

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Saturday, Aug. 17

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

Soccer in Groton. Girls play Sioux Falls Christian at noon followed by the boys playing Freeman Academy.

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



## Sunday, Aug. 18

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

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

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:30 a.m., and at Groton, 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.

## Monday, Aug 19

Senior Menu: Beef stroganoff with noodles, green beans, vanilla pudding, mandarin oranges, whole wheat bread.

Faculty Inservice, 8 a.m.

Boys golf at Sioux Valley (Volga), 10 a.m.

6th grade welcome walk at GHS, 4 p.m.

Elementary school open house, 4 p.m.

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

Pantry open, Groton Community Center, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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

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# 1440

**Why 1440? The printing press was invented around the year 1440, spreading knowledge to the masses and changing the course of history. More facts: In every day, there are 1,440 minutes. We're here to make each one count.**

## **Graceland Scheme Exposed**

Federal authorities yesterday arrested a 53-year-old Missouri woman for allegedly orchestrating a scheme to defraud Elvis Presley's family and steal ownership of the rock 'n' roll legend's Graceland estate in Memphis.

Lisa Jeanine Findley faces charges of mail fraud and aggravated identity theft. The US Justice Department alleges Findley falsely claimed Elvis' daughter, Lisa Marie Presley, had used Graceland as collateral for a \$3.8M loan from a fictitious private lender, Naussany Investments & Private Lending LLC, and never repaid it before her death. Findley sought \$2.8M from the Presley family to settle the fabricated debt and posted a fraudulent foreclosure notice, claiming Graceland would be auctioned. A judge later halted the foreclosure after Elvis' granddaughter, Danielle Riley Keough, sued.

Graceland is the second most visited private home in the US, with over 600,000 visitors annually. The 17,000-square-foot mansion was home to Elvis from 1957 until his death in 1977. A 2020 estimate places the value of the 14-acre property—purchased in 1957 for \$102,500—upward of \$400M.

## **Hurricane Ernesto poised to hit Bermuda today.**

Ernesto—a Category 2 hurricane as of this writing—is expected to pass over or near the British island of Bermuda and bring as much as 15 inches of rain. In Puerto Rico, over 250,000 homes remain without power, and over 170,000 homes remain without running water after Ernesto passed by the US territory late Tuesday. Ernesto is on track to brush parts of Newfoundland, Canada, by Monday.

## **Vice President Kamala Harris unveils economic proposals.**

The Democratic presidential nominee released her plans Friday while giving a speech in North Carolina, a key battleground state. Harris' plans include calling for the construction of 3 million new housing units and a \$40B fund to help local housing initiatives, expanding the child tax credit to \$6K, and limiting taxes on tips. See all details of her economic proposals.

## **Thailand elects its youngest prime minister.**

Paetongtarn Shinawatra, 37, was elected as the country's head two days after Thailand's Constitutional Court removed former Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin from office. The court dismissed Srettha for an ethics violation in appointing a cabinet member who had been jailed over an alleged bribery attempt. Shinawatra is the daughter of billionaire and former Prime Minister Thaksin, who led Thailand from 2001-06. Her aunt, Yingluck, also served as prime minister from 2011-14.

## **Wanted Peruvian gang leader arrested in the US.**

Gianfranco Torres-Navarro, who is wanted for the murder of 23 people in Peru, was arrested by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement in New York. The 38-year-old Torres-Navarro is believed to be the leader of Peruvian gang "Los Killers." He entered the US illegally through the Texas-Mexico border in May and was awaiting immigration proceedings; US authorities were informed in July that Torres-Navarro was wanted in Peru.

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## Eugene Levy and Dan Levy to host 2024 Emmy Awards.

The two will make history as the first father-and-son duo to cohost an awards show when the 76th Emmy Awards air Sept. 15 (8 pm ET, ABC). The two Canadians are best known for starring in and cocreating "Schitt's Creek," which broke Emmy Award records in 2020 after winning nine trophies and becoming the first comedy to sweep the four main comedy acting categories.

## Jack Russell, former Great White singer, dies at 63.

The singer, who led the 1980s rock band, died from Lewy body dementia and multiple system atrophy earlier this month, according to a Thursday night announcement. Russell previously had survived a fatal fire in 2003 at a nightclub in Rhode Island where the band was performing. The band's pyrotechnics ignited the blaze, which killed 100 people, including Great White guitarist Ty Longley.

## Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Sarah G. in Omaha, Nebraska.

"We had an unexpected and devastating storm here. More than 200,000 people without power and widespread damage to homes, businesses, and infrastructure. I will try to keep the acts of kindness I saw brief, for it was too many to list. Mutual aid utility workers came from all over to help restore power. In our case, it took 6 days and a dozen workers in dangerous conditions. The night of the storm, almost every house on our street had a tree or pole down, one blocking the whole street."

"Our neighbors were out in droves—many I had never met before—working together to clear the road. Neighbors that had minimal or no damage were out chopping up trees for other neighbors. People with power opened their homes to those without. It was the most wonderful feeling of community I have ever experienced, and has reminded and inspired me with the awesome power of kindness."

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# Broton Daily Independent

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**BROWN COUNTY  
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA  
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY**

**August 20, 2024 8:45 A.M.**

**COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD**

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Opportunity of Public Comment
4. Judy Dosch, Building Superintendent & Randy Zens, Building Asst. Superintendent:
  - a. Quotes for new pick-up
  - b. Approve & Authorize Judy to sign proposals from IMEG for Structural Engineer Services for Scaffolding & Scanning needed to be done for Renovation Project
5. Public Hearing for Temporary Alcohol Permit in conjunction with Special Event for Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce
6. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign Revised YMCA Drawdown #7 for CDBG Grant
7. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign FY2025 Local Emergency Management Performance Grant (LEMPG) Agreement
8. Approve Request for use of Courthouse Green Space for DPM Harvest Stroll Fall Festival
9. Dirk Rogers, Highway Superintendent
  - a. Discuss R-O-W for Sand Lake Bridge
  - b. Discuss Speed Zone Changes
10. Consent Calendar
  - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes of August 13, 2024
  - b. Claims
  - c. HR Report
  - d. Claim Assignment
11. Other Business
12. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
13. Adjourn

Brown County Commission Meeting

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Public comment provides an opportunity for the public to address the county commission but may not exceed 3 minutes.

Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes (or at the discretion of the board).

Public comment will be accepted virtually when the virtual attendance option is available.

**Official Recordings of Commission Meetings along with the Minutes can be found at**

<https://www.brown.sd.us/departments/commission>

## S.D. Highway 37 Closure Temporarily Extended to 7th Street Intersection in Huron

HURON, S.D. – On Tuesday, Aug. 20, 2024, the closure currently in place on S.D. Highway 37 (Dakota Avenue) in Huron will be extended through the south side of the 7th Street intersection. The closure will be in place on Highway 37, both northbound and southbound, from Market Street south to 7th Street. The existing car detour route on Kansas Avenue will be extended from 5th Street to 9th Street to accommodate the new closure. The intersection of 4th Street will be open to east and west traffic. Marked detours for truck traffic and vehicle traffic continue to be in place to guide motorists around the work zone. Highway 37 will remain open to traffic south of 7th Street while the closure is in place.

This closure is part of a larger project on Highway 37 that consists of grading, paving, storm sewer, curb and gutter, traffic signals, and lighting through the city of Huron from 9th Street South to 3rd Street North. The city of Huron's utility and streetscape project will run in conjunction with the state project.

The primary contractor on this \$19 million project is BX Civil & Construction, Inc. of Dell Rapids, SD. The interim project completion date for 7th Street to Market Street is November 2024, with an overall project completion date of August 2025.

## Name Released in Lawrence County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: US Highway 14A, mile marker 21, 10 miles south of Spearfish, SD

When: 6:27 p.m., Monday, August 12, 2024

Vehicle 1: 2014 BMW S1000 RR motorcycle

Driver 1: Brendan Scott Rebsom, 22-year-old male, fatal injuries

Helmet Use: Yes

Lawrence County, S.D.- A 22-year-old man died in a single vehicle motorcycle crash Monday evening 10 miles south of Spearfish, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Brendan S. Rebsom, the driver of a 2014 BMW motorcycle, was traveling on US Highway 14A near mile marker 21 and failed to negotiate a left-hand curve. The driver lost control and left the roadway down into a wooded embankment. Rebsom became separated from his bike and sustained fatal injuries. He was wearing a helmet.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

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

## Name Released in Minnehaha County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: Interstate 90, mile marker 401, two miles east of Sioux Falls City Limits

When: 10:59 p.m., Monday, August 12, 2024

Vehicle 1: 2007 Suzuki GSX-R1000

Driver 1: Vasiliy Vasilyevich Manuylo, 29-year-old male, fatal injuries

Helmet Use: Yes

Minnehaha County, S.D.- A 29-year-old man died in a single vehicle motorcycle crash Monday evening two miles east of Sioux Falls, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Vasiliy V. Manuylo, the driver of a 2007 Suzuki motorcycle, was traveling eastbound on Interstate 90 near mile marker 401. The motorcycle left the road to the right and entered the south ditch, crashed into a fence and separated the driver from the motorcycle. Manuylo passed away at the scene from his injuries. He was wearing a helmet.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

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

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## Coming up on GDILIVE.COM

**GT**  
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Tigers



Saturday, Aug. 17th

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at Groton

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2 p.m.

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## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### COMMENTARY

## Legislative staffer was a great help to lawmakers and a proud Czech

by FRANK KLOUCEK

AUGUST 17, 2024 6:00 AM

Reuben Bezpaletz, who was one of the main staffers for the Legislative Research Council in our state Capitol for 42 years, died this past weekend at age 77.

He was very kind and fair to all legislators, including Democrats. He worked hard to keep legislation between the staff and the legislator. There was no disclosure of proposed legislation to Republican or Democratic leadership under his watch.

His respect for the Legislature and the legislative process was as big as his heart. One example of this is when he drafted the bill requested by Scotland teacher Gary Pepper that changed the state constitution to set the minimum age for governors at 21. It was approved by an overwhelming vote of South Dakotans. Before this change, there were no constitutional age restrictions on the office of governor.

Reuben knew the state constitution and rules of the Legislature inside and out. Over Reuben's 42-year career, he helped many committee chairs run their committee hearings correctly.

Reuben, who was married to Teresa, was a Czech from the Woonsocket area. He loved state, national and international history, his Czech heritage and poppyseed kolaches — or as he spelled it, "kolaces." Reuben loved Tabor, its church, museums and rich cultural history, and he really enjoyed Tabor's Czech Days.

Reuben was a brilliant Legislative Research Council staffer who went the extra mile for legislators to explain current laws, proposed laws, rules and their impact. Reuben paid attention to the fine details of legislative draftsmanship. He was a perfectionist who went over and above to help legislators.

Lynn Moran was a classmate of Reuben's at Woonsocket High School and the University of South Dakota. She told me he was an accomplished artist already at 5 years old and was Woonsocket's Class of 1965 valedictorian. He graduated from USD and went on to work with distinction for 42 years at the South Dakota Legislative Research Council. Linda Stensland told of his excellent work on environmental bills, which are still on the books today. Many legislators can attest to Reuben's integrity and honesty.

Many of the bills he drafted for me became law or were copied by Republican legislators and then became law. He was not afraid to stand up for the little guy or the minority when they were getting trampled on. Reuben helped Paul Symens and the landowners with flooding and property rights issues concerning water rights and hunting access in northeast South Dakota. He was fair and honest and helped many Democratic and Republican legislators over the years, especially those who did not always get a fair shake. He made a positive difference in many legislators' lives, including mine.

One of Reuben's finest hours was taking a group of legislators to the Klas Czech restaurant in Cicero, Illinois, which he loved very much. As a connoisseur of fine Czech food and a history buff, he delighted in the fine food and rich history of the Klas restaurant. Their roast duck was his favorite. They cooked it similar to how his mother cooked it. Reuben knew his Czech heritage very well and always beamed proudly when describing the Czech Republic breaking away from Russia to become an independent country.

Reuben Bezpaletz was a great man with a heart as big as the great state of South Dakota. He will be missed.

*Frank Kloucek is a family farmer from rural Scotland who served 22 years as a Democratic state legislator. He and his wife, Joanie, have four children and eight grandchildren.*

## Summit jumpstarts pipeline efforts with purchase of old land easement agreements

BY: JACK O'CONNOR - AUGUST 16, 2024 2:50 PM

Summit Carbon Solutions has purchased old land easement agreements from a former rival company to help speed up its carbon pipeline construction project, Summit officials confirm.

Summit's former rival, Navigator CO2, attempted its own carbon dioxide pipeline project before backing out in October 2023. With Navigator out of the picture, Summit has purchased many of Navigator's old agreements to expand its coverage area and save itself time by not needing to negotiate new agreements.

Summit received approval in June from the Iowa Utilities Board, now called Iowa Utilities Commission, on its pipeline project. With the permit approval, Summit was given the power of eminent domain to force unwilling landowners into easement agreements.

The proposed project plan would build pipelines in Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, South Dakota and North Dakota to carry captured carbon dioxide from ethanol plants and transport it to underground reservoirs in North Dakota.

### Roadblocks for Summit remain

Iowa is the only state to give Summit the green light so far. Before Summit begins construction in Iowa, the organization still has a handful of roadblocks to overcome.

The Iowa Utilities Commission is requiring Summit to refile several documents to receive a permit. Summit is also still in the middle of lawsuits it filed against Iowa counties that have attempted to restrict the placement of pipelines.

Additionally, Summit still needs approval in South Dakota and North Dakota for pipelines to be placed in Iowa.

Summit will also be limited from engaging in any new easement agreements with landowners until the organization holds public informational meetings in affected counties as required by law.

Summit has released its schedule for 23 public informational meetings about the project across 23 different counties throughout August and September. The times and locations of the meetings can be read [here](#).

The Iowa chapter of the Sierra Club, an environmentalist activist group, has pledged to fight against Summit's pipeline efforts. The group is currently working with impacted landowners to oppose the project.

"The public comment period is our chance to tell the truth about carbon pipelines and the dangers they pose to our land, our families and our communities," the Sierra Club wrote on its website. "We also need to make sure impacted landowners know they DO NOT have to sign an easement."

Summit could also face challenges in the Legislature When Navigator wanted to connect pipelines from Iowa to Illinois, Illinois state lawmakers passed a two-year moratorium on new carbon dioxide pipelines.

In past sessions, the Iowa House of Representatives have passed three fairly bipartisan bills that would limit or regulate the use of eminent domain for these projects. However, none of the bills managed to pass the Iowa Senate.

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds has expressed support for the benefits carbon dioxide capture could have on the Iowa agriculture industry as long as the benefits account for landowner rights.

On Thursday, after a tour of the Chevron Renewable Energy Group's facility in Newton, Rep. Marianne Miller-Meeks praised pipelines as a way to aid Iowa's ethanol industry but avoided advocating for or against eminent domain by calling it a state issue, not a federal one.

"I would say that farmers and property owners need to look at the why, the rationale, and then determine if it's in their best interest," Miller-Meeks said. "Companies that are acquiring easements are looking at, 'How do you make the land whole? How do you ensure farmers that you can grow crops in the near future, the timing, restructure so that land is put back in the position it was before they put in the pipeline?'"

## Which agreements are being bought?

Summit isn't purchasing every agreement made by Navigator, Summit spokesperson Sabrina Zenor said. The land easement agreements Navigator made for its proposed route did not always align with Summit's route.

Some easement agreements in Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota and North Dakota have already been purchased but Zenor said the number of easement agreements purchased and when Summit will finish buying the old Navigator agreements it wants can't be confirmed yet.

Summit notified some landowners whose easement agreement was purchased via letters mailed to them. "Summit has acquired right-of-way easement options previously held by Navigator CO2, including the option(s) you signed with Navigator CO2," Lee Blank, Summit's chief executive, wrote in a letter to landowners whose easement agreements Summit purchased. "These options provide us with right-of-way access along expansion routes to the POET and Valero ethanol plants that have recently been added to our project."

With the Iowa Utilities Commission declining to reconsider its permit approval, another lawsuit involving the pipeline project from either landowners, environmental activists or Iowa counties is likely.

*Jack O'Connor is a States Newsroom Fellow for the summer of 2024. Jack is from California and studies journalism and political science at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities. His work can be read at The Minnesota Daily, Star Tribune or Park Bugle.*

## Federal aid approved for southeastern South Dakota flooding

**BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - AUGUST 16, 2024 9:40 AM**

Federal aid is on the way to help people recover from damages caused by late June's historic flooding in southeastern South Dakota.

Governor Kristi Noem announced Thursday night that President Joe Biden approved her disaster declaration request, which she submitted on July 26.

The declaration comes after what the Governor's Office calls a 1,000-year flooding event that impacted 25 counties. Federal funding will be available to state, tribal and local governments, and certain private nonprofit organizations, on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and repair and replacement of damaged infrastructure. The cost share is 75% federal, 15% state and 10% local.

Residents and business owners in Davison, Lincoln, Turner and Union counties qualified for individual assistance and are advised to contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency to apply. Assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster.

Noem said in a statement she is proud of South Dakota's resilience.

"This event was unprecedented, but our response was exactly what South Dakota always does," Noem said. "We work together to get our neighbors back on their feet."

Some residents, particularly in McCook Lake, have struggled in the aftermath. It has been about eight weeks since a June 23 flood severely damaged or destroyed about 40 homes there.

Morgan Speichinger's McCook Lake home was destroyed. Her family is looking forward to working with FEMA to get questions answered.

"It's still a long road ahead of us, but this was a major step forward," she said. "Especially since we have been stagnant for so long."

Many affected McCook Lake residents have relied on temporary accommodations, such as staying in hotels or with friends and relatives, while awaiting assistance.

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

## The big moment arrives for Harris: Democratic convention kicks off Monday in Chicago

**BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA AND JACOB FISCHLER - AUGUST 16, 2024 3:32 PM**

WASHINGTON — Just a little over a month after she became a candidate for president in the biggest shakeup in generations of presidential politics, Vice President Kamala Harris on Thursday will deliver a widely anticipated speech accepting the Democratic nomination at the party's convention in Chicago.

Harris' ascent to the top of the ticket after President Joe Biden changed course and said he would not seek reelection has breathed new life into the Democratic bid, with polls showing Harris — who is already the party's official nominee after a virtual roll call earlier this month — faring much better than Biden was against Republican rival Donald Trump.

Over the course of four days, Democrats will look to capitalize on their base's newfound enthusiasm for the campaign, with leading speakers aiming to rally the faithful around the party's positions on reproductive rights, gun safety and voting rights, while making a strong pitch to young voters. Harris will also be expected to further lay out her policy positions.

Harris' nomination is historic. The daughter of immigrants, Harris is the first Black and South Asian woman selected to lead a major party ticket. She would be the first woman of any race to guide the nation as chief executive.

The party has not released an official detailed schedule of speakers, but a convention official confirmed that "current and past presidents are expected to participate in convention programming." Biden and two former presidents, Barack Obama and Bill Clinton, as well as former nominee Hillary Clinton, will all speak, according to the New York Times.

Vice presidential candidate Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz is expected to address the convention Wednesday evening, with Harris' acceptance speech closing out the convention Thursday, the convention official said.

The evening programming block will run from 6:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday and 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. the rest of the week.

In addition to the usual television broadcasts, the convention will livestream on several social media platforms, including YouTube, X, Instagram and TikTok. The official live stream will be available on Dem-Convention.com.

Scores of Democratic caucus and council meetings, as well as state delegation breakfasts and gatherings, are also scheduled throughout the week's daytime hours. Media organizations and outside groups are also holding daytime events that will feature Democratic officeholders and candidates.

Protests are also expected over the Biden administration's handling of the Israel-Hamas war, with the backdrop of a delegation of uncommitted voters who oppose the war.

As many as 25,000 protestors are expected over the course of the convention, according to DemList, a newsletter for Democratic officials and allies.

### **A contest transformed**

Harris' entry into the race, nearly immediately after Biden announced on July 21 he would no longer seek reelection, energized Democrats distressed over Biden's poor showings in polls against Trump, whose reelection bid Biden turned back in 2020.

A Monmouth University poll published Aug. 14 showed a huge jump in enthusiasm for Democrats. The survey found 85% of Democratic respondents were excited about the Harris-Trump race. By comparison, only 46% of Democratic respondents said in June they were excited about a Biden-Trump race.

Harris is also seeing better polling numbers in matchups against Trump, with battleground-state and national surveys consistently shifting toward the Democratic ticket since Biden left the race.

Polls of seven battleground states published by The Cook Political Report With Amy Walter on Aug. 14 showed Harris narrowly leading in five states — Arizona, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin — and tied in Georgia and trailing in Nevada. All were improvements from Biden's standing in

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the same poll in May.

An Aug. 14 survey from Quinnipiac University showed Harris with a 48%-45% edge in Pennsylvania. The 3-point advantage for Harris was within the poll's margin of error.

Democrats hope to carry the momentum through the convention. Polls typically favor a party during and immediately after its national party gathering.

Despite the recent polling, Harris and Walz continue to describe themselves as underdogs in the race.

## Campaign themes

In her short time on the campaign trail, Harris has emphasized a few core messages.

She's made reproductive rights a central focus, including the slogan "We are not going back" in her stump speech after describing Republicans' position on abortion. Additionally, a Texas woman who had to leave the state for an emergency abortion will speak at the DNC, according to Reuters.

Harris has also played up her background as a prosecutor, drawing a contrast with Trump's legal troubles.

Walz has highlighted his working-class background and military service, while attacking Republican positions to restrict reproductive rights and ban certain books in schools.

Walz's first solo campaign stop since Harris selected him as her running mate was at a union convention, where he emphasized his union background as a high school teacher.

Walz was not initially considered the favorite to be Harris' running mate, but his appeal as a Midwesterner with a record of winning tough elections and enacting progressive policies led to his selection Aug. 6.

Harris has faced criticism for not sitting down for a formal media interview or holding a press conference since she became a candidate.

## Platform in flux

Democrats have not finalized their platform for 2024. Adopting a party platform is generally among the official items at a convention.

The party set a draft platform in July just eight days before Biden dropped his reelection bid. The document centered on the theme of "finishing the job" and mentioned Biden, then the presumptive nominee, 50 times and Harris 12.

Party spokespeople did not respond to an inquiry this week about plans for an update to the platform.

Reproductive rights will likely be a focus point of any policy wishlist.

Harris, during her time as vice president, has led the administration's messaging on reproductive rights after the Supreme Court overturned the constitutional right to an abortion in the summer of 2022.

In her campaign speeches, she has often stressed the need to "trust women" and that the government should not be deciding reproductive health.

Harris has often promised that if she is elected, she will restore those reproductive rights, but unless Democrats control a majority in the U.S. House and 60 Senate votes, it's unlikely she would be able to achieve that promise.

Since Roe v. Wade was overturned in that Supreme Court decision, Democrats have campaigned on reproductive rights that expand beyond abortion and include protections for in vitro fertilization.

The 2020 party platform focused on recovering from the coronavirus pandemic, the economy, quality health care, investing in education, protecting democracy and combating climate change.

Democrats are likely to continue to criticize the Project 2025 playbook — a blueprint by the Heritage Foundation, a think tank, to implement conservative policies across the federal government should Trump win in November.

Trump has disavowed the document, but has not detailed his own policy plans.

## Chicago conventions

The Democratic National Convention will take place in Chicago, a city with a long history of hosting the event. Democrats have held their convention in Chicago 11 times, first in 1864 and most recently in 1996.

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This year's will be the first in-person Democratic National Convention since 2016. It was upended due to the coronavirus pandemic and held virtually in 2020.

Throughout the four-day convention, there will be speeches and side events hosted by state Democratic party leaders.

The ceremonial roll call vote with delegates on the convention floor will take place Tuesday. The vice presidential nomination speech by Walz will be Wednesday night and on Thursday night, Harris will give her nomination acceptance speech.

The city is also preparing for massive protests from several groups on reproductive rights, LGBTQ protections, housing and an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, according to WBEZ News.

The City Council of Chicago in January approved a ceasefire resolution, with Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson the tiebreaker, making it the largest city to call for an end to the Israel-Hamas war, in which more than 40,000 Palestinians have died.

The war followed an Oct. 7 attack from Hamas, in which nearly 1,200 people were killed in Israel and hundreds taken hostage.

## Road to nomination

Harris' acceptance speech will cap a five-year journey to her party's nomination.

In 2019, the California senator announced a bid for president in the next year's election, but dropped out before the first primary or caucus votes were cast after she failed to catch on with Democratic voters.

Biden later picked her as a running mate, and the two defeated Trump and then-Vice President Mike Pence in the 2020 election.

Biden launched a reelection campaign for 2024, but stepped aside after a disastrous debate performance in June spurred questions about his ability to campaign and serve for another four-year term.

After Biden bowed out, Harris quickly secured 99% of delegates to become the party's likely nominee. The virtual five-day vote secured her official nomination.

With less than three months until Election Day, Harris and Walz already have sprinted through battleground states including Arizona, Pennsylvania and North Carolina.

Their campaign has also pulled in more than \$300 million, according to the campaign. Official Federal Election Commission records will be released in mid-October.

Harris and Trump have agreed to a Sept. 10 debate hosted by ABC News in Philadelphia. Trump proposed two more debates, and Harris has said she would be open to another one between the first debate and Election Day.

Walz and Republican vice presidential candidate Sen. J.D. Vance of Ohio have agreed to an Oct. 1 debate on CBS News, in New York City.

Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.

## Nine GOP-led attorneys general sue Biden administration over voter registration efforts

BY: DARRELL EHRICK, DAILY MONTANAN - AUGUST 16, 2024 9:32 AM

Nine states, including South Dakota, are challenging an executive order by President Joe Biden that would enlist federal agencies to help register residents to vote, and those states say the order undermines their power to control elections, calling it a federally subsidized program aimed at boosting Democratic and left-leaning blocs.

Kansas Attorney General Kris Kobach and Montana Attorney General Austin Knudsen filed the federal lawsuit in court in Wichita, Kansas. The nine states are Montana, Kansas, Iowa, South Dakota, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Carolina.

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South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley issued a statement saying in part, "This is an election integrity issue and another overreach by the federal government against the states."

The heart of the lawsuit is Executive Order 14019, which was issued on March 10, 2021.

The states challenging the executive order say that Biden converts various federal agencies, turning them in part into "a voter registration organization" illegally. The attorneys general say that elections, including voter registration, are solely the province of states, guaranteed by the Tenth Amendment of the United States Constitution.

Moreover, the states said that it's an example of the federal government trying to usurp the sovereignty of the states, and giving the states no other choice than to resort to federal court. The lawsuit said the states were never invited into the process, never allowed to comment, and they accuse the Biden administration of hiding the plans.

"In response to requests under the Freedom of Information Act, the Biden-Harris Administration has asserted the plans are subject to privilege and may be withheld from public scrutiny," the lawsuit claims.

The lawsuit lists a number of federal agencies as defendants, including the U.S. Treasury, the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of The Interior, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the U.S. Department of Education.

The lawsuit also claims that the National Voter Registration Act means that federal agencies cannot stand in the way of citizens voting, but it also said that voter registration activity is left to the states, and Biden's order oversteps its authority.

The 41-page suit outlines a number of ways the executive order commands the federal agencies to help bolster the efforts to register voters, for example:

The suit accuses the Department of Justice of providing information to those who remain eligible to vote while in federal custody, as well as preparing prisoners about voting laws and rights before reentry.

It says that the Department of the Interior will disseminate information about registering and voting at schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Education and tribal colleges and universities.

The order also encourages the Department of Agriculture to provide nonpartisan voter information through its borrowers and lenders about registration and voting.

Designating 2,400 American Job Centers, which provide employment guidance, training and career services, to become voter registration agencies under the National Voter Registration Act.

Allowing public housing community areas space for certain election-related activities, including voter registration or voter drop boxes for early voting.

The lawsuit said that the order allows the Department of Education to allow federal work study funds to "support voter registration" activities.

"There is little detail about how agencies determine whether a third-party organization is 'approved,' 'non-partisan,' or what third-party organizations an agency can work with to promote voter registration," the lawsuit said. "A rule that permits federal agencies to engage in voter registration activities trenches on States' constitutionally protected sovereign rights."

From a practical standpoint, the states claim that the federal government's executive order doesn't just exceed the constitution, but could threaten efforts in the individual states.

"The vast resources of the federal government render it unique among all possible entities engaged in voter registration. Because of the resources it can bring to bear, the federal government can engage in voter registration activities on a scale that will, as a practical matter, swamp any state's attempt to regulate the government's actions," the lawsuit said.

Knudsen, Montana's Attorney General, echoed that sentiment when he announced the lawsuit from Helena on Tuesday.

"Fair elections are an essential part of our country's republic. Congress gave the states the power to oversee elections years ago," Knudsen said. "I will not stand by while the Biden-Harris administration attempts to shamelessly garner votes by employing its own agencies to register voters and disregard states' own voter registration systems, putting the integrity of our elections at risk."



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The states also said that encouraging a variety of different agencies without proper training put the elections at risk of fraud.

"They failed to consider the risk of fraud or to implement actions to prevent fraud, which threatens the integrity of state administration of elections," the states said. "This includes, at a minimum, ensuring that illegal aliens do not register to vote through the plans the agency defendants put in place."

It is already against federal law for non-citizens to vote in elections.

The states conclude the lawsuit by saying that the plans in the executive order weren't motivated to help resident register to vote, rather they are part of a Democrat plan.

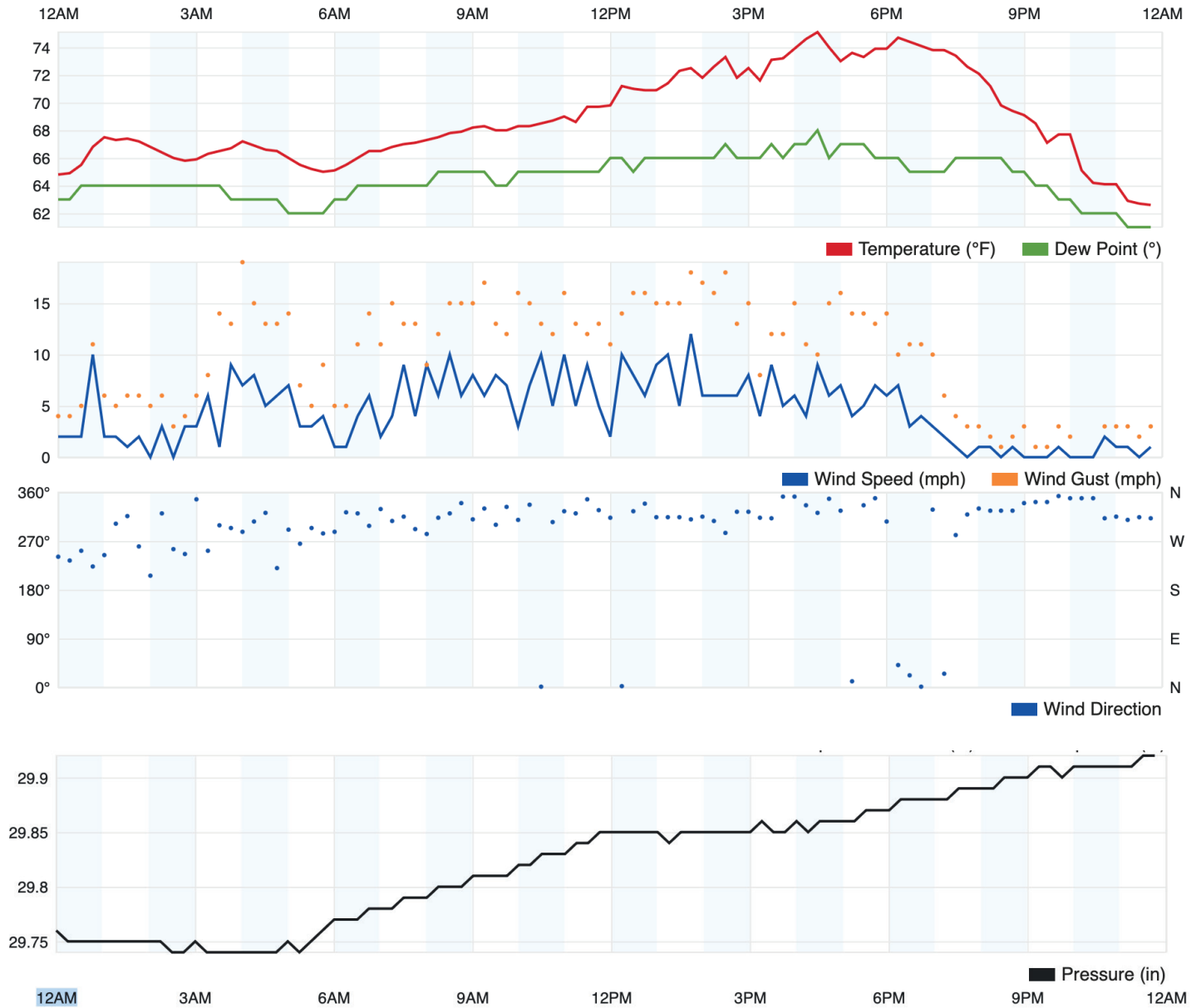
"(The executive order) was motivated by a partisan desire to unfairly increase the Democrat vote as shown by the fact that the order came from left-wing, progressive groups," the suit claims. "The purpose is to promote left-wing politicians and policies at elections."

*Darrell Ehrlick is the editor-in-chief of the Daily Montanan, after leading his native state's largest paper, The Billings Gazette. He is an award-winning journalist, author, historian and teacher, whose career has taken him to North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Utah, and Wyoming. With Darrell at the helm, the Gazette staff took Montana's top newspaper award six times in seven years. Darrell's books include writing the historical chapters of "Billings Memories" Volumes I-III, and "It Happened in Minnesota." He has taught journalism at Winona State University and Montana State University-Billings, and has served on the student publications board of the University of Wyoming.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 79 °F

Mostly Sunny

Tonight



Low: 57 °F

Mostly Clear

Sunday



High: 83 °F

Sunny

Sunday Night



Low: 60 °F

Mostly Clear

Monday



High: 86 °F

Sunny



## Temperature Trends And Precipitation Chances This Week

August 17, 2024  
4:11 AM

### Maximum Temperature Forecast (°F)

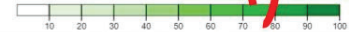
	8/17 Sat	8/18 Sun	8/19 Mon	8/20 Tue	8/21 Wed	8/22 Thu	8/23 Fri
Aberdeen	81	84	86	85	89	88	86
Britton	77	81	83	80	83	84	81
Brookings	78	81	81	78	81	83	83
Chamberlain	84	84	87	87	89	90	89
Clark	77	80	82	80	85	85	83
Eagle Butte	82	82	87	88	92	89	87
Ellendale	80	83	85	82	86	84	84
Eureka	80	82	86	83	88	86	84
Gettysburg	81	82	86	86	91	90	86
Huron	82	84	85	84	85	86	87
Kennebec	84	82	87	90	94	93	90
McIntosh	80	83	87	85	91	87	85
Milbank	78	82	83	80	83	83	84
Miller	81	82	86	86	91	90	87
Mobridge	86	88	91	89	93	91	89
Murdo	86	85	89	92	96	94	91
Pierre	87	87	91	93	97	96	93
Redfield	82	84	87	86	91	90	86
Sisseton	79	82	84	80	84	84	83
Watertown	78	81	82	80	84	87	83
Webster	76	80	81	77	82	84	81
Wheaton	79	82	83	79	82	79	82

-A Warming  
Trend Is Coming.

-Best Chance  
For Precipitation  
Is Anchored On  
Tuesday.

### Probability of Precipitation Forecast (%)

	8/17 Sat	8/18 Sun	8/19 Mon	8/20 Tue	8/21 Wed	8/22 Thu	8/23 Fri
Aberdeen	0	5	5	45	20	20	20
Britton	0	0	5	40	25	20	20
Brookings	0	0	0	30	30	10	20
Chamberlain	5	15	15	30	25	15	15
Clark	0	0	5	40	25	20	20
Eagle Butte	30	10	35	50	15	20	20
Ellendale	0	0	5	45	20	20	20
Eureka	0	5	5	45	15	15	15
Gettysburg	5	5	15	40	15	20	20
Huron	0	5	5	30	25	10	15
Kennebec	25	25	15	35	15	20	20
McIntosh	15	5	35	50	15	20	15
Milbank	5	0	0	30	30	20	25
Miller	5	5	5	45	20	20	20
Mobridge	5	5	10	40	10	15	15
Murdo	25	25	30	40	10	15	15
Pierre	25	20	20	40	15	15	15
Redfield	0	5	5	40	20	15	20
Sisseton	5	0	0	35	30	20	25
Watertown	0	0	0	35	30	20	25
Webster	0	0	0	40	30	20	25
Wheaton	10	0	0	35	35	20	25



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Showers with embedded thunderstorms will move into north central South Dakota this morning before dissipating. Otherwise, rain pretty much steers clear of the area this weekend as highs reach into the 80s, region wide, by Sunday.

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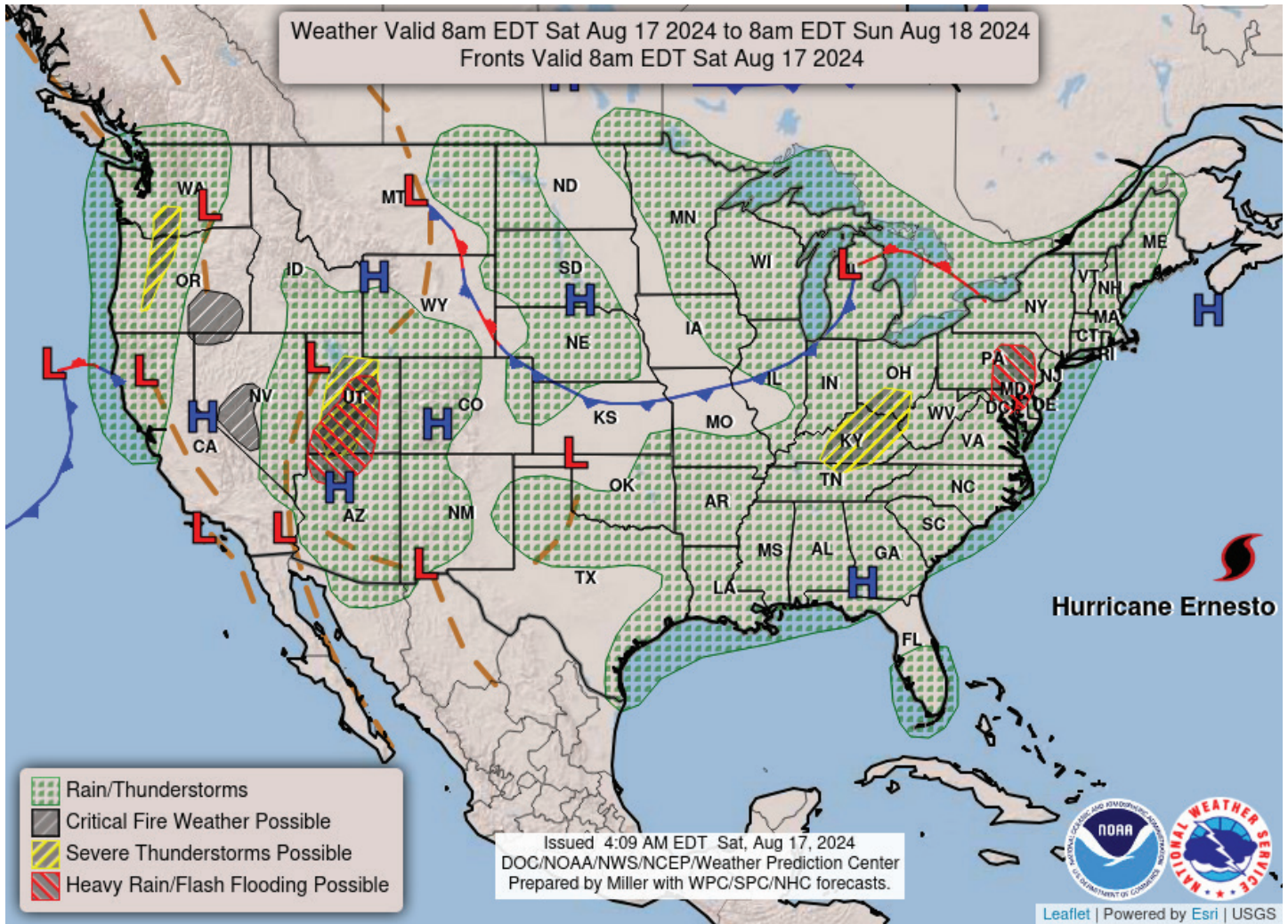
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 75 °F at 4:30 PM**  
**Low Temp: 63 °F at 11:24 PM**  
**Wind: 25 mph at 4:05 AM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 14 hours, 2 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 104 in 1976  
Record Low: 39 in 2012  
Average High: 83  
Average Low: 57  
Average Precip in Aug.: 1.22  
Precip to date in Aug.: 4.13  
Average Precip to date: 15.32  
Precip Year to Date: 19.02  
Sunset Tonight: 8:37:30 pm  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:36:19 am



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## Today in Weather History

August 17, 1961: Intensive rainfall occurred during the overnight hours on the 17th through the early morning hours on the 18th. Some rainfall amounts include 4.13 inches in Clark, 2.52 inches 1 W of Summit, 2.50 in Andover, 2.20 in Waubay, 2.15 in Wilmot, 2.12 in Wheaton, and 2.10 in Clear Lake.

August 17, 2007: An estimated four to six inches of rain and hail to the size of baseballs caused localized flooding between Piedmont and Tilford in Meade County, especially near poor drainage areas and at a barricade along a frontage road. The water washed over several roads and was several inches deep on Interstate 90, forcing law enforcement officials to close it for a couple of hours. Torrential rains estimated at four to six inches fell west of Hermosa in Custer County between 6 pm and 8 pm MST. Battle and Grace Coolidge Creeks overflowed their banks and several dry canyons filled with water and drained into the creeks. State highways 40 and 36 were flooded in numerous spots. A river gauge on Battle Creek just east of Hermosa crested at 14.91 feet at 9 pm, rising from 2.63 ft at 7:30 pm and above the flood stage of 8.0 feet. About six inches of water covered Highway 79 at the Battle Creek bridge. A railroad bridge about 3/4 mile downstream became clogged with debris and water rose behind the embankment and flooded six homes. At about 8:30 pm MST, a section of the embankment failed, flooding a new subdivision on the other side. All of the approximately 20 houses were damaged; three homes were washed off their foundations, and one of those houses was carried a half a mile east of the subdivision by the flowing water. There were no injuries.

1899: Hurricane San Ciriaco set many records on its path. Killing nearly 3,500 people in Puerto Rico, it was the deadliest hurricane to hit the island and the strongest at the time, until 30 years later when the island was affected by the Hurricane San Felipe Segundo, a Category 5 hurricane, in 1928. It was also the tenth deadliest Atlantic hurricane ever recorded. San Ciriaco is also the longest lasting Atlantic hurricane in recorded history, continuing for 28 days. On August 17, the hurricane turned back to the northwest and made landfall near Hatteras, North Carolina on the following day. San Ciriaco remains the strongest hurricane to make landfall on the Outer Banks since 1899.

1915 - A hurricane hit Galveston, TX, with wind gusts to 120 mph and a twelve foot storm surge. The storm claimed 275 lives, including forty-two on Galveston Island, with most deaths due to drowning. Of 250 homes built outside the seawall (which was constructed after the catastrophic hurricane of 1900), just ten percent were left standing. (The Weather Channel)

1946 - An estimated F-4 tornado killed 11 people and injured 100 others in the Mankato, Minnesota area around 6:52 PM. The deaths and most of the injuries occurred in the complete destruction of the 26 cabins at the Green Gables tourist camp, 3 miles southwest of Mankato. A 27-ton road grader was reportedly hurled about 100 feet. Another tornado an hour later destroys downtown Wells, Minnesota.

1969: The music festival, known as Woodstock, should have ended on this day. Jimi Hendrix, the last act to perform, was delayed due to rain on Sunday evening. Jimi Hendrix took the stage at 8:30 am Monday morning.

1969 - Camille, the second worst hurricane in U.S. history, smashed into the Mississippi coast. Winds gusted to 172 mph at Main Pass Block LA, and to 190 mph near Bay Saint Louis MS. The hurricane claimed 256 lives, and caused 1.3 billion dollars damage. Several ocean going ships were carried over seven miles inland by the hurricane. The hurricane produced winds to 200 mph, and a storm surge of 24.6 feet. Complete destruction occurred in some coastal areas near the eye of the hurricane. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Northern and Central Plains Region. One thunderstorm spawned a tornado near Fairbury NE, along with baseball size hail and wind gusts to 100 mph, causing severe crop damage west of town. Ten cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Syracuse NY hit 97 degrees for the first time in twenty-two years. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



## SEEING THE LIGHT

An astronomy professor asked his class, "When can you see the farthest – at night or in the daytime?"

Unanimously, the class answered, "In the daytime."

"Wrong," corrected the teacher. "In the daytime you see the sun. But at night you can see the stars, and the stars are millions of times farther away than the sun."

What do you see when you look beyond the moment? It's something that many of us do. Sometimes it is to escape the present moment. Other times it is to dream dreams of how things might change within our families – whether better or worse. Perhaps we may want to get away from the moment and simply escape.

When King Uzziah died, Isaiah "saw the Lord sitting on a lofty throne." What he saw was his commission to be God's messenger to His people. For some that might have been a dream come true. Others may have seen it as a responsibility more than they could handle. Being God's messenger has always had its difficult moments.

But Isaiah's mission looked difficult from the beginning. He had to tell people who believed they were blessed by God that they were going to be destroyed by God because they were disobedient to Him. And his response? "I'll go. Send me! I'll do whatever You ask!"

Now, more than ever, we need Isaiah's view of God. He has called us to serve Him. We dare not fail!

Prayer: Grant us, Lord, a vision of Your greatness that matches Isaiah's and empower us to serve You at all costs. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Then I heard the Lord asking, "Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?" I said, "Here I am. Send me." Isaiah 6

*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: 08.16.24

22 38 48 51 61 5

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$498,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.14.24

8 11 15 32 42 6

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$7,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 35 Mins 57 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.16.24

5 12 17 21 45 8

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 50 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.14.24

20 21 28 29 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$20,000**

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 50 Mins 57 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.14.24

16 27 34 62 66 22

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 19 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.14.24

8 9 23 29 62 13

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$35,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 19 Mins 58 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
- Cancelled:** 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
- 11/16/2024 Groton American Legion "Turkey Raffle" 6:30-11:30pm
- 11/28/2024 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 12/01/2024 Groton Snow Queen Contest, 4:30 p.m.
- 12/07/2024 Olive Grove 8th Annual Holiday Party & Tour of Homes with Live & Silent Auctions 6pm-close
- 04/12/2025 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt at the City Park 10am Sharp
- 05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm
- 07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm

## News from the **AP** Associated Press

### **Black Hills Harley-Davidson® Continues to Build its Legacy at the 84th Annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally**

RAPID CITY, S.D.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Aug 16, 2024--

Following on the heels of the Harley-Davidson® Homecoming Festival in Milwaukee in July, motorcycle riders and fans kept the celebration of riding going at the 84th annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally held August 2 – 11, 2024.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20240816113395/en/>

Black Hills Harley-Davidson® Rally at Exit 55 (Photo: Business Wire)

Throughout the 10-day event, Black Hills Harley-Davidson® hosted riders and enthusiasts and delivered a strong sales performance surpassing last year's record for motorcycles sold during the annual event. Black Hills Harley-Davidson® sales performance highlights from the 2024 Rally include:

New motorcycle sales up 26% compared to 2023, with Harley-Davidson's® new 2024 Street Glide® and Road Glide® motorcycle models garnering the most attention and demo rides. Used motorcycle sales up 7% compared to 2023. Parts and accessories sales up 5% compared to 2023, led by top seller Harley-Davidson® Audio Powered by Rockford Fosgate® sound system packages.

"We are extremely pleased with the rider turnout and sales performance at this year's Rally," said Al Rieman, General Manager of Black Hills Harley-Davidson®. Adding, "With support from Harley-Davidson®, we delivered exceptional experiences for our riders and fans above and beyond even last year, giving them even more reasons to come back next year or anytime for an unforgettable ride that only Harley-Davidson® can offer."

New this year at the dealership was a VIP-themed demo ride experience where riders trying out new Harley-Davidson® motorcycles were treated to exclusive parking, dedicated concierge attention, and refreshments in a VIP air-conditioned hang-out zone that featured live music and premium views of the Rally activities. The VIP experience, a successful contributor to Black Hills Harley-Davidson's® new motorcycle sales, is planned to return next year. Overall demo rides of Harley-Davidson® motorcycles at the Sturgis Rally also surpassed last year's totals.

"We're already getting ready for the 85th Sturgis Rally, and we expect it to be another incredible experience for our customers, the city, our Black Hills dealership, and Harley-Davidson®!" said Rieman.

The 85th annual Sturgis Rally takes place on August 1-10, 2025.

### **Hurricane Ernesto makes landfall on Bermuda as a category 1 storm**

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Hurricane Ernesto made landfall on the tiny British Atlantic territory of Bermuda early Saturday as residents hunkered down.

The wide category 1 storm was directly over the the wealthy territory at 6 a.m. Saturday, with maximum sustained winds of 85 mph (140 kph). The U.S. National Hurricane Center warned of strong winds, a dangerous storm surge and significant coastal flooding.

It said some 6 to 9 inches (150-225 millimeters) of rain was expected to fall on Bermuda. "This rainfall will likely result in considerable life-threatening flash flooding, especially in low-lying areas on the island," it said.

Due to the large size of the storm and its slow movement, hurricane-strength winds are expected to continue until Saturday afternoon, with tropical storm-strength winds continuing well into Sunday, the Bermuda government said. Ernesto is moving toward the north-northeast at around 9 mph (15 kph).

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The NHC reported life-threatening surf and rip currents on the east coast of the United States and said they would reach Canada during the course of the day. Ernesto is forecast to be near or east of Newfoundland by Monday night.

Bermuda power utility BELCO said that as of Saturday morning, more than three-quarters of its customers were without power. It described itself as being in "an active state of crisis."

"Our crews are no longer out in the field working as it is no longer safe for them. They will now rest until it is deemed safe for them to begin restoration efforts," BELCO added.

In preparation for the storm, officials in the wealthy British territory had suspended public transportation and closed the airport on Friday night.

"Hurricane Ernesto seriously threatens our community," National Security Minister Michael Weeks said. "This is not a storm to be taken lightly."

Bermuda is an archipelago of 181 tiny islands whose total land mass is roughly the size of Manhattan.

According to AccuWeather, it's uncommon for the eye of a hurricane to make landfall in Bermuda. It noted that, before today, since 1850 only 11 of 130 tropical storms that came within 100 miles (160 kilometers) of Bermuda had landfall.

The island is a renowned offshore financial center with sturdy construction, and given its elevation, storm surge is not as problematic as it is with low-lying islands.

Ernesto previously battered the northeast Caribbean, where it left hundreds of thousands of people without power or water in Puerto Rico after swiping past the U.S. territory as a tropical storm.

More than 180,000 out of nearly 1.5 million clients were still without power more than two days after the storm. Another 170,000 were without water as the National Weather Service issued yet another severe heat advisory, warning of "dangerously hot and humid conditions."

"It's not easy," said Andrés Cabrera, 60, who lives in the north coastal city of Carolina and had no water or power.

Like many on the island, he could not afford a generator or solar panels. Cabrera said he was relying for relief only "on the wind that comes in from the street."

Officials said they hoped to restore power to 90% of nearly 1.5 million customers in Puerto Rico by Sunday, but have not said when they expect power to be fully restored.

Of 152 locations of critical infrastructure without electricity that are being prioritized, 36 now have power, said Juan Saca, president of Luma Energy, a private company that operates the transmission and distribution of power on the island.

In the neighboring U.S. Virgin Islands, crews also were working to restore power, with 80% of customers back online.

Ernesto is the fifth named storm and the third hurricane of this year's Atlantic hurricane season.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has predicted an above-average Atlantic hurricane season this year because of record warm ocean temperatures. It forecast 17 to 25 named storms, with four to seven major hurricanes.

## Strategist who ran DeSantis' ill-fated bid is working with Musk to help organize voters for Trump

By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

Ron DeSantis' senior political aides were gathered last year at the Florida governor's campaign headquarters, an office across the street from a Red Lobster on Tallahassee's north side, planning the announcement of his candidacy for president.

Some wanted the Republican to go a baseball stadium in Tampa, near where he grew up and starred in Little League, for what they hoped would be a photogenic rally with his young family. Campaign manager Generra Peck supported a different idea, according to people familiar with the matter — one she had quietly been working on for weeks with Elon Musk, the then-new owner of the platform still known at the time as Twitter. The people spoke on condition of anonymity to disclose internal deliberations.

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DeSantis opted for an audio-only conversation with Musk on Twitter Spaces. Initially drawing interest and curiosity, the call was a disaster. The feed crashed due to technical glitches, creating an inauspicious opening for what would ultimately be DeSantis' ill-fated campaign.

Peck, who was demoted three months into DeSantis' candidacy, and Musk are now working together again, this time on a super political action committee, America PAC, dedicated to electing Donald Trump, who beat DeSantis on his way to winning this year's Republican nomination.

Trump's campaign is largely leaving paid canvassing and get-out-the-vote efforts to outside groups such as America PAC, relying on new guidance from the Federal Election Commission that allows campaigns to coordinate with outside groups in ways that were previously not allowed. But in doing so, the campaign has outsourced a core function to a coterie of untested groups that operate independently. Indeed, DeSantis' decision to have an outside group canvass for him was attributed as one of the reasons his presidential bid failed.

The small margins that an effective turnout program can achieve could be especially important in a tight presidential race with Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee, drawing more enthusiasm than when President Joe Biden was seeking reelection.

America PAC works to identify likely Trump supporters

America PAC has a charge of identifying likely Trump supporters in key states through door-to-door canvassing and digital outreach. It is among a handful of organizations to which Trump's team has ceded most of the organizational effort, including Turning Point Action and Faith and Freedom Coalition.

Its work — and Musk's role — have drawn an unusual level of interest.

"America PAC is utilizing the data it collects to register voters and encourage them to vote," lawyers for the group wrote in an Aug. 7 letter sent to a staffer for Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, whose office was cited in an Aug. 4 CNBC story as investigating the group's efforts. "Admittedly, not all our plans or strategies are public at this time, but any investigation into our efforts will prove premature and imprudent."

Benson's office, which released the letter, responded two days later by saying it announced a review "in response to concerns that potential Michigan voters were being misled by an America PAC website into believing they were registering to vote when they were, in fact, not."

Musk has denied reports that he would fund pro-Trump efforts this year to the tune of \$45 million a month. But he has been vocal both in his support of Trump and his boosting of conservative voices on the platform he renamed from Twitter to X.

"The key values of the PAC are supporting a meritocracy & individual freedom," Musk wrote in a July post. "Republicans are mostly, but not entirely, on the side of merit & freedom."

A year after Trump repeatedly mocked DeSantis' botched rollout, he appeared on the same platform this week to speak with Musk. But their call was also plagued by glitches and delayed for 40 minutes, followed by a long conversation in which Trump's audio often sounded slurred.

"Based on that two-hour X mess, if you get Musk as a client, that's good, I guess. But if you don't, you can see how that's also good," said Mark Campbell, who managed the winning campaign of Gov. Glenn Youngkin, R-Va., in 2021. "Because as far as Elon Musk's foray into politics goes, he's 0 for 2."

A spokesman for America PAC declined to comment. Peck did not respond to messages seeking comment.

America PAC brings in DeSantis alumni

In mid-July, America PAC dumped the vendors it had hired for digital strategy, polling, canvassing and advertising. It replaced those vendors with companies linked to Phil Cox, another former DeSantis campaign aide and former executive director of the Republican Governors Association who is a business partner of Peck's in a firm called P2.

Peck is not the sole leader of the PAC. In addition to Peck and Cox, Dave Rexrode, another top aide on the Youngkin campaign, is also a senior adviser.

People familiar with the matter say Peck — and DeSantis — have cultivated close ties with Musk.

About a month before DeSantis launched his campaign on Twitter Spaces, Peck held a late-night Zoom

meeting with Musk, who was overseas, as well as Musk's friend and fellow tech billionaire David Sacks and pro-DeSantis super PAC chairman Adam Laxalt, about Musk's interest in contributing to DeSantis' looming presidential campaign.

After that meeting, Peck told members of DeSantis' political team that she expected Musk to be the biggest player in the 20-year history of super PACs, groups that can take unlimited sums and advocate for a candidate as long as they do not coordinate with campaigns.

From that point on, Peck guarded Musk carefully, the people familiar with the operations said.

Where typically senior political operatives in contact with major donors hand off those relationships to a campaign's finance director, Peck did not in Musk's case, maintaining her role as the single DeSantis campaign conduit to Musk. "It was all her," one person said.

Likewise, Peck typically did not involve senior advisers to Never Back Down, the super PAC that DeSantis had entrusted with his organizational efforts in early states, to participate in calls with Musk. Though there are rules that bar coordination between campaigns and super PACs, those can be accommodated in conference calls by asking PAC officials to drop off the call during strategy discussions.

Peck kept communications with Musk to herself, to the point that top aides were barred from discussing Musk's interest in the campaign.

"Nobody was able to talk to engage with the Elon stuff," the source said. "It was clear during and immediately after the rollout that Generra was the one talking to them, exclusively so."

Others in DeSantis' political orbit said there was no need for Musk to be in contact with the Florida governor's campaign, that the billionaire defies the profile of even the biggest political donors. Those who say Musk wasn't in touch with key staff could be voicing bitterness that they didn't have more access to him, they say.

Others question how much America PAC will matter

Ultimately, Musk is not listed in Federal Election Commission records as having donated either to DeSantis' campaign or Never Back Down.

Peck served as campaign policy director on Youngkin's campaign. Campbell, the campaign manager then, described Peck as "brilliant in the policy area" but said he wasn't sure about her experience setting up a canvassing operation.

"If she's also trying to develop Elon Musk, I'm not sure that's that different than what a lot of political consultants do, which is put two different sides of their business together, the political and the corporate sides," Campbell said.

Canvassing and voter outreach are some of the most visible parts of a campaign, even though some strategists say observers put too much importance on the so-called "ground game." Campbell argued that both candidates — and not outsiders — would determine the fate of the race.

"Anything having to do with Musk is all collateral noise," he said.

## **A woman and her 2 children are among 10 killed in an Israeli strike in southern Lebanon**

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB and MOHAMMAD ZAATARI Associated Press

NABATIEH, Lebanon (AP) — An Israeli strike in southern Lebanon early Saturday killed at least 10 Syrian nationals, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry.

The strike on Wadi al-Kfour in Nabatieh province is among the deadliest in Lebanon since the Hezbollah militant group and Israeli military started trading strikes on Oct. 8, a day after Hamas attacked southern Israel and sparked the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. Hezbollah maintains that it will stop its attacks once a cease-fire is reached in the Gaza Strip.

Among the dead were a woman and her two children, the ministry said. Five others were wounded, two of whom in critical condition.

An Arabic-language spokesperson for the Israeli military, Avichay Adraee, said the strike in the southern province targeted a weapons depot belonging to Hezbollah.

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Mohammad Shoaib, who runs a slaughterhouse in Wadi al-Kfour, said the area struck was an "industrial and civilian area" that contained factories producing bricks, metal, and aluminum, as well as a dairy farm.

The uncle of three of the people killed in the strike said they were factory workers who were in their housing accomodation when they were hit. He denied that there were weapons at the facility.

"There was nothing at all like that," Hussein Shahoud said. "There was metal for construction, for building, for all kinds of purposes."

Hezbollah later announced it had fired a volley of rockets at the community of Ayelet HaShahar, near Safad in northern Israel in retaliation for the strike. The statement said that all 10 victims in Lebanon were civilians. Hezbollah typically issues death notices when its members are killed.

The Israeli army said 55 projectiles were identified crossing from Lebanon, some of which fell in open areas. No injuries were reported, but the strikes ignited multiple fires, it said. Earlier Saturday, two Israeli soldiers were injured, one seriously, by a strike coming from Lebanon that hit the area of Misgav Am.

The Lebanese government and international governments have scrambled for weeks to put an end to the monthslong clashes, with the region on a knife edge since July.

An Israeli strike last month in southern Beirut killed Hezbollah's top commander, whom Israel accused of leading a rocket attack on the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights that killed 12 youths. Hours later, an explosion widely blamed on Israel killed Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in the Iranian capital.

Both Tehran and Hezbollah vowed to retaliate, but have not yet launched strikes as diplomatic endeavors and Gaza cease-fire talks continue in Qatar.

Hezbollah and Israel fought a six-week war in the summer of 2006 that ended in a draw. Hezbollah's military capabilities have developed significantly since then.

More than 500 people have been killed by Israeli strikes since Oct. 8, most of them fighters with Hezbollah and other armed groups but also including around 100 civilians and noncombatants. In northern Israel, 22 soldiers and 24 civilians have been killed by strikes from Lebanon. Tens of thousands of people have been displaced on both sides of tense frontier.

## Deadly violence persists in Gaza despite mediators' hopes for a truce

By WAFAA SHURAFI and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — As mediators expressed optimism for an imminent cease-fire deal, violence raged on Saturday in the Gaza Strip, where an Israeli airstrike killed at least 18 people, all from the same family.

The attack came days after the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza announced the death toll surpassed 40,000 in the 10-month-old Israel-Hamas war, and just hours after officials from the United States, Egypt and Qatar wrapped up two days of cease-fire talks with a message of hope that a deal could be reached.

A joint statement from the three mediators said a proposal to bridge the gaps between Israel and Hamas was presented and they expected to work out the details of how to implement the possible deal next week in Cairo.

The mediation efforts were aimed not just at securing the release of scores of Israeli hostages and stopping the fighting that has devastated Gaza, where aid and health workers fear a possible polio outbreak. It is also aimed at tamping down regional tensions that have threatened to explode into a broader war amid fears that Iran and Hezbollah militants in Lebanon would attack Israel in retaliation for the killings of top militant leaders.

The airstrike in Gaza early Saturday morning hit a house and an adjacent warehouse sheltering displaced people at the entrance of the town of Zawaida, according to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah, where the casualties were taken. An Associated Press reporter at the hospital counted the fatalities as they were brought in.

Among those killed was a wholesaler identified as Sami Jawad al-Ejlal, who coordinated with the Israeli

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military to bring meat and fish to Gaza. The dead also included his two wives, 11 of their children ages 2 to 22, the children's grandmother, and three other relatives, according to a fatality list provided by the hospital.

"He was a peaceful man," said Abu Ahmed, a neighbor who was slightly wounded in the attack.

More than 40 civilians were sheltering in the house and warehouse at the time of the strike, he said.

Associated Press footage showed bulldozers removing rubble from the heavily damaged warehouse, and trucks that Abu Ahmed said were used to bring meat and fish to Gaza from Israel.

The Israeli military, which rarely comments on individual strikes, said it was checking the report. It said Saturday that it was continuing attacks on militants in central Gaza, including one seen launching rockets at troops.

Meanwhile, another mass evacuation was ordered for areas in central Gaza. In a post on X, Israeli military spokesperson Avichay Adraee said Palestinians in areas in and around the urban Maghazi refugee camp should leave. He said Israeli forces will operate in these areas in response to Palestinian rocket fire.

The vast majority of Gaza's population has been displaced by the fighting, often multiple times, and around 84% of Gaza's territory has been placed under evacuation orders by the Israeli military, according to the United Nations.

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed across the border on Oct. 7, killing about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting 250 to Gaza. More than 100 were released in a November cease-fire, and around 110 are believed to still be inside Gaza, though Israeli authorities believe around a third are dead.

Israel says it has killed more than 17,000 Hamas militants, without providing evidence.

Mediators have spent months trying to hammer out a three-phase plan in which Hamas would release the hostages in exchange for a lasting cease-fire, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and the release of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

But efforts took on new urgency in recent weeks as diplomats hoped a deal would persuade Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah to hold off on retaliating for the killing of a top Hezbollah commander in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut and of Hamas' top political leader in an explosion in Tehran that was widely blamed on Israel.

Israel and Hezbollah have been trading fire since the war started, and an Israeli strike Saturday killed at least 10 Syrians there, including a woman and her two children, Lebanon's Health Ministry said. Israel said it targeted a Hezbollah weapons depot.

An American official said Friday that the cease-fire deal presented to the two sides bridges all the gaps between Israel and Hamas. In what appeared to be a sign of confidence, mediators were beginning preparations for implementing the proposal even before it was approved, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity in keeping with rules set by the White House.

The official said an "implementation cell" was being established in Cairo to focus on logistics — including freeing hostages, providing humanitarian aid for Gaza and ensuring the terms of the pact are met.

But Hamas cast doubt on whether an agreement was near, saying the latest proposal diverged significantly from a previous iteration they had accepted in principle.

The Israeli prime minister's office issued a statement saying it "appreciates the efforts of the U.S. and the mediators to dissuade Hamas from its refusal to a hostage release deal."

Both sides agreed in principle to a plan announced on May 31 by U.S. President Joe Biden. But Hamas has proposed amendments, and Israel has suggested clarifications, leading each side to accuse the other of trying to tank a deal.

The U.S. official said the latest proposal is the same as Biden's, with some clarifications based on ongoing talks. The way it's structured poses no risk to Israel's security but enhances it, the official added.

Hamas has rejected Israel's demands, which include a lasting military presence along the border with Egypt and a line bisecting Gaza where it would search Palestinians returning to their homes to root out militants.

But Israel showed flexibility during the talks on retreating from the border corridor, and a meeting between Egyptian and Israeli military officials was scheduled for the following week to agree on a withdrawal

mechanism, according to two Egyptian officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the private negotiations.

Israel insisted on keeping control of the road bisecting Gaza, but American mediators vowed to return to the talks next week with a compromise on that demand, the officials said.

As part of an increased wave of diplomacy aimed at securing the deal, French Foreign Minister Stéphane Séjourné met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty in Cairo on Saturday.

Séjourné and British Foreign Secretary David Lammy met with officials in Israel on Friday. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken planned to travel to Israel over the weekend and was expected to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday.

## What to know as India's medics and women protest the rape and killing of a doctor

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India's medical workers began a countrywide strike Saturday to protest the rape and killing of a trainee doctor at a state-run hospital in the eastern West Bengal state.

Saturday's strike was called by the country's largest group of doctors, the Indian Medical Association, saying all non-essential services at hospitals would be shut down across the country for 24 hours.

The suspension of work has affected thousands of patients across India. The protests — mostly led by women — have intensified in recent days, demanding a safer working environment.

Here's what to know.

A trainee doctor has been killed

On Aug. 9, police discovered the bloodied body of the 31-year-old trainee doctor at the state-run R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital's seminar hall in eastern Kolkata city.

A police volunteer working at the hospital has been detained in connection with the crime, but the family of the victim alleges it was a gang rape and more people were involved. An autopsy has confirmed sexual assault.

The case is being probed by federal investigators after state government officers were accused of mishandling the investigation.

On Wednesday night, thousands of women across the country protested on the streets, demanding justice for the victim as they participated in "Reclaim The Night" marches. Some protesters called for the perpetrators of the crime to be given the death penalty.

Protesters want justice and safety

Thousands of medical workers across India are demanding justice for the victim and a guarantee of safety for doctors and paramedics inside hospitals and medical campuses. Many of them have suspended all but emergency treatment, with more such strikes planned over the weekend.

Doctors say the assault highlights the vulnerability of medics who work without proper safety facilities in hospitals and medical campuses across India.

The Indian Medical Association asked public support in its "struggle for justice" and called the killing a "crime of barbaric scale due to the lack of safe spaces for women."

The doctors are also demanding more stringent laws to protect them from violence, including making any attack on on-duty medics an offense without the possibility of bail.

India has a history of sexual violence against women

Sexual violence against women is a widespread problem in India.

Many cases of crimes against women go unreported in India due to the stigma surrounding sexual violence, as well as a lack of faith in the police. Women's rights activists say the problem is particularly acute in rural areas, where the community sometimes shames victims of sexual assault and families worry about their social standing.

Still, the number of recorded rape cases in the country has increased. In 2022, police recorded 31,516 reports of rape — a 20% jump from 2021, according to the National Crime Records Bureau.



In 2012, the gang rape and killing of a 23-year-old student on a New Delhi bus galvanized massive protests across India. It inspired lawmakers to order harsher penalties for such crimes, as well as the creation of fast-track courts dedicated to rape cases. The government also introduced the death penalty for repeat offenders.

The rape law amended in 2013 also criminalized stalking and voyeurism and lowered the age at which a person can be tried as an adult from 18 to 16.

## **Aid groups in Gaza aim to avert a polio outbreak with a surge of vaccinations**

By FATMA KHALED Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — The threat of polio is rising fast in the Gaza Strip, prompting aid groups to call for an urgent pause in the war so they can ramp up vaccinations and head off a full-blown outbreak. One case has been confirmed, others are suspected and the virus was detected in wastewater in six different locations in July.

Polio was eradicated in Gaza 25 years ago, but vaccinations plunged after the war began 10 months ago and the territory has become a breeding ground for the virus, aid groups say. Hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians are crowded into tent camps lacking clean water or proper disposal of sewage and garbage.

To avert a widespread outbreak, aid groups are preparing to vaccinate more than 600,000 children in the coming weeks. They say the ambitious vaccination plans are impossible, though, without a pause in the fighting between Israel and Hamas.

A possible cease-fire deal couldn't come soon enough.

"We are anticipating and preparing for the worst-case scenario of a polio outbreak in the coming weeks or month," Francis Hughes, the Gaza Response Director at CARE International, told The Associated Press.

The World Health Organization and UNICEF, the United Nations children's agency, said in a joint statement Friday that, at a minimum, a seven-day pause is needed to carry out a mass vaccination plan.

The U.N. aims to bring 1.6 million doses of polio vaccine into Gaza, where sanitation and water systems have been destroyed, leaving open pits of human waste in crowded tent camps. Families living in the camps have little clean water or even soap to maintain hygiene and sometimes use wastewater to drink or clean clothes and dishes.

At least 225 informal waste disposal sites and landfills have cropped up around Gaza — many close to where families are sheltering, according to a report released in July by PAX, a Netherlands-based nonprofit that used satellite imagery to track the sites.

Polio, which is highly contagious and transmits mainly through contact with contaminated feces, water or food, can cause difficulty breathing and irreversible paralysis, usually in the legs. It strikes young children in particular and is sometimes fatal.

The aid group Mercy Corps estimates some 50,000 babies born since the war began have not been immunized against polio.

WHO and UNICEF said Friday that three children are suspected of being infected and that their stool samples were being tested by a laboratory in Jordan. The Ministry of Health in Ramallah in the West Bank said late Friday that tests conducted in Jordan confirmed one case in a 10-month-old child in Gaza.

"This is very concerning," UNICEF spokesperson Ammar Ammar said Saturday. "It is impossible to carry out the vaccination in an active war zone and the alternative would be unconscionable for the children in Gaza and the whole region."

Aid workers anticipate the number of suspected cases will rise, and worry that the disease could be hard to contain without urgent intervention.

"We are not optimistic because we know that doctors could also be missing the warning signs," said Hughes of CARE International.

Health workers in Gaza are gearing up for a mass vaccination campaign to begin at the end of August and continue into September. The goal is to immunize 640,000 children under the age of 10 over two

rounds of vaccinations, according to WHO.

The Israeli military body responsible for Palestinian civilian affairs, which goes by the acronym COGAT, said it is "preparing to support a comprehensive vaccination campaign." And Hamas said in a statement Friday that it would support a seven-day truce to facilitate the vaccinations. Cease-fire talks resume in Cairo next week.

The alarm over polio was first raised when the WHO announced in July that sewage samples collected from six locations in Khan Younis and Deir al-Balah, in the south and center of Gaza, tested positive for a variant of the virus used in vaccines. The weakened form of the virus used in vaccines can mutate into a stronger version and cause an outbreak in areas that lack proper immunization, according to WHO.

The only countries where polio is endemic are Afghanistan and Pakistan. But outbreaks of the vaccine-derived virus have occurred in war-torn Ukraine and Yemen, where conditions aren't nearly as bad as they are in Gaza.

Part of the challenge in Gaza, where polio hasn't been seen in a quarter-century, is to raise awareness so that health workers recognize symptoms, the U.N. says. The territory's health care system has been devastated by the war, where workers are overwhelmed treating the wounded, and patients sick with diarrhea and other ailments.

Before the war, 99% of Gaza's population was vaccinated against polio. That figure is now 86%, according to WHO. The goal is to get polio immunization levels in Gaza back above 95%.

While more than 440,000 doses of polio vaccine were brought into Gaza in December, that supply has diminished to just over 86,000, according to Hamid Jafari, director of polio eradication for the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region.

The 1.6 million oral doses being brought into Gaza will be a more advanced version of the vaccine that is less prone to mutating into an outbreak, the WHO said.

Getting the vaccine into Gaza is just the first step.

U.N. workers face difficulties retrieving medical supplies and other aid because of Israel's military assaults, fighting between troops and Hamas, and increasing lawlessness that has led to the looting of convoys.

Also, vaccines must be kept refrigerated, which has become difficult in Gaza, where electricity is scarce. About 15-20 refrigerated trucks serve all of Gaza, and they also must be used to transport food and other medical supplies, said a senior Israeli army official with COGAT who was not authorized to talk with media and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Palestinians also face difficulties getting around. Their inability to reach health facilities will be an additional obstacle to the vaccination campaign, said Sameer Sah of Medical Aid for Palestinians.

"There's no transport system. The roads have been destroyed and you have quadcopters shooting at people," said Sah, referring to Israeli drones that often carry out strikes. Israel says its strikes target Hamas militants.

WHO said a pause in the fighting is vital to enabling "children and families to safely reach health facilities and community outreach workers to get to children who cannot access health facilities."

Only about a third of Gaza's 36 hospitals and 40% of its primary health care facilities are functioning, according to the U.N. But the WHO and UNICEF say their vaccination campaign will be carried out in every municipality in Gaza, with help from 2,700 workers.

## **Congo's humanitarian crisis helped mpox spiral again into a global health emergency**

By RUTH ALONGA and CHINEDU ASADU Associated Press

GOMA, Congo (AP) — Sarah Bagheni had a headache, fever, and itchy and unusual skin lesions for days, but she had no inkling that her symptoms might have been caused by mpox and that she might be another case in a growing global health emergency.

She also has no idea where to go to get medical help.

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She and her husband live in the Bulengo displacement camp in eastern Congo, a region that is effectively ground zero for a series of mpox outbreaks in Africa.

This year's alarming rise in cases, including a new form of the virus identified by scientists in eastern Congo, led the World Health Organization to declare it a global health emergency on Wednesday. It said the new variant could spread beyond the five African countries where it had already been detected — a timely warning that came a day before Sweden reported its first case of the new strain.

In the vast central African nation of Congo, which has had more than 96% of the world's roughly 17,000 recorded cases of mpox this year — and some 500 deaths from the disease — many of the most vulnerable seem unaware of its existence or the threat that it poses.

"We know nothing about this," Bagheni's husband, Habumuremyiza Hire, said Thursday about mpox. "I watch her condition helplessly because I don't know what to do. We continue to share the same room."

Millions are thought to be out of reach of medical help or advice in the conflict-torn east, where dozens of rebel groups have been fighting Congolese army forces for years over mineral-rich areas, causing a huge displacement crisis. Hundreds of thousands of people like Bagheni and her husband have been forced into overcrowded refugee camps around Goma, while more have taken refuge in the city.

Conditions in the camps are dire and medical facilities are almost nonexistent.

Mahoro Faustin, who runs the Bulengo camp, said that about three months ago, administrators first started noticing people in the camp exhibiting fever, body aches and chills — symptoms that could signal malaria, measles or mpox.

There is no way of knowing how many mpox cases there might be in Bulengo because of a lack of testing, he said. There haven't been any recent health campaigns to educate the tens of thousands of people in the camp about mpox, and Faustin said he's worried about how many people might be undiagnosed.

"Just look at the overcrowding here," he said, pointing to a sea of ramshackle tents. "If nothing is done, we will all be infected here, or maybe we are already all infected."

Around 70% of the new mpox cases in the Goma area in the last two months that were registered at a treatment center run by Medair were from displacement camps, said Dr. Pierre Olivier Ngadjole, the international aid group's health advisor in Congo. The youngest of those cases was a month-old baby and the oldest a 90-year-old, he said.

In severe cases of mpox, people can develop lesions on the face, hands, arms, chest and genitals. While the disease originated in animals, the virus has in recent years been spreading between people via close physical contact, including sex.

Bagheni's best hope of getting a diagnosis for her lesions is a government hospital that's a two-hour drive away. That's likely out of the question, given that she already struggles with mobility having previously had both her legs amputated.

Seven million people are internally displaced in Congo, with more than 5.5 million of them in the country's east, according to the U.N. refugee agency. Congo has the largest displacement camp population in Africa, and one of the largest in the world.

The humanitarian crisis in eastern Congo has almost every possible complication when it comes to stopping an mpox outbreak, said Dr. Chris Beyrer, director of Duke University's Global Health Institute.

That includes war, illicit mining industries that attract sex workers, transient populations near border regions, and entrenched poverty. He also said the global community missed multiple warning signs.

"We're paying attention to it now, but mpox has been spreading since 2017 in Congo and Nigeria," Beyrer said, adding that experts have long been calling for vaccines to be shared with Africa, but to little effect. He said the WHO's emergency declaration was "late in coming," with more than a dozen countries already affected.

Beyrer said that unlike COVID-19 or HIV, there's a good vaccine and good treatments and diagnostics for mpox, but "the access issues are worse than ever" in places like eastern Congo.

In 2022, there were outbreaks in more than 70 countries around the world, including the United States, which led the WHO to also declare an emergency that lasted until mid-2023. It was largely shut down in wealthy countries within months through the use of vaccines and treatments, but few doses have been

made available in Africa.

The new and possibly more infectious strain of mpox was first detected this year in a mining town in eastern Congo, about 450 kilometers (280 miles) south of Goma. It's unclear how much the new strain is to blame, but Congo is now enduring its worst outbreak yet and at least 13 African countries have recorded cases, four of them for the first time.

The outbreaks in those four countries — Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda — have been linked to Congo's, and Doctors Without Borders said Friday that Congo's surge "threatens a major spread of the disease" to other countries.

Salim Abdool Karim, an infectious disease expert who chairs the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's emergency committee, said the Congo outbreak has a particularly concerning change, in that it's disproportionately affecting young people. Children under 15 account for 70% of cases and 85% of all deaths in the country, the Africa CDC reported.

Unlike the 2022 global outbreak, which predominantly affected gay and bisexual men, mpox now appears to be spreading in heterosexual populations.

All of Congo's 26 provinces have recorded mpox cases, according to the state-run news agency. But Health Minister Samuel-Roger Kamba said Thursday that the country doesn't have a single vaccine dose yet and he pleaded for "vigilance in all directions from all Congolese."

Dr. Rachel Maguru, who heads the multi-epidemic center at Goma's North Kivu provincial hospital, said they also don't have drugs or any established treatments for mpox and are relying on other experts such as dermatologists to help where they can. A larger outbreak around the city and its numerous displacement camps already overburdened with an influx of people would be "terrible," she said.

She also noted a pivotal problem: poor and displaced people have other priorities, like earning enough money to eat and survive. Aid agencies and stretched local authorities are already wrestling with providing food, shelter and basic health care to the millions displaced, while also dealing with outbreaks of other diseases like cholera.

## **As political convention comes to Chicago, residents, leaders and activists vie for the spotlight**

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — As the American city that has hosted more political conventions than any other, Chicago has pretty much seen it all.

Presidential candidates have been made official in Chicago more than two dozen times since Abraham Lincoln in 1860, including the infamous 1968 convention, where police clashed with protesters, and Bill Clinton's 1996 renomination.

Now the nation's third-largest city is back on the global political stage as it hosts the Democratic National Convention starting Monday, with city leaders, residents and activists each hoping to claim time in the spotlight and shape the city's reputation.

Tourism officials are eager to highlight the best sites and eats, while allaying security concerns about crowds and street violence. Anti-war protesters, drawing from the area's large Palestinian population, are ready to march. And elected leaders say it's an historic opportunity to be the city where a woman of color, Vice President Kamala Harris, will be designated to lead a presidential ticket for the first time.

"It's a remarkable testament to who we are as a people, and hosting the world yet again where major history will take place by launching the first Black woman of Asian descent to the most powerful post in the world," Mayor Brandon Johnson told The Associated Press. "Chicago gets to do that."

But not everyone sees it that way.

Even though there have been convention highs, such as the 1996 convention going off largely without a hitch, comparisons to the 1968 convention are inescapable, especially as disapproval of U.S. support for war in Gaza grows.

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Lee Weiner, 85, is the last living member of the "Chicago Seven" activists who were tried for organizing an anti-Vietnam War protest outside the 1968 convention, where bloody clashes with police were captured on live television.

Weiner said the protests changed the course of his life.

The sociologist wrote a memoir about his experiences growing up in Chicago and sitting for the high-profile trial. Weiner said he thinks people are now more divided than ever and that police tactics haven't really changed.

"Echoes of that time are very much a part of our day to day now," Weiner said. "If you're going to be out in the streets, you should watch your ass."

Chicago has been preparing for more than a year, with extensive police training and security drills ahead of the event that's expected to draw 50,000 people, including thousands of anti-war activists.

Johnson says his leadership — as a Black man and former union organizer — shows how things are different, and that Chicago will accommodate First Amendment rights.

But anxiety that things might take a turn remain.

Some downtown businesses boarded up their windows this week while Cook County courts added more space and hours in anticipation of mass arrests during the convention.

Police Superintendent Larry Snelling said Chicago has held many large-scale events without problems, including the NATO convention in 2012. He touted the department's training for constitutional policing and de-escalation tactics as critical to the city's security plan.

The department faced strong criticism for being unprepared in the aftermath of George Floyd's killing in Minneapolis in 2020, when civil unrest broke out nationwide.

But Snelling said that was a different situation — Chicago's police are prepared for planned protests during the DNC — and that the department has learned many lessons.

"We've evolved as a department. We've evolved in training," Snelling told the AP this week. "You look at 1968; I think anyone who's still around from that time will tell you that officers didn't have the training or the preparedness to deal with that type of situation."

Protests are expected every day of the convention, with the overarching message being a call for an immediate end to the war in Gaza. Activists say Chicago is the ideal location because demonstrations will draw from the city's southwest suburbs, where the largest concentrations of Palestinians nationwide reside.

"It's not hyperbole to say the genocide is affecting the people of Chicago on a very personal level," said Muhammad Sankari, an organizer. "Because of that, it's a moral imperative for us to be organizing and bringing our demands to the doorstep of the Democratic Party."

Some Chicago residents are also hoping to seize the chance.

Bradly Johnson leads an anti-violence organization, BUILD Chicago, on the West Side, not far from the United Center where the convention will take place. For months during after-school and weekend programming, his group has cited the upcoming convention in teaching young people about the democratic process.

He's hoping the thousands of party leaders coming to Chicago will also learn from young people.

"It's an opportunity for Chicago to demonstrate that although there are shootings, that's not the totality of who we are," he said.

Former U.S. Sen. Carol Moseley Braun of Illinois said excitement around the convention — the city's 26th for a major party — was clear.

Her phone has been buzzing with friends and acquaintances looking for tickets since Harris became the presumptive nominee. Adding to the hype, Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker had been under consideration as Harris' running mate.

Moseley Braun, the first Black woman elected to the U.S. Senate, said it was fitting that Harris would accept the nomination in Chicago, where former President Barack Obama started his political career.

"We have a tradition in this city of men and women moving forward for new horizons," she said.

Tourism officials were also excited about boosting revenue.

Conventions of a similar size in other cities have generated as much as \$200 million for hotels, restaurants and retailers, according to Choose Chicago, the city's tourism marketing organization.

"We're like a 'Type A' personality," said Rich Gamble, the interim president of Choose Chicago. "We have expectations of ourselves. If you're here, we want the best version to be seen and the best behaviors."

## The pro-Palestinian 'uncommitted' movement is at an impasse with top Democrats as the DNC begins

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

DEARBORN, Mich. (AP) — Of the thousands of delegates expected to gather Monday at the Democratic National Convention, just 36 will belong to the "uncommitted" movement sparked by dissatisfaction with President Joe Biden's handling of the Israel-Hamas war.

But that small core has outsized influence.

Anger over U.S. backing for Israel's offensive in Gaza could generate unwelcome images for convention organizers, with raucous protests expected outside and potentially inside the Chicago arena where Harris will accept the nomination Thursday.

Top Democrats have spent weeks meeting with "uncommitted" voters and their allies — including a previously unreported sit-down between Vice President Kamala Harris and the mayor of Dearborn, Michigan — in an effort to respond to criticism in key swing states like Michigan, which has a significant Arab American population.

Months of meetings and phone calls between pro-Palestinian activists and the Harris campaign have fallen into an effective impasse. The activists want Harris to endorse an arms embargo to Israel and a permanent cease-fire. Harris has supported Biden's negotiations for a cease-fire but rejected an arms embargo.

Rima Mohammad, one of Michigan's two "uncommitted" delegates, said she sees the convention as a chance to share their movement's concerns with the party leadership.

"It is a way for protesters outside to be able to share their frustration with the party," she said.

The Democratic nominee meets a key Arab American mayor

Questions remain about the leverage "uncommitted" voters hold now that Biden has stepped aside and Harris has taken his place. Democrats have seen a significant surge in enthusiasm for Harris' campaign and concerns about voter apathy in key areas, such as Detroit's large Black population, appear to have diminished.

But Harris and her team have still made communication with Arab American leaders a priority.

During a campaign trip to Michigan last week, Harris met with Abdullah Hammoud, the 34-year-old mayor of Dearborn, a Detroit suburb that has the largest number of Arab Americans of any city in the United States. The meeting was disclosed by a person who was not authorized to discuss it publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The person familiar with the meeting did not provide specific details but said the focus was on Harris' potential policy, if elected, on the Israel-Hamas conflict. Hammoud declined to comment.

"Vice President Harris supports the deals currently on the table for a permanent cease-fire in Gaza and for the release of hostages," her campaign said in a statement. "She will continue to meet with leaders from Palestinian, Muslim, Israeli and Jewish communities, as she has throughout her vice presidency."

Campaign manager Julie Chavez Rodriguez on Thursday held separate one-on-one meetings with leaders in the Arab American community and "uncommitted" movement in metro Detroit.

"They are listening and we are talking," said Osama Siblani, publisher of The Arab American News, who met with Chavez Rodriguez. "But none of us can garner votes in the community without public statements from Harris. She doesn't need us; she can win over votes by saying and doing the right thing."

According to Siblani, Chavez Rodriguez agreed that "the killing has to stop." In response, Siblani said he pressed: "How? There is no plan."

Lavora Barnes, the Democratic chair in Michigan, said the party would "continue working toward our goal of coming together to defeat Donald Trump and Republicans up and down the ballot."

"We are committed to continuing these conversations with community leaders, activists and organiza-

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tions because we want to ensure that everyone in the Michigan Democratic Party has a seat at the table," Barnes said in a statement.

No agreement on an arms embargo

Some on the Democratic Party's left have called for including a moratorium on the use of U.S.-made weapons by Israel in the platform of policy goals that will be approved during next week's convention. But such language isn't included in a draft platform party officials released earlier this summer, and it's unlikely that those close to Harris' campaign would endorse including it.

The Uncommitted National Movement has also requested a speaking slot at the convention for a doctor who has worked on the frontlines in Gaza, along with a leader of the movement. And they have asked for a meeting with Harris "to discuss updating the Gaza policy in hopes of stopping the flow of unconditional weapons and bombs" to Israel, said Abbas Alawieh, another "uncommitted" delegate from Michigan and one of the founders of the movement.

Before a Harris rally just outside Detroit last week, Alawieh and Layla Elabed, co-founders of the movement, briefly met with the vice president. They requested a formal meeting with Harris and urged her to support an embargo on weapons shipments to Israel. According to them, Harris seemed open to the idea of meeting.

However, shortly after news of the meeting became public, Harris' national security adviser Phil Gordon reaffirmed that she does not support an arms embargo. Alawieh mentioned Wednesday that the group has not received any further response from Harris' team or the DNC regarding their requests ahead of the convention.

"I hope she doesn't miss the opportunity to unite the party," said Alawieh.

The Trump campaign continues its outreach

Elsewhere in metro Detroit this week, Massad Boulos, the father-in-law of Trump's youngest daughter and now a leader in his Arab American outreach, was holding meetings with various community groups. Boulos has come to Michigan often for the outreach, along with Arab Americans for Trump chair Bishara Bahbah.

According to Bahbah, their pitch highlights the situation in Gaza under Biden's administration and a promise from Trump's team to give the community a seat at the table if he wins.

"We have been told by the Trump circle, which is not part of the campaign, that in return for our votes, there would be a seat at the table and a voice to be heard," said Bahbah.

But any apparent political opportunity for Trump in the Arab American community or the "uncommitted" movement may be limited by his past remarks and policies.

Many Arabs remain offended by Trump's ban, while in office, on immigration from several majority Muslim countries as well as remarks they consider insulting. Trump also has criticized Biden for not being a strong enough supporter of Israel.

Speaking to an audience of Jewish supporters Thursday, Trump painted the protesters expected in Chicago as antisemitic and invoked an Arabic term that is sometimes used by Muslims to mean war or struggle.

"There will be no jihad coming to America under Trump," he said.

But Bahbah acknowledges that his and Boulos' strategy isn't necessarily aimed at converting voters to support Trump — but to stop them from voting for Harris.

"If I can't convince people to vote for Trump, having them sit at home is better," said Bahbah.

## 'Shoot me up with a big one': A timeline of the last days of Matthew Perry

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The arrest of five people in the overdose death of Matthew Perry has revealed key details about the final days of the "Friends" star, most of them spent in the throes of an addiction to the surgical anesthetic ketamine.

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Perry would die at age 54 on Oct. 28 after telling his assistant to shoot him up "with a big one." Drawn from unsealed federal court documents and a medical examiner's investigation, here's a chronological look at the end of Perry's life.

## The final month

September 30 — Perry and his live-in personal assistant, Kenneth Iwamasa, met at their home in the Pacific Palisades neighborhood of Los Angeles with Dr. Salvador Plasencia. Perry had been receiving ketamine treatments for depression — an increasingly common off-label use — from his regular doctor, but wasn't able to get as much as he wanted. Plasencia texted a doctor friend in San Diego, Mark Chavez, who agreed to obtain ketamine for him.

"I wonder how much this moron will pay," Plasencia texted Chavez. The two met up the same day in Costa Mesa, halfway between Los Angeles and San Diego and exchanged at least four vials of ketamine.

Plasencia returned to Perry's house, where Iwamasa paid him \$4,500 in cash for the vials. Plasencia gave Perry two injections of ketamine, and instructed Iwamasa on how to give the injections to the actor. Plasencia texted Chavez that the experience "felt like a bad movie."

October 2 — Iwamasa texted Plasencia saying he wanted to buy not just injection sessions, but to be left with more vials of ketamine, referring to it in agreed-upon code as "dr pepper." Plasencia appeared, gave Perry the injections, and left behind the vials of the anesthetic.

October 4 — Iwamasa injected Perry himself for the first time. He texted the doctor that he had found "the sweet spot" to put the needle into his boss, but that trying different spots on Perry had led to them running out, and they needed more. Plasencia texted Chavez asking if he could keep supplying the drug so they could become Perry's "go-to."

October 6 — Iwamasa told Plasencia they were running low, and needed more. Plasencia went to Perry's house and sold him one or more vials.

October 8 — In a late night meetup at a Santa Monica shopping plaza, Plasencia sold Iwamasa four vials of ketamine for \$6,000 in cash.

October 10 — Iwamasa drove Perry to a public parking lot in Long Beach, where they met up with the doctor. He sold them more ketamine, and gave an injection to Perry while the actor sat in a car. On the same day, Iwamasa sought even more of the drug from an additional source of ketamine, reaching out to Erik Fleming, an acquaintance of Perry.

October 11 — Fleming messaged Iwamasa that he can get ketamine from a woman he knows. "It's unmarked but it's amazing — he take one and try it and I have more if he likes," Fleming wrote. The woman, Jasveen Sangha, was known to her customers as the "Ketamine Queen." Fleming texted Iwamasa that she only deals "with high end and celebs. If it were not great stuff she'd lose her business."

October 12 — Plasencia went to Perry's house, where he was paid \$21,000 in cash, some of it owed to him for previous ketamine buys. While there he injected Perry. The actor immediately froze up and his blood pressure spiked. The assistant said the doctor told him, "let's not do that again."

October 13 — Perry got a sample of Sangha's ketamine and tried it. He and Iwamasa would ask for 25 vials of it, for which he would pay \$5,500. Fleming dropped it off at Perry's house a day later.

On or around Oct. 20 — Perry received his last legal ketamine treatment from his regular physician, according to what a woman close to him whose name was redacted in official documents told medical examiner's investigators. The woman said his previous doctor had given him treatments every other day, but his new doctor said Perry was doing well, his depression was managed, and he no longer needed so many treatments. The woman would tell investigators that she had believed Perry had been sober for 19 months and there had been no relapse.

## The final week

Around October 24 — Perry talked to the unidentified woman for the last time. She told investigators he had been in good spirits.

October 25 — Iwamasa asked Fleming for another 25 vials of ketamine. After picking up \$6,000 from Perry, Fleming picked up the ketamine from Sangha, who told him her own source is known as "Master Chef." Meanwhile, Iwamasa gave Perry at least six shots of ketamine.



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October 26 — Iwamasa again gave Perry at least six shots of ketamine.

October 27 — The assistant again gave the actor at least six shots of ketamine. With the supply coming from Fleming and Sangha, Perry and Iwamasa had been out of touch with Plasencia for about two weeks. Plasencia would text Iwamasa saying he had more to offer: "I know you mentioned taking a break. I have been stocking up."

The final day

About 8:30 a.m. — Acting at Perry's direction, using syringes from Plasencia and ketamine from Sangha, Iwamasa gave Perry an injection.

About 11 a.m. — Perry played pickleball, according to what Iwamasa told medical examiner's investigators later in the day, though many elements of that initial story changed in his later talks to prosecutors.

About 12:45 p.m. — Iwamasa gave Perry his second shot of the day, and the actor began watching a movie.

Shortly before 1:30 p.m. — Iwamasa gave Perry his third and final injection of the day while Perry sat at his backyard jacuzzi. "Shoot me up with a big one," Iwamasa remembered Perry telling him. The assistant then left to run errands.

About 4 p.m. — Iwamasa returned home to find Perry face down in the jacuzzi. He jumped in, pulled Perry to the steps and called 911. Paramedics arrived minutes later and declared Perry dead. Coroner's investigators would say ketamine was the primary cause of his death, with drowning a secondary cause.

The defendants now

Iwamasa has pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute Ketamine. Fleming has pleaded guilty to distributing ketamine resulting in death. Both are cooperating with prosecutors.

Chavez has agreed to plead guilty to conspiracy to distribute the drug. Plasencia and Sangha, the two main targets of the investigation, have pleaded not guilty to multiple felony counts.

Plasencia's lawyer Stefan Sacks said Thursday that everything his client did was in Perry's best medical interest. Sangha's attorney declined comment.

Attorneys for the other three men did not respond to multiple messages seeking comment from The Associated Press.

## **Her name was on a filing agreeing to be a Cornel West elector. Her question: What's an elector?**

By BRIAN SLODYSKO and JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — When Denisha Mitchell was asked why she filled out paperwork to serve as an Arizona elector for the independent presidential candidate Cornel West, her first response was "What?!" Her second: What's an elector?

"I was shocked and surprised by it all. I didn't even know what an elector was," Mitchell told The Associated Press on Friday. "The crazy thing is it was all forged. None of it was my handwriting. It was definitely not my signature. My email was wrong, my address was wrong."

Mitchell's case is the latest example of dubious tactics used in an effort to qualify West, a left-wing academic, for the ballot in states across the U.S. It's also among the more egregious. It's an effort that West himself apparently knows nothing about. His campaign did not immediately respond for comment Friday evening.

"If you produce information that is a false on filing to a government entity in Arizona, you've committed a felony. It's just not that complicated," said Dennis K. Burke, a former U.S. Attorney in Arizona, who also served as a chief deputy in the state attorney general's office.

But as the presidential election enters a critical three-month period, there are efforts around the country to subvert the integrity of the ballot, many of them coming from a collection of conservative activists and Republican-aligned operatives pushing West's candidacy.

Republicans and their allies have worked to get West on the ballot in Arizona, Wisconsin, Virginia, North

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Carolina, Nebraska, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Maine.

Their hope is West will serve as a spoiler candidate, boosting former President Donald Trump's chance of winning in November by siphoning liberal support away from the Democratic nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris, in battleground states that could be decided by just a few thousand votes.

While it is not clear who is behind the effort — and there is no indication that Trump's campaign is directly involved — one thing is certain: It's not West, who has not been actively campaigning and whose presidential committee, records show, was almost \$17,000 in debt at the end of June.

Since discovering she was signed up to be an elector, Mitchell has signed an affidavit that will be submitted to state authorities next week attesting that she never agreed to serve as an elector and never signed her name to a filing. In Arizona, all independent presidential campaigns are required to submit filings showing that they have a slate of electors who will cast their Electoral College votes for a presidential candidate.

But her story is not the only unusual one among the slate of electors for West.

One of them, Elizabeth Rothgeb, pleaded guilty to manslaughter after accepting a plea deal stemming from the killing of her then-husband with an ax in 1998. She spent 10 years in prison and was released on Christmas Eve 2010, according to online records from the state prison system.

Rothgeb, who could not be reached for comment, is a registered Republican, as are two other electors for West, voting records show. Two additional electors listed in the state filings are not registered to vote at the addresses provided for them, records show.

As for Mitchell, she says she is unsure who filled out the paperwork in her name.

She and her husband were both enthusiastic supporters of Bernie Sanders and were drawn to West's progressive message earlier this year. They later took jobs gathering petition signatures to get an initiative on the ballot that would raise the wages of tipped workers. They soured on West's candidacy when they read that Republican-aligned operatives were working to get him on the ballot to play spoiler.

"We weren't for the Republican griminess, so we stopped pushing him," she said.

Her former employer, a signature gathering contractor called Wells Marketing, a mysterious Missouri limited liability company, is leading the effort to get West on the ballot in Arizona. The company did not respond to a message seeking comment at a phone number listed for it.

"I don't know who did it. But because I worked for Wells (Marketing), they do have my information," said Mitchell.

The company is closely affiliated with Mark Jacoby — a brother-in-law of a Wells Marketing official, according to social media posts — who was also listed on state documents as the employer of one signature gatherer working to get West on the ballot in the state.

Jacoby is a Republican-aligned operative from California with a longstanding reputation for using deceptive tactics. He was convicted in 2009 of voter registration fraud, court records show.

In 2020, Jacoby worked to gather signatures to place the rapper Ye, formerly known as Kanye West, on the ballot. Ye's quixotic presidential campaign was widely viewed by Democrats as an effort to dilute Joe Biden's popularity with Black voters.

Jacoby's firm, Let the Voters Decide, was investigated for using questionable signature gathering tactics during a 2020 petition drive in Michigan that sought to roll back some of Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's emergency powers during the coronavirus pandemic. No charges came of the investigation.

He was accused in 2008 of tricking voters into registering with the California Republican Party by telling them they were signing an initiative to strengthen penalties for child molesters, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Jacoby did not answer a call at a number listed to him and his voicemail inbox was full.

Similarly unusual efforts have unfolded in other states, as well.

In April, The Washington Post reported pro-Trump activist Scott Presler was gathering signatures for West outside a Trump rally in North Carolina. In a video posted online, Presler described West, an academic, as a "far-left Marxist" who "if we get him on the ballot he could take a percentage point away" from Biden.

But Republican involvement in getting West and his Justice For All party on the ballot in North Carolina

ran far deeper.

At the beginning of June, disclosures show, West had spent just \$2,400 this year to gather the signatures needed to qualify for the ballot in states across the U.S.

But then Justice For All submitted well over the roughly 13,800 signatures needed. State government emails obtained by The Associated Press show current and former employees of Blitz Canvassing, a Republican firm that earned millions of dollars doing work for Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, helped West pull off the feat. The emails, previously reported by NBC News, show the employees affiliated with Blitz Canvassing were the designated representatives to pick up and drop off petitions for West's campaign.

Ballot access hijinks are nothing new in Arizona, where elections are often decided by fractions of a percentage point.

This year, a leader of the conservative group Turning Point Action resigned from the organization and dropped his bid for reelection to the Arizona House of Representatives after he was accused of forging signatures on his nominating petitions.

## US official says Mideast mediators are preparing for implementation of cease-fire deal in advance

By RAVI NESSMAN, ZEKE MILLER and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — In a sign that mediators believe a Gaza cease-fire deal is imminent, a U.S. official said Friday that Mideast negotiators are working out logistics for the potential release of hostages and distribution of aid as part of any agreement to end the Israel-Hamas war.

The official, who spoke to reporters on condition of anonymity in keeping with rules set by the White House, said the proposal currently on the table basically bridges every gap between Israel and Hamas and mediators were making preparations before a final deal is approved.

It was unclear what measures were being taken, but the official said a new "implementation cell" was being established in Cairo in advance. The cell would focus on logistics, including freeing hostages, providing humanitarian aid for Gaza and ensuring that the terms of the pact are met, the official said.

The comments came hours after mediators expressed hope that a deal was within reach. They said two days of talks had wrapped up in Qatar and that they plan to reconvene in Cairo next week to seal an agreement to stop the fighting.

Israel issued a vague statement saying it appreciated the mediators' efforts, and a statement from Hamas did not sound enthusiastic about the latest proposal to end the devastating 10-month war and free Israeli hostages held in Gaza. A cease-fire is seen as the best hope for heading off an even larger regional conflict.

U.S. President Joe Biden seemed optimistic, saying, "We are closer than we've ever been" to an agreement. Biden has expressed optimism for a deal before, only for talks to break down.

"As of an hour ago, it's still in play," he said, as he was traveling to spend the weekend at the Camp David presidential retreat. "It's far from over. Just a couple more issues, I think we got a shot."

Both sides agreed in principle to the plan Biden announced on May 31. But Hamas has proposed amendments, and Israel has suggested clarifications, leading each side to accuse the other of trying to tank a deal.

The U.S. official said the latest proposal is the same as Biden's with some clarifications based on ongoing talks. The way it's structured poses no risk to Israel's security but enhances it, the official added.

Hamas has rejected Israel's demands, which include a lasting military presence along the border with Egypt and a line bisecting Gaza where it would search Palestinians returning to their homes to root out militants.

Hamas quickly cast doubt on whether an agreement was near.

In a statement, the militant group said the latest proposal diverged significantly from the previous iteration they had agreed to in principle, implying they were not disposed to accept it.

The Israeli prime minister's office issued a statement saying it "appreciates the efforts of the U.S. and the mediators to dissuade Hamas from its refusal to a hostage release deal."

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken planned to travel to Israel over the weekend to "continue intensive

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diplomatic efforts" toward a cease-fire and to underscore the need for all parties in the region to avoid escalation, State Department spokesman Vedant Patel said.

Blinken was expected to meet with Netanyahu on Monday to discuss the new deal, said an Israeli official who spoke on the condition of anonymity in line with official requirements.

The new push for an end to the Israel-Hamas war came as the Palestinian death toll in Gaza climbed past 40,000, according to Gaza health authorities, whose counts do not distinguish between civilians and combatants. Fears were still high that Iran and Hezbollah militants in Lebanon would attack Israel in retaliation for the killings of top militant leaders.

International mediators believe the best hope for calming tensions would be a deal between Israel and Hamas to halt the fighting and secure the release of Israeli hostages.

International diplomacy to prevent the war from spreading intensified Friday, with the British and French foreign ministers making a joint trip to Israel.

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz said in a statement that he told his British and French counterparts that if Iran attacks Israel, Israel expects its allies not just to help it defend itself, but to join in attacking Iran.

He also warned Iran — which backs Hamas, Hezbollah and Houthi rebels in Yemen, all of whom have attacked Israel since the Gaza war started — to stop the attacks.

"Iran is the head of the axis of evil, and the free world must stop it now before it's too late," Katz said on X.

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed across the heavily guarded border on Oct. 7, killing around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting 250 to Gaza. More than 100 were released during a weeklong cease-fire in November, and around 110 are believed to still be inside Gaza, though Israeli authorities believe around a third of them are dead.

Israel's military spokesperson, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said Thursday that Israel had killed more than 17,000 Hamas militants in Gaza in the war, without providing evidence.

Diplomats hoped a cease-fire deal would persuade Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah to hold off on retaliating for the killing of a top Hezbollah commander in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut and of Hamas' top political leader in an explosion in Tehran that was widely blamed on Israel.

The mediators have spent months trying to hammer out a three-phase plan in which Hamas would release the hostages in exchange for a lasting cease-fire, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and the release of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

While talks were ongoing, Israel continued its offensive in Gaza.

On Friday it dropped leaflets asking civilians to evacuate from areas in northern Khan Younis and eastern Deir al-Balah, saying forces plan to respond to rocket fire that targeted Israel. After the orders were given, airstrikes hit some areas of Khan Younis, sending people fleeing. A video showed plumes of black smoke rising into the air after loud booms.

Also Friday, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi spoke to Biden and agreed to intensify joint efforts in the coming days to reach an agreement, said a spokesman for the presidency. El-Sisi also urged regional self-restraint.

In a clear message to Israel, Hezbollah released a video, with Hebrew and English subtitles, showing underground tunnels where trucks were transporting long-range missiles.

A Hezbollah official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was speaking about military affairs, said the missiles in the video have a range of about 140 kilometers (86 miles), capable of reaching deep inside Israel.

Hezbollah has tens of thousands of rockets, missiles and drones that the group says give it the ability to hit anywhere in Israel. Hezbollah started attacking Israel on Oct. 8 and says it will stop only when the Gaza war ends.

## Hurricane Ernesto lashes Bermuda as wealthy British territory closes down

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Hurricane Ernesto began to pound Bermuda late Friday with heavy winds and rain after officials in the tiny British territory in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean opened shelters and closed government offices.

The Category 2 storm located 95 miles (150 kilometers) south-southwest of Bermuda was packing maximum sustained winds of 100 mph (155 kph). It was moving northeast at 13 mph (20 kph).

Ernesto's large eye will likely be very near or over Bermuda early Saturday morning, with significant coastal flooding expected, according to the National Hurricane Center.

"Preparations to protect life and property should be rushed to completion," the center said.

The storm was forecast to dump between 6 to 9 inches of rain. Forecasters noted that Ernesto was a large hurricane, with hurricane-force winds extending up to 75 miles (120 kilometers) from the center and tropical-storm-force winds extending up to 275 miles (445 kilometers).

In preparation for the storm, officials in the wealthy British territory suspended public transportation and closed the airport on Friday night.

National Security Minister Michael Weeks warned of dangerous weather conditions starting late Friday, with more than 14% of customers already without power and growing.

"Hurricane Ernesto seriously threatens our community," he said. "This is not a storm to be taken lightly."

Dangerous surf and rip currents are also possible on the Turks and Caicos, the Bahamas and Atlantic Canada during the next few days, according to the center.

Ernesto was forecast to be near or east of Newfoundland by Monday night.

Bermuda is an archipelago of 181 tiny islands whose total land mass is roughly the size of Manhattan.

According to AccuWeather, it's uncommon for the eye of a hurricane to make landfall. It noted that since 1850, only 11 of 130 tropical storms that have come within 100 miles (160 kilometers) of Bermuda have made landfall.

The island is a renowned offshore financial center with sturdy construction, and given its elevation, storm surge is not as problematic as it is with low-lying islands.

Ernesto previously battered the northeast Caribbean, where it left hundreds of thousands of people without power or water in Puerto Rico after swiping past the U.S. territory as a tropical storm.

More than 180,000 out of nearly 1.5 million clients were still without power more than two days after the storm. Another 170,000 were without water as the National Weather Service issued yet another severe heat advisory, warning of "dangerously hot and humid conditions."

"It's not easy," said Andrés Cabrera, 60, who lives in the north coastal city of Carolina and had no water or power.

Like many on the island, he could not afford a generator or solar panels. Cabrera said he was relying for relief only "on the wind that comes in from the street."

Officials said they hoped to restore power to 90% of nearly 1.5 million customers in Puerto Rico by Sunday, but have not said when they expect power to be fully restored.

Of 152 locations of critical infrastructure without electricity that are being prioritized, 36 now have power, said Juan Saca, president of Luma Energy, a private company that operates the transmission and distribution of power on the island.

In the neighboring U.S. Virgin Islands, crews also were working to restore power, with 80% of customers back online.

Ernesto is the fifth named storm and the third hurricane of this year's Atlantic hurricane season.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has predicted an above-average Atlantic hurricane season this year because of record warm ocean temperatures. It forecast 17 to 25 named storms, with four to seven major hurricanes.

## A gunshot, a murdered rival and a kidnapped drug lord: Mexico's ruling party faces growing scandal

By MARK STEVENSON Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — It was strange and surprising when Mexico's most-wanted drug lord landed at an airfield near El Paso, Texas in July, but the story of how he got there is now growing into a scandal that threatens top figures in Mexico's ruling party.

At issue is whether Rubén Rocha — the governor of the cartel-dominated state of Sinaloa and a close ally of the president — may have held meetings with top leaders of the Sinaloa cartel, the main producer of deadly fentanyl that kills 70,000 Americans per year.

The saga involves skullduggery worthy of a 1940s film noir, but it threatens to undermine President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's central assertion that, while he refuses to confront Mexico's drug cartels, he also makes no deals with them.

On Thursday, federal prosecutors said Sinaloa state officials mishandled evidence in an apparent attempt to cover up the July 25 murder of Héctor Cuén, a politician who allegedly helped lure drug lord Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada to a meeting where he expected to find Gov. Rocha. Instead, Zambada was abducted by another drug lord and flown to the United States, where he was arrested.

Zambada said in a letter released by his lawyer that Cuén was murdered at the house where the abduction took place. Gov. Rocha has maintained Cuén was killed by gunmen in a botched robbery at a gasoline station later that day, and he even provided security camera footage of the alleged attack.

But federal prosecutors quickly noted something was wrong: post-mortem records showed Cuén's body had four gunshot wounds, while only one gunshot can be heard on the security camera footage, and gas station employees said they didn't hear any.

And the feds said Sinaloa officials violated all murder investigation rules by allowing Cuén's body to be cremated. Gov. Rocha denies planning any meeting with Zambada, but in the rest of the dispute over the events of that day, the drug lord's version now appears more credible. The Sinaloa state chief prosecutor resigned on Friday.

"It appears that what they did in Sinaloa was, as they do frequently, to cover up the crime," said Mexican security analyst David Saucedo.

López Obrador acknowledged Friday that "there have been contradictions in the case from the very start," and promised to get to the bottom of it. Federal prosecutors have taken over the case and the president said "the Attorney General's Office is showing that there are things that don't add up."

Gov. Rocha has been a sort of point-man for López Obrador's "hugs not bullets" policy of not confronting drug cartels; his state is home to Mexico's most powerful gang.

The governor has accompanied the president on his most controversial trips: the half-dozen visits the president has made to Badiraguato, Sinaloa, the hometown of imprisoned drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzmán.

At one point, Lopez Obrador even stopped to chat with Guzmán's now-deceased mother. Badiraguato is also where Gov. Rocha was born.

The Mexican president's drug policy is based on a series of unwieldy propositions: it's no use arresting drug lords, because new ones will pop up. López Obrador claims high-profile cartel arrests were a policy forced on Mexico by the United States; refusing to continue them is a victory for national sovereignty.

The president claims Mexican cartels don't manufacture fentanyl (they do, and top officials in Mexico have admitted as much), and that American social problems, not Mexican cartels, are responsible for the fentanyl crisis.

López Obrador says drug cartels are essentially "respectful people" who "respect the citizenry" and mostly just kill each other. The only solution to Mexico's dizzyingly high murder rate, he says, is to use job-training programs to drain the pool of potential drug cartel recruits.

All those assertions rest on one central proposition that now appears in doubt: that while the government doesn't attack cartels, it also doesn't make deals with them. While nobody has presented any credible

evidence that the president has met with drug lords, analysts say Gov. Rocha, a member of the president's Morena party, did.

"It isn't a suspicion any more, it's a certainty," said Saucedo. "What has become clear is that what the government has is intermediaries who negotiate with the Sinaloa cartel." Rocha has denied meeting or dealing with drug lords.

Saucedo notes it would not be the first time that Mexican governors or their relatives have met with drug lords — one was caught on video tape doing so in 2014.

Zambada's arrest in late July, along with El Chapo's son, Joaquín Guzmán López, was embarrassing for Mexico from the start, because the Mexican government wasn't even aware of it.

But it was Zambada's later account of how he was duped by the younger Guzmán — who always intended to turn himself in to U.S. authorities and apparently took along Zambada, who had a \$15 million bounty on his head, as a prize — that has set Mexico's political establishment trembling.

Zambada has said that Guzmán, who he trusted, had invited him to the meeting to help iron out the fierce political rivalry between Cuén and Gov. Rocha. Zambada was known for eluding capture for decades because of his incredibly tight, loyal and sophisticated personal security apparatus.

The fact that he would knowingly leave that all behind to meet with Gov. Rocha means that Zambada viewed such a meeting as credible and feasible. Ditto the idea that Zambada, as the leader of the oldest wing of the Sinaloa cartel, could act as an arbiter in the state's political disputes.

Gov. Rocha has denied he knew of or attended the meeting where Zambada was abducted. In an odd piece of political theater, Rocha published the flight plan of a plane that he said took him out of the state that day on a family vacation, and even published a video that day carefully explaining that "I am not in the state."

But in the central dispute about what happened that day, Zambada's version appears to be more credible. "It appears to me that El Mayo Zambada's version is totally more credible," said Saucedo. "It all adds up."

## **New California laws aim to reduce smash-and-grab robberies, car thefts and shoplifting**

By TRÂN NGUYỄN Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California Gov. Gavin Newsom on Friday signed a bipartisan package of 10 bills that aims to crack down on smash-and-grab robberies and property crimes, making it easier to go after repeat shoplifters and auto thieves and increase penalties for those running professional reselling schemes.

The move comes as Democratic leadership works to prove that they're tough enough on crime while trying to convince voters reject a ballot measure that would bring even harsher sentences for repeat offenders of shoplifting and drug charges.

While shoplifting has been a growing problem, large-scale, smash-and-grab thefts, in which groups of individuals brazenly rush into stores and take goods in plain sight, have become a crisis in California and elsewhere in recent years. Such crimes, often captured on video and posted on social media, have brought particular attention to the problem of retail theft in the state.

The legislation includes the most significant changes to address retail theft in years, the Democratic governor said. It allows law enforcement to combine the value of goods stolen from different victims to impose harsher penalties and arrest people for shoplifting using video footage or witness statements.

"This goes to the heart of the issue, and it does it in a thoughtful and judicious way," Newsom said of the package. "This is the real deal."

The package received bipartisan support from the Legislature, though some progressive Democrats did not vote for it, citing concerns that some of the measures are too punitive.

The legislation also crack down on cargo thefts, close a legal loophole to make it easier to prosecute auto thefts and require marketplaces like eBay and Nextdoor to start collecting bank accounts and tax identification numbers from high-volume sellers. Retailers also can obtain restraining orders against con-

victed shoplifters under one of the bills.

"We know that retail theft has consequences, big and small, physical and financial," state Sen. Nancy Skinner, who authored one of the bills, said Friday. "And we know we have to take the right steps in order to stop it without returning to the days of mass incarceration."

Democratic lawmakers, led by Newsom, spent months earlier this year unsuccessfully fighting to keep a tougher-on-crime initiative off the November ballot. That ballot measure, Proposition 36, would make it a felony for repeat shoplifters and some drug charges, among other things. Democrats worried the measure would disproportionately criminalize low-income people and those with substance use issues rather than target ringleaders who hire large groups of people to steal goods for them to resell online. Lawmakers' legislation instead would allow prosecutors to combine multiple thefts at different locations for a felony charge and stiffen penalties for smash-and-grabs and large-scale reselling operations.

Newsom in June went as far as proposing putting a competing measure on the ballot but dropped the plan a day later. Proposition 36 is backed by a coalition of district attorneys, businesses and some local elected officials such as San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan.

Newsom, flanked by a bipartisan coalition of state lawmakers, business leaders and local officials in a Home Depot store in San Jose, said the ballot measure would be "a devastating setback" for California. Newsom said last month he will work to fight the measure.

"That initiative is about going back to the 1980s and the war on drugs," he said. "It's about mass incarceration."

How to tackle crimes in California has become increasingly difficult to navigate in recent years for state Democrats, many of whom have spent the last decade championing progressive policies to depopulate jails and prisons and invest in rehabilitation programs. Newsom's administration has also spent \$267 million to help dozens of local law enforcement agencies increase patrols, buy surveillance equipment and prosecute more criminals.

The issue hit a boiling point this year amid mounting criticism from Republicans and law enforcement, who point to viral videos of large-scale thefts where groups of individuals brazenly rush into stores and take goods in plain sight. Voters across the state are also vexed over what they see as a lawless California where retail crimes and drug abuse run rampant as the state grapples with a homelessness crisis.

As the issue could even affect the makeup — and control — of Congress, some Democrats broke with party leadership and said they supported Proposition 36, the tough-on-crime approach.

It's hard to quantify the retail crime issue in California because of the lack of local data, but many point to major store closures and everyday products like toothpaste being locked behind plexiglass as evidence of a crisis. The California Retailers Association said it's challenging to quantify the issue in California because many stores don't share their data.

Crime data shows the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles saw a steady increase in shoplifting between 2021 and 2022, according to a study by the non-partisan Public Policy Institute of California. The state attorney general and experts said crime rates in California remain low compared to the heights decades ago.

The California Highway Patrol has recovered \$45 million in stolen goods and arrested nearly 3,000 people since 2019, officials said Friday.

## Pharmacist blamed for deaths in US meningitis outbreak will plead no contest in Michigan case

By ED WHITE Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — A Massachusetts pharmacist charged with murder in the deaths of 11 Michigan residents from a 2012 U.S. meningitis outbreak has agreed to plead no contest to involuntary manslaughter, according to an email sent to families and obtained Friday by The Associated Press.

The deal with Glenn Chin calls for a 7 1/2-year prison sentence, with credit for his current longer sentence for federal crimes, Johanna Delp of the state attorney general's office said in the email.



She said Chin will appear in Livingston County court next Thursday. A trial planned for November will be scratched.

Michigan is the only state to charge Chin and Barry Cadden, an executive at the New England Compounding Center in Framingham, Massachusetts, for deaths related to the outbreak.

More than 700 people in 20 states were sickened with fungal meningitis or other debilitating illnesses, and dozens died as a result of tainted steroids shipped to pain clinics, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The laboratory's "clean room," where steroids were prepared, was rife with mold, insects and cracks, investigators said. Chin supervised production.

He is currently serving a 10 1/2-year federal sentence for racketeering, fraud and other crimes connected to the outbreak, following a 2017 trial in Boston. Because of the credit for his federal sentence, Chin is unlikely to serve additional time in Michigan's custody.

"I am truly sorry that this ever occurred," Chin, now 56, said in the Boston court.

A phone message and emails seeking comment from Chin's attorney weren't immediately returned Friday.

Cadden, 57, pleaded no contest to involuntary manslaughter in Michigan earlier this year and was sentenced to 10 years in prison. Second-degree murder charges were dropped.

Cadden's state sentence is running at the same time as his 14 1/2-year federal sentence, and he has been getting credit for time in custody since 2018.

## **Ukrainian forces left a path of destruction in the Kursk operation.**

### **AP visited a seized Russian town**

SUDZHA, Russia (AP) — A trail of destruction lies in the path that Ukrainian forces carved on their risky incursion into Russia, blasting through the border and eventually into the town of Sudzha, where Associated Press journalists traveled Friday on a Ukrainian government-organized trip.

Artillery fire has blown chunks out of a statue of Soviet founder Vladimir Lenin that stands in a central square of the Russian town, which Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday was fully under his troops' control. The windows of an administrative building are blasted out, and its bright yellow facade is scorched and pockmarked with bullet holes.

Ukrainian forces have overrun one Russian settlement after another in the surprise operation that Kyiv hopes will change the dynamic of the 2 1/2-year-old conflict.

Russia's military has so far struggled to mount an effective response to the attack on its Kursk region, the largest on the country since World War II. Sudzha, which is 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the border, is the biggest town to fall to Ukraine's troops since the incursion began Aug. 6.

Evidence of Ukraine's lightning march lines the roads to the town. On grass littered with debris lies a sign blasted with bullets that has arrows in two directions: Ukraine to the left and Russia to right. A burned-out tank stands by the side of a road.

The photos and video the AP chose to publish were reviewed by the Ukrainian Defense Ministry, as is standard procedure on such trips.

The incursion has reframed the conflict, leading to the evacuation of more than 120,000 civilians, according to Russian authorities, and the capture of at least 100 Russian troops, according to Kyiv. It is widely seen as a major morale boost for a country and an army struggling to fend off steady Russian advances more than two years after Moscow sent troops into Ukraine.

But, so far, it has not dented Russia's overall strategic advantage.

The full scope of the Kursk operation remains unclear, including how long Ukraine is willing to hold Russian territory and to what end. Will Sudzha be a bargaining chip for a future cease-fire negotiation? And if so, will Ukraine assume the role of an occupier in a country that, in turn, controls a fifth of its own territory?

Ukrainian officials and soldiers have said diverting Russian reserves from the main battlegrounds in eastern Ukraine is a minimum aim of the Kursk offensive, but Moscow has shown no signs of withdrawing significant numbers of troops from battles there or slowing their tempo.

Zelenskyy has said Ukraine will establish a command office in Sudzha to coordinate aid and military affairs. That suggests Ukraine may plan to remain in the Kursk region long-term – or at least wants to signal to Moscow that it might.

Ukraine's Western backers have remained largely silent about the surprise operation, though U.S. President Joe Biden said that he's been kept abreast of developments.

Sudzha, which had a population of just 5,000 before the conflict began, holds some strategic importance. From the town, troops can access main roads to continue with their operation in Russia. Natural gas flowing from West Siberian gas fields to Central Europe via Ukraine passes through a metering station in the Sudzha district. However, Ukraine can also cut this gas flow from its own territory.

In the Russian town on Friday, residents huddled in a school basement. As they wondered about their fate, Ukrainian forces pushed their advance in Kursk. Fighting continued south of Korenevo, a town similar in size to Sudzha that would be an important tactical gain.

## **Jury convicts white Florida woman in fatal shooting of her Black neighbor during ongoing dispute**

By CURT ANDERSON Associated Press

A white Florida woman was convicted Friday of manslaughter in the fatal shooting of a Black neighbor after the jury rejected her claims that she fired through a metal door in self-defense amid an ongoing dispute over children playing outside her home.

The all-white jury in Ocala, Florida, found 60-year-old Susan Lorincz guilty after 2 1/2 hours of deliberation. Lorincz faces up to 30 years in prison at sentencing. She had claimed self-defense when she fired a single shot with a .380-caliber handgun through her front door on June 2, 2023, killing 35-year-old Ajike "A.J." Owens.

The confrontation was the latest in a dispute between the two neighbors over Owens' children playing in a grassy area near both of their houses. Prosecutors said Owens had come to Lorincz's home after her children complained that she had allegedly thrown roller skates and an umbrella at them amid a long-running annoyance at their boisterous play outside.

Lorincz told detectives in a videotaped interview that she feared for her life as Owens yelled and pounded on her door.

"I thought I was in imminent danger," she said.

Lorincz also said she had been harassed for most of the three years she lived in the neighborhood.

The victim's family members broke down in tears after Lorincz left the courtroom with deputies. She showed no reaction or emotion when the verdict was announced.

Circuit Judge Robert W. Hodges did not immediately set a sentencing date but ordered a background report to be done on Lorincz.

Anthony Thomas, an attorney for the Owens family, said they would push for the maximum 30-year prison term. Owens' mother, Pamela Dias, said she took some solace from the guilty verdict.

"We've achieved some justice for Ajike. My heart is a little lighter," Dias told reporters outside the courthouse. "This has been a long journey to get to this stage, to get to this verdict. I find some peace with that verdict."

State Attorney William Gladson, whose office prosecuted the case, said it was "a tragic reminder" of the consequences of gun violence.

"The defendant's choices have left four young children without their mother, a loss that will be felt for the rest of their lives," Gladson said in a statement. "While today's verdict can't bring A.J. back, we hope it brings some measure of justice and peace to her family and friends."

During closing arguments, prosecutor Rich Buxman had said there was no evidence that Owens posed an imminent physical threat to Lorincz.

"It's not a crime to bang on somebody's door. It's not a crime to yell," Buxman told jurors. "There was no imminent danger whatsoever when she fired that gun."

A lawyer for Lorincz countered that she was frightened by Owens' aggressive actions and was legally justified in firing her gun under Florida's "stand your ground" law. An autopsy found Owens weighed about 290 pounds (130 kilograms), making her much larger as well as younger than Lorincz, and the two had previous confrontations.

"She can defend herself," said Amanda Sizemore, an assistant public defender. "She had a split second to make a decision whether or not to fire her weapon."

Lorincz did not testify but said in an interview with detectives that was played for jurors that she never intended to harm Owens. Still, in one 911 call, Lorincz told a dispatcher, "I'm just sick of these children."

"She was not in fear. She was angry," Buxman said.

Owens' family has expressed surprise no Black jurors were selected for the trial given the racially sensitive nature of the case. There were protests in the Black community when prosecutors took weeks to charge Lorincz with manslaughter, a lesser count than second-degree murder which carries a potential life prison sentence.

The county court clerk's office said in an email that eight Black people were among the 70 in the initial jury pool. In contrast, 49 were white and 10 were listed as Hispanic, two as Asian and one as "other," the clerk's office said, based on records provided by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

Ocala is about 80 miles (130 kilometers) northwest of Orlando in central Florida. Marion County's Black population is about 12%, according to census figures.

## **Harris offers proposals to cut food and housing costs, trying to blunt Trump's economic attacks**

By MATT BROWN and MAKIYA SEMINERA Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris announced a sweeping set of economic proposals on Friday meant to cut taxes and lower the cost of groceries, housing and other essentials for many Americans.

"Look, the bills add up," she declared, trying to address the financial concerns that are at the top of voters' minds and that Republican Donald Trump is attempting to blame on her.

During a speech in the battleground state of North Carolina, Harris said that "building up the middle class will be a defining goal of my presidency" as she promoted her plan for a federal ban on price gouging by food producers and grocers. She also proposed \$25,000 in down payment assistance for certain first-time homebuyers and tax incentives for builders of starter homes.

"Every day across our nation, families talk about their plans for the future, their ambitions, their aspirations for themselves, for their children. And they talk about how they're going to be able to actually achieve them financially, because, look, the bills add up," Harris said. "Food, rent, gas, back to school clothes, prescription medications. After all that, for many families, there's not much left at the end of the month."

She stressed tax breaks for families, as well as middle- and lower-income people, promising to expand the child tax credit to up to \$3,600 — and \$6,000 for children in their first year of life. The vice president also wants to enlarge the earned income tax credit to cover people in lower-income jobs without children — which the campaign estimates would cut their effective tax rate by \$1,500 — and lower health insurance premiums through the Affordable Care Act.

Overall, the plans represent a continuation of many Biden administration priorities.

Harris isn't looking for any radical departures from President Joe Biden, who stepped down from the race last month and endorsed her. Still, the vice president has embraced a dash of economic populism, shifting away from Biden's emphasis on job creation and infrastructure to matters more closely tied to easing the cost of living — food prices, housing costs and tax breaks for families.

Much of what she's proposing would require congressional approval, which is far from assured in the current political environment, though, and Harris' campaign has offered scant details on how to pay for the ideas.

The vice president is seeking to blunt Trump's attacks on her. He responded to her speech by posting

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on his social media account, "Kamala will implement SOVIET style price controls." He gave his own speech Thursday, during which he displayed popular grocery store items meant to represent the high cost of food.

Some of Trump's economic advisers offered further rebuttals to Harris' plans before she spoke on Friday, with Brian Hughes, a spokesman for the former president's campaign, calling them representative of a "socialist and authoritarian model."

Kevin Hassett, a former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers during the Trump administration, called it "completely preposterous" for the government to play a role in setting food prices, a reference to Harris' proposed federal ban on "corporate price-gouging" on food.

In her speech, Harris offered stark contrasts with Trump's economic proposals, including his call for steep tariffs on foreign goods. She said that her opponent "wants to impose what is, in effect, a national sales tax on everyday products and basic necessities that we import from other countries."

"It will mean higher prices on just about every one of your daily needs," Harris said. "A Trump tax on gas, a Trump tax on food, a Trump tax on clothing, a Trump tax on over-the-counter medication."

She added, "At this moment, when everyday prices are too high, he will make them even higher."

Year-over-year inflation has reached its lowest level in more than three years, but food prices are still 21% above where they were three years ago. A Labor Department report this week showed that nearly all of July's inflation reflected higher rental prices and other housing costs, a trend that, according to real-time data, is easing. As a result, housing costs should rise more slowly in the coming months, contributing to lower inflation.

Harris' grocery pricing proposal would instruct the Federal Trade Commission to penalize "big corporations" that engage in price spikes and it singles out a lack of competition in the meat-packing industry for driving up meat prices.

Monica Wallace, a county clerk who attended Harris' speech, called the vice president's economic plans "what we need."

"I have a mother who is receiving services, and just in food stamps alone, she's still not able to afford food that will last her," Wallace said.

Comparing Harris to Trump, Wallace said she sees the vice president as someone "definitely for the middle and lower class," whereas the former president is "for the people who make the money to do any and everything that they want."

Polls nonetheless show that Americans are more likely to trust Trump over Harris when it comes to handling the economy: Some 45% say Trump is better positioned to handle the economy, while 38% say that about Harris. About 1 in 10 trust neither Harris nor Trump to better handle the economy, according to the latest Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll.

Riding a resurgence of enthusiasm since the Democrats' campaign reboot, Harris has embarked on a battleground state blitz in recent weeks that has broadened the number of races viewed as competitive by strategists. In North Carolina, Democrats are navigating renewed energy with caution in an economically dynamic state that hasn't been won by a Democratic presidential candidate since Barack Obama in 2008.

Gov. Roy Cooper told Friday's crowd, "I have that 2008 feeling."

"That's the last time we voted for a Democratic nominee for president, Barack Obama," Cooper said.

North Carolina State University political science professor Steven Greene said that the state "went from a situation where Joe Biden was almost surely going down in defeat here, whereas Kamala Harris has a very real chance of winning,"

Deborah Holder, a 68-year-old Raleigh resident who runs six McDonalds restaurants, said of the vice president, "Her culture is something that is going to be a huge strength for her, because she'll be able to look at the rest of us not just as her constituents, but as people that she has dealt with in all walks of life,"

Harris is trying to strike a balance in defining her own image and economic agenda while still giving credit for the Biden administration's track record. Her speech in North Carolina came a day after the president was asked if Harris might distance herself from his economic record and responded, "She's not going to."

In their first joint speaking event since Biden dropped out, he and Harris were in Maryland on Thursday

where they showcased successful negotiations to lower prices for Medicare recipients on 10 prescription drugs.

But Harris spent far more time talking about Trump than Biden in North Carolina, promising "to build an America where everyone's work is rewarded and talents are valued, where we work with labor and business to strengthen the American economy."

"And where everyone has the opportunity," she said "not just to get by, but to get ahead."

## What to know about the US arrest of a Peruvian gang leader suspected of killing 23 people

By MICHAEL R. SISAK, ELLIOT SPAGAT and FRANKLIN BRICENO Associated Press

A South American crime boss wanted in the killings of at least 23 people in Peru was captured this week in New York, three months after U.S. immigration authorities arrested and then released him after he illegally entered the country at the Texas-Mexico border.

The arrests Wednesday of Gianfranco Torres-Navarro and his girlfriend, Mishelle Sol Ivanna Ortíz Ubillús, ended an international search that gripped Peru in the wake of violence attributed to Torres-Navarro and his "Los Killers" gang. Their capture also raised questions about why the notorious gang leader was allowed to stay in the U.S. after his initial brush with immigration authorities in May.

Who are Gianfranco Torres-Navarro and Mishelle Ortíz Ubillús?

Torres-Navarro, 38, is the leader of "Los Killers de Ventanilla y Callao." Peruvian authorities say the gang, formed in 2022, has used violence to thwart rivals and further its core business of extorting construction companies in an area along the Pacific coast where Peru's main port is located.

Torres-Navarro was previously a member of the Los Malditos de Angamos criminal organization, Peru's Public Prosecutor's Office said. He is also known as "Gianfranco 23," a reference to the number of people he is alleged to have killed or ordered killed. He reportedly has the names of victims tattooed on his body.

Jorge Chavez-Cotrina, the head of Peru's Special Prosecutor's Office against Organized Crime, told The Associated Press that the crimes Torres-Navarro was wanted for include contract killings, extortion and running a criminal organization.

The Public Prosecutor's Office has described Ortiz Ubillús as Torres Navarro's romantic partner, lieutenant and cashier. She has a sizable following on TikTok, where she's shown off their luxe lifestyle, including designer clothes and resort vacations.

Online immigration detention records for Torres-Navarro and Ortíz Ubillús did not include information on lawyers who could comment on their behalf.

Who is Torres-Navarro accused of killing?

Col. Franco Moreno, the head of Peru's High Complexity Crime Investigations Division, told AP that Torres-Navarro's victims included rival gang leaders and their families.

Torres-Navarro "is a highly dangerous criminal who believed he was untouchable and responsible for 23 murders." All of it was done "to increase his criminal leadership," the investigator said.

Torres-Navarro and Ortíz Ubillús are believed to have fled Peru after he and the "Los Killers" gang were suspected of killing retired police officer Cesar Quegua Herrera and wounding a municipal employee at a restaurant in San Miguel in March.

Torres-Navarro also is suspected of ordering a February 2023 hit on the leader of another gang and five members of his family, including two children, Moreno said.

In some cases, Torres-Navarro "has personally executed the deaths of his rivals," Chavez-Cotrina said.

When did Torres-Navarro enter the U.S.?

Torres-Navarro illegally entered the U.S. on May 16 near Roma, Texas, about 210 miles (339 kilometers) south of San Antonio, according to U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection arrested him the same day and released him with a notice to appear for immigration proceedings, ICE said.

Peruvian authorities say they didn't order the location and international capture of Torres-Navarro and

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Ortíz Ubillús' until July 3. U.S. authorities said they received information on July 8 that Torres-Navarro was wanted in Peru and subsequently moved to arrest him.

ICE arrested them in Endicott, New York, a small village about 145 miles (233 kilometers) northwest of New York City, the agency said.

What happens when someone enters the U.S. illegally?

U.S. Border Patrol releases tens of thousands of migrants each month who enter illegally with notices to appear in immigration court to pursue asylum or other forms of humanitarian protection.

Releases into the U.S. have fallen dramatically in line with fewer crossings as Mexican authorities have stepped up enforcement within their borders and the U.S. introduced asylum restrictions in June.

There were 27,768 releases into the U.S. in July, down from 191,782 in December. In May, when Torres-Navarro entered the country, 62,164 people were released with notices to appear in court.

The Border Patrol may refer migrants to ICE for detention while their cases go through immigration court, but the agency receives funding to hold only 34,000 people. Space is reserved for those deemed the highest security risks.

Migrants who are released are photographed and fingerprinted. They must provide a U.S. address where they will live.

Why didn't border agents keep Torres-Navarro in custody in May?

U.S. Customs and Border Protection did not respond to AP's questions about Torres-Navarro, including what information it had about him in May or whether the Peruvian government had flagged him in databases it searches.

The agency provided a fact sheet stating that it "uses a range of resources and information, including information shared by partners worldwide, to inform screening and vetting and to target such individuals attempting to come to United States."

The agency, part of the Department of Homeland Security, said it "has implemented enhanced screening measures at the border to identify known or suspected gang members" and that people confirmed as such are referred for criminal prosecution or detained for removal from the U.S.

Customs and Border Protection did not immediately respond to questions about whether those procedures were in place when Torres-Navarro entered the country and, if so, whether he was subject to such screening.

Has Torres-Navarro been in trouble before?

Torres-Navarro has been on the radar of Peruvian authorities for years, but he has largely eluded attempts to hold him accountable for his alleged crimes.

In 2019, while on the run from authorities, he was sentenced to 10 years in prison for illegal weapons possession.

He remained at large until 2021, when he was arrested at a toll checkpoint near Peru's capital city, Lima. Torres-Navarro was freed last December after an acquittal in that case.

Peruvian authorities said "Los Killers" soon ramped up its violence, culminating in the killing of the retired police officer in San Miguel.

In June, six reputed members of "Los Killers" were arrested in a series of raids and accused of homicide, contract killing, and extortion, the National Police of Peru said.

Moreno said his investigators began following the gang after the February 2023 execution of a rival gang boss and that man's family. Moreno said Peruvian authorities tracked phone calls, geolocations and messages from Torres-Navarro and his gang of at least 10 members.

What happens to Torres-Navarro and Ortíz Ubillús now?

Torres-Navarro is being held at a federal detention facility about halfway between Buffalo and Rochester, New York, pending an immigration hearing, ICE said.

Ortíz Ubillús is being held at a processing center in Phillipsburg, Pennsylvania, according to ICE's Online Detainee Locator System.

They are likely to be deported to Peru unless they are charged in the U.S.

## Woman charged in brazen plot to extort Elvis Presley's family and auction off Graceland

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and JONATHAN MATTISE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Missouri woman has been arrested on charges she orchestrated a brazen scheme to defraud Elvis Presley's family by trying to auction off his Graceland mansion and property before a judge halted the mysterious foreclosure sale, the Justice Department said Friday.

Lisa Jeanine Findley, 53, of Kimberling City, falsely claimed Presley's daughter borrowed \$3.8 million from a bogus private lender and had pledged Graceland as collateral for the loan before her death last year, prosecutors said. She then threatened to sell Graceland to the higher bidder if Presley's family didn't pay a \$2.85 million settlement, according to authorities.

Findley posed as three different people allegedly involved with the fake lender, fabricated loan documents, and published a fraudulent foreclosure notice in a Memphis newspaper announcing the auction of Graceland in May, prosecutors said. A judge stopped the sale after Presley's granddaughter sued.

Experts were baffled by the attempt to sell off one of the most storied pieces of real estate in the country using names, emails and documents that were quickly suspected to be phony.

Graceland opened as a museum and tourist attraction in 1982 and draws hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. A large Presley-themed entertainment complex across the street from the museum is owned by Elvis Presley Enterprises. The announcement of charges came on the 47th anniversary of Presley's death at the age of 42.

"Ms. Findley allegedly took advantage of the very public and tragic occurrences in the Presley family as an opportunity to prey on the name and financial status of the heirs to the Graceland estate, attempting to steal what rightfully belongs to the Presley family for her personal gain," said Eric Shen, inspector in charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service Criminal Investigations Group.

An attorney for Findley, who used multiple aliases, was not listed in court documents. A voicemail left with a phone number believed to be associated with Findley was not immediately returned, nor was an email sent to an address prosecutors say she had used in the scheme.

She's charged with mail fraud and aggravated identity theft. The mail fraud charge carries up to 20 years in prison. She remained in custody after a brief federal court appearance in Missouri, according to court papers.

In May, a public notice for a foreclosure sale of the 13-acre (5-hectare) estate said Promenade Trust, which controls the Graceland museum, owes \$3.8 million after failing to repay a 2018 loan. Riley Keough, Presley's granddaughter and an actor, inherited the trust and ownership of the home after the death of her mother, Lisa Marie Presley, last year. An attorney for Keough didn't immediately respond to a message seeking comment on Friday.

Keough filed a lawsuit claiming fraud, and a judge halted the proposed auction with an injunction. Naussany Investments and Private Lending — the bogus lender authorities now say Findley created — said Lisa Marie Presley had used Graceland as collateral for the loan, according to the foreclosure sale notice. Keough's lawsuit alleged that Naussany presented fraudulent documents regarding the loan in September 2023 and that Lisa Marie Presley never borrowed money from Naussany.

Kimberly Philbrick, the notary whose name is listed on Naussany's documents, indicated she never met Lisa Marie Presley nor notarized any documents for her, according to the estate's lawsuit. The judge said the notary's affidavit brings into question "the authenticity of the signature."

The judge in May halted the foreclosure sale of the beloved Memphis tourist attraction, saying Elvis Presley's estate could be successful in arguing that a company's attempt to auction Graceland was fraudulent.

The Tennessee attorney general's office had been investigating the Graceland controversy, then confirmed in June that it handed the probe over to federal authorities.

A statement emailed to The Associated Press after the judge stopped the sale said Naussany would not proceed because a key document in the case and the loan were recorded and obtained in a different

state, meaning "legal action would have to be filed in multiple states." The statement, sent from an email address listed in court documents, did not specify the other state.

After the scheme fell apart, Findley tried to make it look like the person responsible was a Nigerian identity thief, prosecutors said. An email sent May 25 to the AP from the same email as the earlier statement said in Spanish that the foreclosure sale attempt was made by a Nigerian fraud ring that targets old and dead people in the U.S. and uses the Internet to steal money.

## Michael Brown's death transformed a nation and sparked a decade of American reckoning on race

By AARON MORRISON Associated Press

Kayla Reed was born in a predominantly African American section of St. Louis where, like her own kin, many Black families had been transplanted out of the Deep South.

After the death of her grandmother, Reed moved with her father from the city to a St. Louis County town located within one mile of Ferguson, Missouri, where 10 years ago, a Black teenager's fatal shooting by a white police officer changed Reed's life and shook awake a nation.

"It was like in my backyard," she recalls. "I don't really feel like I considered myself much of an activist. I definitely think I had the type of Black consciousness that comes with being raised by a Black preacher and seeing Black people go through so much."

Reed was not a community organizer. She was a pharmacy technician with second job at a furniture store. Like so many others, on Aug. 9, 2014, she learned by word of mouth, as she clocked out of a shift, that an unarmed 18-year-old from the neighborhood had been killed.

His name was Michael Brown.

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EDITOR'S NOTE — Over the next several weeks, The Associated Press will publish a series of stories exploring the impact, legacy and ripples of what is widely called the "Ferguson uprising" but has sparked nationwide outcries over police violence and calls for broader solutions to entrenched racial injustices. The series provides a sprawling look at racial justice in American life, from stories about how the uprising changed the U.S. Department of Justice and how corporations sought to boost their profiles by donating to the movement, to examinations of a reckoning on race in schools, churches, politics, sports and public health.

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A march toward measurable change

When Reed joined hundreds of grieving community members out at the scene, Brown's bloodied body had been removed from the middle of Canfield Drive, a two-lane street in Ferguson, a majority-Black city where the relationship between local police and residents had long been tenuous. The tensions worsened after detectives left Brown's corpse covered with a white sheet for four traumatizing hours in the summer heat, in full view of an apartment complex.

Darren Wilson, the Ferguson police officer who fatally shot Brown, had driven a police vehicle up to the teenager and his friend on Canfield Drive. The officer ordered them to get up on the sidewalk before a scuffle ensued. Although Brown was unarmed, Wilson described Brown as menacing at 6-foot-4 and claimed the teenager charged at him before he opened fire.

Some nearby residents said Brown had his hands up in surrender when he was shot.

For Reed, Brown's encounter with the Ferguson officer was familiar. Her brothers, her dad and other loved ones had been subjected to mistreatment, disrespect and indignity by the area's police. Nonetheless, she was shocked.

"I just found myself sort of returning to (Canfield Drive) day after day, and then to what becomes the uprising," says Reed, who became an organizer amid the protests and civil unrest.

Largely peaceful demonstrations — some blemished by vandalism, theft and arson among residents and outside opportunists — were met with violent police response. But the demonstrations weren't contained



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to Ferguson. Over the next decade, the deaths of Black people at the hands of police and vigilantes would draw support, resources and democratic change to communities all over the nation. "This time," residents vowed, things must be different.

Today, Reed is the executive director of Action St. Louis, a Black-led political activist group that she co-founded in 2014. She says the passage of time has proven that what began as an uprising in Ferguson has resulted in measurable change for Black Americans.

Movement-minded leaders have been elected and anti-progressive leaders unseated. Local legislation has been passed to dismantle prisons and jails, and federal legislation has been introduced in Congress. Most critically, more people are politically educated and engaged with the idea that they can build communities that work for them and not simply exist in an ecosystem of systemic racism.

"What we've tried to show over the last 10 years is that there is no landmark piece of legislation that we're chasing," Reed says. "What we are chasing is the fundamental uprooting of a system rooted in anti-Blackness, rooted in the form of white supremacy that has been continuously violent for over a century to our people."

Strength in numbers — and coalitions

The death of Michael Brown prompted an eruption of protests and gave a boost to a then-nascent Black Lives Matter movement. In subsequent years, a new generation stepped forward to pick up the work of civil rights and racial justice started by their parents and grandparents. In racial justice movements, the uprooting of white supremacy is a lesser-invoked aim — one that also demands white people reckon with their race's complicity in generations of disadvantage faced by Black Americans and other people of color.

It's not just BLM. Over the last decade, Indigenous people defended land and water, Latinos resisted draconian immigration detention and deportation practices, and Asian American activists pushed back on xenophobia that endangers their lives. Together these movements, benefitting from multiracial coalition-building, are changing American democracy and the broader culture, encouraging activism the world over.

Michael Brown inspired much of that. But a decade later, the future of racial justice in the United States remains in question.

"Michael Brown embodied the anger, that was so obvious and evident after decades of dismissing it, of holding it back, of telling ourselves we're going to overcome," says Karla Scott, a communications professor and the former African American Studies program director at St. Louis University. "It just became the moment we said, we can't be polite anymore. He set fire to all of the anger that had been smoldering for centuries. And it was not just the Black community."

The Brown case and the Ferguson uprising prompted a generation of activists in Black-led organizations to work collectively on strategy, yielding the policy platform known as "Vision for Black Lives." But there was also a recognition that the vision couldn't be achieved without building a multiracial movement, says Loan Tran, national director of Rising Majority, a coalition of advocacy organizations.

"All of these struggles are interconnected," says Tran, who uses they/them pronouns. "The whole objective under the system that we live under is to pit communities against each other, to participate in an Olympic competition of their own oppression."

Instead of arguing about who is more oppressed, multiracial coalition building over the last decade has helped communities of color get clear about common problems and opportunities, Tran says.

"We are interested in building powerful movements that actually change and shift the conditions," they say. "So when we think about this upcoming election, it calls at some of the foundational questions that we're grappling with: What does a genuine multiracial democracy in this country look like? What does a non-exploitative economy actually look like? And how are we going to get there?"

A glimpse from 10 years down the road

Years after the U.S. Department of Justice issued a scathing indictment of Ferguson's police department, nearly half of its officers are Black. Police receive training on de-escalation and community relationship building.

Ferguson's mayor, police chief, city attorney and other leaders are Black. The city's residents, who are

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70% Black and 21% white, can find more jobs in the area because of a career development initiative launched after the protests. But the city remains under federal watch, the result of a consent decree that required sweeping changes to the way its police force and municipal court systems are run.

These changes in Ferguson came as the deaths of Black Americans at the hands of police drew more protests and civil unrest in other cities. In 2015, Walter Scott in North Charleston, South Carolina, and Freddie Gray in Baltimore; in 2016, Philando Castile in Falcon Heights, Minnesota, and Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; in 2018, Stephon Clark in Sacramento and Botham Jean in Dallas, Texas.

The backlash to BLM and racial justice conversations was significant. Even though former President Barack Obama convened a task force in which law enforcement leaders and Ferguson protesters compiled recommendations for policing reforms, the fatal ambush of police officers in New York City and Dallas in 2014 and 2016, respectively, brought about strong condemnations of Black protesters and organizers.

Still, the list of Black citizen casualties grew until, in 2020, the deaths of George Floyd in Minneapolis and Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky sparked an unprecedented mobilization of racial justice protests and civil unrest. This time, many felt, things really would be different.

But after four years, Congress hasn't passed legislation meant to impose national policing reforms. Earlier this month, Democratic senators reintroduced the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act that would ban police chokeholds, eliminate the use of no-knock warrants and limit the federal transfer of excess military equipment that local police departments have used to quell protests. There were no Republican cosponsors.

Even this year, ahead of a national election between a former prosecutor whose record receives mixed reviews among racial justice advocates and a former president who has pledged to offer police immunity from criminal prosecution, hopes for progress appear foggy.

Days before the anniversary of Brown's death this month, Missouri Rep. Cori Bush, a movement-supported congresswoman who had been teargassed with Ferguson protesters, lost a Democratic primary to St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney Wesley Bell. The prosecutor, a Black man who campaigned in 2018 on reopening the Brown case, announced in 2020 that he would not charge the officer who killed the teen.

In Ferguson, residents marked 10 years to the day since Brown was killed. But an afternoon protest ended with a Black Ferguson police officer hospitalized and fighting for his life after he was assaulted by participants. Community leaders cautioned police officials against reviving the us-versus-them mentality, even as they condemned the attack on the Ferguson officer.

The recent developments haven't deterred movement stalwarts. Reed, the St. Louis area activist, rejects the premise that a decade is long enough to achieve all the aims of any racial justice movement. This is about a "lifetime of work," she says. "When people ask what have you gotten, what have you won, I say I'm in this until we actually do live in a country ... where we are not weaponizing forces to harm our people."

"For us, it's not from protest to policy. It's from protest to power."

## COVID-19 is on the upswing in the US

By The Associated Press undefined

COVID-19 hasn't gone away, and data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests it's on the upswing around the country.

"We've seen these summer increases every summer that COVID-19 has been with us," said Dr. Amesh Adalja, a Johns Hopkins University infectious disease physician. "What's different about these cases this summer vs. prior summers is that they don't translate into hospitals in crisis."

Adalja said factors in the seasonal increase could be increased travel, people staying indoors to avoid summer heat and the virus' continued evolution — which could help it get around people's immunity.

Testing for COVID-19 is sporadic and the true number of cases isn't clear because many infections aren't reported. But one way to spot trends is to see what percentage of lab tests come back positive. By that metric, COVID-19 is surging, with nearly 15% of tests coming back positive vs. less than 1% for flu.

Nevertheless, doctors' offices aren't seeing an outsized share of people with symptoms of respiratory illness. The proportion of doctor visits for flu-like symptoms remains low.

And COVID-19-related hospitalizations are rising, but they remain below the levels seen in winter — and far below the peaks seen earlier in the pandemic.

The CDC also tries to monitor the spread of the coronavirus by looking for it in sewage and other wastewater at participating sites across the country.

The most recent wastewater data — from the beginning of August — shows the highest levels since January. Detections were highest in the West and South, and lowest in the Northeast. The agency labels national wastewater viral activity level as “very high.”

Experts say to treat the data with caution because it has limitations.

“You just know it means there’s a lot of virus out there,” said Jennifer Nuzzo, a Brown University pandemic researcher. “But you don’t know how many people, how many infections that translates to.”

Nevertheless, the wastewater data shows “there’s a whole lot of COVID out there,” she added.

Adalja suggested staying up to date on your vaccinations and that people at higher risk of a serious illness consider wearing masks in crowded, indoor congregated areas.

If you do get sick, note that the CDC recommends staying away from other people until your symptoms are improving and you’ve been fever-free for 24 hours.

COVID-19 is now “basically part of the human condition,” Adalja said. “It’s unavoidable when you interact with humans.”

## **Matthew Perry’s death leads to sweeping indictment of 5, including doctors and a reputed dealer**

By ANDREW DALTON and KAITLYN HUAMANI Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Nearly 10 months after the death of Matthew Perry, the long-simmering investigation into the ketamine that killed him came dramatically into public view with the announcement that five people had been charged with having roles in the overdose of the beloved “Friends” star.

Here are key things to know about the case, including the two key figures who could be headed for trial and the possibility of the steepest of prison sentences.

### A sweeping set of indictments

One or more arrests had been expected since investigators from three different agencies revealed in May they had been conducting a joint probe into how the 54-year-old Perry got such large amounts of ketamine.

The actor had been among the growing number of patients using legal but off-label medical means to treat depression, or in other cases chronic pain, with the powerful surgical anesthetic.

Recent reports suggested indictments might be imminent, but few outside observers, if any, knew how wide-ranging the prosecution would be, reaching much further than previous cases stemming from celebrity overdoses.

When Michael Jackson died in 2009 from a lethal dose of the anesthetic propofol, his doctor was charged with providing it. After rapper Mac Miller died in 2017, two men who prosecutors described as a dealer and a middleman were convicted of providing fentanyl-laced oxycodone that helped kill him.

But Perry’s case pulled in both, with indictments against doctors and illegal distributors who prosecutors say preyed on his long and public struggles with addiction. The investigation even went after the live-in personal assistant who prosecutors say helped him get ketamine and injected it directly into him before Perry was found dead in his hot tub on Oct. 28, 2023.

“They knew what they were doing was risking great danger to Mr. Perry. But they did it anyway,” U.S. Attorney Martin Estrada said in announcing the charges.

The prosecution was well under way even before the announcement. Two people including the assistant, Kenneth Iwamasa, and a Perry acquaintance, Eric Fleming, have pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute the drug. A San Diego physician, Dr. Mark Chavez, has agreed to enter a guilty plea.

That leaves prosecutors free to pursue their two biggest targets.

The doctor and the ‘Ketamine Queen’

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An indictment unsealed Thursday alleges Perry turned to Los Angeles doctor Salvador Plasencia when his regular doctors refused to give him more ketamine. Prosecutors allege Plasencia cashed in on Perry's desperation and addiction, getting him to pay \$55,000 in cash for large amounts of the drug in the two months before his death.

"I wonder how much this moron will pay," Plasencia texted a co-defendant, according to his indictment. He pleaded not guilty to seven counts of distribution of ketamine in an appearance in federal court on Thursday afternoon.

Plasencia's attorney, Stefan Sacks, said outside court that he "was operating with what he what he thought were the best of medical intentions," and his actions "certainly didn't rise to the level of criminal misconduct."

Prosecutors allege Jasveen Sangha, whom they describe as a drug dealer known to customers as the "Ketamine Queen," provided the doses of the drug that actually killed Perry, injected into the actor by Iwamasa with syringes supplied by Plasencia.

Sangha also pleaded not guilty. Her attorney Alexandra Kazarian derided the "queen" moniker as made-for-media consumption during the hearing. The lawyer declined comment on the case outside court.

Prosecutors say the other doctor in the case, Chavez, helped Plasencia obtain the ketamine he gave to Perry, while Perry's acquaintance, Fleming, helped get ketamine from Sangha to Perry.

Chavez could get up to 10 years in prison, Iwamasa up to 15 years and Fleming up to 25 years.

Multiple messages seeking comment from attorneys for the three men were not returned.

Looking ahead to trial

Sangha could get life in prison if convicted as charged, while Plasencia could get up to 120 years. Each has a trial date in October, but it is highly unlikely any would be facing a jury by then, and the two may be tried together. They also could face testimony from the co-defendants who reached plea agreements.

Magistrate Judge Alka Sagar ruled Sangha should be held without bond while awaiting trial, citing prosecutors' contentions that she had destroyed evidence and funded a lavish lifestyle with drug sales even after Perry's death.

The judge agreed to release Plasencia after he posted a \$100,000 bond.

His attorney argued the Perry case was "isolated" and the doctor should be allowed to treat patients who depended on him at his one-man practice while awaiting trial.

"I'm not buying that argument," Sagar said, but agreed Plasencia could see patients so long as they signed a document in which he acknowledged the charges.

"People have probably already heard about it from the amount of press," Sacks told the judge, noting if they hadn't, they would soon.

Records show Plasencia's medical license has been in good standing with no records of complaints, though it is set to expire in October and he could face action. He already has surrendered his federal license to prescribe more dangerous drugs.

What is ketamine?

Ketamine is a powerful anesthetic approved by U.S. health regulators for use during surgery. It can be given as an intramuscular injection or by IV.

The drug is a chemical cousin of the recreational drug PCP. Ketamine itself has been used recreationally for its euphoric effects. It can cause hallucinations and can impact breathing and the heart.

Pushing back against ketamine

Prosecutors and police presented the Perry case as part of a major pushback against a rise in the illegal use of ketamine that has shadowed the broadening of its legal use.

Los Angeles police said in May they were working with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service with a probe into how Perry got the drug. His autopsy, released in December, found the amount of ketamine in his blood was in the range used for general anesthesia during surgery.

"As Matthew Perry's ketamine addiction grew, he wanted more and he wanted it faster and cheaper. That is how he ended up buying from street dealers and stole the ketamine that ultimately led to his

death," U.S. Drug Enforcement Administrator Anne Milgram said Thursday. "In doing so, he followed the arc that we have tragically seen with many others. The substance use disorder begins in a doctor's office and ends in the street."

Perry had years of struggles with addiction dating back to his time on NBC's megahit sitcom, "Friends," for 10 seasons from 1994 to 2004. Playing Chandler Bing, he became one of the biggest television stars of his generation alongside Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox, Lisa Kudrow, Matt LeBlanc and David Schwimmer.

## Now that mpox is a global health emergency, will it trigger another pandemic?

By MARIA CHENG AP Medical Writer

LONDON (AP) — The World Health Organization has declared the ongoing outbreaks of mpox in Congo and elsewhere in Africa to be a global emergency, requiring urgent action to curb the virus' transmission.

Sweden has since announced it had found the first case of a new form of mpox previously only seen in Africa in a traveler, while other European health authorities warned more imported cases were likely.

Here's a look at mpox and how likely it is to spread further:

Is mpox going to trigger another pandemic?

That seems highly unlikely. Pandemics, including the most recent ones of swine flu and COVID-19, are typically sparked by airborne viruses that spread quickly, including by people who may not be showing symptoms.

Mpox, also known as monkeypox, is spread primarily through close skin-to-skin contact with infected people or their soiled clothes or bedsheets. It often causes visible skin lesions that could make people less likely to be in close contact with others.

To stay safe, experts advise avoiding close physical contact with someone who has lesions resembling mpox, not sharing their utensils, clothing or bedsheets and maintaining good hygiene like regular hand-washing.

On Friday, Europe's Centre for Disease Prevention and Control said that more imported cases of mpox from Africa were "highly likely," but the chances of local outbreaks in Europe were very low.

Scientists say the risk to the general population in countries without ongoing mpox outbreaks is low.

How different is mpox from COVID-19?

Mpox spreads very slowly unlike the coronavirus. Shortly after the coronavirus was identified in China, the number of cases jumped exponentially from several hundred to several thousand; in a single week in January, the case count increased more than tenfold.

By March 2020, when WHO described COVID-19 as a pandemic, there were more than 126,000 infections and 4,600 deaths — about three months after the coronavirus was first identified.

In contrast, it's taken since 2022 for mpox cases to hit nearly 100,000 infections globally, with about 200 deaths, according to WHO.

There are vaccines and treatments available for mpox unlike in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We have what we need to stop mpox," said Dr. Chris Beyrer, director of Duke University's Global Health Institute. "This is not the same situation we faced during COVID when there was no vaccine and no antivirals."

How quickly will these mpox outbreaks be stopped?

It's unclear. The 2022 mpox outbreak in more than 70 countries was slowed within months, thanks largely to vaccination programs and drugs being made available to at-risk populations in rich countries.

At the moment, the majority of mpox cases are in Africa — and 96% of those cases and deaths are in Congo, one of the world's poorest countries whose health system has mostly collapsed from the strain of malnutrition, cholera and measles. Although Congolese officials requested 4 million vaccines from donors, it has yet to receive any.

Despite WHO declaring mpox a global emergency in 2022, Africa got barely any vaccines or treatments.

Beyrer of Duke University said it was in the world's interest to invest now in squashing the outbreaks in

Africa.

"We are actually in a good place to get control of this pandemic, but we have to make the decision to prioritize Africa," he said.

## **Bibles, cryptocurrency, Truth Social and gold bars: A look at Trump's reported sources of income**

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

Former President Donald Trump owns more than \$1 million worth of cryptocurrency and up to \$250,000 in gold bars along with the portfolio of golf courses and real estate properties that have made him a billionaire, according to newly released financial disclosures.

The details come from documents filed by Trump as part of his Republican presidential bid that were released Thursday night.

The more than 200 pages of paperwork give a limited picture of the real estate developer-turned reality TV star-turned-president's money and investments. In accordance with federal law, most assets' values are listed in a range, though Trump reports the precise figure for some of his income. The document does not detail the former president's business losses, making it impossible to determine how much of a profit any of his myriad holdings provides.

But it provides a glimpse at Trump's vast wealth and some new details about the unusual ways he makes money.

### UNUSUAL INVESTMENTS AND SOURCES OF INCOME

Trump reported earning \$300,000 off sales of an edition of the Bible that he and country singer Lee Greenwood endorsed, known as "The Greenwood Bible." He also earned \$4.4 million in royalties off a book called "Letters to Trump" and \$500,000 off one called "A MAGA Journey." Trump still receives royalties on a wide number of other books, including "The Art of the Deal," which came out in 1987 and netted the former president \$50,000 to \$100,000 in the past year.

As a onetime member of the Screen Actors Guild, Trump receives an annual pension of \$90,776.

Trump's fame comes from real estate, but his current biggest asset is likely his media company that operates the social media network Truth Social. The company went public in March, and Trump reports owning more than 114 million shares in the firm. He is currently unable to sell the shares as part of a "lock-up" agreement preventing major shareholders from selling stock for six months after it goes public, but with company stock at about \$23 per share Friday, his holdings are worth more than \$2 billion.

Some of Trump's other investments are also unusual. He reports having \$1 million to \$5 million worth of the cryptocurrency ethereum, a noteworthy holding because he's vowed to lift regulations on the cryptocurrency industry should he return to the White House.

Trump also reported earning \$7.15 million in licensing fees from NFT INT, which appears to be a firm selling digital tokens. His wife, Melania, earned \$330,000 from selling NFTs, according to the report.

The former president also reported owning \$100,000 to \$250,000 in gold bars.

Those assets are dwarfed by a wide range of sizable investments in traditional stocks and even a wide range of municipal and school bonds, as well as his real estate holdings.

### BROAD BUSINESS EMPIRE

Trump reports a wide range of companies and investments that span the globe. Many appear to simply be trademark claims in countries as varied as Argentina, Belarus, Cuba and India. Others are generating money for him, including more than \$3 million in income that he reported from licenses in Dubai and more than \$2 million in Oman.

Trump's golf courses also generate money for him, including \$37 million from his club in Bedminster, New Jersey, where he gave a rambling press conference on Thursday; \$31 million from his golf club in Jupiter, Florida; and 26 million British pounds (the equivalent of 33.5 million USD) worth of revenue from his Turnberry course in Scotland.

Trump's flagship resort of Mar-a-Lago in Florida generated more than \$56 million in income, according

to the report.

Melania Trump received a \$237,000 payment for speaking to the conservative gay rights group Log Cabin Republicans in April.

#### NOTEWORTHY DEBTS

Trump lists several debts, including one stemming from litigation against him by the New York attorney general's office alleging business fraud and two more from a magazine writer.

A jury found Trump liable for sexually assaulting E. Jean Carroll in 1996, and a second jury found he slandered her when he continued to deny it.

Trump lists his debts to Carroll as between \$1 million and \$5 million and more than \$50 million, the highest category available. The lawsuit judgments against him were for \$5 million and \$88 million respectively. Trump is appealing the verdicts.

Likewise, Trump lists his debt to the New York attorney general's office as more than \$50 million. He owes nearly \$500 million in the civil fraud judgment and is appealing that verdict as well.

## Tennessee family's lawsuit says video long kept from them shows police force, not drugs, killed son

By MITCH WEISS and JEFF MARTIN Associated Press

A mother whose son was having a seizure in his Tennessee apartment said in a federal lawsuit that police and paramedics subjected the 23-year-old to "inhumane acts of violence" instead of treating him, then covered up their use of deadly force.

The death of Austin Hunter Turner was one of more than 1,000 nationally that an investigation led by The Associated Press identified as happening after police officers used physical force or weapons that were supposed to stop, but not kill, people.

The lawsuit, filed this week in federal court, came after AP reporters shared police body-camera video they had unearthed with Turner's parents, who didn't know it existed. That footage made the family doubt the official conclusion that a drug overdose killed their son.

Citing the AP's reporting and many of the details it disclosed, the lawsuit focused on how officers' own video contradicted the police version of what happened inside Turner's small apartment in the northeastern Tennessee city of Bristol.

The officers had said they physically restrained Turner and shocked him with a Taser because he was fighting paramedics who were trying to help him.

The lawsuit said that Turner was "treated as a suspect and not a patient facing a medical emergency" from the moment officers arrived. "Turner was not resisting arrest or being combative. He was not disobeying commands; he was having a seizure."

Multiple messages left for Bristol Police Chief Matt Austin, Fire Chief Michael Carrier and Mayor Vince Turner were not returned Thursday and Friday. The lawsuit accuses the city and several police officers and firefighters of violating Turner's civil rights.

For Turner's mother, Karen Goodwin, the lawsuit is a last chance at justice for a son everyone knew as Hunter. Since that night in August 2017, she and her husband, Brian, believed police and blamed their son for his own death. Now she wants those who were there to be held accountable. They should have recognized that her son was having a medical emergency, she said, and she's angry because she believes they lied.

"We've always trusted the police," Goodwin said. "We didn't question authority, so when they told us he died of a drug overdose, we believed them."

The case highlighted a central finding of the AP-led investigation: A lack of accountability permeates the justice system in the aftermath of fatal police encounters that don't involve shootings. From the patrol officers at the scene and their commanders to prosecutors and medical examiners, the system shields officers from scrutiny. Some other deaths the investigation documented reflect another reality of policing in America: The fraying of the nation's social safety net can thrust officers into violent situations with

people who need mental or substance addiction treatment.

In Tennessee, it was hard to find an attorney. Goodwin said she contacted 20 before a Nashville law firm agreed to take her case. Lawyers know they have high hurdles even to get a case to trial, including “qualified immunity,” which protects officers from lawsuits.

And this case was even more complicated. Lawsuits seeking monetary damages have statutes of limitations, which in cases like Turner’s are one year in Tennessee, according to Dominick Smith, one of the attorneys representing the mother. Though Turner died nearly seven years ago, Goodwin’s attorneys believe the case involved a cover-up. They argue that means the clock shouldn’t start until AP reporters shared the police video with the family in August 2023, as part of their investigation with FRONTLINE (PBS) and the Howard Centers for Investigative Journalism at the University of Maryland and Arizona State University.

A judge will decide whether the lawsuit can proceed, said Christopher Slobogin, director of Vanderbilt University Law School’s Criminal Justice Program.

If family members can show that a reasonable person could not have known how an injury or death happened at the time, he said, a judge could start the clock when they learned the full picture just under a year ago. The defendants will likely argue that because the family has known about the death since 2017, the statute of limitations has expired.

“You look at what’s fair under the circumstances,” said Slobogin, an expert on Tennessee law who is not involved in the case.

The medical emergency began when Turner suddenly collapsed in his apartment. His girlfriend called Goodwin and said she didn’t know whether he was breathing. Goodwin said to call 911, then rushed over.

When she arrived, Goodwin found her son gasping for breath on the linoleum of his kitchen floor. She told paramedics he had a history of seizures.

Not long after, police officers and firefighters swarmed the apartment. They thought Turner was resisting, but Goodwin said that wasn’t the case — his body was jerking from the seizure.

The bodies of officers and firefighters mostly blocked the mother’s view, but she could hear them yelling at her son to stop resisting. An officer shocked him with a Taser.

The group pinned Turner face down on a recliner in what’s known as prone position, which can dangerously restrict breathing. A few minutes later, he was strapped to a stretcher, again face down. He stopped breathing before they got him to the Bristol Regional Medical Center.

In his autopsy report, the medical examiner said Turner died of “Multiple Drug Toxicity” and cited Suboxone, a drug used to wean people off opioids, and the psychoactive chemical in marijuana. The medical examiner also repeated the official police version of events. AP’s investigation found that the medical officials who determine the official cause of police restraint deaths frequently did not link them to force, instead blaming accidents, drug use or preexisting health problems.

Three experts who reviewed case records for the AP said Turner did not die of a drug overdose. Instead, they said the Bristol police made critical errors that contributed to Turner’s death, including pinning him face down.

Goodwin said that, from the start, something didn’t seem right about that night. Despite her doubts, for years Goodwin believed first responders did everything they could to save her son. That changed after she watched the video.

Goodwin was stunned. It struck her that officers appeared to ignore they had been dispatched to a medical call. By the end, instead of rushing Turner away in an ambulance, police and paramedics spent six minutes recounting the violence.

## Settler rampage in West Bank sparks rare condemnation from Israeli leaders

By JULIA FRANKEL and AREF TUFAHA Associated Press

JIT, West Bank (AP) — Israeli leaders on Friday roundly condemned a deadly settler rampage in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, a rare Israeli denunciation of the settler violence growing more common since



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the start of the Israel-Hamas war.

The settler riot in the village of Jit, near the city of Nablus in the northern West Bank, killed one Palestinian and badly injured others late Thursday, Palestinian health officials said.

Residents interviewed by The Associated Press said at least a hundred masked settlers entered the village, shot live ammunition at Palestinians, burned homes and cars and damaged water tankers. Video showed flames engulfing the small village, which residents said was left to defend itself without military help for two hours.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he took the riots "seriously" and that Israelis who carried out criminal acts would be prosecuted. He issued what appeared to be a call for settlers to stand down.

"Those who fight terrorism are the IDF and the security forces, and no one else," he said, using an acronym for the Israeli military.

President Isaac Herzog also condemned the attack, as did Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who said the settlers had "attacked innocent people." He added they did not "represent the values" of settler communities.

The Palestinians seek the West Bank, which Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war, as the heartland of a future state, a position with wide international backing.

Rights groups say that arrests for settler violence are rare, and prosecutions even rarer. Israel's left-leaning Haaretz newspaper reported in 2022 that based on statistics from the Israeli police, charges were pressed in only 3.8% of cases of settler violence, with most cases being opened and closed without any action being taken.

It was unclear why the Jit attack yielded such a strong rebuke from Israeli leaders. A similar settler riot in the village of Al-Mughayyir in April went without comparable mention from the authorities. The Jit attack comes as Israel is under heightened international scrutiny over its role in cease-fire talks with American, Qatari and Egyptian mediators in Doha, yet another attempt to broker an end to the 10-month-old war.

The French foreign minister and the British foreign secretary were also in Israel on Friday for meetings with diplomatic officials, and both condemned the attack. The EU's foreign policy chief, Josep Borell, said he would propose EU sanctions against "violent settlers' enablers, including some Israeli government's members."

The U.S. has broadly condemned settler violence and the expansion of Israel's West Bank settlements. U.S. Ambassador Jack Lew wrote on the social media platform X on Friday that he was "appalled" by the attack, and the White House National Security Council called violent settler attacks "unacceptable."

"Israeli authorities must take measures to protect all communities from harm, this includes intervening to stop such violence, and holding all perpetrators of such violence to account," it said in a statement.

Other Israeli officials distinguished between the settler attack on Jit and the larger Israeli settlement project, which the international community views as illegal under international law.

Far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich — an ultranationalist settler who has turbocharged settlement expansion, railed against U.S. sanctions on violent settlers and previously defended violent settlers as heroes — labeled the rioters "criminals" who were "in no way related to the settlement and the settlers."

"We are building and developing settlements in a legal and official manner," Smotrich wrote on X, adding that he "reject(s) any expression of anarchist criminal violence that has nothing to do with love for the land and the desire to settle in it."

Ultra-orthodox Israeli Interior Minister Moshe Arbel called on Israel's Shin Bet internal security agency to investigate those involved and said the riot ran against Jewish values and harmed the "settlement enterprise."

Since the Israel-Hamas war began on Oct. 7, violence has flared in the occupied territory. Palestinian health officials say 633 Palestinians, including 147 children and teenagers, have been killed by Israeli fire and over 5,400 injured. Many have been killed during Israeli military raids into Palestinian cities and towns, but settlers have killed at least 11 Palestinians, including two children, and injured 234 people, according to AIDA, a coalition of nonprofit and other groups working in the territory.

The U.N. documented over 1,000 settler attacks in the West Bank since the start of the war, averaging

four a day. That's double the average during the same period last year, AIDA says.

Sufian Jit, a resident of the village, said a group of 100 settlers streamed in before sundown Thursday, burning cars, puncturing water tankers and destroying homes. He called the army and firefighters, pleading for help. Firefighters never came, so villagers ran between burning cars to put out the fires, he said. After two hours, he said soldiers arrived.

"It was more than 100 settlers against us. At the beginning, there were just a few people trying to stop them, and then later the whole town came and stopped them," he said.

The Israeli military said late Thursday it had arrested one Israeli civilian in connection with the violence and opened an investigation. Police did not say whether the civilian was still in custody on Friday, but said they were working with the Shin Bet and military to investigate and "bring the relevant perpetrators to justice."

Mourners prepared Friday for the funeral of young 23-year-old Rasheed Mahmoud abed Al Khadier Sadah. His relative, Ibrahim Sadah, said many residents wanted to help defend the village but had to take shelter once settlers started firing live ammunition.

## What is ketamine, the drug involved in Matthew Perry's death?

By CARLA K. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

The investigation into the death of "Friends" star Matthew Perry has led to a sweeping indictment that pulled in five people who prosecutors say contributed to his ketamine overdose in October, including two doctors and a street dealer involved in providing Perry large amounts of the powerful anesthetic.

Here's what to know about ketamine.

What is ketamine?

Ketamine is a powerful anesthetic approved by U.S. health regulators for use during surgery. It can be given as an intramuscular injection or by IV.

The drug is a chemical cousin of the recreational drug PCP. Ketamine itself has been used recreationally for its euphoric effects. It can cause hallucinations and can impact breathing and the heart.

How was Matthew Perry using ketamine?

Ketamine has seen a huge surge in use in recent years as a treatment for depression, anxiety and pain. While the drug isn't approved for those conditions, doctors are free to prescribe drugs for so-called off-label uses.

In Perry's case, he was using it to treat depression. He was receiving ketamine infusion therapy from his physicians, but prosecutors said the actor turned to other sources when his doctors refused to give him more doses.

Prosecutors said Thursday that Perry obtained ketamine illicitly through a network that included a pair of doctors, his assistant and a woman they dubbed the "Ketamine Queen." Perry's assistant, who has pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute ketamine causing death, injected the actor with ketamine — including several times on the day he died.

"We are not talking about legitimate ketamine treatment," U.S. Attorney Martin Estrada said while announcing the charges. "We're talking about two doctors who abused the trust they had, abused their licenses to put another person's life at risk."

How else is ketamine being used?

Ketamine also has been used by paramedics as a sedative, often while working alongside police when they believed subjects were out of control. Some states and agencies have begun to rethink the practice due to its dangers. The 2019 death in Colorado of a young Black man named Elijah McClain brought scrutiny to the practice and led to a pair of paramedics being convicted for giving McClain an overdose of ketamine.

Overall, the practice of giving ketamine and other sedatives to people detained by police has spread quietly across the nation over the last 15 years, built on questionable science and backed by police-aligned experts, an investigation led by The Associated Press has found.

## How Ferguson elevated the profile of the Justice Department's civil rights enforcers

By ERIC TUCKER and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As the first images out of Ferguson, Missouri surfaced 10 years ago — the bloodied body of a man left for hours in the street beneath white sheets, protesters smashing car windows and looting stores — it didn't take long for the federal government to see a role for itself.

Acting with notable haste, the FBI within two days opened a criminal investigation into the killing of Michael Brown at the hands of a police officer, while the Justice Department less than a month later launched a civil rights inquiry culminating in a devastating report that identified abuses by the city's overwhelmingly white police force and court system.

The investigations catapulted the department's Civil Rights Division into the spotlight, bringing heightened publicity to a unit whose work since its 1957 creation included fighting for voting rights and prosecuting Los Angeles police officers in the beating of Rodney King. The Ferguson probes became part of a cluster of high-profile investigations into police departments, work that fed a national dialogue on race and law enforcement and formed a legacy item of the Obama administration Justice Department before being largely abandoned under President Donald Trump. Inquiries into big-city police forces returned under President Joe Biden.

"I can't tell you the number of chiefs I've talked to who told me that they had their officers read the Ferguson report, that they did trainings around it," said Vanita Gupta, who took over the Civil Rights Division two months after Brown's death and held the position for the remainder of the Obama administration. "It became a document that had a life far beyond Ferguson and really triggered conversations nationwide around justice and policing."

This story is part of an ongoing series by The Associated Press exploring the impact, legacy and ripple effects of what is widely called the Ferguson uprising, sparked a decade ago by the fatal shooting of Brown.

The public outcry in Ferguson didn't occur in a vacuum, coming two years after the killing of Black teenager Trayvon Martin by a neighborhood watch volunteer in Florida and on the heels of a spate of federal investigations that exposed pervasive problems in police departments in Seattle, Albuquerque and Newark, New Jersey. In Ferguson itself, residents protested not only Brown's death but also years if not decades of mistreatment by police and city officials.

"It was this constant, daily experience of hostile engagement with law enforcement. People were afraid to go out of their homes. They were afraid to drive because they didn't want to get stopped. They knew that each one of those encounters would be a negative encounter," said Jonathan Smith, who headed the Civil Rights Division section that investigated Ferguson and other troubled police forces.

Brown was killed Aug. 9, 2014 in a violent altercation with officer Darren Wilson that began when Wilson ordered the 18-year-old, who was walking with a friend down the middle of a street, onto the sidewalk. The following day, after a candlelight vigil, protesters smashed car windows and carried away stolen items from stores. The night after that, police fired tear gas and rubber bullets into a crowd to try to disperse protesters.

As community unrest grew, with protesters clashing with officers in armored vehicles and military-style equipment, President Barack Obama dispatched Attorney General Eric Holder to Ferguson, where he met with law enforcement and community leaders. In a trip that underscored the administration's determination to quell the turbulence, Holder appealed for calm in the community and met Brown's parents, saying later that he had greeted them not only as attorney general but as the father of a teenage son.

Besides the investigation into Brown's death, the Justice Department separately opened a civil inquiry into the entire police department.

Officials scoured more than 35,000 pages of police records and found city emails containing racist language. They analyzed data on stops, searches, citations, arrests and use-of-force. The team — which

included attorneys, an investigator and community engagement specialists — participated in police ride-alongs, attended court proceedings and spent hours in coffeeshops talking to residents.

The result was a scathing March 2015 report documenting eye-popping police abuses. Even though the department didn't find sufficient evidence for criminal charges in Brown's death, a decision that disappointed protesters seeking justice, the broader report into the police department resonated across the nation, as many people outside Ferguson recognized similar abuses by their law enforcement.

"There are Fergusons all around the country where attention is needed to rebuild community trust — which, of course, is ultimately key to public safety," said Chiraag Bains, a former senior counselor in the Civil Rights Division who helped lead the Ferguson investigations.

The report showed how Black residents were disproportionately subjected to excessive force and baseless searches-and-seizures, practices the Justice Department said reflected racial bias within the city. It accused the city of using law enforcement operations to generate revenue rather than for legitimate public safety purposes. Among the examples of abuse it cited: one man was charged with violating the city's municipal code for purported infractions like not wearing a seatbelt despite sitting in a parked car and for giving the shortened form of his name — "Mike" instead of "Michael."

The Justice Department and Ferguson in 2016 entered into a consent decree requiring the police department to make significant reforms.

Such agreements aren't the "the end all, be all," said Gupta, since they're limited to resolving policing problems but don't necessarily address longstanding race-based disparities. That can be frustrating, she said, because police-community breakdowns can often be the "tip of the spear to more entrenched societal inequities."

Even so, she said, one consequence of the department's policing work in Ferguson was that community leaders and political figures began calling for federal intervention after similar deaths. That's what happened in Baltimore, for instance, where the Justice Department launched a sweeping investigation into the city police department after Freddie Gray's death, and in Chicago, where a federal inquiry into the Chicago force was opened after Laquan McDonald was fatally shot by a police officer.

The focus of the Civil Rights Division changed dramatically in the Trump administration. Trump's first attorney general, Jeff Sessions, announced weeks after taking office a review of pattern-or-practice investigations that all but nullified a process he said unduly smeared entire police forces.

But the investigations picked up again early in the Biden administration, with a new Justice Department leadership entering their positions in the aftermath of George Floyd's killing in Minneapolis. Since April 2021, the Civil Rights Division says it's launched 11 pattern-or-practice investigations into law enforcement agencies, including police departments in Minneapolis, Louisville and Phoenix. It's currently enforcing consent decrees with 12 law enforcement agencies, including Ferguson police.

Christy Lopez, a former Justice Department official who led the team that investigated Ferguson, said that while she was not satisfied with the pace of work, there's no question "we are in a better place than we were 10 years ago in terms of how we think about and how we are actually working to change policing."

But much work remains, Lopez said.

"Not only do we still have a long way to go, but it's not at all clear that we will continue moving forward," she said. "And it's very clear that people's lives are being lost and lives are being destroyed because of our inability to actually be sensible about things, to not politicize everything."

## What do marijuana, the death penalty and fracking have in common? Harris shifted positions on them

By BRIAN SLODYSKO, MICHAEL R. BLOOD and ALAN SUDERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As California's attorney general, Kamala Harris successfully defended the death penalty in court, despite her past crusade against it.

As a new senator, she proposed abolishing cash bail — a reversal from when she chided San Francisco judges for making it "cheaper" to commit crimes by setting bail amounts too low.

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And now, as vice president and the Democratic presidential nominee, Harris' campaign insists she does not want to ban fracking, an oil and gas extraction process, even though that was precisely her position just a few years ago during a brief White House bid.

Politicians often recalibrate in the face of shifting public opinions. Across two decades in office and now seeking the presidency for a second time, Harris has not hesitated to stake out expedient and — at times — contradictory positions. Her policy reversals are opening her to attacks by Republicans and testing the strength of her pitch to voters as a truth-teller who is more credible than former President Donald Trump.

"She is vulnerable to the charge of flip-flopping, no question about that," said John Pitney, a professor of political science at Claremont McKenna College in California. "The trouble for Republicans, to put it lightly," is Trump and his running mate, Sen. JD Vance of Ohio, "do not come to this issue with spotless records."

Harris' campaign did not address her policy shifts and instead leaned into her credentials as a prosecutor to attack Trump.

"During her career in law enforcement, Kamala Harris was a pragmatic prosecutor who successfully took on predators, fraudsters, and cheaters like Donald Trump," said spokesman James Singer.

Trump has changed positions, too

Trump has a well-documented record of falsehoods, shifting positions and outright lies. One of the clearest examples of Trump taking all sides of an issue is on the subject of abortion. He was "very pro-choice" in 1999 but later declared he was "pro-life" roughly a decade later and suggested during his 2016 presidential campaign that women who have abortions should be subject to "some form of punishment."

Nevertheless, there is ample incentive to attack Harris along similar lines if history is a guide.

Republicans in 2004 savaged then-Sen. John Kerry for voting both for and against the same Iraq War funding bill, arguing he lacked core principles. Democrats attacked George H.W. Bush for failing to abide by his "read my lips" vow to not raise taxes.

But it hasn't always worked. In 1992, Democratic presidential hopeful Paul Tsongas attacked Bill Clinton, dismissing him as someone who "will say anything, do anything to get votes." Clinton won the presidency twice.

The death penalty

One of Harris' most pronounced shifts was over the death penalty, which she pledged to never pursue when elected San Francisco district attorney.

She stuck to that pledge when a 21-year-old gang member was accused of killing a police officer — a decision condemned by rank-and-file cops and some fellow Democrats.

Harris softened her approach four years later as she campaigned for California attorney general. Amid a tightly contested race, Harris said she would "enforce the death penalty as the law dictates." Other Democrats on the ballot cruised to victory; Harris barely won.

Her office successfully defended the death penalty in court and Harris argued she was obligated to uphold the law as the state's top attorney — even as she refused to enforce a referendum that banned gay marriage.

'Blood and guts prosecutor' turned progressive

As district attorney, Harris zealously approached criminal enforcement matters. She pursued the parents of chronically truant students, sought higher bail amounts and aggressively prosecuted drug crimes.

"She was a blood and guts prosecutor," said Bill Fazio, a longtime San Francisco attorney who ran against Harris in the 2003 district attorney's race.

As attorney general, Harris continued to take hardline stances. She appealed convictions that judges had ordered thrown out. Her office fought the ordered release of prisoners due to overcrowding. She also opposed legislation requiring her office to investigate shootings involving police and declined to back statewide standards for the use of body cameras.

Once elected to the Senate in 2016, however, Harris jettisoned many of those positions. She portrayed herself as a "progressive prosecutor" and proposed sweeping reforms, including abolishing the cash bail system and a moratorium on the death penalty.

It's unclear if Harris still supports the idea. Her campaign declined to directly address the question.

"She believes that we need a system where public safety, not wealth, determines who should stay behind bars following an arrest. Anyone who is a danger to society should be detained regardless of how wealthy," said Singer, the spokesman.

'I did inhale'

Harris also changed positions on two other hot-button issues: marijuana and gun control.

Most Americans live in states where marijuana is legal in some form, and Harris is now the first major party presidential nominee to support marijuana legalization.

Her prosecutors in San Francisco, however, convicted more than 1,900 people on cannabis-related offenses and she opposed allowing marijuana sales for recreational use when running for California attorney general in 2010, arguing it would cause confusion in the state's loosely regulated medicinal marketplace.

She maintained the position when running for re-election to the office — but her Republican challenger didn't.

By the time she sought the presidency in 2019, she had reversed course and joked that as a college student she "did inhale," twisting a line Bill Clinton used in his 1992 campaign to deflect criticism that he had used the drug.

Most American adults support legalization, so "it's not surprising that any particular politician also would," said Morgan Fox, political director for the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws.

Harris supported mandatory gun buy-back programs during her short-lived campaign for the presidency in 2019. But since becoming vice president, she has pulled back support for the idea, which would force millions of gun owners to sell their AR-15s and similar firearms to the government.

She now advocates for more moderate and politically popular proposals, including universal background checks on gun sales and "red flag" laws.

## **They look like — and link to — real news articles. But they're actually ads from the Harris campaign**

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

If you're not looking too closely, some recent Kamala Harris ads may give the false impression that some leading news organizations are taking sides in the campaign for president.

The advertisements, which have turned up in some Google search feeds, include links to legitimate news stories but feature — in words that appear to be headlines from the originating news organizations — pro-Harris messages written by the Democrat's campaign. They were revealed in an article by Axios this week.

Google and the campaign defend the practice as legitimate and legal, used in the past by both Democrats and Republicans. But it has raised concern from some of the outlets and others.

Said Jane Kirtley, a media ethics professor at the University of Minnesota: "What it's about is confusion and deception."

Assorted methods of advertising

While television remains the dominant form of political advertising, the under-the-radar Google ads also indicate there will be many different ways political campaigns try to reach voters this fall.

The Google ads have popped up for consumers making searches, usually in targeted geographic regions. One ad, for example, has the headline, "VP Harris's Economic Vision — Lower Costs and Higher Wages." Copy underneath reads, "a future where every person has the opportunity not just to get by but to get ahead. We won't go back to the failed trickle-down policies that hurt working families."

The ad includes a link to a story on The Associated Press' website, where those messages do not appear. Similarly, an ad that links to a story by The Guardian says Harris "is a champion for reproductive freedom and will stop Trump's abortion bans."

A spokesman for the Guardian said that "while we understand why an organization might wish to align itself with the Guardian's trusted brand, we need to ensure that it is being used appropriately and with our permission. We'll be reaching out to Google for more information about this practice."

The AP also said it was unaware that one of its articles was being used for this purpose. "AP's journalism is independent, fact-based and non partisan and must not be misrepresented in any way," spokesman Patrick Maks said.

Other Google search ads have run using material from CBS News, CNN, Time, PBS and USA Today, according to the Google Ads Transparency Center.

There is no indication that any of the linked articles were altered in any way. But Kirtley said she questioned how many people who see the advertisement will click on those links, and instead mistakenly think the ads were quoting from the articles. For news organizations, that's crucially important at a time they're fighting against perceptions of bias by some in the public.

"Their brand is being co-opted for political advertising without permission or prior knowledge," she said. "It's fine if they chose to endorse someone, but you don't want your reporting to be turned into an endorsement."

News content used outside of news spaces

It's not the only instance of news outlets needing to be cognizant of their work being used in a political context in an unauthorized way. The AP would not discuss on Thursday whether it has needed to take action to prevent unauthorized uses of its now-iconic photograph of former President Donald Trump following an assassination attempt this summer; it will reportedly be on the cover of Trump's upcoming book.

Google notes that the Harris ads are clearly labeled as "sponsored" so they are distinguishable from regular search results, and reveal that they are paid for by the Harris campaign. "It's fairly common for advertisers to link out to or cite external websites, including news sites, in their ads," Google said in a statement.

Indeed, the campaigns of Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp and Tennessee Sen. Marsha Blackburn used similar Google ads during Republican primary campaigns. But in 2017, Facebook decided to ban a similar practice in its advertising after the Wall Street Journal raised questions about it.

The Harris Google ad campaign seems limited in scope. The ads linking to Guardian and AP articles both appeared only in searches by users in the swing state of Pennsylvania, and both have appeared less than 2,000 times, according to the Ads Transparency Center. The Harris campaign said it had no plans to discontinue the ads.

"I just don't think it's a big deal," said Robert Shrum, a veteran Democratic political strategist and director of the Center for the Political Future at the University of Southern California.

Harris' Google effort is an indication that campaigns will be searching for new and creative ways to reach voters in the next few months, said Steve Caplan, who is teaching a class in political advertising at USC this fall. One expected trend: an explosion of commercials on streaming services like Netflix that never used to accept advertising.

"You're trying to find new and innovative ways to break through in a media environment that's very cluttered, and that takes strategy and creativity," Caplan said.

Still, television ads — especially in swing states — are expected to dominate.

## Protests grow in India over the rape and killing of a doctor at a state-run hospital

By PIYUSH NAGPAL Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Thousands of people marched through various Indian cities Friday to protest the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at a government hospital, demanding justice and better security at medical campuses and hospitals.

Demonstrators held signs calling for accountability for the woman's rape and killing as they gathered near Parliament in New Delhi. Similar protests were held in the eastern city of Kolkata — the capital of West Bengal state where the killing took place — and other Indian cities like Mumbai and Hyderabad.

The protests, which have generally been peaceful, began Aug. 9 when police discovered the bloodied body of the 31-year-old trainee doctor at the state-run R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital's seminar

hall in Kolkata.

An autopsy later confirmed sexual assault, and a police volunteer was detained in connection with the crime. The family of the victim alleged it was a case of a gang rape and more were involved.

State government officers who first began investigating the case have been accused of mishandling it. Police later handed the case to federal investigators following a court order.

In the days since, mounting anger has boiled over into nationwide outrage and stirred protests over violence against women. The protests have also led thousands of doctors and paramedics to walk out of some public hospitals across India and demand a safer working environment.

Sexual violence against women is a widespread problem in India. In 2022, police recorded 31,516 reports of rape — a 20% increase from 2021, according to the National Crime Records Bureau.

Many cases of crimes against women go unreported in India due to stigma surrounding sexual violence, as well as a lack of faith in the police. Women's rights activists say the problem is particularly acute in rural areas, where the community sometimes shames victims of sexual assault and families worry about their social standing.

Richa Garg, a doctor who was part of the protests Friday in New Delhi, said she no longer felt safe at her workplace.

"As a woman, it boils my blood. The culprits of this crime should be found immediately ... and our workplaces should be made safer," she said.

On Wednesday night, the hospital where the trainee doctor was killed was attacked. Police did not identify who was behind the rampage, but said they have arrested 19 so far.

The Indian Medical Association, the country's largest grouping of medics, called late Thursday for a "nationwide withdrawal of services," except essential services, for 24 hours starting Saturday.

"Doctors, especially women are vulnerable to violence because of the nature of the profession. It is for the authorities to provide for the safety of doctors inside hospitals and campuses," the IMA said in a statement issued on the social media platform X.

Political parties, Bollywood actors and other high profile celebrities have also voiced shock at the crime and called for stricter punishments for those who commit them.

"Monstrous behavior against women should be severely and promptly punished," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Thursday in an address to the nation on its 78th Independence Day.

For many, the gruesome nature of the attack has invoked comparisons with the horrific 2012 gang rape and killing of a 23-year-old student on a New Delhi bus. The attack galvanized massive protests, sometimes violent, and inspired lawmakers to order harsher penalties for such crimes, as well as the creation of fast-track courts dedicated to rape cases. Under pressure, the government also introduced the death penalty for repeat offenders.

The rape law amended in 2013 also criminalized stalking and voyeurism and lowered the age at which a person can be tried as an adult from 18 to 16.

## **Thaksin's daughter Paetongtarn Shinawatra is elected Thailand's prime minister**

By JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Thailand's Parliament elected Paetongtarn Shinawatra as prime minister Friday, continuing the legacy of the political dynasty that began with her father Thaksin Shinawatra, one of Thailand's most popular but divisive political figures.

Thaksin, a former Prime Minister, was ousted by a military coup in 2006, which triggered decades of deep political divisions. Paetongtarn appears to be the beneficiary of a deal her father made with his old conservative foes, allowing the populist party led by her to take power while pushing aside the more progressive party that finished first in last year's election.

Paetongtarn becomes Thailand's third leader from the Shinawatra family, after her billionaire father, who



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returned from exile last year, and her aunt Yingluck Shinawatra, who lives in exile. Paetongtarn also is Thailand's second female prime minister after her aunt, and the country's youngest leader at 37.

As the only nominee, she was confirmed by 319 votes in favor, with 145 against and 27 abstentions. Paetongtarn is the leader of the Pheu Thai party, the latest of a string of parties linked to Thaksin. She is not an elected lawmaker as that was not required for her to be a candidate for prime minister.

She will officially become prime minister with royal assent, though the timing of that step isn't known.

Paetongtarn, a former business executive, appeared overwhelmed as she spoke to reporters after the Parliament vote at the party's office in Bangkok. She said she was very "honored and happy."

"I really hope that I can make people feel confident, that we can build opportunity and quality of life," she said. "I hope that I can do my best to make the country go forward."

Paetongtarn's nomination followed the removal of Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin of Pheu Thai on Wednesday after less than a year in office. The Constitutional Court found him guilty of a serious ethical breach regarding his appointment of a Cabinet member who was jailed in connection with an alleged bribery attempt.

It was the second major ruling in a week to shake Thai politics. The same court last week dissolved the progressive Move Forward party, which won last year's general election but was blocked from taking power. The party has already regrouped as the People's Party.

Thaksin's residual popularity and influence is a factor behind the political support for Paetongtarn. Her public entry into politics came in 2021 when the Pheu Thai party announced she would lead an inclusion advisory committee. She was named one of Pheu Thai's three prime ministerial candidates ahead of the polls in 2023 and was made party chief last year.

When Paetongtarn was on the campaign trail for Pheu Thai, she acknowledged her family ties but insisted she was not just her father's proxy.

"I am my dad's daughter, always and forever, but I have my own decisions," she told a reporter.

However, her work will not be easy with Thaksin continuing to call the political shots for Pheu Thai, said Petra Alderman, a political research fellow at England's University of Birmingham.

"Thaksin was a political force to reckon with, but he was also a liability," she said, "He has a tendency to overplay his political hand, so serving in his shadow has never been easy."

Alderman noted that, while Paetongtarn seems to enjoy warm political and public support, that is not the only factor that will determine the course of her premiership.

"Who gets to govern in Thailand and for how long are questions that are often answered by unelected and unaccountable watchdog institutions, (such as) the Election Commission of Thailand and the Constitutional Court, or military coups," she said.

Pheu Thai and its predecessors linked to Thaksin have won all national elections since 2001, with core populist policies pledging to solve economic problems and bridge income equality, until it lost to the reformist Move Forward in 2023. It was given a chance to form a government, however, after Move Forward was blocked from taking power by the previous Senate, a military-appointed body.

Move Forward was excluded from the coalition by Pheu Thai, which went on to join with parties affiliated with the military government that previously ousted it in a coup.

Thaksin returned to Thailand last year after years in exile on the same day that Srettha was approved by both lower and upper houses, in what was interpreted as part of a political bargain between Pheu Thai and their longstanding rivals in the conservative establishment to stop Move Forward from forming a government.

Senators were given special power to veto a prime ministerial candidate by the constitution adopted in 2017 under a military government. However, new members of the Senate, selected in a convoluted process last month, do not retain the veto. It means that a candidate needs just a majority from the lower house.

The coalition of Pheu Thai and its old conservative rivals under the leadership of Paetongtarn could strengthen their unity because Paetongtarn possesses something that Srettha does not — a direct line to her powerful father who has the final say — said Napon Jatusripitak, a political science researcher at

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Singapore's ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.

"In a strange way, it creates a clear chain of command and curbs factionalism," he said. "Paetongtarn will be given clear jurisdiction on where she can exercise her own agency and where it is a matter between her father and the coalition members."

## Today in History: August 17, Clinton admits to Lewinsky affair

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, Aug. 17, the 230th day of 2024. There are 136 days left in the year.

Today in history: On August 17, 1998, President Bill Clinton gave grand jury testimony via closed-circuit television from the White House concerning his relationship with Monica Lewinsky; he then delivered a TV address in which he admitted his relationship with Lewinsky was "wrong" but denied previously committing perjury (Clinton was subsequently impeached by the House of Representatives, but acquitted in the Senate).

Also on this date:

In 1807, Robert Fulton's North River Steamboat made its first voyage, heading up the Hudson River on a successful round trip between New York City and Albany.

In 1863, federal batteries and ships began bombarding Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor during the Civil War, but the Confederates managed to hold on despite several days of shelling.

In 1915, a mob in Cobb County, Georgia, lynched Jewish businessman Leo Frank, 31, whose death sentence for the murder of 13-year-old Mary Phagan had been commuted to life imprisonment. (Frank, who'd maintained his innocence, was pardoned by the state of Georgia in 1986.)

In 1945, Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta proclaimed independence for Indonesia, setting off the Indonesian National Revolution against Dutch rule.

In 1945, the George Orwell novel "Animal Farm," an allegorical satire of Soviet Communism, was first published in London by Martin Secker & Warburg.

In 1959, trumpeter Miles Davis released "Kind of Blue," regarded as one of the most influential jazz albums of all time.

In 1978, the first successful trans-Atlantic balloon flight ended as Maxie Anderson, Ben Abruzzo and Larry Newman landed their Double Eagle II outside Paris.

In 1988, Pakistani President Mohammad Zia ul-Haq and U.S. Ambassador Arnold Raphel (RAY'-fehl) were killed in a mysterious plane crash.

In 1999, more than 17,000 people were killed when a magnitude 7.4 earthquake struck the Kocaeli Province of Turkey.

Today's Birthdays: Computer scientist Margaret Hamilton is 88. Actor Robert DeNiro is 81. Businessman Larry Ellison is 80. Film director Martha Coolidge is 78. Filmmaker/author Julian Fellowes is 75. Tennis Hall of Famer Guillermo Vilas is 72. Singer Belinda Carlisle is 66. Author Jonathan Franzen is 65. Actor Sean Penn is 64. Singer/actor Donnie Wahlberg is 55. College Basketball Hall of Famer and retired NBA All-Star Christian Laettner is 55. Rapper Posdnuos (PAHS'-deh-noos) (De La Soul) is 55. Tennis Hall of Famer Jim Courier is 54. Soccer great Thierry Henry is 47. Rock climber Alex Honnold is 39. Actor Austin Butler is 33. Singer-songwriter Phoebe Bridgers is 30.