Argentine coach, and one Spanish player received lesser sanctions.

Supreme Court allows White House ballroom construction to continue.

Chief Justice John Roberts yesterday issued a temporary stay allowing President Donald Trump's roughly \$400M White House ballroom renovation project to proceed as the high court weighs his appeal. Preservationists have sued, arguing that the project requires congressional approval. Meanwhile, Trump argues the renovation is necessary for security, citing recent shootings and threats in his vicinity.

Former Abercrombie & Fitch CEO mentally fit to stand sex trafficking trial.

A New York judge yesterday ruled that Michael Jeffries is competent to stand trial after being hospitalized for months with dementia and Alzheimer's symptoms. The 82-year-old is slated to go on trial alongside two codefendants in late October on allegations that they promised modeling jobs to lure men into drug-fueled sex parties. Jeffries led Abercrombie from 1992 to 2014.

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Court slashes \$50M judgment against Infowars' Alex Jones.

A Texas appeals court yesterday reduced punitive damages against Jones over his claims that the 2012 Sandy Hook school shooting was a hoax to \$1.5M. The court ruled that the two parents who sued failed to show sufficient evidence that the harassment stemming from his claims justified exceeding the state's \$750K damages cap per plaintiff. The ruling does not affect a \$1.4B judgment against Jones in Connecticut.

Rare tornadoes hit New York City area amid East Coast storms.

Tornadoes struck southern Queens, Long Island, and Delaware on Thursday night, damaging cabanas and buildings at a Long Island beach club. Two to three inches of rain were also reported across the area, with several reports of people trapped in their cars by flooding. No serious injuries have been reported as of this writing. Tornadoes are rare in the area because the Atlantic Ocean typically limits atmospheric instability.

Depression stops the formation of new brain cells, according to new study.

New neurons appear to stop forming in the hippocampus of adults with major depressive disorder. Because the hippocampus plays an important role in memory and emotional response, researchers believe this lack of new neurons may make it harder to adapt to stress. The finding challenges a long-held belief that depression stems solely from an imbalance in neurotransmitters and points to a potential new therapeutic target.

Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Lorie D. in Utah.

"I had an emergency appointment with a specialist doctor in an unknown part of the city. As I followed my GPS, my phone died. I ran into a store and asked a kind woman if she would look up the doctor's address. But I had his name spelled wrong, as well. The woman called several specialists until she found the right place and name, and they agreed to see me. Then the woman went the third mile, and led me in her own car to the doctor's office! The over-stressed doctor saw me, though I was half an hour late getting there."

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Tigers shut out Miller/Highmore-Harrold in Carson's coaching debut

MILLER — Groton Area opened the 2026 football season in impressive fashion Friday night, giving first-year head coach Jordan Carson his first career victory with a 21-0 shutout of Miller/Highmore-Harrold.

The Tigers combined an efficient passing attack with a dominant defensive performance, holding the Rustlers to only 73 yards of total offense and three first downs.

For Carson, the victory was the culmination of weeks of preparation with a young Groton roster.

"We prepared for it," Carson said. "We had those kids working pretty hard from day one, and we had some goals, and we said we had to try to minimize our mistakes and try to capitalize on our opportunities, and I thought we did a pretty good job of that tonight."

Groton received the opening kickoff and moved the football, with Jordan Schwan breaking loose for a 21-yard run, but the Tigers eventually turned the ball over on downs.

The Groton defense quickly forced a Miller/Highmore-Harrold punt, and the Tigers took over at their own 20-yard line. Seven plays and three first downs later, Asher Johnson scored on a two-yard run with 2:30 remaining in the first quarter. Ryder Schwan kicked the extra point to give Groton a 7-0 lead.

After another defensive stop, Groton struck again.

Brody Lord hauled in a 34-yard pass late in the first quarter to move the Tigers to the Miller/Highmore-Harrold 30-yard line. On the first play of the second quarter, Johnson connected with Anthony Tracy for a 26-yard touchdown. Schwan added the extra point and Groton led 14-0 with 11:51 remaining in the half.

Neither offense found the end zone again before halftime.

Miller/Highmore-Harrold managed its first first down of the second half but was again forced to punt. The Rustlers later caught a break when a punt bounced off a Groton player and was recovered by Miller/Highmore-Harrold at the Tiger 44-yard line.

Groton's defense responded by stopping the Rustlers on fourth-and-seven.

The Tigers then began the drive that put the game away. Starting from their own 44 late in the third quarter, Groton picked up several first downs and moved into Miller/Highmore-Harrold territory.

With 10:35 remaining in the fourth quarter, Johnson and Tracy connected again, this time for another 26-yard touchdown pass. Schwan's third successful extra point made it 21-0.

Miller/Highmore-Harrold fumbled on its next possession, and although Groton was unable to turn the turnover into points, the Tiger defense continued to keep the Rustlers off the scoreboard.

Miller/Highmore-Harrold put together one of its better drives late in the game, but Ryder Schwan intercepted Chase Hurd's pass to end the threat.

Johnson finished nine-of-12 passing for 155 yards and two touchdowns. He also led the Tigers on the ground with 45 yards on 15 carries and a touchdown.

Tracy rushed five times for 19 yards and caught two touchdown passes. Ryder Schelle had two receptions for 38 yards and carried eight times for 26 yards. Lord had a 34-yard reception, while Case Reints



Asher Johnson gets ready to throw the ball at the football game Friday in Miller. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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caught one pass for 10 yards.

Groton finished with 114 rushing yards and 155 passing yards for 269 yards of total offense.

Miller/Highmore-Harrod was held to 41 rushing yards on 30 carries. Hurd completed four of 13 passes for 32 yards and an interception.

Defensively, Braeden Fliehs led Groton with five tackles, while Johnson finished with four. Isaiah Scepaniak forced a fumble, Reints recovered a fumble and Ryder Schwan recorded the interception.

The Tigers were also relatively disciplined, committing three penalties for just 15 yards. Groton had four fumbles but lost only one.

One concern coming out of the opener was the health of Jordan Schwan, who was injured after his 21-yard run early in the game.

Carson said Schwan rolled an ankle and was unable to play much of the remainder of the game.

"We're hopefully — hopefully he can heal up quick and be back for next week or weeks after," Carson said.

Carson said one of his biggest challenges since taking over the program has been putting his system into place.

"I kind of know how I want to run things, but it's implementing everything that we're doing along the way," Carson said. "Implementing a new offense has been a pretty good challenge so far with some young kids, but I thought we executed well tonight."

The Tigers are relying heavily on a young roster this season, with sophomores and juniors filling many key roles and only a handful of seniors.

Carson said what the Tigers may lack in experience, they make up for with determination.

"I would say that we have some tenacious football players," Carson said. "They might not be the biggest or the strongest or the fastest, but we've got some pretty tough kids. And I think they're looking to get a lot better, and they want to keep getting better. So I think maybe tenacity is a good way to put it."

Friday night also turned out to be a significant night in Groton football history.

Longtime Tiger statistician Tom Woods noted during the broadcast that Carson is the 31st head football coach in Groton history, with the program dating back to 1914.

The season opener was also the 850th varsity football game in school history, and Miller became the 55th different opponent Groton has faced. It was the first-ever football meeting between Groton and Miller.

Woods said the 2026 season marks the 110th season of varsity football at Groton. There were three years during the World War I era in which Groton did not play a football season.

The opener also marked a personal milestone for Woods, who is beginning his 40th year working with the Groton football program.

Woods said his involvement began when former Groton coach Becker asked him to come around the program, spend time with the players and offer encouragement.

Through four decades, that relationship with Tiger football has continued.

"There's nothing that I find more joy in than being able to cheer the kids on," Woods said, thanking the many Groton coaches over the years who have allowed him to remain involved with the program.

Woods' extensive research into Groton football history has also helped uncover some pieces of the program's past that had been forgotten.



Ryder Schelle catches the ball for a 30 yard pass play to get the ball down to the Rustlers' 25 yard line. Three plays later Groton Area scored. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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He said he had previously listed 1972 as Groton's first Northeast Conference championship, but a former Groton connection challenged him to look farther back into the newspaper archives. Woods discovered that Groton's championship teams of the 1930s had also been members of the Northeast Conference and won back-to-back conference championships.

Woods said he plans to commemorate those teams and hopes the earlier championship years can eventually be added to the school's championship banner.

He also discussed new athletic record boards being developed at the school. Football boards will include game, season and career records along with a "1,000 Club" recognizing 1,000-yard rushing, passing or receiving seasons.

Because complete statistics were not consistently kept in earlier decades, Woods said the football statistical record boards will generally begin with the 1987 season, when the records become much more complete.

After celebrating the first win of his head coaching career, Carson was already looking ahead.

Groton Area, 1-0, will return home next week to host Beresford, which also won its season opener.

Carson said the Tigers will approach the next challenge the same way they approached Friday night.

"We'll get some film on them and we'll start prepping," Carson said. "We'll have our best game ready to go for them."

Thanks to these sponsors for making the broadcast possible on GDILIVE.COM: Agtegra, Avantara-Groton, Bierman Farm Service, BK Custom Ts, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Farmers Union Insurance, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, Heartland Energy, Jacobson Electric, John Sieh Agency, Jungle Lanes & Cafe, Locke Electric, Poet, Rix Farms / R&M Farms, S & S Lumber, The Meat House.

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Groton Area

First Downs 11
Rushing: 33-114
Rushers:
Asher Johnson 15-45
Anthony Tracy 5-19
Case Reints 2-7
Jordan Schwan 1-21
Ryder Schelle 8-26
Alex Abeln 1-(-4)
Keegan Woltjer 1-0

Passing: 9-13-155
Asher Johnson 9-12-155
Alex Abeln 0-1-0

Receivers:

Ryder Schelle 2-38
Brody Lord 1-34
Case Reints 1-10

Fumbles: had 4, lost 1
Penalties: 3-15

Defensive Leaders:

Braeden Fliehs 5 tackles
Asher Johnson 4 tackles
Isaiah Scepaniak 1 forced fumble
Case Reints 1 fumble recovery
Ryder Schwan 1 interception
Record: 1-0
Next game: host Beresford

Scoring:

First Quarter: 2:30: Asher Johnson 2 yard run (PAT: Ryder Schwan kick) 7-0
Second Quarter: 11:51: Anthony Tracy 26 yard pass from Asher Johnson (PAT: Schwan kick) 14-0
Fourth Quarter: 10:35: Anthony Tracy 26 yard pass from Asher Johnson (PAT: Schwan kick) 21-0

Miller/Highmore-Harrold

First Downs: 3
Rushing: 30-41
Rushers:
Sam Crago 14-17
Chase Hurd 12-29
Kia McCauley 3-(-5)

Passing: 4-13-32 (1 Int)
Chase Hurd 4-13-32-1

Receivers

Blaten Werdel 2-24
Kia McCauley 1-0
Brecken Anderberg 1-8

Fumbles: had 1, lost 1
Penalties: 2-25

Defensive Leaders:

Sam Cargo 8 tackles
Brecken Anderberg 8 tackles
JD Chavez 8 tackles
Chase Hurd 8 tackles

Record: 0-1
Next game: host Winner

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Groton Area soccer teams sweep Belle Fourche

BELLE FOURCHE — Groton Area's soccer teams made it a successful trip west Friday, with both the girls and boys picking up 2-1 victories over Belle Fourche.

The Groton Area girls overcame an early deficit, scoring twice in the first half and then protecting the lead through a scoreless second half.

Belle Fourche struck first in the eighth minute, taking a 1-0 advantage after what Groton Area coach Matt Baumgartner described as a defensive mis-assignment.

The Tigers responded in the 26th minute when Brenna Imrie gathered a ball that bounced out from an attacking sequence. From the middle of the field, Imrie launched a shot from about 30 yards that found the back of the net and tied the game at 1-1.

Groton Area took the lead eight minutes later.

McKenna Tietz lined up a free kick from the far left side of the field and drove the ball into the net in the 34th minute, giving the Tigers a 2-1 advantage heading into halftime.

Neither team scored in the second half as Groton Area held on for the victory.

Baumgartner said the Tigers created plenty of scoring opportunities throughout the contest but weren't as efficient as he would have liked.

"A game with many offensive chances only resulted in two long-range goals for the Tigers," Baumgartner said. "The girls had a lot of time and space today but rushed opportunities and misplaced a lot of shots."

Although pleased to come away with the road win, Baumgartner said the Tigers know they left additional scoring chances on the field.

"Coming out ahead with a win is the scenario we traveled out for, but a 2-1 win with a dozen-plus missed shots stings at me and the team as a whole tonight," he said.

Baumgartner said falling behind early forced the Tigers to settle themselves before eventually taking control.

"We gave up an early goal on a simple mis-assignment and crawled back to get the lead before the halftime whistle, and that calmed our nerves," he said.

Baumgartner was also encouraged by the contributions from some of Groton Area's younger players.

"Our young rotation pieces played very nicely today and are eagerly learning and adapting to varsity-speed soccer," he said. "Proud of the fight to crawl out a victory, but we know there's smarter and more efficient soccer to be had from us."

The Tigers face another challenge today against an unbeaten St. Thomas More squad.

"We must work hard against a 2-0 St. Thomas More and are excited for it," Baumgartner said.

The Groton Area boys completed the sweep with another 2-1 victory over Belle Fourche.

Logan Olson and Ethan Kroll accounted for the Tigers' two goals as Groton Area came away with the one-goal road win.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

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Western South Dakota lawmaker takes plea deal to drop road-damage charge from felony to misdemeanor

Meanwhile, separate election-related felony charges still pending for Republican state senator in eastern South Dakota

BY JOHN HULT

A South Dakota Republican state lawmaker pleaded no contest Friday to a misdemeanor for damaging a road in Butte County in a case that began with a felony charge.

Rep. Travis Ismay, 49, of Newell, was charged in early June for felony intentional damage to a highway or bridge, a crime punishable by up to two years in prison and a \$4,000 fine.

On Friday, Ismay was sentenced to pay \$1,750 in restitution and \$78 in court costs after entering a plea of "nolo contendere" to a misdemeanor charge of destruction of a highway. Such a plea allows defendants to admit that the state has enough evidence to prove they've committed a crime without formally admitting guilt.

The lesser charge was filed earlier this month by Butte County State's Attorney Brian Knox "pursuant to the plea agreement of the parties."

Knox was appointed this summer to replace Timothy Barnaud, who'd filed the felony charge against Ismay before being appointed to a magistrate judge position. Barnaud did not preside over Ismay's case.

The felony indictment did not include details on the road damage, nor on the location of the highway in question. The same is true of the misdemeanor complaint.

Late Friday afternoon, Knox sent a written statement, which he said had been approved by Ismay and his Rapid City attorney, Tim Rensch.

It said that Ismay had graded a road outside his home, and that Ismay "believed his actions were justified due to what he described as the unfavorable conditions of the road."

"Mr. Ismay took action to improve the roadway, not destroy the roadway," the statement said.

Even so, Butte County was "required to send highway workers to properly fix the roadway, following reports that it was unsafe to travel due to Mr. Ismay's actions."

"Butte County would remind all that taking roadway construction or upkeep into your own hands is not acceptable," the statement said.

Ismay will repay the county for the cost of redoing the work, the statement said, to "make the county whole," and the statement said the felony was dropped in exchange for his pledge to do so.

In a phone call Friday with South Dakota Searchlight, Ismay said he was "really impressed" with the "common sense way" Knox approached the case.

The incident occurred three days after Ismay won his primary contest in the June 2 election. He is unopposed in the Nov. 3 general election.

Rep. Scott Odenbach, the majority leader for the state House of Representatives, said Friday that a plea to a class 2 misdemeanor has "no repercussions that I know of" for a member of the chamber.

Election case unresolved for state senator

Felony charges are still pending in Minnehaha County, meanwhile, for another Republican state lawmaker, Sen. Tom Pischke of Dell Rapids.

Pischke faces two felony counts for allegedly filing false or forged election-related documents. Prosecutors in Sioux Falls allege he signed and mailed 16 applications for precinct committeeman and committeewoman to the Minnehaha County Auditor's Office, aiming to get those candidates listed on the June 2

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primary ballot without their knowledge.

Under state law, applications for those positions needn't be notarized, and no signatures from supporters are needed to qualify for the ballot.

At least 20% of precinct committee members must be present at Minnehaha County Republican Party meetings to conduct official business. The number of committee members fluctuates, and could have swollen in Minnehaha County if the unaware candidates noted in Pischke's case had been elected during the primary.

When charges against Pischke were filed, the Minnehaha County party chairman told South Dakota Searchlight the lawmaker's alleged behavior was likely meant to undermine the chairman's ability to lead the party by making it more difficult to have a quorum at party meetings.

Pischke has pleaded not guilty. He waived his right to a preliminary hearing on Aug. 17, and is scheduled to be arraigned on the charges Sept. 15.

County chooses third-place primary finisher to replace Pischke

On July 28, Pischke abandoned his reelection campaign. He said in a written statement that he's always prided himself on "complete transparency," but that he "would not have been able to maintain that standard during the upcoming November election."

Recently, the Republican Party chose Bart Sample, of Flandreau, to replace Pischke on the ballot for his district, which includes northern Minnehaha County and all of Moody County. Sample finished third in a three-way primary race on June 2 for two Republican nominations for the district state's representative seats.

Sample will face Brian Breitling, an independent candidate and former Republican lawmaker, in the Nov. 3 general election.

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

Avian flu affects 77,700 South Dakota birds, raising state's four-year outbreak total to 8.1 million

BY MAKENZIE HUBER

Bird flu has returned to South Dakota, with federal officials confirming detections in two flocks this month after nearly a month without U.S. cases.

The highly pathogenic avian influenza virus — H5N1, a strain that spreads quickly and kills birds rapidly — struck a flock of 74,900 commercial meat turkeys in Beadle County on Aug. 12 and a backyard flock of 2,800 birds in Brule County on Thursday. Euthanizing the entire affected flock is the standard practice when a detection is confirmed.

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture tracks detections nationwide. Federal officials also confirmed the virus in two Idaho backyard flocks of 10 and 50 birds on Thursday.

The South Dakota Department of Health issued an alert Friday for potential human infections among patients who may have been exposed to infected animals. Providers should ask patients with flu-like symptoms — fever, chills, cough or sore throat — about recent contact with sick or dead animals, the alert said.

Since the national bird flu outbreak began in 2022, the virus has affected 8.1 million birds in South Dakota from 144 commercial flocks and 31 backyard flocks.

Federal policy requires officials to kill all birds at affected sites to prevent the virus from spreading to nearby farms. Former South Dakota State Veterinarian Beth Thompson told South Dakota Searchlight previously that "foaming" is the most common method in turkey barns, where foam is sprayed atop turkeys inside the barn to suffocate them.

Federal and state officials oversee the process, and the federal government reimburses farmers for their

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losses through indemnity payments.

Avian influenza detections rise as wild birds spread the virus during seasonal migrations, which are underway.

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

US senator from South Dakota subjects Postal Service to multiple pressure points

Rounds blocks governing board nominations and proposes cuts to executive bonuses amid reports of slow mail

BY MEGHAN O'BRIEN

About two years ago, U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds, R-South Dakota, started hearing increasing complaints about slow mail delivery. Veterans weren't receiving their prescriptions on time, he said, or medications got lost on the way. Some people said they received bills on the day payments were due. Newspaper publishers said it took over a week for papers to travel less than 100 miles away, and some reported lost deliveries.

Rounds took his frustrations to the postmaster general, who resigned not long after their meeting. Rounds then brought his complaints to the new postmaster general, "who basically pooh-poohed our concerns" and said "the bigger problems were in the bigger cities," Rounds recalled.

Growing increasingly frustrated, Rounds concluded a letter about the matter to fellow senators in June by writing "I am forwarding this to you via email because if I mailed it, you may not receive this letter in a timely fashion."

The senator's recent actions in response to the problems include supporting an investigation into the Postal Service, proposing legislation to remove bonuses for Postal Service executives, and placing a hold on Senate confirmations of new members for the Postal Service's executive board.

Investigation underway

In December, Rounds asked the Inspector General of the U.S. Postal Service to investigate the state's mail delivery problems.

"They cautioned us that they would have to do this somewhat in a clandestine manner because they couldn't trust that the post office wouldn't try to hide mail if they knew they were coming in to inspect," Rounds said, "which is exactly what we have found out to be true."

Rounds said he's heard from post office workers who say when there's a potential for the inspector general to show up, employees are directed to hide undelivered mail.

"So, we've really appreciated the help from postal employees who have been frustrated by the inability of the post office to honor the commitment that they've made in the past," Rounds said.

A report from the investigation should be available in September, according to Rounds.

Legislation introduced

Recent changes to processing procedures have deprioritized rural America in an effort to save costs, Rounds said.

Two years ago, Postal Service leaders decided to move all non-local mail processing from the Huron, South Dakota, processing facility to Fargo, North Dakota. Rounds and fellow South Dakota Republicans Sen. John Thune and Rep. Dusty Johnson pushed then-Postmaster General Louis DeJoy to reconsider. Due in part to that effort, the Postal Service announced last year that it would keep some processing at the Huron site.

In 2025, the Postal Service began its Regional Transportation Optimization initiative. That means mail dropped off at post offices more than 50 miles from a regional hub will only be transported to processing centers once per day, instead of two or more, which means some mail is delayed. The initiative is expected

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to save millions of dollars, according to the National Association of Postal Supervisors.

The Postal Regulatory Commission, an independent oversight agency, found the new initiative negatively impacts rural communities. In 2025, about 64% of rural communities were anticipated to experience slowed service.

Rounds said he has tested the speed of mail delivery in South Dakota. He sent a letter from his office in Rapid City to his office in Pierre. It left the state and passed through Colorado, Nebraska, Iowa and North Dakota before being delivered at his Pierre office over a 10-day stretch of time, he said.

"It was evident that they had not counted on the length of time it takes to truck over long distances that amount of mail," Rounds said. "First-class mail is supposed to be delivered in three days. It's taking closer to 10 for a lot of the mail in South Dakota."

Continued problems with mail delivery led Rounds to introduce the Executive Benefit and Bonus Removal Act, which would eliminate bonuses for Postal Service executives.

"Incompetent bureaucrats should not get bonuses when the mail does not run on time," Rounds said. "If the Postal Service were serious about cutting costs, it should cut costs inside its own ivory tower before passing costs on to the American people who are still receiving terrible service."

Hold on nominations

In addition to his legislation, Rounds has placed a hold on all Senate confirmations of nominees for Postal Service Board of Governor positions.

Senators can hold bills and nominations, sometimes out of process-related concerns or to gain leverage while negotiating with agencies or colleagues. The decision to honor a hold request ultimately rests with the majority leader — Thune. Rounds' move is known as a "blanket hold," objecting to the approval of all nominations for a specific government agency.

"It is my intent to only release this blanket hold when my concerns are fully resolved by USPS leadership and service returns to levels at least equal to the days of the Pony Express," Rounds said in a letter.

The Board of Governors acts as a board of directors. A full board has 11 members, but there are five unfilled positions. President Donald Trump nominated one person last June and announced three nominations in March.

Issues facing the Postal Service

In a June Senate hearing on the "Postal Service's broken business model," Postmaster General David Steiner reviewed the Postal Service's challenges and said "levers available to private sector enterprises and to government agencies are unavailable to the Postal Service."

"In a normal business model, if 70% of routes are losing money, you would adjust the routes. In a normal business model, if 60% of the stores you had were losing money, you'd close them," Steiner said. "We're not allowed to do either. That is a broken business model."

Without help from Congress to raise the price of stamps and packages and increase the amount of money the Postal Service can borrow from the federal government, Steiner said the post office's ability to deliver mail is threatened.

Meanwhile, the Postal Service is under pressure from President Trump to participate in his proposed restrictions on voting by mail. His March 31 executive order told the post office to refuse to deliver ballots in states that don't provide lists of voters and to only send and receive ballots that include tracking barcodes, but courts have blocked the order and the Trump administration is asking the U.S. Supreme Court to consider an appeal.

The Postal Service did not immediately respond to South Dakota Searchlight's request for comment on Rounds' legislation, nomination holds and criticisms.

Brian Bengs, an independent challenging Rounds in the Nov. 3 election, called former Postmaster General DeJoy the "worst postmaster general in history," and told Searchlight that Rounds "sat by for years" while DeJoy "laid the foundation of today's problems."

"It's past time for Postal Service management and the board of directors to be held accountable, and I find it convenient Mike has only come around to that idea during an election year," Bengs said.

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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.

Beef producers 'disappointed' by Trump tariff suspension

President announces suspension of tariffs on imported ground beef

BY CAMI KOONS

President Donald Trump announced Friday he was suspending tariffs on 300,000 metric tons of imported ground beef to help lower the cost of the meat, in a move cattle producers said would not help their efforts to restore herd sizes.

The president made the announcement in a Truth Social post where he said the imported beef will be sold at 25% below the current market prices.

"This deal will reduce prices for Americans while giving space for our Great American Beef Herd to grow again," Trump wrote in the post.

National Cattlemen's Beef Association CEO Colin Woodall said "flooding" the market with "government-subsidized, below-market beef" would not help producers to "rebuild the American cattle herd," which continues to decline.

According to the most recent cattle report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the nation's herd size is "up slightly" from where it sat in July 2025. Even with the slight increase from the year prior, the cattle and calves inventory – at 94.2 million head – is at about the same level it was in the 1950s.

Iowa Cattlemen's Association President Craig Moss said the association was "extremely disappointed" by Trump's announcement and said it has already "created unnecessary market volatility."

Cattle market reports from Friday showed "crashing futures" because of the Trump announcement.

"The drop in the markets will directly impact their profitability and bottom line, and in turn impacts decisions our producers are making about expanding their cattle herds," Moss said in a statement. "We believe the government should avoid intervention and let the market work."

At the same time, the price of ground beef has been on a steep increase since around 2023, which was the last time a pound of ground chuck was below \$5 per pound. The price, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, has not dropped below \$6 per pound since April 2025.

In his Truth Social post, the president blamed his predecessor Joe Biden for the hike in prices, claiming beef prices "soared at their fastest rate" under the Democratic president. Consumer Price Index data shows ground chuck rose from \$4.31 in January 2021 when Biden took office, to \$5.58 in December 2024. Prices have risen to \$6.85 in the year and a half Trump has been in the office.

Moss said consumer demand for "high-quality beef raised by U.S. producers has remained strong" and argued that consumers have been "willing to pay for beef."

Hinson sides with beef producers

U.S. Rep. Ashley Hinson, speaking with reporters at the Iowa State Fair Friday, said Trump's recent decision to increase beef imports was a "bad idea."

"We grow the highest quality beef here in Iowa, and so absolutely, I'll be advocating to the administration because I think we need to be focusing on growing the herd the right way and protecting our cattlemen," Hinson said.

Hinson is running for U.S. Senate against Democrat Josh Turek, who has been critical of past efforts to import beef and has called for mandatory country of origin labeling to support U.S. beef producers.

This is not the first time Trump has acted to lower consumer beef prices in a way that has upset cattle producers. In February the president announced a deal with Argentina to import an additional 80,000 metric tons of lean beef trimmings with a goal of lowering consumer prices.

In a post on X, Turek said the decision was "yet another blow" to producers, noting tariffs and the war in Iran that, he said, has driven up the cost of farm inputs.

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"Iowa farmers in every corner of the state have told me that these decisions have been just one gut punch after another — they deserve better," Turek said in the social media post.

Moss said the Friday announcement pausing quota tariffs on 300,000 metric tons of ground beef imports, was "another hit" for cattle feeders who learned Aug. 13 that a major Tyson beef facility in Illinois would close.

Woodall with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association said this time of year is a "critical" time for producers as they make decisions about herd sizes.

"Cattle farmers and ranchers are responding to strong market signals and historically high demand, and we are already working to rebuild after years of ongoing drought, high input costs and other challenges that have reduced U.S. cattle numbers," Woodall said. "Today's announcement and other market interventions throw cold water on the prospect of herd expansion and sacrifices long-term stability for short term messaging."

This article has been updated to include comment from Josh Turek.

This story was originally produced by Iowa Capital Dispatch, 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.

Cami Koons is an Iowa Capital Dispatch reporter covering agriculture and the environment. She previously worked at publications in Kansas and Missouri, covering rural affairs.

North Dakota Sen. Kevin Cramer vows to block future Trump nominees over federal wetlands rule

BY JACK DURA

U.S. Sen. Kevin Cramer says he will block confirmation of future Trump nominees until the administration changes a Biden-era wetlands rule he said tramples on farmers.

Cramer, R-N.D., said the rule violates private property rights by creating enormous setbacks for drain tile from wetland easements. Those easements are pieces of private land the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service purchased years ago to permanently protect habitat. Drain tile is plastic pipe that carries away excess moisture.

Cramer said he recently called President Donald Trump to address the matter. The rule majorly affects North Dakota because the state makes up a large portion of the Prairie Pothole Region, he said. That wetland area is important habitat for ducks and geese.

"This is a left-wing, environmentalist extremist dream rule," Cramer told the North Dakota Monitor.

Last month, Fish and Wildlife asked for public comments on the 2024 rule. On Aug. 14, the agency said "no further action is planned" as it reviews feedback from more than 200,000 commenters.

"Our administration is dedicated to protecting both the wetland easements purchased by the FWS that are necessary to protect our conservation heritage as well as the private landowners' use of their lands outside the easement boundaries," Fish and Wildlife said on social media.

It's unclear where the agency's process will go next. Fish and Wildlife did not respond to an email and an online message from the Monitor.

Cramer said, "The Fish and Wildlife Service can say they're pausing, but as I said, I can't pause my aggression."

The senator said he called Trump on Wednesday night when no other officials would call him back. Trump asked how he could fix it and said he planned to call Interior Secretary and former North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum, according to Cramer. Fish and Wildlife is housed within the Interior Department.

"I'm more optimistic today than I was before," Cramer said late Thursday.

The Senate is in recess until Sept. 14. Cramer said he already has put a hold on every pending nominee, which would cause a significant disruption to the chamber's business if the holds are still in place when senators return to Washington next month.

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Cramer said he told Trump the administration needs to evaluate the comments and "pull the pause off of the action."

"That's all you have to do: restore the process that they were under and utilizing," Cramer said. Ultimately, a class-action lawsuit by farmers might be necessary, he said.

The issue at hand is Fish and Wildlife and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, both federal government agencies, are playing by different rules when it comes to drain tile setbacks, said Ryan Wanzek, whose family farms in east-central North Dakota in the Prairie Pothole Region.

"They've changed the goalposts," Wanzek said.

His family farm in Stutsman County has not tiled on easement land because it's not worth drawing up the plans only to have the federal agencies change their minds, he said.

"It makes it harder for us as farmers to go and get a clear answer when we've got two different agencies, both run by the same administration, telling us two different things," Wanzek said.

Many wetland easements house zero wildlife and are basically white, salty soil farmers cannot improve, Wanzek said.

"Whether you like it or not, if there's crop there, it houses wildlife. It feeds the wildlife. If there's not crop there and it's white, salty soils, it's not doing anything for the wildlife," he said.

The North Dakota Wildlife Federation supports the rule. The rule ensures habitat for ducks and protection for compliant landowners if their easements dry up, Federation Executive Director John Bradley said. The rule also takes soil types and hydrology into account, complex factors that aren't blanket standards, he said.

The Dakotas produce more than 50% of North America's mallards, blue-winged teal, pintails, gadwalls and other game ducks, Bradley said. North Dakota has an important job to protect wetlands for everybody, he said.

Landowners were fairly compensated for the easements in the first place, Bradley said. Hunters' duck stamp dollars purchased the easements, he said. Cramer's comments are out of touch with the everyday North Dakota duck hunter, he said.

"To say that it's either these rich Southern duck hunters or radical environmentalists who have concerns or vested interest in keeping these wetlands – certainly, I'm sure some do, but that glosses over the average duck hunter of North Dakota," Bradley said.

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

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

US Supreme Court allows \$400M Trump ballroom project to proceed

BY ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump can continue building a White House ballroom for now, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled Friday, reversing a federal judge's order that barred above-ground construction on the grounds of the former East Wing.

The one-page order from Chief Justice John Roberts allows the justices more time to consider the legal arguments as to whether the president can continue with construction.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States, a nonprofit Congress created to protect public buildings, sued to block construction late last year. The group charged that Trump violated the U.S. Constitution and federal law when he demolished part of the White House last July without approval from Congress.

The trust wrote in its brief to the high court that the trial court's pause should remain in place because any progress on the project could not easily be undone.

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"We are grateful for the Decision of the United States Supreme Court," Trump wrote on social media after the order. "The Military/Ballroom Complex being built on the hallowed grounds of the White House, which is so vital for National Security, will be THE GREATEST OF ITS KIND! Construction is under budget and ahead of schedule."

Trump has argued the 90,000-square-foot ballroom — which the administration said this month will cost \$400 million, double the initial estimate — is needed to reinforce security features and provide a larger space to host foreign dignitaries. Trump has said the project is being funded with private donations.

The East Wing of the White House was built in 1942. Workers last October demolished it, even after Trump said the ballroom construction would not impact the building.

A federal appeals court this month upheld the lower court order that barred further construction of the ballroom above ground, but allowed for below-ground construction. The appeals court stayed its decision for 14 days to give the administration time to appeal to the Supreme Court.

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

Trump's court workarounds push limits but are within legal bounds, experts say

BY ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has not slowed his pursuit of central policy goals and personal passions, even after major setbacks at the U.S. Supreme Court and other federal courts.

The high court in its 2026 term delivered blows to Trump's core campaign promises to upend a constitutional provision governing who becomes a U.S. citizen at birth and to swiftly address the growing national debt with "trillions of dollars" raised by taxing imports.

The justices also ruled the president cannot fire, without cause, Fed Board Gov. Lisa Cook and deny her a chance to plead her case. And a lower court blocked Trump from installing his name on the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

But even after the Supreme Court ruled against him, Trump is forging ahead and using what some legal observers describe as "creative lawyering" to find alternative routes to push his agenda, even as public support fades.

He ordered new blanket tariffs in late July on at least 60 trading partners. He signed a new round of birthright citizenship orders Aug. 6. Reports also revealed that Cook received a letter Aug. 5 from administration officials that Trump is again "considering" firing her.

The moves test the power dynamic between the executive and judicial branches, but are not illegal or even unconventional in modern times, experts said.

"They look at it and they say, 'We want to advance a particular policy agenda. Here's the whole array of legal arguments that we might be able to use that give us authority,'" said Scott Anderson, senior fellow at the centrist Brookings Institution and senior counsel and editor of the publication Lawfare.

Trump is not alone in this pursuit. After all, President Joe Biden found another route to student loan debt relief after a loss at the Supreme Court. A federal appeals court effectively axed the Biden-era relief program in March.

"It does happen, and (administrations) will sometimes run the risk of legal reversal, but it's a rarer move," Anderson said. "For this administration, it's become the standard move."

'Spirit of the law'

While Anderson said Trump's responses to the rulings are "not surprising" given the legal strategy of his second term, one could argue the "legal brinksmanship ... often clearly runs contrary to some of the spirit of the law, and it capitalizes on a lot of institutional inefficiencies."

Thomas Berry, a legal scholar with the libertarian Cato Institute, said while Trump has often used rhetoric

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to "delegitimize the court," his recent actions are not out of legal bounds.

"What he's doing is distinct from outright disobedience or ignoring a Supreme Court's decision, and it's important to stress that that line has not been crossed," said Berry, who directs the institute's Robert A. Levy Center for Constitutional Studies.

A White House spokesperson said the administration has "always followed court orders."

"The Supreme Court's ruling on the Cook case required notice and an opportunity for a hearing in considering whether the President should take certain adverse employment actions. The President's notice sent to Fed. Governor Cook offers exactly that within the precise structure enunciated by the Court," said Lauren Bis in a brief written response from the White House.

A Department of Justice spokesperson, who did not provide a name, wrote in a statement, "Investigative and prosecutorial decisions are made based on the law and the facts. To date, DOJ has prevailed in 24 emergency applications before the Supreme Court, winning over 80 percent, an unprecedented win rate that speaks for itself, and has also won dozens of merits cases at the Court."

The spokesperson highlighted the department's Supreme Court win in June that allows the administration to follow through with plans to deport between about 350,000 Haitians and 6,000 Syrians who were living in the U.S. under Temporary Protected Status.

Birthright citizenship

On the final day of its 2026 term, the Supreme Court rejected Trump's sweeping attempt to deny citizenship to children born to parents who either do not have legal status or hold temporary legal visas.

Chief Justice John Roberts led the 6-3 opinion on June 30, writing that children born in the U.S. to parents who are unlawfully or temporarily present "are 'subject to the jurisdiction' of the United States and are citizens at birth under the Fourteenth Amendment's Citizenship Clause."

Today's exceptions for those who are not subject to U.S. jurisdiction include foreign diplomats and their families, members of invading armies and in most cases foreign public ships passing in nearby waters.

On Aug. 6, Trump signed two executive orders again aimed at curtailing birthright citizenship. The first targets children born to the staff working for foreign diplomats; to children born in American Samoa, where Congress has yet to pass a citizenship law; and to the children born to parents who belong to what the U.S. defines as a "Foreign Terrorist Organization."

"So what Trump is trying to do with these executive orders is he's trying to say, 'OK fine, those are the categories you've given us. We're going to try to push those to the maximal extent possible,'" Berry said.

"And he interprets them broadly," Berry continued. "Do people have diplomatic immunity or not? That's kind of a factual question. Literally the ambassador and the ambassador's spouse, they get diplomatic immunity. But does everyone from the foreign country working in the embassy similarly get immunity from U.S. law? That wasn't my impression."

Trump is also seeking to limit birthright citizenship by taking what Berry described as a "maximalist view" of what an invading army is.

"It's not obvious that that analogy extends to people who are part of designated terrorist groups because they're not literally rampaging and pillaging," he said. "This is more people who are living here but have been, you know, labeled as part of a group that's at odds with the United States."

Anderson said the administration "clearly is intending to just take advantage of every hint and every limitation the Supreme Court decision left open."

The American Civil Liberties Union on Aug. 12 began the process of asking the federal judiciary to reaffirm the Supreme Court ruling.

Tariffs

Trump's trade policy provides another example of the administration finding a new legal reasoning after the Supreme Court struck down the initial basis for a major administration goal.

In the midst of refunding roughly \$166 billion to businesses that paid taxes on imports under Trump's emergency tariffs, the president has hopscotched across multiple trade statutes to continually impose at least 10% duties on most global goods since his Supreme Court loss in February.

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In a 6-3 opinion, the high court struck down Trump's unprecedented claim of tariff authority under the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act. Congress retained tariff authority in most circumstances, Roberts wrote for the majority, and Trump could not use the statute to impose duties after declaring emergencies on trade imbalances and illegal drug smuggling.

Trump lost the case to a handful of small business owners and Democratic state officials. Tariffs are taxes paid by the importers, meaning American businesses were shouldering the additional costs.

Trump immediately turned to another statute, Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974, which authorizes the president to unilaterally set up to 10% in tariffs for 150 days.

The order set off another round of legal challenges, including from Democratic-led states, in the U.S. Court of International Trade.

Less than a month after the Supreme Court loss, the U.S. Office of the Trade Representative also opened broad trade investigations under Section 301 of the 1974 law into the practices of nearly all U.S. trading partners.

As the clock ran out on Trump's 10% blanket tariff under Section 122 on July 24, U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer announced his office had found forced labor practices by roughly 60 of America's trading partners, including Canada, the European Union, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, Taiwan and the United Kingdom, among dozens more. The findings triggered a 10% to 12.5% duty on most goods from those countries.

Days earlier, Trump announced he would use a Depression-era provision that had never been enforced — Section 338 of the Tariff Act of 1930 — to slap a 50% duty on most Canadian imports. The U.S., for now, has delayed the start of the high tariffs as talks with Canada continue, according to reports.

Trump's strategy on pushing tariffs is "not really surprising at all," Anderson said, adding "it's not even inappropriate."

"The Supreme Court never said, 'You can't do tariffs.' In fact, it said basically you can. It just said 'You can't do it this way.' And that automatically points to these other ways, which everyone said is probably a more sound way to do this if the president really wants to do this," Anderson said.

"It doesn't mean it's good policy," he added. "It doesn't mean it's a good idea, but there's at least a very colorable case the president can do this all legally."

2025 deportation flights

Trump's "aggressive" legal strategy has set him apart from other presidents, and, despite specific recent examples that haven't crossed a legal line, the administration likely violated court orders in relation to immigration, according to observers.

"I think there are some cases that push the envelope, might be unlawful, particularly around, like, some of those early deportations," Anderson said. "But the majority of the time, the executive branch has been responding and complying with court orders. It's capitalizing on the fact that those orders are often very narrow."

Berry also highlighted the March 2025 deportation flights that took off with hundreds of immigrants on board despite a court order as a potential example of cases "where these agencies have outright violated court orders."

Overall, the courts have been a check on the administration's view of expansive power, both experts said.

"It is worth taking a moment to realize, like, just how vastly smaller the scope of this (most recent) birth-right executive order is after the Supreme Court," Berry said. "The decision did cut off the vast majority of options the administration has. I mean, you think about the scope of millions of people that the original order would have affected, and compare that to this. It's just night and day."

Electorate another check

Voters are also a check on power, observers say.

With crucial midterm elections approaching, Trump's net approval rating is -26, meaning the percentage of voters who approve of him is 26 points below those who disapprove, according to The Economist/YouGov poll figures published Aug. 18. A Reuters/Ipsos found Trump's approval rating at a record low of

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33%, according to data published Aug. 17.

A recent Fox New poll last month showed most voters disapproved of Trump's handling of the economy. And 55% told Reuters/Ipsos just days before the Supreme Court ruling that they disapproved of Trump's attempt to end birthright citizenship.

Trump surrounded himself in his second term with people who "openly denigrated" a lot of norms of the executive office and are "acting accordingly" to what they saw their voter base wanted, Anderson said.

"I think they probably overreacted to this idea that simply by winning the last election, that voters have a high tolerance for this," Anderson said. "And Republicans in Congress and potentially in 2028 are going to pay a price for that."

Anderson added if voters and lawmakers don't like the loopholes Trump's legal strategy is employing, then maybe it's time for Congress to close them.

"If we don't think our laws align with what we think is right ethically and good policy, then maybe they do need to be adjusted," he said.

"Maybe if we want a robust separation of powers, we need to take actions that will empower the courts and Congress to push back on executive aggrandizement more effectively, as opposed to the trajectory over the most of the 20th century, which was implicitly, sometimes expressly, more or less empowering the executive branch on the assumption that the executive branch was going to self-constrain itself."

'Everything people don't like'

As for the Kennedy Center: Despite a judge's order that led to the yanking of Trump's name from the facade of the revered performing arts venue in mid-June, Trump's hand-picked board voted Aug. 13 to again affix his name to the building.

This time, instead of above John F. Kennedy's name, the board voted to add an inscription underneath to read "The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Restored and Renovated By President Donald J. Trump," according to court records.

A federal judge had found that Trump's name, which had already been added, could not officially remain there without authorization from Congress.

"It's sort of everything people don't like about lawyers at its extreme. ... This is kind of again looking for a loophole — they're going to argue 'We are not naming the center. We are adding this appendage,'" Berry said.

"So long as it's just like naming the renovation, you know, kind of like a sponsorship deal at the end of the name of a stadium or something like that, that's acceptable because it's not renaming the center," he continued. "So we're likely to have litigation about that too, and it's going to be a pretty lawyerly and probably annoying debate."

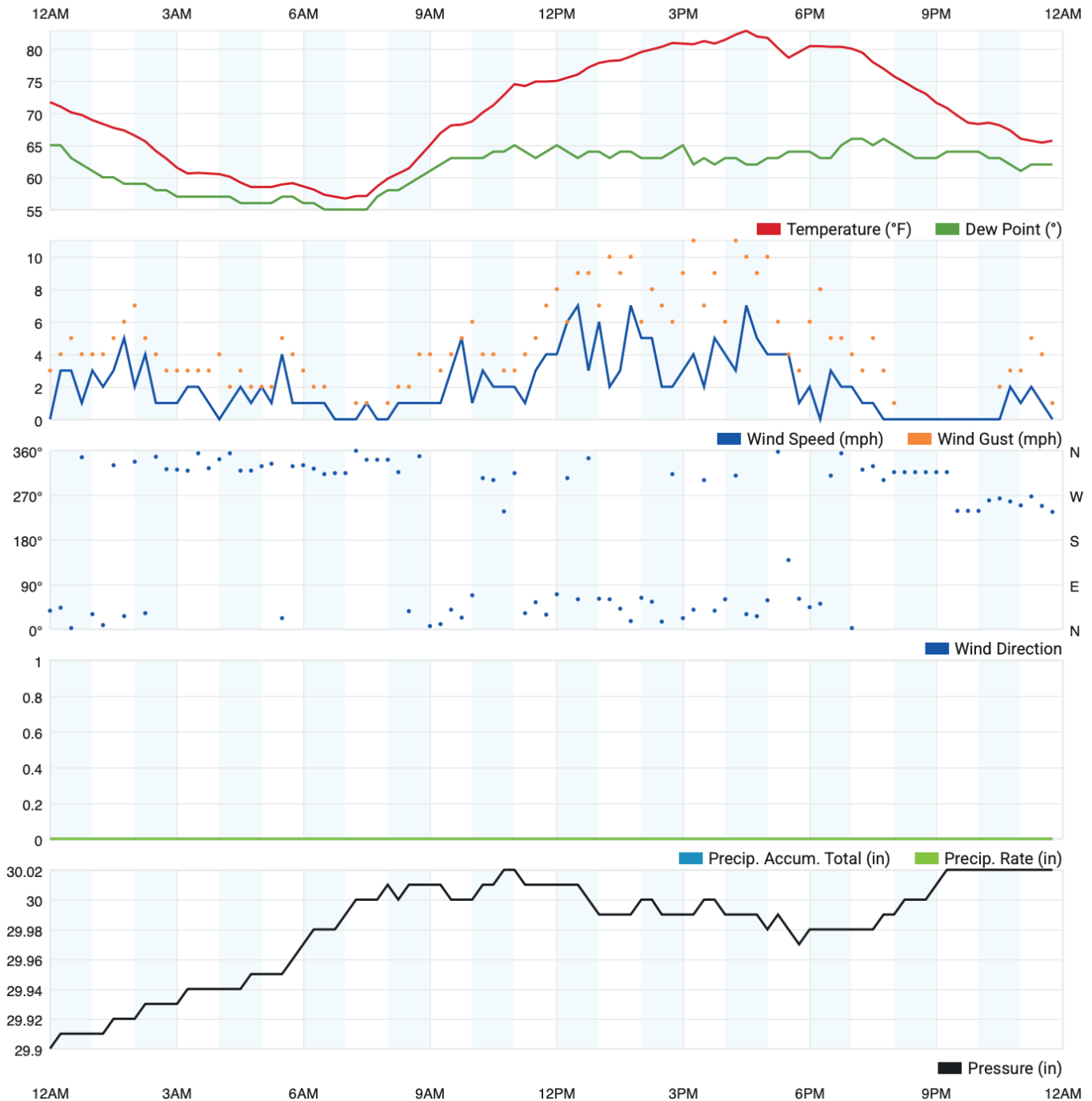
Ashley Murray covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

August 21, 2026



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Today



High: 80 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 54 °F

Increasing
Clouds

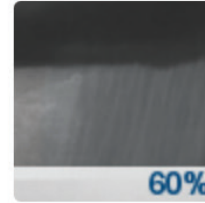
Sunday



High: 81 °F

Partly Sunny

Sunday Night



Low: 61 °F

Showers
Likely

Monday



High: 83 °F

Partly Sunny

Weekend Outlook



weather.gov/aberdien

Today

Aug 22nd, 2026



78-85°

Warmest across central SD



A sunny start to the day, then increasing high clouds during the late afternoon and evening

Sunday

Aug 23rd, 2026



77-84°

Warmest across central SD



Scattered showers and thunderstorms over central SD during the day, then gradually shifting east-southeast across eastern SD

August 22, 2026 2:43 AM

This weekend will be a tail of two halves, as high pressure leads to a sunny day and generally light winds today. But increasing clouds later today will lead to increasing rain chances late tonight and into Sunday and Sunday night (50-80% chance).

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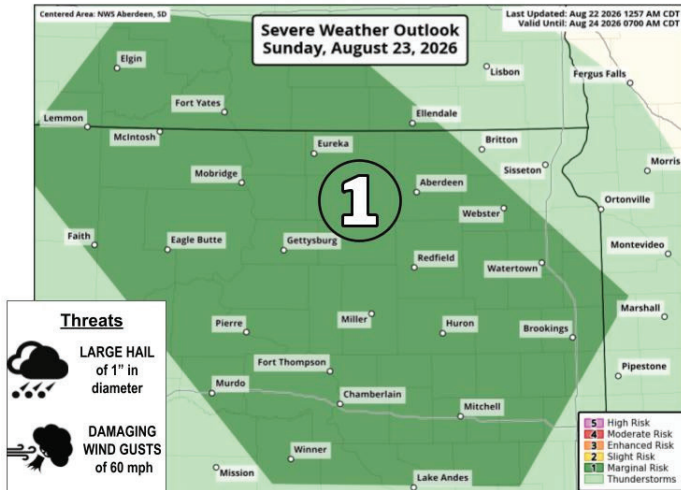
Sunday's Weather Outlook

August 22, 2026
2:46 AM

Sunday will bring the potential for Severe Weather and Heavy Rain

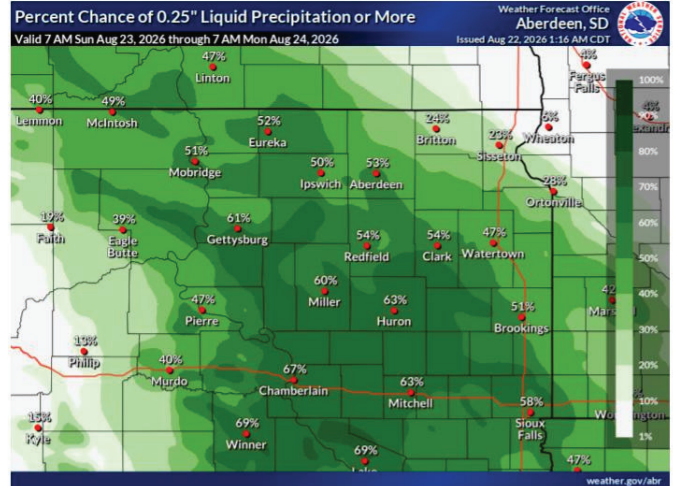
Marginal Risk (Level 1 out of 5)

Scattered **showers** with isolated **thunderstorms** are expected Sunday morning in central SD, with the **thunderstorm coverage and severe potential increasing** into the afternoon and evening.



0.25" Rain Potential (7am Sun to 7am Mon)

Brief **heavy rain** is possible with any showers and thunderstorms that occur Sun into Sun night. The greatest chance of rainfall totals over 0.25" is around the Missouri and James River Valleys.



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

As the rain moves into the area on Sunday, there is an increasing potential for severe storms Sunday afternoon and night, with the strongest storms producing hail to 1" in diameter and wind gusts to 60 mph. In addition, locally heavy rain is possible with any thunderstorms.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 83 °F at 4:27 PM

Low Temp: 56 °F at 6:56 AM

Wind: 12 mph at 4:13 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 105 in 1971

Record Low: 36 in 1904

Average High: 82

Average Low: 55

Average Precip in Aug.: 1.59

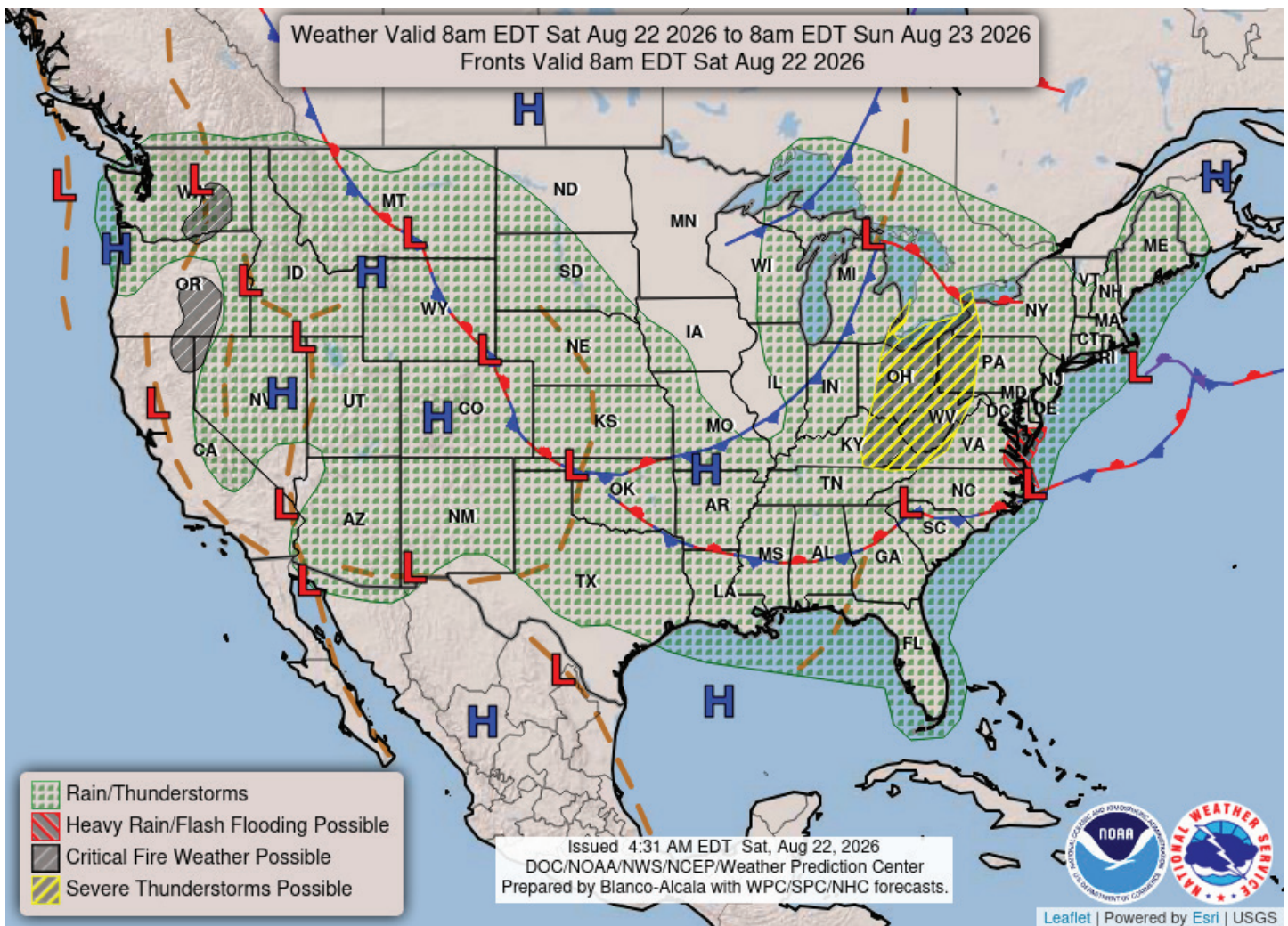
Precip to date in Aug.: 10.14

Average Precip to date: 15.69

Precip Year to Date: 19.61

Sunset Tonight: 8:29 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:43 am



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Today in Weather History

August 22, 1985: Intense thunderstorms moved from near Shadehill Reservoir in northwest South Dakota late in the evening of the 21st, to northern Brown County after sunrise on the 22nd. These thunderstorms produced high winds, large hail, rain, and lightning. Considerable crop and property damage were caused mainly by the strong winds and hail. Winds gusts ranged from 55 mph at Mobridge to 60 mph in and around Akaska. Winds of 70 mph were reported at Onaka and Faulkton. The strongest wind gust was reported in Hoven with a peak gust of 72 mph. Widespread damage was reported throughout the area. Many mobile homes, storage sheds, silos, and roofs were damaged or destroyed. Nine miles south and four miles west of Keldron, over two inches in diameter hail fell for 40 minutes, breaking windows and piling in ditches to a depth of four feet. These intense thunderstorms also produced brief heavy rainfall ranging from three-quarters of an inch to over four inches.

August 21, 2011: The Missouri River at Pierre, Fort Pierre, and Chamberlain/Oacoma fell throughout August as releases on the Oahe Dam were slowly decreased. The Missouri River at Chamberlain/Oacoma fell below flood stage on August 22nd. The extensive damage to homes and roads began to surface as the water receded. The river continued to fall into September.

1816 — The growing season for corn was cut short as damaging frosts were reported from North Carolina to interior New England. (David Ludlum)

1893: Four hurricanes are observed in the Atlantic Ocean at the same time. Over a century would pass, 1998 before four hurricanes would again rage together in the Atlantic.

1923 — The temperature at Anchorage, AK, reached 82 degrees, a record for August for the location which was later tied on the 2nd in 1978. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — A cold front lowered temperatures 20 to 40 degrees across the north central U.S., and produced severe thunderstorms in Ohio and Lower Michigan. An early morning thunderstorm near Sydney MI produced high winds which spun a car around 180 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Afternoon highs of 88 degrees at Astoria, OR, and 104 degrees at Medford, OR, were records for the date, and the number of daily record highs across the nation since the first of June topped the 2000 mark. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Evening thunderstorms in the central U.S. produced golf ball size hail at May City IA, and wind gusts to 66 mph at Balltown IA. Lightning struck a barn in Fayette County IA killing 750 hogs. Evening thunderstorms in Montana produced wind gusts to 70 mph at Havre. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1992 — Hurricane Andrew makes landfall in Southern Florida as a Category 5 storm with wind gusts estimated in excess of 175 m.p.h. Estimated damages exceeded \$20 billion, more than 60 people were killed and approximately 2 million people were evacuated from their homes. (University of Illinois WW2010)

1994: Hurricane John, about 345 miles south of Hilo, Hawaii had winds of 175 mph and pressure at 920 millibars or 27.17 inches of mercury, making it one of the strongest hurricanes ever in the Central Pacific. The 31-day existence made John the longest-lasting tropical cyclone recorded in both the Pacific Ocean and worldwide, surpassing both Hurricane Tina's previous record in the Pacific of 24 days in the 1992 season and the 1899 San Ciriaco hurricane's previous world record of 28 days in the 1899 Atlantic season. John was also the farthest-traveling tropical cyclone in both Pacific Ocean and worldwide, with distance traveled of 7,165 miles, out-distancing previous record holders Hurricane Fico in the Pacific of 4,700 miles in the 1978 season and Hurricane Faith worldwide of 6,850 miles in the 1966 Atlantic season.

2003: The Okanagan Mountain fire reaches its destructive peak, destroying 250 homes. Nearly 40,000 residents have been evacuated or are on evacuation alert. The Okanagan Mountain Park Fire is estimated to be 17,000 hectares and continues to grow.



Overcoming Jealousy

We don't have to conquer jealousy on our own—God wants to transform our heart and help us step into freedom.

Psalms 37:4-6: 4 Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart.

5 Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it.

6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light And your judgment as the noonday.

Now that we have a clear picture of what jealousy is and the impact it can have, let's look at some practical ways to address the issue. Overcoming jealousy isn't about trying harder; it's about allowing God to transform our heart. Here are five steps to take:

Acknowledge that jealousy exists in your life. Don't minimize or rationalize the problem. Instead, be honest with yourself before God. Confession is the first step toward freedom.

Recognize what jealousy reveals. In analyzing your envy, ask yourself, Does this bring to light what I believe I need in order to be happy? What am I afraid of losing? These questions will help you understand the deeper longings beneath the surface.

Bring it to God in ongoing confession. Make this a regular practice, not a one-time prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal jealous thoughts, and realize that God's grace is always available.

Ask God to help you see others as He does. Doing this will help you recognize them as His beloved children.

Redirect your focus to God's faithfulness in your own life. Jealousy blinds us to good things. But when we delight ourselves in the Lord, He transforms our desires (Ps. 37:4).

Overcoming jealousy is a process, not a quick fix. But with God's help, the grip of envy can loosen over time.

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

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The Groton Independent

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.21.26

1 20 25 56 57 2

TOP PRIZE:

\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 13 Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.21.26

1 25 34 48 57 24

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$130,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 3 Days 13 Hrs 58 Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.19.26

23 31 40 41 45 1

All Star Bonus: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,700,000

NEXT DRAW: 13 Hrs 13 Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.19.26

10 16 17 25 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$34,000

NEXT DRAW: 13 Hrs 28 Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.19.26

5 18 38 56 67 7

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 13 Hrs 57 Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.19.26

10 21 58 61 64 17

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$68,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 13 Hrs 57 Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

PREP FOOTBALL

Avon 50, Scotland/Menno 0
Beresford 40, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 8
Bon Homme 48, Stanley County 0
Britton-Hecla 44, Waverly-South Shore 0
Castlewood 46, Hamlin 34
Chamberlain 38, Rapid City Christian 30
Clark-Willow Lake 35, Flandreau 8
Colman-Egan 34, Oldham-Ramona-Rutland 14
Corsica/Stickney 64, Burke 13
Dell Rapids St Mary's 58, Deubrook 6
Deuel 22, Parker/Marion 6
Elk Point-Jefferson 28, McCook Central-Montrose 13
Elkton-Lake Benton 28, Canistota 0
Estelline-Hendricks 24, Florence-Henry 8
Freeman 36, Alcester-Hudson 17
Garretson 35, Baltic 6
Gettysburg 22, North Central 20
Great Plains Lutheran 42, Redfield 0
Groton 21, Miller 0
Herreid-Selby 26, Harding County 18
Hitchcock-Tulare 40, Leola-Frederick High School 12
Howard 54, DeSmet 22
Irene-Wakonda 46, Chester 12
Iroquois-Lake Preston 52, Sunshine Bible Academy 0
Kimball-White Lake 22, Gregory 8
Lyman 41, New Underwood 6
Parkston 54, Hill City 24
Philip 47, Jones County 12
Platte-Geddes 43, TDAACDC 8
Sioux Falls Lutheran 28, Centerville 14
Sioux Valley 30, Aberdeen Roncalli 6
Sisseton 39, Webster 12
St Thomas More 41, Mobridge-Pollock 6
Sully Buttes 30, Faulkton 20
Timber Lake 22, Lemmon High School 20
Viborg-Hurley 22, Bridgewater-Emery/Ethan 8
Wagner 26, WWSSC 0
Wall 40, Bennett County 32
Warner 48, Northwestern 8
Waubay/Summit 43, Wilmot 20
Winner 12, Hot Springs 0
Wolsey-Wessington 14, Arlington 6

Some high school football scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

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US imposes 50% tariffs on \$20 billion worth of Canadian products.

Canada says it will retaliate

By PAUL WISEMAN and ROB GILLIES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States imposed 50% tariffs on \$20 billion worth of Canadian products early Saturday, and Canada immediately said it would retaliate after last-ditch negotiations failed to resolve the latest strain in relations between the historic allies.

President Donald Trump's import taxes will hit about 5% of what Canada ships to the United States every year, including products ranging from hockey sticks to tongue depressors.

"Canada will match those tariffs dollar for dollar to protect our workers and businesses," Prime Minister Mark Carney said in a statement. The retaliation escalates the trade conflict and calls into question the future of a North American trade agreement covering the United States, Canada and Mexico that is crucial to industry in all three countries.

Canada had sought concessions on tariffs on steel, aluminum, autos and lumber.

"Tonight, Canada declined to finalize the trade deal under the terms agreed earlier this week. Despite the U.S. offer to Canada to receive the best treatment of any major exporter to our market, new demands and walk-backs of other commitments by Canada have upended the careful balance reached in the past days," U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said in a statement read to reporters shortly before midnight.

Carney blamed the Republican administration for the breakdown, saying "last-minute changes in the U.S. proposed terms were unfair, uneconomic, and called into question the reliability of any deal." He said he had suspended negotiations and directed Canada's negotiating team to return to Ottawa.

Carney said his government would announce additional support for Canadian workers and businesses in the coming days.

Greer said the U.S. offer was "forward-looking" and included "a historic economic and national security partnership."

No further talks are planned.

The breakdown in negotiations marked a sharp reversal from two days earlier, when officials from the two countries sounded as if they were headed toward a compromise.

Carney said Canada's goal throughout the negotiations had been to secure the best possible agreement, "never a deal at any price or on any deadline."

Ontario Premier Doug Ford, who leads Canada's most populous province, backed Carney's response, saying the prime minister had his "full support" for retaliation "tariff for tariff, dollar for dollar" and that "everything needs to be on the table."

A typically cooperative alliance goes sour

The political impact will likely be even bigger than the economic fallout. The countries sold each other \$880 billion worth of goods and services last year.

The tariffs were initially supposed to kick in at 12:01 a.m. Wednesday. Trump extended the deadline for three days to allow talks to continue, but the countries could not reach an agreement in time.

The U.S. and Canada have wrangled for decades over trade, poking each other over sore spots such as Canadian softwood lumber imports and U.S. access to Canada's protected dairy market.

Somehow, they still managed to remain friends, allies and trading partners. Canadian soldiers fought alongside Americans in Afghanistan after 9/11. The 5,525-mile U.S.-Canada border is undefended, and nearly 330,000 people and \$2 billion worth of goods cross it every day; 800,000 Canadians live in the United States.

Trump's approach to dealing with Canada marks an extraordinary departure from the traditionally cooperative relationship between the two countries. Trump has imposed tariffs on Canadian goods in a push to bring manufacturing back to the United States and made inflammatory comments about turning Canada into America's 51st state.

Carney said Canada had recognized that "America has changed" and that the two countries would "not return to our old relationship."

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Canadians and Americans are frustrated

The Canadian public is fed up. A petition to expel U.S. Ambassador Pete Hoekstra, a Trump ally, has collected nearly 248,000 signatures since July 21. It accuses the former Republican congressman from Michigan of having “normalized” Trump’s talk of annexing Canada, among other things.

The two countries had good reasons to find a compromise.

Nearly 72% of Canada’s goods exports last year went to the United States. The Trump administration might be wary of imposing new tariffs — paid by U.S. importers who try to pass along the cost to consumers via higher prices — before the November’s midterm elections. American voters are already frustrated with the high cost of living.

“Canada likely wanted further sector-specific relief than the U.S. was willing to offer, or Canada’s concessions did not go far enough,” said Ryan Majerus, a partner at King & Spalding and a former U.S. trade official. “Either way, I think both sides will be under immense pressure in the coming days to still find an off-ramp. But if Canada has agreed to also impose tariffs, the off-ramp may be even harder to find.”

Candace Laing, president and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, called the tariffs “a body blow to North American competitiveness” and warned they would raise costs for Americans while threatening Canadian customers, investment and small businesses.

Trump has turned to Depression-era trade penalties

Trump has made tariffs the centerpiece of his second-term economic agenda. Last year, he imposed double-digit import taxes on almost every country, justifying them by declaring the long-standing U.S. trade deficit a national emergency. The Supreme Court in February ruled that he had overstepped his authority. The justices struck down the trade penalties and set the stage for the federal government to pay refunds to importers.

So Trump has looked for other legal authority to justify tariffs.

To punish Canada, he reached back to the Great Depression, invoking Section 338 of the Tariff Act of 1930 to threaten 50% tariffs on products that account for about 5% of Canadian exports to the United States.

Nearly a century ago, with the U.S. and world economies in collapse, Congress passed the 1930 tariff law, imposing taxes on imports from around the world. Known as the Smoot-Hawley tariffs after their congressional sponsors, they are notorious among economists and historians for limiting world commerce and making the Great Depression worse.

Section 338, which has never been used before to impose tariffs, authorizes the president to slap import taxes of up to 50% on imports from countries that have discriminated against U.S. businesses. No investigation is required to justify the levies. Nor is there any limit on how long they can stay in place.

The rift comes as the United States, Mexico and Canada are trying to renew a trade agreement that Trump negotiated in his first term and once praised as a triumph. The United States has begun formal talks with Mexico over revamping the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement, known as USMCA. But talks with Canada have not begun and escalating trade conflict casts doubt on whether they will.

“Canada told the Americans in advance that if these tariffs landed, it would stop negotiating and retaliate,” said Barry Appleton, senior fellow at the Center for International Law at New York Law School. “The American trade representative said publicly he would not tolerate retaliation. Both sides have now committed themselves in public, which is how escalation stops being a choice.”

Russian and Ukrainian attacks kill 9 people a day after deadly shopping mall drone strike by Moscow

By VOLODYMYR YURCHUK Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian drone and missile strikes killed at least seven people in Ukraine, officials said Saturday, while a Ukrainian drone attack on Russia’s Krasnodar region killed two others, a day after a strike on a Ukrainian shopping center killed 16 people.

Moscow’s forces have recently intensified their ballistic missile attacks on Kyiv, exploiting Ukraine’s chronic shortage of U.S.-made Patriot air defense interceptors, the sole weapon in its arsenal able to shoot down

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the missiles.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that one person was killed and another wounded in the latest attacks when ballistic missiles hit railway infrastructure in the capital, Kyiv, overnight.

Russia's Defense Ministry said that its forces had hit a locomotive depot.

In a separate attack, local authorities said two people were killed Saturday afternoon in a Russian ballistic missile strike on the Kyiv region, which surrounds the capital.

Russian drone strikes also killed one person overnight in the Zaporizhzhia region, local officials said Saturday, with a daytime attack killing three others and wounding 15. Zelenskyy said that three people were also wounded in an attack on a minibus in the regional capital, also called Zaporizhzhia.

In Russia's southern Krasnodar region, authorities said that two children were killed and two adults were wounded in a Ukrainian drone strike.

The latest attacks came a day after Russian drones struck a shopping center in the city of Kryvyi Rih in central Ukraine on Friday.

Dnipropetrovsk regional head Oleksandr Hanzha said in the early hours of Saturday that the death toll had risen to 16 and nine people remain missing after the attack, which wounded another 130.

Kryvyi Rih is the hometown of Zelenskyy, who described the attack as a double-tap strike, in which an initial wave of drones hit the area followed by a second wave as rescue workers responded. The Ukrainian leader said the fire, which spread across 9,000 square meters (around 97,000 square feet), had been extinguished and rescue efforts were underway.

Kryvyi Rih has been hit multiple times during the 4½-year all-out war between Russia and Ukraine, with one of the deadliest occurring in April 2025, when 20 people were killed, including nine children.

Large-scale Russian strikes have become a regular occurrence this summer, with Friday's attacks landing just 24 hours after Russia pounded Kyiv with scores of missiles and drones in a nighttime assault that killed 16 people.

The capital has been hit hard repeatedly in recent weeks: 17 people were killed in a strike on Kyiv and its surrounding region just over two weeks ago, and nine died in another attack on the city two days before that. The United Nations said last week that Kyiv was one of the hardest-hit cities in July, with at least 54 civilians killed and 202 wounded.

At the same time, Ukraine has shifted the war onto Russian soil through long-range drone strikes on oil facilities that have caused fuel shortages across Russia. It also has unsettled the Russian public by striking warehouses of Wildberries, the country's biggest online retailer.

The Russian online news outlet Astra reported Saturday that a Ukrainian drone set ablaze an oil refinery in the Samara region. Local officials said that damage was recorded at an unidentified "industrial facility" and a logistics center for Ozon, a competitor to Wildberries.

Zelenskyy said Saturday Ukrainian forces struck the Novokuibyshevsk oil refinery in Samara, noting its distance some 620 miles (1,000 kilometers) from the front line.

Congo receives more than 16,000 doses of Ebola vaccine as it grapples with unprecedented outbreak

BUNIA, Congo (AP) — Congo has received more than 16,000 doses of the Ervebo vaccine as the country grapples with the fastest Ebola outbreak in history, the country's health minister said.

The 16,250 doses arrived at the N'djili International Airport in the capital, Kinshasa, late Friday, as part of 70,000 doses expected from the World Health Organization and partners that were announced on Thursday. More doses are expected early next week.

The current Ebola outbreak in Congo is caused by the rare Bundibugyo virus, which currently has no approved treatment or vaccine. It can spread easily and go undetected because some of its symptoms are similar to other illnesses, such as malaria. The Ervebo vaccine is licensed to treat Ebola and has been effective in past outbreaks. The WHO said it may provide some protection against the Bundibugyo virus.

The latest outbreak, which has recorded 2,557 deaths out of the 5,375 confirmed cases across six af-

fects provinces, is spreading at an unprecedented rate and is on track to surpass the deadliest outbreak on record, which killed over 11,000 people across West Africa between 2014 and 2016. Data from the Africa Centre for Disease Control shows that transmission has not yet peaked and could reach three times its known rate.

Efforts to contain the outbreak have been hampered by armed conflict between the government and rebel groups, which control key cities in the hot spot; attacks on medical personnel and facilities; an itinerant labor population and people displaced by the armed conflict; and a lack of critical infrastructure.

Iran says the world has accepted it has defeated the US, and other Middle East developments

By The Associated Press undefined

Iran's president says the world has accepted that it's won the war with the United States, while France and Saudi Arabia are expected to discuss plans to bypass the Strait of Hormuz, which has been effectively closed since the U.S. and Israel launched a war with Iran nearly six months ago.

Meanwhile remarks by the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey and special envoy for Syria appear to contradict official U.S. position over the Golan Heights.

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

Iran's President says the world has accepted that Iran won the war

Iranian state media reported Friday that President Masoud Pezeshkian said the war with the U.S. should end since the world has already accepted that Iran has won. Iran sees its control over the Strait and not giving into U.S. demands as a win.

"The entire world approved our victory and the U.S. is hated," he said according to IRNA news agency. Iran sees its control over the Strait and not giving into U.S. demands as a win.

The remarks came as the Trump administration is touting a crushing financial campaign against Iran, promising an "economic D-Day" against the country. President Donald Trump announced that the U.S. would be imposing an "unprecedented" level of economic warfare and isolation on Iran, aiming to force its leadership to cave to demands to end its nuclear program and fully reopen the crucial Strait of Hormuz to oil and natural gas tankers.

U.S. Ambassador to Turkey and special envoy for Syria appears to contradict official U.S. position on the Golan Heights

In an interview Friday, Tom Barrack said that Israel "still" occupies the territory in violation of U.N. resolutions.

In his comments made to Mario Nawfal, a Lebanese-Australian entrepreneur, Barrack said that "in the Golan, with Syria, they (Israel) still occupy the Golan, against the U.N. resolutions."

Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 war and annexed it in 1981. The U.N. considers the territory occupied Syrian land and the annexation null and void, with U.N. resolutions calling for Israel's withdrawal to the June 4, 1967, line.

In March 2019, Trump signed a proclamation recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, reversing decades of U.S. policy. The move did not change the territory's status under international law or win broader international recognition.

Colombia became the second country to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan this month, joining the United States.

Barrack's remarks sparked a backlash Saturday from conservative activist and U.S. presidential ally Laura Loomer, who posted on X that he "should resign for his lack of understanding of U.S. foreign policy."

French president and Saudi crown prince to meet to discuss ways to bypass the Strait

French President Emmanuel Macron and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman are expected to discuss the effects of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and plans to develop routes around the waterway

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during the Saudi leader's two-day visit to Paris beginning Sunday, according to officials in the presidency who are not authorized to be publicly named.

Proposals under consideration include increasing trade through Omani ports outside the Persian Gulf, expanding or doubling pipelines in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, and developing new rail links, the officials said.

France and Saudi Arabia have formed a joint task force on energy and logistics connections between the Middle East and Europe that is scheduled to meet at ministerial level Monday.

The officials said the work was already well advanced and would focus on identifying the most strategic projects, securing financing and establishing roles for French companies. The visit will be Mohammed bin Salman's first trip abroad since he traveled to Washington in November 2025, according to the officials.

— AP correspondent Angela Charlton in Paris.

Pope Leo praises San Marino as model of freedom and common good

By GIADA ZAMPANO and NICCOLÒ LUPONE Associated Press

SAN MARINO (AP) — Pope Leo XIV on Saturday hailed the tiny Republic of San Marino as a model of political freedom and civic responsibility, praising its centuries-old republican traditions while warning against political and economic systems that place power above the human person.

Addressing local authorities during a one-day visit to the world's oldest surviving republic, Leo reflected on the legacy of Saints Marino and Leone, whom he credited with helping create a society rooted in freedom, mutual respect and community.

The pope said the two saints translated the Christian message into "a new community and political model, strongly characterized by the Christian principles of freedom, mutual respect and communion," a legacy that he said continues to shape the republic today.

San Marino, a nation of about 35,000 people completely surrounded by the Italian state, traces its origins to the fourth century. It is governed by a 60-member parliament that elects two captains regent every six months to serve jointly as heads of state, a power-sharing arrangement designed to prevent the concentration of authority.

Using the micro state as an example, Leo argued that small political communities can offer lessons in public service and social cohesion at a time of growing division and distrust.

Leo is the third pope to visit San Marino, after St. John Paul II visited in 1982 and Pope Benedict XVI came in 2011.

The American pontiff praised a society "built on respect for one's own freedom and that of others and above all on respect for the sacred Will of God."

He warned that modern societies face increasing threats from violence, social fragmentation and ideologies that put self-interest ahead of the common good.

"We live in a world wounded by many conflicts," the pope said, citing growing violence, closures and fear of others. He urged Christians to respond through forgiveness, solidarity and concern for the vulnerable.

Leo also described San Marino as a "laboratory of good politics" and called for public life to uphold the dignity of every human person "from conception to natural death" — language commonly used by Vatican officials and Catholic leaders when referring to church opposition to abortion and euthanasia.

In 2021, San Marino voters approved a referendum legalizing abortion during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, overturning a decades-old ban. The referendum represented a significant change in law and public policy in a country with deep Catholic roots.

While Leo did not directly address the referendum, he repeatedly stressed the need for political, social and economic systems to place human dignity at their center. He warned against models that present themselves as liberating but ultimately fail to serve the human person and the common good.

The pope also praised small communities in the San Marino-Montefeltro region that have responded to depopulation and the loss of services through mutual support and cooperation.

Somali pirates hijack oil tanker off Yemen in latest attack

By OMAR FARUK Associated Press

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — Somali pirates hijacked an oil products tanker off Yemen, a Somali maritime security official said, the latest in a resurgence of piracy that has seen six commercial vessels seized since April across the Gulf of Aden and western Indian Ocean.

Six armed pirates hijacked the Eritrean-flagged M.T. Sibu 1 on Thursday about 136 nautical miles (252 kilometers) east of al-Mukalla, Yemen, and took it toward Somalia's Puntland coast, the official, who has knowledge of the incident, told The Associated Press on Friday. He spoke on condition of anonymity as he was not allowed to discuss the matter publicly.

The Sibu 1, managed by the UAE-based Qatrat Alnada Almasi Ship Management, was sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department last year for allegedly belonging to an Iranian "shadow fleet" used to transport petroleum products seeking to evade U.S. sanctions.

The tanker had 20 crew members aboard: 16 Indians, one Syrian, one Sudanese, and one Iraqi. The nationality of one crew member was not immediately known. The vessel's previous port of departure and intended destination remained unclear.

The hijacking came three days after pirates seized the Lutuf, a Cameroon-flagged general cargo vessel, off Somalia's coast. The vessel had 10 crew aboard, including six Indians, a Turkish national, a Georgian national and two Serbian security guards, according to maritime tracking reports.

The Sibu 1 is the sixth commercial vessel hijacked by Somali pirates since April 21, when the Palau-flagged tanker Honor 25 was seized off Somalia. Pirates later seized the Sward on April 26, the Eureka on May 2, the Asana on July 17 and the Lutuf on Aug. 17.

The attacks have occurred increasingly far from Somalia's coastline, including the hijacking of the Eureka while anchored off Yemen and the Asana about 65 nautical miles (120 kilometers) southwest of al-Mukalla. The International Maritime Bureau recorded 38 piracy and armed robbery incidents worldwide during the first half of 2026, including five hijackings. Somali pirates accounted for 94% of crew members taken hostage during that period, the bureau said.

Puntland's Security Ministry said Friday that its investigations indicated that forces beyond Puntland's control were behind the renewed piracy, but did not identify any group or country. The claim could not be independently verified.

Puntland said it had deployed security forces along its coast and condemned airstrikes that it said struck fishing vessels and property near coastal communities where hijacked ships were being held. It called on the countries involved to explain strikes near Garacad on Aug. 18 and Aug. 20.

The ministry did not identify who carried out the strikes, and the allegations could not be independently confirmed.

Wildfires expose — and detonate — buried bombs and mines from WWI and WWII

By SAM McNEIL Associated Press

ELSENBORN, Belgium (AP) — The wildfires burning across Europe this summer have exposed a potentially deadly threat lurking beneath the blackened landscape: rusty bombs and mines from World War I and II that threaten crews responding to the flames.

Some of the weapons have exploded in the intense heat. Blasts have been reported in France, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, where a bomb-disposal team was dispatched to check a forest threatened by flames near a site of fierce fighting in the Limburg province in 1944.

Fueled by climate change, the fires and explosions show that the continent's "climatic luck" is running out, said Sarah Njeri, a peace and conflict scholar at London's School of Oriental and African Studies. Steady temperatures and predictable rainfall once ensured that most buried weapons stayed dormant.

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"Climate change is now doing the work of unburying and reactivating what was previously stable," Njeri said. Fires can ignite old munitions but can also burn away the scrub and brush that hides them.

This wildfire season was supercharged by heavy rains in January that spurred vegetation growth, which became kindling when the summer heat arrived. Those temperatures, combined with drought conditions, low humidity and stiff winds, offered an ideal environment for fire, according to a study issued last month by the World Weather Attribution group.

Flames chewed up old battlefields and set off buried explosives

As they advanced, the flames moved over territory that has long been known to hold unexploded weapons, a lethal legacy that lingered long after the guns fell silent.

In a forest in tinder-dry France, a massive wildfire outside the southwestern city of Bordeaux uncovered a cache of what is believed to be World War II-era ammunition.

In the eastern Belgian province of Liege, Gov. Hervé Jamar said "a few sporadic detonations" were recently heard and that emergency services were adapting to account for munitions buried in a fire area. He said no fire crews were in danger, but local media published photos of a firefighter handling a rusted bomb.

During World War II, booby traps, bombs and mines were sprinkled throughout the province's dense peat-bog forest known as the High Fens. In the first four years after Germany's surrender in 1945, the munitions killed six civilians, said Bernard Collard, a local historian who runs the Truschbaum Museum near Belgium's border with Germany that houses a collection of found objects from the war.

"When you go into a forest like this, you are not sure where the explosives are," he said. He remembers his father detonating a found bomb in a quarry.

The fire in the High Fens, which stretches across the border with Germany, is smoldering atop a much-bloodied battlefield where Nazis fought Allied troops. The Battle of the Bulge was fought in and around the High Fens.

The fire is even closer to the sites of two lesser-known skirmishes along Elsenborn Ridge and in the Hurtgen Forest, which lasted 88 days and killed about 33,000 American and 28,000 German troops.

Every year, Belgium responds to thousands of calls about explosives

Collard is authorized to scan with a metal detector the former battlefields, now forests, pastures and farmland. He has found mortar shells, machine guns, helmets, cigarette cases, and once, a human skeleton.

"You never know what you might come across, and you shouldn't take it lightly," Collard said while standing in a field that was once a blood-soaked site. Nearby, blueberry bushes cover old foxholes, trenches and deep craters from artillery fire.

He frequently works with the Belgian demining squad. "It's part of our history. We live with it," Collard said.

Unexploded ordnance is even more dangerous around wildfires because heat can trigger the explosives, said Jonas Tepe, a spokesperson for North Rhine-Westphalia, just across the border in Germany.

The Belgian Ministry of Defense said it receives requests from the region about every week to assist in disarming explosives, yet it does not consider the area a "hot spot" compared to elsewhere in Belgium. Such requests are even more common in the west, where farmers in towns such as Ypres — infamous for harrowing trench warfare in World War I — call the annual tilling of the soil "the iron harvest" because it turns up so many war remnants.

Every year across the nation, Belgium's Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Destruction Service responds to more than 3,000 calls and disposes of 200 to 250 tons of munitions left over from both world wars.

Flames are not the only threat

Drought has also helped to lay the past bare by shrinking rivers and lakes to reveal old weapons.

In Slovakia, the Danube River fell and exposed two naval mines that police pulled out of the water and buried in a trench for a controlled demolition. Authorities in Hungary closed Budapest's Margaret Bridge after a bomb dating from World War II emerged at its base in receding water.

As the Rhine dried up, German authorities also found a WWII-era bomb.

Christina Greene, a researcher at the University of Arizona who, with Njeri, wrote an article on Europe's wildfires and unexploded ordnance risk, said "the legacy of war keeps creeping up" because of climate change.

"It's reliving the legacies of war and conflict in a way that we haven't had to deal with in a while in certain places."

Former Hong Kong vigil organizer strives to mark Tiananmen crackdown despite convictions

By KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Tang Ngok-kwan still occasionally visits the places where Hong Kong once publicly remembered Beijing's 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown.

Though Tang's fellow activists were locked up in prison, accused of inciting subversion, and an annual candlelight vigil they previously organized to mourn the crackdown's victims vanished, the 58-year-old continues to personally and discreetly remember the event, which is a political taboo on mainland China.

At Victoria Park, where tens of thousands of people once gathered for the only large-scale public commemoration of the crackdown in China, Tang bowed on the eve of the anniversary and read of a list of the victims in a low voice. He sometimes returns to two university campuses where commemorative sculptures once stood, even though most traces of their existence already have vanished.

Two of Tang's former colleagues were convicted Friday under a Beijing-imposed national security law, facing a maximum prison term of 10 years. Their vigil organizing group also was found guilty. Government-approved judges ruled the pair had incited others to overthrow the leadership of China's Communist Party through unlawful means.

Many observers say the convictions were the latest case reflecting the decline in freedoms in the former British colony that returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

Tang told The Associated Press that the arguments in the verdict did not convince him and he felt wronged on behalf of those convicted.

"After the alliance was convicted, I feel that whenever people bring up the alliance, there'll be a sense of wariness around it," he said.

Decades dedicated to remembering the crackdown

Tang was an ordinary young man when he joined a wave of people who marched in Hong Kong in support of Beijing's student-led, pro-democracy protests in May 1989.

When tanks rolled into the heart of Beijing on the night of June 3-4 to quell the protests, Tang didn't sleep. Hundreds, possibly thousands of people, were killed during the crackdown.

Shortly after the bloody event, some members of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, along with others sympathetic to the protesters, mobilized to help bring those wanted by authorities to safety. The group also ran the massive public candlelight vigil that attracted tens of thousands of people annually for three decades.

Tang says he feels a moral burden because he believes Hong Kong's support might have left the students in a position with no easy exit in 1989. That kept Tang, who turned from a volunteer to a core member of the alliance, working behind the scenes for years.

Activism leads to convictions and jail terms

Authorities banned the annual vigil in 2020, citing risks to public health during the COVID-19 pandemic. Weeks later, Beijing imposed the security law, saying it was necessary for the city's stability following massive protests in 2019.

The alliance's fate was called into question in 2021. A mainland Chinese official criticized those chanting "end one-party dictatorship," without naming the group. Police also sought details about its operations and finances in connection with alleged links to pro-democracy groups overseas, accusing it of being a foreign agent.

But the group refused to cooperate and told reporters in September 2021 that the request was an "abuse of power." Tang knew by then he would be imprisoned for not handing in the information. He recalled he was frightened when he saw a large crowd of reporters at the venue.

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"It really feels like everyone is watching how you die and then coming to see you off on your way," he said. Days later, Tang was arrested over the refusal, alongside several other core members. The alliance's chair and vice-chairs, Lee Cheuk-yan, Chow Hang-tung and Albert Ho, were charged under the security law. The group voted to disband soon after and two commemorative statues and one relief were removed at university campuses in late 2021.

Tang, Chow and another core member were sentenced to 4 1/2 months in prison each in 2023 for failing to provide authorities with information. Tang's prison term overlapped with the 35th anniversary of the crackdown. To remember it, he ran 35 laps barefoot.

The trio's convictions were quashed in 2025 by Hong Kong's top court, though they had already served their terms.

Engaging in quiet acts of remembrance

The legal battle involving the vigil organizers did not end there. The trial for Lee and Chow began in January and Tang was a regular presence in the courtroom's public gallery. Ho entered a guilty plea, a move that typically results in a sentence reduction.

Before their trial, commemorating the crackdown publicly had already become politically sensitive. Police took away some people who tried to do so near the former vigil site on the crackdown anniversary. After the lifting of pandemic restrictions, an annual carnival occupied Victoria Park on every anniversary.

Police wouldn't let Tang enter court Friday if he insisted on bringing along "sensitive" materials, including bookmarks printed with the words "vindicate June 4," he said.

He has walked repeatedly between a subway station and the trial court to remember the years Lee and Chow spent in custody awaiting trial, he said, noting there are 64 steps leading up from the subway station exit, a number echoing the June 4 anniversary.

Tang has an eye for details like that. He joked it was "pathological."

"When there's nothing concrete you can do, the only option, to put it bluntly, well, it's just another kind of way to balance your psychology," he said.

What to know about Alex Jones' Texas court win and more than \$1 billion in damages he still faces

By JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Conspiracy theorist Alex Jones is still under orders to pay more than \$1 billion over his false claims surrounding the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre despite a Texas court reducing some of the money awarded to families.

For the bombastic Infowars founder, the ruling that saves him more than \$40 million was still a legal victory amid multiple punishing financial judgments that forced him and his company, Free Speech Systems, to file for bankruptcy.

Sandy Hook families have yet to collect any money from Jones, who has left his Infowars platform amid numerous ongoing legal battles but is still broadcasting on other websites.

He still faces a defamation judgment of \$1.25 billion in a Connecticut lawsuit and the nearly \$6 million that remains in the Texas case.

What to know about Jones, Infowars and his legal cases:

How Jones lawsuits got here

Several relatives of the 20 first graders and six educators killed at Sandy Hook sued Jones and his company, Free Speech Systems, in Connecticut and Texas for defamation and inflicting emotional distress for saying the shooting was staged by "crisis actors" to win more gun control.

Victims' relatives testified that followers of Jones subjected them to death and rape threats, in-person harassment and abusive comments on social media.

Jones argued there was no proof that linked him to the others' actions. He did concede under oath that the shooting did happen.

The Connecticut case produced a judgment against Jones of more than \$1.4 billion in damages, which was

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reduced by about \$150 million during appeals. In Texas, Jones was hit with nearly \$50 million in damages.

On Friday, a state appeals court threw out most of the Texas award because it vastly exceeded the state's legal cap on punitive damages. The ruling reduced that portion from more than \$40 million to \$1.5 million, leaving about \$6 million intact.

Only one judgment impacted

The Texas court ruling did not throw out the finding of defamation against Jones. He still called it a major victory for free speech and vowed to continue his appeals.

"I got lawyers who are good constitutional lawyers, and they are not backing down," Jones said.

The Texas ruling has no impact on the bigger Connecticut case, where Jones was found liable for \$1.25 billion. That judgment still stands, and Jones' appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court last year was denied.

"The families care not at all about this irrelevant ruling which affects only two of the 19 claims they all share. Jones still faces over a billion dollars of liability, so this changes absolutely nothing. All it does is highlight the absurdity of Texas law," said Mark Bankston, an attorney for the families in the Texas case.

How Infowars became a media empire

Jones pushed many conspiracy theories over the last three decades, including that the U.S. government was behind or failed to stop the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing and the 9/11 attacks.

As the outlandish nature of his false claims grew, so did his presence across radio stations, his Infowars website and social media.

After getting fired from an Austin radio station in the mid-1990s, he began broadcasting from home on his Infowars website. He bought the domain name for \$9.

In 2004, he had two employees and a tiny office. By 2010, Jones had over 60 employees. By 2024, he had four studios in Austin and a warehouse for the products he sells.

Jones filed for bankruptcy in 2022 as the judgments against him mounted. The liquidation of assets forced him to surrender his Infowars platform.

He still broadcasts on new websites, social media and streaming platforms, and he continues to sell merchandise, including dietary supplements and clothing that bring in millions of dollars a year.

The Onion steps in the take over Infowars

Sandy Hook families have been prevented from collecting any money from Jones while he pursues lengthy appeals in state and federal courts.

The satirical website The Onion has moved to take over Jones' Infowars platforms and turn his bullhorn of conspiracy theories into parody sites.

Jones took Infowars off the air in April. A proposed licensing deal that would give The Onion temporary authority to use Infowars' trademarks, copyrights and intellectual property has been put on hold during Jones' appeals.

Still, The Onion has set up its own Infowars webpage on its website, running videos of shows parodying Jones. The webpage replaced the "o" in Infowars with an onion and sells products under that logo including T-shirts, tote bags and coffee mugs, with some proceeds going to the Sandy Hook families.

What to know about the first week of a trial in the 1996 killing of Tupac Shakur

By ANDREW DALTON, JESSICA HILL and REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — In the first week of testimony at the trial of a man accused of orchestrating the killing of Tupac Shakur, the night of Sept. 7, 1996, has been run and rerun many times — through police who were at the scene, through the people near the hip-hop superstar, and through the recorded words of the suspect, Duane "Keffe D" Davis.

Many of the basic facts jurors have learned are not in dispute.

Shakur and Death Row Records co-founder Marion "Suge" Knight were in Las Vegas to watch a Mike Tyson fight at the MGM Grand Garden Arena. Just outside, Shakur, Knight and their entourage got into a

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brawl with Davis' nephew, Orlando "Baby Lane" Anderson.

Later that night, Shakur and Knight were in a black BMW at a red light near the Las Vegas Strip, when a white Cadillac with four men inside pulled up beside them and someone opened fire. Shakur was shot multiple times and died six days later. Knight survived with minor injuries.

Years later, Davis would say he procured the gun and his nephew fired the shots. Davis' lawyers have disputed the statements and fought unsuccessfully to get them excluded. The other men in the Cadillac have since died, limiting eyewitness testimony.

The dispute had its roots in the long-running feud between the Mob Piru Bloods, a gang Knight and Shakur were affiliated with, and the South Side Compton Crips, for whom Davis was a prominent leader.

A jury of six men and 10 women — four are alternates — will decide whether Davis, 63, is guilty of one count of murder with a deadly weapon with the intent to promote, further or assist a criminal gang. He has pleaded not guilty. If convicted, he could get life in prison.

Here's a closer look at the first week of the trial that is expected to last about a month.

Is Keffe D admitting old truths — or as his lawyer says, 'full of crap'?

A prosecutor said in his opening statement that Davis' own words — in interviews with police, podcasters and filmmakers — would prove he orchestrated the killing.

"Let's be clear, Duane Davis did not pull the trigger. But he did plan the shooting in retaliation of the beating of his nephew," Chief Deputy District Attorney Binu Palal told jurors. "Remarkably, you will learn that from Duane Davis himself."

"Now, 30 years later, we're going to ask you to finally hold Duane Davis accountable," Palal said.

Davis' defense attorney Michael Sanft took the unusual approach of telling jurors his client's words were all bloviating and braggadocio, and did not represent the truth.

"What they are telling you, they are representing as fact, when it's really fiction," said Sanft. He said Davis wasn't previously charged because law enforcement knew that he was "full of crap."

Who are the witnesses and what have they said about the 1996 shooting?

Seventeen witnesses testified through the first five days, a little under half the number prosecutors said they plan to call at the trial.

They included a police officer, Garry Dale, who first responded to the scene, jumped into the ambulance with Shakur and asked him who shot him. "We'll take care of it," was Dale's best memory of what Shakur said.

Brent Becker, a homicide detective from the initial investigation, said that despite being able to get probable identification on the men in the Cadillac from confidential informants, it was of little use because no witnesses would say anything solid on the record.

That included Knight. "I thought he lied to us," Becker said.

Some of the case's most compelling witnesses — formerly gang-affiliated men who testified unwillingly under court order — essentially refused to help the prosecution that summoned them, but provided drama and humor that was absent from the more sterile official testimony.

They included James McDonald, a former Mob Piru member who helped Knight with security.

"I'm aware of a lot of things," McDonald said on the stand, "things that was going on, people ain't talked about them in 30 years. Today ain't one of them."

He directly addressed the defendant. "What you're going through, brother, is what you're going through," McDonald said, adding "I didn't want to be a part of it."

Knight is on the prosecution's witness list, but will likely take a similar approach should he be called. He's in prison serving a 28-year sentence for an unrelated killing in California.

Leonard Jefferson, who took the last known photo of Shakur, also took the stand. Police developed Jefferson's film and returned the photo negatives days after Shakur died.

In the frame, Shakur looks directly at the camera while Knight stares ahead, his hand on the steering wheel.

"The picture just took on a life of its own," Jefferson told The Associated Press.

Jurors hear Keffe D's damning statements

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Decades of interviews starting from the late 1990s were played for jurors.

Key was a 2008 interview with law enforcement looking into the 1997 killing of the Notorious B.I.G., Shakur's rap archrival. Davis had briefly been a suspect in that shooting, but one detective testified that "everyone was a suspect" in that case at one point or another.

Davis shifted the conversation to the Shakur shooting, and admitted his involvement from the passenger side of the Cadillac.

"If we would have been on my side, I would have blasted," Davis said. Instead, Knight's car was on the other side, so Davis passed his gun back to the guys in the backseat, he said.

Davis said his nephew took the weapon and started firing.

Several people in the audience shook their heads when they heard detectives tell Davis that the interview would not be used against him. But authorities argue he negated that agreement when, years later, he spoke publicly about the shooting.

Davis, with bald head and gray goatee, sat stoically through most of the testimony, wearing a suit and tie. He occasionally whispered and exchanged fist bumps with his lawyer.

And he spoke to the judge on Friday, saying his family's safety is at risk because witnesses for the prosecution have shared his home address. "They keep giving out my address," he said. "They broke into my house, vandalized my house, vandalized my wife's car."

"I'm not upset I'm being prosecuted," Davis said, but "you're endangering my family's life."

Why the bond market is flexing its muscles, and why everyone needs to care

By STAN CHOE and CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — The bond market is one of the few forces in the world strong enough to get politicians to snap to attention. It also helps dictate how much ordinary people have to pay on their mortgages and car loans, as well as how much they earn from their savings accounts and 401(k) plans.

This week rising bond yields forced the U.S. Treasury Department into an unusual intervention and raised the specter of higher borrowing costs putting the brakes on consumer spending, the lifeblood of the economy. It also sparked concerns that investors might finally be thinking twice about financing a seemingly endless flow of government borrowing.

Here's a look at what's going on and how it affects everyone:

First, a reminder of what the bond market is

When governments and big companies borrow money, they don't ask a bank for a loan. Instead, they sell IOUs to investors and promise to repay the money with a certain interest rate. If those IOUs are set to be repaid many years from now, they're called bonds. (IOUs the U.S. government will repay more quickly are more often called bills or notes.)

Investors in the bond market often buy and sell these bonds after they're issued, and they continue to pay the same interest rate. But if the bond starts to look less attractive, a buyer can get bonds that were earlier worth \$100 for less than that. Such a drop in price means the new buyer will get a bigger return, percentage-wise, on their money than the interest rate the bond pays on its face value. Those payments are called the bond's yield.

The U.S. bond market is the biggest but investors have other options

The world's biggest and most important bond market is for IOUs from the U.S. government, which are called Treasuries. The total size of it was \$31.5 trillion, as of July, according to the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association.

Yet Treasuries are facing more competition from higher-yielding bonds overseas than in recent decades. After years of near-zero interest rates, even 30-year Japanese government bonds are now paying more than 4%. Yields on U.K. bonds have reached 5.81%, and German bonds are also paying 3.76%, versus 5.27% for a comparable U.S. bond. It's a big reason U.S. rates have been drifting higher.

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Ira Jersey, chief U.S. interest rate strategist at Bloomberg Intelligence, said that large global investors such as pension funds and life insurers used to have little choice to invest in Treasuries because most other overseas bonds paid so little interest.

"Now the U.S. 30-year yield has to compete with all these other sovereign bonds," Jersey said. "The U.S. is not the only game in town anymore."

The U.S. government bond market helps set interest rates that affect regular people

The easiest example is mortgage rates. Rates for these loans tend to follow the path of yields for Treasuries that will get repaid in 10 years.

The 10-year Treasury yield is the centerpiece of the bond market, and it shot higher through the summer after the war with Iran sent oil prices higher and worries about inflation upward, adding to longstanding concerns about the size of the U.S. government's debt.

That in turn made mortgages more expensive for people looking to buy a house. The average 30-year fixed-rate mortgage is near its highest level in a year, discouraging people already worried the price of homeownership may be too high.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent's announcement Wednesday that the government would double its buybacks of longer-term bonds was intended to bring down the 10-year Treasury yield and lower mortgages. Yet the move brought only temporary relief, with the 10-year yield rising back to 4.74% Friday, matching its highest point in more than a year.

Thierry Wizman, global rates strategist at Macquarie Group, said higher mortgage rates will likely discourage some consumers from buying homes. At the same time, higher yields generally should draw more investment into bonds issued by large tech firms investing in AI infrastructure.

"The private sector wants to have the AI revolution," Wizman said. "Who's going to take a step back? It's going to be the consumer. And higher yields are going to do that a little bit."

Other parts of the market, including where the Federal Reserve sets its interest rate for very short-term overnight loans, affect rates for everything from credit cards to savings accounts to auto loans.

Generally, higher yields and rates benefit people who are savers. It means they are earning more from lending money to the U.S. government or sticking their cash in a high-yield savings account.

Higher yields and rates, meanwhile, tend to hurt people who are borrowing money. They also drag on prices for stocks, gold and even cryptocurrencies. The thought is: Why should anyone pay high prices for riskier investments when U.S. Treasuries, which are supposed to be safer, are paying more than before?

Higher yields mean U.S. taxpayers will have to pay more for their government's bills

Washington continues to spend far more than it brings in through revenue, so it has to borrow money to cover the gap. That has sent its total debt over \$40 trillion, a staggering record, and the number keeps climbing by the day.

When yields are rising, the U.S. government has to pay higher interest rates to entice buyers for its bonds when it auctions off Treasuries.

The federal government has already paid \$931 billion in interest on its debt through the first 10 months of its fiscal year, which ends in September. That's more than it spent on health, national defense or veterans benefits and is just behind Social Security and Medicare.

Concerns have been brewing in the bond market for a long time

It's no secret that the U.S. government has a lot of debt. Officials at the Federal Reserve, economists, investors and many other voices have been saying for years that the U.S. government is on an unsustainable path with how much it spends versus what it brings in.

Everything from tax cuts to increased military budgets adds to the deficit.

The unknown has always been when or if a tipping point would arrive that turns the worries about the U.S. government's debt into a panic. That would cause investors to quickly dump their Treasuries, which would send yields surging.

And while yields have climbed this summer, they haven't done so at such a pace to suggest a tipping point is here. The climb in yields for government bonds has also been worldwide. It's not just Washington

feeling pressure but also bond markets in Japan, France, Germany and elsewhere.

Importantly, a measure in the bond market that shows how worried bond investors are about potential defaults by several big economies' governments on their bonds has not risen excessively, according to strategists at Macquarie.

Court cuts \$50M judgment against Alex Jones over falsely labeling Sandy Hook killings a hoax

By JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A Texas court on Friday slashed a \$50 million judgment that conspiracy theorist Alex Jones was ordered to pay families of the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre over his false claims that one of the deadliest mass shootings in U.S. history was a hoax.

The Infowars founder can only be forced to pay about \$6 million, the Texas Third Court of Appeals ruled in a unanimous opinion, citing state laws that limit lawsuit damages.

The ruling does not affect a separate \$1.25 billion judgment against Jones in Connecticut, where he was also found liable for defaming and causing emotional distress to relatives of the 20 first-graders and six educators killed in the Newtown shooting.

The punishing financial verdicts against Jones and his company, Free Speech Systems, in recent years have forced him into bankruptcy, led to some of his personal property being put up for auction and led to him leaving his Infowars platform. For decades, he used the platform to push conspiracy theories about the United Nations, the federal government, gun control and more.

Sandy Hook families have yet to collect any money from Jones, who has waged lengthy appeals in state and bankruptcy courts as his company faces liquidation. He remains on air after moving onto new websites and streaming platforms.

Friday's ruling did not throw out the trial court's finding of defamation against Jones. Still, he called it "a gigantic victory for the First Amendment," and said he will continue to appeal the case to the state Supreme Court to get the remaining damages thrown out.

"I got lawyers who are good constitutional lawyers and they are not backing down," Jones said.

Jones has already tried to appeal the Connecticut judgment to the U.S. Supreme Court but was denied last year.

The decision by the Texas Third Court of Appeals left intact more than \$4.1 million in compensatory damages awarded by a jury to Sandy Hook parents Neil Heslin and Scarlett Lewis for defamation and emotional distress. But it slashed more than \$45 million in additional punitive damages down to \$1.5 million to comply with the state's \$750,000 cap for each plaintiff.

The court found Heslin and Lewis did not show evidence that the harassment following Jones' hoax claims rose to a level that would allow them to exceed the cap. It also said the trial judge improperly allowed the parents to seek higher damages after trial.

Mark Bankston, an attorney for Heslin and Lewis in the Texas lawsuit, shrugged off the appeals court ruling as "irrelevant" given that Jones still faces massive financial judgments in Connecticut.

"The families care not at all about this irrelevant ruling which affects only two of the 19 claims they all share. Jones still faces over a billion dollars of liability, so this changes absolutely nothing. All it does is highlight the absurdity of Texas law," Bankston said.

Newtown families harassed as Jones claimed the massacre was a hoax

Heslin and Lewis's 6-year-old son Jesse Lewis was among those killed in the Sandy Hook attack. Their lawsuit against Jones and the 2022 verdict marked the first time he was held financially liable for peddling lies about the massacre, claiming it was faked by the government to tighten gun laws.

Jones portrayed the lawsuit as an attack on his First Amendment rights, but conceded during the trial that the shootings were "100% real" and that he was wrong to have lied about them.

At the Texas and Connecticut trials, victims' relatives testified that Jones' followers -- believing his claims that the shooting didn't happen -- subjected them to death and rape threats, in-person harassment and

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abusive comments on social media. Jones argued there was no proof that linked him to those actions.

Heslin and Lewis told jurors that an apology wouldn't suffice and initially called on them to make Jones pay more than \$150 million for the years of suffering he has put them and other Sandy Hook families through.

Almost immediately after the punitive damages in Texas were announced, Jones' trial attorney predicted the award would be reduced to \$1.5 million on appeal.

Christopher Mattei, a lawyer for the Sandy Hook families in the Connecticut lawsuit, said Friday's ruling has no bearing on the ongoing lower court proceedings in Texas involving the liquidation of Infowars' parent company.

The Onion steps in to mock Jones and help frustrated families

Jones and his company have filed for bankruptcy, and those legal proceedings continue. The satirical website The Onion also moved to take over Jones' Infowars platforms and turn his bullhorn of conspiracy theories into parody sites.

Jones took Infowars off the air in April and moved to a new location, switching his shows to new websites and posting them on his personal X account. The Onion, meanwhile, has set up its own Infowars webpage on its website, running videos of shows parodying Jones.

A proposed licensing deal that would give The Onion temporary authority to use Infowars' trademarks, copyrights and intellectual property has been put on hold because the liquidation proceedings have been stayed during Jones' appeals.

In November 2024, the Chicago-based satirical outlet was named the winner of a bankruptcy court auction of the assets of Infowars' parent company, Free Speech Systems, aimed at helping pay some of the defamation judgments. A federal judge overturned the auction results, citing problems with the process and The Onion's bid.

Trump urges South Carolinians to make Sen. Darline Graham the GOP nominee for US Senate

By MEG KINNARD and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. (AP) — President Donald Trump sought Friday to boost Sen. Darline Graham's effort to win a full term, telling thousands of supporters that the first step toward keeping her as their senator involves helping the political newcomer triumph in a Republican runoff next week.

The Republican president also begged them to pretend that he's on the ballot Tuesday — even though he is not — if that will help get them out to vote.

Voters will decide Tuesday whether Graham or Rep. Ralph Norman will be the Republican nominee for the U.S. Senate on the ballot in November.

"You have to get out and vote," Trump said about Darline Graham, who is serving out the remainder of the term of her late brother, Sen. Lindsey Graham, who died unexpectedly in July. "And we need every South Carolina patriot to go to the polls and vote for Darline Graham."

Trump nodded to the reality that Republican base voters lose interest in elections when he is not a candidate for office, as is the case this year. Trump is serving his second and final term as president.

"So what I really want you to do is pretend, please, that I'm on the ballot. Just come and vote. It's so important," Trump said. "So just say that I'm on the ballot one more time. You got to say it, and you got to come out and vote."

Trump, who encouraged Darline Graham to run and has given her his "complete and total endorsement," called her to the stage as he neared the end of his remarks.

"This is Trump country," she declared before leading the crowd in chants of "U.S.A."

Trump visits friendly territory in Myrtle Beach

Trump opened his remarks by declaring he was in a "very good mood" because Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts earlier Friday allowed construction to continue for now on the \$400 million ballroom Trump is adding to the White House. The project is being challenged in federal court.

He appeared jovial throughout and noted at several points that it was the end of the week.

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"It's a Friday night. We have plenty of time, right?" Trump said at one point. "What the hell do I have to do? Go back, bomb Iran a little bit more?"

At another point, he resurrected a campaign staple by reading the lyrics from the 1960s song "The Snake" as he steered the speech toward illegal immigration. Trump used to read the lyrics in his past campaigns to illustrate what he said are the perils of allowing people to enter the United States without authorization.

"Haven't done that in a long time," he said after he finished the reading. "That's our border."

He also called a cast of people on stage, ranging from Republican Tim Scott, South Carolina's other U.S. senator, to Karoline Leavitt, his outgoing White House press secretary.

Trump closed by encouraging people to vote for Darline Graham on Tuesday to preserve tax cuts, among other things. He said choosing her would be a tribute to her brother, who was very close to the president, and, "I want it to happen."

"Good luck, Darline," he said before leaving the stage.

The Myrtle Beach rally was the sort of campaign trail occasion that Trump hasn't done as much of this year, compared with past midterms, making it a signal of the importance he is placing on a win for his pick.

It was also an opportunity for the president to wade into friendly territory before the midterm elections that leave his party's control of Congress hanging in the balance. South Carolina hasn't elected a Democrat statewide in decades, its House delegation has only one Democrat and Trump's own victory in the 2016 presidential primary here helped propel him toward the nomination and ultimately the White House.

Darline Graham draws contrasts with Norman

"I am many things: a problem solver, a mother, a leader, but I am not a career politician," Darline Graham said. Norman has served in the U.S. House of Representatives since 2017.

In the scramble of a special Republican primary election that was called after Lindsey Graham's sudden death, his sister was picked by Gov. Henry McMaster — also a Trump ally — to serve as interim senator and entered the special primary at Trump's urging. The president had said he told McMaster that appointing her would be a "fabulous tribute to Lindsey," although the governor pointed out that he asked Graham to serve "in the wee hours" after her brother's death, adding that Trump "thought it was a great idea" when he later told him of his pick.

Hours before the rally, McMaster officially endorsed Graham. When he appointed her Graham last month, a person familiar with McMaster's thinking but unauthorized to speak publicly about it said the governor had never contemplated that she would run for the seat herself.

The president pressed "RUN DARLINE, RUN" on social media, and gave her his "Complete and Total Endorsement" before she'd officially announced her campaign. And at every turn on the campaign trail, she's reminded voters of this anointing, as well as her commitment to advancing his priorities if elected. On the eve of the primary two weeks ago, he held a tele-rally for Graham.

Like Trump, Darline Graham has portrayed herself as a political outsider

A political newcomer, Graham has stressed that she's "not a politician," as she's hurriedly introduced herself to voters across the state. Regularly touting her support for Trump's policies, as well as his endorsement, she has pointed to her years heading up a state agency, as well as her weeks on the job in the U.S. Senate, as evidence of her readiness.

Saying she's "answering President Trump's call to serve," she has repeatedly said she wants "to fight for President Trump's agenda" and cited his core goals of border security and passing the SAVE Act voting bill as among her top priorities.

Graham has said she's focused on kitchen table issues like gas prices and household spending rather than international affairs. Earlier this week, after stumbling on an elemental foreign policy question related to U.S. interests in Taiwan, Graham defended herself as "not a polished politician up here."

Speaking publicly about the gaffe for the first time Friday, before he flew to South Carolina, Trump told reporters Graham "was being honest" when she said Tuesday during a debate that she wasn't up to speed on national security issues.

"She's surrounded by very good people, and she said that she's totally for the military," Trump said.

TikTok reaches \$400 million settlement with US Justice Department over children's privacy

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

TikTok has reached a \$400 million settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice, ending a 2024 lawsuit alleging the company violated federal children's privacy laws.

The DOJ said Friday that TikTok will pay \$300 million immediately and another \$100 million after an order vacates an earlier consent decree against its predecessor company, Musical.ly.

"This settlement is a major victory for American children and parents," said U.S. Associate Attorney General Stanley E. Woodward Jr. in a statement. "The Department's priority is ensuring that children are protected online and that companies entrusted with their personal information meet their legal obligations. This resolution secures a substantial recovery while reinforcing the protections that families expect and deserve."

Since the DOJ's lawsuit in 2024, TikTok has undergone major changes, most notably in the ownership structure of its U.S. arm. In January, the social video platform company signed agreements with major investors including Oracle, Silver Lake and the Emirati investment firm MGX to form the new TikTok U.S. joint venture.

Representatives for TikTok did not immediately respond to a message for comment Friday.

The latest lawsuit focused on allegations that TikTok and its China-based parent company ByteDance violated a federal law that requires kid-oriented apps and websites to get parental consent before collecting personal information of children under 13. It also says the companies failed to honor requests from parents who wanted their children's accounts deleted, and chose not to delete accounts even when the firms knew they belonged to kids under 13.

The settlement comes as social media companies face an avalanche of lawsuits over children's safety and privacy and a growing number of countries are banning young kids and teens from social media apps. Instagram's parent company, Meta Platforms, is currently on trial in federal court in Oakland, California, over allegations it violated the 1998 Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, or COPPA, along with various state statutes.

Supreme Court's chief justice allows work on Trump's \$400M White House ballroom to continue for now

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Chief Justice John Roberts on Friday allowed the White House to continue construction on President Donald Trump's \$400 million ballroom project for now, as the Supreme Court considers the Trump administration's emergency request to intervene in lawsuits over the project.

The temporary order came hours before lower-court rulings would have forced a halt to aboveground construction of the project because Trump didn't get congressional approval.

It will remain in place until the Supreme Court issues a more durable decision, though the one-page document does not detail Roberts' reasoning or indicate when another ruling will be handed down. Roberts signed the order because he oversees emergency appeals of cases filed in the capital.

Trump thanked the high court and the chief justice during his remarks later Friday during a political appearance in South Carolina.

"When they say proceed, I think that's a good thing. That's a good thing," Trump said.

Ballroom case tests the limits of presidential power

The case is coming before the nation's highest court as Trump, a Republican, exercises unparalleled assertions of presidential power and increasingly seeks to mold the capital in his own image.

The administration has argued that the president has total authority to renovate the White House and other federal buildings as he sees fit and that the ballroom project must be completed due to national

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security concerns.

When Trump first announced the plans for a new ballroom, he did not emphasize national security. He said the project would be funded by private donations, including from himself.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation argues that Trump has no unilateral authority to undertake the work, which has included demolishing the East Wing. Lawyers for the preservation group accused the White House of trying to "outrun the courts" by accelerating construction.

A spokesperson for the trust said Friday that the order from Roberts is not a final decision and the group is awaiting further action. The full Supreme Court will likely weigh in next on whether construction can continue for the potentially long duration of the lawsuit.

Trump said his administration is grateful for Friday's decision, writing in a social media post that the project is "under budget and ahead of schedule."

While litigation plays out, the ballroom is going up quickly

The Trump administration says 65% of the work has already been completed on the planned 90,000-square-foot (8,400-square-meter) ballroom, where the East Wing stood before the president ordered its demolition.

Crews are working 20 hours a day, seven days a week, on the project, where about \$200 million in private donations has been spent or committed, according to court documents filed by the Justice Department.

The work has proceeded against the backdrop of the litigation winding through the courts.

In April, a district court judge ordered a stop to the aboveground construction of the planned ballroom. That ruling was briefly suspended, then upheld by an appeals court panel. U.S. District Judge Richard Leon in Washington allowed work to continue only belowground on bunkers and military installations. Leon was nominated by President George W. Bush, a Republican.

Leon's decision was upheld by an appeals court panel, as two judges appointed by Democratic presidents found the project was for Congress to decide and "not a matter for Executive self-help." A third judge, appointed by Trump, found that the preservationist group challenging the project had no legal standing to sue.

Solicitor General D. John Sauer picked up on that argument, calling the decision halting the work "extraordinary and unlawful." He said the completion of the project was "vitally required by national security."

The Trump administration has scored a series of victories on the Supreme Court's emergency docket, though the justices have ruled against some of the president's signature policies after fuller review.

Plane crashed on second attempt to land in heavy fog in Alaska, killing all 8 aboard, officials say

By BECKY BOHRER and JOSH FUNK Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — A plane that crashed at a remote military site in western Alaska, killing all eight people on board, was making its second runway approach in heavy fog when it lost contact, authorities said Friday.

The Cessna's two pilots could not see the gravel airstrip and were flying solely by instruments when the plane crashed about midday Thursday, Clint Johnson, the National Transportation Safety Board's Alaska region chief, told a virtual news conference.

Regulations required that they abort their first landing attempt because of the lack of visibility, he said, and the plane crashed on its second attempt, about one-third of a mile (0.5 kilometers) from the runway. The runway is surrounded by mountainous terrain on three sides, and the Federal Aviation Administration recommends pilots use GPS and other instruments when they land there.

On board were the pilots, two employees of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and four contractors. Two of the contractors were employees of Calista Brice, a collection of companies that perform construction, engineering, logistics and other work in remote areas. Calista Brice is a subsidiary of Calista Corp., an Alaska Native regional corporation.

The military has not said what work they were performing at the Cape Newenham Long Range Radar

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Site, about 450 miles (725 kilometers) west of Anchorage on Alaska's southwest coast.

NTSB investigators were traveling to the scene Friday.

The radar site was built in the 1950s as part of a network designed to provide early warning of a missile attack by the Soviet Union. Today, it monitors the skies off the coast in the direction of Russia, North Korea and China.

Those on board were "dedicated professionals carrying out a vital mission in a demanding environment," U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Robert Davis, commander of Alaskan Command, the Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Command Region and Eleventh Air Force, said in a statement Thursday.

"This is a devastating loss for our military family and the communities we serve," Davis said.

Johnson said search teams found the fragmented wreckage after the twin-engine Cessna 441, also known as a Cessna Conquest, lost contact. Its final flight path was captured by radar at the site, he said.

Weather conditions were changing Thursday as heavy fog rolled through the area. An automated observation system not far from the airport reported a low cloud ceiling, fog and visibility of about 10 miles (16 kilometers) in the minutes before the crash, but the next update about 15 minutes after it showed visibility of less than one-quarter mile (0.40 kilometers), according to Carrie Haisley, the meteorologist in charge of the National Weather Service's Alaska sector operations center.

Mike O'Donnell, who oversaw airport safety programs and accident investigations for much of his 17 years at FAA, said it sounded as if weather conditions were bad enough that the pilots should have diverted and landed somewhere else.

The airstrip is at a private military site managed by the Pacific Air Forces Regional Support Center. It's part of a network of remote radar sites that tracks aircraft operating in Alaska's airspace and along its borders, a statement from Alaskan Command said.

The outpost at Cape Newenham closed in 1983 after a new radar was installed, and now the site is visited only occasionally by civilian contractors who perform maintenance on the system.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said the two employees who died were part of a "project delivery team en route to a project site in support of the U.S. Air Force." The statement did not provide additional details about the work.

Johnson said the flight was operated by Security Aviation based in Anchorage. The charter company did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment.

Lindsay Clancy's defense rests at trial over whether postpartum psychosis drove her to kill her kids

By LEAH WILLINGHAM and MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — The defense rested its case Friday in the Lindsay Clancy murder trial after eliciting several days of testimony about her mental state before and after she strangled her three young children.

Prosecutors then began calling rebuttal witnesses in the trial, which is likely entering its final days. Closing arguments are expected next week.

Clancy, 36, has pleaded not guilty to murder charges in the deaths of her children 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. Clancy jumped from a second-story window after strangling the children and remains paralyzed from the waist down.

Prosecutors argue that Clancy, a former labor and delivery nurse, planned the killings.

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

Clancy's lawyer, Kevin Reddington, hasn't disputed that she killed the children but says she should not be held criminally responsible because she had postpartum psychosis, a rare mental illness linked to the

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stress, sleep deprivation and hormonal changes that follow childbirth.

He sought to bolster that defense by having the jury hear from more of Clancy's family members, who detailed her worsening mental health and attempts to fix it through psychiatric treatment and medications before the January 2023 killings. The jury also heard from a psychologist and a hospital chaplain who met with Clancy after the killings.

The defense's final witness also testified at the trial of Texas mom Andrea Yates

For his final witness on Friday, Reddington called Dr. Phillip Resnick, a forensic psychiatrist and expert in filicide, or the killing of a child by a parent.

Resnick testified that Clancy was "clearly psychotic" on the day she killed her children and was not in control of her actions.

"It was almost like she was a puppet and someone else was pulling the strings," said Resnick, who testified for the defense in the 2006 trial of Andrea Yates, the Texas mother who drowned her five children in 2001.

Resnick said he spent hours interviewing Clancy four months after the killings and believed she tended to minimize rather than exaggerate her symptoms. He said she suffered from severe depression, showed evidence consistent with bipolar disorder and reported hearing a voice commanding her to kill her children.

Resnick described several categories of filicide, including killings involving abuse. Others involve psychosis or what he calls "altruistic" filicide — a killing committed "out of love rather than hostility." He said he found Clancy's case involved both of the latter categories, but he didn't find evidence of abuse.

Resnick said Clancy had a delusional belief that if social services took the children or if she killed herself, her children would suffer without her, and believed that they would be better off dying with her and going to heaven.

"She believed that she was doing what was right for her children," he said.

Under cross-examination by prosecutor Jennifer Sprague, Resnick acknowledged that Clancy did not disclose thoughts of harming her children to medical providers who asked, but said that was "very common because people fear their children will be taken away."

"So it's better to kill them than have them taken away?" Sprague asked.

The judge struck the question.

Prosecutors say Clancy wasn't suffering from psychosis or bipolar disorder

Prosecutors argue that Clancy contrived to get her husband out of the house the day of the killings. They have attempted to show that while she was getting treatment for anxiety, insomnia and depression, she wasn't suffering from psychosis or bipolar disorder.

After the defense rested, prosecutors called forensic psychiatrist Dr. Avram Mack as a rebuttal witness. Mack agreed that Clancy suffered from a major depressive episode but said he found no evidence of mania or hypomania to support a bipolar diagnosis — or of psychosis — leading up to the killings.

Mack said Clancy recounted the killings to him, saying she heard a loud male voice telling her to kill the children so she could kill herself. She recalled strangling the children and saying "go to God" as she did so, he told jurors.

Mack said Clancy was experiencing severe mental illness when she killed her children but that it was a continuation of the depression she had experienced for months in which she was able to control impulses and distinguish right from wrong.

He also said, "There's no reason that psychosis in and of itself inhibits a person's ability to know right from wrong."

US stocks rise, even as the bond market applies more pressure

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks rose Friday and trimmed their losses from a shaky week. That was even though the bond market, which has been the center of Wall Street's action, remained jumpy and continued to add pressure.

The S&P 500 rose 0.4% for just its second gain in the six days since setting its all-time high last week.

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The Dow Jones Industrial Average jumped 517 points, or 1%, and the Nasdaq composite climbed 0.4%.

Ross Stores helped lead the way and rose 4.4% after reporting stronger profit and revenue for the latest quarter than analysts expected. CEO Jim Conroy said it saw both an increase in new customers and more interest from existing customers, while the off-price retailer at the same time benefited from refunds on tariffs.

Most U.S. companies have reported bigger profits for the spring than analysts expected, which has helped drive stocks to records recently. Stock prices tend to follow the path of corporate profits over the long term.

Hopes for continued profit growth got a boost from a preliminary report by S&P Global suggesting growth for U.S. business activity hit a 52-month high. But the other big lever that helps set stock prices, interest rates, has been much shakier.

After soaring through the summer and then hesitating following this week's surprise move by the U.S. Treasury Department to repurchase more U.S. government bonds, yields climbed further on Friday.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 4.73% from 4.69% late Thursday. It's back above its level from before the Treasury market made its move, which analysts said at the time would likely have only a temporary effect. The 30-year Treasury yield, which the Fed is also targeting with its bond repurchases, also rose and is near its highest level since 2007.

Contributing to Friday's gains for bond yields was continued uncertainty about when the war with Iran will allow oil tankers to freely exit the Persian Gulf again. That caused oil prices to rise, which affects Treasury yields because they increase worries about inflation.

The price for a barrel of Brent crude oil settled at \$92.67, up 0.8%.

Besides inflation, concerns about the fast-rising debt for the U.S. government have also been sending yields upward. Higher yields can slow the economy and undercut prices for all kinds of investments.

One of the biggest beneficiaries of U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent's move to try to get longer-term yields lower is bitcoin. Cryptocurrencies often rise when interest rates are lower and more money is flowing through the financial system. Hopes for legislation in Washington to help the crypto industry have also helped it.

Bitcoin has climbed above \$77,000 from less than \$63,000 a week ago. That helped stocks in the crypto industry lead Wall Street. Robinhood Markets jumped 13.7%, and Coinbase Global gained 8.2%.

The price of gold also climbed and briefly topped \$4,690 per ounce from less than \$4,440 a week earlier. The Treasury Department's buyback announcement has helped weaken the U.S. dollar's value against other currencies, which tends to give gold's price a boost.

That helped drive stocks of miners higher. Newmont climbed 3.1%, and Freeport-McMoRan jumped 7.6%.

They helped offset a 5.2% drop for OSI Systems, which sells security screening equipment to airports and other specialized electronic systems. It reported weaker revenue for the latest quarter than analysts expected, and CEO Ajay Mehra said it was hurt by "the Middle East conflicts which shifted the timing of certain planned deliveries."

Boston Beer sank 2.6% after the seller of Samuel Adams and Dogfish Head said its chief financial officer is leaving the company and announced an interim replacement.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 33.21 points to 7,674.37. The Dow Jones Industrial Average jumped 517.80 to 53,277.01, and the Nasdaq composite added 113.29 to 26,180.45.

In stock markets abroad, indexes rose in much of Asia and Europe. Hong Kong's Hang Seng rose 1.2%, and South Korea's Kospi climbed 0.9% for two of the world's bigger moves.

An 18-year-old with a sword attacks a school in Sweden, leaving 1 dead and 2 injured

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — An 18-year-old man with a sword attacked a school Friday in central Sweden, leaving one person dead and at least two others seriously injured, a police chief said.

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Police Chief Tommy Alriksson told a news conference that the suspect had been arrested following the attack at the school in the central town of Fagersta, northwest of the capital, Stockholm.

Police confirmed that shots were fired during the arrest. It was not clear whether the suspect had been injured, but he was being held in custody — not treated in a hospital.

The attack took place at the Brinell School in Fagersta while classes were in session, with about 400 to 500 students, officials said. There was no immediate word on the attacker's possible motive.

"We have no reason at this time to believe that there are multiple perpetrators," Alriksson said, adding that an investigation was continuing.

Sweden's national police said investigators have already carried out two house searches in connection with the suspect. Many witnesses were expected to be interviewed as part of the investigation.

"That's why we can't give out too much information, because we don't want to influence witnesses," Alriksson said.

Vastmanland County, where the town is located, said the two seriously injured boys were between 12 and 17 years old, the TT news agency reported. It did not provide details about the dead person.

Police spokesperson Pelle Vamstad, quoted by TT, said an alarm was received in the early afternoon Friday. Police cordoned off a wide area around the school as part of their response. Several nearby schools had been locked down following the incident, and roadblocks were set up, authorities said.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson, in a post earlier on the X social media platform, lamented the violence in Fagersta "right after the summer break."

"We do not yet know what lies behind the act, but we know that the police are working very intensively," he added. "Our thoughts are with all those affected."

The Fagersta city government set up a crisis center in a sports hall near the school. The Vastmanland County government said "many people" were affected and that police, fire services, and healthcare workers were among those caring for them.

Vance campaigns at the Ohio steel plant where his grandfather worked

By MICHELLE L. PRICE and JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

MIDDLETOWN, Ohio (AP) — Vice President JD Vance returned to his hometown on Friday to campaign for Republican candidates at the steel plant where his grandfather worked and portray the Democratic Party his Papaw once supported as unrecognizable today.

Vance has highlighted his Rust Belt roots while trying to boost GOP candidates ahead of the November midterm elections. He has focused on promoting the Trump administration's economic policies and efforts to try to expand U.S. manufacturing.

As he took the stage at the Cleveland-Cliffs Middletown Works facility, known as Armco Steel when his grandfather James Vance worked there for nearly 40 years, he remarked on sharing the space where the man whose name he shared once stood.

"Papaw was a welder in this place for 40 years, and today his grandson stands here as the vice president of these United States. It's an amazing thing," Vance said.

The Middletown event comes as Vance is expected to ramp up his travel schedule with more public events and fundraisers, according to a person familiar with the plans who was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Vance says Trump is trying to reverse decades of 'American decline'

As they've campaigned this year, Vance, more than President Donald Trump, has acknowledged Americans' cost-of-living concerns, seeking to assure voters that the administration is working to reverse high prices, though he didn't offer specifics.

The vice president said, "We've got a lot of work to do" and "I'm not saying it's going to be easy or it's all going to happen overnight," but he said Trump was trying to reverse "40 years of American decline." He pointed to Trump's immigration and trade policies, including his tariffs, as trying to protect jobs like

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those at the steel plant.

Trump's tariff policies, though, have contributed to the higher costs Americans are facing, as taxes on imports have raised the price of imported products as well as those made domestically, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

With an eye toward Ohio's competitive elections, Vance focused on portraying Democrats today as unrecognizable to the party his grandfather supported for its union associations, calling it the "party of graduate students."

Vance said his grandfather also thought "way too many politicians were just plain old corrupt."

"He hated the people who forgot about this town when they should have been fighting for this town," Vance said.

Vance blamed politicians of both major political parties, saying that for 40 years they espoused policies of free trade and open immigration that led to factory jobs being shipped overseas and an eventual scourge of opioids left behind, which he blamed on "a lot of cartels" and "the fentanyl trade," which he said came along with "some innocent people" across the border.

Vance has deep ties to the town and the steel plant

In his bestselling memoir "Hillbilly Elegy," Vance described the steel plant as an economic savior that brought his grandparents from Kentucky's hills into the American middle class. He described how his grandfather would boast upon seeing an old Ford or Chevy that its steel was made by his company.

His grandson's election as vice president of the United States spurred pride in the Midwestern city, though Vance has faced some pushback on his portrayal of it in the book. He said kids "derisively called it 'Middletucky'" when he was a child because it had so many transplants like his family. He said they brought problems with them from Kentucky, such as drug addiction, "Mountain Dew mouth" and problematic fathers.

In the 2024 election, Trump and Vance won about 62% of the vote in the city's precincts. His mother, Beverly Aikins, and his sister still live in Middletown.

Before he arrived at the steel plant, he first stopped by a pastry shop to buy doughnuts and remind workers there of the "no tax on tips" provision in the tax and spending law Trump signed last year, according to a video posted online by an aide.

After the event, Vance visited a Cincinnati chili restaurant where he served beers and Cincinnati chili-topped dogs with cheese to people gathered inside.

"Nice pour, JD!" someone shouted. "I'll take a beer back here," called another.

Ohio has lost its political bellwether status and turned red during the Trump era, but Democrats see a chance to win both the governor's office and a U.S. Senate seat from Republican hands this year as anti-Trump sentiment buoys their party.

Republican Sen. Jon Husted, who was appointed to replace Vance in the Senate, is trying to hold on to his seat against a challenge from former Sen. Sherrod Brown, a longtime Ohio politician with a pro-working class message who lost his reelection bid to Republican Bernie Moreno two years ago.

Brown has capitalized on public opposition to artificial intelligence data centers in the campaign and aired ads calling Husted the "face of data centers in Ohio." The National Republican Senatorial Committee, the GOP's Senate campaign arm, warned in a memo this week that backlash to the centers has left Husted vulnerable.

Vivek Ramaswamy, a Vance ally, is the party's nominee for governor in a race against Democrat Amy Acton. Democrats have not won the Ohio governor's office in two decades.

Husted and Ramaswamy both spoke before Vance on Friday, as did U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright.

Vance, whose family still keeps a home in Cincinnati where they sometimes spend weekends, was making his first public visit since his fourth child was born in July.

As part of his plans for ramping up his travel schedule, his office announced a trip Monday to Brewer, Maine, where former Republican Gov. Paul LePage is running against Democrat Matt Dunlap, the state auditor, in a competitive House district.

Trump announces plan to lower beef prices, but ranchers and some Republicans are already balking

By SEUNG MIN KIM and JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump announced Friday that his administration will allow more beef to be temporarily imported into the U.S. without triggering higher tariffs, which drew swift pushback from cattle producers and conservative rural-state Republicans.

Beef prices have climbed to record highs amid a drop in the number of U.S. cattle, consistent consumer demand and limits on cattle from Mexico, where the animals are facing a flesh-eating pest. The U.S. president has also imposed 50% tariffs on Brazil, a major beef exporter.

Trump remains under pressure to cut costs and address affordability issues ahead of November's mid-terms. But ranchers, normally some of the president's biggest supporters, are enjoying some rare profitable years and worry cheap beef imports will reduce cattle prices — and with it, the incentive to increase herd sizes.

"We all want lower grocery prices, but as I've said for months, we cannot do it at the expense of American producers," Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., said in a statement. "Flooding the market with foreign beef hurts our livestock industry and undermines the long-term solution: growing the U.S. cattle herd to meet demand."

When asked by reporters Friday evening about criticism of the deal, Trump said, "I love the ranchers; they've done a fantastic job. But they admit that we need a little help, and, in order to get the prices down, so that's what we're doing."

Sen. Tim Sheehy, R-Mont., said in a social media post just hours after Trump announced the deal that the president's "heart is in the right place," but importing beef will "harm our ranching families who feed the nation."

And Sen. Pete Ricketts, R-Neb., said that while he appreciates the administration's focus on grocery prices, "short term policy shifts do not equal long term solutions."

The deal, Trump said, allows up to 300,000 metric tons of ground beef to be imported into the U.S. for the next 90 days without activating an "out of quota" tariff, which is a tax that goes into effect once a certain quantity of that product enters the country.

The president said on social media that he had committed to ensuring the imported beef would be sold at 25% below current market rates, making it cheaper for American consumers. Trump didn't specify which countries would import the beef while speaking to reporters Friday, but said "there are a few" and that they'll send the "highest quality beef." A White House official said the deal is with foreign beef exporters who have agreed to the discount on beef.

"You don't put America first by putting U.S. cattle producers last," U.S. Cattlemen's Association President Justin Tupper said in a statement. "This move will weaken our markets and gamble with food safety in the process."

The president's announcement and other market interventions sacrifice "long-term stability for short term messaging," Colin Woodall, CEO of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, said in a statement.

Glynn Tonsor, a professor at Kansas State University who focuses on the cattle and beef industry, said he would like to see more details about the latest deal but that his immediate assessment was that it wouldn't have a big effect on prices.

That's because 300,000 metric tons amounts to roughly 3% of what Americans eat yearly, he said. "The relative magnitude we are talking about is pretty small."

David Anderson, professor of agricultural economics at Texas A&M University, said he was skeptical other countries could redirect so much beef to the U.S. in such a short time period.

"Is that even achievable?" he questioned in a phone interview.

The White House official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a plan that has yet to be finalized, said the beef in question is lean beef trimmings that are used for ground beef production. Trump plans to sign an executive order formalizing the directive within two weeks, the official said. The administration made a push last year to buy more beef from Argentina to try to bring down prices.

The president said Friday that his plan would help grow the U.S. cattle supply, which is the smallest it's been in decades. Some ranchers and experts said the opposite effect was more likely.

"Imports have been a major contributor to the decline in the U.S. cattle inventory," said Bill Bullard, the CEO of the R-CALF USA, which represents independent cattle producers. "Using more imports today will exacerbate that decline and will prevent herd expansion."

NCAA gets win in court on 5-year eligibility rule, but this is hardly the end of the lawsuits

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

DENVER (AP) — The NCAA notched an important win in federal court Friday over its much-disputed five-year eligibility rule, though it fell short of shutting down the last-minute shuffling threatening to upend college sports rosters with football season fast approaching.

A 2-1 decision by a panel of the U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals halted, for now, a judge's order that would have granted thousands of athletes an extra season of eligibility. But it did nothing to resolve dozens of other lawsuits and court orders piling up across the country that allow players in the same situation to join teams for the upcoming season.

Virtually all these lawsuits involve players who graduated from high school in 2022, whose college eligibility ended last season and who were not included in the NCAA's controversial new rule — less than two months old — that grants most Division I athletes five years of eligibility over five years but doesn't take effect until next season.

"There's a reason we saw so many state-court lawsuits filed" after the now-paused federal court ruling that came down July 31, said Sam Ehrlich, a former lawyer who now works at Boise State and operates the College Sports Litigation Tracker. "It was a 'just in case.' They did it just in case what we just saw happen actually happened."

Among the many athletes watching this unfold and wondering where it winds up are defensive linemen Kellan Wyatt and Stephan Daley, both members of the national championship team at Indiana last season who decided to return after the lower-court decision. So are former Ole Miss starters Dae'Quan Wright, Zxavian Harris and Wydett Williams, who won a ruling from a Louisiana state court giving them another season of eligibility even though they had signed with NFL teams this summer.

While some players hope to land back at their schools, whatever the impact on the rosters, how that works isn't at all clear in many cases. The judge in the case involving the Ole Miss players, for example, gave them a week to enter the transfer portal, which for football players is only open in January.

In appealing the state court cases, the NCAA is expected to invoke parts of Friday's ruling, which agreed with NCAA arguments that it was likely to win the case when it's heard in full — probably several months from now — and that the NCAA would suffer more harm than the players if the court didn't pause the order.

The NCAA can also take heart in an Ohio appeals court that paused a similar injunction involving Xavier basketball Filip Borovicanin and others.

But other than those two cases, Ehrlich said, judges across the country "are unanimous that the NCAA is in the wrong" on the five-year eligibility issue when it comes to the Class of 2022.

Plaintiffs' attorney Rob Shelquist issued a statement calling the appeals court ruling procedural and "not a decision on the merits of the athletes' antitrust claims."

"We are exploring every available option given the split in the panel's ruling and remain committed to fighting for these college athletes whose opportunities and eligibility have been unfairly restricted," he said.

The NCAA's chief legal officer, Scott Bearby, sent a memo to schools telling them they would not be subject to NCAA punishment for allowing any player to compete between the time the July 31 ruling came down and Friday. But he reiterated that those players are no longer eligible.

Bearby also acknowledged that the NCAA would continue to defend lawsuits around the country — a signal that the NCAA knows Friday's ruling offers no guarantees of an end to the roster chaos.

"If anything, I do wonder if there's a part of the NCAA that's, like, 'Maybe we'd have been better off not

getting the stay because, boy, there's going to be a lot of lawsuits filed over the next couple of weeks," Ehrlich said.

Courts that go beyond filing emergency injunctions and take up the cases in their entirety will have to decide who suffers more harm: Is it players who can't play a fifth year and could lose educational and NIL opportunities? Or incoming freshmen who signed with the idea that they wouldn't be competing against a class of fifth-year seniors?

When the NCAA decided to have the rule kick in next year, it also grappled with that calculation, knowing it couldn't be perfectly fair.

"Fairness is in the eye of the beholder," the NCAA argued in its legal brief in the appeals case. "Countless student-athletes already on campuses, and schools who built their rosters in reliance on the rules the NCAA's membership wrote and agreed to follow, do not believe it is fair for thousands of formerly ineligible athletes to return to competition at the start of the 2026-27 season."

Russian drones kill 15 people at a shopping mall in a central Ukrainian city, officials say

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian drones struck a shopping center in the city of Kryvyi Rih in central Ukraine on Friday, killing at least 15 people and wounding scores more, authorities said.

The shopping mall strikes, plus two other separate Russian attacks in the Mykolaiv and Kharkiv regions, left a total of 21 people dead across Ukraine on Friday, authorities said.

Kryvyi Rih is the hometown of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who described the attack as a double-tap strike, in which an initial wave of drones hit the area, followed by a second wave as rescue workers responded.

"Attacks like these are nothing less than terrorist acts," Zelenskyy wrote on social media. In a video address several hours later, he said Ukraine would respond to the shopping mall attack.

Oleksandr Hanzha, who heads the Dnipropetrovsk regional military administration, said Friday evening that the attack on the mall killed at least 15 people and injured 130, including 23 children.

Kryvyi Rih has been hit multiple times during the more than 4-year-old war, with one of the deadliest occurring in April 2025, when 20 people, including nine children, were killed.

Russia exploits Ukraine's shortage of defensive systems

Earlier on Friday, a Russian drone attack on Ukraine's Kharkiv region killed two women, aged 73 and 66, and wounded two others, said regional head Oleh Syniehubov.

Another Russian attack on Friday evening killed four people, including three children, in Ukraine's southern Mykolaiv region, emergency services said.

Ukraine shot down or suppressed 107 out of 135 drones launched by Russia overnight, according to a statement from Ukraine's air force on Telegram.

Friday's attacks came just 24 hours after Russia pounded the capital of Kyiv with scores of missiles and drones in a nighttime aerial attack that killed 16 people.

Large-scale Russian strikes have become a regular occurrence this summer. Just over two weeks ago, a Russian attack on Kyiv and its surrounding region killed 17 people, and nine were killed in the city two days before that. The United Nations said last week that Kyiv was one of the hardest hit cities in July, with at least 54 civilians killed and 202 injured.

Moscow's forces have recently intensified their ballistic missile attacks on Kyiv, exploiting Ukraine's chronic shortage of U.S.-made Patriot air defense interceptors, the sole weapon in its arsenal able to shoot down the missiles.

Ukrainian drones hit Russian oil refinery

A Ukrainian drone attack killed one person and wounded four others when a car was struck Friday in Russia's Belgorod region near the village of Razumnoye, local officials said, adding that two of the injured were in serious condition.

Earlier, Zelenskyy said a separate Ukrainian drone attack hit an oil refinery in Perm, more than 1,600

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kilometers (about 995 miles) from his country's border. Also struck was the Marinovka military airfield in Russia's Volgograd region, he said.

The Russian online news outlet Astra reported that the Ukrainian drone had set ablaze a Lukoil-operated oil refinery in Perm. Local officials said damage was recorded at an unidentified "industrial facility."

Russia's Defense Ministry said its air defenses overnight intercepted 325 Ukrainian drones over 15 Russian regions, as well as Crimea. The peninsula was illegally annexed by Moscow in 2014.

Later Friday, it said its defenses shot down another 211 drones.

Long-range strikes between Russia and Ukraine have escalated as troops continually fail to make significant battlefield progress, analysts say. Troop movements along the roughly 1,250-kilometer (780-mile) front line in eastern and southern Ukraine are severely restricted by large numbers of drones and ground robots that threaten infantry and vehicles.

In the past year, Ukraine has devised and deployed domestically produced long-range drones for strikes deep inside Russia, capturing the attention of governments and defense manufacturers around the world.

Officials in Kyiv aim to make the Russian public feel the war's consequences and pressure Russian President Vladimir Putin into negotiating a peace settlement. Putin has so far shown no sign he intends to stop the invasion.

T-wolves, Lynx co-owner Lore agrees to sell his controlling stake at a \$4.5B value, AP source says

By DAVE CAMPBELL AP Sports Writer

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Minnesota Timberwolves and Lynx co-owner Marc Lore has agreed to sell his controlling stake in the franchises to limited partner Marc Stad at a \$4.5 billion value barely a year after his purchase was finalized, according to a person with knowledge of the deal.

The person spoke Friday to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because details of the agreement — the second sale in the NBA this month — were not being publicized.

The Los Angeles Lakers were flipped by Mark Walter to Bob Iger and Josh Kushner at a \$12.5 billion valuation in a deal struck last week.

Lore, a New York e-commerce entrepreneur, and partner Alex Rodriguez, the former Major League Baseball star, bought the NBA and WNBA clubs from Minnesota businessman Glen Taylor. That complicated and contentious process lasted more than four years until the \$1.5 billion sale got league approval in June 2025.

Lore will retain a limited share and essentially swap roles with Stad, who is the founder of Dragoneer Investment group, a California-based firm focused on technology companies. Rodriguez will remain as a co-owner and continue as the most publicly visible owner of the pro basketball franchises.

Lore's decision to sell his majority stake stems from his focus on his food delivery startup Wonder, according to a second person with knowledge of the situation, speaking on condition of anonymity to the AP because those details were not being made public. Lore has started the process of taking Wonder public.

Lore, Rodriguez and Stad issued a joint statement Friday expressing their commitment to the current leadership in the organization including chief executive officer Matt Caldwell, Timberwolves president of basketball operations Tim Connelly, Timberwolves head coach Chris Finch, and Lynx president of basketball operations and head coach Cheryl Reeve.

"We have been working together for years with a shared goal of building the Timberwolves and Lynx into the best organization in basketball on and off the floor. Our priority is and always will be championships," the owners said. "Our new agreement, pending league approval, is an evolution of the partnership we have built together and strengthening of our commitment to our team and our culture."

The two teams currently play at Target Center, which opened in 1990 for the second season of the Timberwolves after they were granted an expansion franchise. Lore and Rodriguez have previously pledged a desire to keeping the teams in downtown Minneapolis, eventually in a new arena.

The Lynx were added to the WNBA as an expansion club in 1999 and have won four championships, with a healthy lead on the rest of the league this season behind star Napheesa Collier and rookie Olivia Miles.

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The Timberwolves have never won a title or reached the NBA Finals, with an eight-year run of making the playoffs behind star forward Kevin Garnett their only period of sustained success until recently.

Since drafting Anthony Edwards with the first overall pick in the 2020 draft, hiring Finch in 2021 and Connelly in 2022, the Timberwolves have grown into one of the league's best teams. They reached the Western Conference Finals in 2024 and 2025 and were ousted in the second round by the San Antonio Spurs last season. They acquired point guard LaMelo Ball in one of the NBA's biggest summer trades.

Israel will investigate Hind Rajab's killing. Her mother wants more

By SAM METZ Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The mother of a 5-year-old Palestinian girl who was killed after Israeli forces fired on her family's car in Gaza City wants an independent inquiry into her death, saying an Israeli military investigation announced this week is insufficient.

Wesam Hamada said her daughter Hind Rajab's final pleas still haunt her.

"All I remember is her voice pleading, 'Mama, I'm scared. Mama, I'm hungry. Mama, I'm hurt,'" she said. "Her voice keeps repeating in my ears."

The widely publicized recording of Hind's January 2024 phone call with her mother and emergency dispatchers made her one of the Israel-Hamas war's most prominent casualties.

Israel's military this week admitted to firing at the family's car as it fled an Israeli invasion and firing toward an ambulance dispatched to help them.

It said it would launch a criminal investigation into its troops' conduct. All six people in the car and two paramedics were killed. But both Rajab's family and emergency responders from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society doubt the Israeli investigation can deliver justice.

"Why did the investigation and the acknowledgment of the shooting at Hind's car and at the paramedics come only after more than two years?" Hamada said in an interview with The Associated Press. "It's an attempt to distract from what's happening in Gaza and improve the (Israeli) army's image to the world. That's it."

A call to paramedics that was heard around the world

The story of their deaths drew international outcry after the Palestinian Red Crescent Society released recordings of Hind and her 15-year-old cousin Layan Hamada calling for help. It was further amplified by "The Voice of Hind Rajab," a film that excerpted the recordings and was nominated for an Oscar.

On the recordings, as audible gunfire erupts around them, Hamada asks for help and tells Red Crescent dispatchers that her family had been killed. Seconds later, more gunshots are heard, and Layan's screaming stops.

Ambulance dispatchers called back and found Hind on the other end of the line. She told them Layan was dead and Israeli tanks were advancing. The Red Crescent sent an ambulance and stayed in contact with Hind until the call dropped.

Hind and five relatives were found dead in the family car 12 days later. The two medics sent to rescue her were also found dead nearby, their ambulance blackened and destroyed.

Israel initially said its troops were not in the area. A U.N. commission of inquiry and an investigation by the research group Forensic Architecture found evidence placing Israeli forces near the car and attributed the attack to them.

Rana Al Faqih, a dispatcher who was in contact with Hind for more than three hours, said the day remains seared in her memory. She tried to calm Hind and eventually patched her mother onto the call.

"I couldn't physically reach Hind, embrace her or help her feel safe," she said in an interview at the Red Crescent headquarters in Ramallah, West Bank. "All I had was my voice. My voice was with her, and it might have comforted her."

Advocates doubt an Israeli investigation can bring accountability

The investigation is one of two criminal probes the military announced Wednesday after reviewing roughly 150 incidents.

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Military investigators will now take up the probes and present their findings to military prosecutors. The military advocate general can then decide to keep investigating, indict any soldiers or decline to charge them.

Israeli officials say the country's justice system can address any violations by its troops. But such investigations rarely lead to indictments. Just 0.17% of incidents reviewed from 2014 and 2022 led to prosecution, according to an analysis by Israeli rights group Yesh Din.

The Belgium-based Hind Rajab Foundation — which campaigns for the arrest of Israeli troops it accuses of war crimes — said in a statement on Wednesday that an Israeli military investigation "should not be mistaken for a genuine step toward justice."

"Israel's internal investigations into the criminal conduct of its own soldiers are fundamentally flawed and cannot be regarded as credible mechanisms of accountability," it said.

A mother says her grief is not unique

The Israel-Hamas war began on Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas-led militants killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in southern Israel and abducted 251 others. More than 73,400 people have been killed in the Israeli offensive since, according to the health ministry in Gaza.

The ministry, part of the Hamas-led government, does not give a breakdown of civilians and militants but says women and children constitute about half the deaths.

Hamada said her pain since the killing of Hind — who had wanted to become a doctor — was not unique. "The pain is like the pain of every mother who has lost her child in Gaza," she said. "You wish she were in front of you, growing up and fulfilling your dreams and her dreams, and then you lose her in the most horrific circumstances."

___ Ibrahim Hazboun in Jerusalem, and Haitham Hamed in Ramallah, West Bank, contributed reporting.

Prince Harry and 6 others must pay initial \$13 million over failed invasion of privacy case

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Prince Harry and six others, including Elton John, have been ordered to pay an initial 9.5 million pounds (\$13 million) to the publisher of Britain's Daily Mail newspaper following their failed invasion of privacy case — and could face an additional 25 million pounds in legal costs.

In a judgment Friday, Justice Matthew Nicklin said in a written statement that the payment to Associated Newspapers Ltd. will have to be made by Aug. 28. The payment is at the upper end of expectations and marks a vindication for the journalists at the Daily Mail and a defeat for the losing claimants and their lawyers.

The claimants lost a High Court case in London last month during which they had alleged malpractice, such as the illegal hacking of phones, on the part of Associated Newspapers.

The other high-profile figures behind the case were Doreen Lawrence, the anti-racism activist whose son Stephen was stabbed to death in 1993 as he waited for a bus; Elton John's film producer husband David Furnish; actors Sadie Frost and Liz Hurley; and politician Simon Hughes. Lawrence's costs are expected to be covered by the others.

In excoriating comments accompanying his award, Nicklin said "several features" were important in his decision, including the "speculative" nature of the claims and the failure of the claimants to "voluntarily" withdraw serious allegations that could no longer be backed up.

"The conduct was unreasonable to a high degree," he said.

Claimants face additional 25-million-pound charge

The publisher has said it incurred more than 34 million pounds during the case. Should it pursue the claimants for the remainder of the costs, and get the necessary legal approval to do so, then Harry and the six others will be liable for a further 25 million pounds or so.

The claimants took out insurance for around half of that total, in line with the budget estimates provided at the outset by the lawyers working for Associated Newspapers.

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Though the judge said the costs appeared "excessive," he said he would not impose a cap that would have limited the claimants' liabilities as it would have been "too broad brushed, would risk unfairness, and would be vulnerable to the charge that it was arbitrary."

The amount that will be paid could well be determined in the future by costs judges, specialists who assess and determine financial outcomes in civil litigation when parties cannot agree.

David Bailey-Vella, chairman of the Association of Costs Lawyers, said the ruling "could not have gone much worse" for the claimants.

He said the claimants will "surely try again before the costs judges to try and show they relied on Associated's original budget when buying the insurance and so should not have to pay more."

Hughes, a former member of the centrist Liberal Democrats, said he was "disappointed and surprised" that Associated Newspapers' recoverable costs were not limited.

None of the other claimants have yet commented on the judge's decision. They have until Oct. 2 to decide whether to appeal.

Harry and the rest had failed to even win one of 97 claims

The publisher had strongly denied the claims made during the 11-week trial in London earlier this year. In his July 7 judgment, Nicklin said there had been a shortage of evidence to support the 97 claims and found there was a possibility that the reporting came from legitimate sources.

In a statement following the decision, Associated Newspapers said the judgment is a "devastating critique of an attempt to destroy a newspaper and the reputations of its journalists, editors and executives."

"The truth is that these outrageous claims should never have been brought," it said. "That they were pursued raises disturbing questions about the conduct of elements of the legal profession."

Cost verdict comes days after Harry's bombshell UK return news

The judgment comes two days after it was made public that Harry and his wife, Meghan Markle, are moving back to the U.K. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex, who are no longer working royals, decamped to California more than six years ago but will relocate back later this month to live in a nonroyal residence outside London.

Harry's defeat against Associated Newspapers brought an end to a trio of lawsuits accusing tabloid publishers of using unlawful tactics, such as phone hacking or hiring private detectives to dig up dirt on his life.

Harry won a judgment in 2023 that condemned the publishers of the Daily Mirror for "widespread and habitual" phone hacking. Last year, Rupert Murdoch's flagship U.K. tabloid, The Sun, made an unprecedented apology for intruding on his life for years and agreed to pay substantial damages to settle his privacy invasion lawsuit.

Harry has said his litigation — in which he broke with royal family tradition to seek relief in the courts — was a primary source of his falling out with his father, King Charles III, and brother Prince William.

His grudge with the tabloids runs deep and his legal actions are part of his larger quest to reform the news media that he says damaged his relationships and made him "paranoid beyond belief."

He blames the press for the death of his mother, Princess Diana, who was killed in a car crash in 1997 while being pursued by paparazzi in Paris, and for attacks on his wife, Meghan, that led the couple to abandon royal life and move to the United States in 2020.

Top-ranked Jannik Sinner withdraws from the US Open with a knee injury

By BRIAN MAHONEY AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Top-ranked Jannik Sinner withdrew from the U.S. Open on Friday, unable to recover from a right knee injury that has sidelined him since winning the Wimbledon title.

Sinner beat Alexander Zverev last month for his second straight title at the All England Club, but then pulled out of the hard-court tournaments in Montreal and Cincinnati that serve as a warmup for the U.S. Open.

The 25-year-old Italian wrote Friday that he won't be ready when the main draw begins on Aug. 30.

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"Even though I have been working hard with my team and my medical staff, we have now had to make the difficult decision that I will not be able to compete at the US Open this year," Sinner wrote in a post on X.

"We have been back on court in Monte Carlo over the last couple of days and have realized that I still need more time to recover from my right knee issue. I'm obviously very sad and disappointed, as New York has a special place in my heart. I was very much looking forward to coming back and playing in the electric atmosphere in front of the great fans there."

Sinner was the 2024 U.S. Open champion and lost to Carlos Alcaraz in last year's final.

Alcaraz posted on social media on Thursday that he would be ready to play in New York after he has been out of action since April because of a right wrist injury.

The rivalry between those two has dominated men's tennis in recent years, and they met in the last three Grand Slam finals in 2025. Alcaraz took the most recent one with his four-set victory in New York.

That ended Sinner's title reign after he beat Taylor Fritz in straight sets in the 2024 final.

Sinner is 44-3 with six titles this year. He had a stunning collapse at the French Open, blowing a two-set lead while struggling in the heat in his second-round match against Juan Manuel Cerundolo. He then sat out until Wimbledon, where his victory gave him five Grand Slam titles.

It will be the first time Sinner has missed a Grand Slam tournament since making his major debut at the U.S. Open in 2019.

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US, South Korean militaries wrap up drill early, a day after North Korea's missile barrage

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The U.S. and South Korean militaries wrapped up their annual drill six days earlier than initially scheduled on Friday in a conciliatory gesture toward North Korea, though the North said the step isn't enough to persuade it to return to talks.

U.S. President Donald Trump had earlier abruptly ordered the Pentagon to "substantially reduce" the Ulchi Freedom Shield exercise just before it began Monday. Trump cited what he described as a good relationship with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korea's refusal to support him over the war in Iran.

South Korea's military said the Ulchi Freedom Shield, a command post exercise with the U.S., ended on Friday.

This month's exercise was initially reportedly scheduled to be held in two phases for 11 days in simulation of North Korean attacks — the first part until Friday on defensive operations and the second part until Aug. 27 on counteroffensive operations. North Korea is extremely sensitive to the second phase.

South Korea and the U.S. had also planned to hold 14 joint field training exercises during the Ulchi Freedom Shield period. But they've agreed to halve them as well, according to South Korea's military.

North Korea shrugs off Trump's outreach

Kim Yo Jong, the influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, brushed aside Trump's overture on Wednesday, saying that reducing the duration and size of the drills won't change their "provocative, aggressive nature."

The next day, North Korea fired about 10 short-range ballistic missiles toward the sea, apparently following through with its previous threat to respond to the U.S.-South Korean drills that it views as an invasion rehearsal.

The U.S. Pacific Command said the events didn't pose an immediate threat to U.S. territory or its allies. The command said the U.S. remains committed to the defense of the U.S. homeland and its allies in the region.

Kim Yo Jong's statement dampened hopes for an early resumption of talks between Trump and Kim Jong Un, whose earlier nuclear diplomacy collapsed in 2019. Kim Jong Un has used the diplomatic stalemate to increase his leverage by modernizing his nuclear and missile arsenals and aligning with Russia over its war against Ukraine. Kim Jong Un suggested last year that he won't return to talks unless the U.S. drops its demand for North Korean denuclearization as a precondition for diplomacy.

Kim Yo Jong still used relatively measured language, avoided typical harsh North Korean rhetoric and touched upon what she called an "excellent" relationship between her brother and Trump. This suggests North Korea doesn't want to completely shut the door for future talks and may seek to win bigger U.S. concessions, such as international recognition as a nuclear state and broad sanctions relief.

More nuclear weapons, Russia ties give North Korea greater leverage

With its supply of ammunition and troops to Russia, North Korea is likely receiving economic and military assistance in return, and its expanding ties with Russia provides it with leverage to ask for greater support from China, its biggest trading partner.

"After this strategic play has run its course, Kim may seek further economic and reputational benefits from Washington," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul. "But that will probably be after the U.S. midterm elections when Trump is expected to be in a weaker domestic political position and in search of headline-grabbing foreign policies."

Kim Dong-yub, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, said that Kim Yo Jong's statement showed North Korea's position that a personal relationship between her brother and Trump "can't be a factor that moves current North Korean-U.S. relations." He said Kim Yo Jong likely aimed to head off speculation that Trump's move can restore diplomacy so as not to fully take the blame when it doesn't happen.

Kim Yo Jong denied Trump's claim that Kim Jong Un had responded to his request for a conversation.

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When asked by reporters Wednesday if he would be meeting with Kim Jong Un this year, Trump said that "Yeah, I will be."

The Ulchi Freedom Shield is one of the main military exercises conducted by the U.S. and South Korea annually to enhance their ability to cope with potential North Korean aggression. Its downsizing has caused worries about joint U.S.-South Korean readiness.

Today in History: August 22, first America's Cup trophy

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, Aug. 22, the 234th day of 2026. There are 131 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Aug. 22, 1851, the schooner America outraced more than a dozen British vessels off the English coast to win a trophy that came to be known as the America's Cup.

Also on this date:

In 1791, the Haitian Revolution began as enslaved people of Saint-Domingue rose up against French colonizers.

In 1910, Japan annexed Korea, which remained under Japanese control until the end of World War II.

In 1922, Irish revolutionary Michael Collins was shot to death, apparently by Irish Republican Army members opposed to the Anglo-Irish Treaty that Collins had cosigned.

In 1965, a fourteen-minute brawl ensued between the San Francisco Giants and the Los Angeles Dodgers after Giants pitcher Juan Marichal struck Dodgers catcher John Roseboro in the head with a baseball bat. (Marichal and Roseboro would later reconcile and become lifelong friends.)

In 1968, Pope Paul VI arrived in Bogota, Colombia, for the start of the first papal visit to South America.

In 1972, John Wojtowicz (WAHT'-uh-witz) and Salvatore Naturile took seven employees hostage at a Chase Manhattan Bank branch in Brooklyn, New York, during a botched robbery; the siege, which ended with Wojtowicz's arrest and Naturile's killing by the FBI, inspired the 1975 movie "Dog Day Afternoon."

In 1989, Black Panthers co-founder Huey P. Newton was shot to death in Oakland, California.

In 1992, on the second day of the Ruby Ridge siege in Idaho, an FBI sharpshooter killed Vicki Weaver, the wife of white separatist Randy Weaver.

In 1996, President Bill Clinton signed welfare reform legislation that ended guaranteed cash payments to the poor and demanded work from recipients.

In 2003, Alabama's chief justice, Roy Moore, was suspended for his refusal to obey a federal court order to remove his Ten Commandments monument from the rotunda of his courthouse.

In 2007, a Black Hawk helicopter crashed in Iraq, killing all 14 U.S. soldiers aboard.

In 2016, a bomb attack targeting an outdoor wedding party in Turkey killed at least 30 people and wounded 94 others. The attack came as the country was still reeling from a failed coup attempt weeks earlier.

In 2022, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the United States' top infectious disease expert who became a household name — and the subject of partisan attacks — during the COVID-19 pandemic, announced he would be leaving the federal government in December after more than five decades of public service.

Today's Birthdays: Author Annie Proulx is 91. Baseball Hall of Famer Carl Yastrzemski is 87. Pro Football Hall of Fame coach Bill Parcells is 85. Writer-producer David Chase is 81. International Swimming Hall of Famer Diana Nyad is 77. Baseball Hall of Famer Paul Molitor is 70. Rock guitarist Vernon Reid is 68. Country singer Collin Raye is 66. Rock singer Roland Orzabal (Tears For Fears) is 65. Singer Tori Amos is 63. International Tennis Hall of Famer Mats Wilander (VEE'-luhn-dur) is 62. Rapper GZA (JIHZ'-ah)/The Genius is 60. Actor Ty Burrell is 59. Celebrity chef Giada De Laurentiis is 56. Actor Rick Yune is 55. Comedian-actor Kristen Wiig is 53. Pop singer Dua Lipa is 31. Actor Raphael Alejandro is 19.