

Groton Daily Independent

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Community Calendar

Wednesday, Sept. 16

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

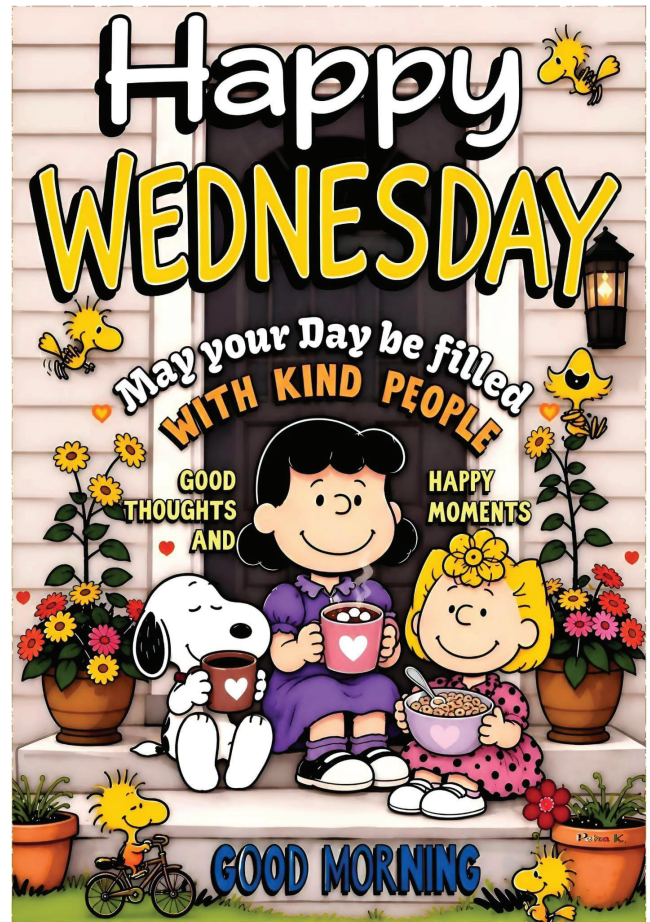
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

Groton Daily Independent

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Thursday, Sept. 17

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

Cross Country at Aberdeen Roncalli Invitational
Volleyball hosts Clark/Willow Lake (7th/C @ 5pm, 8th/JV @ 6pm, Varsity to follow)
3rd-6th Grade Football hosts Warner, 6 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 18

HOMEcoming DAY!

Senior Menu: Taco bake with ground beef, Mexican rice with beans, Catalina blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

Homecoming Parade, 1 p.m.

Football hosts Elk Point-Jefferson, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 19

HOSA Homecoming Dance

Youth Football Jamboree in Groton, 8 a.m.

Volleyball Invitational at Hamlin

Boys soccer hosts Freeman/Marion/Parker/Viborg-Hurley, Noon

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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.

The Space Arms Race

The US has deployed weapons in orbit, officials revealed Monday, marking the first public acknowledgment of US space-based weapons. Officials offered few details, describing them as "on-orbit space control weapons" designed to protect against hostile action.

The disclosure comes amid growing space-military competition, with the US saying that China and Russia are developing capabilities that could threaten US satellites. In 2025, the US announced plans to develop Golden Dome, a missile defense network that would include space-based interceptors to destroy missiles in flight. One Congressional Budget Office model estimated a system could require 7,800 orbital interceptors and cost \$1.2T over 20 years. The 1967 Outer Space Treaty bans nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in orbit, but does not ban conventional weapons. Meanwhile, a Pentagon watchdog found the Iran war has strained US interceptor inventories, with operations costing over \$42B.

See how many space-based interceptors circling Earth it could take to defend against a missile attack.

Treasury Yields Soar

The 10-year and 30-year Treasury yields yesterday climbed to their highest levels since 2007, the year before the global financial crisis. Investors now see a more than 92% chance the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates by 0.25% today.

Treasury yields are the annual returns the federal government pays to investors who buy bonds. The 10-year yield hit 5.04%, and the 30-year hit 5.36% yesterday, in part due to inflation fears as the Iran war sends oil prices above \$106 per barrel. The 10-year yield is often used as a benchmark for borrowing costs, so its rise may drive up mortgage rates. Higher-yielding bonds could also spur investors to shift money from stocks to bonds, pushing the stock market down. US stock markets closed down on the news (S&P 500 -0.5%, Dow -0.6%, Nasdaq -0.8%).

Separately, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent defended President Donald Trump's economic record before Congress, including a \$5.2B bond buyback last week aimed at driving yields down.

Kennedy Center Closes

The Kennedy Center's board, led by President Donald Trump, voted yesterday to close the landmark DC venue, citing urgent financial and structural issues. The board's decision came soon after a federal judge ruled Trump's name could not be readded to the building.

The board cited a partial ceiling collapse in the venue's main lobby on Sept. 4 after an evening of heavy rain in its decision. However, the board said it will not begin a planned two-year, \$257M renovation project funded by Congress until Trump's name can be inscribed, an effort to honor his plan to raise an additional \$100M in funding. A federal judge has ruled such inscriptions illegal, citing federal law that no memorials or plaques be added to the Kennedy Center without congressional approval.

Trump is the first current or former US president to serve as chair of the Kennedy Center, which has historically had a bipartisan governance structure.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Prosecutors say they will not pursue death penalty if Nick Reiner is convicted of murdering his parents, director Rob Reiner and photographer Michele Singer Reiner.

Amazon is reportedly in talks to air Emmys on Prime Video in 2027 after the 31-year deal that rotated the award show through TV networks expired this year.

PGA Tour CEO Brian Rolapp suggests LIV Golf players may not get special opportunity to switch to PGA amid LIV bankruptcy.

Science & Technology

SpaceX to perform 14th test flight of its fully reusable Starship mega-rocket next week, attempting to bring the upper stage into Earth's orbit for the first time.

Paleontologists identify Diplodocus remains in Spain, suggesting the dinosaur crossed a land bridge from what is now the western US to Europe during the Late Jurassic period (More, w/image)

African wild dogs travel over 2,560 miles in eight months, longest recorded trek by an African mammal.

Business & Markets

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney calls for more data centers, investment in airports at first Canada Investment Summit.

... and confirms he will discuss possibility of visa-free travel for Canadians in this week's EU talks.

Bitcoin falls 4% after Senate blocks cryptocurrency bill aimed at establishing new regulatory framework for digital assets in 49-50 vote.

AI marketing platform Profound achieves unicorn valuation at \$1.8B after raising \$180M in Series D funding.

Women's health startup Evvy raises \$40M Series B round to scale its vaginal microbiome diagnostics platform.

Politics & World Affairs

FBI thwarts an "imminent" mass casualty attack planned by 21-year-old Pennsylvania man who pledged allegiance to ISIS, Justice Department says.

The US reports its fourth measles death in a year for the first time since 1992; Pennsylvania confirms two deaths Tuesday from unvaccinated people in the state.

NATO jets shoot down drone over Lithuania as Denmark accuses Russian warship of firing flares at a Danish military helicopter.

Netherlands blames major railway outage on sabotage; has not identified suspect or motive.

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Sunflower Classic Scramble Couples Tournament

Sunday, September 6, 2026

Championship Flight

1st Place –Susie Sousa & Mark Papstein - 66
2nd Place - Brevin Fliehs & Carly Guthmiller – 66
3rd Place – Reid Johnson & Carlee Johnson - 67
4th Place - Erica Hunstad & Ken Lynch – 69
Ian Rose & Rylie Rose - 71
Brad & Dar Larson – 71
Mark & Kari Kline - 73
Randy & Sue Stanley – 73

First Flight

1st Place – Jake Unzen & Stacey Vikander - 74
2nd Place – Doug & Vicki Jorgenson – 74
3rd Place – Pat Martin & Tammy Doerr - 75
4th Place – Tom & Vicki Hladke - 75
Steve & Betty Dunker – 76
Suzie Easthouse & Evan Easthouse – 76
Josh & Madison Claymore – 76
Liam Johnson & Nicole Johnson - 77

Second Flight

1st Place – Brad & Brenda Waage - 79
2nd Place – Spencer & Kelli Locke - 81
3rd Place – Marvin Bonnett & Barb Gillick - 81
4th Place – Tony & Mandy Grohs - 81
Shorty & Julie Fliehs – 82
Chad & Michelle Johnson – 86
Porter Johnson & Lilly – 94
Bob & Mavis Rossow – 94
Larry & Shirlee Frohling - 95

Pin Prizes

Closest to the Pin #4 (Women's) – Carlee Johnson
Closest to the Pin #8 (Men's) – Mark Papstein
Longest Putt #9 – Madison Claymore

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Johnson wins Redfield Invitational, Tigers place fourth

Groton's Jace Johnson captured medalist honors Tuesday at the Redfield Invitational Golf Meet held at Fischer Grove Golf Course near Redfield.

Johnson turned in a 5-over-par 75 on the par-70 course to take first place individually. He opened with a 37 on the front nine and followed with a 38 on the back nine. Johnson recorded birdies on the par-4 eighth hole and the par-5 13th.

Groton finished fourth in the team standings with a score of 363. Watertown JV won the team title with a 321, followed by Sioux Valley at 339 and Aberdeen Roncalli at 353. Sisseton was fifth at 367, Redfield sixth at 376 and Milbank seventh at 386.

Haden Harder was Groton's next finisher, placing 20th with a 93. He shot a 46 on the front nine and a 47 on the back.

Bentley Ehresman finished one stroke behind Harder with a 94 to place 21st. Ehresmann carded a 49 on the opening nine before improving to a 45 on the back nine.

Liam Johnson placed 29th with a 101. He shot a 51 on the front and 50 on the back. Easton Larson was 30th with a 102, shooting 52-50.

Graham Rose rounded out the Groton contingent, finishing 35th with a 107. Rose had a 51 on the front nine and a 56 on the back.

Groton's four counting scores for the team total came from Jace Johnson, Harder, Ehresmann and Liam Johnson.



Jace Johnson takes first at the Redfield Golf Meet held Tuesday.

(Photo by Becca Johnson)



Groton golfers participating at the Redfield Meet are pictured above, left to right: Easton Larson, Bentley Ehresmann, Liam Johnson, Graham Rose, Haden Harder and Jace Johnson.

(Photo by Becca Johnson)

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☆	1		Jace Johnson <i>Groton</i>													+5				75			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total		
Strokes																							
White - Men Tee / SLOPE®: 119 / Course Rating™: 66.6 / FISHER GROVE CC																							
Yardage	410	192	324	475	130	364	353	300	165	2713	410	192	324	475	130	364	353	300	165	2713	5426		
Par	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	35	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	35	70		
Jace Johnson	5	3	5	5	4	4	4	3	4	37	5	3	4	4	3	8	4	4	3	38	75		

☆	20		Haden Harder <i>Groton</i>													+23				93			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total		
Yardage	410	192	324	475	130	364	353	300	165	2713	410	192	324	475	130	364	353	300	165	2713	5426		
Par	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	35	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	35	70		
Haden Harder	5	4	5	6	3	5	7	5	6	46	6	4	4	7	5	6	5	6	4	47	93		

	21		Bentley Ehersmana <i>Groton</i>												+24					94			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total	
Yardage		410	192	324	475	130	364	353	300	165	2713	410	192	324	475	130	364	353	300	165	2713	5426	
Par		5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	35	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	35	70	
Bentley Ehersmana		5	4	4	7	4	7	6	5	7	49	6	4	5	7	5	5	5	5	3	45	94	

☆	29			Liam Johnson <i>Groton</i>												+31				101			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total		
Yardage	410	192	324	475	130	364	353	300	165	2713	410	192	324	475	130	364	353	300	165	2713	5426		
Par	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	35	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	35	70		
Liam Johnson	4	3	5	10	4	11	8	3	3	51	5	4	4	7	5	7	6	5	7	50	101		

☆	30		Easton Larson <i>Groton</i>													+32				102			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total		
Yardage	410	192	324	475	130	364	353	300	165	2713	410	192	324	475	130	364	353	300	165	2713	5426		
Par	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	35	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	35	70		
Easton Larson	5	6	5	5	4	6	10	6	5	52	5	3	5	7	5	5	7	8	5	50	102		

☆	35			Graham Rose <i>Groton</i>												+37				107			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total		
Yardage	410	192	324	475	130	364	353	300	165	2713	410	192	324	475	130	364	353	300	165	2713	5426		
Par	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	35	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	35	70		
Graham Rose	6	5	5	8	4	6	7	6	4	51	7	5	5	8	4	8	8	5	6	56	107		

Starting Hole Eagle or Better Birdie Par Bogey Double Bogey or Worse

Locke scores twice to lift Groton past Lennox

by Coach Matt Baumgartner

Final

Groton Area 2

Lennox 1

1st Half

Groton Area 1

Lennox 0

2nd Half

Groton Area 1

Lennox 1

Goals:

- 1) Groton Area - Sydney Locke assisted by McKenna Tietz - 3rd minute.
- 2) Groton Area - Sydney Locke - 48th minute.
- 3) Lennox – Nora Alustiza Roitegui - 63rd minute.

Goalkeeper:

Groton Area - Tori Schuster – 80min – 9 saves

The game had many good challenges for us today, we had to defend a fast team in Lennox that can erupt chaos in our defensive third and play confident and calm enough in front of their goal. We fired attack after attack in the opening minutes and came out ahead with a wonderfully worked throw in from McKenna Tietz to an open Sydney Locke to knock home the opener inside the first three minutes. Lennox found chances first half and put Schuster into save mode as she made some spectacular saves and rounded out the day with 9 total. There are things we did at our best all season today and a couple nuances that we will have to fix up. I'm proud of the energy we brought in the opening stages of each half and how we fought for a rewarding victory on homecoming week.

Names Released in Hanson County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: SD 42 at mile marker 311, 10 miles southwest of Alexandria, South Dakota

When: 8:05 p.m., Friday, September 11, 2026

Driver 1: Andrew Michael Wipf, 31-year-old male from Alexandria, South Dakota, minor injuries

Vehicle 1: 2005 Dodge Dakota

Seat Belt Used: No

Passenger: Andrew J. Wipf, 59-year-old male from Alexandria, South Dakota, fatal injuries

Seatbelt Used: No

Hanson County, S.D.- An Alexandria man died Friday in a single vehicle crash near Alexandria, South Dakota.

Preliminary crash information indicates Andrew Michael Wipf, the driver of a 2005 Dodge Dakota, was traveling westbound on SD 42 near mile marker 311 while pulling a trailer loaded with lumber. He lost control of the trailer while going down a hill. The Dodge entered the north ditch, rolled, and became separated from the trailer. His passenger, Andrew J. Wipf, was ejected from the vehicle and sustained fatal injuries. Andrew Michael Wipf was taken to a Mitchell hospital with minor injuries.

The investigation is ongoing. All information released is preliminary.

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

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Andover Threshing Show Photos

Photos by Donna Anderson



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Putney Strikers win 2026 state mixed bowling championship

The Putney Strikers captured the team championship at the 2026 South Dakota State USBC Mixed Championship held this spring.

The team of Austin Schuelke, Deb Schuelke, Suzie Easthouse and John Sippel finished at the top of the final standings with a combined score of 2,880. The team competed through the Aberdeen Area USBC.

Pictured are Austin and Deb Schuelke, Suzie Easthouse and John Sippel. (Courtesy Photo)

Groton City Council hears update on code enforcement, tables rubble site monitoring, baseball report

By Elizabeth Varin

The Groton City Council addressed changes to code enforcement in town and discussed oversight of the city's rubble site during its Tuesday meeting, but tabling discussion related to the 2026 baseball end-of-year report.

The city's contracted code enforcer Dennis "Mike" Olson told the council he plans to retire and recommended a potential replacement, Joel Johnson with Code Enforcement Specialists, a property code enforcement company based in Burke.

"I've passed the three quarter century mark and feel like I should slow down," Olson said. "I hope the town feels like we've made good progress. I certainly want to let the council know that these efforts should continue."

Olson told the council he said he would remain in the position until the city signs a contract with a new code enforcer. However, if the city decides to hold off on contracting with a replacement, Tuesday's meeting marked his 30-day notice.

The council also discussed a proposal to install a camera monitoring system at the city's rubble site. Questions arose about why more progress had not been made toward transitioning oversight of the site to City Hall employees.

Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich told the council that maybe 30 percent of the system to control the rubble site code system and cameras have been installed on City Hall computers.

Mayor Scott Hanlon asked him what they needed to do to get it all moved over to City Hall.

"By the end of the month it would be nice to get you guys to have control of it," Hanlon said.

Council members discussed whether it would make more sense to put a new code and camera system in, something City Hall employees would be comfortable working with, Councilman Brian Bahr added.

Councilman Kevin Nehls asked that the item to add a new camera facing the rubble site be tabled until the original gate code and camera system is dealt with.

The council ultimately tabled the discussion, with members instead indicating they want to move forward with a new system to monitor the gate and emphasizing that they would like to see the system installed sooner rather than later.

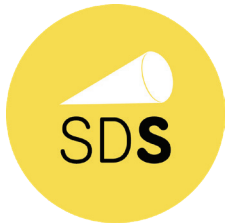
The council also tabled the 2026 baseball end-of-year report, opting to wait until a majority of council members could meet in person to discuss and approve the report. Two council members participated in Tuesday's meeting by phone, while another two council members were absent.

Council members confirmed that employees and contractors had been paid, but held off on approving the report. Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich said the only items pending the approval of the report are a reimbursement to the American Legion and the splitting of the gate fees from the season at the ballpark.

- The council approved signing an agreement for the Rural Attorney Recruitment Program after City Attorney Chad Locken assured the council the city would not incur costs with the program. The city is sponsoring the attorney, and the firm employing the attorney has agreed to be completely responsible for the municipality's share of the incentive payment, \$4,379.76 per year.

- The city will enter into a funding agreement for the 2028 signing and delineation project. The project will evaluate the need for new road signage (including stop, yield, curve warning, delineation, school zone and street name signs) on county and Class II and Class III city roads. According to the joint powers financial and maintenance agreement between the state Department of Transportation and the city, the state will be the contracting party to install the new signs, obtain the required environmental clearance and provide construction engineering including construction supervision and inspection. Once the project is complete, the city would take over the maintenance, repair and replacement of all street name signs installed on any part of the project that are within the city limits. The council voted to enter into the agreement and authorized the mayor to sign the agreement.

- The council approved the first reading of an ordinance to certify the city's tax levy, essentially putting in writing how much the city will ask the county to collect for the city of Groton in property tax. Questions arose about opt-out agreements that have been in place for more than 20 years, but the council approved the first reading anyway.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Lawsuit causes South Dakota secretary of state to issue new guidance on federal-only voter notices

BY JOHN HULT

South Dakota Secretary of State Monae Johnson has instructed county auditors to send voters stripped of their right to vote in state and local elections more accurate letters explaining why.

The letters will also offer guidance on how to get those rights back for those who feel they shouldn't have lost them.

The instructions are an outgrowth of a federal lawsuit against the state filed by the League of Women Voters and a Sioux Falls man named Jaysen Hill. He alleges he wasn't able to vote in local contests in the June 2 primary because of a registration error and wasn't offered an explanation or an opportunity to address it in time to cast a ballot.

The League is a nonprofit organization focused on voter registration and civic education. It argues that the procedures used to implement a new law requiring proof of citizenship by people who register to vote are unconstitutional.

That law is one of two passed by lawmakers in the past two years to create a class of "federal-only" voters in South Dakota. Such voters get ballots that allow them to vote in federal races like U.S. House or Senate or president, but not in state or local contests or ballot questions.

A 2026 law requires newly registering voters to provide a birth certificate, passport, driver's license, non-driver's identification card or tribal identification card, or "any other type of acceptable documentary evidence of citizenship" permitted under federal law. Photocopies can be used in place of all of them except driver's licenses and state or tribal identification cards.

A related law from 2025 designates newly registering voters and voters requesting absentee ballots as federal-only if they list only a mail-forwarding service or post office box as their address, unless they can provide a physical address and prove 30 days of state residency.

Hill sent a photocopy of his identification card when he mailed in his voter registration and was tagged as a federal-only voter as a result, the lawsuit says. Even so, he got a letter from the Minnehaha County auditor erroneously saying that had happened because he'd failed to provide a physical address — something he'd done correctly.

Letter issue spurs request for immediate intervention

The League takes issue with several procedures surrounding the implementation of the proof-of-citizenship requirement.

Last week, the group asked U.S. District Judge Eric Schulte to issue an order that would immediately stop the state from tagging voters as federal-only without offering an accurate reason and a way to remedy the issue.

On Monday, Johnson filed a document saying that while she doesn't have the authority to mandate what kind of letters local auditors send federal-only voters, she did send auditors two alternative form letters on Monday that address the League's concerns. One explains to such voters that they failed to produce documentation of their citizenship, and the other says they've failed to provide a residential address.

She also sent a separate letter to auditors that says "it has come to my office's attention that some county auditors may be sending out a notice concerning the failure to provide a residential address" to voters who did that but didn't offer proof of citizenship.

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Auditors should do three things, Johnson said in that letter:
Stop sending inaccurate letters to people registered as federal-only.
Start sending accurate ones.

Send new letters to federal-only voters who got inaccurate ones to tell them how to get back their "full-voter status" in time for them to do so by the voter registration deadline of Oct. 19.

The document also says Johnson contacted the state's registration system vendor and asked it to disable the auto-populating letter feature that had been producing the allegedly problematic letters for counties.

League asks judge to put it in an order

Schulte scheduled a snap hearing for Tuesday after Johnson's filing. He wrote that he'd been "on the cusp" of issuing a ruling, but that he wanted to assess the impact of Johnson's actions on his need to do so.

At that hearing, Schulte asked William Hancock, a Campaign Legal Center attorney for the League, if Johnson's actions satisfied the "simple fix" request the League outlined in its court paperwork and during last week's hearing.

They did, Hancock said. But he added that they only represent "the first step" toward a more permanent, longer-term remedy.

Hancock noted that Johnson's declaration did not include a promise to maintain the new procedure going forward, and that she could "walk it back" any time.

He also argued that Johnson had continued to downplay her role as the state's top election official, and said the state hadn't taken steps to correct the problem until "the 11th hour," when a ruling from Schulte was imminent.

Johnson's office did not address the issue in the months before the primary, Hancock said, or support changing the rules to address it when the Board of Elections voted down the League's proposed procedural changes at a meeting in July on a technicality, and did not agree to address it in correspondence with the League in the weeks that followed.

The League would still like an order, he said at the hearing, which was livestreamed into an empty courtroom in Sioux Falls because all the parties appeared remotely.

Drew Driesen, a lawyer for the state, argued that it would be all but impossible for Johnson to "walk back" her guidance so near to an election. County auditors are preparing for advance voting, which begins Friday, and are too busy to reverse course twice in one week.

No order is needed, Driesen said.

Schulte told Driesen that a filing from Johnson pledging not to rescind the guidance "would help," but told both parties he still needs "to get this order out" in a timely fashion. He gave Hancock until noon Wednesday to offer any additional written arguments to support the request for an order in the League's favor.

While Johnson's actions and a potential order from Schulte would deal with the immediate issue of notice to federal-only voters, both sides would still need to deal with the rest of the issues in the case in the coming weeks and months.

The lawsuit additionally asks Schulte to force the state to accept photocopies of driver's licenses, tribal IDs and nondriver IDs for voter registration, and to rescind guidance requiring in-person registration for people who use such IDs as proof of citizenship.

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.

Two years after McCook Lake disaster, Corps of Engineers agrees to help with new flood-control plan

BY JOSHUA HAIAR

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and several local governments are partnering to study ways of better protecting the lower Big Sioux River area from high water, including the McCook Lake community that was devastated by flooding in 2024.

The Big Sioux River empties into the Missouri River at Sioux City, where the borders of South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa meet. The feasibility study will examine whether improvements to the existing flood-control plan could better protect homes, businesses, infrastructure and agricultural land.

Local sponsors are Union County, the city of North Sioux City and the Dakota Dunes Community Improvement District.

The Corps announced the partnership Tuesday in a news release. The city administrator of North Sioux City, Jeff Dooley, said in an email response to South Dakota Searchlight that studies of this kind can last up to three years and cost up to \$3 million in total, with the Corps funding half and the local partners funding the other half.

Three days of heavy rain totaling more than 17 inches in some locations caused the June 2024 flooding. As record-high water rolled down the Big Sioux River, authorities who were following a decades-old flood plan installed a temporary levee that diverted water toward McCook Lake, where they hoped for a manageable rise that would later drain out of the lake.

Instead, floodwaters overwhelmed the lake. Emergency crews had to rescue some residents, more than 100 homes were damaged, and roads and other infrastructure were destroyed.

The disaster cost North Sioux City, which includes McCook Lake, millions in infrastructure repairs. Homeowners suffered millions in additional damage and received some assistance from federal disaster relief programs, though in some cases it wasn't enough to replace their losses. Some also lacked flood insurance.

The existing flood-control plan "has generally performed as intended" in the past, according to the Corps' website. "However, recent flooding events have highlighted changing conditions and new challenges that warrant further evaluation."

The Corps said the study's first public open house will be in North Sioux City in late October, but did not provide a specific time, date or place.

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

December trial date set for South Dakota lawmaker facing election-related felony charges

BY JOHN HULT

SIOUX FALLS — A judge in Minnehaha County set a December trial date on Tuesday for a South Dakota state senator facing election-related felony charges.

Dell Rapids Republican Tom Pischke, 44, is charged with two felony counts of filing a forged or false instrument for allegedly signing and submitting candidate nominating petitions for county party precinct positions without those candidates' knowledge.

Minnehaha County election officials noticed some discrepancies in the petitions and turned them over to investigators, court documents say. The candidates did not appear on the June primary ballot.

The Minnehaha County Republican Party chairman told South Dakota Searchlight earlier this year that he believes Pischke was trying to hamstring the chairman's ability to conduct party business by adding precinct representatives and making it more difficult to get a quorum for meetings.

Pischke was first charged in a criminal complaint, which entitled him to a preliminary hearing at which

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prosecutors would need to show they had enough evidence to proceed with those charges.

When the time came for that hearing last month, Pischke waived his right to contest the charges. That cleared the way for a jury trial and set up Tuesday's arraignment hearing.

At the hearing, Judge Doug Barnett advised Pischke of his rights, told him each criminal count is punishable by up to two years in prison, accepted a not guilty plea from Pischke and set a Dec. 7 jury trial date.

Pischke and his lawyer, Ryan Kolbeck of Sioux Falls, declined to comment on the case after the hearing. Attorneys for both sides said during Pischke's first appearance earlier this summer that they were discussing a plea agreement.

Pischke ended his reelection campaign in July, saying the ongoing case would make it too difficult for him to be transparent with constituents.

No Democrat is running for Pischke's state Senate seat, but former Republican lawmaker Bryan Breitling, of Dell Rapids, had been running against him as an independent candidate in District 25, which includes northern Minnehaha County and all of Moody County.

Breitling will now face Bart Sample, of Flandreau, who was chosen to replace Pischke by the Republican Party. Sample finished third in a three-way primary race on June 2 for two Republican nominations for the district's state House seats.

On the other side of South Dakota, a Republican state representative pleaded no contest last month to a misdemeanor road damage charge in a case that began as a felony. Travis Ismay of Newell regraded the gravel road that runs by his property himself, forcing Butte County to redo the work at a cost of more than \$1,700.

Ismay's no contest plea was not an admission of guilt, but rather an acknowledgement that the state had enough evidence to convict him of the misdemeanor charge. The reduced charge was offered by the Butte County state's attorney as part of a plea deal, as was a requirement that Ismay repay the county for redoing his work.

Ismay has no general election competitor and will return to Pierre for another term in January.

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.

FBI's Patel dodges questions on election interference at rambunctious US Senate hearing

BY ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — FBI Director Kash Patel sidestepped questions about FBI agents at polling places in the midterm elections at a U.S. Senate hearing Tuesday that also featured a tense exchange between GOP Chairman Chuck Grassley of Iowa and Democratic Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey.

With the November midterm elections fast approaching and the parties jockeying for control of Congress, several Democratic senators wanted assurance from Patel, under oath, that the FBI would not send agents into polling places.

"Do you pledge that you will not, in any way, interfere in the will of the American people when they go to the polls in November?" Sen. Peter Welch, a Vermont Democrat, asked.

"I pledge unequivocally that I will not participate in your charade of lies," Patel told Welch.

Patel in addition faced questions during the five-hour hearing from members of the Judiciary Committee about recent changes to the agency's hiring requirements, an ongoing probe into 2020 election ballots seized in Georgia, and how the FBI plans to handle crimes committed by AI agents.

'We have a lackey here'

A boiling point came when Booker spoke beyond his allotted time and name-called Patel a "thug" who "wouldn't qualify" to be an FBI special agent.

Booker accused Patel of not answering questions about whether the agency was improperly targeting journalists. The FBI subpoenaed multiple New York Times reporters in July after the outlet published ac-

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counts of security deficiencies on President Donald Trump's new Qatari-donated jet now used as Air Force One. The DOJ dropped the subpoenas later that month after a federal judge pressured the agency.

"My concluding remark is we don't have an FBI director. We have a lackey here who is using government, and frankly, he's not even a good lackey. He's an incompetent lackey. He's like an 18-year-old kid who wants to join a fraternity that he could never be a member of, doing keg stands and chugging with friends," Booker said, before continuing the exchange for roughly four minutes more.

"Are you ready to shut up?" Grassley, of Iowa, asked Booker with a raised voice.

Patel brushed off Grassley's offer during the exchange to respond to Booker.

"I don't have much to say. This guy called me a thug. It's kind of ironic. He's running for president of the United States. He just got his 20-second ad campaign," Patel said. "Next."

Booker told NBC News' "Meet the Press with Kristen Welker" in March that he's "definitely not ruling out" a presidential run in 2028.

Grassley thanked Patel for "putting up with what you had to put up with."

"And I'm sorry I couldn't control some of them more than I already did," he said.

Democratic probes promised

Sen. Adam Schiff, a California Democrat, warned a Democratic-led Congress would investigate the FBI's actions under Patel's leadership.

That includes the alleged firing of agents who worked on investigations of the Jan. 6, 2021 Capitol attack and President Donald Trump's alleged hoarding of classified documents at Mar-a-Lago following his first term.

"The FBI is being sued for wrongful termination. I will remind you, director, because you probably need reminding, that while this Congress is not going to investigate the wrongful termination of potentially hundreds of agents for working on properly predicated investigations, the next Congress will," Schiff said.

The panel's Republicans praised Patel for his record at the agency.

Patel said his agency "has made America safer than it's ever been."

"Across six America 250 events and this year's World Cup alone, we welcomed over 12 million visitors to the United States to attend these events. Not one single incident occurred at any single one of these events," he said during his opening remarks.

Bizarre exchange over FBI hiring

One topic that drew scrutiny from both sides of the aisle was a recent reported change at the FBI that lifted previous disqualifying behavior for special agent recruits, including theft from employers, prostitution and bestiality.

Sen. John Kennedy, a Louisiana Republican, said he understands "the game" of Democrats broaching the subject of bestiality to "make you look bad," but said he was also "trying to get to the bottom of this."

In a bizarre and unexpected exchange for a Senate hearing, Kennedy asked hypothetically, "If 'Joe' participated in bestiality, not as the animal, but as the human, don't you think he ought to be disqualified?"

"If he voluntarily did it, sure," Patel said.

Kennedy interrupted, "Okay, how do you involuntarily do that?"

Patel said some people are trafficked and forced into "degrading acts of all kind," but later want to join the FBI.

"But you're not telling us today that if a human being (voluntarily) had sex with an animal that they can still be an FBI agent?" Kennedy asked.

"No," Patel responded.

"In fact, they ought to be in jail, right?" Kennedy shot back.

"They all are," Patel said.

"Yea, well, okay," Kennedy said.

FBI at polling locations

On the topic of an FBI presence at the polls on Nov. 3, Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., told Patel he

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was "dissatisfied that you are unable to give us an unequivocal, clear, unambiguous commitment that the FBI will be kept out of election interference."

"You are involved in seven voter-related subpoenas issued to the Nevada Secretary of State's office, you were involved in seizure of election records from Fulton County, Georgia. Clearly, the FBI has been involved in possible election interference," Blumenthal said.

FBI agents seized 2020 presidential election ballots in Fulton County in January.

The Trump administration served voter-related subpoenas earlier this month in Nevada.

Welch told Patel he's concerned about what he's "willing to do for the president in this year's midterm elections that the president is already saying are going to be rigged if he loses."

Moments later Welch asked, "Last month, Congressman and Michigan gubernatorial candidate John James said to podcaster Benny Johnson, quote, 'I've already had a good conversation with my friend Kash Patel, who has said already that the FBI will have a presence leading up to Election Day in Michigan, in both West Michigan and Southeast Michigan.' Is that true?"

"We have an election crimes community coordinator in all 56 field offices, so you bet we're going to have them there and manning the posts for election interference," Patel said.

The exchange continued for several minutes, growing more contentious, as Welch pressed for an answer and Patel said he would not take part in a "charade of lies."

"Then why are you being such a panderer to President Trump, who's still claiming that he won the 2020 election, and who has said the only way Democrats can win in 2026 is if they cheat. Do you believe that?" Welch replied.

"I believe in the rule of law. ... I want to know how your wealth increased 4,000% since you became a United States senator?" Patel shot back.

"Let's knock it off," Sen. John Cornyn, a Texas Republican, chimed in after taking over the hearing for Grassley.

AI hacking

Sen. Josh Hawley, who has shown skepticism of the skyrocketing growth of artificial intelligence, used part of his time to ask how the FBI will handle illegal hacking incidents by AI agents.

Several incidents this summer involved AI agents hacking into other systems, including OpenAI agents that broke into tech company Hugging Face, without explicit instructions to do so.

The recent explosive development of AI has dominated headlines and conversations on Capitol Hill in recent days after top tech executives warned development was moving too quickly to adhere to safety guardrails. Congress has yet to pass overarching AI regulations.

"What's the role here for the bureau? How, how do you wrap your head around these kind of crimes?" asked Hawley, a Missouri Republican.

"This is a great question. It's literally the new frontier, and nobody's really talking about it, so thank you. So a couple things: The president has issued his AI directive on what the government can and can't use, and that's the right first step because you don't want 77 different large language models," Patel said.

The FBI, he said, has reviewed 140 "test case models" to measure their capabilities and "make sure they are cooperating and following underlying federal statutes."

"What we need to do on a resource basis is go after the people that created these models that are going rogue," Patel said.

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

Iran war cost tops \$40B and billions more monthly, budget analysis finds

BY JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — The cost of U.S. military operations in Iran has exceeded \$40 billion and the war will continue to cost taxpayers between \$2 billion and \$3 billion per month, according to an analysis released Tuesday by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

The ongoing bombing campaign, which President Donald Trump launched alongside the Israeli government in February, has also significantly reduced American military weapons stockpiles, according to the analysis.

CBO Director Phillip L. Swagel wrote in a letter accompanying the report that “the main opportunity cost of the conflict thus far has been the large expenditure of missile defense interceptors, which will leave the United States with a reduced inventory of interceptors for several years.

“The shortfall would become especially problematic if a conflict arose with an opponent whose arsenal included large numbers of ballistic and cruise missiles.”

Swagel noted in the letter that because the Defense Department “did not respond to CBO’s requests for information” the report “relied on government databases and public reports.”

“As a result, CBO’s estimates are subject to considerable uncertainty,” he wrote.

In addition to the direct costs, CBO expects the war to increase inflation in the first quarter of 2027 by 0.5 percentage points due to the rise in energy prices, predominantly caused by increased danger and difficulty navigating the Strait of Hormuz.

“CBO’s analysis does not assign financial costs to U.S. military personnel killed or injured in the conflict, nor does it include longer-term costs associated with future increases in outlays for veterans’ health care and disability compensation,” Swagel wrote. “It also does not include costs that could emerge in the future if ships, aircraft, and other equipment need repairs or additional maintenance as a result of their use in the conflict.”

Boyle request for numbers

The analysis stems from a request House Budget Committee ranking member Brendan Boyle submitted to CBO in March.

The Pennsylvania Democrat wrote in a statement released Tuesday that the “disastrous war in Iran has already taken the lives of brave American servicemembers and left others wounded.”

“Beyond that human toll, this nonpartisan CBO report makes clear that the war has also cost American taxpayers tens of billions of dollars and counting, while continuing to drive up costs,” Boyle added. “Donald Trump and Republicans have spent years telling Americans that we cannot afford to help families here at home, but apparently they can find tens of billions of dollars, and potentially much more, for a reckless war that is leaving Americans to pay the price.”

Inspectors general report

The CBO report differs somewhat from a report released earlier this week by inspectors general from the departments of Defense and State as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development.

That report estimated the war cost at \$33.4 billion through June 29, though it didn’t include any costs since then.

Neither report includes the cost of damaged military infrastructure, with Swagel writing it was “unable to estimate the cost of damage to U.S. bases and facilities in the Middle East for two reasons.

“First, DoD has not provided CBO with information about the value of damaged or destroyed equipment and property. Second, the extent of repairs or rebuilding that DoD plans to undertake is unclear. And even if the bases were fully repaired or rebuilt, a portion of the costs of doing so could be paid by host nations.”

The inspectors general wrote their report “did not include the cost of military construction for damaged infrastructure in its estimate because the DoW has not determined what its future posture will be in the region, how it will construct its bases, and what percentage of the construction costs Allies and partners will contribute.”

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Administration pleads for more war funding

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth testified before the Senate Appropriations Committee in July that without extra money from Congress, the department would "face critical shortfalls that threaten" its ability to "pay our service members, rapidly replenish equipment and munitions, and sustain vital operations without disruption."

The Trump administration asked Congress in June to provide \$87.6 billion in emergency funding for the war as well as other expenses not covered in annual government spending bills.

That supplemental request proposed \$67.15 billion for the Defense Department, \$3.36 billion for the State Department, \$2.03 billion for the U.S. Coast Guard, \$40.26 million for the FBI, \$36.18 million for the Treasury Department's office of terrorism and financial intelligence and \$13.1 million for the Homeland Security Department's operations and support account that was part of a "classified request."

Congress has not yet approved the additional spending and isn't likely to this month before both chambers return to the campaign trail ahead of November's midterm elections.

The inspectors general wrote in their report that because lawmakers have not provided dedicated funding for the Iran war that the Defense Department has "used base budget funds that otherwise would be used for standard operational activities, such as planned training and maintenance activities."

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

First tribal police recruits set to graduate from basic training in North Dakota

Nobody from South Dakota among first 12 to complete program

BY MICHAEL ACHTERLING

Basic law enforcement training for tribal police officers expanded to North Dakota this year, offering tribes in the northern region a training option other than the U.S. Indian Police Academy in New Mexico.

Twelve recruits from nine tribal law enforcement agencies participated in the first 14-week class of Camp Grafton's Indian Country Police Officer Training Program, with graduation set for Tuesday.

Camp Grafton Training Center, a North Dakota National Guard base near Devils Lake, previously offered advanced law enforcement training for the BIA. But the only basic training option was in New Mexico, which leaders in North Dakota and other northern states have said is a barrier to recruiting new tribal police officers.

Charles Addington, principal director for justice services and law enforcement for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, said in a statement that the response to the new program has been "overwhelmingly positive."

"This pilot offering has provided renewed hope for many agencies across the northern region by giving them a closer, more accessible option for training their officers," Addington said.

One North Dakota tribal police recruit joined the pilot program from the BIA Turtle Mountain Agency. Other participants are from tribal nations in Washington, Nebraska, Wyoming and Wisconsin. The program also was promoted to Idaho, Montana, South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa, Addington said.

The training at Camp Grafton is closer to home and easier on family life, said Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians Chairman Jamie Azure.

"You're not having to displace yourself and go all the way across the country just to receive training to come back and provide a service in our own communities," Azure said. "It provides more opportunity to more people, being closer."

Sgt. Mike Roy, a school resource officer for the Three Affiliated Tribes, said he would have preferred to have a training option closer to home. He attended the tribal law enforcement academy in New Mexico while his wife and kids were home in North Dakota.

"Being away for like five months, that's hard," Roy said. "Had I been here, I could have been coming home on the weekends."

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The program features nearly 600 hours of training across different disciplines, such as report writing and court testimony, federal and tribal criminal law, emergency vehicle operations, firearms fundamentals and arrest and control techniques, according to the bureau.

Addington said the goal of the pilot program is to assess the capabilities of Camp Grafton as a training site and ensure adequate resources, facilities and the number of instructors are in place to provide the basic law enforcement course into the future.

The bureau is planning to offer multiple tribal basic law enforcement courses over the next year that will include 24-36 officers in each class.

In addition to basic law enforcement training, the bureau will also feature basic training for tribal correctional officers and additional specialized training for tribal police and corrections officers in missing persons, defensive techniques, child and elder abuse and high-risk traffic stops, according to the bureau's website.

"All academy programs are taught by subject-matter experts who have extensive experience working in tribal communities and handling the complex and sensitive investigations often encountered in Indian Country," Addington said.

North Dakota Monitor journalists Jack Dura and Amy Dalrymple contributed to this report.

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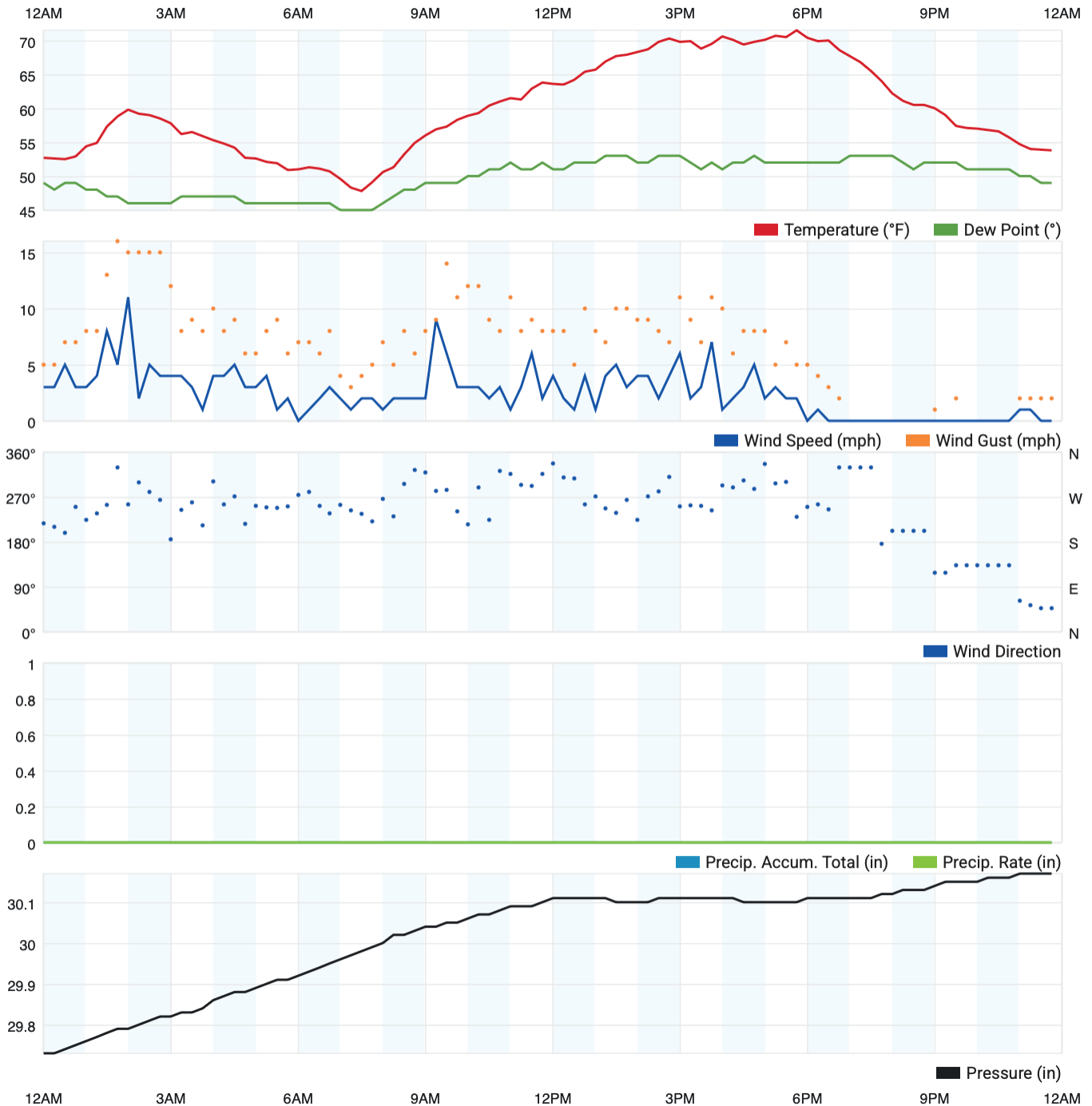
Michael Achterling is a reporter based in Bismarck. He recently worked as digital editor and city government reporter for the Detroit Lakes Tribune in Minnesota and as news director for KDLM/KRCQ/KBOT, a part of Leighton Broadcasting. You can reach him at machterling@northdakotamonitor.com.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

September 15, 2026



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Today



High: 70 °F

Partly Sunny

Tonight



Low: 48 °F

Partly Cloudy

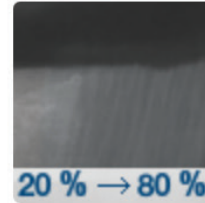
Thursday



High: 73 °F

Partly Sunny

Thursday
Night

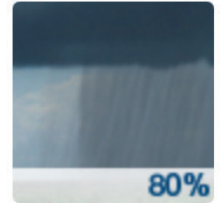


20 % → 80 %

Low: 54 °F

Slight Chance
Showers then
Showers

Friday



80%

High: 67 °F

Showers



Timing Rainfall Thursday-Friday

September 15, 2026

3:08 PM CDT

Key Messages

- Colorado Low type system
- Rain develops across southwest/south central South Dakota initially
- Spreads east to northeast, increases in coverage and intensity late Thursday (see chart)
- East-West band of moderate rainfall sets up across eastern South Dakota but...
- **Greatest uncertainty** - where exactly the band sets up, which influences highest total moisture (upwards of 2")
 - Will it be Southeast SD and Sioux Falls?
 - How about Huron to Watertown/Brookings?
- or -
 - Maybe even Sisseton/Aberdeen?

Probability of Precipitation (%) Forecast

	9/17 Thu								9/18 Fri							
	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	
McIntosh	0	0	5	5	25	25	40	40	40	40	15	15	5	5	15	
Eagle Butte	0	5	10	10	35	35	80	80	75	75	30	30	5	5	10	
Murdo	5	10	15	15	60	60	95	95	80	80	10	10	5	5	5	
Mobridge	0	5	5	5	25	25	45	45	60	60	30	30	5	5	10	
Pierre	0	5	10	10	45	45	90	90	90	90	30	30	5	5	5	
Gettysburg	0	5	5	5	30	30	70	70	80	80	45	45	5	5	10	
Kennebec	0	10	20	20	55	55	95	95	90	90	25	25	5	5	5	
Eureka	0	0	0	0	20	20	40	40	60	60	35	35	10	10	10	
Chamberlain	0	10	15	15	55	55	95	95	100	100	45	45	5	5	5	
Miller	0	5	5	5	35	35	85	85	95	95	60	60	10	10	15	
Ellendale	0	0	0	0	15	15	30	30	55	55	45	45	25	25	10	
Redfield	0	0	0	0	25	25	70	70	90	90	70	70	15	15	15	
Aberdeen	0	0	0	0	20	20	45	45	75	75	60	60	25	25	10	
Huron	0	5	5	5	30	30	75	75	100	100	85	85	15	15	10	
Britton	0	0	0	0	5	5	30	30	60	60	60	60	30	30	15	
Clark	0	0	0	0	25	25	55	55	90	90	80	80	30	30	15	
Webster	0	0	0	0	20	20	45	45	75	75	70	70	40	40	20	
Watertown	0	0	0	0	25	25	50	50	90	90	85	85	45	45	20	
Sisseton	0	0	0	0	5	5	30	30	70	70	75	75	40	40	30	
Brookings	0	0	5	5	30	30	60	60	100	100	95	95	35	35	35	
Milbank	0	0	0	0	15	15	35	35	80	80	90	90	50	50	30	
Wheaton	0	0	0	0	5	5	25	25	55	55	70	70	45	45	35	



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

A Colorado Low will lift across the region late Thursday into Friday, bringing moisture to a decent swath of the state into western Minnesota. The exact location for where the heaviest rainfall sets up, which could exceed 2", is still a little uncertain. Models place it somewhere across the southeast, east central or northeast, so hoping for a little better confidence in time.

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Through The Weekend

September 15, 2026

3:38 PM CDT

Active with another decent rainmaker Thursday-Friday

Wednesday



Highs
69 - 79

20 - 30%
Showers

Thursday



Highs
69 - 73

30 - 90%
Rain

Friday



Highs
65 - 74

30 - 90%
Rain

Saturday



Highs
66 - 71

20 - 40%
Showers
(west river)

Sunday



Highs
66 - 71

20 - 40%
Showers



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

We're setting up for a more active next several days. The first system coming through tomorrow (Wednesday) won't bring much moisture overall. Its the system towards the end of the work week that will bring another 1-2" type amounts to mainly eastern South Dakota.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 72 °F at 5:44 PM

Low Temp: 48 °F at 7:27 AM

Wind: 17 mph at 2:21 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 96 in 1925

Record Low: 20 in 1916

Average High: 75

Average Low: 47

Average Precip in Sept.: 1.08

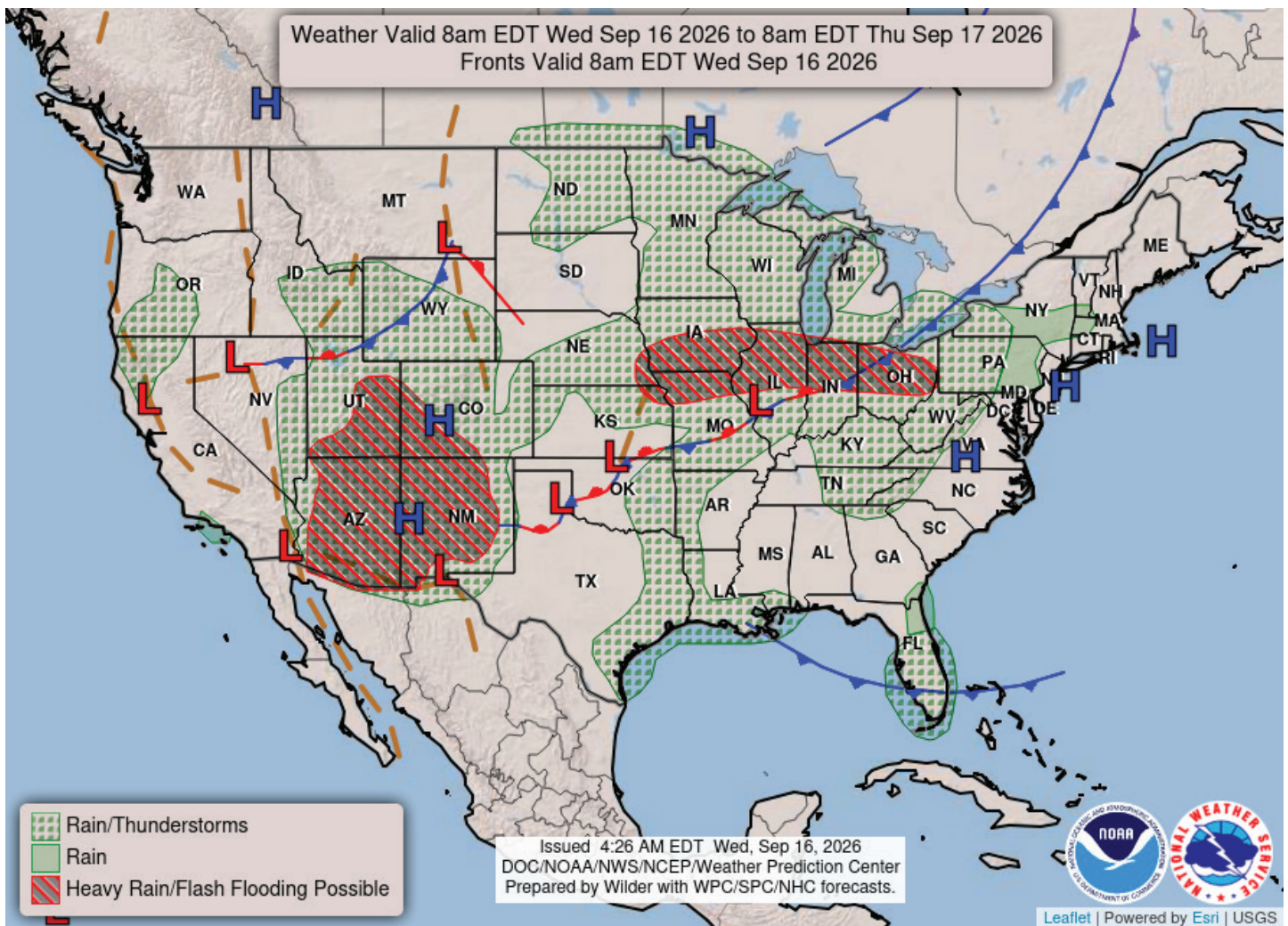
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.90

Average Precip to date: 17.42

Precip Year to Date: 20.96

Sunset Tonight: 7:42 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:13 am



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Today in Weather History

September 16, 1965: A heavy snow event brought widespread snowfall across the region with snowfall accumulations of 1 inch in Colony and Devils Tower, 2.6 inches at the Rapid City Airport, 4 inches in Oelrichs, 5.1 inches in Redig, and 8 inches in Lead, Spearfish, and Sundance.

September 16, 2006: Two weak tornadoes touched down briefly west and north of Clark in the late afternoon. No damage occurred.

1881: Iowa's earliest measurable snow of record fell over western sections of the state. Four to six inches was reported between Stuart and Avoca.

1888: An estimated F2 tornado struck Washington, DC. The tornado first touched down on the south side of the city then moved up Maryland Avenue. The National Museum and Botanical Gardens were damaged before the tornado lifted off the ground.

1928: The Okeechobee Hurricane, also known as the San Felipe Segundo Hurricane was one of the deadliest hurricanes in the history of the Atlantic basin. This Hurricane made landfall near West Palm Beach, Florida as a Category 4 storm during the evening hours of the 16th. The storm surge caused water to pour out of the southern edge of Lake Okeechobee, flooding hundreds of square miles as high as 20 feet. This storm killed over 4,000 people, including 2,500 in Florida.

1961: On September 16, 1961, Hurricane Esther was seeded by Navy planes in the inaugural experiment of what was to formally become Project STORMFURY next year. Esther was the first hurricane to be initially detected by satellite. On Sept. 10th, TIROS III imaged an area of disturbed weather a hundred miles southwest of the Cabo Verde Islands.

1984 — The remains of Tropical Storm Edourd began to produce torrential rains in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Port Isabel reported more than 21 inches. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Overnight rains soaked Arkansas, with 5.25 inches reported at Bismarck. In the town of Malvern, up to four feet of water was reported over several downtown streets, with water entering some homes and businesses. Thunderstorms in Texas drenched Lufkin with 4.30 inches of rain in just three hours. Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in Missouri. A small tornado near Kirksville lifted a barn thirty feet into the air and then demolished it. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Hurricane Gilbert moved ashore into Mexico. The hurricane established an all-time record for the western hemisphere with a barometric reading of 26.13 inches. Winds approached 200 mph, with higher gusts. Gilbert devastated Jamaica and the Yucatan Peninsula. (The Weather Channel) Hurricane Gilbert made landfall 120 miles south of Brownsville TX during the early evening. Winds gusted to 61 mph at Brownsville, and reached 82 mph at Padre Island. Six foot tides eroded three to four feet off beaches along the Lower Texas Coast, leaving the waterline seventy-five feet farther inland. Rainfall totals ranged up to 8.71 inches at Lamar TX. Gilbert caused three million dollars damage along the Lower Texas Coast, but less than a million dollars damage along the Middle Texas Coast. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Showers and thunderstorms, representing what remained of Hurricane Octave, brought locally heavy rains to California, impeding the drying process for raisins and other crops. Sacramento CA was soaked with 1.53 inches of rain in six hours. At Phoenix AZ, the afternoon high of 107 degrees marked a record seventy-six days with afternoon highs 105 degrees or above. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2004 — Hurricane Ivan turned northward over cooler waters, and made landfall in southern Alabama as a Category 3 storm. Hurricane Ivan had a very unusual track almost making a huge circle.

The God Who Pursues

Drifting from God's calling doesn't hinder His sovereignty; rather, it reveals His persistence in pursuing us.

Jonah 1:1-17: 1 The word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying,

2 "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me."

3 But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

4 The LORD hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up.

5 Then the sailors became afraid and every man cried to his god, and they threw the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone below into the hold of the ship, lain down and fallen sound asleep.

6 So the captain approached him and said, "How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god. Perhaps your god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish."

7 Each man said to his mate, "Come, let us cast lots so we may learn on whose account this calamity has struck us." So they cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.

8 Then they said to him, "Tell us, now! On whose account has this calamity struck us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?"

9 He said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land."

10 Then the men became extremely frightened and they said to him, "How could you do this?" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

11 So they said to him, "What should we do to you that the sea may become calm for us?"--for the sea was becoming increasingly stormy.

12 He said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea. Then the sea will become calm for you, for I know that on account of me this great storm has come upon you."

13 However, the men rowed desperately to return to land but they could not, for the sea was becoming even stormier against them.

14 Then they called on the LORD and said, "We earnestly pray, O LORD, do not let us perish on account of this man's life and do not put innocent blood on us; for You, O LORD, have done as You have pleased."

15 So they picked up Jonah, threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging.

16 Then the men feared the LORD greatly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

17 And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

When Jonah ran away from the Lord, he probably thought he'd escaped an undesirable assignment. But before long, he found himself in an even less pleasant situation: taking a wild ride inside a fish. Two things stand out in this story.

Jonah's determination to get away. Perhaps you've had the same struggle Jonah had: God's plans don't match yours. We can coast along, enjoying fellowship with the Lord until the day He asks us to do something we'd rather avoid. It's an honest reaction, one more common than most of us admit. But when we run from what God is inviting us into, the distance we create costs us the peace and closeness we had with Him.

God's persistence in pursuing him. What's remarkable about this story isn't Jonah's resistance—it's God's refusal to give up on him. The Lord "hurled a great wind on the sea" (v. 4) and "appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah" (v. 17). These weren't punishments; they were interventions. God pursued Jonah because He had something meaningful for the prophet to be part of, and He loved the people Jonah was meant to reach.

When we drift from what God has called us to, He doesn't abandon us there. He comes after us—not to condemn, but to draw us back into the fullness of life with Him (Psalms 139:7-10).

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.15.26

5 6 14 36 38 3

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 36 Mins 33 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.15.26

27 36 43 57 58 16

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$244,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 21 Mins 33 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.14.26

1 10 26 47 52 8

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$4,550,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 36 Mins 33 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.12.26

14 15 22 23 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$55,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 51 Mins 33 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.14.26

12 23 48 61 67 8

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 20 Mins 33 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.14.26

19 20 57 61 67 22

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$271,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 20 Mins 33 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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

Staffing problems stall federal investigations of missing and killed Native people

By SARAH RAZA and SAVANNAH PETERS Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Peter Martin went missing two years ago from the Fond Du Lac reservation in Minnesota. His family hasn't stopped looking, but they say the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs investigation into Martin's disappearance has stalled since the agent assigned to the case left the role in early 2025.

"They've never had a person take his space for this region and yeah, we haven't heard from them since," said family friend Kayla Jackson.

The bureau's Missing and Murdered Unit was created in 2021 to address the crisis of violence against Native Americans and put new resources toward solving cold cases. But a recent federal audit by the Interior Department's internal watchdog found staffing issues have plagued the unit since its formation during President Joe Biden's administration, creating a backlog of cases and leaving families without required victim services.

Federal spending on the initiative grew from \$12 to \$17 million between 2021 and 2024. During the same period, the audit found that 39% of money for the Missing and Murdered Unit was redirected toward other Bureau of Indian Affairs law enforcement costs, including upgrading vehicles. Nearly half the unit's posts remained unfilled as of last year, even as the bureau overall has lost a third of its workforce due to staffing cuts under President Donald Trump.

The bureau says it has adopted many of the report's recommendations, from streamlining its case referral pipeline to training staff on victim services requirements. But federal auditors say weaknesses in its hiring process remain. And some families are still in the dark about their loved ones' cases.

"It is nothing but heartbreaking just to see how inadequate the response has already been for so many of these situations," said David Adams, an Albuquerque-based attorney, former federal prosecutor and member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

Hundreds of cases languished for years

The Missing and Murdered Unit had 83 open cases and nearly 400 pending referrals as of November 2024, according to the audit released Sept. 9 by Interior's Office of Inspector General. The unit did not have a timeframe for assessing referrals.

The audit also found agents had unmanageable caseloads, with some assigned administrative duties, like conducting research on referrals, on top of their active investigations.

Relatives of Kaysera Stops Pretty Places were hopeful when, in 2022, a Bureau of Indian Affairs agent was assigned to her still-unsolved case. Stops Pretty Places had just turned 18 when her body was found in a town bordering the Crow Reservation in 2019.

Her aunt, Grace Bulltail, said the agent was difficult to reach and provided few updates. Last year, Bulltail learned the agent never had full access to the files of local investigators before the agent was reassigned to other duties.

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The Associated Press emailed bureau officials seeking comment about the case.

Sarah Deer, a professor at the University of Kansas School of Law, said delays and dysfunction among federal investigators are compounding families' grief.

"These are families who have often experienced institutional failure already," she said. "A system designed as a response to that history cannot ask families to keep waiting."

Victims' families fell through the cracks

In 8 of 13 cases reviewed by the inspector general's office, the assigned agent did not contact bureau staff who specialize in helping victims' families. One staff member said they referred families to outside programs because the unit had only two victim specialists nationwide.

Martin was 31 years old when he was reported missing after a welfare check on the Fond Du Lac reservation in 2024. Relatives described him as an outgoing man who played sports with kids and took his nieces and nephews out trick-or-treating. Family members said they get periodic updates from the Fond Du Lac Police Department, but were never connected to BIA victim specialists.

The BIA website does not list a case agent in Martin's case. The AP asked bureau officials for comment. Federal efforts on missing and murdered cases

The Trump administration says it has been ramping up efforts to address high rates of violence against Native people. Last month, the FBI announced it would set a minimum reward of \$25,000 for public information in dozens of cold cases on tribal land.

Bureau of Indian Affairs officials said in a statement they have taken steps under President Donald Trump to improve case processing and make sure families get support. They said most of the recommendations from the audit had been acted upon.

"The deficiencies identified in the OIG audit reflect operations under the previous administration that were inconsistent with the objectives outlined in Operation Lady Justice," the statement said, referring to a presidential task force established by the first Trump administration in 2019 to address the crisis of missing and killed Indigenous persons.

In February, the Missing and Murdered Unit assisted in recovering and identifying two sets of remains on the Chickasaw Nation, closing a missing persons case that had run cold more than a decade before.

Deer said new federal and state task forces and specialized law enforcement initiatives have increased public awareness of the crisis.

"The government has stepped up in some ways to appropriate resources, but implementation matters," she said.

Meanwhile tribal police departments, which are often the first to respond to cases involving Native people, remain under-resourced with limited capacity to investigate complex crimes, she said.

"What I always come back to is whether or not this money could be better utilized by tribes themselves," Deer said.

Building collapse in Gaza kills 19 as perilous conditions persist for Palestinians during truce

By WAFAA SHURAF and TOQA EZZIDIN The Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — A building housing half a dozen families gave out in Gaza City overnight into Wednesday, killing 19 people as they slept and injuring 25, and leaving rescuers digging through rubble for dozens more who'd been sheltering inside the structure.

The sudden collapse of the building, which was known to be unstable due to damage from Israeli strikes earlier in the war, underscored how perilous and desperate living conditions have grown for the majority of the enclave's population as a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas stalls.

The 19 dead include at least 13 women and children, according to Zaher al-Wahidi, a spokesperson for the Gaza Health Ministry. The toll was expected to rise as more bodies were recovered from the wreckage.

All of Gaza's roughly 2 million people now live in a stretch of land that makes up less half of the territory. They remain dependent on aid and are surrounded by Israeli troops who carry out strikes or attacks on

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a near-daily basis.

There's been no reconstruction work since the ceasefire was agreed to almost a year ago. Israel has said it will not allow any rebuilding until Hamas disarms.

The level of destruction means Palestinians have been forced to choose between crowded tent camps or what's left of the enclave's damaged buildings.

At least six displaced Palestinian families were in living in the structure that collapsed early Wednesday despite knowing that it was teetering on the brink of collapse, according to Gaza's civil defense.

"The lack of options and alternatives left them with no other choice," said Aboud Majdalawi, a rescuer with the force.

In the aftermath of the collapse, people were searching desperately for loved ones or their remains.

A group of men were seen carrying the headless body of a child. Others sat atop a pile of rubble, pulling desperately at flashes of color they believed could be clothing worn by a survivor. All they found were dust-caked blankets wedged in the debris.

Despite an October ceasefire that has reduced fighting in Gaza, Israel has continued to carry out strikes, killing at least 1,375 people since the agreement went into effect, according to local health officials.

The nearly three-year Israel-Hamas war has killed more than 73,789 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. The ministry, part of the Hamas-run government, maintains detailed records viewed as generally reliable by U.N. agencies and international organizations. It doesn't distinguish between civilians and militants, but says women and children make up around half of the toll.

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen says she wants Canada to become the bloc's 1st associate member

By ROB GILLIES Associated Press

STRASBOURG, France (AP) — European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday proposed opening a path for Canada to become the European Union's first associate member, a striking overture as U.S. President Donald Trump's tariffs drive Ottawa closer to Europe.

"I would like to work with you on opening the door for Canada being the first associate member of the EU," von der Leyen told Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney during her annual State of the European Union address. Carney received a standing ovation from European lawmakers. He is due to address the European Parliament on Thursday.

Trump's tariffs and repeated talk of making Canada the 51st state have pushed Canada to seek closer economic and security ties with Europe. Roughly 70% of Canadian exports go to the United States, and Carney has called for a "unique alliance" with the EU as Canada seeks to reduce that dependence.

Von der Leyen said Canada and the EU would build on their existing free trade agreement, known as CETA, with a broader "Alliance for the Future" aimed at creating "a common prosperity and economic security space."

She cast that closer relationship as rooted not just in trade but in shared democratic values.

"Above all, dear Mark, Europe and Canada believe in democracy," von der Leyen said to Carney, who sat in the front row to her left.

"We believe that power does not belong to the strongest, the richest or the loudest, but to all of us. That democracies have the freedom to choose with whom to work."

Von der Leyen said the expanded partnership would cover advanced manufacturing, technology, defense production, the Arctic, energy, critical minerals, batteries, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, cybersecurity and economic security.

"This is a partnership not against anyone else, but for our common strength," she said. "In short, we want to bring the relationship with Canada to the highest level possible."

Canada this year became the first non-European country to join the EU's 150-billion-euro (\$173-billion) SAFE defense program, giving Canadian companies access to joint procurement.

Carney said Tuesday that economic integration, once viewed largely as an asset, is increasingly "being

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used as a weapon by certain countries.”

Canada has retaliated against U.S. tariffs and rejected trade terms Carney says would weaken its sovereignty.

The EU has taken a different course with Washington, reaching a trade agreement that set a 15% U.S. tariff ceiling on the vast majority of EU exports while Europe eliminated tariffs on U.S. industrial goods.

That contrast has loomed over Carney’s push for closer European ties. In a closely watched speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January, he urged middle powers to work together to increase their leverage in an era of great-power rivalry.

“When we only negotiate bilaterally with a hegemon, we negotiate from weakness. We accept what is offered,” Carney said.

“This is not sovereignty,” he said. “It is the performance of sovereignty while accepting subordination.”

Carney’s Davos speech on middle powers in January drew a personal rebuke from Trump, and von der Leyen’s overture to America’s neighbor could raise the temperature again.

In an emailed statement Wednesday, Iratxe García Pérez, president of the Socialists & Democrats group in the European Parliament, praised Carney for “great courage confronting Donald Trump” and said allies were needed to defend “sovereignty, solidarity and international law.”

Saudi Arabia calls an attempted Mecca attack a ‘red line’ as Iran-backed Houthis deny they did it

By SAMY MAGDY, SUZAN FRASER and MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Saudi Arabia accused Yemen’s Iran-backed Houthi rebels overnight of trying to attack Islam’s holiest city, prompting condemnation from countries in the region but no sign of military support. The kingdom, a key U.S. ally, declared Mecca a “red line” as it slid deeper into the new front of the Iran war.

With the world’s biggest oil exporter under fire from the rebels backed by the Saudis’ regional adversary, Tehran, the kingdom needs a safe outlet for its crude as well as military support. However, a path to either one remains unclear.

A crucial Saudi pipeline has reportedly been shut down for weeks as the Yemen-based Houthis have been attacking infrastructure in the kingdom as well as its shipping on the Red Sea. Iran is still targeting ships in the Strait of Hormuz. Oil prices remain above \$100 a barrel.

The Houthis denied firing drones toward Mecca, about 1,100 kilometers (680 miles) from Yemen’s border. The Saudis said they intercepted and destroyed the drone before it entered the airspace over the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad.

Turkey and Pakistan say the Saudis haven’t asked for help

A new defense pact among Saudi Arabia, NATO member Turkey and nuclear power Pakistan remained untapped, as officials from Turkey and Pakistan told The Associated Press they have not received a Saudi request for support in response to the Houthis’ escalation.

The Turkish official added that efforts to “institutionalize” the alliance need to be completed before the pact becomes operational. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly on the issue.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif joined the condemnation of the attempted drone attack on Mecca and said his country and the Saudis stand “unwaveringly, shoulder to shoulder.” Other condemnation came from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, representing over 57 Muslim states, which said the attempt violates the “sanctity of holy sites.”

This was the second attempted attack by the Houthis against Mecca after the rebels fired a ballistic missile toward the city in 2017, according to Col. Turki al-Maliki, spokesperson for the Saudi-led military coalition.

For now, the US is staying out of the fight

Top U.S. officials in recent days have indicated a lack of desire to get involved in the conflict.

“The Houthis called us, and they don’t want to fight with us,” U.S. President Donald Trump said Saturday,

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adding that the rebels appear focused on the Saudis.

Vice President J.D. Vance on Monday said Washington had been in "constant contact" with the Saudis and had been "engaged in direct conversations with the Houthis themselves," calling it "a very fluid and dynamic thing" to be monitored.

Houthis claim shooting down an F-15 fighter jet

Later Wednesday, the rebels claimed, without offering evidence, that they shot down an F-15 fighter jet operated by the Saudi-led coalition fighting the Houthis over the central province of Marib. Houthi military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree didn't say when it occurred, and the AP couldn't independently verify the claim.

Spokespeople for the Saudi-led coalition and the Saudi government didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Elsewhere, Iran's top diplomat, Abbas Araghchi, was visiting China, the biggest buyer of Iranian oil, as talks were expected to focus on the conflict and on shipping on the Strait of Hormuz.

Chinese President Xi Jinping at the BRICS summit in New Delhi over the weekend again offered Beijing's help in ending the conflict in the Middle East.

EU plans new firefighting fleet after deadly summer heat wave

By SAM McNEIL Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — A scorching summer that dried up rivers and killed tens of thousands across the European Union from Portugal to Hungary has shown that the bloc needs to develop new tools to meet a worsening climate, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Wednesday.

She said that this instability led her to propose a new European Heatwave Plan as well as a future European firefighting fleet of airplanes. Currently, the EU operates a small fleet itself but coordinates a network of aircraft, water trucks and volunteers that move across the 27-nation bloc as fires ignite.

"This summer was the summer of truth. Almost no part of our continent was spared," said the EU executive during her annual State of the European Union address in Strasbourg.

"Key rivers like the Danube, the Rhine or La Garonne are disappearing before our eyes. More than 35,000 additional deaths during the heat waves. Care homes and hospitals dangerously overheated."

The extreme heat, which hit Europe exceptionally hard and early this year appears to have led to a much higher spike in deaths than expected. Where Von der Leyen's figure of 35,000 comes from is unclear, but it is triple the estimates of "excessive deaths" by monitoring groups in July.

Fires in France and Spain drove hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes, shut down nuclear reactors in Hungary and France, ignited century-old munitions on Belgium's border with Germany and revealed previously lost ships sunk on riverbeds like a tugboat in Serbia.

The heat and humidity that broke many records during the summer would not have been possible without climate change, according to a study by the World Weather Attribution group.

"All of this is a mere preview. These were the hottest summer months ever, but probably the coolest of the years to come," von der Leyen said. "Science is clear: Europe is warming at double the global rate."

While commending those who battled blazes this summer, von der Leyen said that she's asked emergency responders and senior firefighters to "think bigger and learn faster" to design "new capabilities" for the EU to tackle climate instability.

When she praised a Danish helicopter pilot named Rune Kyndal, who died in August while fighting fires in Greece, the assembly erupted in applause.

"Rune gave his life to save others and today, all of Europe owes him," von der Leyen said.

A damaged building collapses in Gaza, killing at least 16, and other Mideast developments

By The Associated Press undefined

A building housing displaced Palestinian families collapsed in Gaza City on Wednesday, killing at least 16 people, most of them women and children. The multistory structure was heavily damaged during the Israel-Hamas war and there had been warnings about its safety.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia said late on Tuesday that its air defenses, which have been fending off attacks by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels, had intercepted a drone that the kingdom said was headed toward its holy city of Mecca.

Here's a look at the latest news in the Middle East. Full coverage can be found here.

Collapse of a building housing families displaced by the war kills at least 16

A damaged building in Gaza City housing about six displaced families collapsed on Wednesday morning, killing at least 16 people and injuring more than 25. Among the dead were eight children and five women, according to Zaher al-Wahidi, a spokesperson for the Gaza Health Ministry. The toll was expected to rise as more bodies were recovered from the wreckage on Wednesday morning.

Video showed civil defense crews surveying the wreckage and using bulldozers to dig out people, including children.

The building had been partially destroyed in an Israeli strike earlier in the war. It was not immediately clear what caused the collapse, but in Gaza — where the majority of buildings have been damaged or destroyed — dozens of bombed-out multistory structures have collapsed throughout the war, particularly during winter weather.

Building collapses have become a major hazard in Gaza. Displaced families have often returned from tent camps to homes damaged by bombardment during the almost three years of war.

Saudi Arabia's military says it shot down a drone near Mecca

Saudi military spokesperson Maj. Gen. Turki al-Malki said the kingdom's defenses intercepted and destroyed a drone on Tuesday evening before it entered the airspace over Mecca, Islam's holiest city and a focal point for followers of the faith.

Mecca is the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad and the location of the Kaaba, the black cube-shaped structure that Muslims around the world turn to five times a day when praying. Muslims believe Muhammad first received God's revelations of the Quran, Islam's holy book, in Mecca.

The security of the holy city is "a red line," al-Malki said, adding that Saudi forces will not hesitate to act against "hostile and terrorist behavior."

The Iran-backed Houthis in neighboring Yemen denied targeting Mecca. But the allegation drew condemnations throughout the Islamic world, including from Pakistan and the 57-country Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

EU chief proposes social media ban for kids under 13

By SAM McNEIL and KELVIN CHAN Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen proposed banning children under 13 from accessing social media, online games and chatbots on Wednesday during her annual State of the European Union speech in Strasbourg.

"I am aware that many perceive the power of Big Tech as overwhelming and impossible to roll back. I disagree," said the EU executive.

"We do not have to accept addictive features. We do not have to accept children being drawn into ever more extreme content. We do not have to accept that girls have their photos used for AI-generated sexualized images," she said.

Von der Leyen said that under her proposal "mini accounts" chaperoned by guardians would be granted to kids aged 13-15.

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The EU's 27 member nations will now vote on the proposal, which could spark tensions with U.S. President Donald Trump, who has long criticized Europe's tech regulations.

Von der Leyen used her speech to advance a plan that she foreshadowed earlier this year, when she said kids should be exposed to social media in a "phased and gradual" way.

The commission's proposal is part of a wider ongoing debate playing out worldwide on how to protect young people online.

In the United States, social media company Meta Platforms last month agreed to pay up to \$18 billion and add stronger child-safety measures to its Facebook and Instagram platforms to resolve a trial over teen social media addiction and settle claims filed by nearly every state.

Meanwhile, individual countries in Europe and in other places like Australia and New Zealand have taken their own steps to ban teens from social media platforms. But some of those efforts have run into roadblocks. France's top court last month struck down a law banning children under 15 from social media, saying it infringed on fundamental freedoms. French President Emmanuel Macron vowed to rework the proposal.

Manfred Weber, the head of the largest group in the European Parliament, spoke after von der Leyen to propose that the EU follow Australia's lead in allowing citizens to switch off social media algorithms.

"Elon Musk will not like it, but probably that is a reason for doing it," he said.

Americans are increasingly concerned about the environmental impact of AI, new poll finds

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

On the way home from a recent trip, Eriech Tapia drove past a sea of dark industrial buildings lining an already jam-packed northern Virginia road: data centers.

"It was interesting to see how many were going up," said Tapia, a 30-year-old Republican from Arlington, Virginia, who works in higher education advocacy and policy. He said the data centers lend valuable computing power that can help keep the U.S. competitive with other nations, but he also worries about how much electricity they use.

Like Tapia, Americans have grown more concerned about the environmental impacts of artificial intelligence over the last year, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago.

The survey data say about half, 53%, of Americans are "extremely" or "very" concerned about artificial intelligence's environmental impacts. That is up from 41% last year. Democrats are driving much of the increase in environmental concern, but the poll also reveals broader worries about the local impact of data centers, which power AI and cloud computing.

"We're undertaking a massive experiment in real time, and I don't think there'll be any putting the milk back in the bottle. Change is scary, and I think some of that is being reflected here," said Michael Greenstone, who directs the University of Chicago institute that collaborated on the survey.

Rising concern among Democrats about AI's environmental impact

There are thousands of data centers in the U.S. with construction planned for more. Those include smaller, conventional centers that have been around for decades, as well as larger hyperscale ones that are being built to serve artificial intelligence's added processing needs. Virginia and Texas have the most facilities currently in operation, and other top contenders include California, Ohio and New York.

While 87% of existing data centers are in urban areas, most new data centers are planned for rural areas, according to a Pew Research Center analysis from earlier this year.

"I think that decisions are being made for the company, not for the community that they're being built in," said Nancy Antunes, a 60-year-old retired Democrat from Waltham, Massachusetts.

A recent United Nations University report predicted that data centers' environmental footprint, which already rivals some of the world's largest countries, will grow rapidly as AI is more widely adopted.

Democrats are increasingly worried about AI's environmental consequences. About two-thirds of Democrats say they are "extremely" or "very" concerned about how AI will affect the environment, the poll

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found, up from about half in 2025. By contrast, about half of independents and about 4 in 10 Republicans are highly concerned about the environmental impact of AI.

Overall, Americans are more worried about the environmental impact of AI than other industries with a substantial environmental footprint. Only about 3 in 10 U.S. adults are highly concerned about the impact of meat production or air travel.

Most Americans support limits on new data centers

While concerns about environmental impacts are higher among Democrats, there is a broad sense of wariness about a rapid data center boom.

About 6 in 10 Americans support limiting the number of new data centers that can be built, including most Democrats and Republicans.

"There's a lot of water usage by AI data centers that's taking away from other things like agriculture and farmers and places that really need it, and people who really need it," said 21-year-old computer science student Gedeon Kebede, a Democrat from Cincinnati, Ohio.

A majority of Americans are "extremely" or "very" concerned about the impact of data centers on electricity prices or the water supply in the communities where they are built.

Data centers' use of water to cool AI chips and computers is "nationally modest but potentially locally decisive," energy systems engineer Fengqi You with Cornell University said in an email. While data centers aren't the U.S.' largest water gobblers, a single large campus can still place stress on a smaller municipal area.

The centers are also powered by tremendous amounts of electricity, particularly larger ones, raising concerns about where that energy will come from. Data centers could account for 11.8% of the U.S.' electricity consumption by 2030, according to a Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Report.

"We're talking about building electric infrastructure on a scale of entire cities, or in some cases, entire states just to serve one data center," said Erik Nordman, director of Michigan State University's Institute of Public Utilities.

About two-thirds of U.S. adults support requiring data centers to use clean energy sources, such as wind or solar, to supply their electricity needs. About 8 in 10 Democrats support this, along with 56% of Republicans.

Still, some Americans say data center worries feel distant. Mary Fisher, 68, hasn't seen any come up in her Jacksonville, Florida, neighborhood.

"You know, it hasn't come across my desk as something I should be concerned about," said Fisher, who is retired and identifies as a Republican.

Republicans see more benefits to data centers than Democrats

About a quarter of U.S. adults say data centers are "extremely" or "very" beneficial when it comes to technological advancement, and about 2 in 10 say the same about job creation. Many U.S. adults say data centers are "somewhat" beneficial or aren't sure, while about one-quarter say they're "not very" or "not at all" beneficial for technological advancement, and about a third don't see a benefit for job creation.

"I see a huge increase in the number of temporary construction workers that are coming to areas, which is vitally important to the U.S. economy," Tapia from Virginia said.

Republicans are more likely than Democrats to see data centers' benefits. But about 3 in 10 Republicans still think the centers are "not very" or "not at all" beneficial for improved infrastructure and job creation.

Kebede, the computer science student, said he feels pressured to use artificial intelligence. Despite his concerns surrounding the technology, he still wants to be a competitive applicant for the jobs of the future.

"I think a lot of people just feel that it's very much a bubble," he said. "Ultimately, when it pops, it's going to be very detrimental to everyone, whether you bought into the AI hype or not."

The AP-NORC poll of 3,424 adults was conducted July 6-24, 2026, using a combined sample of interviews from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population, and interviews from opt-in online panels. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or

minus 2.2 percentage points. The AmeriSpeak panel is recruited randomly using address-based sampling methods, and respondents later were interviewed online or by phone. To incorporate the nonprobability sample, NORC used TrueNorth calibration, an innovative hybrid calibration approach developed at NORC to explicitly account for potential bias associated with the nonprobability sample.

3 people killed when NBC and Telemundo news helicopter crashes while covering LA bus collision

By ASHLEY DUONG and HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A news helicopter crashed in a Los Angeles neighborhood on Tuesday and burst into flames, killing at least three people while reporters were covering the collision of an SUV and a city bus, officials and the news outlet said.

Colleen Williams, an NBC4 Los Angeles anchor, confirmed during live broadcasts that two people were killed when the chopper went down. At least one other person was killed on the ground, a spokesperson for the Los Angeles Fire Department said.

"We are going to take a couple of minutes to think about that, process it," Williams said, her voice shaking with emotion. Moments later the coverage cut off.

The helicopter, used by NBC and Telemundo, went down near a large storage facility in the neighborhood of Chatsworth in the San Fernando Valley, officials said. News crews were reporting on a collision from earlier in the day, when an SUV slammed into the middle of a city bus, killing at least two people and injuring six others. Photos and videos online showed half the SUV lodged in the side of the bus.

"From the helicopter itself, it's pretty well destroyed," Capt. Branden Silverman, a spokesperson for the fire department, said. "So we are going to have to go through the rubble and see how many victims there were on board, as well as identify the helicopter; we couldn't even see a tail."

At least four cars and two storage containers on the ground burned after the helicopter caught fire, which was quickly put out, according to officials. NBC4 reporter Robert Kovacik was at the bus scene and saw black smoke and rushed to the helicopter crash site. Dozens of police cars surrounded the scene as ambulances entered.

Two people were brought to a hospital, said Rico A. Gross, a fire department battalion chief. Their conditions were not immediately released.

Williams and the station's website identified the dead aboard the helicopter as Eliana Moreno, a familiar voice for NBC4 and Telemundo 52 during the station's aerial coverage, and pilot George Marciniw. Both were employees of Angel City Air, which operated the chopper.

Moreno, born in Orange County, joined the Angel City Air helicopter team in 2010, the same year she earned a broadcast journalism and political science degree from Chapman University. She reported for several Southern California news outlets and began flying with Marciniw in 2023, the NBC4 website said.

Marciniw grew up in Southern California and graduated from Burbank High School in 1974.

"Losing five Angelenos is very painful," Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said. "And I know this community of Chatsworth, hit hard, will be grieving for some time."

NBC4 and Telemundo 52 Los Angeles said in a statement they "are deeply saddened" and extended "heartfelt condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of those who lost their lives."

Gov. Gavin Newsom thanked the emergency crews responding to both crashes and said in a post on X that "our hearts are with the victims and families."

The National Transportation Safety Board and the Federal Aviation Administration said personnel will arrive Wednesday to begin an investigation into the cause of the helicopter crash.

There have been at least eight fatal crashes involving news helicopters in the U.S. since 2000, killing 16 people, according to a review of federal accident records and news accounts.

They include a 2023 crash in a New Jersey forest that killed the pilot and a photographer aboard a helicopter used by Philadelphia station WPVI and a 2022 crash beside a Charlotte, North Carolina, interstate that killed a pilot and meteorologist during a training flight for WBTV.

Former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte appears in court in The Hague

By MOLLY QUELL Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, who is facing charges of crimes against humanity at the International Criminal Court, made his first public appearance in more than a year on Wednesday, when he attended a pre-trial hearing at the court in The Hague.

The 81-year old is accused of murder and attempted murder for his alleged involvement in dozens of killings as part of his so-called war on drugs while in office, first as the mayor of a southern city in the Philippines and later as president. He denies the charges against him.

He has missed a series of hearings since his arrest in 2025. Medical reasons were cited for his absence but the court's judges ruled in January that he was healthy enough to stand trial.

The presiding judge in his case told Duterte's legal team during an earlier hearing that she wanted the ex-leader to attend Wednesday's session.

"We would expect Mr. Duterte to be here unless there's some medical issue," Judge Joanna Korner said during the June pre-trial hearing.

Wednesday's hearing is to discuss evidence disclosure and come up with a timetable for the trial, which is due to open in November.

Duterte was arrested in March 2025 and was set to appear in court in The Hague in September last year. However, the hearing was delayed after a pretrial panel of judges granted a "limited postponement" to give the court time to determine whether Duterte was fit enough to take part in the proceedings.

Following an assessment by a panel of medical experts, judges ruled that Duterte is "fit to take part in the pretrial proceedings."

The ICC has been looking into mass killings in crackdowns overseen by Duterte since 2018. Estimates of the death toll during Duterte's presidential term vary, from the more than 6,000 that the national police have reported up to 30,000 claimed by human rights groups.

According to the prosecutors, police and government hit squads carried out dozens of killings at Duterte's orders, motivated by the promise of money or to avoid becoming targets themselves.

A month after the court in February 2018 announced a preliminary investigation into the violent drug crackdowns, Duterte said the Philippines would withdraw from the ICC.

Last year, judges rejected a request from Duterte's legal team to throw out the case because of the Philippine withdrawal. Countries cannot "abuse" their right to withdraw from the court's foundational Rome Statute "by shielding persons from justice in relation to alleged crimes that are already under consideration," the decision says.

Earlier this year, an attempt by authorities to arrest another man wanted by the ICC in connection with the drug killings dissolved into gunfire in the Philippine Senate in May. No one was hurt. The court had unsealed an arrest warrant for Ronald Marapon dela Rosa, who served as national police chief under Duterte. Dela Rosa went into hiding following the Senate standoff and remains on the run.

Two months later, the Philippine Senate, acting as an impeachment court, opened the trial of Duterte's daughter, Vice President Sara Duterte. If convicted of the charges, which include amassing unexplained wealth and publicly threatening the family of the current president, Ferdinand Marcos Jr., she may be permanently disqualified from holding public office. She denies the charges.

Asian stocks mostly higher ahead of Fed's interest rate decision

By CHAN HO-HIM AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — Asian shares were mostly higher Wednesday despite losses on Wall Street, as investors await the Federal Reserve's decision on interest rates, with high expectations of a rate hike.

U.S. futures also edged higher. There is widespread expectation that the Fed will hike rates Wednesday for the first time in three years as inflation remains elevated in the U.S. and above the Fed's target.

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Japan's Nikkei 225 gained 0.7% to 63,923.00, despite official data showing that Japan recorded a fourth consecutive month of trade deficit in August.

South Korea's Kospi rose 1.4% to 6,717.97. Hong Kong's Hang Seng edged up 0.2% to 24,715.18. The Shanghai Composite index climbed 0.7% to 3,891.60.

Artificial intelligence-related stocks remained volatile following U.S. AI leaders' calls to slow development of the technology to ensure safety.

SoftBank Group, a key investor in OpenAI, dropped 1.5% after rising 7.5% the day before. Chip equipment manufacturer Tokyo Electron rose 2.1%, while Japanese memory maker Kioxia Holdings lost 1.9%.

South Korea's memory chipmaker SK Hynix climbed 4.1%. Samsung Electronics was up 2%.

Taiwan's Taix advanced 0.7%. Taiwan's leading AI chipmaker TSMC, or Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., fell 0.2%.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 added 0.3% to 8,696.50.

India's Sensex gained 0.5%.

Oil prices fell early Wednesday after rising on Tuesday as tensions dragged on between the U.S. and Iran, and as Saudi Arabia's crucial oil pipeline closure added pressure on global oil supply.

Brent crude, the international standard, was 0.9% lower at \$107.76 a barrel, but still well above the around \$72 per barrel level before the start of the war in late February.

Benchmark U.S. crude fell 1.5% to \$104.24 a barrel.

On Tuesday, Wall Street's benchmark S&P 500 fell 0.5%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 0.6%, and the technology-heavy Nasdaq composite dropped 0.8%.

AI stocks in the U.S. were steady. Nvidia climbed 0.6%, while Advanced Micro Devices rose 2.2%.

Higher U.S. Treasury yields have put pressure on the stock market. The yields on government bonds have risen as the Iran war-caused energy crisis added to inflationary pressure while the U.S.'s national debt grew.

The 10-year Treasury was at nearly 5% early Wednesday, after it briefly touched 5.04% this week in its highest level in years.

In other dealings, the U.S. dollar fell to 154.93 Japanese yen from

In wartime Russia, veterans who fought in Ukraine are running for parliament

By DASHA LITVINOVA and YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

They lead party tickets, star in campaign videos and appear in televised debates. They are Russians who have fought in Ukraine, and they feature prominently in this week's parliamentary election.

Election officials say nearly 200 candidates have served in Ukraine, and the Kremlin touts them as part of Russia's "true elite" — its effort to show that veterans of the 4 1/2-year-old war will have an honored place in civilian life.

But few analysts believe that most of them will ever hold any real power among the country's ruling class, dismissing the effort as a way to lure more volunteers to fight.

Independent Russian media regularly report about returning veterans involved in assaults, drunken brawls and even killings. Some of those crimes were committed by men who were recruited into the military from prison.

The vote that begins Friday for the State Duma — the lower house of parliament — is the first since the war began, and also will take place in areas of Ukraine that Russia captured and illegally annexed. The Kremlin is tightly managing the election, seeking to reinforce its narrative of widespread support for the war and provide a veneer of legitimacy for its actions.

Most of the Kremlin-aligned parties allowed on the ballot have candidates identified as participants in the SVO — the Russian acronym for its "special military operation" in Ukraine.

One prominent candidate is Vladislav Golovin, 29, of the ruling United Russia party, who fought in the battle for the Ukrainian port city of Mariupol and lost part of his leg. He has appeared at events with President Vladimir Putin, who made him a Hero of Russia, the country's highest honor.

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In 2024, Golovin took part in Putin's "Time of Heroes" program that prepares veterans for government careers. He now heads a military and patriotic youth organization, the Young Army — but also has been put on Western sanctions lists.

United Russia has several dozen candidates with a Ukraine war background. Another of its leading candidates is Yevgeny Poddubny, a well-connected state TV war correspondent who was wounded by a Ukrainian drone.

The ultranationalist Liberal Democratic Party has a top candidate in Alexei Vereshchagin, who is described as having joined the Moscow-backed separatist insurgency in eastern Ukraine in 2014 and leading a brigade of volunteers.

"We are the ones our homeland has called upon to fight for the 'Russian World,' and we will fight," Vereshchagin, who was born in Kyiv, said in a campaign video, using a term popularized by Putin, especially after Moscow illegally annexed Crimea in 2014.

Ukrainian police in March posted a photo of what appeared to be Vereshchagin and said they were investigating him for his role in home invasions and threatening civilians in the Kyiv region in 2022 before Ukrainian forces retook the area. They said he fought against Ukraine for over a decade. He hasn't publicly commented on the allegations.

The Kremlin seeks to entice men to fight in Ukraine

By promoting veterans in the State Duma campaign, the Kremlin wants to show potential recruits that they would be fighting "for some higher cause, and that they have bright prospects ahead of them in the form of a career lift," said Nikolay Petrov, senior research fellow at the NEST Centre, founded by exiled Russian tycoon and opposition figure Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

But Russia also "doesn't know what to do" with those returning from the battlefield, Petrov told The Associated Press, and so it offers them largely insignificant positions with little real power, while focusing on promoting those who already held public office.

Former Putin speechwriter-turned-political analyst Abbas Gallyamov was more blunt, calling it "empty talk."

To lure more men into enlisting, "you need to promise them everything they want to hear, from promises of payments to flattery and stories of their special greatness, their contribution to the cause of building a new Russia," Gallyamov told AP.

Most veterans have a difficult postwar path

The postwar path is not simple for many veterans. Most of those who signed military contracts cannot terminate them under Putin's 2022 "partial mobilization" decree, and those who were drafted that year have not yet been demobilized, either.

Those who are severely injured or have reached a certain age can be discharged, and some special units reportedly offer limited tours of duty.

About 167,000 servicemen have returned from Ukraine, presidential administration official Sergei Novikov said in December, although Russian media reports and experts say the number is probably higher.

The competition for the Time of Heroes program is fierce and requires higher education and management experience. Out of over 65,000 applicants in 2024-25, only 168 were accepted, according to its website. Of them, some 80 were appointed to various positions on national, regional or municipal levels.

The independent Russian news outlet Meduza reported in June that at least 1,300 veterans have been appointed to government posts, were elected to local legislatures and councils, or got jobs in state-backed companies or institutions. About 850 of those had some kind of government or related experience before serving, Meduza said, concluding that most beneficiaries were already part of the ruling class.

AP was unable to independently verify those findings, but reports about government officials or lawmakers serving in Ukraine and then returning to their civilian careers are common.

Duma deputy Alexei Zhuravlyov, head of the Rodina, or "Homeland" party, has reported serving at the front while keeping his seat as a lawmaker, like some of his colleagues. He recently lashed out at a YouTube blogger who wondered why he's not fighting full-time in Ukraine. Zhuravlyov said later that he spends "more time on the front line than in the Duma."

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Tambov regional Gov. Yevgeny Pervyshov, a United Russia candidate who also was the former mayor of his native Krasnodar and did a stint as a Duma lawmaker, served in Ukraine as part of a special military unit in 2022.

The U.K. government described his unit in 2024 as having “an unusually high number of United Russia party members and sons of Kremlin VIPs.” In a post on X, the British Defense Ministry said the unit is predominantly involved in drone operations far from the front, allowing elite political figures “to sidestep usual Russian military service requirements with guaranteed safety.”

After a tour of less than a year, Pervyshov was accepted into the Time of Heroes program and later was appointed Tambov’s acting governor before being elected governor in September 2025.

Enthusiasm sours for Putin’s promises

Ivan Filippov, who studies propaganda and analyzes military and pro-war bloggers, says such examples fuel disappointment in the pro-war community, which initially was enthusiastic about Putin’s promise of a new “elite.”

“They were very happy when he said those words, but it turned out rather quickly that it’s not about (genuine) veterans,” he told AP. Rather, he added, it’s about some who went to the battlefield once, “fired a howitzer, got their veteran credentials” and returned to office.

Now, war hawks understand that returning troops will face “a difficult life” when returning home, he said.

“They understand clearly that no one will let them into power,” Filippov said.

Novikov, the Kremlin official, said in December that “tens of thousands” of returning veterans remain jobless, and it “forms a dangerous risk zone.”

When it comes to putting veterans in positions of power, the Kremlin naturally prefers “rational bureaucrats” who did a stint in the armed forces, said Petrov, the analyst.

“The authorities don’t at all need bandits that come back from there,” he added.

Why Yemen’s Houthis have only grown stronger through years of war

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

At various times over the last decade, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Britain and Israel have carried out punishing air raids on Yemen’s Houthi rebels — only to see them grow even stronger.

Now, as the Iran-backed Houthis advance on a key maritime chokepoint and strike Saudi oil facilities, rattling world markets, there is little that can be done to stop them that hasn’t been tried before.

That’s because the Houthis operate in a large and mountainous territory where they can disperse fighters and military infrastructure while threatening major oil infrastructure and key trade routes. Iran and its allies in Lebanon and Iraq provide expertise, training and sophisticated weapons, according to U.N. and other experts, and the Houthis’ hard-line ideology does the rest.

“They are the most committed, the most ideologically pure and the most aggressive” of Iran’s regional allies, says Michael Knights, who has written extensively about the Houthis and is now head of research at Horizon Engage, a New York-based strategic advisory.

“They’ve been developed by the Iranians in a fast-track way. Things that took the Lebanese Hezbollah 20 years to develop, the Houthis have developed in five.”

The well-armed Iranian ally has room to run

The Houthis have a wide array of ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and drones — many resembling Iranian models — that can reach all the Gulf states as well as Israel. They have also used sophisticated anti-ship missiles and naval drones to strike vessels in the Red Sea, threatening a critical trade route.

Iran denies arming the Houthis, which would violate a U.N. embargo. But smuggled Iranian weapons and parts have been seized from numerous shipments bound for Yemen, and a report by U.N. experts in 2024 documented extensive military ties between the Houthis, Iran and its other allies.

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That report estimated that the Houthis had recruited up to 350,000 fighters by 2024, up from just 30,000 in 2015, when Saudi Arabia intervened in Yemen's civil war against the Houthis and imposed a naval blockade.

The Houthis can use relatively inexpensive drones and missiles to target oil and other infrastructure just across the border in Saudi Arabia, as well as tankers off the coast. And while Iran is believed to supply cutting-edge components like guidance systems, the Houthis can manufacture much of their weaponry domestically.

Saudi Arabia boasts an array of U.S.-supplied weapons, including sophisticated aircraft as well as advanced missile defenses used against Iran at the height of the war last spring.

But with supplies of high-end interceptors under pressure, it's unclear how long it can ward off attacks — not only from the Houthis, but from Iran-backed militias in Iraq blamed for an attack that shut down an east-west pipeline crucial for oil exports.

Airstrikes have had limited effect

Saudi Arabia went to war against the Houthis in early 2015, after the rebels seized much of northern and central Yemen, including the capital, Sanaa, from Yemen's internationally recognized government. Even then, the Saudis feared the growth of a well-armed Iranian proxy on their border.

Over the next seven years, Saudi Arabia carried out waves of airstrikes against the Houthis, often killing civilians. An array of Yemeni government forces and southern separatists struggled to push the Houthis back, and the battle lines moved little before a 2022 ceasefire.

The following year, after the outbreak of the war in Gaza, the Houthis began attacking Red Sea shipping in what they said was a blockade of Israel. The U.S. and the U.K. launched waves of strikes against the Houthis beginning in January 2024.

The following year, U.S. President Donald Trump ordered an intensified air campaign, with some 2,000 munitions dropped on over 1,000 targets, a U.S. military official told The Associated Press at the time.

The cost of the U.S. munitions alone totaled more than \$750 million, while the Houthis destroyed seven U.S. MQ-9 Reaper drones, at a cost of more than \$30 million apiece. An over \$60 million F/A-18 fighter jet slid off an aircraft carrier.

After weeks of U.S. strikes, the Houthis agreed to stop attacking American ships. But they continued to target Israel, which responded with its own strikes later in 2025, killing the Houthi prime minister along with other senior officials and repeatedly hitting a key port.

The Houthis largely kept to the sidelines in the first several months of the Iran war, but in July, they resumed attacks on Saudi Arabia and declared a blockade on Saudi shipping.

Any lasting defeat would require ground troops

As recent conflicts have shown, air power is rarely effective without ground troops who can move in and seize territory after strikes.

In the case of Yemen, the ground fighters opposed to the Houthis are deeply divided and fought each other as recently as January. They include fighters loyal to the Saudi-backed government and southern separatists supported by the United Arab Emirates — a sometimes rival to the Saudis that withdrew from Yemen in 2019.

"Half of the story is Iranian support, and this is extremely important ... but there's another half of the story, which is the weakness of their adversaries," said Thomas Juneau, a professor of international affairs at the University of Ottawa specializing in Iran and Yemen.

"(Yemen's) internationally recognized government is fragmented, it's weak, it's disunited, it's corrupt, and the Houthis have systematically been able to exploit that," he said.

In recent weeks, anti-Houthi forces have fallen back from one position after another as the rebels have advanced toward the Bab el-Mandeb, a narrow strait between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

The Saudis appear reluctant to enter another full-scale war with the Houthis. A ground campaign would involve prolonged fighting and high casualties. The U.S., still preoccupied with Iran, also appears keen to stay out. A Saudi mutual defense pact with Turkey and Pakistan signed last month has yet to be activated.

The diplomatic options are also limited. The Houthis are demanding that Saudi Arabia lift its blockade,

which would be an admission of defeat in the long-running war and pave the way for even more extensive Iranian aid to the rebels.

"As long as U.S.-Iran tensions are not resolved, there will not be significant progress between Saudi Arabia and Iran," Juneau said. "The Houthis are in a very intransigent mood right now, and they are absolutely not ready to make any kind of concessions."

AI rivals found rare agreement on safety. Putting it into practice is harder

By KAITLYN HUAMANI and KELVIN CHAN AP Technology Writers

The leading AI industry voices rarely agree — so when they do, it's no wonder it captures attention.

Anthropic's Dario Amodei, OpenAI's Sam Altman, SpaceX's Elon Musk and other prominent industry leaders have said in recent days that AI's development needs to slow down. The consensus came after an Anthropic researcher resigned with a dire warning about the threats the technology poses to humanity.

But obstacles including domestic and global competition, profit motivations and pushback from President Donald Trump all stand in the way of a coordinated effort to pace AI's development.

Still, this moment could force the industry to wrestle with a "reframing of what we consider successful," said Nick Reese, former director of emerging technology policy at the Department of Homeland Security and an adjunct professor at New York University.

"What if we considered success in AI the same way that we consider success for airlines? On time and haven't had a crash in who knows how long," Reese said. "We don't tolerate commercial airline crashes, but we do tolerate significant AI failures."

Here's what tech leaders want an AI slowdown to entail

In theory, the leading AI startups could slow the progress of their models at any time. But leaps in the technology have partly sprung from competition to build even more powerful models, all with the blessing of a White House that doesn't want the U.S. to lose its edge over China. Anthropic and OpenAI also are racing toward potentially record-breaking public offerings on Wall Street, although the latter said it's holding off on going public this year while it continues its safety efforts.

That's why the proposals floated by industry depend upon mutual collaboration and, to an extent, government regulation.

Amodei recently published a lengthy essay in which he outlined a plan for slowing advanced AI development.

One proposal calls for companies at the forefront of AI, often called frontier labs, to commit to giving "ongoing, employee-like access" to independent outside evaluators. Evaluator teams would have offices, access badges and company laptops so they can monitor safety practices.

Anthropic is "unilaterally committing" to this step now, Amodei wrote. Altman called it a "great idea" on social media and said OpenAI will follow suit.

Altman said he welcomed a "federal framework" setting out safety standards for advanced AI, but said the company didn't need to wait for legislation or an antitrust exemption before addressing AI safety.

Amodei's essay also called for government regulation and intervention, including coordination between frontier AI companies with the help of the U.S. government and the governments of other democratic countries. He said he hopes the leading labs could establish "common safety standards as well as limits on the rate of unchecked AI progress."

Amodei's plan also includes the U.S. and other countries working to coordinate with "authoritarian governments." He acknowledged the difficulty, specifically citing challenges in getting cooperation from China.

The Anthropic head outlined several levels of agreement that global leaders could sign off on. The most feasible, he said, would be an agreement banning "certain narrow and obviously dangerous uses of AI" like producing biological weapons or allowing users to do so. More difficult would be getting the U.S. and its adversaries to agree to test models before release, possibly through a global standards body, for risks in areas like cybersecurity or biological threats.

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Still harder would be to set a "speed limit" on AI models that can develop improved versions of themselves on their own, known as recursive self-improvement.

"Slowing the rate from 'extremely fast' to 'only somewhat fast' gives up relatively little strategic advantage, while potentially greatly improving safety," Amodei wrote.

He drew an analogy to Cold War-era treaties in which "capping the number of missiles limited the potential for destruction while preserving each country's deterrent."

Amodei said the most difficult proposal to implement would be a "full pacing, or even 'pause,'" whereby participating governments agree to substantially limit the overall rate of AI development.

Writing on social media, Altman said the "pacing" of AI development does not mean stopping. AI progress will continue to be rapid, Altman said on X. "But it should be slower than it otherwise could be; interventions like safety cases and monitoring have significant costs."

"Pacing will be well worth this cost," he said, adding that "no amount of American competitive pressure should justify recklessness."

Questions swirl about AI slowdown's feasibility

While experts said the sense of agreement across the industry is promising, there are many unanswered questions.

A slowdown is possible "in theory," said Sandra Wachter, professor of technology and regulation at the Oxford Internet Institute.

But in practice, "it would require substantial coordination and cooperation between companies and governments across countries," something she deems "highly unrealistic" due to "the current state of the world."

Options for promoting a slowdown, she said, include governments doing more to hold AI companies responsible for the risks posed by their technology and pursuing regulation that limits their access to electricity, water and other resources that power data centers.

The idea of embedding external evaluators inside companies has been mostly well-received by the industry, but some critics questioned how independent the assessors could be and how the evaluation standards would be drawn up. The result could be even more concentration of power, Aidan Gomez, co-founder and CEO of the Canadian AI lab Cohere, wrote in response to Amodei's essay.

"A handful of the most powerful labs based in one country would agree on shared standards and the limits to how fast the technology should advance," Gomez said.

He also pushed back against Amodei's idea to have the U.S. government give frontier labs waivers to bypass antitrust restrictions.

"If this is the most consequential technology in human history, then the rules for it cannot be written by a small group of commercially aligned companies behind an antitrust waiver," Gomez said.

Elham Tabassi, the director of the AI and Emerging Technology Initiative and senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, said until the measures companies are committing to are solidified and made public, having independent auditors would be a "voluntarily-provided, company-controlled" move.

Tabassi said it's crucial AI companies continue to invest in developing "scientifically valid" ways of testing and measuring their models as they aim for increased safety. Without this, regulation won't hold as much power, she said.

Trump resistance, pressure to beat China stand in the way

The Trump administration has long favored a light-touch approach to the AI industry in hopes that innovation would flourish and that AI development in the U.S. would surpass China.

The competition between American and Chinese AI companies has been likened to an arms race, which experts said is not conducive to collaboration. That creates "conditions where now we have this existential adversary," Reese said.

Still, some industry leaders remain "cautiously hopeful" about AI development moving in a more safety-minded direction, said Zahra Timsah, the co-founder and CEO of governance platform i-GENTIC AI.

"Within days, you have CEOs that are competing — all of them, all of a sudden, found common ground. You have senators from both parties that started to advance different forms of oversight," Timsah said.

"It's receiving attention, but attention is not the same as implementation. Will it really work? I don't know."

Trump to campaign in North Carolina rally with his handpicked Senate nominee Michael Whatley

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

President Donald Trump will travel to North Carolina on Wednesday to campaign with Republican Senate nominee Michael Whatley as the former national party chairman tries to shore up his campaign against Democratic former Gov. Roy Cooper.

The trip marks Trump's first campaign rally since his unusual midterm convention in Dallas. The president, despite voter frustrations over the Iran war and his economic leadership, has promised dozens more trips ahead of Election Day. Trump's involvement creates a balancing act for Republicans like Whatley, who will depend on the president's core supporters to turn out while also trying to appeal to moderates and disaffected conservatives unhappy with the direction of the country.

Whatley was the president's pick for the Senate race and Trump's pick to lead the Republican National Committee before that. Republicans viewed him as a strong recruit to hold the seat being left open by Sen. Thom Tillis, who decided to retire after clashing with the president last year. But Whatley, who is making his first bid for public office, has trailed Cooper in fundraising in recent months and polling from over the summer showed Cooper with at least a slight lead.

Trump has acknowledged the challenging landscape but believes his presence will be a clear boost.

"In North Carolina, you have a little more difficult case, because people don't quite get it, but they're going to find out," Trump said during his keynote speech in Dallas.

Democrats have not won a Senate contest in the state since 2008, and Trump has carried North Carolina three times since. The seat is critical to Democrats' effort to flip control of the Senate. Cooper was perhaps Democrats' best recruit this cycle, having never lost a statewide race in North Carolina through four terms as attorney general and two terms as governor.

Republican pollster Paul Shumaker, who worked for Tillis's and North Carolina Sen. Ted Budd's campaigns, said Trump will energize Republicans who may not be as excited about the campaign as Democrats. But he noted that registered Democrats and Republicans in North Carolina are split about evenly, while independent voters outnumber both. That cohort of more than 3.5 million voters, he said, are more concerned about the economy, an issue where Trump is weaker than he was in 2024, than with crime or immigration, issues where North Carolina Republicans might still have an advantage over Democrats.

"They see the White House more focused on everything but the economy," Shumaker said. "So that narrative has to change to give them a path here in North Carolina."

Whatley, for his part, has not distanced himself from Trump. During a brief speech in Dallas, he praised Trump's agenda, especially the tax cuts included in his "big beautiful bill" last year. But instead of lavishing praise on the president himself, he spent most of his time unloading on Cooper as soft on crime and bad for North Carolinians' wallets.

"Under Roy Cooper's reign, North Carolina became the most expensive state in the nation for health care costs," he said, countering the former governor's emphasis on the economy under Trump, especially gas and grocery prices.

Cooper's campaign pushed back against Whatley's criticisms and noted that the Republican has faced scrutiny for recently having a convicted sex offender offer the opening prayer at one of his campaign events.

Whatley, meanwhile, is leaning heavily on Trump and national Republican donors to reach voters on TV and online. According to data from AdImpact, which tracks campaign advertising, total Republican spending on the contest has topped \$50 million, while Democrats have spent almost \$35.2 million, with Trump's MAGA Inc. and other conservative PACs accounting for the overall Republican advantage.

Cooper has no public events Wednesday but the state Democratic Party plans a news conference aimed at keeping attention on inflation under Trump.

US-Canada trade war further taxes small businesses as costs rise during the Iran war

By MAE ANDERSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A trade war between the United States and Canada is making it more difficult and expensive for small businesses in the economically entwined countries to operate, according to business owners caught in the crossfire.

Canada imposed reciprocal tariffs on about \$20 billion (CA\$27.6 billion) worth of U.S. goods last week after President Donald Trump placed import taxes on Canadian goods worth the same amount. In response to Canada's action, Trump said the U.S. also would ban imports of wine, whiskey, selected motorcycles and the dairy ingredient whey from Canada.

The tariffs so far involve about 5.5% of the neighboring nations' bilateral trade in goods. Analysts say the overall economic impact therefore will be muted. But small business owners who depend on cross-border sales say a tax of up to 50% on their products and ill will created by the conflict have an outsize effect on them, especially when higher energy costs stemming from the Iran war are eroding their balance sheets.

The owners of four small businesses, two in the U.S. and two in Canada, spoke with The Associated Press about the ways the trade war is affecting their companies.

A Vermont cheesemaker sees a trade war with a close ally hurting business

At Jasper Hill Farm, an artisan cheesemaker in Greensboro, Vermont, co-founder Mateo Kehler said Trump's opening salvo produced an immediate effect: canceled holiday orders from wholesale customers in Canada, whose border is only about 40 miles away.

Cheese wasn't among the products made subject to new U.S. tariffs last month. Kehler suspects his hopes for expanding business in Canada are stalling because residents there resent the way the president and members of his Cabinet treat their country, a longtime ally.

"The backlash on the market side is actually what's affecting us the most," Kehler said. "It's the rhetoric that has inspired a boycott."

Trump has needled America's northern neighbor repeatedly since he returned to the White House. First, it was comments last year about wanting to absorb Canada as the 51st state. After trade negotiations broke down in August, he taunted Prime Minister Mark Carney and signed an executive order to change the name of Lake Ontario to Lake America.

The lost sales and higher prices for materials and equipment that Kehler buys from Canada are tough to swallow when the war with Iran has made fuel for Jasper Hill Farm's trucks and machinery more expensive too, he said. Some of his suppliers and distributors are adding surcharges to cover their costs, he said.

"It's like death by a thousand cuts, because between the rising cost of energy and the tariffs, the inflationary pressure on the inputs across almost every aspect of our business — from the farming side all the way through to finished goods — is just being ratcheted up," Kehler said.

A Vancouver Island company that serves craft distillers expects cost-prohibitive duties to put off U.S. clients

Revival Stillworks makes equipment for distilling liquor like vodka, agave and whisky and helps design spaces for producing craft spirits from the company's base on Vancouver Island, less than 20 miles from Washington state's San Juan Island.

Until last month, the equipment could enter the U.S. tariff-free under the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, a trade pact Trump negotiated during his first presidency. Now, the company's stills, fermenters and other products incur a 50% tax for crossing the border, co-founder Darcy Lane said. The customs charges are considerable because the equipment costs \$250,000 to \$2 million, Lane said.

"We've got millions of dollars worth of orders that are supposed to be happening over the next four to six months, and then all of a sudden this happens again," he said, recalling how a U.S. customer called off a project last year when Trump threatened to put tariffs on some Canadian products.

Clients in the U.S. make up about half of Revival Stillworks' business. With rising oil prices during the war driving up shipping costs, many already were evaluating whether they should move forward with projects

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that involve imported equipment, Lane said.

He and his partner are looking into other kinds of work. Since they employ engineers, welders and fabricators, their business could service the local marine industry, Lane said.

"Hopefully, cooler heads prevail and everything works out, and we can continue along as business as normal," he said. "But if not, we have to put a contingency plan in place anyway."

A Nashville producer of guitar amplifier devices detects a chilling effect on sales to Canadian musicians. Cassandra Sotos is co-owner and CEO of AmpRx, a company in Nashville, Tennessee, that manufactures devices for musicians and recording studios to measure and adjust the voltage moving from a power outlet into a guitar amplifier.

Like Kehler, Sotos thinks the U.S.-Canada trade war is having a chilling effect.

Although the majority of her company's sales are within the U.S., Sotos counts musicians around the world as customers. The new U.S. tariffs do not apply to her bestselling product, a power adapter priced from \$400 to \$1,400, but demand from Canadian customers has fallen off anyway, she said.

Sotos said she isn't sure if customers are worried about unexpected import charges or if the stumbling block is "just optics with the United States" and how the country is perceived in Canada at the moment.

As a small business, "any piece of the puzzle that gets taken away from us is significant," Sotos said. "There's just as many guitar players in Canada as there are in the United States. And I'm currently only able to get to a tiny percentage of them because of all of this."

She feels like trade policies are hampering AmpRx's growth at a time when fighting in the Middle East has brought unexpected expenses. Shipping costs for imported components are two to three times what they were before the war, Sotos said.

"At times, this aspect of the global situation acts as a silent killer for small to medium businesses," she said. "Just as you figure out how to manage the increase from tariffs, you get the second punch to the gut with the shipping estimate."

A British Columbia beekeeper fears for the future of Canada's honey industry

A new tariff on Canadian honey that the U.S. started charging in August came as a blow to beekeepers like Peter Awram, CEO of the family-owned Worker Bee Honey Co. in Rosedale, British Columbia. The U.S. was the market for about 60% of Canadian honey export volume, he said.

The reciprocal 50% tariff that Carney's government slapped on American-made honey does nothing to help because an influx from India and China of fake honey diluted with rice syrup has created pricing pressure on both sides of the border, said Awram, who began beekeeping more than 50 years ago.

"Most of what Canada is now tariffing is not American honey," he said. "It is other countries' honey carrying American paperwork."

Most Canadian beekeepers will likely try to increase their domestic sales, which could flood the market with honey and further depress prices, Awram said.

"The industry was in a precarious state before the tariff," Awram said. "If this tariff stays in place for long, it will put a large number of commercial beekeepers out of business."

Warsh likely to side with financial markets over Trump as Fed rate hike expected

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Barely four months into the job, Federal Reserve Chair Kevin Warsh is stuck between two strong and opposing forces: Financial markets that anticipate the central bank will raise interest rates, and President Donald Trump, who wants the Fed to cut them or leave them unchanged.

Economists expect that on Wednesday, Warsh and his fellow policymakers will side with the markets.

Warsh, economists say, has largely boxed himself into a rate hike after delivering a high-profile speech last month warning that inflation remains too far above the Fed's 2% target and might require higher borrowing costs to bring it down. A report last week showing inflation is still stubbornly high largely sealed

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investors' expectations.

Warsh has faced this dilemma before. Soon after becoming chair May 22, he delivered tough rhetoric on inflation, but in late July the central bank left its key rate unchanged. After he provided little explanation for his decision at a press conference, investors pushed up longer-term interest rates, accelerating a process that is still ongoing. This week, the rate on the 10-year Treasury bond reached 5% for the first time in three years. Mortgage rates, which closely follow the 10-year Treasury, have also risen.

If the Fed doesn't hike its key rate Wednesday, it risks a replay of what happened in late July, economists say. When investors expect inflation to stay high, they demand higher interest rates on government and corporate bonds to compensate.

"That is the paradox: A hike now could lower long-term rates later," Diane Swonk, chief economist at KPMG, wrote in an email. "Restore faith in the 2% target, then the inflation premium can fall. Fail, and markets will tighten instead through higher mortgage rates, business borrowing costs and interest on the debt."

A quarter-point rate increase would be the first in three years and push the Fed's benchmark rate to about 3.9%.

While campaigning for the top job last year, Warsh said the Fed could lower interest rates. But since getting the nod, the Iran war has sharply raised gas prices, lifting inflation to 3.7% in July, according to the Fed's preferred measure. In April 2025, before Trump's tariffs, it had fallen to 2.3%.

Core inflation, which excludes the volatile food and energy categories, was 3.3% in July, up from 3% just before the Iran war.

If the Fed forgoes a rate hike, it would risk being seen as giving in to pressure from the White House, which could undercut its credibility with financial markets.

"Kevin cares about his legacy," said Kristin Forbes, an economics professor at MIT's Sloan School and former policymaker at the Bank of England. "And he knows that Fed chairs who follow political pressure instead of the economy do not go down well in the annals of history."

Trump harshly criticized Warsh's predecessor, Jerome Powell, for not cutting rates quickly enough. His Justice Department even launched a criminal investigation into Powell over brief testimony he delivered to Congress last year, though that probe was eventually dropped.

Kevin Hassett, Trump's top economic adviser, was asked in an interview with Fox News on Sunday how Trump might react to a rate hike.

"I'm sure he's not going to be super happy about it, but he will defend the independence of Kevin Warsh above all," Hassett said.

Warsh might also have a measure of protection from the fact that his father-in-law is Ronald Lauder, a friend of Trump's and a billionaire donor to his campaigns.

Even if Warsh decides to support a rate hike, it's not clear how many more will follow. It's unusual for the Fed to change rates just once. Typically the central bank embarks on a series of hikes or rate cuts to push the economy in the direction it seeks.

There is one precedent for a single hike: In 1997, former chair Alan Greenspan lifted rates by a quarter-point in March of that year. Yet a financial crisis ignited in Asia that July, prompting the Fed to remain on hold. When the crisis worsened in 1998, the Fed ultimately cut rates three times that fall.

For now, Wall Street investors anticipate the Fed will hike three times, with additional increases in December and March.

But Jonathan Pingle, an economist at UBS, said it is possible that if future inflation data showed price increases cooling, the Fed could forgo more hikes.

"They don't have to follow through on that if the data goes their way," Pingle said.

On Wednesday, the Fed will provide some hints about its next moves when it releases its quarterly economic projections, which will include a forecast of where its benchmark rate will be at the end of this year and next.

Saudi crown prince goes to Egypt for support against Houthi strikes, and other Mideast developments

By The Associated Press undefined

With his kingdom under attack, Saudi Arabia's crown prince on Tuesday reached out to Egypt for support against Yemen's Houthi rebels who have disrupted key shipping routes, contributing to a spike in the cost of oil around the world.

Egypt is unlikely to offer military help to Saudi Arabia, but the country is influential in the Arab world and can help rally support. Separately, a Houthi official said Tuesday that Saudi warplanes struck Yemen, killing three people, including two children.

The U.S. military, meanwhile, said it destroyed two Iranian boats. And a new appeal went out from the Iranian government seeking volunteers to learn how to handle assault rifles.

Here's a look at the latest news in the Middle East. Full coverage can be found [here](#).

Saudi, Egyptian leaders meet in Cairo

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman traveled to Egypt to see President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi on Tuesday. Neither side gave firm details on any future steps, though el-Sissi's office said there was "unwavering" support for the Red Sea neighbor.

Saudi Arabia's East-West Pipeline will be largely shut down for weeks as it is repaired after attacks by Iranian-backed militias in Iraq, officials say, likely taking several million barrels of oil a day off the market.

Houthi fighters have made remarkable advances, seizing the Red Sea port of Mokha and three strategic islands in and near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

The U.K. prime minister's spokesman, Tom Wells, said the Houthis "must cease their attacks immediately" and said Saudi Arabia and Yemen "have the right to defend themselves."

Saudi military says it shot down drone near Mecca

Saudi military spokesperson Maj. Gen. Turki al-Malki said its air defense forces intercepted and destroyed a drone Tuesday evening before it entered the airspace over Mecca, Islam's holiest city and a focal point for followers of the faith. It's the birthplace of Prophet Muhammad, where Muslims believe he first received God's revelations of the Quran, and the location of the Kaaba, the black, cube-shaped structure that Muslims around the world turn to five times a day when praying.

The security of the holy city is "a red line," he said, adding that Saudi forces will not hesitate to act against "hostile and terrorist behavior."

The Houthis denied firing drones toward Mecca.

3 killed in Saudi airstrikes in Yemen's southwest, Houthis say

Anees al Asbahi, a spokesperson for the Houthi-run Health Ministry, said on X that Saudi airstrikes killed three people, including two children, in Yemen's Taiz province.

The Associated Press couldn't independently verify the claim, and al-Asbahi didn't say what the Saudi warplanes had targeted.

The renewed fighting in Yemen is endangering civilians and threatening shipping through the Red Sea, a route that has become more important due to disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz since the U.S. and Israel launched joint strikes against Iran on Feb. 28, sparking the war.

Yemen's UN ambassador says forces are working to constrain Houthis

Yemen's forces are working to prevent Houthi rebels from threatening the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and international navigation, the country's U.N. envoy said Tuesday.

Ambassador Abdullah Al-Saadi told an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council that Yemen's armed forces are regrouping and regaining control, and he vowed that the Houthis "will once again fail to turn any battleground gains into a reality."

He said the fight against the Houthis and their attempt to control a key corridor for global energy and trade has become an international issue which calls for effective implementation of the U.N. arms embargo against the Houthis.

Yemen is home to over 40 million people who fear a return to the civil war that killed 150,000 and brought

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many others to the brink of famine in one of the world's most sprawling humanitarian crises.

Saudi Arabia's U.N. envoy told the U.N. Security Council the Houthis' latest escalation threatens one of the most important international waterways "with economic consequences far exceeding this region" and that protecting the waterways should be an international responsibility.

"The conduct by Houthi militias, their sponsors and master puppeteers, has shown that they are now militarizing international straits to blackmail the global economy," Ambassador Abdulaziz Alwasil said, without naming the Houthis' Iranian backers.

Yemenis flee violence but fuel is a factor

A fuel shortage in Yemen is hampering the movement of people attempting to flee the country and cross the Red Sea for Djibouti, officials said.

More than 2,000 Yemenis are in Djibouti. More than 100,000 others are internally displaced in Yemen, according to the U.N. refugee agency UNHCR.

"We cannot allow those who have sought refuge among us to suffer," Djibouti Finance Minister Ilyas M. Dawaleh said on X.

In a post on X, the U.N.'s humanitarian chief, Tom Fletcher, said that he had allocated \$9 million from an emergency fund to provide assistance to the displaced in Yemen and the communities that are hosting them.

US says 2 Iranian boats destroyed

The U.S. military says it "forcefully responded" against two Iranian boats that were trying to steal a drone ship in the waters off Iran.

The drone involved is a "Saildrone," a small craft that can operate by itself, Capt. Tim Hawkins, U.S. Central Command spokesman, said Tuesday. CENTCOM has been using them to surveil maritime traffic.

Iranian state media reported Monday that a pair of fishing boats came under attack in Hormozgan province and that several fishermen were missing, citing a provincial official.

Iran seeks volunteers to 'sacrifice their lives'

Iran's state TV reported that civilians are being recruited to learn how to use assault rifles, the second such recruitment effort since the U.S. and Israel began an air war against Tehran.

The move is seen as a show of defiance as U.S. President Donald Trump threatens to restart the war with Iran as months of negotiations break down and the Islamic Republic keeps its grip on the Strait of Hormuz.

The volunteers are known as "Janfada" or the "ones who sacrifice their lives." The appeal suggests more armed hard-liners could also help suppress any demonstrations against Iran's theocracy.

Israeli strikes kill 7 people in Gaza, officials say

The strikes took place throughout the day and into Tuesday night, with two children among the dead, local health officials said.

Strikes were reported in Gaza City, northern Gaza and the southern city of Khan Younis, according to hospital officials and the Health Ministry.

Israel's military said the first strike killed a Hamas commander. Israel's military did not respond to a request for comment on the other strikes.

The heaviest fighting between Israel and Hamas has subsided since a ceasefire last October, but Israeli fire has killed at least 1,375 Palestinians in Gaza, according to health officials in the territory.

Oman official calls for alternative energy routes to Strait of Hormuz

Oman's Minister of Energy and Minerals Salim Al-Aufi called for alternative routes for liquefied natural gas (LNG) to bypass the Strait of Hormuz, either through Oman or through Yemen. He spoke at the world's largest natural gas conference, Gastech, in Bangkok.

Abdul Rahman Al Yahyai, CEO of Oman's state-owned Integrated Gas Company (IGC), said the closure of Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline "means more stress in the market, high prices for both gas and oil, and it means more disruption to global supplies."

Separately, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio called the foreign minister of Oman to discuss the Gulf Arab country's efforts to salvage a U.S.-Iran ceasefire and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the State Department said.

The FBI thwarted a Russian plot to kill a prominent dissident in Washington, authorities say

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The intelligence services of the Russian Federation are plotting to carry out targeted killings in the U.S. and in European nations supporting Ukraine, federal authorities said Tuesday in announcing they'd thwarted a plot to kill a prominent Russian dissident believed to be living in Washington, D.C.

Five people assumed to be living abroad were charged in the plot, according to an indictment unsealed in Manhattan federal court. It said a network of the Russian intelligence services has paid and tried to pay individuals in the United States and in other countries since 2024 to surveil and then kill Russian dissidents.

The associates recruited by the network also have been solicited to carry out acts of terrorism against civilian and military infrastructure in European countries that are perceived to be aligned with Ukraine, the indictment said.

James C. Barnacle Jr., head of New York's FBI office, said the agency disrupted the plans "through relentless work" as members of the intelligence services and their affiliates "conspired to intimidate, threaten, or murder people on U.S. soil and around the world."

Darren B. Cox, head of the Washington, D.C., office of the FBI, in a release cited "extraordinary work by multiple FBI field offices, components, and partner agencies" and said they "moved quickly to disrupt the plot."

According to the release, a network of people working for the Russian Federation's intelligence services had since at least 2024 conspired to conduct and had conducted attacks and murders around the world, including within the United States.

Previously the network had focused on Russian dissidents and defectors but following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine had targeted nations perceived to be allies of Ukraine, the release said. Recently, members of the network have tried to recruit multiple people in the United States, it said.

U.S. Attorney Jamie McDonald said in the release that the Russian-led network said the people charged in the foiled plot "conspired to cause destruction and mayhem around the world, including right here in the United States."

Among those charged in the indictment were three high-ranking members of the Russian intelligence services, authorities said. They were identified as Yuri Khrameev, a former colonel in the Russian intelligence services; his son, Kirill Khrameev, an officer in the Federal Security Service of Russia; and Oemis Romagoza Durruthy, a Cuban national and an influential member of the Cuban diaspora living in Russia.

The indictment said the Federal Security Service is Russia's principal security agency and the successor agency to the former Soviet Union's Committee for State Security, which was known as the KGB.

Yuri Khrameev and two others charged in the indictment — Yaidel Delgado Suarez and Angel Eduardo Castro, both living in Russia — recruited a Venezuelan citizen living in Brooklyn to surveil and murder a prominent Russian dissident they believed to be residing in Washington, D.C., the indictment said.

It said the Brooklyn resident was sent to two locations associated with the targeted victim and was given "explicit instructions on how to conduct surveillance" while being promised \$1,000 and \$1,500 to carry out the work.

After conducting the surveillance and providing multiple photographs and videos of locations associated with the intended victim, the U.S. resident turned down the \$40,000 that was offered to "eliminate" or "disappear" the target through murder, authorities said.

When the offer was rejected, the member of the intelligence services who made it offered multiple other people within the United States substantial amounts of money to finish the job, the indictment said.

Ed Sheeran's tour in trouble after opening acts drop out in solidarity with rapper Macklemore

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Ed Sheeran's tour of North and South America was plunged into chaos Tuesday when four of his supporting acts abruptly quit in solidarity with the rapper Macklemore, who was dropped for making pro-Palestinian comments onstage.

Hours after Sheeran posted on social media about Macklemore's ouster and attributed the decision to the tour's promoters, Irish acts Aaron Rowe and Beoga, the Danish band Lukas Graham, and Finneas posted on Instagram that they were leaving the tour.

Rowe and Lukas Graham would have been replacements for Macklemore on Sheeran's remaining U.S. dates, while Beoga had been performing several songs — including some the Irish folk band co-wrote — with Sheeran around the middle of each set. Finneas, who is Billie Eilish's brother and musical collaborator, was due to tour with Sheeran in South America later this year.

"Artists must not be silenced when they speak up for the oppressed," Finneas said on Instagram. "I have decided to withdraw from my upcoming tour dates with Ed Sheeran. I stand with Palestine and its people."

Pressure mounts on Sheeran

The moves by his fellow artists put enormous pressure on Sheeran, who has tried to avoid politics and taking a side in the Gaza conflict, arguing that his fans don't come to his shows to hear politics.

Rowe and Beoga each cited their country's history in their statements explaining their decision. "We are Irish people who understand colonialism. As founding members of the Irish Artists for Palestine movement, we are committed activists for justice and will continue to be," Beoga said.

Rowe called Sheeran a friend and said the British singer-songwriter changed his life. "But as Irish people we know all too well about genocide, forced famine and violent occupation," he said, adding that he couldn't "stand by and allow billionaires to use their position of power to silence the rightful voices of those who speak up."

Meanwhile, Lukas Graham, the band that had hits with "Mama Said" and "7 Years," expressed gratitude to Sheeran and called it "a difficult decision."

"Money doesn't give you the right to own the conversation. Nobody's bank balance should decide who gets to speak or which suffering we're allowed to acknowledge," the band posted, seemingly referring to billionaire Robert Kraft's role in Macklemore's removal from the tour.

Emails seeking comment were sent to Sheeran and the tour's promoter, the Messina Touring Group.

The crisis started with Macklemore being dropped

Sheeran weighed in on Macklemore being dropped after the rapper made pro-Palestinian comments onstage during their tour, saying the decision was made by the promoters alone. The British singer also said he refused to be drawn into a public discussion about the war in Gaza.

"Macklemore coming off tour was the promoter's decision, it was not mine," Sheeran wrote on Instagram on Tuesday. "I would never let down the fans who had made plans, nor would I abandon the touring crew and the other support acts and musicians who rely on me for work and to make a living."

Sheeran's statement came a day after Macklemore said he was kicked off the Loop Tour after exclaiming "Free Palestine!" during the Sept. 5 date at New Jersey's MetLife Stadium while introducing his protest song "Hind's Hall."

"To all of my Jewish brothers and sisters, criticism of Israel, criticism of apartheid, being against genocide, it in no way is criticism of you," he said during the concert.

Macklemore said Monday on Instagram that several U.S. venues told the promoter they would prohibit him from performing as Sheeran's opening act, rallied by Kraft, owner of NFL's New England Patriots. His Kraft Group also owns Gillette Stadium, where the Patriots play.

In a statement Monday, Kraft said the decision to cancel Macklemore was a result of his recent comments "and a broader history of antisemitic rhetoric and imagery that we believe has been deeply offensive and hurtful to the Jewish community."

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Kraft's representatives didn't immediately respond to a Tuesday email seeking comment about the other musical artists' actions.

Sheeran says 'I am not complicit'

A growing chorus of organizations and experts say Israel's wartime actions in Gaza amount to genocide — an accusation Israel vehemently rejects.

Macklemore was scheduled to perform at eight of the 10 shows Sheeran has remaining on his stadium tour, which is scheduled to resume Saturday in Philadelphia. Ahead are stops at Gillette Stadium, Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium and Indianapolis' Lucas Oil Stadium.

In his social media post, Sheeran said he "spoke with the venues at length all week to try to build a bridge," but that "the venue's and promoter's decision was final."

He wrote that he tries to use his music to "bring people from all backgrounds and cultures together" and that while he has personal views about "this devastating conflict," he chooses not to speak publicly because people who come to his shows "do not expect a political forum." He added: "I am not complicit."

"I respect Macklemore's strength of purpose to stand up and shout for what he believes," Sheeran added. "However, there is room for multiple approaches to the same end: peace. I choose to use my fame and platform to be a place of safety and sanctuary, to maintain diplomacy and keep conversations open, not closed."

Trump administration plans to send powerful bombs to Israel in \$2.8 billion weapons sale

By MICHELLE L. PRICE and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration is planning to deliver powerful 2,000-pound bombs to Israel as part of an upcoming arms deal, weapons that prompted such concerns about the possibility of mass casualties in Gaza that the Biden administration paused their delivery two years ago.

The \$2.8 billion package includes 40,000 of the bombs, made up of 20,000 Mk84s and 20,000 BLU-117s, according to two U.S. officials and a person familiar with the plan who spoke Tuesday on condition of anonymity to discuss the package, which is not yet final.

Congress has been informally notified about the pending deal, most of which is to be paid for with foreign military financing — in which U.S. taxpayer dollars are given to Israel to turn around and buy the weapons from the United States.

The proposed sale is just the latest in a series of Trump administration steps to improve Israeli's military capacity. The conflict in Gaza has left tens of thousands of Palestinians dead and has decimated the enclave. The U.S. brokered a fragile ceasefire, but violence has continued.

The package, which was reported earlier by The Washington Post, comes as Israel has faced increasing international isolation over its war in Gaza in response to the deadly Oct. 7, 2023, attacks by Hamas.

The sale signals that some strains in the relationship between President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, especially since the two countries launched the war against Iran in February, are not impeding the closeness of the U.S.-Israeli alliance. Trump has had a hot-and-cold history with Netanyahu over the years and expressed some frustration with Netanyahu tied to the Iran conflict before their latest meeting in July at the White House.

In 2024, the Biden administration held off on one shipment of the bombs, but Trump lifted that hold when he took office again.

Last year, the Trump administration bypassed a normal congressional review process and approved a nearly \$3 billion sale to Israel that included more than 35,500 of the bombs. The administration then approved a new series of arms sales to Israel totaling \$6.67 billion in January.

The 2,000-pound bombs have multiple variants, with some designed to penetrate deep, underground targets while others detonate above ground and cause widespread damage.

Though the Israeli military has offered few details about what bombs and artillery it has used in Gaza, experts analyzing strike footage and blast fragments found on-site believe the U.S.-made bombs have been

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used there, targeting a tunnel network used by Hamas but also killing of people in densely populated areas.

While the heaviest fighting in Gaza has subsided since the fragile ceasefire took hold in October, Israel has continued to carry out strikes in the territory, including some overnight and into Tuesday that killed several people. That is even after Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and a key Mideast negotiator, met with Netanyahu last month in an effort to push the ceasefire deal forward and asked Israel to reduce its attacks.

Militants have carried out shooting attacks on Israeli troops, and Israel says its strikes are in response to those and other ceasefire violations.

The Hamas-led attack on southern Israel in 2023 killed around 1,200 people and saw 251 taken hostage. Israel's offensive in Gaza to retaliate has killed more than 73,264 Palestinians, including those killed since the ceasefire, Gaza's Health Ministry said.

Trump's push to restrict mail ballots has failed. Other efforts to reshape the midterms are ongoing

By ALI SWENSON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The Supreme Court this week closed the chapter on one of President Donald Trump's boldest efforts to reshape November's elections — a plan that would have demanded a dramatic overhaul of the nation's mail voting processes on what most election officials agreed was an impossibly short timeline.

But the case was just one example of the Republican president's numerous attempts to assert federal control over the upcoming midterms. Several others remain in various states of play, even as mail ballots have been sent out in at least three states and early voting starts in others this week.

Recently, the Department of Justice ordered officials in more than two dozen states to preserve records from the 2024 election as part of a campaign to force them to turn over detailed voter data despite repeated court losses.

And lacking the sensitive voter data the administration wants from many states, the Department of Homeland Security has launched its own probe to find noncitizen voters on state rolls, an effort that a federal whistleblower says is rushed, error-ridden and potentially violating state laws.

Meanwhile, Trump has continued to falsely claim that mail ballots are corrupt, that noncitizens are abundant on voter lists and that Democratic election fraud is widespread. During the recent Republican convention, the president goaded his fans in a verbal pledge to "cheat like hell, like they do."

In response to Monday's Supreme Court ruling, Trump lashed back at the justices, saying they lacked the "courage necessary to save our America."

The Constitution gives the power to run elections to states, rather than to the federal government. Election officials have said they're prepared to run a safe, secure election even if Trump continues to fan the flames.

Democratic groups have signaled they are building out contingency plans in case Trump sends armed federal officers to the polls or Republicans make other attempts to improperly interfere in the election, a high-stakes contest that will determine which party controls Congress next year.

With his mail ballot reforms blocked for now, here's a look at Trump's other, ongoing efforts to reshape election procedures:

Trump has pressured states to use a controversial federal voter lookup tool

The president insists, contrary to reams of research, that large numbers of noncitizens are illegally voting around the country.

In his second term in office, he has sought to use the might of the federal government to crack down on the issue, including through a massive overhaul of a federal voter eligibility database called Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements, or SAVE.

The SAVE program was created under an immigration law mandating that the Department of Homeland Security help federal, state and local agencies prevent government benefits from going to noncitizens. Trump last year directed changes to significantly expand its abilities for mass searches by election officials.

Then, his administration sent letters and filed lawsuits to push states to run their sensitive voter data

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through the tool – a prospect some states have agreed to, but many have resisted to keep their residents' personal information secure.

Since last year, at least 67 million registrations have been scanned through the program, but critics worry it could end up purging valid voters from the rolls. Some registrants have already been wrongly flagged.

A federal judge in June barred the new version of the SAVE program, calling it an illegal violation of Americans' privacy. The Trump administration has asked the Supreme Court to intervene and block that ruling with an emergency order. The Supreme Court has yet to weigh in on the case.

Meanwhile, the federal government continues to push states to give up voter registration information that contains addresses, dates of birth, driver's license numbers and partial Social Security numbers.

DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin in July warned that state officials could lose funding or face investigations if they failed to go along with Trump's election security demands. And the DOJ last week sent letters to 29 states and the District of Columbia ordering them to preserve 2024 election documents and advising them that they were "under investigation" and subject to ongoing litigation for their failure to give up the data.

Numerous investigations have found that while noncitizens have occasionally appeared on voting rolls and cast ballots, it is extremely rare.

DHS is conducting its own noncitizen voter investigation

In a last-ditch effort to hunt for noncitizen voters without detailed data from all states, DHS in August ordered a group of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services staff to pivot to a full-time manual investigation of state voter rolls, according to a whistleblower's report released Monday.

The anonymous federal whistleblower said federal employees are being directed to misrepresent themselves on the voter lookup tools in a way that likely violates state laws as they compare DHS-provided data with state records in an attempt to identify noncitizens who are illegally registered.

The probe known as the "Unlawful Voter Initiative" also asks employees to create federal law enforcement records about voters based on unreliable data, the whistleblower account warns. It's a prospect that could wrongly implicate U.S. citizens in documentation that could spur further investigation.

Asked about the initiative, DHS didn't deny its work but said the investigation was being conducted "diligently and professionally."

"The department accessed publicly available data from states' voter rolls and cross referenced them with known aliens in our systems," a DHS spokesperson said in an emailed statement. "It's not rocket science; it's an easy step to secure our elections."

Administration has signaled other efforts are in the works

Trump has repeatedly run up against the courts in his attempts to more widely reshape election administration, including through two executive orders tied up in lawsuits that allege the changes he wants are unconstitutional.

He also has been stymied in his attempts to get the Republican-led Congress to pass a strict proof-of-citizenship bill called the SAVE America Act. The legislation doesn't have enough votes in the Senate to pass.

But his administration also has used its law enforcement power to take unprecedented steps that have been successful. For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation last year seized hundreds of boxes of ballots and other documents related to the 2020 election in Georgia's most populous county without offering an explanation. The FBI has also demanded 2024 ballots from Michigan's Wayne County, and received records related to the 2020 election from Arizona's Maricopa County.

Attorney General Todd Blanche on Tuesday signaled the Trump administration will be undeterred by the Supreme Court's ruling in its efforts to investigate and combat voter fraud.

"I expect you're going to see that work continue," he told reporters at a Rose Garden press briefing.

Tammy Patrick of The Election Center, which has nearly 2,500 election officials as members, said those who run voting offices breathed a collective sigh of relief at the high court's decision on mail voting Monday night. It removes the main threat that could have immediately disrupted balloting nationwide.

She and various election administrators insisted that time-tested processes will hold for the 2026 midterms and that voters' voices will be heard.

"Voters should realize the midterms are going to be secure," Patrick said. "They're going to be legitimate."

Kennedy Center will close for renovations after judge blocks returning Trump's name to building

By STEVEN SLOAN and ASHRAF KHALIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump-aligned Kennedy Center board voted Tuesday to close most of the iconic performing arts venue just hours after a federal judge blocked the institution from returning President Donald Trump's name to the building.

In a social media post, Trump said the closure was needed for safety repairs. But he said the repairs, which Congress has allocated \$257 million to cover, would only happen if the board was allowed to move forward with plans to add his name to the building. A federal judge has twice said that can't happen without the approval of Congress.

"Simply put, Defendants cannot install memorials for President Trump or anyone or anything else at the Kennedy Center without Congress's blessing," U.S. District Judge Christopher Cooper said in the latest ruling Tuesday.

The Justice Department appealed the ruling. Trump, who was named the Kennedy Center's chairman last year by loyalists on the board, participated in the virtual board meeting and said on social media he'd given \$17 million to an endowment intended to support the institution.

The meeting included testy exchanges at points between Trump and Rep. Joyce Beatty, an Ohio Democrat who has led the campaign to block efforts to memorialize the president at the Kennedy Center. At one point, Beatty referred to Trump as someone who caused "extreme harm," according to a participant in the meeting who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

Trump said Beatty was "incompetent" and "holding up everything."

"You're holding up the whole country," she responded.

White House spokesman Davis Ingle said, "Trump-deranged Democrats like Joyce Beatty oppose anything that celebrates the greatness of our country because they put America Last."

Kennedy Center fans worry about possible demolition

The developments threw into limbo the fate of one of the nation's most prominent cultural institutions, a place where presidents, lawmakers and celebrities of all political ideologies have gathered for decades to recognize and celebrate the best in American arts and culture.

The venue's leaders have argued that the massive building, which began construction in 1965, was in dire need of renovations. A partial ceiling collapse in the building's main hallway earlier this month intensified the calls for renovations.

"The building is not currently built to last, the chairman knows that because he is among the best builders in the world," Brian Ballard, Kennedy Center board member, said in a statement.

But Trump's insistence on a physical recognition of his work on the building, reminiscent of his tendency to add his name to buildings as a real estate developer, has been a persistent sticking point — alienating many of the institution's longtime supporters and facing repeated legal roadblocks.

The fight over the Kennedy Center marks a rare setback in Trump's second term bid to dramatically remake the nation's capital in his gilded tastes. He's demolished the East Wing of the White House and is replacing it with a ballroom and plans to build a triumphal arch near Arlington National Cemetery. He's also eyeing a golf course renovation along the Potomac River.

The Kennedy Center board voted in August to inscribe his name on the Kennedy Center's facade so it would read "The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Restored and Renovated By President Donald J. Trump." If the Trump Kennedy Center Fund reached \$100 million, another inscription would be added reading "Endowed by the Trump Kennedy Center Fund."

The plaza in front of the Kennedy Center would also be renamed in Trump's honor.

Cooper ruled in May that the Kennedy Center illegally added Trump's name to the building, ordering it removed. The institution's leaders complied in June but left a tarp and scaffolding in place where Trump's name was once displayed.

Hanging over the hearing was the prospect that the administration may seek to demolish the Kennedy

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Center. In a filing last month, administration lawyers told the court that absent recognition of the president, the Kennedy Center would struggle to raise money for renovations. Without that money, they suggested, the building may need to be demolished, a prospect that alarmed some given Trump's swift moves last year to dismantle the East Wing.

The Kennedy Center, the lawyers argued, "will deteriorate further into an unsafe, decrepit structure that will be required to be taken down, with a determination to follow on what to build on the site, such as a large outdoor amphitheater overlooking the Potomac River that has been proposed, by some, for many years."

Trump and the court: If he wins, he's happy. When he loses, he ridicules justices he appointed

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has taken his wins, and more notably his losses, at the U.S. Supreme Court quite personally.

It is a court he shaped with three nominees during his first term and he has frequently expressed admiration when the court rules his way, only to turn sharply critical when it delivers him a defeat.

On Monday, the court rejected his administration's planned restrictions on mail ballots for the midterm elections and by the morning on Tuesday, Trump took to social media to denigrate the decision and the justices he had appointed who rejected Trump's argument.

None of the three justices wrote about their rationale for joining the majority opinion, though Justice Brett Kavanaugh indicated he might see things differently if the election wasn't coming up so quickly. Of the nine-member court, only Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito fully agreed with the administration.

Trump's rebuke also resurfaced his frustration over losses on tariffs and birthright citizenship — two other issues where the conservative majority court has checked the power of the Republican president.

The court has let Trump move ahead with much of his agenda

The justices have handed the president nearly two dozen victories in emergency appeals, often lifting lower court orders that had blocked key aspects of his boundary-testing second-term agenda. While technically temporary, those decisions have largely allowed his administration to push ahead with his crackdown on immigration, ban on transgender people serving in the military and dismantling of the Department of Education.

He also got significantly more power over federal regulatory agencies that Congress had created to operate independently when the court found presidents can fire those leaders at will. Another ruling that weakened the Voting Rights Act allowed his call for redistricting for partisan advantage to proceed.

Those decisions, though, achieved longtime goals of the conservative legal movement. "They're the kind of cases that, for the most part, it doesn't matter what administration would have brought them, the court would have come out the same place," said Erin Murphy, an appellate attorney who clerked for Chief Justice John Roberts. She spoke at a Tuesday panel at Georgetown Law's Supreme Court Institute.

Trump also has been dealt high-profile losses

Trump's record has been more mixed, though, in cases where the court has gotten a full briefing and heard arguments. The justices struck down his far-reaching tariffs on nearly every other country, his restrictions on birthright citizenship and put the brakes on his push to fire a member of the Federal Reserve Board.

His administration is still pursuing those goals in new ways, but for Trump the losses have rankled. On Tuesday, he assailed the justices "for shockingly bad rulings that are of such magnitude that it won't be easily possible for our Country to recover or heal."

He referenced his own role in appointing three of the nine justices, writing that "these are not the people I interviewed to serve on the United States Supreme Court."

The missive came after a high-profile loss on the emergency docket: the high court's rejection of his proposed restrictions on mail ballots before the fast-approaching midterm elections. Trump has long targeted mail voting even while using it himself, falsely blaming it for his 2020 election loss despite a lack of

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evidence of fraud.

"I think it's certainly right that this is not a MAGA court. The court is asserting its independence from the president," said Don Verrilli, a former Solicitor General under President Barack Obama, also speaking at Georgetown.

The justices have twice rejected Trump-backed cases ahead of the midterms

The mail ballots decision was the second time in as many weeks that the court rejected a Trump-backed appeal related to the election. The high court also refused to allow Missouri to use new elections maps redrawn at Trump's urging to help Republicans gain an extra seat in the U.S. House.

The high court's majority didn't explain either decision in detail, as is typical on their emergency docket. But taken together, the decision seems to signal an unwillingness to intervene in election litigation before the pivotal November contests.

"My guess is there's a robust majority that doesn't want to be the decision maker allowing the chaos to happen," said attorney Roman Martinez, another former Roberts clerk who frequently argues before the court.

The court will likely end up being drawn into election litigation again, though, before or after the votes are cast. "As the rest of this electoral cycle unfolds, I think there is going to be a lot of turbulence around these issues," Verrilli said.

Lionel Messi added to Argentina's roster for Oct. 6 friendly that team says will be farewell match

BUENOS AIRES (AP) — Lionel Messi might have one last dance with Argentina after all.

Despite announcing his international retirement, the 39-year-old Inter Miami star was included Tuesday in Lionel Scaloni's 28-man Argentina squad ahead of three home friendlies.

Messi has yet to confirm whether he will join the team, but the head of Argentina soccer said the icon accepted the invitation for the Oct. 6 game against Benin in Buenos Aires for what will be a grand finale.

"After a conversation with senior national team coach Lionel Scaloni, we decided to invite the best player in the world — our icon, our captain Lionel Messi — so that he can have the farewell he deserves on October 6," said Claudio Tapia, president of the Argentine Football Association.

Messi led Argentina to the 2022 World Cup title and helped the Albiceleste reach the final at the 2026 edition.

"Furthermore, having received Lionel's acceptance," Tapia said, "we want to invite all the Qatar World Cup champions to join him, along with their families, to witness the 'last tango' of the world's best player."

Earlier, Argentina had announced it would face Bolivia, Burkina Faso and Benin in its first batch of friendly matches following Messi's retirement from the national team after a 21-year spell.

The country's soccer association said the home match against Bolivia will take place Sept. 30 at the Mario Alberto Kempes Stadium in Córdoba.

The Estadio Monumental in Buenos Aires will host the friendlies against Burkina Faso and Benin on Oct. 3 and Oct. 6, respectively.

Focus also turns to the future of Scaloni, whose contract expires in December. Scaloni had hinted he might step down following the 1-0 loss to Spain in the World Cup final on July 19.

Three Argentina players — Leandro Paredes, Nahuel Molina and Thiago Almada — were recently handed bans by FIFA for a scuffle after losing the World Cup final. Paredes received a 10-match ban.

FBI chief Kash Patel defends hiring policy changes on prostitution, bestiality at fiery hearing

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — FBI Director Kash Patel defended Tuesday a recent policy change to allow some applicants who have engaged in prostitution and bestiality to be considered for employment, insisting that the move was made to enable victims of those acts to apply for a job without fear of automatic disqualification.

The subject arose during a fiery Senate Judiciary Committee hearing in which Patel clashed with Democrats over his firing of agents who participated in investigations of President Donald Trump and suggested that agents might be dispatched to the polls on Election Day amid Justice Department and White House concerns about voter fraud.

The hours-long hearing featured the name-calling and biting personal exchanges that have come to define Patel's appearances on Capitol Hill, with Democrats characterizing the Trump appointee as unqualified, criticizing him for politically charged investigations into Trump's enemies and highlighting travel that has included a trip to the Winter Olympics in Italy in which he partied with U.S. hockey players and a snorkeling excursion at the Pearl Harbor memorial in Hawaii.

"He's an incompetent lackey. He's like an 18-year old-kid who wants to join a fraternity that he could never be a member of, doing keg stands and chugging with friends. He's an embarrassment to the agency and wouldn't qualify even to be an FBI agent," said an exasperated Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey, his voice rising in anger.

"What a mockery you are," he added.

Patel shot back, "You are the biggest mockery in the United States Senate, and you're sitting next to Schiff." That was a reference to Sen. Adam Schiff, a California Democrat and outspoken Patel critic.

Patel was pressed on the FBI's hiring standards

The FBI quietly issued guidance this past spring lifting a categorical hiring restriction on applicants who had previously participated in prostitution. The bureau made a similar change with regard to childhood experience in bestiality.

Under questioning, Patel denied that the changes reflected a lowering of employment standards and insisted they were designed to prevent victims who'd been forced to engage in that conduct from being automatically disqualified.

"We did not want to punish victims of bestiality, victims who were trafficked. We did not want to make it an automatic disqualification for the FBI to consider you if you were a victim of these awful, heinous acts," Patel said. "We are not going to target victims and prevent them from serving in their capacity to serve this country."

The questioning spanned partisan lines, with Republican Sen. John Kennedy of Louisiana grilling Patel about the rationale for a change that the FBI director said was proposed to him by subordinates.

"When you saw bestiality, I say this with respect: The person who recommended it, why didn't you just say what planet did you parachute in from?" Kennedy asked.

Patel conceded that was his initial response, but "they then explained to me and showed me cases in which people were forced into it and applied to the FBI and so I thought they should be considered. It's not an automatic disqualification."

The Associated Press reported last month that the FBI still intends to bar some applicants who are revealed to have previously engaged in prostitution, including if they've done so within the last 10 years.

Patel did not rule out sending agents to polling places on Election Day

The hearing took place two months before the midterm elections in November and at a time when the FBI has opened investigations related to the 2020 contest, including by seizing voter data in Fulton County, Georgia.

Trump regularly makes false claims that elections are rigged and riddled with fraud, especially in the

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months before an election. But there is no widespread fraud in American elections. Local election officials have detailed processes for auditing the accuracy of the vote after ballots are tallied. Even as he disputed his loss in 2020, audits, reviews and recounts in the battleground states where he challenged the outcome all affirmed Democrat Joe Biden's win.

Those voter fraud claims, and the FBI's efforts to investigate the 2020 race, have spurred Democratic concerns that Patel could plunge the bureau into the upcoming election.

Asked whether the FBI has the general authority to monitor elections, Patel replied that responsibility rests with the Department of Homeland Security. He said the FBI's presence on Election Day will be "housed" with election crimes coordinators at each of the bureau's 56 field offices, but under questioning, he declined to rule out that agents would be dispatched to the polls in the event of problems or reports of interference.

"Do you pledge that you will not in any way interfere in the will of the American people when they go to the polls in November?" asked Democratic Sen. Peter Welch of Vermont in one of the hearing's more combative exchanges.

"I pledge unequivocally that I will not participate in your charade of lies," Patel said, later calling Welch a "total fraud."

FBI firings were also a featured topic of the hearing

Patel repeatedly touted what he asserted was his record-breaking success at the FBI, proclaiming the "most prolific reduction in crime in U.S. history" even though violent crime rates in American cities had begun dropping well before Trump took office last year for reasons that are difficult to pinpoint.

Even as the Republican-led panel tried through its questioning to keep the focus on Patel's crime-fighting efforts from his perch at the nation's premier federal law enforcement agency, Democrats seized on the tumult inside the FBI over the last year — including sweeping firings of agents who participated in investigations of Trump, the bureau's aggressive efforts to investigate media leaks by serving subpoenas at reporters' homes and Patel's travel schedule that has blended private leisure with professional responsibilities.

Democrat Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut pressed Patel on the firing of national security agents with expertise in Iran shortly before the U.S. launched attacks on the country last February. He noted that the agents had participated in an FBI investigation into Trump over his retention of classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.

"Do you think firing the president's political opponents is more important than retaining the decades of experience and expertise monitoring intelligence threats from Iran?" Blumenthal asked.

"I think what's most important is to not have a weaponized FBI, and I will endeavor every single day to make sure we have no one there that is doing that," Patel responded. He did not say why their participation in the Mar-a-Lago investigation represented "weaponized" law enforcement.

Patel later suggested that the scope of firings had been overblown, saying many agents had retired on their own. And he defended his personal travels by pointing to numbers that he said showed that two recent predecessors, Chris Wray and James Comey, had traveled more.

US stocks slip after oil prices and the bond market crank up the pressure

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks slipped Tuesday after oil prices and the bond market cranked up the pressure on Wall Street.

The S&P 500 fell 0.4%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 328 points, or 0.6%, and the Nasdaq composite sank 0.8%.

They felt pressure as the yield on the 10-year Treasury, which is the centerpiece of the U.S. bond market, climbed to 5.00% from 4.97% late Monday and briefly touched 5.04% overnight. It's been jumping to its highest level in years, and Monday was the first time it breached 5% since 2023.

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Higher yields mean everyone from the U.S. government to households to businesses must pay more in interest to borrow money, which slows the overall economy. They also make people less willing to pay high prices for stocks because they can earn more from sitting in bonds, which are considered safer investments.

"The result is a market that must work harder to generate earnings growth just as investors become less willing to pay premium valuations for that growth," according to Darrell Cronk, president of Wells Fargo Investment Institute.

The last time the 10-year yield was consistently above 5% was around the turn of the millennium, and it's been a long march back since it bottomed out below 0.50% in 2020. The pace has accelerated since February, after the war with Iran sent oil prices much higher.

That raised worries about high inflation potentially lasting for years, which are layering atop longstanding concerns about the U.S. government's massive debt level and other issues.

Oil prices rose further Tuesday following several sharp swings in the morning. The price for a barrel of Brent crude, the international standard, climbed 2.9% to settle at \$108.75.

It remains well above its \$72 level from early July and from before the war with Iran began in February, as doubt continues about whether the fighting will allow oil tankers to freely exit the Persian Gulf anytime soon through the Strait of Hormuz.

Inflation remains high enough that the widespread expectation is that the Federal Reserve will announce on Wednesday that it will hike the federal funds rate for the first time in three years.

Traders are still betting on a slight chance that the Federal Reserve could hold off on hiking interest rates, though. If it does, the market could swing because investors may see it as a sign that the Fed is less committed to getting inflation lower.

Fed officials will also release forecasts for where they see interest rates heading in upcoming years, providing another opportunity to inject uncertainty into the market.

On Wall Street, stocks of companies that depend on customers having enough spare cash to spend on their products fell to some of the sharper losses.

Chipotle Mexican Grill dropped 5.9%. Darden Restaurants, the company behind Olive Garden and Longhorn Steakhouse, sank 4.3%.

Dollar Tree, whose customers may have less financial cushion than others, fell 5.4%.

Dave & Buster's Entertainment tumbled 19% after reporting weaker results for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

Elsewhere on Wall Street, stocks enmeshed in the cryptocurrency industry sank after the U.S. Senate voted to block legislation creating a new regulatory framework for crypto, while demanding more limits on President Donald Trump's investments.

Coinbase Global fell 10.1%, and Robinhood Markets lost 3.4%.

Several artificial-intelligence stocks meanwhile held steadier following their worldwide slide the day before, after leaders of the AI industry called for a slowdown in development to address safety issues for humanity.

Nvidia added 0.6% a day after its 3.4% drop was the heaviest weight on the S&P 500 index. Advanced Micro Devices climbed 2.2%.

Such stocks led the U.S. market to records for years, but they've come under pressure recently on worries that their prices shot too high in the frenzy around AI.

All told, the S&P 500 fell 34.25 points to 7,585.73. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 328.09 to 52,093.11, and the Nasdaq composite fell 204.84 to 25,981.57.

In stock markets abroad, indexes fell across much of Europe and Asia. But for several, the drops were not as sharp as Monday's caused by the slide for AI stocks.

South Korea's Kospi index, for example, fell 0.9% following Monday's 3.3% drop.

Senate blocks cryptocurrency regulation as Democrats push back on Trump investments

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked legislation to create a new regulatory framework for cryptocurrency, stalling an industry-backed effort to place new guardrails around digital assets after demanding more limits on President Donald Trump's investments.

The 49-50 vote on whether to move forward with the legislation was a pivotal election-year test for the \$2.3 trillion cryptocurrency market as the industry has pushed aggressively for a uniform set of rules. The Senate debate came as cryptocurrency companies have become a major political force, and as Trump has amassed significant wealth in crypto while in office.

While some Democrats are friendly toward the industry and support the idea of regulation, they have been adamant that the bill include strong ethics safeguards to prevent the president and his family from enriching themselves while he's in office. The opposition appears to have only solidified two months before the midterm elections, despite significant donations that crypto groups have given to some Democrats in recent years. In the end, no Democrats supported it.

"Let's make sure that we do not pass a crypto bill that will let Donald Trump continue to rake in billions of dollars in crypto profits while working families across this country struggle to deal with higher prices and an economy that gets worse by the day," said Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, the top Democrat on the Senate Banking Committee.

Several Democrats who have been supportive of the bill aside from the ethics concerns said they were still open to negotiating.

Virginia Sen. Mark Warner said he still wants regulation of the crypto industry, but "we cannot pass landmark legislation governing this industry while allowing the president of the United States to personally profit from it."

The White House indicated Tuesday that it would now turn to agencies to implement parts of their crypto agenda and warned that the failed vote would continue to stifle financial innovation domestically while it flourishes abroad.

"The full cost of today's result may not be known for years to come, but this much is clear: It increases the risk that the standards that global financial markets adhere to in the future will be those of Brussels or Beijing, rather than Washington and New York," Patrick Witt, the White House's crypto adviser, said.

Trump agrees to some changes as Democrats push back

As Democrats made clear they would block the bill, Trump agreed to some concessions on ethics, including new restrictions on federal elected officials from issuing digital assets like the presidential meme coins he and his wife Melania launched before he took office for his second term. He agreed to new concessions Sunday, such as additional powers for state attorneys general that Democrats had sought to enforce the crypto measures.

Those concessions were not enough for Democrats, who sent a counteroffer late Monday to expand the ethics provision but were not able to strike a final deal. Among other issues, they said the bill still needed stricter enforcement and a requirement for Trump or any future president to divest if holdings reach a certain value.

"Instead of spending their time twisting themselves into knots to appease President Trump, Republicans should have worked more closely with Senate Democrats to craft a bill that could pass with strong ethics provisions," said Arizona Sen. Ruben Gallego, who was involved in last-minute talks with GOP senators on the bill.

Republicans needed Democratic support to win the 60 votes necessary to move forward on the bill in the 53-47 Senate.

North Carolina Sen. Thom Tillis, a Republican who worked with Gallego to strengthen the ethics provision, said before the vote that he was pleased with Trump's latest concessions.

"We're so close," Tillis said. "It's just a shame to not take this opportunity."

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Trump has amassed big crypto profits

Trump's family has raked in big profits in the crypto sector since he was reelected, including the meme coin, announced the day before Trump took office. Top investors were invited to a private reception with the president.

Trump's family also has a controlling stake in World Liberty Financial, a crypto firm co-founded with the president's special envoy Steve Witkoff. Trump reported more than \$500 million in revenue from World Liberty Financial sales of crypto products, including "governance tokens," in his annual disclosure report filed with the Office of Government Ethics. That is a significant share of the more than \$1.4 billion that the president reported from crypto businesses last year.

A measure enacted into law last year regulating stablecoins, a type of cryptocurrency, barred members of Congress and their families from profiting off them, but it did not extend to Trump or his family.

Legislation aims to give crypto firms legal certainty

Republicans who have been working on the legislation for more than a year say it could now stall indefinitely. The House and Senate will be out of session during October and before the elections, and the dynamics could significantly shift if Democrats win back the majorities of the House or Senate, or both, in November.

Republican Sen. Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming, a lead sponsor of the bill, said beforehand that a no vote means "opposing real ethics reforms on politicians' personal investments, handing American leadership in digital assets to our foreign competitors, and leaving Americans with zero protections in the digital asset markets."

Supporters say the legislation aims to give the industry more legal certainty and protect consumers by creating a broad set of guardrails and regulatory requirements, including better enforcement to prevent bad actors and protections to prevent a market collapse.

As talks continued Tuesday morning, Lummis posted on X that it was "now or never for the Clarity Act," referring to the bill's name.

"The time for negotiating is over," she wrote.

Crypto cash has flooded campaigns

Opponents, mostly Democrats, say the bill is a giveaway to the industry as crypto companies have become generous donors to candidates in both parties around the country.

"It's no secret that they are seeking to ram a bill through Congress based upon not the merits of the bill, but the threat that they will spend even more money in elections against people who vote against it," said Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut.

In 2024, the crypto industry spent more than \$130 million in congressional races, including \$40 million in Ohio and \$10 million each in Arizona and Michigan.

"DC received a clear message that being anti-crypto is a good way to end your career, as it doesn't represent the will of the voters," Brian Armstrong, the CEO of Coinbase, the nation's largest crypto exchange, wrote in a social media post the day after the 2024 election.

Trump slams the Supreme Court for rejecting his push to restrict mail ballots

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Tuesday went after the Supreme Court after it rejected his push to restrict mail-in voting in this year's midterms, saying justices who opposed him were "not the people I interviewed."

His social media missive was just the latest in a long history of Trump assailing justices, particularly those he had nominated, who ruled against him on his administration's most prominent initiatives. The president has been publicly furious with the Supreme Court over its decisions against restricting birthright citizenship and his ability to issue tariffs unilaterally.

On mail-in voting, the Trump administration had made a last-minute push to have the U.S. Postal Service

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play a central role in deciding who would be able to receive a ballot. But state election officials argued there was not enough time to make the changes for the Nov. 3 midterm elections — and said their systems were already secure and accurate.

The court ruled late Monday in an emergency order that the restrictions would most likely lose in court, at least for this year's election.

"The Court's inability and unwillingness to do the right thing for our Country will go down, in a very negative way, in the annals of History," Trump wrote in a lengthy social media post Tuesday. "This Supreme Court is bullied and cajoled by the Radical Left into making decisions that have set America back at least a hundred years."

Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas publicly dissented from the order, and Trump on Tuesday called them "legends both." Trump has nominated three of the justices on the Supreme Court — Neil Gorsuch, Amy Coney Barrett and Brett Kavanaugh.

"These are not the people I interviewed to serve on the United States Supreme Court, they are merely a shell of their original selves," Trump said. He asserted that the court "is costing the United States Trillions of Dollars with shockingly bad rulings that are of such magnitude that it won't be easily possible for our Country to recover or heal."

It won't be the last time Trump criticizes the court, his attorney general says

Attorney General Todd Blanche said later Tuesday that the administration was going to comply with the decision but "that doesn't mean that we're not going to do everything in this administration that we can to make sure that there are free and fair elections."

Blanche also defended Trump's commentary about the court, dismissing the idea that it was undermining the court's independence and saying it was part of the democratic process for the president to be critical of another branch of government.

"He has every right and indeed, he should communicate his concerns with the Supreme Court whenever he has them," Blanche said at the White House. "This isn't the first time that he's done it, and it won't be the last."

The president has a lengthy track record of attacking judges, often very personally, who issue decisions that go against his wishes, and Trump has long viewed his legal appointments as owing loyalty to the person who nominated them to the bench.

So as Barrett, Kavanaugh and Gorsuch ruled against Trump at varying points over the years, the president has not hesitated to go after them publicly, while praising them if they sided with him in a case.

Yet this court, led by Chief Justice John Roberts, has ruled in favor of Trump on several of his priorities, most notably the 2024 decision from the court's conservative majority that said former presidents are presumptively entitled to immunity for all official acts. That paved the way for Trump to run for reelection without threat of a criminal trial that year.

Trump has opposed mail voting and falsely blamed fraud associated with mail voting for his 2020 election loss. A report by the Brookings Institution published in 2025 found that mail voting fraud occurred in only about four cases out of every 10 million mail ballots cast.

Roughly a third of voters use mail ballots, and mail voting has already begun in some states. The decision allows states to continue sending out mail ballots under the same processes they've used for years.

On Tuesday, Trump also complained that the decision took too long to issue.

"It is not easy for me to write this criticism of the United States Supreme Court — it will likely cost me dearly for years to come — but I feel it my obligation and duty, as President, to do so for the America we love!" Trump said.

Massachusetts governor proposes improved postpartum healthcare after Lindsay Clancy trial

By LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — New parents in Massachusetts should receive better support and postpartum care, Gov. Maura Healey said Tuesday, following the high-profile murder trial of Lindsay Clancy who, her attorneys argued, was suffering from unresolved postpartum psychosis when she killed her three children in 2023.

Healey proposed providing free home visits by nurses to all parents with newborns as well as updated regulations governing mental health screening of new mothers.

"To every mom who has struggled with her mental health before, during or after pregnancy, I want you to know we see you — I see you," Healey said during a visit to Boston's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

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.

"We need to talk more openly about this," said Healey, who signed a maternal health law in 2024 that expanded access to doulas, midwives and birth centers, and required insurers to cover postpartum depression screenings.

Both sides agreed that Clancy killed her three children, then tried to take her own life by jumping from a second-floor window. The Massachusetts mother is now paralyzed from the waist down. Her attorneys argued she could not be held criminally responsible because of postpartum psychosis, while prosecutors said she should be found guilty because evidence indicated she knew what she was doing was wrong.

A mistrial was declared when jurors could not reach a unanimous verdict.

Healey, a Democrat, said she plans to ask state lawmakers to approve \$2 million for a program aimed at offering home visits to all families welcoming the roughly 68,000 newborns in Massachusetts each year. No families would be required to participate, but those who do can have a nurse visit and answer questions about feeding, sleep, and caring for a new baby. The nurse would also monitor mothers' postpartum health, as well as screen for depression and other mental health concerns.

This would be the first state investment in a federally funded program that currently provides nurse visits to about 3,000 families each year, Healey said.

Healey also proposed a \$250,000 investment in the Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program for Moms and directed the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to update state regulations on perinatal mental health screenings to identify concerns during and after pregnancy.

Giving birth can be one of life's most joyous experiences, Healey said, "but it's also one of the most challenging."

"For new mothers, it can be exhausting, isolating and overwhelming," she said.

Massachusetts has long been a national leader in expanding access to health care, with one of the lowest uninsured rates in the U.S. Its landmark 2006 health care law, which sought near-universal coverage, became a model for key parts of the federal Affordable Care Act.

Yet maternal care gaps remain. Mental illness, including substance use disorder, was the leading underlying cause of death for pregnant women and new mothers in Massachusetts from 2019 through 2024, accounting for 38%, according to the state's maternal mortality review committee. The panel also concluded that 85% of those deaths were preventable and more than half occurred between seven days and one year after giving birth.

Nick Reiner avoids death penalty over his parents' killings but still faces life in prison

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Hollywood filmmaker Rob Reiner's son will not face the death penalty on charges he fatally stabbed his parents after lying in wait at their home in Los Angeles late last year, prosecutors said Tuesday.

If convicted, the maximum sentence 33-year-old Nick Reiner could get is life without the possibility of parole, Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan Hochman said at a news conference. Before reaching its decision, Hochman said his office did a thorough review, including speaking to Rob and Michele Singer Reiner's families and evaluating mitigating factors in Nick Reiner's favor.

Nick Reiner, who briefly appeared at a court hearing Tuesday morning, has twice pleaded not guilty. The death penalty had been on the table because of the lying-in-wait allegation, the fact that multiple people were killed, and the use of a knife, which is considered a dangerous weapon. However, it's been two decades since California's last execution, and Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a moratorium on the practice in 2019.

Nick Reiner's public defender highlights his mental illness

Reiner's attorney, Deputy Public Defender Kimberly Greene, said prosecutors made the right decision.

"Nick has a serious mental illness and a long history of struggling with self-medication. His circumstances are a tragic example of how difficult it can be for people experiencing significant mental health challenges to access and navigate the treatment and support they need," Greene said in a statement. "Nothing can undo the profound loss experienced by the Reiner family and those who loved them. Our hearts remain with the family."

Nick Reiner was charged with first-degree murder on Dec. 16, two days after the stunning killings. Reiner's former defense attorney, Alan Jackson, adamantly insisted that "pursuant to the laws of California, Nick Reiner is not guilty of murder."

Jackson had to withdraw for undisclosed reasons that he said were beyond his and the client's control, and a public defender took over for him.

A grand jury indicted Reiner in July. The judge in the case was deciding whether to make public the transcripts of those secret grand jury proceedings, a move that would likely reveal many key details about the killings.

Hochman said his office will not oppose the transcripts' release, but Nick Reiner's siblings Jake and Romi Reiner were adamantly opposed, saying it would add to their trauma and harm.

At Tuesday's hearing, Judge Sam Ohta said he will hear arguments on the issue next month.

Nick Reiner wants access to his trust fund

Reiner has asked a different judge to force the release of money from a trust his parents set up for him when he was a child, so that he can rehire Jackson, a high-profile defense attorney whose clients have included Kevin Spacey and Karen Read.

The trustees overseeing the funds argue Reiner shouldn't get them, but his lawyers argue that he is still innocent under the law and that the money would legally be his regardless of his parents' deaths. Reiner is awaiting a ruling on the money. Jackson has said he wants to return to the case.

Hochman said he does not expect a trial until next year.

Hours earlier, Rob Reiner was honored at the Emmys

Rob Reiner received an emotional tribute at the Emmy Awards on Monday night. He won a posthumous Emmy for best guest actor in a comedy series for his role on "The Bear," and was honored by his friend and "Bear" co-star Jamie Lee Curtis.

"He was generous, kind and funny as hell, and a friend to all," Curtis said. "And we all miss Rob and Michele and all those we lost this year."

Nick Reiner was the second of Rob and Michele Reiner's three children. He and his father co-wrote the script for the 2015 film "Being Charlie," which was partly based on the son's teenage struggles with ad-

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diction and homelessness.

Rob Reiner began as an actor, starring in the TV sitcom "All in the Family" as Michael "Meathead" Stivic, the liberal son-in-law to a much more conservative and bigoted Archie Bunker, played by Carroll O'Connor. Reiner won two Emmy Awards for the role.

He became a prolific director whose work included some of the most memorable and endlessly watchable movies of the 1980s and '90s. His credits included "This is Spinal Tap," "Stand By Me," "A Few Good Men," and "When Harry Met Sally..." during the production of which he met photographer Michele Singer. They wed soon after and were married for 36 years.

A fourth measles death is reported in Pennsylvania

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Pennsylvania officials have reported a fourth measles-associated death.

The latest death involved an 18-year-old resident of Mifflin County, in the center of the state, the county coroner's office said in a Facebook post. The cause was acute disseminated encephalomyelitis, a rare and severe neurological complication of measles, it said.

On Saturday, a 40-year-old woman from Jefferson County, a rural area in western Pennsylvania, died of measles complications. And last month, two measles-infected infants died in Lancaster County, in the southeastern part of the state.

None of the four were vaccinated, according to the state health department. The infants were too young for vaccinations, according to current recommendations.

The U.S. is enduring its worst year for measles since 1991 and has seen seven reported measles-associated deaths in the last two years — more than the combined total of reported deaths over the previous three decades.

Pennsylvania's measles outbreak continues to grow, with nearly 700 illnesses reported so far this year across 38 counties, including about 100 cases in the last seven days. The measles-associated deaths are the first reported in the state in 35 years, state officials say.

"My thoughts are with the two families who lost loved ones to this highly contagious virus, as Pennsylvania faces the worst measles outbreak in more than three decades," the state's health secretary, Dr. Debra Bogen, said in a statement Tuesday, referring to the two most recent deaths — those of the adults.

"We remain committed to working with our partners across Pennsylvania to stem this outbreak and prevent more deaths. That means ensuring people have the facts about measles and access to the MMR vaccine, which kept measles outbreaks at bay for decades."

The nation eliminated the domestic spread of measles in 2000 by maintaining high vaccination rates, but they have fallen in recent years to below the 95% coverage needed to prevent outbreaks. Meanwhile, measles infections have been surging in recent years.

In November, international health officials will meet to determine if the U.S. and Mexico have lost their measles-free status.

The problem has been years in the making, as fewer kids get routine vaccines due to parental waivers, health care access issues and rampant disinformation. More recently, Trump administration health officials, including Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., have questioned and sown doubt about the established safety of vaccines at an unprecedented level while also defunding local efforts to improve vaccination rates.

As AI debate flares, Melania Trump touts the technology as she tours North Carolina school

By COLLIN BINKLEY and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

JEFFERSON, N.C. (AP) — First lady Melania Trump visited an elementary school in northwestern North Carolina Tuesday, where she said the U.S. must lead on artificial intelligence as she spoke with elementary school students, teachers and staff about how they're using technology and AI in the classroom.

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Her trip to Ashe County on Tuesday came as tech and political leaders debate about how best to regulate AI. Prominent tech leaders have been warning about the dangers of the technology and calling for more oversight, while President Donald Trump on Monday angrily dismissed the idea that more limits are needed, calling it a "hoax."

Many parents have also expressed alarm about schools' widespread adoption of tablets with access to sites like YouTube even in classrooms with the youngest students.

The first lady visited Mountain View Elementary School in rural Jefferson, which has a focus on using AI, robotics and engineering.

Asked by a reporter about the potential of AI and the growing warnings about it, the first lady said students must learn it for the U.S. to be a global leader.

"I think they need to learn we need to lead," she said. "Of course they need to be vigilant as well. But this is our future. And we need to guide them and teach them what is available. If not, they will stay behind. And we need to be the first, in the United States, to lead."

Students showed the first lady an AI experiment

The first lady opened her trip by recognizing the two-year anniversary of Hurricane Helene, which kept students out of school for more than 30 days as the community worked to recover. Mountain View's neighborhood flooded and the school was used as an emergency childcare center and later a community distribution site for supplies.

"Your story is incredible," she told several hundred students, teachers and administrators sitting on the gymnasium floor and bleachers. "North Carolina is the definition of resilience. Toughness in times of adversity is ingrained in the Tar Heel State's character."

The first lady was warmly welcomed at the school. A wall of the gym was decorated with a hand-painted banner with purple print that read, "Welcome to Ashe County 1st Lady Melania Trump!" A digital screen in a school hallway welcomed the first lady with cartoon images of a boy and girl waving American flags.

After her remarks, she visited a fifth grade science classroom where she sat with students while a teacher walked them through an experiment simulating pressure changes in the human chest cavity. The students then used AI to generate a video of their model using tablets.

As she observed the lesson, an 11-year-old asked if he could give the first lady a hug. They hugged several times.

She later spent time in the school's media center, where she sat with students building chatbots to research potential future careers and watched them use 3D printers. She joined in as they manipulated robotic arms that buzzed and whirled in the background.

"You can do anything. Anything is possible," she told them. "The sky is the limit, right? Just never give up."

Melania Trump donated some AI tools to the school district

She also announced that her Be Best initiative would be helping to provide 1,500 students in Ashe County with subscriptions to StudyFetch, an AI learning platform, and that Mountain View Elementary and other schools in the district would be receiving 100 Jetson Nano Developer Kits — small computers for running AI applications.

"Maybe one of you will create the next great robot," she said in her remarks. "And if you do, make sure you bring it to the White House to show me."

The first lady made headlines earlier this year when she walked into a White House event with a humanoid robot at a summit she hosted with other first spouses about empowering children with technology.

Last September, at a meeting of a White House task force on AI in education, she noted that the technology was boosting economic growth but also expressed some caution.

"As leaders and parents, we must manage AI's growth responsibly," she said at last year's event. "During this primitive stage, it is our duty to treat AI as we would our own children — empowering, but with watchful guidance."

Technology in education is one of the first lady's signature issues, along with advocacy for foster children, and lobbying Congress to pass the "Take It Down Act" making revenge porn a crime.

It's the first lady's fourth trip to North Carolina since 2025. She accompanied the president to meet fami-

lies affected by Hurricane Helene at the beginning of his term, and subsequently spent time with military families in other parts of the state.

The state is home to one of the most closely watched Senate races of the November midterm elections, pitting Michael Whatley, a former chairman of the Republican National Committee, against Democrat Roy Cooper, a former governor. The president is traveling to Gastonia in the southern part of the state on Wednesday for a rally for Whatley.

Judge blocks Kennedy Center board from putting Trump's name on the building or grounds in any way

By ASHRAF KHALIL and STEVEN SLOAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge blocked the Kennedy Center on Tuesday from returning President Donald Trump's name to the iconic performing arts venue in a move meant to recognize his renovation efforts, saying it would violate an earlier ruling that his name was illegally added to the building.

Judge Christopher Cooper ruled that, "Simply put, Defendants cannot install memorials for President Trump or anyone or anything else at the Kennedy Center without Congress's blessing."

The Trump-aligned board at the Kennedy Center voted in August to inscribe the president's name on the venue's facade so it would read "The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Restored and Renovated By President Donald J. Trump."

If the Trump Kennedy Center Fund reached \$100 million, another inscription would be added reading: "Endowed by the Trump Kennedy Center Fund."

The plaza in front of the Kennedy Center would have also been renamed in Trump's honor, as part of the board's vote.

Cooper ruled in May that only Congress can approve changes to the Kennedy Center's name. In an emergency hearing on the matter in August, the administration argued it was no longer attempting to rename the building and that the vote was simply a recognition of Trump's effort to secure money for much needed renovations.

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, whose wife sits on the Kennedy Center board, compared the move to the way hospitals and colleges recognize high dollar donors.

But a lawyer for U.S. Rep. Joyce Beatty, an Ohio Democrat and ex officio member of the Kennedy Center board, argued the changes amounted to "deja vu" and violated Cooper's earlier ruling.

"The law is extremely clear: The John F. Kennedy Center is named for President Kennedy — and no one else," Beatty said in a statement Tuesday. "But President Trump is holding the Kennedy Center hostage unless he can put his name on this sacred memorial. The Court just rejected this proposal for the second time. This unlawfulness is as breathtaking as it is wrong, and it needs to stop."

Tuesday's ruling is the latest twist in a months-old naming saga that first saw the board installing Trump's name above Kennedy's. After Cooper shot down that move, an elevated tarp was erected which obscures Trump's name and most of Kennedy's.

A more recent board proposal floated multiple options for getting Trump's name on the grounds, including inscriptions like "Renovation and endowment overseen by President Donald J. Trump and the Trump Kennedy Center Fund." Another option: "With Gratitude for Support from President Donald J. Trump and the Trump Kennedy Center Fund."

The proposed board resolution was submitted to the court by Beatty as part of her effort to prevent the board from proceeding with the planned closure. It flatly states that "without such appropriate recognition" it's unlikely that Trump will financially support what the board says are desperately needed renovations.

Cooper, in his Tuesday ruling, tartly notes "the government plays word games."

In a scheduling hearing Tuesday morning, prior to the release of his ruling, Cooper appealed to lawyers for both sides to find a mediated solution to the fate of the performing arts center. The center's board has claimed the building is in desperate physical shape and the institution is desperately close to insolvency.

"Is it possible to turn down the temperature a little bit?" Cooper asked. "I'm not ordering you to do it, but there is a larger public interest here."

US strips millions in military aid from Europe and Mideast to back Trump-aligned nations in Americas

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration is stripping tens of millions of dollars in U.S. military assistance from countries in Europe and the Middle East to support conservative-leaning governments in Central and South America.

The State Department on Tuesday notified Congress that it will reprogram \$52 million in foreign military financing from Slovakia, North Macedonia, Tunisia and Iraq to Panama, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited Colombia, Ecuador and Peru last week and pledged to them additional support as the Trump administration has prioritized the Western Hemisphere in its foreign policy with an emphasis on combating drug trafficking and illegal immigration.

It is just the latest in a series of moves that have reduced either money or troop deployments to Europe in response to President Donald Trump's complaints about NATO allies not spending enough on their defense budgets and other matters. Both North Macedonia and Slovakia are NATO members.

But it also comes as the administration has put particular attention on the Western Hemisphere, aligning deeply with right-wing governments as Trump celebrates a renewal of the 19th century Monroe Doctrine establishing Washington's dominance in the Americas.

Foreign military financing provides recipient countries with U.S. taxpayer dollars to allow them to purchase military equipment from American defense contractors.

The State Department said the funds would be used to "combat narcoterrorism in our backyard and help continue to secure the Panama Canal," adding that the Western Hemisphere has been historically neglected in U.S. military assistance.

"These funds will prevent adversaries from establishing strategic footholds in our hemisphere," the department said in a veiled jab at China, which has increasingly sought to boost its presence in Latin America.

The shift of money does not eliminate foreign military financing for Tunisia, Iraq, North Macedonia or Slovakia, although the exact amount remaining for those countries was not immediately clear.

The State Department said, though, that the current distribution of financing does "not align with the administration's prioritization of" the Western Hemisphere.

Federal Reserve is expected to raise its benchmark rate, defying Trump's demands

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve is widely expected to lift its short-term interest rate Wednesday for the first time in three years to fight stubbornly high inflation, a move that would put the central bank at odds with President Donald Trump's support for a cut.

A quarter-point increase in the Fed's rate, currently about 3.6%, isn't guaranteed because Fed Chair Kevin Warsh doesn't provide the signals about next moves that his predecessors did. Still, most analysts and economists expect a hike after a speech two weeks ago at the Fed's annual conference in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in which Warsh argued that the Fed had not yet achieved its goal of putting inflation in check.

A rate increase would throw another sharp shift into a volatile period for the economy and financial markets. As recently as March, the Fed had forecast it would cut its rate once this year. But with the Iran war flaring up again and causing sharp increases in oil and gas prices, inflation is likely to remain higher than the Fed's 2% target for even longer.

"I don't see any end to the war in Iran right now," Kristin Forbes, an economist at MIT's Sloan School, said. "Given what everyone has been through in the last few years of high inflation, consumers are more sensitive, companies are more sensitive, they raise prices faster ... The risks are much more on more persistent inflation than it falling quickly."

Surging investment in AI data centers has also been accelerating inflation and contributing to higher

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longer-term interest rates, though now leading companies are discussing slowing the technology's development.

All eyes are on interest rates before the midterms

The Fed's potential rate hike comes just seven weeks before the midterm elections in which high prices and affordability have taken key roles. Trump has demanded that the Fed cut rates, a move that isn't on the table, and on Sunday the president said, "the United States is so strong we should be paying the lowest interest rate in the world."

Trump repeatedly attacked Warsh's predecessor, Jerome Powell, in harshly personal terms, upending decades of tradition in which presidents treated the Fed as independent.

Kevin Hassett, Trump's top economic adviser, said Sunday on CNN that Trump "100% respects the independence of Kevin Warsh."

Yet at the same time, Hassett suggested in a Fox News interview that the Fed shouldn't hike so close to the midterms.

"I'd be wary of a rate hike ... I think if you want an independent Fed, then one thing the Fed does is it stays out of the way of elections," Hassett said.

Financial markets expect that Warsh and the central bank will brush off such warnings. Traders now see a 90% chance the Fed will hike Wednesday, according to futures prices. That figure jumped after Friday's inflation report showed that prices remain stubbornly high and core inflation, which excludes volatile food and energy, picked up in August from the previous month.

After that report, and Warsh's tough talk on inflation late last month, most economists argue that Warsh will have to hike rates or risk undermining his credibility with financial markets. Longer-term interest rates, such as those on the 10-year and 30-year Treasury bonds, could spike if he doesn't hike, as they did after a Fed meeting in late July when Warsh failed to convince markets he was willing to lift rates if needed.

"At the end of the day the Chair's repeated stern warnings on inflation intolerance risk institutional credibility absent some action to back it up," Michael Feroli, an economist at JPMorgan Chase, wrote in a preview of the Fed's meeting.

A rate increase could raise other questions

Some members of the Fed's interest-rate setting committee still expect inflation, outside of food and energy, to fade over time and may not feel a rate hike is necessary.

But Warsh has not made that argument. Instead, in his Jackson Hole remarks, he said recent inflation reports "do not tell me that underlying trends have improved," adding that if such improvement wasn't seen soon, "we have work to do."

Ironically, by boosting Fed credibility, a rate hike could hold down longer-term interest rates that consumers pay for things like mortgages and auto loans. Some of the recent spike in mortgage rates has likely reflected concerns among investors that the Fed wasn't committed to fighting inflation. Investors typically demand higher yields to own bonds when inflation is elevated.

Still, if the Fed does increase its rate Wednesday, then Warsh will face a new set of questions: How many hikes will the Fed implement? How effective will they be in reducing inflation when much of it stems from higher oil prices, something the Fed can't control? What will they do if an AI slowdown threatens to slow the economy, which would typically get the central bank to cut rates?

Matthew Luzzetti, chief U.S. economist at Deutsche Bank, said it is rare for the Fed to lift its key rate just once, which is likely to have little impact on the economy, and so multiple hikes are likely.

But how the Fed characterizes possible rate increases on Wednesday could give clues to its next steps, he said. For example, if Warsh suggests the Fed is unwinding the three cuts it made in late 2025 — when it feared that unemployment was rising — that would suggest two more hikes would be needed.

Alternatively, Warsh could portray a hike as an act of "risk management," Luzzetti said, with the Fed expecting inflation to cool but hiking rates to essentially ensure it falls. That could point to possibly just two increases.

Warsh has resisted providing such guidance so far. But Wall Street traders expect three hikes — in September, December, and March — according to futures prices.

In Buffalo and elsewhere, NFL players find grass to be the better choice over artificial turf

By JOHN WAWROW AP Sports Writer

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. (AP) — For Josh Allen, the grass is most definitely greener across the street.

As the Buffalo Bills moved closer to their first regular-season game Thursday in their new Highmark Stadium, the quarterback looked forward to not having to deal with the added wear and tear his body previously experienced playing on the artificial turf of the team's now-demolished old facility.

"I've gotten numerous, numerous burns on my legs from artificial turf, to the point I can't sleep at night because it's bubbling over. It's very painful," Allen said, noting he still feels it after the Bills practice on the turf inside their fieldhouse. "If I could snap my fingers and make every field grass, that's what I would do for sure."

The new Bills stadium and Allen's comments reflect an increasingly heated debate in the league over whether teams should play on artificial turf or natural grass. It follows a World Cup in which tournament organizers mandated converting seven NFL stadiums from turf to grass, only to switch back to artificial surfaces for the pro football season.

Players overwhelmingly support grass

NFL players and their union overwhelmingly favor natural grass and are perplexed about why the league's billionaire owners can't do what FIFA did for the World Cup.

"It's a little bizarre, but what can you expect?" 49ers defensive lineman Nick Bosa said.

As with most debates, it's about money. Though the NFL does not provide cost figures, it's widely accepted that artificial turf is much more affordable than grass, which requires year-round maintenance and constant resodding. NFL grass fields generally have a lifespan of about seven events.

Artificial fields also require some maintenance to replace infill, and generally have a lifespan of between three to seven years.

That still doesn't square with players, even as the NFL continues trending toward artificial surfaces.

"Natural grass isn't out of reach. Prioritizing players shouldn't be either!" Colts running back Jonathan Taylor posted on his X account with the hashtag "WorthTheCost."

With Buffalo, 16 of the NFL's 30 facilities will feature grass this season, including Green Bay's Lambeau Field, which is made up of 95% grass and reinforced with polyethylene fibers.

Of the 18 NFL facilities built since 2000, 11 have artificial surfaces, and those don't include Carolina and Tennessee, which recently made the switch to turf. Cost and maintenance appear to play more of a factor than geography, with six of the NFL's seven coldest markets and all three Florida-based teams featuring grass surfaces.

Where there is consensus is that NFL playing surfaces are far more advanced today than 50 years ago when several teams, starting with the Houston Oilers, played on AstroTurf — essentially a thinly padded carpet laid over concrete or asphalt.

NFL/NFLPA set standards for all fields

Nick Pappas, the NFL's director of field surfaces, said the advancements in turf technology are night and day since the AstroTurf era. The focus now, he said, is the NFL and NFLPA working with all turf manufacturers to establish standards for surfaces based on player feedback and metrics from testing conducted by the league.

This led to the league and union jointly releasing a series of standardized playing surface requirements each facility must meet by 2028. The list of criteria covering both playing and practice surfaces includes minimum standards for impact, traction, and guidelines for when to resurface.

The objective is to achieve as much consistency as possible across all 30 NFL playing surfaces, whether grass or artificial.

"The goal is that we take the emotions out of the material makeup," Pappas said. "What the composition of the field is should only be secondary to how the field performs."

In the past, Pappas said, the guidelines for field composition were easy to comply with, leading to teams

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choosing their turf by cutting the best deal with a manufacturer. Now, the league and union are having manufacturers present their products for testing before being certified.

"That's really the course correction," Pappas said. "It's, bring us a product once you believe you've met (the criteria). And then we'll run it through the wringer and get it in front of our athlete and ensure that we feel comfortable putting it into play."

The NFL cites its own studies in saying there has been no significant difference in injury rates when comparing artificial turf and grass over the past three seasons. And last season's lower-extremity injury rate was half of the average level that occurred from 2018-22.

And yet players, and even some NFL owners, prefer grass.

That was the case in Las Vegas, where Raiders managing general partner Mark Davis cited player safety as one reason to install grass despite moving into an indoor facility.

The same applied in Buffalo, where owner Terry Pegula considered installing natural grass in the team's old facility before electing to wait until the new one was built.

Already resodding in Buffalo

The Bills have encountered a few hiccups in making the switch, and that's despite installing heating coils, grow lights and ventilation systems to spur growth. The team recently elected to resod its entire field ahead of schedule after divots and worn areas became exposed after just two preseason games and two practices.

The Bills elected to resod after their final preseason game to take advantage of a three-plus-week window before their home opener. And they're expected to resod the field at last once more before the season is over.

Pappas called it a trial and error process, because there's a learning curve involved to determine how grass reacts to a new environment.

"Obviously, we were seeing a grass that maybe didn't have the strength that everybody had hoped for and was pulling apart a little more than expected or preferred," said Pappas, who personally inspected the Bills' field before and after the team's preseason finale last month. "They'll continue to adapt and make adjustments as they need to. ... And I do anticipate things will continue to improve."

The NFLPA, meantime, applauded the Bills for installing grass in the first place, and sticking with it despite the additional costs involved.

Cost isn't an issue as far as Bills President Pete Guelli is concerned.

"I understand the economics of why people want an artificial turf field," Guelli told The Associated Press. "But if you're really putting your players first, there's no other choice but grass."

NATO jets shoot down drone over Lithuania and Russian ship fires flares at Danish helicopter

By LIUDAS DAPKUS Associated Press

VILNIUS, Lithuania (AP) — NATO fighter jets shot down a drone that entered Lithuanian airspace overnight, officials said Tuesday, the day after the head of the alliance said strikes close to its territory would only increase its support for Ukraine in the war against Russia's full-scale invasion.

Military officials in Lithuania, a NATO member, said the incident marked the first time that a drone had been shot down in its airspace. Authorities didn't comment on the drone's origin or purpose, saying further investigation was needed, but two senior officials said the device was likely carrying explosives.

Officials in other NATO countries, including Germany, Denmark, the United Kingdom and Poland, have in recent weeks accused Russia of involvement in acts such as drone incursions, sabotage, arson and surveillance of defense facilities and in plans to use a drone carrying explosives to attack an airport.

Separately, Denmark said Tuesday that one of its air force helicopters was fired on with flares as it was carrying out surveillance of a Russian frigate in the Baltic Sea.

Strikes close to NATO territory showed Russian President Vladimir Putin's "desperation and also his de-

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sire to sow fear and terror," NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte said Monday. He spoke after a Russian drone struck a railway line near the Ukraine-Poland border on Sunday shortly after senior visiting officials passed through.

Rutte pledged to bolster the 32-nation alliance's own defenses along its long eastern border with Russia and with Belarus, a Russian ally.

Ursula von der Leyen, head of the European Commission, said the incidents in Lithuania and Denmark were not isolated but "part of a broader pattern of Russian aggression and provocation against Europe, testing our readiness and our resolve."

"Russia will find our resolve only growing stronger," she said.

Drone found to be carrying explosives

The drone downed Tuesday in Lithuania fell near the village of Pratkūnai, about 60 miles (100 kilometers) west of the capital, Vilnius, and near the Kaunas Reservoir, Lithuania's National Crisis Management Center said Tuesday.

Vilmantas Vitkauskas, head of the crisis center, told Lithuanian public broadcaster LRT that the drone most likely entered from Belarus. It remained in Lithuanian airspace for about 30 minutes and flew along the outskirts of populated areas before being intercepted, he said.

Writing on Facebook on Tuesday, Lithuanian Defense Minister Robertas Kaunas said an explosive device was detected on the drone and neutralized by bomb-disposal experts.

Menacing drones have repeatedly loomed over the skies of Lithuania, which shares borders with Belarus and the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad.

In May, residents of Vilnius were told to take shelter, and the president and prime minister were taken to safe locations during an alarm over drone activity near the border with Belarus.

Stray Ukrainian drones have also previously crossed the border into Baltic airspace, including in May, when a NATO fighter jet shot down a Ukrainian drone over southern Estonia.

Meanwhile, Denmark accused Russia of firing flares at one of its air force helicopters in connection with "routine photographic coverage" of a Russian frigate in waters off the port of Gedser in the Baltic Sea.

"This is completely unacceptable," the Danish Foreign Ministry wrote on X, saying that the Russian ambassador was summoned over the incident.

Russia's ambassador to Denmark, Vladimir Barbin, said it was "not the first time" that Danish air force helicopters "carried out dangerous maneuvers near Russian warships."

He said the Danish helicopter conducted "provocative actions against the Russian frigate."

The Kremlin declined to comment Tuesday, with presidential spokesperson Dmitry Peskov saying that he did not have details.

Kyiv says it's 'ready to support de-escalation'

In Ukraine, Russian drone strikes continued across the country following a social media post from U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday that Russia and Ukraine had agreed "not to hit" each other's energy infrastructure.

Trump didn't offer details on the purported agreement. Previous efforts to broker even a partial ceasefire have repeatedly fallen apart within hours, with both sides accusing the other of violations.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said late Monday that Kyiv was "ready to support de-escalation" if the United States could ensure "Russia is genuinely ready to stop this war."

But Zelenskyy said Tuesday in a statement that Moscow had continued to attack Ukraine's energy sector, logistics and critical infrastructure, and that Kyiv responded by striking an oil refinery in Syzran, a city in western Russia.

"There is no alternative to ending this war. And all forms of pressure on Russia must create the right diplomatic conditions," Zelenskyy said.

The Kremlin said Tuesday that it considered Trump's proposal for a ceasefire on energy infrastructure to be "a good idea."

However, it stressed that strikes on Russian oil refineries were not the root cause of global supply issues

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for gas or diesel.

"The core problem lies in the export of petroleum products to global markets," Peskov said. He said that countries instead needed to guarantee safe navigation for oil tankers and lift global sanctions on Russian oil.

The Kremlin's comments contradict those of Trump, who on Sunday called on Zelenskyy to halt strikes on Russian oil refineries and claimed that such attacks had caused a global shortage.

"Mr. Zelenskyy has to do one thing. He has to stop knocking out diesel fuel in Russia," Trump told reporters, following news on Friday that diesel prices in the U.S. had soared past an average of \$6 a gallon.

"We spoke to Mr. Zelenskyy about it. There are plenty of other targets. Don't hit diesel fuel, because that's hurting, that's hurting the world," he said.

Ukraine's State Emergency Service said Tuesday that Russian strikes on Kyiv had killed one person and wounded seven other people since the start of the day, with attacks carried out on the capital's gas stations.

Two more people were killed in separate Russian strikes in the Ukrainian cities of Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, the emergency service said.

Elsewhere, Russian forces shot down 222 Ukrainian drones overnight, Russia's Defense Ministry said Tuesday.

A "massive" Ukrainian drone attack sparked several fires in the Russian city of Taganrog, regional Gov. Yuri Slyusar said. He said on Telegram that two apartment buildings and three private homes had been damaged, as well as an educational institution, agricultural warehouses and a site belonging to Russian e-retailer Ozon.

Zelenskyy said Tuesday that Kyiv's forces had targeted a drone-production facility in the city.

Ukrainian parliament votes to dismiss prosecutor general

In other developments, Ukraine's parliament voted to dismiss Ruslan Kravchenko from the post of prosecutor general Tuesday.

Kravchenko submitted his resignation on Sept. 7 amid an investigation into corruption in his office, though no notice of suspicion was issued against him. Zelenskyy had suspended Kravchenko from the post the day before. Kravchenko had served as prosecutor general since June 21, 2025.

Repeated corruption scandals have hurt Zelenskyy's approval ratings.

Israeli airstrikes on a village in southern Lebanon kill 12 people, including 2 children

By AHMAD MANTASH Associated Press

KFAR RUMMAN, Lebanon (AP) — Israel's air force carried out two airstrikes early Monday on a southern Lebanese village, killing at least 12 people and wounding others, including children, Lebanon's Health Ministry said.

Monday's strikes came amid a new round of escalation between Israel and the militant Hezbollah group despite a truce reached more than two months ago. The strikes also came days after Israel's military said it is in "operational control" of the strategic Ali Taher hill that overlooks several villages as well as main roads leading to the city of Nabatiyeh.

The Health Ministry said one of the strikes hit a building, killing 11 people, including two children and four women. Eight were also wounded, including three children and a paramedic.

The ministry said that another strike on a car in the village killed a paramedic with the Lebanese Islamic Risala Scout Association and wounded two others.

The Israeli military said the strikes come in retaliation for two Hezbollah drone attacks that exploded while targeting Israeli troops in Lebanon from the area on Monday. It said the strikes targeted a Hezbollah militant trying to transport weapons to Kfar Rumman.

Hezbollah did not claim the attacks nor immediately issue a statement on the intensifying strikes around Nabatiyeh province.

"We have been living in constant anxiety amid shelling on the outskirts," said Kfar Rumman resident

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Fouad Chakaron as he stood in front of the destroyed building. "Now they struck the heart of the town."

Another resident, Saleh Medlej, pointed to the destroyed building and said this was home to families with children. "Are there missiles here?" he asked in reference to the building where the families lived.

"I will not leave this place," Medlej said, vowing to stay in his hometown despite the airstrikes and shelling.

Earlier Monday, Israel's military issued an evacuation warning for a home in the village of Deir al-Zahrani and shortly afterward a building was struck. The military said the strike was in retaliation for a drone attack by Hezbollah militants. There was no word on casualties.

In a separate statement also on Monday, the Israeli military said Israeli troops operating near the Crusader-built Beaufort castle came under fire by a Hezbollah member who was inside a house, lightly wounding two of them. The troops later killed the militant.

On Sunday, Israeli strikes killed at least seven people in southern Lebanon and leveled an empty hospital.

The strikes came days after Israel released two Syrian and three Lebanese prisoners as part of a deal with Lebanon. In return, Lebanon agreed to search for the bodies of Jewish Lebanese citizens who went missing during the country's civil war decades ago.

A U.S.-brokered truce between Israel and Hezbollah has been repeatedly violated, with Israel carrying out airstrikes in Lebanon and Hezbollah firing drones at Israeli troops.

Lebanon and Israel in June signed a U.S.-mediated framework deal under which Israeli forces were to withdraw from southern Lebanon in exchange for the disarmament of Hezbollah, but little progress has been made in its implementation.

Hezbollah is not a party to the Lebanon-Israel talks and has said it will not give up its weapons in any area north of southern Lebanon's Litani River. Israeli officials, meanwhile, have said they will not withdraw unless Hezbollah is disarmed throughout the country.

Kfar Rumman's mayor, Abdullah Farhat, described what happened in the village as "a massacre in every sense of the word." He blasted the framework agreement between Lebanon and Israel, saying that Lebanese leaders "signed deals and we are paying the price here."

"There is an enemy that is not concerned about anything," Farhat said, referring to strikes that have been ongoing since the deal was signed.

'Widow's Bay' breaks Emmys record with 14 wins including best comedy series, 'Pitt' wins best drama

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A "Widow's Bay" wave slammed into the Emmy Awards on Monday night as the Apple TV show set a single-season record for a comedy with 14 wins, including best comedy series and best actor for star Matthew Rhys, who personally took home three trophies.

"The celebrations will be long, varied, and I hope at times wild," Rhys said backstage while holding two of his Emmys.

"The Pitt" won best drama series for the second straight year, and star Noah Wyle repeated as best actor in a drama, but the HBO Max emergency room drama won no other Emmys and underperformed its expectations.

Rhea Seehorn won best actress in a drama for "Pluribus," and Jean Smart won her fifth best actress in a comedy award for the fifth and final season of "Hacks." No actor had won an Emmy every year for a series that lasted more than three seasons until Smart did it Monday.

Every other comedy award went to "Widow's Bay," which unequivocally owned the night and broke the comedy series record set last year by "The Studio" when it won 13.

The 'weird' 'Widow's Bay' sweeps across categories

Along with best actor in a comedy, Rhys won best actor in a limited series for "The Beast in Me," becoming the first man to win two leading actor categories in the same year, and he gets one of the best comedy series trophies as an executive producer for "Widow's Bay."

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The first-season series created by Katie Dippold leans hard into both comedy and horror as it tells the story of a New England island community, with Rhys as its mayor, reckoning with a centuries-old curse.

"Thank you, Apple, for letting us take this crazy, creative swing," Dippold said as she accepted the best comedy award. "They truly just let us do this weird show."

Apple TV solidified its status as the owner of the Emmy comedy categories. Between "Widow's Bay," "The Studio" and "Ted Lasso," it has won best comedy series four times in six seasons. The latter two shows were between seasons and not eligible this year.

"Widow's Bay" also won for directing for Hiro Murai and for writing for its creator Dippold, a first-time Emmy winner and first-time nominee who was previously best known for a decade-old viral tweet showing her awkwardly dressed as "The Babadook."

"When I was sitting there in that costume," Dippold said backstage after the show, "I did not think that this moment would happen."

"Widow's Bay" had won eight Emmys in a previous ceremony before sweeping all six of its categories Monday night. Stephen Root won best supporting actor in a comedy series and Kate O'Flynn won best supporting actress.

'The Pitt' and 'Hacks' fail to run up numbers

"The Pitt" was the top drama nominee with 25 and "Hacks" was the top comedy nominee with 24, but neither made much of a splash when it came time to claim trophies.

Smart's was the only win for "Hacks" on Monday night.

"What a ride this has been," an emotional Smart said after getting a standing ovation.

The 75-year-old has won eight Emmys overall in a career that was already more than respectable when she landed her defining role of Deborah Vance, a brash stand-up comic pushing back against age, obscurity and sexism in the HBO Max series.

And best drama and best actor were the only wins for "The Pitt," though it had won four at an earlier ceremony.

Wyle won for playing Dr. Michael "Robby" Robinavitch, a role that brought him a major career revival after starring in "ER" in the 1990s.

"This is all I've ever wanted to do, and this is the only club I've ever wanted to join," Wyle said in his acceptance.

Seehorn gets her first Emmy, Janney and Pelphrey beat 'Pitt' competition

Seehorn won her first Emmy for playing the lone central character on Apple TV's "Pluribus."

The 54-year-old had been nominated twice without winning for her breakthrough role on "Better Call Saul," a show from "Breaking Bad" creator Vince Gilligan, who put Seehorn at the center of "Pluribus." Gilligan won his fifth career Emmy for his writing on the show.

Allison Janney won best supporting actress in a drama for "The Diplomat," and Tom Pelphrey won supporting actor in a drama for "Task," both beating several nominees from "The Pitt."

"DTF St. Louis" won best limited series. Stars David Harbour and Linda Cardellini both won for supporting acting at a previous ceremony on Sept. 6 as the Television Academy moved several categories off the main telecast to shorten the show. "DTF St. Louis" won seven Emmys overall.

'Widow's Bay' gets rewarded for its elite cast

"Widow's Bay" brought a combination of younger, well-respected unknowns and widely known and beloved veterans to work on the show.

It was the first Emmy for both O'Flynn and Root.

O'Flynn, a 40-year-old British actor whose previous acclaim came mostly for her work in theater, plays Patricia Moyer, a city worker and social outcast dealing with a demonic darkness on "Widow's Bay."

"This is the role of a lifetime," O'Flynn said from the stage. "This is for all the Patricias out there."

Root, one of the most ubiquitous character actors of the last few decades, beat out Harrison Ford, who many thought would get his first major competitive Hollywood award for his role on "Shrinking."

"Thank you, sir, for all your many years of great, great, great acting," Root said to Ford during his ac-

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ceptance.

Root, 74, is the oldest person to win the category.

Sally Field, 79, became the oldest woman to win best actress in a limited or anthology series or TV movie for "Remarkably Bright Creatures."

Colbert wins after cancellation again

"The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," taken off the air by CBS, won best variety series. It's one of six Emmys the show has won this year after the show was cancelled for what the network said was economic reasons while many believe it was his criticism of the Trump administration.

"If you like the comedy tonight, my old writers wrote it," Colbert said.

Mariska Hargitay hosted the NBC telecast held at the traditional Emmys home of the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles.

"NBC is celebrating its 100th year, and I have been on 'Law & Order: SVU' for all of them," said Hargitay, a three-time Emmy winner who has starred in the show for 27 seasons, during her opening monologue.

Hargitay closed the show — which came in at a relatively lean three hours with the shortened awards slate — with the famous "Law & Order" gavel sound.

Michael J. Fox, a nominee for his work with Ford on "Shrinking," received the Bob Hope Humanitarian Award.

Tearful tributes to Parton, O'Hara and Reiner

Field paid tribute to her "Steel Magnolias" co-star Dolly Parton, who died last month, in a tribute during the telecast that also included Reba McEntire.

There were also emotional tributes to Catherine O'Hara, who died in March, and Rob Reiner, who was killed along with his wife, Michele Singer Reiner, in their home in December.

Reiner, who won a posthumous Emmy at an earlier ceremony for best guest actor in a comedy series for his role on "The Bear," was honored by his friend and "Bear" co-star Jamie Lee Curtis.

"He was generous, kind and funny as hell, and a friend to all," Curtis said. "And we all miss Rob and Michele and all those we lost this year."

Today in History: September 16, the Land Run of 1883

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, Sept. 16, the 259th day of 2026. There are 106 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 16, 1893, the largest land run in U.S. history occurred as more than 100,000 white settlers rushed to claim over more than 6 million acres of land in what is now northern Oklahoma. The land had been acquired by the forcibly displaced Cherokee Nation, which came under U.S. pressure to sell land rights before the run.

Also on this date:

In 1810, Catholic priest Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla called on his parishioners to join him in a rebellion against Spanish rule, marking the beginning of the Mexican War of Independence.

In 1908, General Motors was founded in Flint, Michigan, by William C. Durant.

In 1940, Samuel T. Rayburn of Texas was first elected speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; he would hold the post for a record 17 years, spanning three separate terms.

In 1966, the Metropolitan Opera officially opened its new opera house at New York's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts with the world premiere of Samuel Barber's "Antony and Cleopatra."

In 1974, President Gerald R. Ford signed a proclamation announcing a conditional amnesty program for Vietnam War deserters and draft evaders.

In 1982, the massacre of more than 1,300 Palestinian men, women and children at the hands of Israeli-allied Christian Phalange militiamen began in west Beirut's Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

In 2007, O.J. Simpson was arrested in the alleged armed robbery of sports memorabilia collectors in Las Vegas. (Simpson was later convicted of kidnapping and armed robbery and sentenced to nine to 33 years

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in prison; he was released in 2017.)

In 2013, Aaron Alexis, a former U.S. Navy reservist, went on a shooting rampage inside the Washington Navy Yard, killing 12 people before being fatally shot police.

In 2021, President Emmanuel Macron announced that France had killed Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahrawi, the leader of the Islamic State group in the Greater Sahara. Macron's office said al-Sahrawi personally ordered the killing of six French aid workers and their Nigerien colleagues in 2020 and was behind a 2017 attack that killed U.S. and Niger military personnel.

Today's Birthdays: Actor George Chakiris is 94. Actor Ed Begley Jr. is 77. Author-historian-filmmaker Henry Louis Gates Jr. is 76. Country singer David Bellamy (The Bellamy Brothers) is 76. Actor Mickey Rourke is 74. Jazz musician Earl Klugh is 73. Baseball Hall of Famer Robin Yount is 71. Magician David Copperfield is 70. Actor Jennifer Tilly is 68. Retired MLB All-Star pitcher Orel Hershisier is 68. Baseball Hall of Famer Tim Lincecum is 67. Singer Richard Marx is 63. Comedian Molly Shannon is 62. Singer Marc Anthony is 58. Comedian-actor Amy Poehler is 55. Singer-songwriter Musiq Soulchild is 49. Actor Alexis Bledel is 45. Actor Madeline Zima is 41. Rock singer-musician Nick Jonas (The Jonas Brothers) is 34. Actor Chase Stokes is 34.