

Groton Daily Independent

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Saturday, July 6

Common Cents Community Thrift Store is closed.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, July 7

Groton Locke Electric hosts Redfield Dairy Queen, 4 p.m.
Special Needs Swim, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion: St. John's at 9 a.m.; Zion at 11 a.m.
United Methodist: Worship with communion: Conde at 8:30 a.m.; Groton at 10:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.
First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.
Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

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



Monday, July 8

Senior Menu: Beef noodle stroganoff, green beans, vanilla pudding, mandarin oranges, whole wheat bread.
U12 hosts Webster, 6 p.m. (DH)
U10 W/R at Watertown, 6 p.m. (DH)
U8 R hosts Columbia 6 p.m. (1)
T-Ball Black hosts Columbia, 5 p.m.; Gold practice, 6 p.m. on Soccer Complex
Softball at Oakes: U8 at 5 p.m. (1), U10B at 6 p.m. (2)
Jr. Teeners hosts Clark, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
Pantry open, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

1440

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Labor Market Slowdown

US employers added 206,000 nonfarm jobs in June, slightly beating economist estimates of 200,000 jobs, according to government data released yesterday. The figure is lower than the downwardly revised gain of 218,000 jobs in May (compared to the originally reported 272,000).

The June unemployment rate rose to 4.1%, tied for the highest jobless level since October 2021. Economists had expected the rate to remain unchanged from May's 4%. Most of the jobs were added in government (70,000), healthcare (49,000), and social assistance (34,000). Average hourly earnings in June rose 0.3% month-over-month and 3.9% year-over-year, both in line with estimates and slightly lower than readings in May. [View all data here.](#)

Analysts say the report suggests the economy is beginning to cool down, with job creation, wage growth, and unemployment showing signs of stabilizing. The Federal Reserve previously said it was looking for more evidence of a slowdown before cutting its benchmark federal funds rate, which has been at a range between 5.25% and 5.5% since last July.

Hurricane Beryl reaches Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula.

The hurricane made landfall Friday near the resort town of Tulum as a Category 2 storm after causing damage in Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Barbados earlier in the week. At least 11 people have been killed so far across the Caribbean. Beryl is expected to reach South Texas by Monday. [Track Beryl here.](#)

President Joe Biden appears in first televised post-debate interview.

Biden sat down with ABC News anchor George Stephanopoulos Friday in his first televised interview since his CNN debate with former President Donald Trump last month. Biden dismissed concerns about his cognitive abilities and rejected calls to withdraw from the presidential race. He attributed his debate performance to feeling sick and exhausted after overseas travel. [Read the transcript of the interview here.](#)

Reformist Masoud Pezeshkian wins Iran's presidential runoff election.

Pezeshkian—a heart surgeon and lawmaker—beat out hard-liner Saeed Jalili in the race to replace former President Ebrahim Raisi, who died in a helicopter crash in May. Pezeshkian secured roughly 16.3 million votes in Friday's runoff election, while Jalili—Iran's former nuclear negotiator—garnered roughly 13.5 million votes. Voter turnout was nearly 50%.

UK's new Prime Minister Keir Starmer appoints cabinet members.

Starmer defeated former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak after his center-left Labour Party won a parliamentary majority (see results) in the UK's national elections. As part of Starmer's cabinet appointments, Rachel Reeves became the UK's first female chancellor to lead the country's treasury.

Kansas Supreme Court overturns laws limiting abortion access.

The high court rejected a pair of state laws Friday, one that created special licensing requirements for abortion providers and another that banned a second-trimester abortion procedure known as dilation and evacuation. The court said the first law exceeded requirements for comparable medical professionals. In rejecting the second law, the court said the state's constitution protects personal autonomy.

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- Dual Hydro-Gear® EZT-2200™ transmission

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Volunteer crew to exit NASA's simulated Mars habitat after 378 days.

The four volunteers were the first crew to have lived inside the simulated Mars habitat at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, for over a year. The 3D-printed habitat, spanning 1,700 square feet, simulates the conditions and challenges of the red planet, including harvesting vegetables and conducting "Marswalks." The crew is set to emerge at 5 pm ET today. View a livestream here.

Mouse study offers clues into cause of migraines.

Researchers have discovered an unknown route between the brain and peripheral nerves where altered cerebrospinal fluid travels through, activating pain and inflammatory receptors and triggering headaches. Cerebrospinal fluid surrounds the brain and spinal cord, and its contents can temporarily change when neural activity shuts down.

Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Rochelle W. in Oregon.

"My daughter's family recently returned from a vacation in Mexico. Her 7-year-old son is prone to motion sickness, and in the course of the flight, expelled a great deal of stomach contents into her lap. They were prepared with a change of clothes for the boy, but she had no backup. A woman across the aisle, who was witnessing the situation, pulled some clothes from her own suitcase for my daughter to change into. When my daughter offered to reimburse her, the woman refused. I think everyone on the flight was thankful for this act of kindness."

*Actual retail prices are set by dealer and may vary. Taxes are additional and vary by location. Freight and PDI charges may be additional and vary by dealer. Models subject to limited availability. Images may not reflect dealer inventory and/or unit specifications. † As rated by Kohler, all power levels are stated in gross horsepower at 3600 RPM per SAE J1940 as rated by engine manufacturer. †† As required by Kawasaki, horsepower tested in accordance with SAE J1995 and rated in accordance with SAE J2723 and certified by SAE International. **See operator's manual for warranty details and information. Certain restrictions apply. Kohler® is a registered trademark of Kohler Co. Kawasaki® is a registered trademark of KAWASAKI JUKOGYO KABUSHIKI KAISHA.
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PLEASE JOIN US IN
CELEBRATING

DROP & GO GIFT CARD
BRIDAL SHOWER FOR

*Julianna Kosel
& Isaac Mell*

Julianna is the daughter of Tina & the one & only "Paper Paul" Kosel
The wedding will take place in Florida on July 30th.

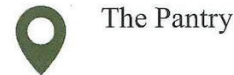
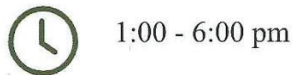
GROTON SWIMMING POOL
DROP OFF TIMES ARE: 1-8:30 M-TH
1-8 FRI-SUN

FROM: JUNE 27TH TO JULY 14TH

*The couple is also registered on Amazon if you prefer to send them a gift.

BUYING FOOD IS A SNAP!

FREE SNAP APPLICATION ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE



WITH SNAP:



You will stretch your food dollars.



Your students qualify for free school meals.

Information needed to receive help filling out SNAP Application:

- Social Security Numbers of all household members.
- Gross monthly earned and unearned income.
- Out-of-pocket medical expenses totaling over \$35/month (**Only for those age 60+ and disabled households**).
- Amount of childcare Expenses.

Household Size	Max Gross Monthly Income
1	\$1580
2	\$2137
3	\$2694
4	\$3250
5	\$3807
6	\$4364
EACH ADDITIONAL MEMBER +\$557	



*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

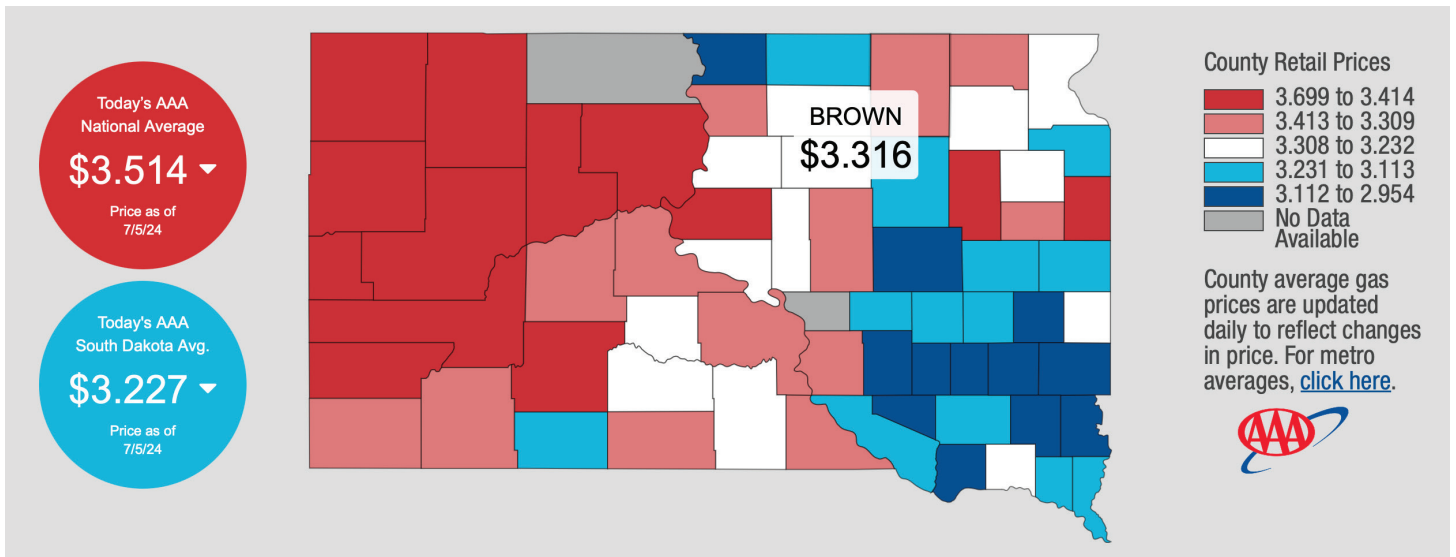
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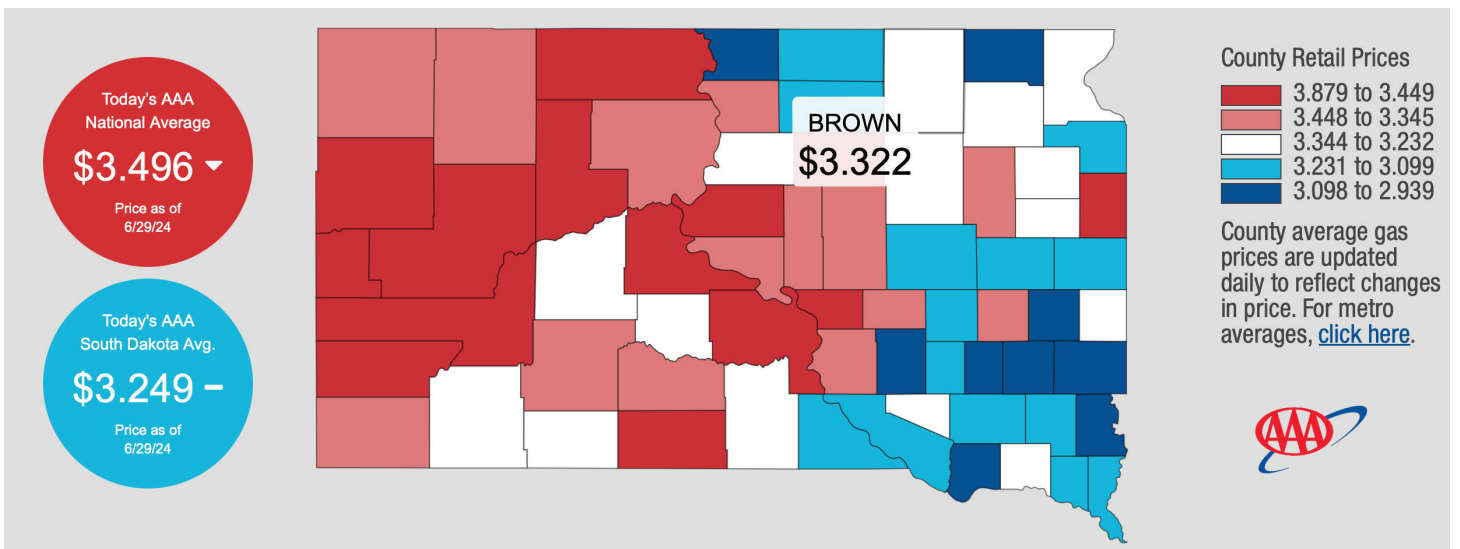
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.227	\$3.443	\$3.876	\$3.466
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.235	\$3.448	\$3.860	\$3.459
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.249	\$3.439	\$3.864	\$3.423
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.290	\$3.475	\$3.905	\$3.459
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.485	\$3.680	\$4.151	\$3.685

This Week



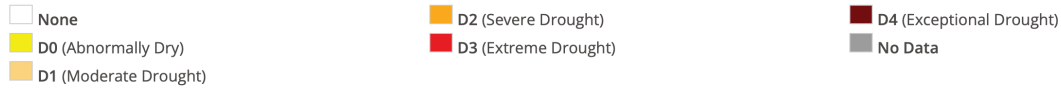
Last Week



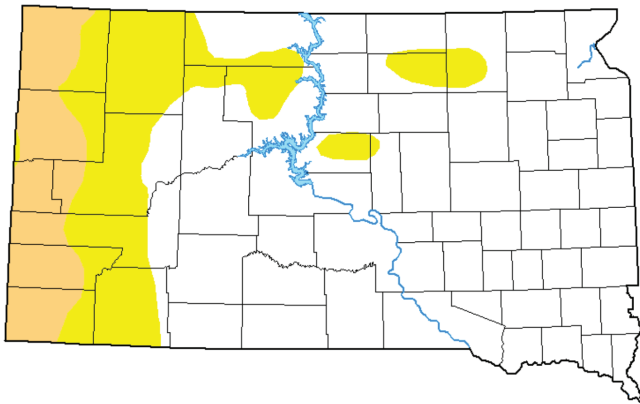
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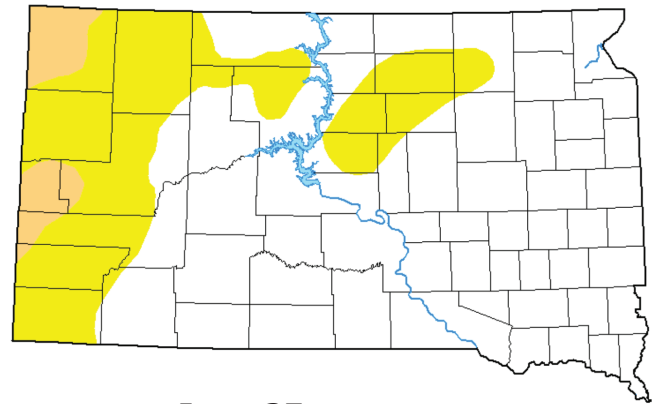
Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



July 2



June 25

The High Plains region experienced a mixture of both deteriorating and improving drought conditions this week, which has also predominantly been the case over at least the last month. A couple of troughs of low pressure moved across the western and central U.S. this week, helping to tap into some moisture from the Pacific Ocean and draw it into the region. This resulted in heavy rainfall across parts of the Four Corners and extending eastward into the Central and Eastern Plains. Parts of Kansas and eastern Nebraska received well in excess of 3 inches of rainfall. Unfortunately, several locations across the western High Plains region were not so lucky and received below normal weekly rainfall. Temperatures were also unseasonably warm, running anywhere from 4°F to 8°F above average for the week in many areas, helping to exacerbate worsening conditions.

Miller's Granary transformed into a Home

by Dorene Nelson



When looking at a 75 year old granary that's seen better days, most people would tear it down, ignore it, or look the other way! Not Braden Miller: like an artist, he sees what others don't.



He makes a connection between a lot of random things that the average person would not! In his subconscious he sees more than old wood and a lonely, abandoned building. Braden sees an opportunity and an outlet for his creativity that he learned in his Building Trades classes at Lake Area Technical College.

"The vision I have of transforming this old granary into a new home for my family and me was sparked by the information that I learned about its history," Miller explained.

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"My great grandfather Bing Miller had originally had it built around 1950," he stated. "Ironically the construction crew employed 'Lefty' Krueger, my wife Aubray's great grandfather."

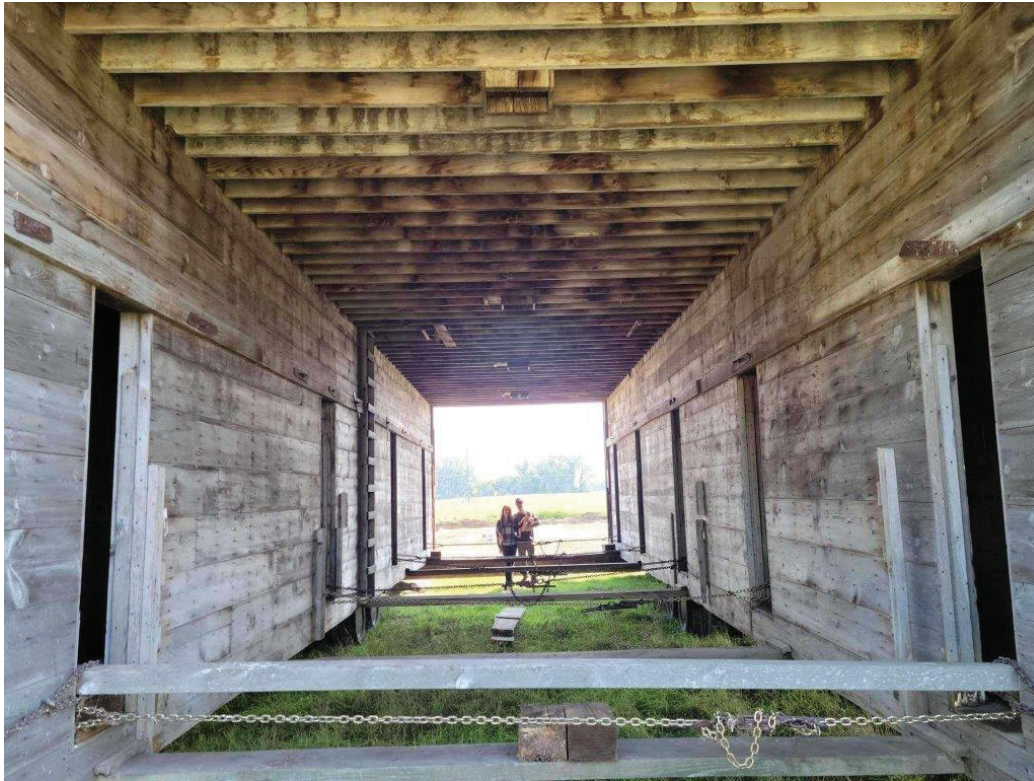
"Perhaps those coincidences helped put the idea in my head to buy this old granary, move it closer to my home, and use the skills I learned in college to transform it into a home for myself, my wife, and our daughter," Miller explained.

"I purchased the granary from my neighbor who had originally bought it at my Grandfather Bing Miller's auction sale," he stated. "So it has come back to its original family."

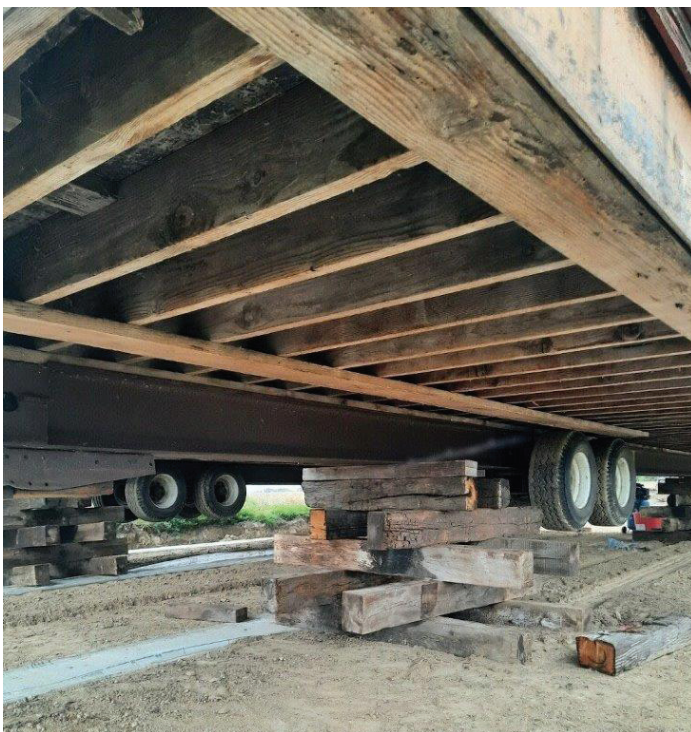
"The man I bought the granary from had also intended to make it into a home," Miller said. "By using long iron I-Beams, my neighbor moved the granary to his farm where it sat for eighteen years until I decided to purchase it. I then moved it five miles down the road to our pasture along Highway 37 to begin our future home."

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“Putting the building on these iron I-Beams had several advantages. It kept the wood from getting wet and rotting as well as keeping the structure off the ground so that it would be easy to move again. That worked very well since I was able to move it by using the same equipment,” he said.



“The original granary had five bins on one side with four on the other,” Miller said. “I’ve done some preliminary work on it by adding floor joists and a four-foot crawl space.”

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Pictured are Aubray and Braden Miller along with baby Amelia.

"Actually I 'over-built' the building," he explained. "which gives it more strength and stability. To be honest with you, the granary has 'good 'bones.' Its basic structure was what put the idea in my head of making this building into a house," Miller admitted.

"There will be no basement, only a four-foot crawl space," he explained. "I intend to take the old roof completely off and build it eight feet taller with a new roof on top of that."

"Obviously I'll need some help to complete this huge project," Miller smiled, "but it will still take about three more years to complete. In addition to building our new home, I do have to work for a living!"

"The completed make-over home will be about 2700 square feet when finished," he explained. "Above the garage I'm planning to put an office."

"My vision for the completed home is four bedrooms and three bathrooms," Miller said. "I can do the construction myself but will need to hire a plumber, an electrician, and an HVAC technician to put in the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning."

"Come and check on my progress," he smiled. "Maybe it'll be done in three years; maybe not!"

A Walk of Faith

"For we walk by faith, not by sight"

II Corinthians 5:7



Ladies' Luncheon

Bethesda Lutheran Church, Bristol

Wednesday, July 10, 2024

By Bethesda Women of the ELCA

Silent Auction opens at 10:30

Speaker: Jeff Peterson, author of "It's Just Walking"
and a graduate of Bristol High School

Luncheon at Noon—Door Prizes

\$15.00 advance tickets please, call:

Kay Espeland 605-492-3507

Jane Goehring 605-290-1420

Or contact any WELCA member





SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Magic mushroom alternatives recalled across US, one person sickened in SD

BY: JOHN HULT - JULY 5, 2024 11:29 AM

A death in North Dakota and 48 reported illnesses — including one in South Dakota — led to a nationwide recall of psychedelic candies.

The recall affects products from the company Prophet Premium Blends Diamond Shruumz, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. The products include micro-dosing chocolate bars, infused cones and micro-dose and mega-dose/extreme gummies.

Officials in North Dakota have not released any additional information on the death in that state. The South Dakota Department of Health did not immediately answer questions Friday on whether the South Dakota case involved a hospitalization. There were 27 reported hospitalizations across 24 states linked to the products as of July 1, according to a notice from the CDC. A spokesperson for Attorney General Marty Jackley's office did not immediately respond to a question on the legal status of the substances in South Dakota.

South Dakota state government offices were closed Friday as part of the Fourth of July weekend.

The CDC notice says the agency has gotten reports of "severe acute illnesses and other adverse effects," and that it's working with the Food and Drug Administration and state partners "to determine whether other products are associated with adverse health effects."

The death in North Dakota that factored into the recall was "potentially" linked to the products, the CDC says.

A recall notice on the Diamond Shruumz website suggests that the illnesses were related to people who'd eaten entire chocolate bars that had "higher levels of Muscimol than normal."

The site still lists the products, but there is no purchase option.

"It is crucial that all of our consumers refrain from ingesting this product while we, alongside the FDA, continue our investigation as to what is the cause of the serious adverse effects," the website says.



These Diamond Shruumz brand products have been recalled after reports of illnesses and one potential death. (Image from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

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Muscimol is a psychoactive substance used in psychedelic products. The company told the FDA that the substance could be responsible for the medical issues that sparked the recall, "including seizures, central nervous system depression (loss of consciousness, confusion, sleepiness), agitation, abnormal heart rates, hyper/hypotension, nausea, and vomiting."

According to the North Dakota Monitor, North Dakota officials are warning the public because the recalled products could still be available for sale online, in stores that sell hemp-derived products, or in smoke and vape shops, said Michelle Dethloff, director of the infectious diseases and epidemiology unit.

"Diamond Shroomz-brand products have been recalled and should no longer be available for sale," according to the FDA.

The FDA's webpage on the recall says it's continuing to conduct tests to determine the chemical makeup of product samples, and lists out a handful of chemicals found in samples so far. Two of the ingredients in those tested items are listed as schedule I controlled substances in South Dakota. Possession of controlled substances is a felony crime in the state.

Muscimol, the chemical reportedly responsible for the adverse reactions, is not on the state's controlled substance list.

The "mushroom" products are different from the hemp-derived intoxicants that became illegal to sell or make in South Dakota as of July 1. Those products, including those labeled delta-8 or delta-10, are not illegal to possess and remain available for purchase online.

Products that ape the effects of federally barred psilocybin hallucinogenic mushrooms — also known as "magic mushrooms" — were not specifically targeted by lawmakers who passed the ban over the winter.

Muscimol can come from the Amanita muscaria mushroom, which is not illegal under federal law. According to a study published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine on June 10, 12.3% of Americans have tried psilocybin, making it the most-used hallucinogen in the nation. That popularity, the article says, has helped spur a market for the toadstool-like Amanita. It notes that Google searches related to "Amanita muscaria" rose 114% between 2022 and 2023.

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.

Biden in first TV interview since debate denies medical condition: 'It was a bad episode'

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - JULY 5, 2024 9:09 PM

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Friday in his first televised interview since the presidential debate defended his reelection bid and rejected calls that he should step aside amid growing anxiety among some Democrats about his mental and physical state.

The 22-minute interview with ABC News' George Stephanopoulos came as some lawmakers and other prominent Democrats have said Biden should suspend his campaign and let someone else become the official nominee.

But Biden said that's unnecessary, distilling his actions during the June 27 debate as simply a "bad night." "It was a bad episode, no indication of any serious condition," Biden said. "I was exhausted. I didn't listen to my instincts in terms of preparing and it was a bad night."

Biden refused to answer a question about what he would do if allies and friends in Congress urged him to leave the presidential campaign.

"I'm not going to answer that question. It's not going to happen," Biden said.

Members of Congress and Democratic governors have expressed concern with Biden remaining the presumptive nominee ever since he struggled to answer questions and had moments where he appeared confused during the first presidential debate.

Biden brushed aside Virginia Sen. Mark Warner's plans to convene Democratic senators on Monday to discuss the future of Biden's bid, which multiple news organizations reported Friday. Both chambers of Congress will return to Washington next week.

"Mark is a good man," Biden said, before incorrectly claiming Warner "tried to get the nomination" for president — Warner in 2006 said he would not make a bid. "Mark and I have a different perspective. I respect him."

Biden won't commit to cognitive exam

Stephanopoulos pressed Biden during the interview on whether he really has the mental and physical stamina to remain president for another four years, and whether Biden is being honest with himself about his age.

"I believe so," Biden said. "I wouldn't be running if I didn't think I did. Look, I'm running again because I think I understand best what has to be done to take this nation to a completely new level."

Biden repeatedly declined to commit to taking a cognitive exam, suggesting that his schedule and daily work load are evidence enough he's up to the task of being president.

"I have a cognitive test every single day. Every day I have that test, everything I do," Biden said. "You know, not only am I campaigning, I'm running the world."

Biden added that there are 125 days left in the campaign and that people should watch him in the months ahead to determine if he's suitable to be reelected to the highest position in the government.

In Wisconsin, Biden points to Trump flubs

The ABC News interview aired just hours after Biden held a rally in Madison, Wisconsin, where he repeatedly criticized the Republican presumptive presidential nominee, Donald Trump.

This November's presidential election, Biden said, should be about character, honesty and decency.

"Let's focus on what really matters: We're running against the biggest liar and the biggest threat to our democracy in American history," Biden said. "That's not hyperbole."

Biden sought to shift the attention from his performance at the debate to flubs Trump has made over the years, including in a Fourth of July speech in 2019 when the former president said securing the airports was essential during the Revolutionary War.

"He said George Washington's army won the Revolution by taking control of the airports from the British," Biden said before crossing himself somewhat jokingly. "Talk about me misspeaking — airports from the British in 1776? It's true, he is a stable genius."

Trump, at the time, criticized the teleprompter for the comment.

Biden during the rally listed off what he views as his accomplishments, including canceling some student loan debt, nominating Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court, signing a same-sex marriage bill,



President Joe Biden sat down for an interview with ABC's "Good Morning America" co-anchor and "This Week" anchor George Stephanopoulos in Wisconsin on the campaign trail on July 5, 2024. (Photo used with permission of ABC News)

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approving gun safety policies and working with Congress on a sweeping climate change law.

"I'm not letting one, 90-minute debate wipe out three-and-a-half years of work," Biden said.

During the next four years, Biden said, whoever holds the Oval Office will appoint at least two new justices to the Supreme Court.

Should that be Trump, a recent ruling from the justices on presidential immunity could lead to a challenging time for the country, Biden said.

"For over two centuries, America's been a free, democratic nation," Biden said. "And I'll be damned if in the year 2024 — just two years before our 250th anniversary as a nation — I'll let Donald Trump take this away."

Illinois Dem congressman says Biden should quit

Biden briefly spoke with reporters in the White House pool after the rally, saying he was determined to stay in the race and brushing aside calls from some lawmakers for him to withdraw.

When asked by a reporter about Warner suggesting Biden let another person take over as the party's presidential candidate, Biden said Warner "is the only one considering that."

Later in the evening, Illinois Democratic Rep. Mike Quigley said on MSNBC that Biden should step aside.

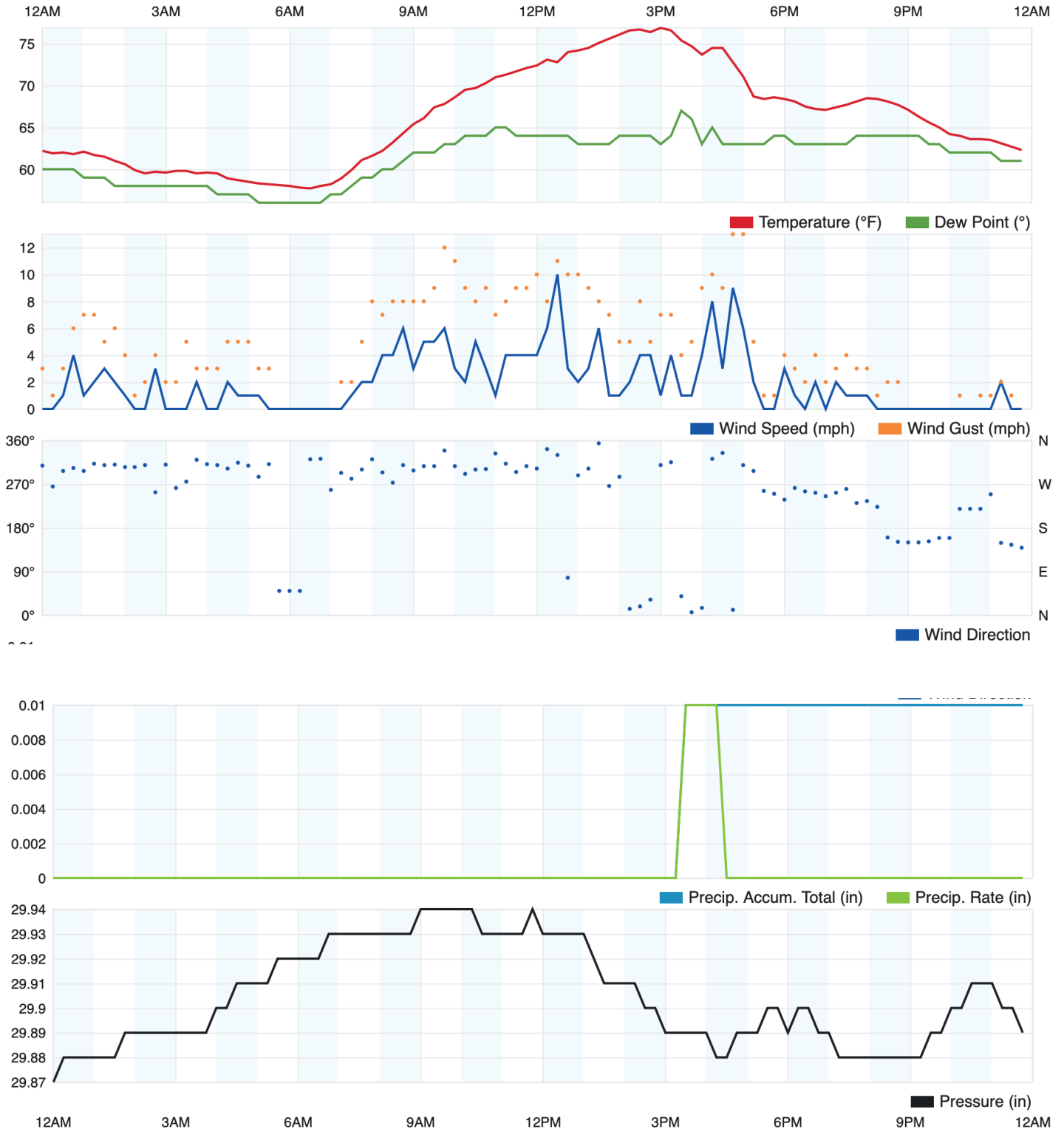
"Mr. President, your legacy is set. We owe you the greatest debt of gratitude," Quigley said. "The only thing that you can do now to cement that for all time and prevent utter catastrophe is to step down and let someone else do this."

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.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today

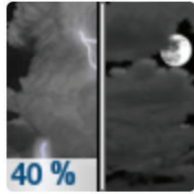


20 % → 60 %

High: 78 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms then
T-storms
Likely

Tonight



40 %

Low: 56 °F

Chance
T-storms then
Mostly Cloudy

Sunday



40%

High: 79 °F

Chance
T-storms

Sunday Night



20 %

Low: 58 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms then
Partly Cloudy

Monday



High: 81 °F

Sunny



Forecast Temps & Precip Timing

July 6, 2024
3:07 AM

Today

Highs: 74-80

Sunday

Highs: 75-82 / Lows: 55-59

Monday

Highs: 77-84 / Lows: 56-61

Tuesday

Highs: 79-86 / Lows: 57-61

Probability of Precipitation Forecast (%)

	7/6 Sat														7/7 Sun		
	9am	10am	11am	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	10pm	11pm	12am	1am
Aberdeen	15	20	20	30	30	30	25	35	55	50	40	25	20	15	5	5	5
Britton	30	25	30	30	25	35	45	35	45	30	25	30	30	20	15	5	5
Brookings	10	10	15	25	40	50	60	60	60	55	45	45	45	30	30	30	20
Chamberlain	25	25	30	25	20	30	35	35	30	20	10	10	10	5	5	5	5
Clark	15	20	35	25	30	20	30	35	45	50	45	45	35	20	15	5	5
Eagle Butte	10	5	5	0	5	10	15	15	15	15	10	5	5	5	5	10	25
Ellendale	20	20	20	20	20	35	35	50	70	65	35	25	20	15	10	5	5
Eureka	60	30	20	30	35	25	25	25	35	20	15	15	15	5	5	10	5
Gettysburg	65	40	20	15	15	15	20	20	30	25	15	10	10	5	5	5	5
Huron	25	30	35	35	30	35	35	45	55	40	30	30	30	20	20	20	20
Kennebec	75	25	20	10	10	10	15	15	10	10	10	10	5	5	5	5	5
McIntosh	25	10	5	5	5	15	15	15	15	15	15	5	5	5	5	5	15
Milbank	10	15	25	25	40	80	70	40	65	70	35	25	20	20	30	25	15
Miller	70	65	55	20	15	15	20	20	25	30	15	15	10	5	5	5	5
Mobridge	65	25	15	10	10	15	15	25	35	20	15	10	10	5	5	5	5
Murdo	30	10	5	0	0	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0	5
Pierre	50	20	15	5	5	5	15	15	15	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Redfield	25	35	35	25	20	20	25	40	70	50	30	25	15	5	5	5	5
Sisseton	10	25	35	35	50	70	55	45	50	40	25	25	20	15	15	15	15
Watertown	15	25	25	35	40	40	35	35	55	50	50	50	45	45	30	20	5
Webster	15	35	35	40	40	25	35	40	50	40	45	45	30	20	15	10	5
Wheaton	10	10	15	20	35	40	60	65	50	40	30	15	15	15	15	15	20



A weak system crossing the region today will provide the impetus for showers and thunderstorms. A few stronger storms could generate hail to the size of quarters and some strong winds, but widespread severe weather is unlikely.

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Severe Weather Threat Overview

July 6, 2024
3:29 AM

Saturday Afternoon & Evening

Timing/Location

Widespread thunderstorms this afternoon and evening however the best chance for potentially severe weather is mainly eastern/southeast SD

Primary Threats for the **Dark Green** areas

Tornado Potential

Very Low Low Medium High

Max Hail Size

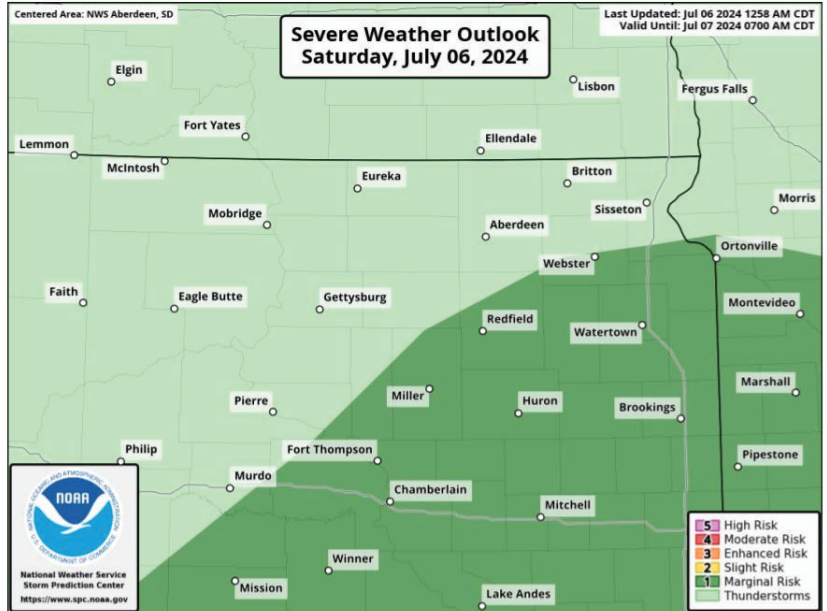
Dimes **Quarters** Golfball Baseball

Max Wind Speed

< 60 mph 60-70 mph 70-80 mph > 80mph

Heavy Rain/Flooding Potential

Very Low **Low** Medium High



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Today's severe weather threat is for hail to the size of quarters and strong winds, mainly focused across eastern and southeastern South Dakota.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 77 °F at 3:03 PM

Low Temp: 58 °F at 6:21 AM

Wind: 13 mph at 4:41 PM

Precip: : 0.01

Day length: 15 hours, 34 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 115 in 1936

Record Low: 42 in 1942

Average High: 84

Average Low: 59

Average Precip in July.: 0.70

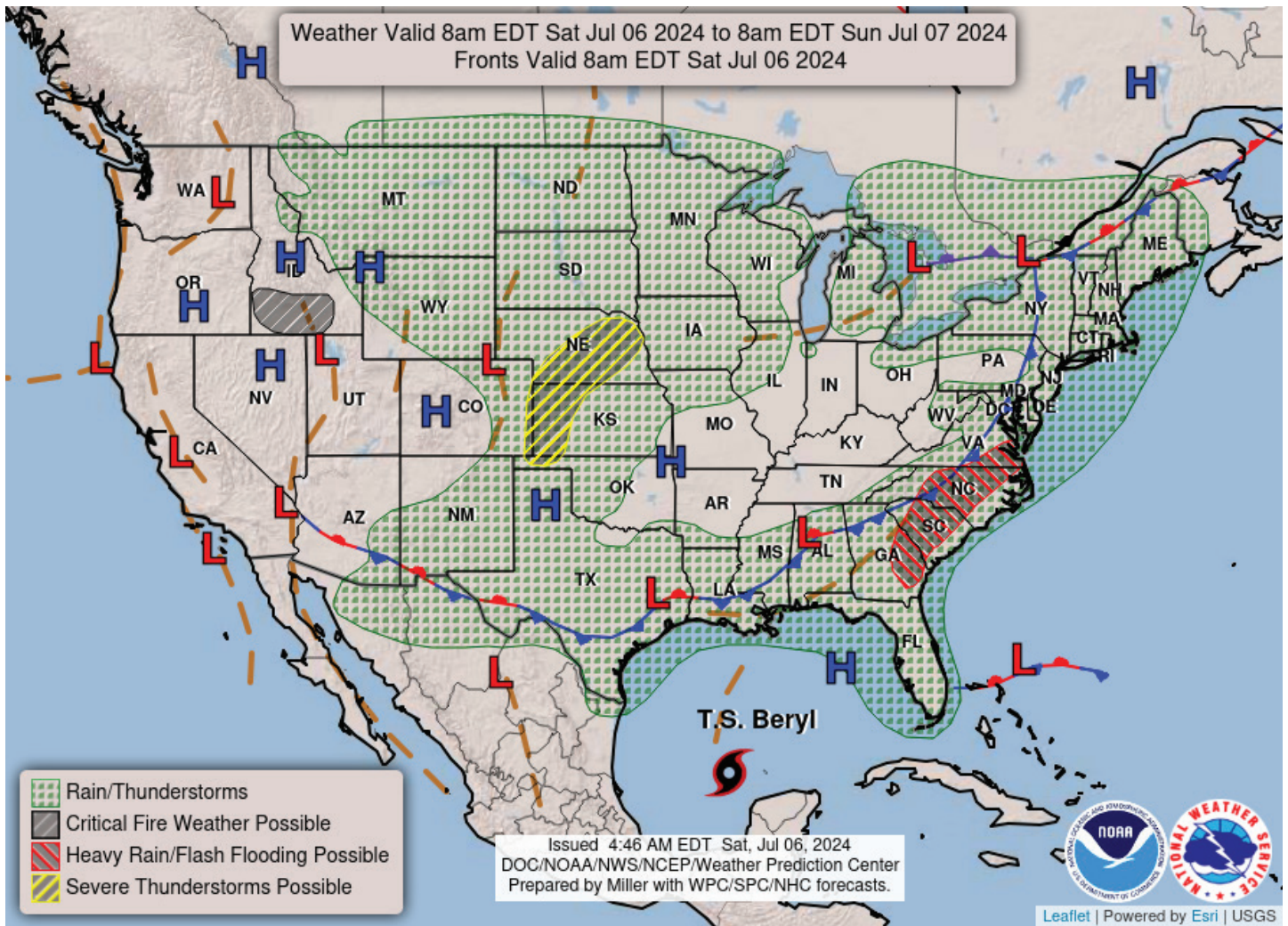
Precip to date in July: 2.56

Average Precip to date: 11.71

Precip Year to Date: 13.61

Sunset Tonight: 9:24:45 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:50:38 am



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Today in Weather History

July 6, 1963: A farmer died near Waubay, in Day County, when the barn was destroyed while he was inside. Winds of 110 mph were recorded at FAA in Watertown before the roof and wind instruments were blown away.

July 6, 1982: A severe thunderstorm produced a series of five microbursts over Sioux Falls. The microbursts caused extensive damage. Winds were estimated to have reached 125 mph, and the Airport recorded a peak gust of 82 mph. Damage, which was heaviest in the south-central and northeast sections of the city, included thousands of trees uprooted or damaged. Several semi-trailers were blown over, critically injuring one man and slightly injuring two others. Several other minor injuries occurred mainly from flying glass. Five cars were rolled over by the high winds, and several others damaged flying debris. Damage at the airport included a portion of a hangar roof blown off and three light aircraft flipped over.

July 6, 1994: Widespread rainfall of over 6 inches fell in Dewey, Potter, and Faulk Counties, causing damage to roads and flooded basements and fields. A teenage girl escaped injury when her car was washed away by the waters of a swollen creek about 5 miles east of Gettysburg. Some total storm amounts include; 6.80 inches in Orient; 6.70 at Faulkton; 5.80 in Milbank; 5.48 in Big Stone City; 5.02 in Ipswich; 4.50 in Gettysburg; 4.17 in Webster; 4.12 near Onaka; 4.02 in Leola; and 3.97 in Britton.

1893: A violent tornado killed 71 persons on its forty-mile track across northwestern Iowa. Forty-nine persons were killed around Pomeroy, where eighty percent of the buildings were destroyed, with most leveled to the ground.

1928 - A hailstorm at Potter, NE, produced a stone which was 5.5 inches in diameter, and seventeen inches in circumference, weighing a pound and a half. (David Ludlum)

1985 - Lightning struck a large transformer in Salt Lake County sending a 200 foot fireball into the air and blacking out almost the entire state for up to five hours. (The Weather Channel)

1986 - Thunderstorm rains during the mid morning hours, and again during the evening, produced major flash-flooding at Leavenworth, KS. The official rainfall total was 10.37 inches, but unofficial totals exceeded twelve inches. At nearby Kansas City, the rainfall total of 5.08 inches was a daily record for July. (Storm Data)

1987 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in twenty-one states east of the Rockies, with severe weather reported in Kentucky and Indiana for the second day in a row. A thunderstorm produced more than five inches of rain in one hour near Reynolds, IL. Rochester, NY, was soaked with 3.25 inches, a record 24 hour total for the month of July. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thirty-six cities in the north central and northeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 98 degrees at International Falls, MN, and 101 degrees at Flint, MI, equalled all-time records. Highs of 96 degrees at Muskegon, MI, and 97 degrees at Buffalo, NY, were records for July. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Unseasonably hot weather prevailed in the southwestern U.S. Ten cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Las Vegas, NV, with a reading of 115 degrees. Hanksville, UT, reached 112 degrees, Bullhead City, AZ, hit 120 degrees, and Death Valley, CA, soared to 126 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

AM I DOING MY BEST?

John Baker was an unlikely candidate to become a respected track star. He was not very well built, much shorter than other members of the track team and appeared to be uncoordinated. But something happened.

During his junior year in high school, the coaches wanted his best friend to join the track team. He refused. When John learned of this, he said, "Let me join and maybe he'll come with me." They agreed to John's suggestion, and both boys began running track together.

At the first cross country track event, most eyes were focused on the state champion, Lloyd Goff. When the race began, he quickly took the lead. But as the racers approached the finish line, one runner was far in front of the others. The coach turned to his assistant and said, "Here comes Goff." Taking his binoculars he looked and said, "Wow! It's not Goff - it's Baker."

After the race the coach asked Baker how he was able to win the race. "I focused on the runner in front of me and said, 'Am I doing my best?' And when I passed him, I said that about the next one in front of me until I passed them all."

All of us who profess to be Christians need to ask ourselves constantly: "Am I doing my best for Christ?"

Prayer: You have given us so much, Father, that we sometimes forget what we have and what we can do for You. May we do more for You today than we did yesterday. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. Philippians 4:13



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

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.05.24

6 15 32 54 67 4

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$181,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.03.24

6 7 37 46 49 10

All Star Bonus: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$4,440,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 3 Mins 28
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.05.24

7 15 23 41 48 17

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 18 Mins 29
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.03.24

4 7 14 25 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$26,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 18 Mins 28
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.03.24

19 22 38 55 61 23

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 47 Mins 28
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.03.24

2 26 33 55 57 22

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 47 Mins 29
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

- 07/04/2024 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/09/2024 FREE SNAP Application Assistance 1-6pm at the Community Center
- 07/14/2024 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 07/17/2024 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
- 07/17/2024 Pro Am Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/25/2024 Dairy Queen Miracle Treat Day
- 07/25/2024 Summer Downtown Sip & Shop 5-8pm
- 07/25/2024 Treasures Amidst The Trials 6pm at Emmanuel Lutheran Church
- 07/26/2024 Ferney Open Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
- 07/27/2024 1st Annual Celebration in the Park 1-9:30pm
- 08/05/2024 School Supply Drive 4-7pm at the Community Center
- 08/02/2024 Wine on 9 at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm
- 08/08/2024 Family Fun Fest 5:30-7:30pm
- 08/9-11/2024 Jr. Legion State Baseball Tournament
- 08/12/2024 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 1:15-7pm
- 09/07/2024 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 09/07-08/2024 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 09/08/2024 Sunflower Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
- 10/05/2024 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/11/2024 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
- 10/31/2024 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2024 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/28/2024 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 12/07/2024 Olive Grove 8th Annual Holiday Party & Tour of Homes with Live & Silent Auctions 6pm-close

News from the Associated Press

North Dakota tribe goes back to its roots with a massive greenhouse operation

By JACK DURA Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A Native American tribe in North Dakota will soon grow lettuce in a giant greenhouse complex that when fully completed will be among the country's largest, enabling the tribe to grow much of its own food decades after a federal dam flooded the land where they had cultivated corn, beans and other crops for millennia.

Work is ongoing on the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation's 3.3-acre (1.3-hectare) greenhouse that will make up most of the Native Green Grow operation's initial phase. However, enough of the structure will be completed this summer to start growing leafy greens and other crops such as tomatoes and strawberries.

"We're the first farmers of this land," Tribal Chairman Mark Fox said. "We once were part of an aboriginal trade center for thousands and thousands of years because we grew crops — corn, beans, squash, watermelons — all these things at massive levels, so all the tribes depended on us greatly as part of the aboriginal trade system."

The tribe will spend roughly \$76 million on the initial phase, which also will include a warehouse and other facilities near the tiny town of Parshall. It plans to add to the growing space in the coming years, eventually totaling about 14.5 acres (5.9 hectares), which officials say would make it one of the world's largest facilities of its type.

The initial greenhouse will have enough glass to cover the equivalent of seven football fields.

The tribe's fertile land along the Missouri River was inundated in the mid-1950s when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built the Garrison Dam, which created Lake Sakakawea.

Getting fresh produce has long been a challenge in the area of western North Dakota where the tribe is based, on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation. The rolling, rugged landscape — split by Lake Sakakawea — is a long drive from the state's biggest cities, Bismarck and Fargo.

That isolation makes the greenhouses all the more important, as they will enable the tribe to provide food to the roughly 8,300 people on the Fort Berthold reservation and to reservations elsewhere. The tribe also hopes to stock food banks that serve isolated and impoverished areas in the region, and plans to export its produce.

Initially, the MHA Nation expects to grow nearly 2 million pounds (907,000 kilograms) of food a year and for that to eventually increase to 12 to 15 million pounds (5.4 million to 6.4 million kilograms) annually. Fox said the operation's first phase will create 30 to 35 jobs.

The effort coincides with a national move to increase food sovereignty among tribes.

Supply chain disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic led tribes nationwide to use federal coronavirus aid to invest in food systems, including underground greenhouses in South Dakota to feed the local community, said Heather Dawn Thompson, director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Tribal Relations. In Oklahoma, multiple tribes are running or building their own meat processing plant, she said.

The USDA promotes its Indigenous Food Sovereignty Initiative, which "really challenges us to think about food and the way we do business at USDA from an indigenous, tribal lens," Thompson said. Examples include indigenous seed hubs, foraging videos and guides, cooking videos and a meat processing program for indigenous animals.

"We have always been a very independent, sovereign people that have been able to hunt, gather, grow and feed ourselves, and forces have intervened over the last century that have disrupted those independent food resources, and it made it very challenging. But the desire and goal has always been there," said Thompson, whose tribal affiliation is Cheyenne River Sioux.

The MHA Nation's greenhouse plans are possible in large part because of access to potable water and natural gas resources.

The natural gas released in North Dakota's Bakken oil field has long been seen by critics as a waste and environmental concern, but Fox said the tribal nation intends to capture and compress that gas to heat and power the greenhouse and process into fertilizer.

Flaring, in which natural gas is burned off from pipes that emerge from the ground, has been a longtime issue in the No. 3 oil-producing state.

North Dakota Pipeline Authority Director Justin Kringstad said that key to capturing the gas is building needed infrastructure, as the MHA Nation intends to do.

"With those operators that are trying to get to that level of zero, it's certainly going to take more infrastructure, more buildout of pipes, processing plants, all of the above to stay on top of this issue," he said.

The Fort Berthold Reservation had nearly 3,000 active wells in April, when oil production totaled 203,000 barrels a day on the reservation. Oil production has helped the MHA Nation build schools, roads, housing and medical facilities, Fox said.

Gaza soccer stadium is now a shelter for thousands of displaced Palestinians

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — Thousands of displaced Palestinians in northern Gaza have sought refuge in one of the territory's largest soccer arenas, where families now scrape by with little food or water as they try to keep one step ahead of Israel's latest offensive.

Their makeshift tents hug the shade below the stadium's seating, with clothes hanging in the July sun across the dusty, dried-up soccer field. Under the covered benches where players used to sit, Um Bashar bathes a toddler standing in a plastic tub. Lathering soap through the boy's hair, he wiggles and shivers as she pours the chilly water over his head, and he grips the plastic seats for balance.

They've been displaced multiple times, she said, most recently from Israel's renewed operations against Hamas in the Shijaiyah neighborhood of Gaza City.

"We woke up and found tanks in front of the door," she says. "We didn't take anything with us, not a mattress, not a pillow, not any clothes, not a thing. Not even food."

She fled with a group of 70 other people to Yarmouk Sports Stadium — a little under 2 miles (3 kilometers) northwest of Shijaiyah, which was heavily bombed and largely emptied early in the war. Many of the people who ended up in the stadium say they have nothing to return to.

"We left our homes," said one man, Hazem Abu Thoraya, "and all of our homes were bombed and burned, and all those around us were as well."

Hundreds of thousands of people have remained in northern Gaza, even as Israeli troops have surrounded and largely isolated it. However, aid flows there have improved recently, and the U.N. said earlier this week that it is now able to meet people's basic needs in the north. Israel says it allows aid to enter Gaza and blames the U.N. for not doing enough to move it.

Still, residents say the deprivation and insecurity are taking an ever-growing toll.

"There is no safe place. Safety is with God," said a displaced woman, Um Ahmad. "Fear is now felt not only among the children, but also among the adults. ... We don't even feel safe walking in the street."

Reformist Pezeshkian wins Iran's presidential runoff election, besting hard-liner Jalili

By JON GAMBRELL and AMIR VAHDAT Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian won Iran's runoff presidential election Saturday, besting hard-liner Saeed Jalili by promising to reach out to the West and ease enforcement on the country's mandatory headscarf law after years of sanctions and protests squeezing the Islamic Republic.

Pezeshkian promised no radical changes to Iran's Shiite theocracy in his campaign and long has held Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as the final arbiter of all matters of state in the country. But even

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Pezeshkian's modest aims will be challenged by an Iranian government still largely held by hard-liners, the ongoing Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, and Western fears over Tehran enriching uranium to near-weapons-grade levels.

A vote count offered by authorities put Pezeshkian as the winner with 16.3 million votes to Jalili's 13.5 million in Friday's election. Overall, Iran's Interior Ministry said 30 million people voted in an election held without internationally recognized monitors.

Supporters of Pezeshkian, a heart surgeon and longtime lawmaker, entered the streets of Tehran and other cities before dawn to celebrate as his lead grew over Jalili, a hard-line former nuclear negotiator.

"Dear people of Iran, the elections are over and this is just the beginning of our cooperation," Pezeshkian wrote on the social platform X, still banned in Iran. "The difficult path ahead will not be smooth except with your companionship, empathy and trust. I extend my hand to you and I swear on my honor that I will not leave you alone on this path. Do not leave me alone."

Pezeshkian's win still sees Iran at a delicate moment, with tensions high in the Mideast over the Israel-Hamas war, Iran's advancing nuclear program, and a looming election in the United States that could put any chance of a detente between Tehran and Washington at risk. Pezeshkian's victory also wasn't a rout of Jalili, meaning he'll have to carefully navigate Iran's internal politics as the doctor has never held a sensitive, high-level security post.

The first round of voting June 28 saw the lowest turnout in the history of the Islamic Republic since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Iranian officials have long pointed to turnout as a sign of support for the country's Shiite theocracy, which has been under strain after years of sanctions crushing Iran's economy, mass demonstrations and intense crackdowns on all dissent.

Government officials up to Khamenei, the supreme leader, predicted higher turnout as voting got underway, with state television airing images of modest lines at some polling centers. However, online videos purported to show some polls empty while a survey of several dozen sites in Tehran saw light traffic and a heavy security presence on the streets.

Authorities put turnout in Friday's vote at 49.6%, still historically low for an Iranian presidential election. They counted 607,575 voided votes — which often are a sign of protest by those who feel obligated to cast a ballot but reject both candidates.

"I don't expect anything from him — I am happy that the vote put the brake on hard-liners," said bank employee Fatemeh Babaei, who voted for Pezeshkian. "I hope Pezeshkian can return administration to a way in which all people can feel there is a tomorrow."

Taher Khalili, a Kurdish-origin Iranian who runs a small tailor shop in Tehran, offered another reason to be hopeful while handing out candy to passersby.

"In the end, someone from my hometown and the west of Iran came to power," Khalili said. "I hope he will make economy better for small businesses."

Pezeshkian, who speaks Azeri, Farsi and Kurdish, campaigned on outreach to Iran's many ethnicities. He represents the first president from western Iran in decades — something people hope will aid the county as those in the western part are considered more tolerant because of the ethnic and religious diversity in their area.

The election came amid heightened regional tensions. In April, Iran launched its first-ever direct attack on Israel over the war in Gaza, while militia groups armed by Tehran — such as the Lebanese Hezbollah and Yemen's Houthi rebels — are engaged in the fighting and have escalated their attacks.

Iran is also enriching uranium at near weapons-grade levels and maintains a stockpile large enough to build several nuclear weapons, should it choose to do so. And while Khamenei remains the final decision-maker on matters of state, whichever man ends up winning the presidency could bend the country's foreign policy toward either confrontation or collaboration with the West.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia, which has reached a detente with Iran, sent his congratulations to Pezeshkian that stressed his "keenness to develop and deepen the relations that bring our two countries and peoples together." Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has relied on Iranian-made

drones in his war on Ukraine, similarly congratulated Pezeshkian.

There was no immediate response from the U.S.

The campaign also repeatedly touched on what would happen if former President Donald Trump, who unilaterally withdrew America from the Iran nuclear deal in 2018, won the November election. Iran has held indirect talks with President Joe Biden's administration, though there's been no clear movement back toward constraining Tehran's nuclear program for the lifting of economic sanctions.

Though identifying with reformists and relative moderates within Iran's theocracy during the campaign, Pezeshkian at the same time honored Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, on one occasion wearing its uniform to parliament. He repeatedly criticized the United States and praised the Guard for shooting down an American drone in 2019, saying it "delivered a strong punch in the mouth of the Americans and proved to them that our country will not surrender."

More than 61 million Iranians over the age of 18 were eligible to vote, with about 18 million of them between 18 and 30. Voting was to end at 6 p.m. but was extended until midnight to boost participation.

The late President Ebrahim Raisi, who died in a May helicopter crash, was seen as a protégé of Khamenei and a potential successor as supreme leader.

Still, many knew him for his involvement in the mass executions that Iran conducted in 1988, and for his role in the bloody crackdowns on dissent that followed protests over the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini, a young woman detained by police over allegedly improperly wearing the mandatory headscarf, or hijab.

Nigeria claims it has degraded extremists. New suicide bombings suggest they remain potent

By CHINEDU ASADU and HARUNA UMAR Associated Press

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria (AP) — For the first time since 2020, three female suicide bombers attacked the Nigerian border town of Gwoza, where Boko Haram extremists declared a short-lived caliphate 10 years ago, signaling that the world's longest war on militancy is still ongoing.

This came two days after officials touted success in their war against extremists, with Nigeria's military spokesperson Maj. Gen. Edward Buba telling reporters the often-used phrase: "We have greatly degraded the terrorists."

The first of the three coordinated suicide bombings on June 30 targeted a well-attended wedding, the second was detonated at the victims' funeral and the the third at a hospital attending to the injured.

At least 32 people in total were killed in the attacks, including nine family members and friends of Mohammed Kehaya, a resident who is now worried about his safety in the state of Borno, a hotbed of Islamic militancy, where extremists once kidnapped hundreds of schoolgirls in 2014.

No group has claimed responsibility for the bombings, but blame quickly fell on Boko Haram, which since 2009 has launched an insurgency to establish its radical interpretation of Islamic law, or Sharia, in northeastern Nigeria. They have since splintered into different factions, together accounting for the direct deaths of at least 35,000 people and the displacement of more than 2 million amid a humanitarian crisis with people in dire need of foreign aid.

Still, Nigerian authorities maintained that the attacks were not a "setback."

Nigeria's Defense Chief Gen. Chris Musa said the bombings were rather "a sign of desperation" and described them as a one-off by the militants. "Some individuals would do everything possible for us not to succeed," he said.

However, several security analysts and locals interviewed about the bombings echoed concerns that the attacks must have taken a lot of planning and coordination and portend danger in Borno, where some villages lack security presence.

One of the extremists' goals could be to distort the narrative that the security situation in the region has normalized, said Vincent Foucher, consulting senior analyst for West Africa at the International Crisis Group.

"It's a way to show the war goes on," Foucher said.

In Borno, the three bombings sent shock waves across families and left many wondering whether they

should pack what was left of their belongings and flee once again.

"Parents have been calling in to ask if their kids would be safe going back to school," said Yusuf Ibn Tom, a public school teacher in Maiduguri. "Everyone here is scared."

At the height of the insurgency in 2014, Boko Haram was considered the world's deadliest terrorist group, killing at least 6,000 people that year alone, according to the Institute for Economics and Peace's Global Terrorism Index. A lot has changed since then, making the extremists far less lethal.

The military has pushed them further into the fringes of the Lake Chad axis, and the 2021 death of the group's founding leader, Abubakar Shekau, demoralized some members and made suicide bombing less popular. Clashes between Shekau's faction and the one linked to the Islamic State group have made the extremists turn against themselves, sometimes shifting the focus of attacks from the military and civilians and even contributing to the defection of thousands who are undergoing a reintegration program.

But what has not changed over the years is the "operational prowess" of the extremists, said Cameron Hudson, an Africa expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Attacks like the latest one "are rarely one-off incidents and are often part of a wider series," Hudson said, not ruling out that more might come in the future. "That will give a better indication of the relative strength of the insurgency today as well as the Nigerian military's ability to respond," he added.

France's president called a surprise election. The result could diminish his power in world affairs

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron could awake — if he has slept at all — with clipped wings on Monday morning.

The high-stakes second round of the legislative election on Sunday will almost certainly impact the French leader's sway in the areas of defense and foreign affairs. It could diminish his role as an energetic and influential figure in European and world affairs and as one of Ukraine's primary backers in the war against Russia, say retired French military officers and analysts of France's defense and foreign policies.

After the centrist president's bloc finished a distant third, behind the surging far right, in last weekend's first round of voting for a new parliament, one of the only certainties before Sunday's decisive round two is that Macron himself can't emerge strengthened.

With many of its candidates already out of the race, Macron's camp can't secure the absolute majority that gave him ample maneuvering room in his first term as president from 2017. It also is likely to fall well short of the 245 seats it won after his reelection in 2022. That made it the largest single group — albeit without a clear majority — in the outgoing National Assembly that Macron dissolved on June 9, triggering the surprise election after the far right handed his alliance a painful beating in French voting for the European Parliament.

That leaves two outcomes most likely to emerge on Sunday night to Monday as official results come in.

In one scenario, France could end up with a fragmented parliament and a prime minister too weak to seriously undermine Macron's constitutionally guaranteed role as head of the armed forces and, more broadly, unable or unwilling to majorly challenge his defense and foreign-policy powers. Still, even in this best-case scenario for Macron, France risks becoming inward-looking, more focused on its polarized and unstable domestic politics than its place and military activities in the world.

In a second scenario, a worst case for Macron, the far right could secure an historic victory on Sunday that saddles the president with Jordan Bardella as prime minister, in an awkward and possibly conflictual power-sharing arrangement. The 28-year-old Bardella is a protege of Marine Le Pen, who leads the far-right National Rally party, with Bardella as its president. Both Le Pen and Bardella have made clear that, in power, they would seek to rein in Macron and exert themselves in defense, European and foreign affairs decision-making.

The French Constitution only gives limited answers to how the various scenarios might play out. In

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large part, it could depend on the personalities of those involved and their ability to compromise, French analysts say.

Bardella's 'red lines'

Although the constitution says the president is commander in chief, it also says the prime minister "is responsible for national defense."

During the campaign, Bardella laid out what he said would be "my red lines" with regards to Ukraine, if he ends up sharing power with Macron: No more French deliveries of long-range weaponry that Ukraine could use to strike targets in Russia and no sending of troops, a scenario that Macron floated this year. Bardella said he doesn't want nuclear-armed France to be drawn into direct confrontation with nuclear-armed Russia. His party has historically been close to Russia and Le Pen cultivated ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin for many years and supported Russia's illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine in 2014.

Who would have the final word in potential arguments over long-range weapons for Kyiv is "actually quite a tricky one," says François Heisbourg, a French analyst on defense and security questions at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

"The president can probably do it if he wanted to, but the prime minister could also state that he can prevent the president from doing so," he says. "It can become a deadlock."

"If they don't agree, they can actually prevent each other from doing anything."

Power-sharing isn't new to France. But in previous cases, the president and prime minister weren't as sharply opposed politically as Macron and Bardella.

"Nobody until now has tried to test these respective powers to their ultimate conclusion. This is completely uncharted territory," Heisbourg says.

Le Pen and Macron trade shots

On military affairs, Le Pen has already delivered a warning shot, calling Macron's role as commander in chief "an honorary title for the president since it's the prime minister who holds the purse strings." Macron retorted: "What arrogance!"

French retired Vice Adm. Michel Olhagaray, a former head of France's center for higher military studies, is concerned that what he describes as the constitutional "blur" about shared military responsibilities could ripple through the ranks of the country's armed forces.

Conflictual power-sharing could be "something extremely painful for the armies, to know who the armies will obey. Very painful, very difficult," he says.

"In any case, the president of the republic can no longer take personal initiatives, like launching a (military) operation, etc., because that requires an understanding with the prime minister."

Because the French military operates across the globe, with forces deployed on the eastern flank of the NATO alliance, in Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere, changes to its posture by a power-sharing government are sure to be scrutinized by France's international network of allies and partners.

"They will all ask, 'But what is happening? How will this evolve? What will become of France? Will France keep its commitments?'" Olhagaray says.

But analysts say France's nuclear forces shouldn't be impacted. The president holds the nuclear codes, not least to ensure that the arsenal remains credible as a deterrent by making sure that potential enemies understand that any decision to strike isn't taken by committee.

France looks inward

If no clear majority emerges for any single bloc from Sunday's voting, lawmakers may have to do something that's not a tradition in France: build a coalition government. Because the prime minister at its head will need broad consensus in parliament to keep the government from falling, that person is more likely to be a weakened junior partner in sharing power with Macron.

"The president will have much more control," says retired Gen. Dominique Trinquand, a former head of France's military mission at the United Nations.

In a coalition government, consensus-building on tough foreign policy questions — such as whether to greatly boost aid to Ukraine — could take time, and issues that divide might be put on the back burner.

"The room to maneuver would be narrowed," says Frédéric Charillon, a professor of political science at Paris Cité University.

"In France, we are much more used to this kind of, you know, presidential system of monarchic foreign policy, when the president says, 'I will do this, I will do that.'"

But in the power-sharing arrangement with a new prime minister that now awaits Macron, "It cannot work like that."

Biden dismisses age questions in interview as he tries to salvage reelection effort

By COLLEEN LONG and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — President Joe Biden, fighting to save his endangered reelection effort, used a highly anticipated TV interview Friday to repeatedly reject taking an independent medical evaluation that would show voters he is up for serving another term in office while blaming his disastrous debate performance on a "bad episode" and saying there were "no indications of any serious condition."

"Look, I have a cognitive test every single day," Biden told ABC's George Stephanopoulos, referring to the tasks he faces daily in a rigorous job. "Every day, I have that test. Everything I do. You know, not only am I campaigning, but I'm running the world."

The 81-year-old Biden made it through the 22-minute interview without any major blunders that would inflict further damage to his imperiled candidacy, but it appeared unlikely to fully tamp down concerns about his age and fitness for another four years and his ability to defeat Donald Trump in November.

It left Biden in a standoff against a not-insignificant faction of his party with four months to go until Election Day, and with just weeks until the Democratic National Convention. The drawn-out spectacle could benefit Biden's efforts to remain in the race by limiting the party's options to replace him. But it also could be a distraction from vital efforts to frame the 2024 race as a referendum on Trump.

During the interview, Biden insisted he was not more frail than earlier in his presidency. He said he undergoes "ongoing assessment" by his personal doctors and they "don't hesitate to tell me" if something is wrong.

"Can I run the 100 in 10 flat? No. But I'm still in good shape," Biden said.

As for the debate, "I didn't listen to my instincts in terms of preparing," Biden said.

Biden suggested that Trump's disruptions — from just a few feet away — had flustered him: "I realized that, even when I was answering a question and they turned his mic off, he was still shouting and I let it distract me. I'm not blaming it on that. But I realized that I just wasn't in control."

At times, Biden rambled during the interview, which ABC said aired in full and without edits. At one point, he started to explain his debate performance, then veered to a New York Times poll, then pivoted to the lies Trump told during the debate. Biden also referred to the midterm "red wave" as occurring in 2020, rather than 2022.

Asked how he might turn the race around, Biden argued that one key would be large and energetic rallies like the one he held Friday in Wisconsin. When reminded that Trump routinely draws larger crowds, the president laid into his opponent.

"Trump is a pathological liar," Biden said, accusing Trump of bungling the federal response to the COVID pandemic and failing to create jobs. "You ever see something that Trump did that benefited someone else and not him?"

The interview, paired with a weekend campaign in battleground Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, was part of Biden's rigorous effort to course correct from his rocky debate performance. But internal party frustrations continue to fester, with one influential Democratic senator working on a nascent push to encourage the president to exit the race and Democrats quietly chatting about where they would go next if the president drops out — or what it would mean if he stays in.

"It's President Biden's decision whether or not he remains in the race. Voters select our nominee and they chose him," said California Rep. Ro Khanna, a member of the Biden campaign's national advisory

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board that works as a gathering of his top surrogates. "Now, he needs to prove to those voters that he is up to the job and that will require more than just this one interview."

One Democrat who watched said they found Biden to be still shaky under controlled conditions and predicted more will call on him to leave the race.

Still, in Wisconsin, Biden was focused on proving his capacity to serve another term. When asked whether he would halt his campaign, he told reporters he was "completely ruling that out" and said he is "positive" he could serve another four years. At a rally in front of hundreds of supporters he acknowledged his subpar debate performance but insisted, "I am running, and I'm going to win again."

While private angst among Democratic lawmakers, donors and strategists has been running deep since the debate, most in the party have held public fire as they wait to see if the president can restore confidence with his weekend travel and his handling of the interview. Top Biden campaign officials were texting lawmakers encouraging them to refrain from public comments about the situation and give the president a chance to respond, according to a Democrat granted anonymity to discuss the situation.

To that end, Sen. Mark Warner reached out to fellow senators throughout this week to discuss whether to ask Biden to exit the race, according to three people familiar with the effort who requested anonymity to talk about private conversations. The Virginia Democrat's moves are notable given his chairmanship of the Senate Intelligence Committee and his reputation as a lawmaker who is supportive of Biden and has working relationships with colleagues in both parties. Warner's effort was first reported by The Washington Post.

The strategy remains fluid. One of the people with knowledge of Warner's effort said there are enough Senate Democrats concerned enough about Biden's capacity to run for reelection to take some sort of action, although there was yet no consensus on what that plan would be. Some of the Democratic senators could meet as soon as Monday on how to move forward.

The top Democrats on House committees are planning to meet virtually Sunday to discuss the situation, according to a person familiar with the gathering granted anonymity to talk about it.

At least four House Democrats have called for Biden to step down as the nominee. While not going that far, Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey said in a carefully worded statement Friday that Biden now has a decision to make on "the best way forward."

"I urge him to listen to the American people and carefully evaluate whether he remains our best hope to defeat Donald Trump," Healey said.

In the interview, Biden was asked how he might be persuaded to leave the race. He laughed and replied, "If the Lord Almighty comes down and tells me that, I might do that."

There were also a few signs of discontent at Biden's campaign rally Friday, with one person onstage waving a sign that read "Pass the torch Joe" as the president came out. His motorcade was also greeted at the middle school by a few people urging him to move on.

But Rebecca Green, a 52-year-old environmental scientist from Madison, said she found Biden's energy reassuring. "We were just waiting for him to come out strong and fighting again, the way we know he is."

Many Democratic lawmakers, who are hearing from constituents at home during the holiday week, are deeply frustrated and split on whether Biden should stay or go. Privately, discussions among the House Democrats flared this week as word spread that some of them were drafting public letters suggesting the president should quit the race.

Biden appears to have pulled his family closer while attempting to prove that he's still the Democrats' best option.

The ubiquitous presence of Hunter Biden in the West Wing since the debate has become an uncomfortable dynamic for many staffers, according to two Democrats close to the White House who requested anonymity to discuss the sensitive matter.

For many staffers, the sight of Hunter Biden, just weeks after his conviction on felony gun charges, taking a larger role in advising his father has been unsettling and a questionable choice, they said.

In a hastily organized gathering with more than 20 Democratic governors Wednesday evening, Biden acknowledged he needs to sleep more and limit evening events so he can be rested for the job. In trying

to explain away those comments, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre stressed that Biden "works around the clock" but that he "also recognizes the importance of striking a balance and taking care of himself."

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear, who attended the meeting, said Biden "certainly engaged with us on complicated matters."

"But then again, this is something that he needs to not just reassure Democratic governors on, but he needs to reassure the American people," Beshear said.

After hitting Yucatan Peninsula, Beryl churns in Gulf of Mexico as Texas braces for potential hit

By MARTÍN SILVA and JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

TULUM, Mexico (AP) — After battering Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, Beryl moved back into the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico where it was expected to regain hurricane strength Saturday before taking aim at the Texas coast, where officials urged residents to brace for a potential hit.

The earliest storm to develop into a Category 5 hurricane in the Atlantic, Beryl caused at least 11 deaths as it passed through the Caribbean islands earlier in the week. It then battered Mexico as a Category 2 hurricane, toppling trees but causing no injuries or deaths before weakening to a tropical storm as it moved across the peninsula.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center predicted late Friday that Beryl would intensify on Saturday before making landfall, prompting expanded hurricane and storm surge watches.

"There is an increasing risk of damaging hurricane-force winds and life-threatening storm surge in portions of northeastern Mexico and the lower and middle Texas coast late Sunday and Monday," the center warned.

Texas officials warned the state's entire coastline to brace for possible flooding, heavy rain and wind as they wait for a more defined path of the storm. On Friday, the hurricane center issued hurricane and storm surge watches for the Texas coast from the mouth of the Rio Grande north to San Luis Pass, less than 80 miles (128.75 kilometers) south of Houston.

Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, the acting governor while Gov. Greg Abbott is traveling in Taiwan, issued a pre-emptive disaster declaration for 40 counties.

"Everyone along the (Texas) coast should be paying attention this storm," Patrick said. "We hope and we pray for nothing more than a rain event."

Some Texas coastal cities called for voluntary evacuations in low-lying areas prone to flooding, banned beach camping and urged tourists traveling on the July 4 holiday weekend to move recreational vehicles from coastal parks. In Corpus Christi, city officials announced it had distributed 10,000 sandbags in less than two hours Friday, exhausting its supply.

Beryl already spread destruction in Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Barbados this week. Three people have been reported dead in Grenada, three in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, three in Venezuela and two in Jamaica, officials said.

Mexican authorities had moved some tourists and residents out of low-lying areas around the Yucatan Peninsula before landfall, but tens of thousands remained to tough out the strong winds and storm surge. Much of the area around Tulum is just a few yards (meters) above sea level.

The city was plunged into darkness when the storm knocked out power as it came ashore. Screeching winds set off car alarms across the town. Wind and rain continued to whip the seaside city and surrounding areas Friday morning. Army brigades roved the streets of the tourist city, clearing fallen trees and power lines.

After seeing Beryl tear through the Caribbean, 37-year-old Lucía Nagera Balcaza was among those who stocked up on food and hid away in their homes.

"Thank god, we woke up this morning and everything was all right," she said. "The streets are a disaster,

but we're out here cleaning up."

Although no dead or wounded have been reported, nearly half of Tulum continued to be without electricity, said Laura Velázquez, national coordinator of Mexican Civil Protection.

While many in the Yucatan Peninsula took a deep breath, Jamaica and other islands ravaged by the hurricane were still reeling. Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness promised swift relief for residents after visiting one of the worst-affected areas of the island, the southern parish of St Elizabeth on Thursday.

Before the storm hit Mexico, officials had set up shelters in schools and hotels. When the wind began gusting over Tulum's beaches Thursday, officials on four-wheelers with megaphones rolled along the sand telling people to leave and authorities evacuated beachside hotels. Sea turtle eggs were even moved off beaches threatened by storm surge.

Tourists also took precautions. Lara Marsters, 54, a therapist visiting Tulum from Boise, Idaho, said she had filled up empty water bottles from the tap.

"We're going to hunker down and stay safe," she said.

Putin sees no need for nuclear weapons to win in Ukraine. But he's also keeping his options open

By The Associated Press undefined

The message to NATO from President Vladimir Putin was simple and stark: Don't go too far in providing military support for Ukraine, or you'll risk a conflict with Russia that could quickly turn nuclear.

As the war in Ukraine turns slowly in Moscow's favor, Putin declared he doesn't need nuclear weapons to achieve his goals. But he also says it's wrong for the West to assume that Russia will never use them.

"It mustn't be treated in a light, superficial way," Putin said in June, reaffirming that Russia's nuclear doctrine calls for using atomic weapons if it perceives a threat to its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Moscow's nuclear messaging — coming as NATO allies move to shore up exhausted and outgunned Ukrainian forces — heralds what could become the most dangerous phase in the war.

Drills, threats and signals

Moscow has carried out drills with its tactical — or battlefield — nuclear weapons in southern Russia and with ally Belarus, where some were deployed in 2023. Russian Defense Ministry videos showed Iskander missile launchers, nuclear-capable warplanes and sea-launched missiles.

The Kremlin described the exercises as a response to the West pondering the deployment of NATO troops to Ukraine and allowing Kyiv to use longer-range weapons for limited strikes on Russian territory.

"Reliance on nuclear threats and signals is an enduring trend in Russia's activities amid the war in Ukraine," said Heather Williams, senior fellow at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies. "Russian leadership may be assuming it has more at stake in Ukraine than NATO, and nuclear threats are one means of signaling its commitment to winning the war in the hopes of scaring off Western intervention."

Ever since launching the Feb. 24, 2022, invasion, Putin has repeatedly referred to Russia's nuclear might to discourage Western intervention. The United States and NATO criticized the nuclear saber-rattling but said they haven't seen any changes in Russia's nuclear posture warranting a response.

After early setbacks in Ukraine, Putin said Moscow was prepared to use "all means" to protect Russian territory, fueling fears he could turn to tactical nuclear weapons to halt Kyiv's advances. Putin later toned down his rhetoric after Ukraine's 2023 counteroffensive didn't achieve its goals.

Amid Russia's recent military successes, Putin said Moscow doesn't need nuclear weapons to win in Ukraine. Simultaneously, however, he warned that Kyiv's strikes on Russian soil with Western-supplied longer-range weapons would mark a major escalation because they would involve Western intelligence and military personnel — something the West denies.

"Representatives of NATO members, particularly in small countries of Europe, should be aware of what they are playing with," he said, adding they could be mistaken to rely on U.S. protection if Russia strikes them.

"The constant escalation could lead to grave consequences," he said. "If those grave consequences come

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to Europe, how will the U.S. act in view of our parity in strategic weapons? Hard to say. Do they want a global conflict?"

Aiming the 'nuclear pistol'

In May, Russian radar facilities were attacked by Ukrainian drones. One damaged a radar in the southern Krasnodar region, according to satellite images. Another targeted a similar facility in the southern Urals, about 1,500 kilometers (930 miles) east of the border.

Both are part of Russia's early warning system to spot intercontinental ballistic missile launches thousands of kilometers (miles) away. Moscow and Washington rely on such systems to track each other's launches.

Along with earlier Ukrainian raids on Russian nuclear-capable bomber bases, the radar strikes could qualify as triggers for atomic-weapons use under Moscow's nuclear doctrine. Russian hawks urged the Kremlin to respond forcefully.

At a June forum in St. Petersburg, Kremlin-connected foreign policy expert Sergei Karaganov urged Putin to "aim a nuclear pistol at our Western adversaries" to achieve victory in Ukraine.

Putin responded cautiously, saying he saw no security threats that warranted using Russia's nuclear arsenal. At the same time, he indicated Moscow was pondering changes in its nuclear doctrine.

Amending the nuclear doctrine

Since the war began, hawks have urged a revision of the doctrine, which says Moscow could use nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear strike or an attack with conventional weapons that threatens "the very existence" of the Russian state. Some of them argue the threshold is too high, leaving the West with the impression that the Kremlin won't ever touch its nuclear arsenal.

Foreign affairs analyst Dmitri Trenin of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, a Moscow think tank advising the Kremlin, urged modifying the doctrine to declare that Russia could use nuclear weapons first when "the core national interests are at stake," like in Ukraine.

"It's important to persuade the ruling elites in the U.S. and in the West as a whole that they won't be able to stay comfortable and fully protected after provoking conflict with Russia," Trenin said.

Climbing the 'ladder of escalation'

With the West allowing Ukraine to hit Russian territory, Putin threatened to respond by providing weapons to Western adversaries worldwide. He underscored the message in June by signing a mutual defense pact with North Korea, signaling Moscow could start arms deliveries to Pyongyang.

He also declared that Moscow would start producing intermediate-range missiles banned under a Cold War-era pact that Washington and Moscow scrapped in 2019. The Kremlin wouldn't say where Moscow could deploy the new weapons that were prohibited by the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which outlawed ground-launched missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers (310 to 3,410 miles).

Such nuclear-capable missiles are seen as particularly destabilizing because they can reach targets faster than ICBMs, leaving practically no time for decision-makers and raising the likelihood of a global nuclear war over a false launch warning.

Hawks urged Putin to move quickly up a "ladder of escalation" to push the West to back off.

The exercise with battlefield nuclear weapons was one such move, Trenin said, while another could be an atomic test on Russia's Arctic Novaya Zemlya archipelago. Putin has left the door open for resuming such tests, which are banned under a global pact that Russia has signed, although he noted "there is no need for that yet."

Some Russian military experts said Moscow could declare a no-fly zone over the Black Sea to curb U.S. intelligence flights that help Ukraine strike targets in Russia. In late June, the Defense Ministry threatened to take unspecified measures against U.S. drones there.

Trenin and other experts said possible escalatory moves could include cyberattacks on U.S. and European infrastructure, conventional strikes on Western troops if any go to Ukraine, and attacks on military supply hubs for Kyiv on the territory of NATO members. U.S. military bases also could be targeted, they said.

At the top of the ladder, Russia could threaten nuclear strikes on NATO targets in Europe to "sober up the enemy and force it into the talks," Trenin suggested.

"Active nuclear deterrence means the possibility of using nuclear weapons first in the ongoing conflict — not necessarily on the battlefield and not on the territory of Ukraine," he said. "The enemy must have no doubt: Russia won't allow itself to be defeated or blocked from achieving its declared goals by keeping nuclear weapons out of the conflict."

A NATO summit and mending EU relations are among first tasks for new UK leader Keir Starmer

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — New British Prime Minister Keir Starmer doesn't get to take a breather. After a draining six-week election campaign, the center-left politician must get straight to work assembling his government, tackling a mountain of domestic problems and putting his stamp on the U.K.'s relations with the rest of the world.

It's a daunting list for a new leader who has never served in, much less led, a government. But Starmer, who was officially appointed prime minister Friday, insisted that he is up to the challenge of heading the U.K. in a world that is "a more volatile place" than it has been for many years.

Appoint a government

Like someone moving into a new home with their IKEA furniture, Starmer's first task was to assemble a Cabinet.

Starmer began putting together his government soon after he walked through the door of 10 Downing St. on Friday afternoon following his landslide election victory. He has a plethora of lawmakers to choose from — his Labour Party won more than 400 seats in Thursday's election, almost two-thirds of the 650 in the House of Commons.

Key players in the new administration include Treasury chief Rachel Reeves — a former Bank of England economist and the first woman to hold that job — who will liaise with international financial institutions.

The new foreign secretary, Britain's top diplomat, is David Lammy, a Harvard Law School graduate who vowed to "reconnect Britain for our security and prosperity at home."

Make friends on the world stage

Starmer has said his message to the world from the U.K. is: "We're back." He wants Britain to take a larger role on the global stage after years of soured relations with Europe over Brexit and the inward-looking U.K. political soap opera that followed.

He takes office at a time of multiple crises — including the war in Ukraine and the Middle East, a surging far right, a muscle-flexing China — that will test the cool head he honed in his former job as Britain's chief prosecutor.

Malcolm Chalmers, deputy director general of the Royal United Services Institute, a military think-tank, said that with France facing a far-right surge in legislative elections and the U.S. embroiled in a polarizing, high-stakes presidential election, Britain "has the most stable government of all the major Western democracies."

"It therefore has the opportunity, and responsibility, to help steady the ship of Western unity at a time of exceptional political fluidity," he said.

Starmer is set to make a high-profile international debut next week, when he is expected to attend NATO's 75th-anniversary summit in Washington. The gathering is overshadowed by questions about President Joe Biden's fitness and the uncertain outcome of the November U.S. presidential election.

Starmer has said there will be no change to Britain's staunch support for Ukraine, and has pledged to increase U.K. military spending to 2.5% of GDP — though he hasn't put a date on it.

"The decision for Starmer is how much to try to persuade the U.S. — as well as other wavering members of NATO — to remain a defender of Ukraine, on the grounds not just of sovereignty but European security," said Bronwen Maddox, director of international affairs think-tank Chatham House.

Starmer also faces divisions within his party over Israel's war against Hamas. Several Labour lawmakers were defeated in the election by challenges from pro-Palestinian independents angered by the party's

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initial refusal to call unambiguously for a cease-fire in the Gaza conflict.

Patch things up with the neighbors

On July 18, Starmer will host leaders from across Europe at England's Blenheim Palace for a meeting of the 47-nation European Political Community. It's a chance to begin to mend ties with the U.K.'s neighbors in Europe, which have frayed and soured since the U.K. left the European Union in 2020.

Starmer says he wants to reduce some of the post-Brexit barriers for people and goods that have hobbled relations between Britain and the bloc. He insists, though that he won't reverse Brexit, or rejoin the EU's single market and customs union.

Critics say that shows a lack of principle, but supporters say it respects Britons' desire not to reopen the divisive Brexit debate.

Tackle a long to-do list

Starmer also faces a daunting range of domestic challenges, underlaid by the widespread sense that many facets of Britain's public life have broken down during 14 years of Conservative rule.

Stagnant growth and low productivity restrain the economy while millions of people struggle with the cost of living. The country's aging infrastructure is creaking and the state-funded National Health Service is at breaking point, with long waiting lists for treatment, a situation has been worsened by a long-running series of doctors' strikes. Ending that dispute will be a priority, but Starmer has vowed to keep a tight lid on spending and won't want to agree to the big salary increases the doctors are seeking.

Starmer promises to take control of migration and stop people making dangerous journeys across the English Channel in small boats, but he will cancel the Conservative government's controversial plan to send asylum-seekers on a one-way trip to Rwanda. The U.K. has paid Rwanda hundreds of millions of pounds (dollars) as part of the deal without a single flight taking off.

He's also expected to emphasize Britain's commitment to fighting climate change after a series of backwards steps under the Conservatives.

The new government's legislative plans for the next year will be set out July 17 in a speech delivered by King Charles III at the ceremonial State Opening of Parliament.

"A lot of people are feeling a sense of potential transformation," said Lise Butler, senior lecturer in modern history at City University of London. "I think that there's going to be elevated expectations for Starmer, which are going to be difficult to meet."

Republicans turn their focus to Harris as talk of replacing Biden on Democratic ticket intensifies

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — For years it's been a Republican scare tactic.

A vote to reelect President Joe Biden, the GOP often charges, is really a vote for Vice President Kamala Harris. It's an attack line sometimes tinged with racist and misogynist undertones and often macabre imagery.

But after Biden's dismal performance at last week's presidential debate, which has sparked Democratic calls for him to step aside, what was once dismissed as a far-right conspiracy — Harris replacing Biden — could now have a chance of coming to pass. And Republicans, including Donald Trump, are ramping up their attacks.

Trump and his allies have been rolling out new attack lines against Harris, insulting her abilities, painting her as Biden's chief enabler and accusing her of being part of a coverup of his health. It's an effort, campaign officials insist, that is not a reflection of their concerns about a potential change at the top of the ticket, given Biden's insistence he is not leaving the race.

But in a post marking Independence Day on his Truth Social site Thursday, Trump singled out Harris, calling her his "potentially new Democrat Challenger" and giving her a new derisive nickname: "Laffin' Kamala Harris."

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"She did poorly in the Democrat Nominating process, starting out at Number Two, and ending up defeated and dropping out, even before getting to Iowa, but that doesn't mean she's not a 'highly talented' politician! Just ask her Mentor, the Great Willie Brown of San Francisco," he wrote. (Harris dated Brown in the mid-1990s.)

The post came after Trump campaign senior advisers Chris LaCivita and Susie Wiles released a statement earlier this week that offered a different, but similar, moniker, calling her Biden's "Cackling Copilot Kamala Harris."

Trump also posted an expletive-laced video, which was first been reported by the Daily Beast, in which he was captured on the golf course calling Biden an "old broken down pile of crap" and declaring that he'd driven the president from the race. (Trump, in interviews, has repeatedly said he did not expect Biden to be pushed aside.)

"He's quitting the race," Trump said. "And that means we have Kamala. I think she's going to be better. She's so bad. She's so pathetic," he said.

Allies have also joined the attacks, painting Harris as a chief defender of Biden's faculties and accusing her of lying to the American public.

Biden, the White House and his campaign insist he has no plans to drop out of the race. During an interview with ABC News that aired Friday night he said that only "the Lord Almighty" would drive him from the race.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre pushed back against the tenor of attacks against Harris, particularly Trump's decision to invoke a decades-old relationship and other sexist rhetoric.

"I think it's gross, I think it's disturbing," Jean-Pierre told reporters Friday aboard Air Force One. "She should be respected in the role that she has as vice president. She should be respected like any other vice president before her who was in that room. It is appalling that, I'm going to be careful here, that a former president is saying that about a current vice president. And we should call that out — it is not OK."

It remains unclear how Harris would fare against Trump, compared to Biden. Replacing a candidate this late in a presidential cycle — much less an incumbent president who has already sailed through the Democratic Party's primaries — would be unprecedented in modern history, and the mechanics are complicated and potentially messy.

Polling shows that Harris' favorability ratings are similar to Biden's and Trump's. A June AP-NORC poll found about 4 in 10 Americans have a favorable opinion of her. But the share of those who have an unfavorable opinion is slightly lower than for Trump and Biden, and about 1 in 10 have no opinion of her yet.

Harris, at 59 years old, would be a marked generational contrast to Trump, who is 78 years old and has also shown signs of aging. As the first woman, the first Black person and the first person of South Asian descent to serve as vice president, she would also chart a potentially barrier-breaking candidacy that could draw the support of women, minority voters and younger people — groups with whom Trump has been working to make significant inroads.

Harris has also been the Biden administration's leading voice on abortion rights, an animating issue for Democrats since the overturning of Roe v. Wade that could again motivate turnout this fall.

Trump's campaign, however, said it was confident in Trump's chances regardless of his opponent and dismissed the idea that Harris might pose a greater challenge to Trump, seeing her as a more polarizing figure than the president.

"President Trump will beat any Democrat on November 5th because he has a proven record and a agenda to Make America Great Again," LaCivita and Wiles said in their statement.

One campaign official suggested the focus on Harris was more of a reflection of the current media focus on the Democratic ticket than a belief that she will ultimately replace Biden.

While the party has plenty of opposition research on Harris at the ready thanks to her 2020 campaign and her years as vice president, at the end of the day, they argue, the Biden record is the Harris record, and if she were to replace Biden, Trump aides wouldn't face a totally different race.

Harris, for instance, was tapped by Biden to lead the administration's response to drivers of the border

crisis, tying her to one of his weakest issues. And if he does drop out, they argue, voters will have issues trusting the administration, Harris and the press for not shedding light on Biden's weaknesses sooner.

"The economy's still the economy, the border's still the border, there's still global conflicts," said Trump campaign spokesperson Danielle Alvarez. "And changing the person at the top of the ticket doesn't change those realities for American voters."

Beryl moves into the Gulf of Mexico after battering Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, takes aim at Texas

By MARTÍN SILVA and JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

TULUM, Mexico (AP) — Beryl moved into the the Gulf of Mexico Friday and took aim at the south Texas coast after battering Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. Texas officials issued disaster declarations and urge coastal residents to prepare as the storm headed their way.

Beryl hit Tulum as a Category 2 hurricane and toppled trees but caused no injuries or deaths before weakening to a tropical storm as it moved across the peninsula. The U.S. National Hurricane Center expects the storm to regain hurricane strength in the warm waters of the Gulf and hit south Texas by late Sunday or early Monday.

Beryl, the earliest storm to develop into a Category 5 hurricane in the Atlantic, caused at least 11 deaths as it passed through the Caribbean islands earlier in the week.

The storm's center Friday afternoon was in the Gulf just off Mexico, about 615 miles (995 kilometers) southeast of Corpus Christi, Texas. It was moving west-northwest at 13 mph (about 20 kph) with maximum sustained winds of 60 mph (95 kph), the hurricane center said.

Once in the Gulf, Beryl could regain wind speed of 90 mph (150 kph) before hitting Texas, though it is hard to tell now where it could make landfall, forecasters said. Hurricane watches were in effect from the Rio Grande north, covering most of the Texas coast.

Some Texas counties have already issued voluntary evacuation orders in low-lying areas, and Texas officials urged coastal residents to prepare.

Along the Texas coast in Corpus Christi, city officials announced it had distributed 10,000 sandbags in less than two hours Friday, exhausting its supply.

"This is a determined storm that is still strong," Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick said at a news conference.

Patrick issued a pre-emptive disaster declaration for 40 counties that allows state and local authorities to start planning and contracting for response.

Nim Kidd, chief of state emergency operations, said oil companies have started moving employees off rigs along the coast that may be in the path of the storm.

Northeastern Mexico and southern Texas were already soaked by Tropical Storm Alberto just a couple of weeks ago.

Beryl spread destruction in Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Barbados this week. Three people have been reported dead in Grenada, three in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, three in Venezuela and two in Jamaica, officials said.

The head of Mexico's civil defense agency, Laura Velázquez, said Beryl hadn't caused any deaths or injuries there and that "damages were minor," though tens of thousands of people remained without power.

Tulum was plunged into darkness when the storm knocked out power as it came ashore. Screeching winds set off car alarms across the town. Wind and rain continued to whip the seaside city and surrounding areas Friday morning. Army brigades roved the streets of the tourist city, clearing fallen trees and power lines.

After seeing Beryl tear through the Caribbean, 37-year-old Lucía Nagera Balcaza was among those who stocked up on food and hid away in their homes.

"Thank god, we woke up this morning and everything was all right," she said. "The streets are a disaster, but we're out here cleaning up."

Before the storm hit Mexico, officials had set up shelters in schools and hotels. When the wind began gusting over Tulum's beaches Thursday, officials on four-wheelers with megaphones rolled along the sand

telling people to leave and authorities evacuated beachside hotels. Sea turtle eggs were even moved off beaches threatened by storm surge.

Tourists also took precautions. Lara Marsters, 54, a therapist visiting Tulum from Boise, Idaho, said she had filled up empty water bottles from the tap.

"We're going to hunker down and stay safe," she said.

While many in the Yucatan Peninsula took a deep breath, Jamaica and other islands ravaged by the hurricane were still reeling. As of Friday morning, 55% of Jamaica still without electricity and most of the country was without running water, according to government figures.

Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness promised swift relief for residents affected by Hurricane Beryl after visiting one of the worst-affected areas of the island, the southern parish of St Elizabeth on Thursday afternoon.

"I know some of you are experiencing discomfort and displacement, and I want to assure you that the government will move as quickly as we can to get you the help you need," he said.

Earlier in the week, the hurricane damaged or destroyed 95% of homes on a pair of islands in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, jumbled fishing boats in Barbados and ripped off roofs and knocked out electricity in Jamaica.

On Union Island, part of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, a man who identified himself as Captain Baga described the storm's impact, including how he had filled two 2,000-gallon (7,570-liter) rubber water tanks in preparation.

"I strapped them down securely on six sides; and I watched the wind lift those tanks and take them away — filled with water," he said Thursday. "I'm a sailor and I never believed wind could do what I saw it do. If anyone (had) ever told me wind could do that, I would have told them they lie!"

The island was littered with debris from homes that looked like they had exploded.

Mount Everest's highest camp is littered with frozen garbage, and cleanup is likely to take years

By BINAJ GURUBACHARYA Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — The highest camp on the world's tallest mountain is littered with garbage that is going to take years to clean up, according to a Sherpa who led a team that worked to clear trash and dig up dead bodies frozen for years near Mount Everest's peak.

The Nepal government-funded team of soldiers and Sherpas removed 11 tons (24,000 pounds) of garbage, four dead bodies and a skeleton from Everest during this year's climbing season.

Ang Babu Sherpa, who led the team of Sherpas, said there could be as much as 40-50 tons (88,000-110,000 pounds) of garbage still at South Col, the last camp before climbers make their attempt on the summit.

"The garbage left there was mostly old tents, some food packaging and gas cartridges, oxygen bottles, tent packs, and ropes used for climbing and tying up tents," he said, adding that the garbage is in layers and frozen at the 8,000-meter (26,400-foot) altitude where the South Col camp is located.

Since the peak was first conquered in 1953, thousands of climbers have scaled it and many have left behind more than just their footprints.

In recent years, a government requirement that climbers bring back their garbage or lose their deposits, along with increased awareness among climbers about the environment, have significantly reduced the amount of garbage left behind. However, that was not the case in earlier decades.

"Most of the garbage is from older expeditions," Ang Babu said.

The Sherpas on the team collected garbage and bodies from the higher-altitude areas, while the soldiers worked at lower levels and the base camp area for weeks during the popular spring climbing season, when weather conditions are more favorable.

Ang Babu said the weather was a big challenge for their work in the South Col area, where oxygen levels are about one-third the normal amount, winds can quickly turn to blizzard conditions and temperatures

plunge.

"We had to wait for good weather when the sun would melt the ice cover. But waiting a long time in that attitude and conditions is just not possible," he said. "It's difficult to stay for long with the oxygen level very low."

Digging out the garbage is also a big task, since it is frozen inside ice and breaking the blocks is not easy. It took two days to dig out one body near the South Col which was frozen in a standing position deep in the ice, he said. Part way through, the team had to retreat to lower camps because of the deteriorating weather, and then resume after it improved.

Another body was much higher up at 8,400 meters (27,720 feet) and it took 18 hours to drag it to Camp 2, where a helicopter picked it up.

The bodies were flown to Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital in Kathmandu for identification.

Of the 11 tons of garbage removed, three tons of decomposable items were taken to villages near Everest's base and the remaining eight were carried by porters and yaks and then taken by trucks to Kathmandu. There it was sorted for recycling at a facility operated by Agni Ventures, an agency that manages recyclable waste.

"The oldest waste we received was from 1957, and that was rechargeable batteries for torch lights," said Sushil Khadga of the agency.

Why do climbers leave garbage behind?

"At that high altitude, life is very difficult and oxygen is very low. So climbers and their helpers are more focused on saving themselves," Khadga said.

Records tumble as dangerous heat wave scorches the US West and beyond, with the worst yet to come

By CLAIRE RUSH, REBECCA BOONE and SCOTT SONNER Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Records tumbled across the West as a slow-moving heat wave of potentially historic proportions tightened its grip from the Pacific Northwest to Arizona on Friday, sending many residents in search of a cool haven from the dangerously high temperatures.

The Southeast and Mid-Atlantic regions of the U.S. were also sweltering, with oppressive heat and humidity expected to last through Saturday or beyond.

One of the hottest places on Earth, California's Death Valley, shattered the previous record high for the date by 5 degrees — with the mercury climbing to 127 Fahrenheit (52.8 Celsius). The old mark of 122 (50 C) last was tied in 2013.

There was also a record high for the date of 118 (47.7 C) in Phoenix, where highs of 115 (46.1 C) or hotter were forecast through Wednesday. In Needles, California, where the National Weather Service has records dating to 1888, the high of 122 (50 C) edged the old mark of 121 (49.4 C) set in 2007. It was 124 (51.1) in Palm Springs, California.

The worst was yet to come across much of the West, with triple-digit temperatures likely — between 15 and 30 degrees (8 and 16 degrees Celsius) higher than average into next week, the National Weather Service said.

"The duration of this heat is also concerning as scorching above average temperatures are forecast to linger into next week," the weather service in Phoenix said.

"This type of heat is dangerous to all without adequate cooling or hydration," the service said Friday night in Las Vegas, which saw a high of 113 (45 C). "Numerous climate sites face high probabilities of breaking daily as well as all-time temperature records."

In Gresham, Oregon, a Portland suburb that also tied a previous record, of 98 (36.6 C), Sherri Thompson, 52, was waiting in her car with her 14-year-old chihuahua Kiwani for a cooling center to open in the late morning.

Thompson has lived in her car for three years and can only run its air conditioning for about 20 minutes at a time or else the engine overheats. She said she has been hospitalized for heat stroke in the past.

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"I have anxiety and panic attacks, and I get worried. I don't want to have another heat stroke, and everything just triggers my anxiety a lot," she said.

In Arizona's Maricopa County, which encompasses Phoenix, there have been at least 13 confirmed heat-related deaths this year, along with more than 160 other suspected heat deaths are still under investigation, according to the county's most recent report.

That does not include the death of a 10-year-old boy earlier this week in Phoenix who suffered a "heat-related medical event" while hiking with family at South Mountain Park and Preserve, according to police.

More extreme highs are in the near forecast, including 129 (53.8 degrees C) on Sunday at Furnace Creek in Death Valley National Park, and then around 130 (54.44 C) through Wednesday. The hottest temperature ever officially recorded on Earth was 134 degrees (56.67 C) in Death Valley in July 1913, though some experts dispute that measurement and say the real record was 130 recorded there in July 2021.

In Bullhead City, Arizona, the temperature had already reached 111 degrees (44.4 C) by 11 a.m. Friday on its way to a high of 118 (47.7 C), and officials opened a pair of cooling centers for older adults and others.

"While this is a heat wave and we urge everyone to be cautious, we typically don't see large attendance at our cooling centers unless there are power outages," city spokesperson Mackenzie Covert said. "Our community is hot every summer. Our residents are kind of aware of it. They all tend to have working air conditioners."

Figure skaters were out at the Reno Ice Rink in Nevada starting at 6 a.m. before the high topped out at 102 (38.8 C), general manager Kevin Sunde said. By the time the rink was to close at 10:30 p.m., Sunde expected nearly 300 people would have visited, with more parents hanging around to watch kids' hockey practice than usual.

"They may not be getting on the ice themselves, but enjoying the cool," Sunde said. "We're the only sheet of ice within about an hour's drive."

In Norfolk, Virginia, Kristin Weisenborn set up her table at an outdoor farmer's market to sell sourdough bread. The air was hovering just below the triple digits, but the 58% humidity made it feel more like 114 (46 C), according to the National Weather Service.

"It's so hot, I just hope there's a lot of people here that can buy my bread," said Weisenborn, 42, whose Krid's Crumbs bakery is based in Virginia Beach.

"Otherwise we're just standing here sweating," she said, adding that unsold bread will be donated or frozen.

Despite the sweltering air, people were already buying her loaves as the market got underway.

"It's hot, but it's July," Weisenborn added. "Better than snow, I guess."

Iran holds runoff presidential vote pitting hard-liner against reformist after record low turnout

By JON GAMBRELL and NASSER KARIMI Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran held a runoff presidential election on Friday that pitted a hard-line former nuclear negotiator against a reformist lawmaker after the first round of voting saw the lowest turnout in the Islamic Republic's history.

Initial results early Saturday put reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian ahead of hard-liner Saeed Jalili, though it wasn't clear how many people voted in the contest.

Government officials up to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei predicted a higher participation rate as voting got underway, with state television airing images of modest lines at some polling centers across the country.

However, online videos purported to show some polls empty while a survey of several dozen sites in the capital, Tehran, saw light traffic amid a heavy security presence on the streets.

Polls closed after midnight, after voting was repeatedly extended by authorities as is tradition in Iran. Mohsen Eslami, an election spokesman, said Pezeshkian had 8.6 million votes, leading Jalili's 7.5 million. He gave no total turnout figure as counting continued through the night.

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Khamenei has insisted the low turnout from the first round on June 28 did not represent a referendum on Iran's Shiite theocracy. However, many remain disillusioned as Iran has been beset by years under crushing economic sanctions, bloody security force crackdowns on mass protests and tensions with the West over Tehran's advancing nuclear program enriching uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels.

"I want to save the country from isolation we are stuck in, and from lies and the violence against women because Iranian women don't deserve to be beaten up and insulted on the street by extremists who want to destroy the country by cutting ties with big countries," voter Ghazaal Bakhtiari said. "We should have ties with America and powerful nations."

Jalili has a recalcitrant reputation among Western diplomats during negotiations over Iran's nuclear program, something that is paired with concern at home over his hard-line views on Iran's mandatory headscarf, or hijab. Pezeshkian, a heart surgeon, has campaigned on relaxing hijab enforcement and reaching out to the West, though he too for decades has supported Khamenei and Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard.

Pezeshkian's supporters have been warning Jalili will bring a "Taliban"-style government into Tehran, while Jalili has criticized Pezeshkian for running a campaign of fear-mongering.

Both contenders voted Friday in southern Tehran, home to many poor neighborhoods. Though Pezeshkian came out on top in the first round of voting on June 28, Jalili has been trying to secure the votes of people who supported hard-line parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, who came in third and later endorsed the former negotiator.

Pezeshkian offered no comments after voting, walking out with former Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who struck Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. A rambunctious crowd surrounded the men, shouting: "The nation's hope comes!"

Both Pezeshkian and Jalili hope to replace the 63-year-old late President Ebrahim Raisi died in a May 19 helicopter crash that also killed the country's foreign minister and several other officials.

Jalili voted at another polling station, surrounded by a crowd shouting: "Raisi, your way continues!"

"Today the entire world admits that it's the people who decide who's president for the next four years," Jalili said afterward. "This is your right to decide which person, which path and which approach should rule the country in the next four years."

But as has been the case since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, women and those calling for radical change have been barred from the ballot while the vote itself had no oversight from internationally recognized monitors. The country's Interior Ministry, in charge of police, oversees the result.

There have been calls for a boycott, including from imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi, though potential voters in Iran appear to have made the decision not to participate last week on their own as there's no widely accepted opposition movement operating within or outside of the country.

Khamenei cast one of the election's first votes Friday from his residence, TV cameras and photographers capturing him dropping the ballot into the box. He insisted those who didn't vote last week were not boycotting the government.

"I have heard that people's enthusiasm is more than before," Khamenei said. "God willing, people vote and choose the best" candidate.

One voter, 27-year-old Yaghoub Mohammadi, said he voted for Jalili in both rounds.

"He is clean, without depending on powerful people in the establishment," Mohammadi said. "He represents those who have no access to power."

By Friday night, both hard-line and reformist figures urged the public to vote as lines remained light in Tehran.

"Until a few hours ago I was reluctant to vote," said Ahmad Safari, a 55-year-old shopkeeper and father of three daughters who voted despite skipping the first round. "But I decided to vote for Pezeshkian because of my children. Maybe they'll have a better future."

The vote comes as wider tensions have gripped the Middle East over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. In April, Iran launched its first-ever direct attack on Israel over the war in Gaza, while militia groups that Tehran arms in the region — such as the Lebanese Hezbollah and Yemen's Houthi rebels — are en-

gaged in the fighting and have escalated their attacks.

Iran also continues to enrich uranium at near weapons-grade levels and maintains a stockpile large enough to build several nuclear weapons, should it choose to do so. And while Khamenei remains the final decision-maker on matters of state, whichever man ends up winning the presidency could bend the country's foreign policy toward either confrontation or collaboration with the West.

More than 61 million Iranians over the age of 18 were eligible to vote, with about 18 million of them between 18 to 30. Voting was to end at 6 p.m. but was extended until midnight to boost participation.

Raisi, who died in the May helicopter crash, was seen as a protégé of Khamenei and a potential successor as supreme leader.

Still, many knew him for his involvement in the mass executions that Iran conducted in 1988, and for his role in the bloody crackdowns on dissent that followed protests over the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini, a young woman detained by police over allegedly improperly wearing the mandatory headscarf, or hijab.

Israeli strikes kill 6 in Gaza, including kids and UN worker, as truce talks show signs of progress

By WAFAA SHURAFU Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Separate Israeli airstrikes killed at least six people Friday in central Gaza, including two children at a home and at least one United Nations worker, Palestinian hospital officials and first responders said, even as stalled cease-fire talks between Israel and Hamas show signs of renewed momentum.

Four out of every five people in Gaza — nearly 2 million Palestinians — have been driven into the territory's center by expanding Israeli military offensives and evacuation orders, the army estimated earlier this week. Civilians are taking shelter in makeshift tent camps and crowded urban areas, and many have been displaced multiple times.

Violence also flared Friday in the occupied West Bank, where Israeli forces killed seven people in a raid and an airstrike, according to Palestinian health officials. And on the Israel-Lebanon border, rockets fired by militant group Hezbollah lightly wounded two Israeli soldiers, the army said, as concerns grow that these low-level clashes could escalate into a wider regional war.

Deadly Gaza airstrikes

An Israeli strike near the Maghazi refugee camp killed three adults and injured several others on Salah al-Din road, a major thoroughfare in Gaza, according to witnesses and officials at Al Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the city of Deir al-Balah. At least one of the dead was wearing a U.N. vest when brought to the hospital.

An adult and two kids were also killed by a strike in the Nuseirat refugee camp, officials at the hospital said. That strike hit a home, according to the Palestinian Civil Defense rescue service.

Ambulances blared their horns as they rolled up to the medical center's doors Friday evening, unloading the three bodies wrapped in thick household blankets. Laid out in the morgue, an Associated Press journalist observed the man's bloodstained blue-and-white vest of the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA.

At least one wounded man was also wearing a UNRWA vest. "Stand back a little, guys!" a man in a green medical uniform told a small crowd that gathered beside the ambulance. "Thank God you're safe," another man said as the wounded worker was brought inside.

The Israeli military did not immediately comment on the strikes. Israel blames civilian deaths on Hamas, saying militants operate among the population. Hamas denies the claim and accuses Israel of recklessly bombing civilians.

Around 250,000 people were affected earlier in the week by an Israeli order to evacuate half of the southern city of Khan Younis and a wide swath of the surrounding area. Most Palestinians seeking safety are either heading to an Israeli-declared "safe zone" centered on a coastal area called Muwasi, or the nearby city of Deir al-Balah, said the head of the U.N. humanitarian office for the Palestinian territories, Andrea De Domenico, on Wednesday.

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New movement toward a Gaza cease-fire

A team of Israeli negotiators will resume talks next week on a cease-fire and hostage exchange deal with Hamas, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Friday, signaling progress toward a deal to end the war in Gaza after negotiations appeared stuck for weeks.

The brief Israeli statement came hours after Hamas said its proposed amendments to a U.S. plan for a cease-fire "have been met with a positive response by the mediators." The Palestinian militant group said Friday there was no set date for negotiations, and said Israel's official position wasn't yet known.

Netanyahu's office said negotiators will emphasize to American, Qatari and Egyptian mediators that "there are still gaps between the parties" during talks in Doha, Qatar's capital.

The main sticking point in the three-phase deal appears to be getting from the first to the second phase. Hamas is concerned that Israel will restart the war after the first phase, perhaps after making unrealistic demands in the talks. Israeli officials have expressed concern that Hamas will do the same, drawing out the talks and the initial cease-fire indefinitely without releasing the remaining hostages.

Away from the negotiating table, senior Hamas officials met with Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, as well as the leader of the Islamic Group. Hamas said officials also met Friday with senior delegations from the Houthi rebels in Yemen and the Islamic Resistance in Iraq.

And in Washington, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin spoke by phone with his Israeli counterpart, Yoav Gallant, in which they discussed regional security challenges and Austin expressed support for ongoing diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict in Gaza.

Israeli raid in the West Bank

Palestinian authorities say seven people were killed Friday during an Israeli military operation in an area of the West Bank city of Jenin, a known militant stronghold, where the Israeli military said it carried out "counterterrorism activity" that included an airstrike.

Israeli soldiers "encircled a building where terrorists have barricaded themselves in" and the soldiers exchanged fire with those inside, while an airstrike "struck several armed terrorists" in the area.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said a total of seven people were killed, but did not specify whether they died in the exchange of fire or the airstrike. The Islamic Jihad militant group named four of the dead as its members.

Violence has spiraled in the West Bank since the start of Israel's war in Gaza, sparked by the Oct. 7 raid into southern Israel by Hamas militants who killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took more than 200 others as hostages.

The Palestinian Health Ministry says over 500 Palestinians have since been killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank. Most were killed during Israeli raids and violent protests. The dead also include bystanders and Palestinians killed in attacks by Jewish settlers.

In Gaza, Israeli bombardments and ground offensives have so far killed more than 38,000 Palestinians, Gaza's Health Ministry says. The ministry does not differentiate between combatants and civilians in its count, but it includes thousands of women and children.

Israeli restrictions, ongoing fighting and the breakdown of law and order have curtailed humanitarian aid efforts, causing widespread hunger and sparking fears of famine. The top U.N. court has concluded there is a "plausible risk of genocide" in Gaza — a charge Israel strongly denies.

Brazil's Bolsonaro indicted for alleged money laundering for undeclared diamonds from Saudi Arabia

By GABRIELA SÁ PESSOA and MAURICIO SAVARESE Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — The indictment of former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro for money laundering and criminal association in connection with undeclared diamonds from Saudi Arabia marked the far-right leader's second formal accusation, with more potentially in store.

The indictment on Thursday by Federal Police, confirmed by two officials with knowledge of the case, followed another formal accusation in March against Bolsonaro, for allegedly falsifying his COVID-19 vac-

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ination certificate. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

Once Brazil's Supreme Court receives the police report with the latest indictment, the country's prosecutor-general, Paulo Gonet, will analyze it and decide whether to shelve it, ask for additional police investigation or file charges and force Bolsonaro to stand trial.

It's still early to say how likely the last option is, but the police indictment already marked a turning point in the case, said legal expert Renato Stanzola Vieira, president of the Brazilian Institute of Criminal Sciences.

It dramatically raises the legal threats facing the divisive ex-leader that are applauded by his opponents but denounced as political persecution by his supporters.

Bolsonaro did not immediately comment, but he and his lawyers have previously denied any wrongdoing in both those cases, as well as in other investigations. One is probing his possible involvement in inciting a January 2023 uprising in the capital of Brasilia that sought to oust his successor from power.

Last year, Federal Police accused Bolsonaro of attempting to sneak in diamond jewelry reportedly worth \$3 million and selling two luxury watches.

Police said in August that Bolsonaro received cash from the nearly \$70,000 sale of two luxury watches he received as gifts from Saudi Arabia. Brazil requires its citizens arriving by plane from abroad to declare goods worth more than \$1,000 and, for any amount above that exemption, pay a tax equal to 50% of their value.

The jewelry would have been tax exempt had it been a gift from Saudi Arabia to Brazil, but not Bolsonaro's to keep for himself.

The investigation showed that Mauro Cid, Bolsonaro's former aide-de-camp who allegedly falsified his COVID-19 records, sold a Rolex watch and a Patek Philippe watch to a store in the U.S for a total \$68,000 in June 2022. They were gifted from the Saudi government in 2019. Cid later signed a plea bargain with authorities, confirming his actions.

Flávio Bolsonaro, the former president's eldest son and a sitting senator, said on X after Thursday's indictment that persecution against his father was "blatant and shameless."

In addition to Jair Bolsonaro, police indicted 10 others, including Cid and two of his lawyers, Frederick Wassef and Fábio Wajngarten, according to one of the officials. Wassef said in a statement that he didn't have access to the final report of the investigation, and decried selective leaks to the media of a supposedly sealed investigation.

"I am going through all of this solely for practicing law in defense of Jair Bolsonaro," Wassef said.

Wajngarten said on X that police found no evidence implicating him. "The Federal Police knows I did nothing related to what they are investigating, but they still want to punish me because I provide unwavering and permanent defense for former President Bolsonaro," he said.

Vieira, the legal expert, told The Associated Press over the phone, that he doubts Bolsonaro and the others would be tried.

"I see necessary criminal prosecution and necessary investigation of the facts," he said. "I'm even curious about Flávio Bolsonaro's statement because these facts have been under investigation for some time."

Jair Bolsonaro retains staunch allegiance among his political base, as shown by an outpouring of support in February, when an estimated 185,000 people clogged Sao Paulo's main boulevard to protest what the former president calls political persecution.

His critics, particularly members of his rival President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's political party, have cheered every advance of investigations and repeatedly called for his arrest.

The 69-year-old former army captain started his political career as a staunch advocate of Brazil's military dictatorship, and was a lawmaker for nearly three decades. In his first bid for the presidency, in 2018, he was widely dismissed as an outsider and too radically conservative.

But he won a decisive victory, partly because he cast himself as an upstanding citizen following a sprawling corruption probe that ensnared hundreds of politicians and executives.

In his early days in office, Bolsonaro insulted adversaries and garnered criticism for his divisive policies,

attacks on the Supreme Court and efforts to undermine health restrictions during the pandemic. In 2022, he lost his reelection bid in what was the closest vote finish since Brazil's return to democracy in 1985.

Carlos Melo, a political science professor at the Insper University in Sao Paulo, said he doubts Brazil's Supreme Court and the judge overseeing several investigations targeting Bolsonaro, Alexandre de Moraes, will risk sending the former president to prison or imposing other harsh measures.

The objective, Melo said, is to avoid instigating supporters of the far-right leader in a year of mayoral elections.

"Moraes and his fellow justices know that prosecuting a former president who remains a popular man would be even tougher in a year like this," Melo said. "This indictment is another piece of the puzzle. It gives one more problem to Bolsonaro. There will be more."

Last year, Brazil's top electoral court ruled that Bolsonaro abused his presidential powers in the 2022 reelection bid, which rendered him ineligible to run in any elections until 2030 after he used the state television, government and the presidential palace officials, claiming to foreign ambassadors that the country's electronic voting system was rigged.

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July Fourth violence nationwide kills at least 33, Chicago 'in state of grief,' mayor says

By JOHN RABY Associated Press

Shootings and other violence during the extended Fourth of July weekend have left at least 33 people dead, including 11 in Chicago, and injured dozens more nationwide, authorities said.

The Fourth of July historically is one of the nation's deadliest days of the year. A flurry of shootings around the holiday a year ago left more than a dozen people dead and over 60 wounded. And a year before that, seven people died in a mass shooting at a Fourth of July parade near Chicago.

Violence and mass shootings often increase in the summer months, with more people gathering for social events, teens out of school and hotter temperatures.

Chicago 'in state of grief'

In Chicago alone, 11 people had been killed and 55 wounded in shootings as of Friday morning during the extended July Fourth weekend, the Chicago Sun-Times reported. The violence included a mass shooting on Thursday that killed two women and an 8-year-old boy.

The recent violence "has left our city in a state of grief," Mayor Brandon Johnson said.

A community rally was planned for Friday evening, and the city will beef up police presence over the weekend, Johnson said in a statement.

"We are devastated by the recent violence that has left our city in a state of grief and we extend our heartfelt condolences to the families and communities impacted by these recent events," Johnson said.

Eight people were wounded in Chicago's Little Italy neighborhood shortly after midnight Friday. About 90 minutes later, a shooting in the city's Austin neighborhood injured six. Police said preliminary findings suggest the separate shootings involved an exchange of gunfire between two people who then fled.

Recent violence at a popular Lake Michigan beach in Chicago prompted officials to close it early each night through the holiday weekend as a precaution. The 31st Street Beach has been the scene of recent stabbings and shootings.

Southern California violence

In Huntington Beach, California, two people were killed and three others injured in an Independence Day attack less than two hours after a fireworks show ended, police said. Authorities arrested a suspect after responding to reports of an assault with a deadly weapon Thursday night.

15-year-old boy arrested in Niles, Ohio, shooting, 10-year-old girl dies in Cleveland

In the northeastern Ohio community of Niles, Police Chief Jay Holland said a 15-year-old male was in custody after a 23-year-old man was fatally shot Thursday night at a Fourth of July party at a residence.

A 10-year-old girl, identified as Gracie Griffin, was fatally shot in a Cleveland neighborhood, police said.

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It is not yet known what sparked the shooting or if she was targeted.

Fatal drive-by shooting in Philadelphia

A 19-year-old man was killed and six others were wounded in a drive-by shooting in Philadelphia on Thursday night.

The wounded, which included four juveniles, were being treated at hospitals for various injuries that were not considered life-threatening. It is not known yet what prompted the shooting.

Boston-area shootings leave 1 dead, 5 wounded

Three shootings occurred in the Boston area following the city's Fourth of July celebrations, leaving one man dead. The fatal shooting occurred about 1:30 a.m. Friday in a park near Boston's South End neighborhood. At about the same time, three other people were wounded in the city's Jamaica Plain neighborhood. A third shooting at a gas station later left a victim with life-threatening injuries.

A 17-year-old male suffered a stomach wound in another shooting Thursday night in a condominium parking lot in East Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

Connecticut woman fatally shot in car

In Connecticut, a woman was found shot in her car early Friday and was pronounced dead at a hospital. Police identified her as Shamyria Williams, 23, of Hartford. Relatives told reporters they believed she had just left a Fourth of July party.

Six teens shot at home in Albany, New York

Police in Albany, New York, said six males ranging in age from 16 to 19 were being treated at a hospital for injuries that were not considered life-threatening after a shooting at a large gathering.

Police responded to reports of a shooting at a home around 12:15 a.m. Friday. None of the victims were found at the scene but police said they located evidence consistent with gunfire in the yard behind the residence and in the street.

One teenager who had been shot flagged down officers along a street a short time later, police said.

Five teens shot during party in suburban Detroit

Five teens were wounded when shots were fired into a crowd following a fight at a party early Friday morning in Pontiac, about 30 miles (48.2 kilometers) northwest of Detroit.

Three of the victims are 14 years old. The other two are 15 years old. All are males. Authorities said they were taken to hospitals with wounds not considered to be life-threatening.

Tampa nightclub shooting wounds 4

Four people were wounded in a shooting early Friday outside a Tampa adult nightclub after an altercation between the club's security guard and two men, police said.

The two men drove their car to the front of the Pink Pussycat Lounge and one of them shot the security guard with a handgun, police said. The security guard underwent surgery at a hospital and was in stable condition. Three other men suffered unspecified minor injuries. Police said both suspects were arrested and charged with several crimes.

Violence elsewhere

In the Queens section of New York, an 8-year-old boy was fatally stabbed in an apartment in what police described as a domestic dispute. Police said officers later fatally shot a 20-year-old man who held a knife to his 43-year-old father's throat and refused commands to drop the weapon.

In High Point, North Carolina, a shooting at an unofficial fireworks display left one person dead after a large crowd had gathered in the parking lot of the city about 90 miles (145 kilometers) west of Raleigh, police said. The victim was identified as Keith S. Lynch, 32, of High Point.

Shootings at two St. Louis-area Fourth of July gatherings left two men dead and five others injured, two critically, police said.

In West Virginia, Charles Speer, 42, of Kermit, died early Friday after being shot multiple times following a physical altercation at the home of another man, state police said.

And a road-rage incident led to the fatal shooting of a 36-year-old man in Taneytown, Maryland, according to the Carroll County Sheriff's Office.

Earlier Thursday, a police officer serving a warrant in Cleveland and an armed person making threats in Yellowstone National Park were among those killed in other shootings.

Wisconsin Supreme Court changes course, will allow expanded use of ballot drop boxes this fall

By TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — The Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled Friday that officials can place ballot drop boxes around their communities in this fall's elections, overturning its own ruling two years ago limiting their use in the presidential swing state.

The court limited the use of drop boxes in July 2022, ruling then that they could be placed only in local election clerks' offices and no one other than the voter could return a ballot in person.

Conservatives controlled the court at that time, but Janet Protasiewicz's election victory in April 2023 flipped the court to liberal control. Seeing an opening, Priorities USA, a progressive voter mobilization group, asked the court in February to revisit the decision.

At least 29 other states allow for absentee ballot drop boxes, according to the U.S. Vote Foundation, and expanded use in Wisconsin could have major implications in the presidential race.

Wisconsin again figures to be a crucial swing state after President Joe Biden barely won it in 2020 and Donald Trump narrowly took it in 2016. Democrats believe that making it easier to vote absentee will boost turnout for their side.

The justices announced in March they would review the ban on drop boxes but wouldn't consider any other parts of the case. The move drew the ire of the court's conservatives, who accused the liberals of trying to give Democrats an advantage this fall. Democratic Gov. Tony Evers in April urged the court to again allow drop boxes.

The court ruled 4-3 on Friday that drop boxes can be utilized in any location.

Justice Ann Walsh Bradley, one of the court's four liberal justices, wrote for the majority that placing a ballot in a drop box set up and maintained by a local election clerk is no different than giving the ballot to the clerk, regardless of the box's location. Local clerks have great discretion in how they administer elections and that extends to using and locating drop boxes, she added.

"Our decision today does not force or require that any municipal clerks use drop boxes," Bradley wrote. "It merely acknowledges what (state law) has always meant: that clerks may lawfully utilize secure drop boxes in an exercise of their statutorily-conferred discretion."

All three conservative justices dissented. Justice Rebecca Bradley wrote that the liberals are simply trying to advance their political agenda and criticized them for ignoring the precedent set by the 2022 ruling.

"The majority in this case overrules (the 2022 decision) not because it is legally erroneous, but because the majority finds it politically inconvenient," Bradley wrote. "The majority's activism marks another triumph of political power over legal principle in this court."

The popularity of absentee voting exploded during the pandemic in 2020, with more than 40% of all voters casting mail ballots, a record high. At least 500 drop boxes were set up in more than 430 communities for the election that year, including more than a dozen each in Madison and Milwaukee — the state's two most heavily Democratic cities.

Trump and Republicans have alleged that drop boxes facilitated cheating, even though they offered no evidence. Democrats, election officials and some Republicans argued the boxes are secure and an Associated Press survey of state election officials across the U.S. revealed no cases of fraud, vandalism or theft that could have affected the results in 2020.

Republicans who control the Wisconsin Legislature intervened in the case, arguing that the justices should leave the 2022 ruling alone. Their attorney, Misha Tseytlin, didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment Friday.

Matt Fisher, a spokesperson for the state Republican Party, called the decision a "setback."

"This latest attempt by leftist justices to placate their far-left backers will not go unanswered by voters,"

he said in a statement.

Republican National Committee Chair Michael Whatley weighed in as well, saying in a statement that the decision "gives Democrats a green light to dismantle election security safeguards and invite election fraud."

Dane County Clerk Scott McDonell, who administers elections in the state's most Democratic county, called drop boxes a "common sense tool." He said they make the election process more convenient and easier for rural and disabled voters and help reduce that number of ballots that arrive after election day too late to be counted.

"Having drop boxes in place for the 2024 elections in August and November will encourage civic participation in our democracy," McDonell said in a statement.

Trump denies knowing about Project 2025, his allies' sweeping plan to transform the US government

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Donald Trump distanced himself Friday from Project 2025, a massive proposed overhaul of the federal government drafted by longtime allies and former officials in his administration, days after the head of the think tank responsible for the program suggested there would be a second American Revolution.

"I know nothing about Project 2025," Trump posted on his social media website. "I have no idea who is behind it. I disagree with some of the things they're saying and some of the things they're saying are absolutely ridiculous and abysmal. Anything they do, I wish them luck, but I have nothing to do with them."

The 922-page plan outlines a dramatic expansion of presidential power and a plan to fire as many as 50,000 government workers to replace them with Trump loyalists. President Joe Biden's reelection campaign has worked to draw more attention to the agenda, particularly as Biden tries to keep fellow Democrats on board after his disastrous debate.

Trump has outlined his own plans to remake the government if he wins a second term, including staging the largest deportation operation in U.S. history and imposing tariffs on potentially all imports. His campaign has previously warned outside allies not to presume to speak for the former president and suggested their transition-in-waiting efforts were unhelpful.

Heritage Foundation President Kevin Roberts said on Steve Bannon's "War Room" podcast Tuesday that Republicans are "in the process of taking this country back." Former U.S. Rep. Dave Brat of Virginia hosted the show for Bannon, who is serving a four-month prison term.

"We are in the process of the second American Revolution, which will remain bloodless if the left allows it to be," Roberts said.

Those comments were widely circulated online and blasted by the Biden campaign, which issued a statement saying Trump and his allies were "dreaming of a violent revolution to destroy the very idea of America."

Some of the people involved in Project 2025 are former senior administration officials. The project's director is Paul Dans, who served as chief of staff at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management under Trump. Trump's campaign spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt was featured in one of Project 2025's videos.

John McEntee, a former director of the White House Presidential Personnel Office in the Trump administration, is a senior adviser. McEntee told the conservative news site The Daily Wire earlier this year that Project 2025's team would integrate a lot of its work with the campaign after the summer when Trump would announce his transition team.

Trump's comments on Project 2025 come ahead of the Republican Party's meetings next week to begin to draft its party platform.

Project 2025 has been preparing its own 180-day agenda for the next administration that it plans to share privately, rather than as part of its public-facing book of priorities for a Republican president. A key Trump ally, Russ Vought, who contributed to Project 2025 and is drafting this final pillar, is also on the Republican National Committee's platform writing committee.

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A spokesperson for the plan said Project 2025 is not tied to a specific candidate or campaign.

"We are a coalition of more than 110 conservative groups advocating policy and personnel recommendations for the next conservative president," a statement said. "But it is ultimately up to that president, who we believe will be President Trump, to decide which recommendations to implement."

The Democratic National Committee said the plan and the Trump campaign are part of the same "MAGA operation." A Biden campaign spokesperson said that Project 2025 staff members are also leading the Republican policy platform.

"Project 2025 is the extreme policy and personnel playbook for Trump's second term that should scare the hell out of the American people," said Ammar Moussa.

On Thursday, as the country celebrated Independence Day and Biden prepared for his television interview after his halting debate performance, the president's campaign posted on X a shot from the dystopian TV drama "The Handmaid's Tale" showing a group of women in the show's red dresses and white hats standing in formation by a reflecting pool with a cross at the far end where the Washington Monument should be. The story revolves around women who are stripped of their identities and forced to give birth to children for other couples in a totalitarian regime.

"Fourth of July under Trump's Project 2025," the post said.

Which states could have abortion on the ballot in 2024?

Arkansas organizers aim to join the list

By ANDREW DeMILLO, GEOFF MULVIHILL and KIMBERLEE KRUESI Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Organizers of an effort to scale back Arkansas' abortion ban said they have more than enough signatures to try to put their proposal before voters in November's election.

Arkansans for Limited Government submitted petitions said they turned in more than the 90,704 signatures from registered voters needed to qualify. Election officials now must begin checking the validity of the signatures.

The submission brings to six the number of states where election officials are validating signatures on abortion measures. They're already on the ballot in another five, plus a proposed amendment in New York that would bar discrimination based on "pregnancy outcomes."

Supporters of other abortion measures in Arizona and Nebraska submitted petitions in their respective states on Wednesday.

The fate of the measures could reshape or confirm the trendlines that have developed in the two years since the U.S. Supreme Court removed the nationwide right to abortion.

Since the ruling, most Republican-controlled states have new abortion restrictions in effect, including 14 that ban it at every stage of pregnancy. Most Democratic-led states have laws or executive orders to protect access.

Voters in all seven states that have had abortion questions before voters since 2022 have sided with abortion rights supporters, including California, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Montana, Ohio and Vermont.

Here's a look at the abortion measures that could be on ballots in November:

What is on the 2024 ballots?

COLORADO

Colorado's top election official confirmed in May that a measure to enshrine abortion protections in the state constitution, including requirements that Medicaid and private health insurers cover it, made the ballot for the fall election.

Supporters said they gathered more than 225,000 signatures, nearly double the requirement of over 124,000 signatures. Amending the state constitution requires the support of 55% of voters.

Those backing a dueling measure — a law to ban abortion — did not submit signatures and the measure will not go before voters.

Abortion is legal at all stages of pregnancy in Colorado.

FLORIDA

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The state Supreme Court ruled in April that a ballot measure to legalize abortion until fetal viability could go on the ballot despite a legal challenge from state Attorney General Ashley Moody, who argued there are differing views on the meaning of "viability" and that some key terms in the proposed measure are not properly defined.

Advocates collected nearly a million signatures to put a state constitutional amendment to legalize abortion until viability on the ballot, surpassing the nearly 892,000 required.

To take effect, the measure would need agreement from at least 60% of voters.

Abortion is currently illegal in Florida after the first six weeks of pregnancy, before many women know they are pregnant, under a law that took effect May 1.

MARYLAND

Voters also will be asked this year to enshrine the right to abortion in Maryland's constitution. The state already protects the right to abortion under state law and Democrats outnumber Republicans 2-1. Abortion is allowed in Maryland until viability.

NEVADA

The Nevada Secretary of State's office announced in June that a ballot question to enshrine abortion rights in the state constitution has met all of the requirements to appear in front of voters in November.

Under the amendment, abortion access for the first 24 weeks of pregnancy, or later to protect the health of the pregnant person, would be enshrined. Such access already is ensured under a 1990 law.

To change the constitution, voters would need to approve it in both 2024 and 2026.

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota voters will vote this fall on a measure to ban any restrictions on abortion in the first trimester of pregnancy. It would allow the state, in the second trimester, to "regulate the pregnant woman's abortion decision and its effectuation only in ways that are reasonably related to the physical health of the pregnant woman."

An abortion ban would be allowed in the third trimester, as long as it included exceptions for the life and health of the woman.

The state's top election official announced May 16 that about 85% of the more than 55,000 signatures submitted in support of the ballot initiative are valid, exceeding the required 35,017 signatures.

Opponents have sued to try to take the initiative off the ballot.

Where else could abortion be on the ballot in 2024?

ARIZONA

Abortion rights supporters submitted more than 823,000 signatures on Wednesday to put an abortion access measure before voters in November. That's more than twice as many as required.

Election officials still need to verify the signatures.

Under the measure, the state would not be able to ban abortion until the fetus is viable, with later abortions allowed to protect a woman's physical or mental health.

Abortion is currently legal for the first 15 weeks of pregnancy in the state. The Arizona Supreme Court ruled in April that enforcement could begin soon for a near-total ban already on the books. The governor has since signed a bill repealing that law. It is still expected to be in effect for a time, however.

ARKANSAS

Proponents of an amendment to allow abortion in many cases turned in more than 101,000 signatures — at least 10,000 more than needed. The group also said it surpassed a state requirement that a minimum number of signatures come from 50 counties.

Dozens of supporters and opponents of the Arkansas measure lined the halls of the state Capitol as the boxes of petitions were wheeled into a room where officials will begin checking them.

The measure would bar laws banning abortion in the first 20 weeks of gestation and allow abortion later in pregnancy in cases of rape, incest, threats to the woman's health or life, or if the fetus would be unlikely to survive birth.

Because it allows abortion to be banned 20 weeks into pregnancy, the proposal does not have the support of Planned Parenthood Great Plains, which includes Arkansas. The state currently bans abortion at

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all stages of pregnancy, with narrow exceptions.

Anti-abortion groups in the predominantly Republican state also have campaigned heavily against the measure, and one group published the names and hometowns of canvassers gathering signatures for the proposal.

Election officials have 30 days to check the validity of signatures. The group could qualify for additional time to circulate petitions if at least 75% of signatures are found to be valid, statewide and in the 50 counties.

MISSOURI

Missouri abortion rights advocates turned in more than 380,000 signatures, more than twice the required 171,000, for a measure asking voters to approve a constitutional amendment to guarantee abortion until viability. Local election officials have until July 30 to verify the signatures, then it's up to the secretary of state to declare whether there were enough.

A group of moderate Republicans have for this year abandoned efforts for an alternate amendment that would have allowed abortion up to 12 weeks, with limited exceptions after that time.

Abortion is currently banned in Missouri at all stages of pregnancy, with limited exceptions.

MONTANA

Abortion rights proponents in Montana have proposed a constitutional amendment that would bar the government from denying the right to abortion before viability or when it's necessary to protect the life or health of the pregnant person.

After a legal battle over the ballot language, the Montana Supreme Court in April wrote its version of the language that would appear on the ballot if enough valid signatures are certified. Sponsors were required to submit about 60,000 by June 21. They turned in about 117,000, nearly twice the amount needed.

Counties have until July 19 to verify the signatures and the secretary of state would have until Aug. 22 to determine whether the amendment goes on the ballot.

Abortion is legal until viability in Montana under a 1999 Montana Supreme Court opinion.

NEBRASKA

Competing abortion measures could come before voters in November after supporters of each said Wednesday they turned in far more signatures than the 123,000 required for ballot access.

One would enshrine the right to abortion in the state constitution until viability. Supporters said they submitted more than 207,000 signatures.

The other would write into the constitution the current law which bars abortions after the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, with some exceptions. Its backers said they submitted more than 205,000 signatures.

Organizers for a third effort did not submit petitions. It would have defined embryos as people, thus barring abortion at all stages of pregnancy.

Where did ballot efforts fail to gain traction?

Some efforts that sought to restrict or ban abortion also have failed to reach ballots. In Wisconsin, the House approved a measure asking voters to ban abortion after 14 weeks, but the legislative session ended without a vote from the state Senate.

Likewise, Iowa lawmakers ended their session without approving a measure asking voters to find there is no constitutional right to abortion. Pennsylvania lawmakers previously pursued a similar amendment, but it's not expected to be added to the ballot this year.

A Louisiana measure to enshrine abortion rights in the state constitution died in committee, one in Maine effectively died when it fell short of receiving the approval of two-thirds of the House and a Minnesota measure was not passed by lawmakers.

US says troops are leaving Niger bases this weekend and in August after coup

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. will remove all its forces and equipment from a small base in Niger this weekend and fewer than 500 remaining troops will leave a critical drone base in the West African country in August, ahead of a Sept. 15 deadline set in an agreement with the new ruling junta, the American commander there said Friday.

Air Force Maj. Gen. Kenneth Ekman said in an interview that a number of small teams of 10-20 U.S. troops, including special operations forces, have moved to other countries in West Africa. But the bulk of the forces will go to Europe, at least initially.

Niger's ouster of American troops following a coup last year has broad ramifications for the U.S. because it is forcing troops to abandon the critical drone base that was used for counterterrorism missions in the Sahel, a vast region south of the Sahara desert where groups linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group operate.

Ekman and other U.S. military leaders have said other West African nations want to work with the U.S. and may be open to an expanded American presence. He did not detail the locations, but other U.S. officials have pointed to the Ivory Coast and Ghana as examples.

Ekman, who serves as the director for strategy at U.S. Africa Command, is leading the U.S. military withdrawal from the small base at the airport in Niger's capital of Niamey and from the larger counterterrorism base in the city of Agadez. He said there will be a ceremony Sunday marking the completed pullout from the airport base, then the final 100 troops and the last C-17 transport aircraft will depart.

Under the junta agreement, two-thirds of U.S. troops and equipment must be out of the country by July 26, Ekman said. That deadline, which forced the Pentagon to move quickly, is a key reason why U.S. Africa Command will complete its withdrawal of all 1,000 troops from Niger early.

But it also leaves a counterterrorism gap that U.S. officials are struggling to fill as security threats from extremist groups in the Sahel grow.

One of those groups, Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin, known as JNIM, is active in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger and is looking to expand into Benin and Togo. Those expansion locations could be used initially as hubs to rest, recuperate, get financing and gather weapons, according to U.S. officials, but the group also has increased attacks there.

"Niger was immensely helpful for us as a location because it was in the Sahel and it was adjacent to those areas where the threat is most concentrated," Ekman said. Now, he said, the challenge is battling the insurgency while having to get access from outside Niger, which makes it more difficult.

He said other coastal West African nations are concerned about the Sahel-based threats and want to talk about how they can partner with American forces. Ekman added that the small teams of U.S. troops moving to other West African nations are not combat forces but advisers, as well as special operations, personnel recovery and intelligence and surveillance forces.

Talks with other nations continue, and Ekman said some may be interested but not ready to allow in more U.S. troops. One example, he said, is Togo, which is southwest of Niger on the coast.

"In Togo, what I find is a partner that is friendly to the U.S. but that right now is unresolved on the degree they want the presence of any additional U.S. military personnel there," he said. "My assessment was, 'Not yet.'"

Speaking to reporters from The Associated Press and Reuters from the U.S. embassy in Niamey, Ekman said that while portable buildings and vehicles that are no longer useful will be left behind when U.S. troops leave Niger, a lot of larger equipment will be pulled out. For example, he said 18 4,000-pound (1,800-kilograms) generators worth more than \$1 million each will be taken out of Agadez.

Unlike the withdrawal from Afghanistan, he said the U.S. is not destroying equipment or facilities as it leaves.

"Our goal in the execution is, leave things in as good a state as possible," he said. "If we went out and

left it a wreck or we went out spitefully, or if we destroyed things as we went, we'd be foreclosing options" for future security relations.

Niger's ruling junta ordered U.S. forces out of the country in the wake of last July's ouster of the country's democratically elected president by mutinous soldiers. French forces had also been asked to leave as the junta turned to the Russian mercenary group Wagner for security assistance.

Washington officially designated the military takeover as a coup in October, triggering U.S. laws restricting the military support and aid.

Ekman said he has been told that there are fewer than 100 Russian troops at the base near in Niamey and that once they are done training Niger troops, they will also leave the country.

Vatican excommunicates a former ambassador to the US and declares him guilty of schism

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — The Vatican on Friday excommunicated its former ambassador to Washington after finding him guilty of schism, an inevitable outcome for Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano. The conservative had become one of Pope Francis' most ardent critics and a symbol of the polarized Catholic Church in the United States and beyond.

While once enjoying support in the Vatican and U.S. church hierarchies, the Italian archbishop alienated many as he developed a fringe following while delving deeper into conspiracy theories on everything — from the coronavirus pandemic to what he called the "Great Reset" and Russia's war in Ukraine.

The Vatican's doctrine office announced the penalty after a meeting of its members on Thursday and informed Vigano of its decision on Friday.

It cited Vigano's public "refusal to recognize and submit to the Supreme Pontiff, his rejection of communion with the members of the church subject to him, and of the legitimacy and magisterial authority of the Second Vatican Council."

The excommunication, which Vigano incurred automatically with his positions, means he is formally outside communion with the church, and cannot celebrate or receive its sacraments. The crime of schism occurs when someone withdraws submission to the pope or from the communion of Catholics who are subject to him.

Unlike defrocking, a punitive measure that makes a priest a layman again, excommunication is considered a "medicinal" penalty and is declared in hope those who incurred it would repent and come back into communion. If that happens, the Holy See can lift the penalty.

Schisms, which have been regular in the church's 2,000-year history, are considered particularly dangerous as they threaten the unity of the church.

Vigano's dire pronouncements about the current state of the church, amplified on Catholic social media and by ideologically friendly bloggers on both sides of the Atlantic, were an exaggerated version of the chasm between U.S. ultra-conservatives and Francis. And while Vigano enjoyed mainstream support among bishops early in his career, many quietly distanced themselves as his ideas became more extreme.

The Italian prelate, who has not been seen publicly since before 2018, knew the schism declaration was coming after the Vatican informed him of the penal process launched against him last month. He defiantly called it "an honor," and refused to appear in person or defend himself or submit a written defense.

On June 20, Vigano issued a lengthy public statement refusing to recognize the authority of the Vatican's doctrinal office "that claims to judge me, nor of its prefect, nor of the one who appointed him."

He did not directly respond to the schism declaration on Friday on X, his usual forum. Shortly before the Vatican decree was made public, he announced he would be celebrating a Mass on Friday for those who have been supporting him and asked for donations.

Vigano burst onto the public scene in 2012, during the first so-called Vatileaks scandal, when Pope Benedict XVI's butler leaked the pontiff's private papers to an Italian journalist to try to draw attention to corruption in the Holy See.

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In some of the leaked letters, Vigano, then the No. 2 in the Vatican City State administration, begged the pope not to be transferred after exposing corruption in the awarding of Vatican contracts that cost the Holy See millions of euros (dollars).

The entreaties did not work. By the time the letters were published, Vigano was appointed the Vatican's ambassador to the U.S. — a prestigious post but one that took him far from Rome and out of the running to one day be a cardinal.

Vigano reappeared on the scene during Francis' 2015 visit to the U.S., which as nuncio he helped organize. Everything was going fine until Vigano arranged for Kim Davis, a Kentucky clerk at the center of the U.S. gay marriage debate, to be present at the Vatican residence to greet Francis, along with many other people.

After the visit, Davis and her lawyers claimed the encounter with Francis amounted to an affirmation of her cause denying marriage licenses to same-sex couples. The Vatican later turned the tables on Davis' claim, saying she had merely been among a group of well-wishers but that the "only" private audience Francis had in Washington was with a small group of people that included a gay couple.

But Vigano's deception in inviting Davis to meet the pope put the prelate and the pontiff on a collision course that exploded in August 2018.

At the time, the U.S. church was reeling from a new chapter in its clergy sex abuse scandal: One of the most senior U.S. churchmen, Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, was accused of molesting a minor and a Pennsylvania grand jury issued a devastating investigation into decades of abuse and cover-up.

As Francis was wrapping up a tense visit to Ireland, Vigano published an 11-page screed accusing him and a long string of U.S. and Vatican officials of covering for McCarrick. Specifically, Vigano accused Francis of rehabilitating McCarrick from sanctions imposed by Pope Benedict, and called on him to resign — accusations that created the greatest crisis of Francis' then-young pontificate.

Francis quickly authorized an in-house investigation into McCarrick. The report, released in 2020, confirmed that a generation of church officials, including Pope John Paul II, had turned a blind eye to McCarrick's misconduct. It largely spared Francis, who eventually defrocked the churchman.

But the report also faulted Vigano for not looking into new claims against McCarrick or enforcing Vatican restrictions on him when specifically ordered to do so by the Vatican.

At that point, Vigano's claims against Francis became more unhinged, endorsing conspiracy theories about the coronavirus vaccines, appearing at far-right U.S. political rallies via video, backing Russia in its war on Ukraine, and eventually, refusing to recognize Francis as pope.

Massimo Faggioli, a theologian at Villanova University, said while a good number of U.S. bishops vouched for Vigano's integrity when he first made his claims about McCarrick in 2018, his declarations in the ensuing years "led some of them to more prudent positions."

In an essay in the French daily *La Croix*, Faggioli also noted that Vigano had had a seeming unintended effect of mainstreaming another schismatic group, the Society of St. Pius X, which also rejects the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, the 1960s meetings that modernized the church.

However, the society known as SSPX founded by the late French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre in 1969, distanced itself from Vigano and his rejection of the legitimacy of Francis' pontificate, saying they "have not ventured down that perilous road."

Vigano's positions make Lefebvre and the SSPX "look like right-of-center Catholics, and not like the extreme traditionalists they actually are," Faggioli wrote. "This says something about the ground shifting under the feet of Vatican II Catholics."

Brazilian police indict ex-President Bolsonaro in undeclared diamonds case, sources say

By GABRIELA SÁ PESSOA and MAURICIO SAVARESE Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — Brazil's Federal Police have indicted former President Jair Bolsonaro for money laundering and criminal association in connection with undeclared diamonds the far-right leader received from Saudi Arabia during his time in office, according to a source with knowledge of the accusations.

A second source confirmed the indictment, although not for which specific crimes. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak publicly.

Brazil's Supreme Court has yet to receive the police report with the indictment. Once it does, the country's prosecutor-general, Paulo Gonet, will analyze the document and decide whether to file charges and force Bolsonaro to stand trial.

This is Bolsonaro's second indictment since leaving office, following another in March for allegedly falsifying his COVID-19 vaccination certificate. But this indictment dramatically raises the legal threats facing the divisive ex-leader that are applauded by his opponents but denounced as political persecution by his supporters.

Bolsonaro did not immediately comment, but he and his lawyers have previously denied any wrongdoing in both those cases, as well as other investigations into the former president. One is probing his possible involvement in inciting an uprising in capital Brasilia on Jan. 8, 2023 that sought to oust his successor from power.

Last year, Federal Police accused Bolsonaro of attempting to sneak in diamond jewelry reportedly worth \$3 million and selling two luxury watches.

Police said in August that Bolsonaro received cash from the nearly \$70,000 sale of two luxury watches he received as gifts from Saudi Arabia. Brazil requires its citizens arriving by plane from abroad to declare goods worth more than \$1,000 and, for any amount above that exemption, pay a tax equal to 50% of their value.

The jewelry would have been exempt from tax had it been a gift from Saudi Arabia to Brazil, but not Bolsonaro's to keep for himself. Rather, it would have been added to the presidential collection.

The investigation showed that Mauro Cid, Bolsonaro's former aide-de-camp who allegedly falsified his COVID-19 records, in June 2022 sold a Rolex watch and a Patek Philippe watch to a store in the U.S for a total \$68,000. They were gifted by Saudi Arabia's government in 2019. Cid later signed a plea bargain with authorities and confirmed it all.

Flávio Bolsonaro, the former president's eldest son and a sitting senator, said on X after Thursday's indictment that persecution against his father was "blatant and shameless."

In addition to Bolsonaro, police indicted 10 others, including Cid and two of his lawyers, Frederick Wassef and Fábio Wajngarten, according to one of the sources. Wassef said in a statement that he didn't have access to the final report of the investigation, and decried selective leaks to the press of an investigation that is supposed to be proceeding under seal.

"I am going through all of this solely for practicing law in defense of Jair Bolsonaro," he wrote.

On X, Wajngarten said police have found no evidence implicating him. "The Federal Police knows I did nothing related to what they are investigating, but they still want to punish me because I provide unwavering and permanent defense for former President Bolsonaro," he said.

Bolsonaro retains staunch allegiance among his political base, as shown by an outpouring of support in February, when an estimated 185,000 people clogged Sao Paulo's main boulevard to protest what the former president calls political persecution.

His critics, particularly members of his rival President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's political party, have cheered every advance of investigations and repeatedly called for his arrest.

Psychologist Deborah Santos watched news of Bolsonaro's indictment in a bakery in Sao Paulo's up-market Vila Madalena neighborhood.

"This is great, because it breaks a pattern. Bolsonaro supporters love to say how honest he is; everyone

else is dishonest, but them," said Santos, 52. "There you have it: the police think he steals diamonds. That should end any politician's career."

The 69-year-old former army captain started his political career as a staunch advocate of Brazil's military dictatorship, and was a lawmaker for nearly three decades. When he bid for the presidency for the first time, in 2018, he was widely dismissed as an outsider and too radically conservative. But he surprised analysts with a decisive victory, in no small part due to his self-portrayal as an upstanding citizen in the years following a sprawling corruption probe that ensnared hundreds of politicians and executives.

Bolsonaro insulted adversaries since his earliest days in office while garnering critics with his divisive policies, attacks on the Supreme Court and efforts to undermine health restrictions during the pandemic. He lost his reelection bid in the closest finish since Brazil's return to democracy in 1985.

Carlos Melo, a political science professor at the Insper University in Sao Paulo, believes Brazil's Supreme Court and the justice overseeing several investigations targeting Bolsonaro, Alexandre de Moraes, will not risk sending the former president to prison or imposing other harsh measures with any haste. The objective, he said, is to avoid instigating supporters of the far-right leader and so make cases against him more politically sensitive to prosecute.

"This is a year of mayoral elections. Moraes and his fellow justices know that prosecuting a former president who remains a popular man would be even tougher in a year like this," Melo said. "This indictment is another piece of the puzzle. It gives one more problem to Bolsonaro. There will be more."

Last year, Brazil's top electoral court ruled that Bolsonaro abused his presidential powers during his 2022 reelection bid, which rendered him ineligible for any elections until 2030. The case focused on a meeting during which Bolsonaro used government staffers, the state television channel and the presidential palace in Brasilia to tell foreign ambassadors that the country's electronic voting system was rigged.

Bolsonaro is expected to meet Argentinian President Javier Milei this weekend at a conservative conference in Balneario Camboriu, in Brazil's south.

Kansas' top court bolsters a state right to abortion and strikes down 2 anti-abortion laws

By JOHN HANNA AP Political Writer

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Kansas' highest court strongly reaffirmed Friday that the state constitution protects abortion access, striking down a ban on a common second-trimester procedure and laws regulating abortion providers more strictly than other health care providers.

The pair of 5-1 decisions suggests that other restrictions — even ones decades on the books — might not withstand legal challenges. The court's dissenting justice, widely seen as its most conservative, warned that Kansas is headed toward "a legal regime of unrestricted access to abortion."

"This is an immense victory for the health, safety, and dignity of people in Kansas and the entire Midwestern region, where millions have been cut off from abortion access," said Nancy Northup, president and CEO of the Center for Reproductive Rights, which represented the abortion providers challenging the two laws.

The decisions came almost two years after an August 2022 statewide vote decisively affirming abortion rights, the first such vote after the U.S. Supreme Court's Dobbs decision in June 2022 that allowed states to ban abortion altogether. Kansas voters rejected a proposed change in the state constitution approved by the Republican-controlled Legislature to declare that the document provides no right to abortion.

Republican Attorney General Kris Kobach's office had argued that the 2022 vote didn't matter in determining whether the two laws could stand. But Justice Evelyn Wilson, one of three justices appointed to the seven-member court after its landmark 2019 decision, said that while she might have dissented then, "The people spoke with their votes."

"The results were accepted by the people, and Kansas showed the world how things are done in a successful democracy," wrote Wilson, an appointee of Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly, a strong abortion rights supporter.

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Neither law struck down by the court had been enforced because of the lawsuits against them by abortion providers.

Other lawsuits in lower state courts are challenging restrictions on medication abortions, a ban on doctors using teleconferences to meet with patients, rules for what doctors must tell patients before an abortion and a requirement that patients wait 24 hours after receiving information about a procedure to terminate their pregnancies.

Friday's rulings will be felt far outside Kansas since it has attracted thousands of patients from states where abortion is all but banned, most notably Oklahoma and Texas. The Guttmacher Institute, which supports abortion rights, projected last month that about 20,000 abortions were performed in Kansas in 2023 or 152% more than in 2020.

Abortion opponents argued ahead of the August 2022 vote that failing to change the state constitution would doom long-standing restrictions enacted under past Republican governors. Kansas saw a flurry of new restrictions under GOP Gov. Sam Brownback from 2011 through 2018.

"It hurts to say, 'we told you so,' to the many Kansans who were misled by the abortion industry's assurances that it would still be 'heavily regulated' in our state if voters rejected the 2022 amendment," Danielle Underwood, a spokesperson for Kansans for Life, the state's most influential anti-abortion group, said in a statement.

Justice K.J. Wall, a Kelly appointee, did not participate in either ruling on Friday while Justice Caleb Stegall was the lone dissenter. He was appointed by Brownback.

In his dissenting opinion in the clinic regulations case, Stegall said the majority's actions will damage the court's legitimacy "for years to come." He said its declarations about bodily autonomy could affect a "massive swath" of health and safety regulations outside abortion, including licensing requirements for barbers.

"Surely the government does not have a compelling interest in who trims my beard?" Stegall wrote. "Let the lawsuits commence in this new target-rich environment. The majority has — perhaps unwittingly — put the entire administrative state on the chopping block of strict scrutiny."

Justice Melissa Standridge, also a Kelly appointee and the justice writing the majority opinion in the clinic regulations case, called Stegall's comments "inappropriate and denigrating to women faced with decisions between childbirth and abortion."

Kansas doesn't ban most abortions until the 22nd week of pregnancy, but it requires minors to obtain the written consent of their parents or a guardian. Other requirements, including the 24-hour waiting period and what a provider must tell patients, have been put on hold. A lower court is considering a challenge to them by providers.

The health and safety rules aimed specifically at abortion providers were enacted in 2011. Supporters said they would protect women's health — though there was no evidence provided then that such rules elsewhere had led to better health outcomes. Providers said the real goal was to force them out of business.

Standridge said in the majority's opinion on the clinic regulations that not only was there no evidence the rules would improve patients' health, but in some cases, it "affirmatively contradicts" that position.

She wrote that even the state's expert in the case agreed that "existing abortion care is extremely safe" and comparable to care not covered by the regulations.

The other law struck down by the court would have banned a certain type of dilation and evacuation, also known as D&E. It was the first state ban of its kind when it was enacted in 2015.

According to state health department statistics, about 600 D&E procedures were done in Kansas in 2022, accounting for 5% of the state's total abortions. About 88% of the state's abortions occurred in the first trimester. The state has yet to release statistics for 2023.

The procedure ban would have forced providers to use alternative methods that the Center for Reproductive Rights has said are riskier for the patient and more expensive.

Justice Eric Rosen, an appointee of former Democratic Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, said in the majority's opinion on the ban that lower-court evidence showed it would force patients to undergo alternative procedures "that are rarely used, are untested and are sometimes more dangerous or impossible."

Federal Reserve highlights its political independence as presidential campaign heats up

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve is highlighting the importance of its political independence at a time when Donald Trump, who frequently attacked the Fed's policymaking in the past, edges closer to formally becoming the Republican nominee for president.

On Friday, the Fed released its twice-yearly report on its interest-rate policies, a typically dry document that primarily includes its analysis of job growth, inflation, interest rates and other economic trends. The report includes short text boxes that focus on often-technical issues such as monetary policy rules.

The report is typically released the Friday before the Fed chair testifies to House and Senate committees as part of the central bank's semi-annual report to Congress.

Many of the boxes appear regularly in most reports, like one that focuses on employment and earnings for different demographic groups. Friday's report, however, includes a new box titled, "Monetary policy independence, transparency, and accountability." It is there that the Fed stressed the vital need for it to operate independent of political pressures.

"There is broad support for the principles underlying independent monetary policy," the report says. "Operational independence of monetary policy has become an international norm, and economic research indicates that economic performance has tended to be better when central banks have such independence."

Such statements suggest that the Fed is seeking to shore up support in Congress for its independence, which Chair Jerome Powell earlier this week mentioned as a crucial bulwark against political attacks on the Fed.

A spokesperson for the Fed declined to comment on the inclusion of the text box.

"I do think support for the Fed's independence is very high, where it really matters on Capitol Hill, in both political parties," Powell said Tuesday during a monetary policy conference in Portugal.

Before the pandemic struck in 2020, Trump, as president, repeatedly badgered the Fed to lower its benchmark interest rate, which can reduce the cost of consumer and business borrowing and stimulate the economy.

In 2018, as the Fed gradually raised its benchmark rate from ultra-low levels that had been put in place after the Great Recession, Trump, in a highly unusual attack from a sitting president, called the central bank "my biggest threat."

And he said, regarding Powell, "I'm not happy with what he's doing."

Trump originally nominated Powell as Fed chair, and President Joe Biden later re-nominated him to a term that will end in May 2026. Trump has already indicated that he wouldn't renominate Powell if he is elected president again.

Powell, when asked Tuesday about the potential threat posed to the Fed's independence should Trump be elected again, said, "I am not focused on that at all."

"I really think that we just keep doing our jobs," Powell continued. "I mean, the U.S. economy — we have 4% unemployment, it's growing at 2%. Inflation's at 2.6%. Let's keep that going. Let's do our jobs. History will judge."

US employers added a solid 206,000 jobs in June in a sign of continued economic strength

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — America's employers delivered another healthy month of hiring in June, adding 206,000 jobs and once again displaying the U.S. economy's ability to withstand high interest rates.

Last month's job growth did mark a pullback from 218,000 in May. But it was still a solid gain, reflecting the resilience of America's consumer-driven economy, which is slowing but still growing steadily.

Still, Friday's report from the Labor Department contained several signs of a slowing job market. The

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unemployment rate ticked up from 4% to 4.1%, a still-low number but the highest rate since November 2021. The rate rose in large part because 277,000 people began looking for work in June, and not all of them found jobs right away.

The government also sharply revised down its estimate of job growth for April and May by a combined 111,000. And it said average hourly pay rose just 0.3% from May and 3.9% from June 2023. The year-over-year figure was the smallest such rise since June 2021 and will likely be welcomed by the Federal Reserve in its drive to fully conquer inflation. Most economists think the Fed will begin cutting its benchmark rate in September, and the details in Friday's jobs report did nothing to counter that expectation.

Just two sectors — government and a category that includes healthcare and social assistance, neither of which captures the economy's underlying strength — accounted for roughly three-quarters of June's job growth. Economists also noted that job growth from April through June averaged 177,000, a decent figure but still the lowest three-month average since January 2021.

Other economists, while agreeing that the job market is slowing, suggested that it remains resilient.

"Both May and June hiring was above 200,000 even after revisions, and the trajectory looks stable," said Eric Winograd, U.S. economist at AllianceBernstein. "The best available evidence is that the labor market remains strong and that any deceleration remains modest."

The state of the economy is weighing heavily on voters' minds as the presidential campaign intensifies. Despite consistent hiring, relatively few layoffs and gradually cooling inflation, many Americans have been exasperated by still-high prices and assign blame to President Joe Biden.

Economists have been repeatedly predicting that the job market would lose momentum in the face of the high rates engineered by the Fed, only to see the hiring gains show continued strength. Still, signs of an economic slowdown have emerged in the aftermath of the Fed's series of rate hikes. The U.S. gross domestic product — the total output of goods and services — grew at a lethargic annual pace of 1.4% from January through March, the slowest quarterly pace in nearly two years.

Consumer spending, which accounts for about 70% of all U.S. economic activity and which has powered the expansion the past three years, rose at just a 1.5% pace last quarter after growing more than 3% in each of the previous two quarters. In addition, the number of advertised job openings has declined steadily since peaking at a record 12.2 million in March 2022.

At the same time, while employers might not be hiring so aggressively after having struggled to fill jobs the past two years, they aren't cutting many, either. Most workers are enjoying an unusual level of job security.

Hal Lawton, CEO of Tractor Supply, a retail chain that caters to customers in rural areas, said his company still feels under pressure to increase wages. Average hourly pay at Tractor Supply, based in Brentwood, Tennessee, workers exceeds \$16. And with rent and food prices high, workers are still seeking pay raises.

"You've got a tight labor market, and frontline workers are feeling the pinch of their budgets," Lawton said. "They're still out there looking for those wage increases."

During 2022 and 2023, the Fed raised its benchmark interest rate 11 times to try to conquer the worst streak of inflation in four decades, lifting its key rate to its highest point in 23 years. The punishingly higher borrowing rates that resulted, for consumers and businesses, were widely expected to trigger a recession. They didn't. The economy and the job market instead have shown surprising resilience.

Meanwhile, inflation has steadily declined from a 9.1% peak in 2022 to 3.3%. In remarks this week at a conference in Portugal, Fed Chair Jerome Powell noted that price increases in the United States were slowing again after higher readings earlier this year. Powell did caution that further evidence that inflation is moving toward the Fed's 2% target level would be needed before the policymakers would cut rates.

"This is the kind of report that the Federal Reserve wants to see," said Gus Faucher, chief economist at PNC Financial Services Group. "This looks pretty darn good. The labor market is not as strong as it was last year at this time. But the labor market at that time was unsustainably strong."

Chris Thomas, an engineering manager in Christiansburg, Virginia, said he can see first-hand that the job market has lost momentum. When Thomas began a previous job hunt back in 2021, when tech startups were desperate to hire, he landed interviews with about a third of the companies he applied to. It took

him just a month to find a job.

But after he was laid off in April from a job at a startup, it was clear that the landscape had changed. First, he sought leads through his network of friends and business associates. No luck. Then he sent out hundreds of resumes to positions he thought he was qualified to take. He drew few responses.

Finally, after a nearly three-month search, Thomas landed a job at the end of June.

"This is a very, very different job market than the one we had three years ago," he said.

Officers who defended the Capitol fight falsehoods about Jan. 6 and campaign for Joe Biden

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Capitol Police Sgt. Aquilino Gonell is mostly recovered from the brutal assaults he endured from Donald Trump's supporters on Jan. 6, 2021. But not completely. His shoulder still has limited endurance and there are screws and a metal plate holding his right foot together after bone fusion surgery.

Emotional recovery has been more difficult. Gonell struggled when he heard that former Trump visited Capitol Hill last month and received what he called a "hero's welcome" from the Republican lawmakers Gonell had protected that day, and when Trump falsely told millions of viewers in last week's debate that many of the violent rioters, his supporters, "were ushered in by the police."

Trump's Capitol Hill visit was a "triggering mechanism for my PTSD," says Gonell, who retired from the force in 2022 due to his injuries and has recently participated in several campaign events for President Joe Biden. "We did what we had to do to keep those elected officials safe, and instead of siding with us, the officers, they have sided with a person who put their lives at risk."

Three and a half years after the Capitol attack, Trump still falsely claims the 2020 election was stolen. He has promised that if he wins the presidency again he will pardon his supporters who violently beat police and broke into the Capitol to try and overturn the legitimate results. To counter the misinformation, Gonell and two of his fellow officers who were there that day are working with Biden's campaign, attending events in swing states to try and make sure that voters don't forget.

"I'm a living primary source about an important day in American history," says Metropolitan Police Officer Daniel Hodges, who became a recognizable face shortly after the attack when a video of him being crushed between two doors went viral. "So I try to make that count, and make it so that people hear the truth from someone who was there."

Along with former Capitol Police Officer Harry Dunn, Hodges and Gonell are telling audiences about what they went through that day and trying to lay out the contrast between Biden and Trump. It's an unusual transition for law enforcement officers who once protected members of Congress and are used to keeping their political views to themselves.

"I'm really an introvert, and I'm not someone to seek a microphone or an audience," says Hodges, who testified along with Gonell and Dunn at the House Jan. 6 panel's first hearing in 2021. "But I'm in this unique position where people will listen to what I say about an important issue. So I feel a moral obligation to do so."

At recent events in Wisconsin, Nevada and Arizona, they stood with local officials and said that Trump is a danger to the country after trying to overturn Biden's legitimate election.

"Three and a half years later, the fight for democracy still continues," Dunn recently told a group of voters in Arizona, flanked by a handful of politically active Democratic veterans in Phoenix. "It still goes on. Donald Trump is still that threat. His deranged, self-centered, obsessive quest for power is the reason violent insurrectionists assaulted my coworkers and I."

The officers have also aggressively pushed back on Trump's comments at the debate, where he falsely said that there were a "relatively small" group of protesters and that the police let them enter the Capitol. More than 1,400 people have been charged with federal crimes related to the riot, and police were bloodied and injured — some seriously — as they struggled to prevent more from getting in.

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Dunn, who recently lost his own bid for a congressional seat in Maryland, said after the debate that Trump's comments were "a slap in the face, but it's what we have come to expect from Donald Trump."

And the officers said they are still supporting Biden, even after he failed to push back on many of Trump's false claims about Jan. 6 and received widespread criticism for his weak showing at the debate.

"He could have been a little more forceful, but I'll take the person who doesn't send a mob to kill me and my colleagues over the other person," said Gonell, who published a book last year about his experience. "Every single day I'm reminded of that horrible day. Every time I put my shoes on, I see my scar."

Gonell was caught in the worst of the fighting on the Capitol's west front as Trump's supporters protesting his defeat violently tried to push past him and his fellow officers. At one point he was pulled under the crowd and lost oxygen to the point that he thought he would die.

Hodges was nearby, trapped in the heavy golden doors in the center of the Capitol's west front as rioters beat him bloody. A video of his guttural scream as he tried to escape went viral and was played at Democrats' impeachment trial in the weeks after the attack.

Dunn, who has said he was targeted with racial slurs by Trump's supporters during the fighting, says it has been good to travel out of the Washington area, his hometown, and talk to people who may not be watching cable news every day as he campaigns for Biden. There's a lot they don't know about what happened on Jan. 6, he says.

"Being able to have somebody who was there bring firsthand experience and facts retelling the story, it's very beneficial," Dunn said,

The officers were widely praised after Jan. 6, but their criticism of Trump in recent years has made them less popular with some Republicans. When Gonell and Dunn visited the Pennsylvania legislature this spring, some Republicans booed them.

But they are unbowed by the criticism, and have continued to try and bring more attention to their stories. Gonell was outside the Supreme Court on Monday as the justices ruled on whether Trump has immunity for his role in trying to overturn the 2020 election and criticized the justices for sending the federal case back to a lower court. The decision effectively ends any prospects that Trump could be tried before the November election.

On Friday, the court limited a federal obstruction law that has been used to charge some Capitol riot defendants.

"Every single time that the Supreme Court or any other court says that some of these people shouldn't be held accountable, it's a disgrace," Gonell said.

British PM's 1st day at 10 Downing St. will stretch from nuclear weapons briefing to Larry the cat

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — After a few hours of sleep to shake off a night of celebration and an audience with the king, Keir Starmer stepped through the front door of 10 Downing St. for the first time as prime minister on Friday.

When he did, he entered the alternate reality of a man who meets regularly with King Charles III and has ultimate control of Britain's nuclear missiles, all while adjusting to life in a creaking 17th century landmark and trying to balance his work and personal life.

On his first day in office, Starmer will get briefings from senior civil servants about key issues facing the government, receive congratulatory phone calls from world leaders and begin the process of appointing his Cabinet.

Here is a look at some of the other traditions and responsibilities he faces on his first day inside No. 10.
Clap for the leader

The first time a prime minister walks through the uber-polished door of 10 Downing St., household staff and civil servants by custom line the entrance and clap for the new leader and his senior team.

It is Starmer's introduction to the people he will live and work with, most of whom served his predeces-

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sor only a few hours earlier.

Salma Shah, a special adviser to former Treasury chief Sajid Javid, described the custom as equal parts nice gesture and strange experience, particularly given that the civil servants know little or nothing about the latest batch of politicians moving into the heart of British government.

"I've often mused over the fact that no one really claps you on the way out whenever you leave your job," she said during a briefing about the first days of a new administration sponsored by the Institute for Government think tank. "So it's nice, but it is also quite odd."

Nuclear trigger

One of the most sobering moments of any prime minister's first day on the job is the realization that he now has the ultimate authority over whether to launch Britain's nuclear missiles.

In the U.K., this is underscored when the country's top civil servant informs the new prime minister that he has to write "last resort letters" to the captains of Britain's four nuclear-armed submarines telling them what to do in the event of a nuclear attack that wipes out the civilian leadership.

It is a duty unique to Britain, where there is no "nuclear football," the briefcase carrying targeting data and launch codes that accompanies the U.S. president wherever he goes.

The letters are placed on board each of the submarines inside safes that are to be opened only if their captains are certain Britain has been attacked and the country's civilian leaders are dead.

While the letters are destroyed unread when a new prime minister takes office, there are thought to be only four options: retaliate, don't retaliate, use your own judgment, or put your nuclear weapons under the command of the U.S. or Australia, if possible.

This isn't the White House

No. 10 Downing St. is as much of a shorthand for Britain's prime minister as the White House is for the U.S. president. But that's about all they have in common.

Behind the famous black door of No. 10 sits a warren of interlinked offices, meeting rooms and two residences carved out of three townhouses built in the late 1600s.

With an estimated 400 people working in some 100 offices, the space has become dysfunctional, a workplace consultant said two years ago, recommending that the prime minister's top team move to a modern office space.

"It's clear that 10 Downing St. isn't fit for purpose and much of the muddled decision-making afflicting the government may stem from not having a proper office," Andrew Mawson, managing director of Advanced Workplace Associates, said in 2022. "No major corporation – or indeed government department – operates from a largely unreconstructed 300-year-old building or has the CEO living above the shop."

One of the first decisions Britain's new prime minister will have to make is whether to live in the two-bedroom apartment above 10 Downing St., traditionally the home of Britain's leaders, or the more spacious four-bedroom apartment over No. 11, formerly dedicated to the treasury chief.

Starmer, who is married and has two teenage children, is likely to follow recent precedent and claim the larger apartment. Other than his predecessor, Rishi Sunak, every prime minister since Blair has picked that option.

No. 10 Downing St. is part of a row of townhouses built between 1682 and 1684 by former diplomat and property developer George Downing. The home of Britain's prime ministers since 1735, it has been expanded over the years by linking it to the adjoining properties at No. 11 and No. 12.

There were problems from the beginning.

In an effort to increase his profit, Downing cut costs. The houses had inadequate foundations for the boggy ground and the mortar lines were drawn on to give the appearance of evenly spaced bricks, according to the government website.

One former resident, Winston Churchill, described Downing Street with his characteristic flair.

"Shaky and lightly built by the profiteering contractor whose name they bear."

Mouser in chief

Before the day is over, Starmer may have his first meeting with Larry the cat, far and away the most famous permanent resident of Downing Street.

Larry, a gray and white tabby who roams the heart of government as if it is his own personal realm — has been a fixture of the residence for more than 13 years, outlasting five prime ministers.

The former stray was brought to Downing Street from the Battersea Dogs and Cats Home in 2011 to help control a rodent problem and he has been “chief mouser” ever since.

Larry has the press corps at his paws, with photographers snapping photos of him whenever the news is slow, or all the time really. Larry even has 843,000 followers on X, formerly Twitter.

So here’s the question: After Starmer writes his last resort letters, meets the civil servants and starts to adjust to this huge change in his life, will he make time to scratch Larry behind the ears? And what will Larry think?

After all, prime ministers come and go. But Larry? Well, he had better not be going anywhere says freelance photographer Justin Ng, who is known as Larry’s favorite snapper on Downing Street. Perish the thought that Larry might retire!

“I hope Mr. Starmer ... doesn’t underestimate the popularity of Larry,” Ng said. “Basically, if he wants to stay in power, then Larry has to stay, too.”

What we learned from the UK’s general election that will shape politics over the coming years

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The U.K. has its first change in government in 14 years after the Labour Party won a landslide victory early Friday in a general election that saw the Conservative Party suffer its biggest defeat ever.

The new government faces huge challenges, including fixing the country’s sluggish economic and social malaise resulting in part from the U.K.’s exit from the European Union, the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and several Conservative Party scandals.

Here are some things we learned:

A fraying two-party system

For the past 100 years, Britain’s two main political parties have garnered the vast majority of votes. In 1951, for example, the Conservatives and Labour netted nearly 97% of the vote combined.

In the decades since, the trend has been clear — down. This election marked a new low, with the two parties combined barely able to muster 60%.

Despite that relatively low share of the vote, Prime Minister Keir Starmer will be able to govern with a massive majority in the House of Commons that will make it easier for him to get his legislation through.

That’s because in Britain’s electoral system, the candidate with the most votes in each constituency wins even if they don’t get a majority. This makes it easier for a party to win a seat on a relatively low share of the vote, especially when votes are spread out among many parties. These include the anti-immigration Reform UK, the Greens and the Liberal Democrats.

Conservatives punished

No election has seen this many Cabinet ministers lose their seats in Parliament, including some who were prospective candidates to replace Rishi Sunak when he steps down as leader of the party.

Among the 11 Cabinet ministers who have lost their seats, perhaps the most consequential is Penny Mordaunt, who gained international notoriety when she held up a large sword throughout much of last year’s coronation of King Charles III. She was widely tipped to be a future leader as she has support across the party.

Others included Defense Secretary Grant Shapps, Transport Secretary Mark Harper and Education Secretary Gillian Keegan.

The casualty with the highest profile wasn’t even in the Cabinet. That honor goes to Liz Truss, who was prime minister for just 49 days in the fall of 2022 and whose unfunded tax cuts roiled financial markets and sent borrowing costs for homeowners surging. Sunak, who succeeded Truss, could never shake off the legacy of her premiership.

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Labour's Gaza problem

Four of Labour's candidates lost to independent challengers campaigning on a pro-Palestinian platform in constituencies with big Muslim populations.

The biggest surprise was Jonathan Ashworth, who was expected to be in Starmer's Cabinet but lost his seat in Leicester, a city in central England where a third of the population is Muslim.

Even Starmer, who has been criticized for being slow to back a ceasefire in Gaza, saw his majority in his Holborn and St. Pancras seat reduced as more than 7,000 ballots were cast for an independent candidate who had Gaza at the heart of his campaign.

Labour is back in Scotland

In 2015 Labour, which had been dominant in Scottish politics for decades, lost all but one of its seats to the pro-independence Scottish National Party.

Thursday's election almost reversed that, with Labour winning the vast majority of seats in Scotland while the SNP lost 38 seats, leaving it with only nine and putting to rest any thoughts of a pro-independence referendum for Scotland any time soon.

The SNP, which governs in Scotland, has had a difficult few years, most notably as a result of a funding scandal that has embroiled former leader Nicola Sturgeon and her husband.

John Swinney, who only became first minister a few weeks ago, pledged a period of "soul searching" and admitted that the party was "not winning the argument" over independence.

Musical chairs

The newly elected candidates will officially become members of parliament on Tuesday when the House of Commons returns for the swearing in and oath of allegiance to King Charles III.

When they take their seats on the green benches, the Labour members will sit where the Conservatives have been for the past 14 years, on the right hand side of the speaker of the House. The Conservatives will be the opposition, having come second, and will sit to the left of the speaker.

The other opposition benches will look very different, however. There will be 71 Liberal Democrats, up from the 15 who were there when Parliament was dissolved in May, and four Green members rather than one. There will also be four members of the anti-immigration Reform U.K., including its leader and self-professed political agitator, Nigel Farage, who won a seat in Parliament on his eighth attempt. And the SNP's presence will be much diminished.

Reform, which contested its first election, is already saying the U.K.'s electoral system is unfair and are calling for a change, noting they got 14% of the vote, 2 percentage points more than the Liberal Democrats, but ended up with a far lower number of seats. But the U.K.'s electoral system has always been about getting the votes in the right place.

Rishi Sunak's campaign in the UK election showed his lack of political touch

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Rishi Sunak's campaign to remain Britain's prime minister showed a lack of political touch.

The Conservative Party's problems were grave before Friday's resounding election defeat but missteps by Britain's richest prime minister contributed to its defeat.

Predecessors such as Tony Blair and Boris Johnson were more politically astute and able to connect with voters. As for Sunak, he didn't have to call the election until January 2025. He defied political advice by doing so in May — with Conservative support dwindling steadily amid an economic slump, ethics scandals and a revolving door of leaders over the last two years — and announced the July 4 date in the pouring rain.

What's more, the Conservative Party didn't appear ready for the campaign compared with Labour, and voters haven't really felt the improvement in Britain's economy yet.

"I have heard your anger, your disappointment, and I take responsibility for this loss," Sunak said in his final speech as prime minister outside the residence at 10 Downing St.

Arguably, Sunak's biggest blunder — one that prompted him to apologize and which many analysts think

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was the final death knell of the Conservative Party's campaign — was his decision to leave early from the 80-year D-day commemorations in northern France on June 6.

Critics said the decision to skip the international event that closed the commemorations showed disrespect to the veterans and diminished the U.K.'s international standing. Other world leaders including U.S. President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy all were present. As was Keir Starmer, the U.K.'s new prime minister.

Born in 1980 in Southampton on England's south coast to parents of Indian descent, Sunak became Britain's first leader of color and the first Hindu to become prime minister. At 42, he was Britain's youngest leader for more than 200 years.

A former hedge fund manager at Goldman Sachs who married into a billionaire Indian family, Sunak rose rapidly within Conservative ranks. Now 44, he became Treasury chief on the eve of the coronavirus pandemic. Within weeks, he had to unveil the biggest economic support package of any Chancellor of the Exchequer outside wartime, a package that many saw as saving millions of jobs.

Long a low-tax, small-state politician despite the high-spending nature of that package, Sunak had a record of idolizing former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Smooth, confident and at ease with the march of modern technology, Sunak was dubbed "Dishy Rishi" and quickly became one of the most trusted and popular faces within Johnson's administration during the rigors of the pandemic.

Johnson was forced to quit in the summer of 2022 after being adjudged to have lied to Parliament over breaches of coronavirus lockdowns at his offices in Downing Street. As if that wasn't bad enough, trust in the Conservatives tanked further when his successor Liz Truss backed a package of unfunded tax cuts that roiled financial markets and sent borrowing costs surging, particularly for homeowners already struggling with the most acute of cost of living crisis in decades. Her premiership was the shortest in the history of the U.K.

When Sunak replaced Truss, he pitched himself as a stable pair of hands. He constantly reminded voters that he had warned Conservative Party members about the recklessness of Truss's economic plan when he challenged her to succeed Johnson. The day he replaced Truss after her traumatic 49-day premiership in Oct. 2022, the Conservatives were trailing Labour by around 30 percentage points.

As Treasury chief, Sunak was lauded for rolling out his COVID-19 job retention package that arguably saved millions of jobs. But that came at a cost, bringing the country's tax burden to its highest level since the 1940s.

In his 21 months as prime minister, Sunak struggled to keep a lid on bitter divisions within his Conservative Party. One side wanted him to be much tougher on immigration and bolder in cutting taxes, while another urged him to move more to the center of politics, the space where, historically, British elections are won.

In his concession speech, Sunak said he would serve a full term in parliament until 2029, and that he would stay on as leader until the Conservative Party has elected a successor.

"It is important that, after 14 years in government, the Conservative Party rebuilds, but also that it takes up its crucial role in opposition professionally and effectively," he said,

Many think he may be tempted to return to the U.S. in the years to come, perhaps to pursue his interest in artificial technology.

After his school years at Winchester College, one of Britain's most expensive boarding schools, Sunak went to Oxford University to study politics, philosophy and economics — the degree of choice for future prime ministers. He then got an MBA at Stanford University, which proved to be a launchpad for his subsequent career as a hedge fund manager at Goldman Sachs in the U.S.

There, he met his wife, Akshata Murty, the daughter of the billionaire founder of Indian tech giant Infosys. They have two daughters. The couple are the wealthiest inhabitants yet of No. 10 Downing Street, according to the Sunday Times' 2024 Rich List, with an estimated fortune of 651 million pounds (\$815 million). They're even richer than King Charles III, a level of wealth that many said left him out of touch with the daily problems of most people.

With his fortune secure, Sunak was elected to Parliament for the safe Tory seat of Richmond in Yorkshire in 2015. In Britain's 2016 Brexit referendum, he supported leaving the European Union, a "leave" that came unexpectedly and that many Britons today regret.

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Today in History: July 6, Althea Gibson wins Wimbledon

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, July 6, the 188th day of 2024. There are 178 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 6, 1957, Althea Gibson became the first Black tennis player to win a Wimbledon singles title as she defeated fellow American Darlene Hard 6-3, 6-2.

Also on this date:

In 1483, England's King Richard III was crowned in Westminster Abbey.

In 1777, during the American Revolution, British forces captured Fort Ticonderoga (ty-kahn-dur-OH'-gah).

In 1885, French scientist Louis Pasteur tested an anti-rabies vaccine on 9-year-old Joseph Meister, who had been bitten by an infected dog; the boy did not develop rabies.

In 1933, the first All-Star baseball game was played at Chicago's Comiskey Park; the American League defeated the National League 4-2 behind winning pitcher Lefty Gomez of the New York Yankees.

In 1942, Anne Frank, her parents and sister entered a "secret annex" in an Amsterdam building where they were later joined by four other people; they hid from Nazi occupiers for two years before being discovered and arrested.

In 1944, an estimated 168 people died in a fire that broke out during a performance in the main tent of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus in Hartford, Connecticut.

In 1945, President Harry S. Truman signed an executive order establishing the Medal of Freedom.

In 1967, Nigerian forces invade the Republic of Biafra, sparking the Nigerian Civil War.

In 1988, 167 North Sea oil workers were killed when explosions and fires destroyed a drilling platform.

In 2013, an Asiana Airlines Boeing 777 from Seoul, South Korea, crashed while landing at San Francisco International Airport, killing three passengers and injuring 181.

In 2016, Philando Castile, a Black elementary school cafeteria worker, was killed during a traffic stop in the St. Paul suburb of Falcon Heights by Officer Jeronimo Yanez. (Yanez was later acquitted on a charge of second-degree manslaughter.)

In 2018, six followers of the Aum Shinrikyo doomsday cult were hanged along with its leader, Shoko Asahara; they had been convicted of crimes including a 1995 sarin gas attack that killed 13 people and made thousands of others sick on the Tokyo subway system.

In 2020, the Trump administration formally notified the United Nations of its withdrawal from the World Health Organization; President Donald Trump had criticized the WHO's response to the coronavirus pandemic. (The pullout was later halted by President Joseph Biden's administration.)

Today's Birthdays: The 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is 89. Singer Gene Chandler ("Duke of Earl") is 87. Country singer Jeannie Seely is 84. Actor Burt Ward (TV: "Batman") is 79. Former President George W. Bush is 78. Actor-director Sylvester Stallone is 78. Actor Geoffrey Rush is 73. Retired MLB All-Star Willie Randolph is 70. Former first daughter Susan Ford Bales is 67. Actor-writer Jennifer Saunders ("Absolutely Fabulous") is 66. Actor Brian Posehn is 58. Political reporter/moderator John Dickerson is 56. Rapper Inspectah Deck (Wu-Tang Clan) is 54. Rapper 50 Cent is 49. Actors Tia and Tamera Mowry (MOHR'-ee) are 46. Comedian-actor Kevin Hart is 45. Actor Eva (EH'-vuh) Green is 44. San Diego Padres infielder Manny Machado is 32. NBA power forward Zion Williamson is 24.