

# Groton Daily Independent

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## **Tuesday Sept. 9**

School Breakfast: Scones.  
School Lunch: Pasta with meat sauce, corn.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Council, 6 p.m.  
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.; Caring Team Meeting, 1 p.m.  
Boys Golf at Milbank, 10 a.m.  
Cross Country at Britton, 4 p.m.  
Boys Soccer at James Valley Christian, 4 p.m.  
Volleyball at Webster ((7th-5, 8th-6; C-5, JV-6, V-7:15))

## **Wednesday, Sept 10**

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.  
School Lunch: Vegetable soup ham sandwich  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.; League 6:30 p.m.  
St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.  
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Confirmation, 5:30 p.m.  
Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.



## **Thursday, Sept 11**

School Breakfast: Cereal  
School Lunch: Chicken tacos.  
Groton Lions Club Meeting, 6 p.m., 104 N Main St.  
Boys Golf at Olive Grove Golf Course, 10 a.m.  
Volleyball at Roncalli ((7th-5, 8th-6; C-5, JV-6, V-7:30))

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

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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.**

## Chicago Immigration Arrests

The Department of Homeland Security announced yesterday that it has ramped up immigration raids in Chicago. The crackdown, called Operation Midway Blitz, comes amid a Supreme Court ruling allowing a similar operation in Los Angeles.

The court ruled 6-3 yesterday to overturn a federal judge's order blocking the LA raids. The judge had accused the government of violating Fourth Amendment protections requiring reasonable suspicion in order to make arrests—and barred authorities from using race and ethnicity, among other factors, to conduct arrests. While yesterday's ruling was unsigned, Justice Brett Kavanaugh penned a concurring opinion that demographics supported the crackdown, saying roughly 10% of Los Angeles' population (2 million) is in the country illegally.

Immigration efforts in Chicago come as President Donald Trump has promised to defy Gov. JB Pritzker (D) and deploy the National Guard to combat the city's homicide rate.

## France Government Collapse

The French parliament yesterday ousted Prime Minister François Bayrou in a 364-194 vote, marking the second collapse of President Emmanuel Macron's government in nine months. Macron's minority government has struggled to build consensus on how to rein in the country's more than \$3.9T debt.

France's budget deficit reached 5.8% of its economic output last year—nearly double the European Union's 3% limit. Bayrou, a centrist appointed in December, proposed tackling the deficit with roughly \$51B in cuts, including nixing two public holidays and nearly \$6B in healthcare spending. More conservative lawmakers favor cuts to EU programs and immigrant services, while more liberal lawmakers oppose welfare cuts and back tax increases. Still, members from each side of the political spectrum joined to oust Bayrou, after snap elections last year resulted in a hung parliament.

Macron intends to appoint his fifth prime minister since 2022 in the coming days; meanwhile, left-wing antigovernment protests are expected nationwide tomorrow.

## Gen Z Rally

At least 19 people were killed and over 100 others were wounded in Nepal yesterday amid Gen Z-led protests over a social media ban. Tens of thousands of people demonstrated, some breaching barricades near the country's parliament building.

The protests are centered on a ban last week on 26 social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and X. The outlets failed to meet a Supreme Court deadline requiring them to appoint a government liaison and obtain a license to operate. Critics accuse the country's prime minister of using the directive to crack down on free speech. TikTok, Viber, and several smaller outlets were cleared to operate. (TikTok had previously been banned after being linked to over 1,600 cyber-related crimes; the ban was lifted last year.)

An estimated 7.5% of Nepalese citizens live abroad, many relying on social media to communicate. The country's home minister resigned yesterday; curfews were in effect across the country.

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## **Sports, Entertainment, & Culture**

Former President Barack Obama, Conan O'Brien among winners at the 2025 Creative Arts Emmys ahead of this Sunday's Primetime Emmy Awards.

"SNL" Season 51 cast set with Michael Che, Ego Nwodim, and Kenan Thompson among the returning veterans.

First YouTube-exclusive NFL game between the Los Angeles Chargers and Kansas City Chiefs draws 17.3 million viewers.

Serena Williams joins high-profile group of investors in women's basketball league Unrivaled, valuing the new venture at \$340M.

"The Conjuring: Last Rites" hauls in \$194M at the global box office, best-ever opening weekend for a horror film.

Rick Davies, lead singer and cofounder of Supertramp, dies of cancer at age 81.

## **Science & Technology**

OpenAI to back first full-length animated film for theatrical release; "Critterz" targets 2026 debut at Cannes Film Festival.

Researchers uncover brain circuits controlling the release of growth hormones during sleep; compounds support bone and muscle development during childhood and metabolic levels in adults.

Low-cost "nanosieve" detects and sorts plastic waste smaller than the width of a human hair; device allows for cheap pollution monitoring in oceans and waterways.

## **Business & Markets**

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +0.2%, Dow +0.3%, Nasdaq +0.5%) as investors await key inflation reports Thursday.

Supreme Court allows President Donald Trump to temporarily remove Federal Trade Commission member.

Robinhood shares rise 15.8% following announcement that online brokerage will join the S&P 500, replacing Caesars Entertainment Sept. 22.

SpaceX enters \$17B deal to buy spectrum licenses from EchoStar to enhance Starlink's 5G connectivity; EchoStar shares rise 19.9% on the news.

## **Politics & World Affairs**

Jury selection begins in the trial against alleged would-be assassin of President Donald Trump; defendant is accused of attempting to kill then-candidate Trump at his West Palm Beach, Florida, golf course in September 2024.

The House Oversight Committee receives documents as part of its probe into the Justice Department's handling of the Jeffrey Epstein case; tranche includes letter President Donald Trump allegedly wrote for Epstein's 50th birthday.

Federal appeals court upholds E. Jean Carroll's \$83.3M judgment against Trump.

Two Palestinian gunmen kill at least six people, wound 12 others at a bus stop in northern Jerusalem.

President Donald Trump pressures Hamas to accept US-led ceasefire deal as Israel threatens to ramp up Gaza offensive (More)



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## Sunflower Classic Scramble Couples Tournament

Sunday, September 7, 2025

### Championship Flight

1st Place – Brevin Fliehs & Carly Guthmiller - 68  
2nd Place – Erica Hunstad & Ken Lynch – 68  
3rd Place – Connor & Carleen Hanson - 74  
4th Place – Greg Rahm & Bonnie Wagner – 74  
Brad & Dar Larson – 75  
Josh & Madison Claymore - 76  
Steve and Betty Dunker – 77

### First Flight

1st Place – Mike & Cherry Baker - 73  
2nd Place – Reid & Carlee Johnson – 74  
3rd Place – Ian & Rylee Rose – 77  
4th Place – Monty & Britt Evans – 78  
Blake & Leah Ronning – 78  
Tony and Mandy Grohs – 78  
Dan Duenwald & Keri Kline – 78

### Second Flight

1st Place – Paul & Carrie Flach - 75  
2nd Place – Skip Kettering and Suzie Easthouse – 80  
3rd Place – Randy & Sue Stanley – 80  
4th Place – Brad & Brenda Waage – 80  
Tony & Brenda Madsen – 81  
Lance & Cindy Frohling – 84  
TJ & Marcy Harder – 86  
Nathan Weige & Alison Jung – 87

### Third Flight

1st Place – Torre & Denise Raap – 87  
2nd Place – Liam & Nicole Johnson – 87  
3rd Place – Josh & Josie Heupel – 91  
4th Place – Larry & Shirlee Frohling – 93  
Roy & Ranae Wiege – 97  
Michelle Johnson & Boston Marlow – 100  
Deb Fredrickson & Casey Hutchinson – 100  
Tyler & Karen Kampa – 103

### Pin Prizes

Closest to the Pin #4 (Women's) – Suzie Easthouse  
Closest to the Pin #8 (Men's) – Tony Madsen  
Longest Putt #9 – Josh Claymore



**Championship: Brevin Fliehs and Carly Guthmiller with a score of 68.**



Groton  
Area  
Tigers  
Groton, SD

Volleyball at Webster  
C at 5, JV at 6  
sponsored by Dorene Nelson  
Varsity to follow



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Soldier Field has been a house of heartbreak for the Minnesota Vikings over the years, but on Monday Night Football, J.J. McCarthy flipped the script. The second-year quarterback led three straight fourth-quarter touchdown drives to erase a double-digit deficit and deliver a 27-24 comeback win against the rival Chicago Bears.

The Vikings opened the game with a quick three-and-out, while Chicago marched 61 yards on a 10-play touchdown drive. Minnesota's next possession ended in another punt, though the defense held firm and forced a Bears punt to close the quarter.

The Vikings finally moved the ball on their first drive of the second quarter, thanks in large part to a 42-yard pass interference call on former Viking Nahshon Wright. The drive stalled inside the red zone, but Will Reichard's field goal cut the deficit to 7-3. The next four drives produced little (two punts apiece) before Chicago tacked on a field goal with 24 seconds left in the half. The Vikings weren't interested in kneeling out the clock and heading into halftime, and McCarthy and Jalen Nailor connected for 28 yards to set up Reichard's 59-yard kick, a career best, cutting Chicago's lead to just four.

The Vikings opened the second half with a defensive stop, but momentum swung back quickly. McCarthy's first career touchdown pass went the wrong way, as Nahshon Wright jumped a throw and returned it 74 yards for a Bears touchdown. Minnesota's offense sputtered again, punting after losing 10 yards, and the third quarter ended with the Vikings still searching for answers.

A missed 50-yard field goal by Chicago gave Minnesota life early in the fourth, and McCarthy made the most of it. He marched the Vikings 60 yards in six plays, capping it with a touchdown strike to Justin Jefferson. The two-point attempt failed, but the deficit was down to five. After another Bears punt, McCarthy wasted no time, hitting Aaron Jones for a 27-yard touchdown to give Minnesota its first lead of the night. A successful two-point conversion stretched it to 20-17.

The defense forced yet another punt, and McCarthy extended the lead himself with a 14-yard scramble into the end zone. Suddenly, the Vikings led 27-17 with under five minutes left. Penalties on three straight plays, however, handed the Bears new life, and Chicago cut the lead to three with a quick touchdown drive. The Vikings ran three times and punted, leaving the Bears nine seconds. Their desperation hook-and-ladder attempt ended in a fumble recovery by Minnesota, sealing the win.

McCarthy finished 13 of 20 for 168 total yards with three total touchdowns. Jordan Mason paced the backfield with 68 yards on 15 carries, while Jefferson and Jones each had 44 receiving yards and a touchdown. On defense, newcomer Javon Hargrave recorded both of Minnesota's sacks, and Andrew Van Ginkel added a tackle for loss and two pass breakups.

The obvious player of the game was McCarthy. Expectations were high for the young quarterback, and after a shaky start, he delivered in the fourth quarter with three straight touchdown drives. He became just the second quarterback in Vikings history to throw multiple touchdown passes in his debut, joining Fran Tarkenton in 1961 (also against the Bears). He also became the first quarterback since Steve Young in 1985 to erase a double-digit fourth-quarter deficit and win his NFL debut.

Next up, the Vikings return home for another prime-time test as they host the Atlanta Falcons on Sunday Night Football.

## Groton Area facilities planning moves forward with school board approval

By Elizabeth Varin

The Groton Area School Board took its first official steps toward a long-term facilities plan Monday night. The board approved a request for proposal for a facilities master plan of the district's middle/high school building at 502 North Second Street. The goal, according to the request document, is to examine the use and condition of the facility and provide actionable recommendations for future improvement.

The scope of work for the facilities master plan includes on-site inspections, analysis of the building systems (HVAC, roofing, electrical, plumbing and more), an educational adequacy review, development of improvement options and cost estimates, and identification of possible funding mechanisms.

Proposals must be submitted by October 7, with an estimated final presentation taking place in March 2026.

Superintendent Joe Schwan also updated the board on the district's buildings, grounds and transportation committee, which has started analyzing a preliminary list of needed improvements.

The work marks the beginning of efforts to create a ranked capital improvement plan, one of the board's established goals.

The board also heard updates on the K-12 music and health/physical education programs.

Josh Friez, new 5-12 instrumental music teacher, told the board that it's hard to follow anyone who has been leading the instrumental music program for a long time, but "I'm trying to retain the students I have and grow it from there."

Currently, there are 35 in the high school band and 38 in the middle school band, he said. The number of elementary students involved in band are not finalized.

Friez's goal is to have 50 students in each band, as well as teaching kids to love music and grow as individuals.

A new opportunity for this school year is an expansion of drum line with a bucket drumming ensemble.

Friez also told the board about an investment opportunity and longer-term goal: new marching band uniforms.

The current uniforms are more than 20 years old and some pieces are in pretty rough shape, he said. However, with an initial quote for 75 uniforms totaling more than \$19,000, it is a long-term goal, sometime they can work towards.

Landon Brown, K-12 vocal music teacher, reported changes for the upcoming school year.

A big change for the 2025-2026 school year is shifting away from a show choir team to instead staging a musical, scheduled to take place in March. The musical, which will be open to sixth through 12th grade students, will be "Annie." Auditions will take place at the end of the fall semester.

Physical education instructors also updated the board about the health and physical education program.

Lynette Grieve, physical education teacher, told the board about skills she works on with the junior kindergarten, kindergarten, first and second grade students, which includes balance, exercise, flexibility, agility, muscle strength, stretching, health and physical fitness.

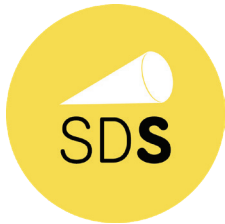
Grieve works with classes ranging in size from 8 (junior kindergarten) to 26 (both second grade classes).

Kyle Gerlach, K-12 physical education/health teacher, also updated the board on class sizes he sees – between 20-24 students in elementary classes and from 20-26 students in middle school/high school classes.

Gerlach sees a few areas of concern, including a lack of space at the elementary school, limiting what he can do with those classes. Classes at the middle/high school need updated textbooks to address vaping, cyber bullying, etc. However, that curriculum is scheduled to be updated soon.

- District administrators reported the most recent enrollment numbers for the district. In total, there were 568 students enrolled in the district as of Monday morning. That includes 266 at the elementary school, 139 at the middle school and 163 at the high school.





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Former USDA appointee announces Democratic bid for Congress

**Announcement sets the stage for party's first U.S. House primary in SD since 2012**

**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER-SEPTEMBER 8, 2025 11:38 AM**

Former U.S. Department of Agriculture appointee Nikki Gronli announced her candidacy for South Dakota's lone U.S. House seat Monday morning, potentially setting up the first Democratic primary race for the seat in over a decade.

The House seat will be up for grabs in next year's election because Republican U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson is running for governor.

Gronli filed her Federal Election Commission statement of candidacy Monday morning and will launch her campaign at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday at the Holiday Inn City Centre in downtown Sioux Falls. Sioux Falls nonprofit executive Billy Mawhiney announced last month he is running for the Democratic nomination as well.

If both stay in the race until next June's primary, it'll be the party's first U.S. House primary race in South Dakota since 2012. The party did not have U.S. House candidates in the 2020 and 2022 elections.

South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley has announced his intention to seek

the Republican nomination for the seat. Republican state Sen. Casey Crabtree, of Madison, filed his statement of candidacy with the Federal Election Commission this summer.

Gronli set out across South Dakota with other Democrats this spring to hold town hall meetings for South Dakotans concerned about federal policy changes under the Trump administration.

"As I traveled the state and listened to people, I realized there might be a place for me in this," Gronli said in an interview with South Dakota Searchlight. "There might be an opportunity to continue to listen to them and bring forward their ideas and voices and be that voice in D.C."

Gronli is the former vice chair of the South Dakota Democratic Party and former state director for USDA Rural Development under the Biden administration. She oversaw investments in rural housing, broadband, infrastructure and other rural community projects. She is president of Flatlander Strategies, a marketing company.

Concerns about the economy, health care access and President Trump's tariff policies "devastating" South Dakota farmers drove Gronli's decision to enter the race.

"I'm watching our current elected leaders not do what's best for South Dakota," Gronli said. "I've decided that I need to get in this race and give people another option. We need some folks who have the



**Nikki Gronli, former state rural development director for the U.S. Department of Agriculture during the Biden administration, participates in a press conference at the downtown Sioux Falls library on April 7, 2025.** (Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

courage to stand up for South Dakota families.”

Besides Crabtree and Jackley, James Bialota, who describes himself as a small business owner and real estate investor, has said on Facebook that he plans to run as a Republican for the U.S. House.

A Democrat named Scott Schlagel has also filed paperwork with the Federal Election Commission to run for the seat.

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

## Trump administration selects Black Hills uranium mining proposal for fast-track permitting program

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER-SEPTEMBER 8, 2025 6:00 AM

Federal officials have chosen a long-lingering uranium mining proposal in southwestern South Dakota for an expedited permitting process.

That doesn't mean the Dewey Burdock project is greenlit. Instead, it means the project will be included in FAST-41, a federal process meant to improve coordination among permitting agencies and hold them accountable to deadlines. The 25-person federal Permitting Council says it can shave 18 months off a project's review time.

The Dewey Burdock project — named for rural locations near Edgemont along the southwestern edge of the Black Hills — has been in the works for nearly two decades. It requires numerous federal, state and local permits, and has been mired in administrative and court appeals for years.

The FAST-41 process was created by Title 41 of the “Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act,” signed into law by President Barack Obama in 2015. Coverage originally focused on transportation infrastructure. It was expanded to mining projects during the final days of Donald Trump's first presidential administration in 2021.

Trump signed an executive order earlier this year directing federal officials to accelerate domestic critical mineral production, including copper, zinc, titanium and uranium. His administration is increasingly using FAST-41 to carry out the order.

### Company says project could start in two years

EnCore Energy Executive Chairman William Sheriff said in a news release the Texas-based company is focused on “building a stronger domestic supply of clean and affordable energy and providing economic



**A proposed enCore Energy uranium mine in South Dakota would be located along the southwestern edge of the Black Hills, in an area shown in this 2014 file image.** (Courtesy of Rapid

City Journal)



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stimulus to southwest South Dakota.” Uranium is the key ingredient in nuclear power production.

Janet Lee-Sheriff, head of communications for enCore, said the company applied for FAST-41 with the expectation it would be a public, open and transparent process with clear deadlines.

The fast-track process can be misconstrued as “pushing permitting like a bulldozer,” Lee-Sheriff said. But there is no guarantee the project will be approved.

“The reason we applied was because we wanted the federal process coordinated to give the state the confidence that this project will or won’t go forward,” Lee-Sheriff said.

Once the permits are dealt with at the federal level, the state can begin its own permitting process.

Within the next two months, the Permitting Council will release a schedule that federal agencies and the company are expected to meet. Updates will be posted to the project’s page on the federal Permitting Dashboard.

If everything goes according to plan, Lee-Sheriff said, the project could be cleared through the federal process by next year, and the state permitting process could begin.

“In our best case, the state would get involved once they see this moving along at the federal level and we’d be able to advance the project toward development in a couple of years,” Lee-Sheriff said.

## Opponents plan to continue challenging project

EnCore said in a news release that its method would have “minimal surface disturbance” compared to open pits and tunnels used to mine uranium in the same area from the 1950s to the ’70s. Lee-Sheriff described the operation as a series of “beehives” with piping underground.

The method is known as “in situ” mining: drilling wells to inject a water-based solution underground, dissolving uranium and pumping it to the surface. The water would be pulled from local aquifers and then treated and pumped back underground after being used for mining, causing opponents to fear pollution of local water sources.

Lilias Jarding, executive director of the Black Hills Clean Water Alliance, said the organization formed in 2009 in response to the Dewey Burdock project. She said the organization will continue to oppose the project because of its potential threat to groundwater and the people who rely on it.

“There is a danger to water and to human health. Those are the two main threats,” Jarding said.

The Oglala Sioux Tribe and NDN Collective have also opposed the project over concerns about potential impacts to historic and cultural sites in the Black Hills, which are central to some tribes’ traditional spiritual beliefs and practices.

Another company, Clean Nuclear Energy Corp., filed a uranium exploration permit application with South Dakota last year to explore for more uranium deposits along the southwestern edge of the Black Hills. That application, which is also opposed by the Black Hills Clean Water Alliance, is under consideration by the state Board of Minerals and Environment.

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

## Democrats share alleged Trump birthday note to Epstein

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY-SEPTEMBER 8, 2025 5:32 PM

WASHINGTON — U.S. House Democrats on Monday revealed a lewd image and inscription they alleged was a birthday note that President Donald Trump provided for the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein’s 50th birthday book compiled by the financier’s co-conspirator Ghislaine Maxwell.

The U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, led by Kentucky Republican James Comer, obtained the drawing via a subpoena for records in the government’s 2019 federal sex trafficking case against Epstein.

“We got the Epstein note Trump says doesn’t exist. Time to end this White House cover-up,” Rep. Robert

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**President Donald Trump speaks to the media in the Oval Office on Sept. 2, 2025.** (Photo by Alex Wong/Getty Images)

Garcia of California wrote on social media. Garcia is the top ranking Democrat on the Oversight Committee.

Comer had not issued a comment or statement as of late Monday afternoon on social media or on the committee's website, where the committee chair has been posting updates on the Epstein probe.

The image of the birthday note shows a cryptic message about a "wonderful secret" written within the outline of a woman's body and breasts. A doodle depicting the name "Donald" — that appears similar to Trump's signature — is placed in the location of the woman's pubic hair.

The Wall Street Journal first reported on the existence of the birthday message in July. Trump promptly sued the news outlet and denied that he created

the note.

The Journal also published the image Wednesday.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt issued a statement on social media Wednesday criticizing the news outlet's latest story as a "hatchet job" and asserting that the president's lawyers "will continue to aggressively pursue litigation."

"The latest piece published by the Wall Street Journal PROVES this entire 'Birthday Card' story is false. As I have said all along, it's very clear President Trump did not draw this picture, and he did not sign it," Leavitt wrote on X.

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries declined to comment on the birthday note at a previously scheduled press conference Monday afternoon.

Trump's past relationship with Epstein has been under a microscope since the Department of Justice declared in July it would not be releasing any further information on the case, and that no incriminating client list of Epstein's existed.

Epstein died in a Manhattan jail cell in August 2019, awaiting trial on federal charges of sex trafficking minors.

Trump campaigned on releasing what he and his followers call the "Epstein files."

The uproar over the investigative materials related to the government's case has revealed a rupture among Trump's voter base and some House Republicans who have reliably supported him.

Victims who shared stories of abuse inflicted by Epstein and Maxwell, who was convicted on federal charges of sex trafficking minors, stood alongside Democrats and Republicans, including Rep. Thomas Massie of Kentucky and Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, on Capitol Hill Sept. 2.

Massie's discharge petition, co-led with Rep. Ro Khanna of California, to compel the release of all Epstein government files has the support of all Democrats, but is two Republican signatures short of forcing a floor vote on the issue.

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

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## Trump penalty of \$83M in E. Jean Carroll case upheld by appeals court

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY-SEPTEMBER 8, 2025 4:49 PM

WASHINGTON — A federal appeals court on Monday upheld that President Donald Trump must pay an \$83 million penalty for defaming writer E. Jean Carroll in 2019, rejecting Trump's argument that presidential immunity shields him from the punishment.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit in Manhattan reaffirmed a lower court decision denying Trump's claim that the 2024 U.S. Supreme Court decision granting presidential immunity protects him, and his assertion that the monetary punishment was excessive.

The three-judge panel wrote that Trump never argued "absolute" presidential immunity as the defamation case proceeded in 2020, and "hence, he may not do so now." At the time, he argued for temporary immunity until he was out of office.

The decision was unsigned. The appeal was before Judges Denny Chin, who was appointed to the bench in 2010 by President Barack Obama; Sarah A. L. Merriam, appointed by President Joe Biden in 2022; and Maria Araujo Kahn, appointed by Biden in 2023.



**E. Jean Carroll leaves the courthouse on Sept. 6, 2024, in New York City.** (Photo by Alex Kent/Getty Images)

### Trump statements

The case centered on Trump's statements about Carroll after New York magazine published an excerpt of the writer's new book in June 2019, in which she alleged Trump sexually assaulted her in a fitting room at the Bergdorf Goodman department store in 1996.

Trump repeatedly made public statements and social media posts claiming Carroll's story was "totally fabricated" and that he didn't know her, despite being previously photographed with her.

Trump began to claim absolute presidential immunity in December 2022, years into the case, and a district court denied his request for a summary judgement, ruling that he had waived any claim to it by failing to raise it in previous court filings.

Trump appealed to the 2nd Circuit and argued in a September 2024 brief that "presidential immunity is fatal to Carroll's claims" and that Trump cannot be held liable for defamatory statements he made.

The Supreme Court ruled in a 6-3 decision in July 2024 that former U.S. presidents enjoy absolute criminal immunity for "core Constitutional" powers and are "entitled to at least presumptive immunity from prosecution for all his official acts," but are not immune from criminal prosecution for "unofficial acts."

Trump escalated the question of presidential immunity to the Supreme Court after being federally indicted on defrauding the American public by claiming falsely that he won the 2020 presidential election and allegedly conspiring to overturn the result.

### 'Extraordinary and unprecedented conduct'

Trump had also argued the dollar amount the jury awarded to Carroll — \$65 million of which was for punitive damages — was "grossly excessive."



The appeals court rejected that claim, highlighting that Trump continued to make defamatory remarks about Carroll during the yearslong litigation.

"For nearly five years, Trump never wavered or relented in his public attacks on Carroll," the judges wrote, even though he was found guilty in a separate but closely related civil case — a jury in 2023 found Trump liable for sexually abusing Carroll in the mid-1990s.

"The statements all shared common themes: Trump continued to assert that Carroll was lying about the 1996 sexual assault and that she was motivated to do so for personal, financial, and political reasons, and to imply that Carroll was too unattractive to be sexually assaulted. He also began to claim that Carroll's lawsuit was part of a conspiracy to interfere with the 2024 election, and vowed to continue to make similar statements in the future."

The judges said Trump's behavior amounted to "extraordinary and unprecedented conduct."

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

## Trump administration asks Supreme Court to let it block \$4B in foreign aid funding

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT-SEPTEMBER 8, 2025 2:12 PM



WASHINGTON — The Trump administration on Monday asked the Supreme Court to overturn a lower court's ruling and allow it to withhold \$4 billion in foreign aid that was previously approved by Congress.

The case is one of many lawsuits challenging the White House's efforts to supersede Congress' spending authority by canceling funding without lawmakers' explicit approval.

This particular case became more complicated in late August when the Trump administration sent Congress a rescission request, asking lawmakers to cancel billions in foreign aid, including some of the funding subject to this lawsuit.

This "pocket rescission," as it's sometimes called, came within 45 days of the end of the fiscal year. Under the Trump administration's interpretation of the law, they believe that allows them to cancel the funding even if Congress refuses to go along with the proposal.

**The U.S. Supreme Court on Oct. 29, 2024.** (Photo by Jane

Norman/States Newsroom)

partisan Government Accountability Office and evoked ire from senior lawmakers, including Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Susan Collins, R-Maine.

"Article I of the Constitution makes clear that Congress has the responsibility for the power of the purse," Collins wrote in a statement. "Any effort to rescind appropriated funds without congressional approval is a clear violation of the law."

Administration sees executive branch 'at war with itself'

The appeal to the Supreme Court filed Monday urges the justices to let the legislative and executive branches figure out the spending dispute on their own and criticizes a federal district court for ordering

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the Trump administration to spend the money.

"The injunction requires the Executive Branch to rush to obligate the same \$4 billion that the President has just proposed rescinding between now and September 30, and thus puts the Executive Branch at war with itself," wrote Solicitor General D. John Sauer. "Just as the President is pressing for rescission and explaining to Congress that obligating these funds would harm U.S. foreign policy interests, his subordinates are being forced to proceed to identify and even negotiate with potential recipients."

The pocket rescissions request at the center of this case is separate from the one Trump sent Congress in early June that asked members to eliminate funding for numerous foreign aid accounts and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Lawmakers approved that proposal in July after preserving full funding for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR.

Congress has yet to act on the second rescissions request as its leaders look for ways to fund the government ahead of an Oct. 1 shutdown deadline.

Attorneys for the organizations that brought the lawsuit — the AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition and Global Health Council — wrote in a brief to the Supreme Court submitted Monday that they opposed the Trump administration's request to overturn the lower court's preliminary injunction.

"USAID and the State Department have been under a duty to obligate these funds since at least March 2024, when Congress enacted the appropriations; they chose not to act sooner," they wrote. "The government faces no cognizable harm from having to take steps to comply with the law for the short period while this Court considers its stay application."

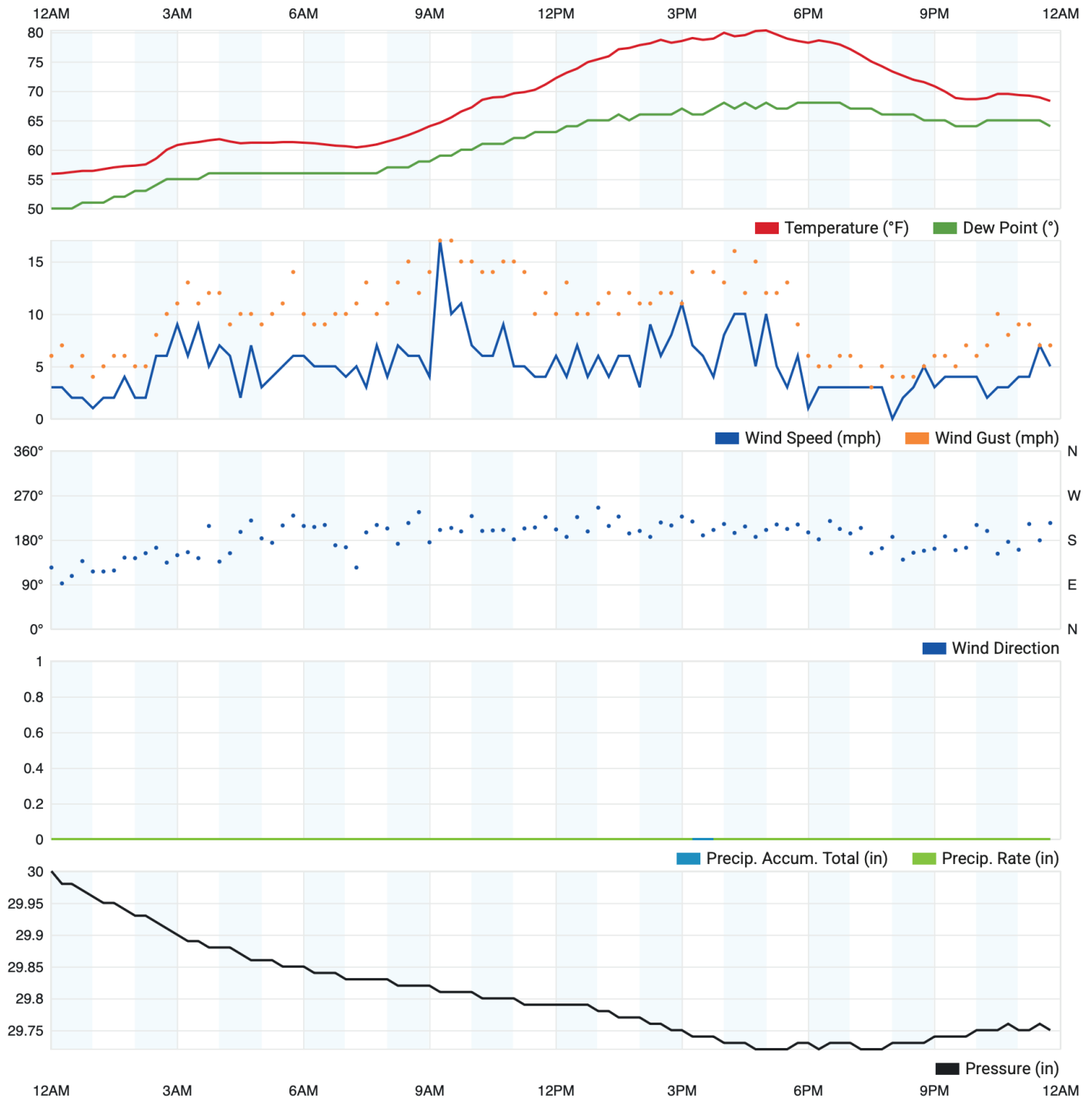
*Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

September 8, 2025





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Tuesday



High: 80 °F

Patchy Fog  
then Mostly  
Sunny

Tuesday Night



Low: 53 °F

Mostly Clear  
then Patchy  
Fog

Wednesday



High: 81 °F

Patchy Fog  
then Sunny

Wednesday  
Night



Low: 60 °F

Partly Cloudy

Thursday



High: 86 °F

Mostly Sunny



Slightly Above  
Average  
Temperatures



## Today

Elevated smoke, some  
surface smoke possible  
west river

Highs: 77 - 87°F

## Wednesday

AM patchy fog possible, then slight  
chance of PM storms

Highs: 77 - 85°F



Isolated 25-30 mph  
wind gusts  
Wed/Thurs

## Thursday

Slight chance of PM storms

Highs: 80 - 87°F

September 9, 2025 3:18 AM

The next few days will feature slightly above average temperatures with highs in the upper 70s to upper 80s. Areas west river may smell some smoke this morning with elevated smoke creating milky skies across much of central and northeastern SD.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 80 °F at 4:43 PM

Heat Index: 83 at 4:45 p.m.

Low Temp: 56 °F at 12:00 AM

Wind: 18 mph at 10:03 AM

Precip: : 0.00

## Today's Info

Record High: 101 in 1931

Record Low: 26 in 1898

Average High: 78

Average Low: 50

Average Precip in Sept.: 0.61

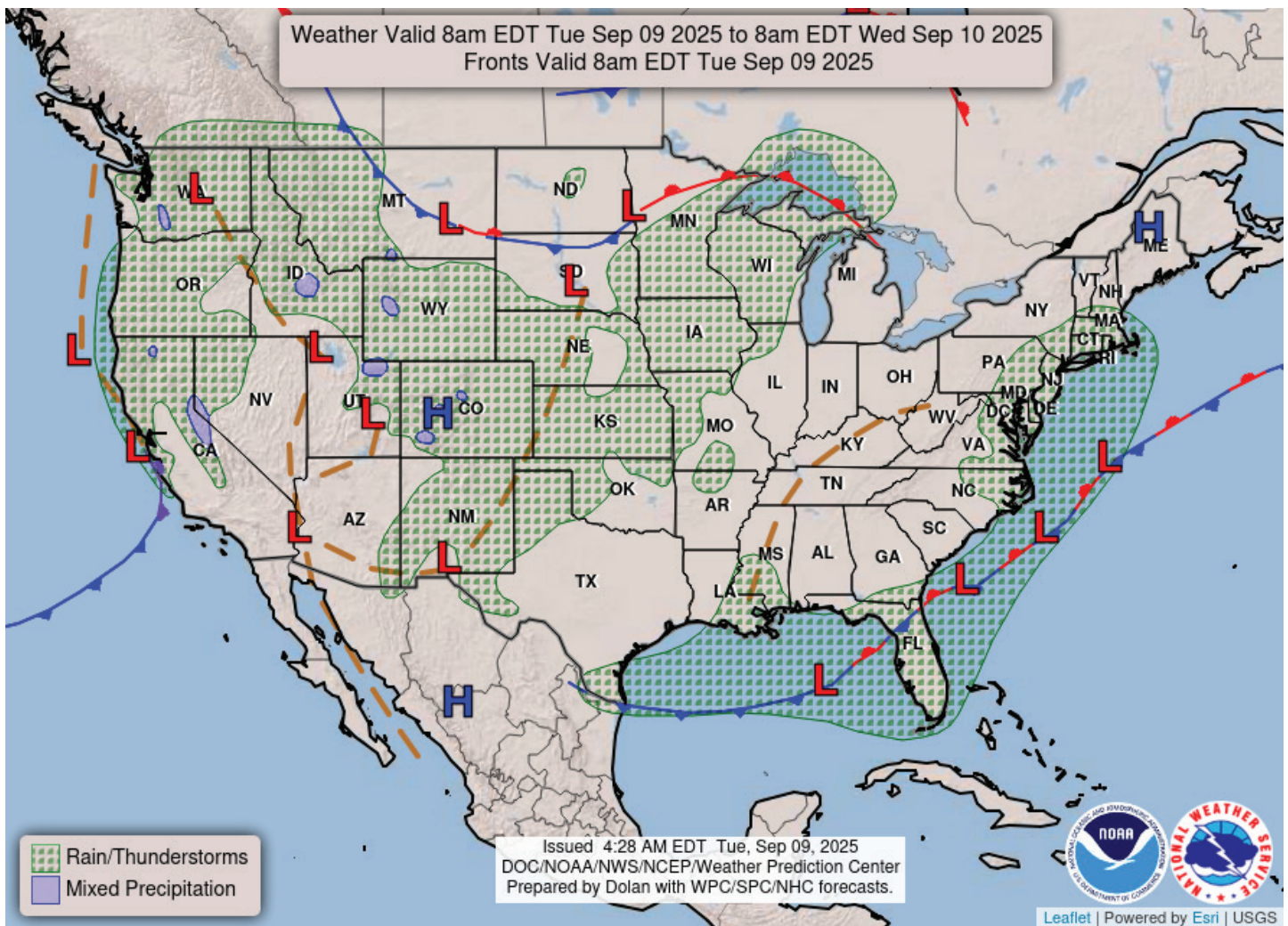
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.02

Average Precip to date: 16.95

Precip Year to Date: 20.32

Sunset Tonight: 7:55 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:05 am



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## **Today in Weather History**

September 9, 1961: A young girl in Bullhead, Corson County, was killed by lightning on the afternoon while walking on the highway. Her little brother was slightly injured.

September 9, 1983: High winds from the late evening into the early morning hours of the 10th blew through east cen-tral South Dakota damaging crops, downing hundreds of trees, breaking windows, damaging roofs and buildings, downing power poles and damaging vehicles. Gusts to 75 mph in Huron moved a semi-trailer a half block. Scattered power outages of up to 24 hours were reported in numerous areas as branches fell across power and telephone lines. Thirty power poles were downed in Kingsbury County alone. Corn, beans, and sunflowers suffered extensive damage in many areas with up to 50 percent losses reported. Gusts up to 90 mph were reported at Lake Poinsett, Lake Norden, and Estel-line, where roofs and shingles were ripped from buildings and numerous windows, were broken. At Lake Poinsett, extensive damage was done to boats, docks, and automobiles.

1775: The Independence Hurricane slammed into Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Many ships were sunk and buildings demolished. 4,000 people died in what is considered to be Canada's deadliest hurricane disaster.

1821: A tornadic outbreak affected the New England states of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont on this day. Five tornadoes reportedly touched down from this event. One storm in New Hampshire had a path width of a half mile and tracked an estimated 23 miles. This tornado killed at least six individuals, which could be the deadliest tornado in New Hampshire history.

1900 - The greatest weather disaster in U.S. records occurred when a hurricane struck Galveston TX. A tide fifteen feet high washed over the island demolishing or carrying away buildings, and drowning more than 6000 persons. The hurricane de-stroyed more than 3600 houses, and total damage was more than thirty million dol-lars. Winds to 120 mph, and a twenty foot storm surge accompanied the hurricane. Following the storm, the surf was three hundred feet inland from the former water line. The hurricane claimed another 1200 lives outside of the Galveston area. (8th-9th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1965: Hurricane Betsy slammed into New Orleans on the evening of September 9, 1965. 110 mph winds and power failures were reported in New Orleans. The eye of the storm passed to the southwest of New Orleans on a northwesterly track. The northern and western eyewalls covered Southeast Louisiana and the New Orleans area from about 8 PM until 4 AM the next morning. In Thibodaux, winds of 130 mph to 140 mph were reported. The Baton Rouge weather bureau operated under auxiliary power, without telephone communication.

1987 - A tropical depression off the coast of South Carolina brought another round of heavy rain to the Middle Atlantic Coast Region and the Upper Ohio Valley. Show-ers and thunderstorms produced extremely heavy rain in eastern Pennsylvania, where flooding caused more than 55 million dollars across a seven county area. The afternoon high of 97 degrees at Miami FL was a record for the month of September. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Eighteen cities in the south central and eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Roanoke VA with a reading of 42 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing along a stationary front produced very heavy rain in the central U.S. Thunderstorms during the late morning and afternoon produced five to nine inches of rain around Lincoln NE, with an unofficial total of eleven inch-es near Holmes Park. Up to six and a half inches of rain soaked northern and west-ern Iowa. Eighty to ninety percent of the homes in Shenandoah IA, where 5.89 inch-es of rain was received, reported basement flooding. (The National Weather Sum-mary) (Storm Data)

2013: Historical rainfall occurred in northern Colorado from September 9 to September 16 and resulted in severe flash flooding along the northern Front Range of Colorado and subsequent river flooding downstream along the South Platte River and its tributaries. The heaviest rain fell along the Front Range northwest of Denver on September 11-12.



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## A HEART THAT DOES KIND THINGS

It was the final set in a tennis match. One of the players had demonstrated his strength and skill as his opponent struggled to stay competitive. Suddenly the player who had been doing so well began to hit the ball out of the lines, into the net and even missed the ball. It seemed as though he lost his focus.

His father approached him during a break and asked, "Keller, what's going on? You were doing so good. Now, you may lose the match and not go to the state finals. What's going on?" he demanded.

"It's O.K., Dad. Leave me alone. I know I can win. I've been missing the balls on purpose. I don't want him to feel bad about losing. I want to encourage him."

Keller did go on to win. But in the process, he not only thought of "doing a kind thing" but showed what kindness "looked like" to someone who was struggling to defeat him and win the match.

Life gives us many opportunities to "do kindness." In fact, God "makes doing kind things available" to us each day. For example, we can open a door for a senior citizen; or be gracious and express our gratitude to a cashier during the rush hour at a grocery store; give a smile to someone who looks like they need encouragement; give a compliment to one who is guiding us when we place an order on the phone; or take care to explain something that is unfamiliar to us.

"Doing kindness" is one of the most important things we Christians can do. It represents what God's grace is all about. If an opportunity to "do kindness" appears, seize it!

Prayer: Help us to be alert, Lord, for opportunities to show Your grace through acts of kindness and love. Help us to show a strong contrast when compared to "the wicked" so people turn to you. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: – In return for my friendship they accuse me, but I am a man of prayer. Psalm 109:4

*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: 09.05.25

6 14 36 58 62 24

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$358,000,000**

NEXT 17 Hrs 32 Mins 41  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.08.25

3 9 37 44 47 4

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$2,700,000**

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 47 Mins  
DRAW: 42 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.08.25

5 9 21 22 36 18

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT 17 Hrs 2 Mins 41  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.06.25

6 23 26 31 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$20,000**

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 2 Mins  
DRAW: 42 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.08.25

7 18 19 22 68 13

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 31 Mins  
DRAW: 41 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.08.25

26 28 41 53 64 9

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$33,000,000**

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 31 Mins  
DRAW: 41 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)



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## **Upcoming Groton Events**

08/09/2025 Groton Legion 30th Anniversary Celebration  
08/07/2025 Groton Firemen Summer Splash in the GHS Parking Lot 7:30-8:30pm  
08/11/2025 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 3:30-6pm  
08/23/2025 Glacial Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course  
09/05/2025 Homecoming Parade 1pm  
09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm  
09/06-07/25 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport  
09/07/2025 Couples Sunflower Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am  
09/07/2025 9th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3-5pm  
10/10/2025 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am  
10/11/2025 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm  
10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm  
10/31/2025 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm  
11/15/2025 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm  
11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving 11:30am-1:30pm Community Center (Thanksgiving)  
11/30/2025 Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m.  
12/06/2025 Olive Grove Holiday Party and Silent Live Auction Fundraiser

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

### PREP VOLLEYBALL

Dell Rapids St Mary's def. Garretson, 25-23, 25-18, 25-14  
Dell Rapids def. Baltic, 25-18, 19-25, 25-20, 25-19  
Deubrook def. Iroquois-Lake Preston, 25-21, 25-20, 18-25, 25-11  
Hamlin def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-8, 25-14, 25-11  
Kimball-White Lake def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-13, 25-17, 30-28  
Lemmon High School def. Bison, 25-16, 25-16, 25-15  
Lennox def. Canton, 25-22, 25-21, 26-24  
North Central def. McLaughlin, 25-17, 25-13, 25-8  
Sioux Falls Washington def. Yankton, 25-17, 13-25, 26-24, 25-16  
Wheaton/Herman-Norcross, Minn. def. Milbank, 25-16, 25-11, 25-17

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

### **Years of activism resulted in a Hong Kong same-sex partnership bill, but a tough vote remains**

By KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — At her wedding, Jaedyn Yu felt her father's tears marked a subtle yet touching shift in his attitude toward love between two women.

Yu's family initially struggled to accept her partner after they fell in love in 2019. Seeking both family recognition and legal rights, the couple decided to marry.

But rather than waiting for Hong Kong to establish its framework for recognizing same-sex partnerships, citing the uncertain timeline, they opted to marry via Zoom with a U.S. officiant in May and held their ceremony in Bali, Indonesia.

Their concern proved prescient. Despite the top court ruling in favor of recognizing same-sex partnerships in 2023, the government's proposed framework, unveiled in July, has met fierce opposition in the legislature.

If passed, the bill would allow residents who already have formed unions overseas to register their partnerships locally and receive rights in handling medical and after-death matters. Lawmakers are set to resume the debate Wednesday, with their vote determining the future of the city's same-sex couples.

Yu's wife, Gloria Tsang, said while the proposal was better than nothing, it would only benefit those who are privileged enough to afford overseas marriages and navigate foreign marriage policies.

"The original purpose of law is to protect everyone," Tsang said.

Decades of progress

The fight for same-sex rights has taken years to gain traction in Hong Kong. The city decriminalized gay sex in 1991.

Prominent gay rights activist Jimmy Sham said that in the past some gay and lesbian people stayed on the sidelines or concealed their identities at events about gay rights.

But in 2005, after groups upholding traditional family values ran newspaper advertisements deemed to undermine gay and lesbian rights, more people emerged to mark International Day Against Homophobia, he said.

Pride parades, among other events, later took to the streets and gained support beyond the LGBTQ+ community.

In 2009, the government introduced a cohabitation relationship definition in a revision to the domestic violence law, extending protection to same-sex couples, in a move that Sham said showed political wisdom.

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Some celebrities have come out publicly and now many same-sex couples are seen holding hands in the streets, he said.

Surveys showed 60% of respondents supported same-sex marriage in 2023 in Hong Kong, up from 38% in 2013, according to a report by university researchers. The city also hosted Asia's first Gay Games in 2023.

LGBTQ+ activism in Hong Kong is still making considerable progress despite a government crackdown following massive protests in 2019.

In recent years, multiple judicial challenges have won same-sex couples equal rights in some areas including dependent visas, civil service and subsidized housing benefits.

In 2023, the top court ruled in a legal challenge brought by Sham that the government should offer a framework for recognizing same-sex partnerships by October 2025. It did not grant full marriage rights to same-sex couples.

That victory mattered deeply to Sham who, at the time, had been in jail since 2021 for the city's biggest national security case. The court ruling showed he could still make an impact even behind bars, he said.

"Suddenly, I felt those emotional issues being swept away, and I'm back," said Sham, who was released from jail in May.

Bill faces fierce resistance

While many same-sex couples and advocates find the government's proposed framework for recognizing same-sex partnership limiting, some still support its passage in the face of opposition from various lawmakers.

Pro-Beijing lawmaker Priscilla Leung described the bill as "opening a paradox box," while her colleague Holden Chow worried the framework would effectively amount to recognizing same-sex marriages. Another legislator, Junius Ho, said the bill "would harm countless generations of our descendants."

The government also reported 80% of 10,780 public opinion submissions opposed the bill, mainly citing concerns over traditional family values and the marriage system. Those backing the bill agreed the government should respect the spirit of the rule of law.

Hong Kong Marriage Equality, a non-governmental organization, said the submissions did not accurately reflect public sentiment. It noted about half of the publicly viewable submissions against the bill used standardized templates, which suggested "strong mobilization by specific groups."

The government maintained the framework would not equate to marriage and argued that requiring overseas registration would provide an objective way to verify committed partnerships. It said the proposal represents the "greatest common denominator" deemed acceptable to the public.

Erick Tsang, the secretary for constitutional affairs, told lawmakers that the government must fulfill its positive obligations under the ruling, otherwise it would violate the rule of law.

The cost of rejection

Sham warned vetoing the bill could damage Hong Kong's international status.

"It would make the whole world question Hong Kong's human rights stance, whether it won't even accept such basic protections for sexual minorities," he said.

Pro-Beijing lawmaker Paul Tse, who is inclined to support the bill, said the opposition seen in the legislature was greater than he had expected given the bill's limited scope.

If lawmakers vote the bill down, the city would face a "mini constitutional crisis" as the judicial, administrative and legislative branches would be in a deadlock. The government would then need to report to the top court and seek time to work out other solutions, he said.

Sham previously proposed decoupling the registration system from overseas marriages to address concerns from conservative groups, but Tse cautioned that such a mechanism might trigger more concerns as some people might consider it closer to local marriage.

Equality appears distant for same-sex couples

In Hong Kong, the daily life of same-sex couples is still in many ways different to that of their straight peers.

Yu has to think carefully about telling colleagues about her wife, unlike some of her foreign friends who share such details casually, while Tsang ponders whether to introduce her partner to those who are not



close to her. Picking a place for getting married overseas also was a challenge.

The pair don't hold high expectations about the bill's passage. Tsang likened the lawmakers' comments to a return to "antiquated" mindsets, saying the acceptance level might be lower than she had imagined.

Despite the bill not being perfect, she said it would be a pity if it were vetoed as it would mark a step backwards after taking a step forward.

"Equality means providing safeguards regardless of your background, your gender, or your position," Yu said.

## **US tech companies enabled the surveillance and detention of hundreds of thousands in China**

By DAKE KANG and Yael Grauer Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — The body camera hung from the top of the IV drip, recording the slightest twitch made by Yang Guoliang as he lay bloody and paralyzed in a hospital bed after a police beating with bricks.

By then, surveillance was nothing new for the Yang family in rural China, snared in an intricate network based on U.S. technology that spies on them and predicts what they'll do.

Their train tickets, hotel bookings, purchases, text messages and phone calls are forwarded to the government. Their house is ringed with more than a dozen cameras. They've tried to go to Beijing 20 times in the past few years, but masked men show up and grab them, often before they depart. And last year, Yang's wife and younger daughter were detained and now face trial for disrupting the work of the Chinese state — a crime carrying a sentence of up to a decade in prison.

Yet the Yangs say they are not criminals. They are simply farmers trying to beg Beijing to stop local officials from seizing their 1 1/2 acres of land in China's eastern Jiangsu province.

"Every move in my own home is monitored," Yang said, sitting behind black curtains that block him from the glare of police lights trained straight at his house. "Their surveillance makes me feel unsafe all the time, everywhere."

Across China, tens of thousands of people tagged as troublemakers like the Yangs are trapped in a digital cage, barred from leaving their province and sometimes even their homes by the world's largest digital surveillance apparatus. Most of this technology came from companies in a country that has long claimed to support freedoms worldwide: the United States.

Over the past quarter century, American tech companies to a large degree designed and built China's surveillance state, playing a far greater role in enabling human rights abuses than previously known, an Associated Press investigation found. They sold billions of dollars of technology to the Chinese police, government and surveillance companies, despite repeated warnings from the U.S. Congress and in the media that such tools were being used to quash dissent, persecute religious sects and target minorities.

Critically, American surveillance technologies allowed a brutal mass detention campaign in the far west region of Xinjiang — targeting, tracking and grading virtually the entire native Uyghur population to forcibly assimilate and subdue them.

U.S. companies did this by bringing "predictive policing" to China — technology that sucks in and analyzes data to prevent crime, protests, or terror attacks before they happen. Such systems mine a vast array of information — texts, calls, payments, flights, video, DNA swabs, mail deliveries, the internet, even water and power use — to unearth individuals deemed suspicious and predict their behavior. But they also allow Chinese police to threaten friends and family and preemptively detain people for crimes they have not even committed.

For example, the AP found a Chinese defense contractor, Huadi, worked with IBM to design the main policing system known as the "Golden Shield" for Beijing to censor the internet and crack down on alleged terrorists, the Falun Gong religious sect, and even villagers deemed troublesome, according to thousands of pages of classified government blueprints taken out of China by a whistleblower, verified by AP and revealed here for the first time. IBM and other companies that responded said they fully complied with all laws, sanctions and U.S. export controls governing business in China, past and present.

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Across China, surveillance systems track blacklisted “key persons,” whose movements are restricted and monitored. In Xinjiang, administrators logged people as high, medium, or low risk, often according to 100-point scores with deductions for factors like growing a beard, being 15 to 55 years old, or just being Uyghur.

Some tech companies even specifically addressed race in their marketing. Dell and a Chinese surveillance firm promoted a “military-grade” AI-powered laptop with “all-race recognition” on Dell’s official WeChat account in 2019. And until contacted by AP in August, biotech giant Thermo Fisher Scientific’s website marketed DNA kits to the Chinese police as “designed” for the Chinese population, including “ethnic minorities like Uyghurs and Tibetans.”

While the flood of American technology slowed considerably starting in 2019 after outrage and sanctions over atrocities in Xinjiang, it laid the foundation for China’s surveillance apparatus that Chinese companies have since built on and in some cases replaced. To this day, concerns remain over where technology sold to China will end up.

For example, 20 former U.S. officials and national security experts wrote a letter in late July criticizing a deal for NVIDIA to sell H20 chips used in artificial intelligence to China, with 15% of revenues going to the U.S. government. They said no matter who the chip is sold to, it will fall into the hands of Chinese military and intelligence services.

NVIDIA said it does not make surveillance systems or software, does not work with police in China and has not designed the H20 for police surveillance. NVIDIA posted on its WeChat social media account in 2022 that Chinese surveillance firms Watix and GEOAI used its chips to train AI patrol drones and systems to identify people by their walk, but told the AP those relationships no longer continue. The White House and Department of Commerce did not respond to requests for comment.

Thermo Fisher and hard drive maker Seagate promoted their products to Chinese police at conferences and trade shows this year, according to online posts. Officers stroll the streets of Beijing with Motorola walkie talkies. NVIDIA and Intel chips remain critical for Chinese policing systems, procurements show. And contracts to maintain existing IBM, Dell, HP, Cisco, Oracle, and Microsoft software and gear remain ubiquitous, often with third parties.

What started in China more than a decade ago could be seen as a cautionary tale for other countries at a time when the use of surveillance technology worldwide is rising sharply, including in the United States. Emboldened by the Trump administration, U.S. tech companies are more powerful than ever, and President Donald Trump has rolled back a Biden-era executive order meant to safeguard civil rights from new surveillance technologies.

As the capacity and sophistication of such technologies has grown, so has their reach. Surveillance technologies now include AI systems that help track and detain migrants in the U.S. and identify people to kill in the Israel-Hamas war. China, in the meantime, has used what it learned from the U.S. to turn itself into a surveillance superpower, selling technologies to countries like Iran and Russia.

The AP investigation was based on tens of thousands of leaked emails and databases from a Chinese surveillance company; tens of thousands of pages of confidential corporate and government documents; public Chinese language marketing material; and thousands of procurements, many provided by ChinaFile, a digital magazine published by the non-profit Asia Society. The AP also drew from dozens of open record requests and interviews with more than 100 current and former Chinese and American engineers, executives, experts, officials, administrators, and police officers.

Though the companies often claim they aren’t responsible for how their products are used, some directly pitched their tech as tools for Chinese police to control citizens, marketing material from IBM, Dell, Cisco, and Seagate show. Their sales pitches — made both publicly and privately — cited Communist Party catch-phrases on crushing protest, including “stability maintenance,” “key persons,” and “abnormal gatherings,” and named programs that stifle dissent, such as “Internet Police,” “Sharp Eyes” and the “Golden Shield.”

Other companies, like Intel, NVIDIA, Oracle, Thermo Fisher, Motorola, Amazon Web Services, Microsoft, Western Digital, creator of mapping software ArcGIS Esri, and what was then Hewlett Packard, or HP, also

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sold technology or services knowingly to Chinese police or surveillance companies. Four practicing lawyers said sales like those uncovered by AP could potentially go against at least the spirit, if not the letter, of U.S. export laws at the time, which the companies denied.

## **American technology made up nearly every part of China's surveillance apparatus, AP found:**

**MILITARY AND POLICE:** In 2009, Chinese defense contractor Huadi worked with IBM to build national intelligence systems, including a counterterrorism system, used by the Chinese military and China's secret police, the Ministry of State Security. Chinese agents sold IBM's i2 police surveillance analysis software to the same ministry and to Chinese police, including in Xinjiang, through the 2010s, leaked emails and marketing posts show. IBM said it has no record of its i2 software ever having been sold to the Public Security Bureau in Xinjiang.

**SURVEILLANCE:** NVIDIA and Intel partnered with China's three biggest surveillance companies to add AI capabilities to camera systems used for video surveillance across China, including Xinjiang and Tibet, until sanctions were imposed. NVIDIA said in a post dating to 2013 or later that a Chinese police institute used its chips for surveillance technology research.

**ETHNIC REPRESSION:** IBM, Oracle, HP, and ArcGIS developer Esri sold hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of geographic and mapping software to Chinese police that allows officers to detect when blacklisted Uyghurs, Tibetans or dissidents stray out of provinces or villages. As late as 2019, with detentions in Xinjiang well underway, Dell hosted an industry summit in its capital. Dell and then-subsidiary VMWare sold cloud software and storage devices to police and entities providing data to police in Tibet and Xinjiang, even in 2022 after abuses there became widely known.

**IDENTIFICATION:** Huadi worked with IBM to construct China's national fingerprint database; IBM told AP it never sold "fingerprinting-specific product or technology" to the Chinese government "in violation of US law." HP and VMWare sold technology used for fingerprint comparison by Chinese police, while Intel partnered with a Chinese fingerprinting company to make their devices more effective. IBM, Dell, and VMWare also promoted facial recognition to Chinese police. China's police and police DNA labs bought Dell and Microsoft software and equipment to save genetic data on police databases.

**CENSORSHIP AND CONTROL:** In 2016, Dell boasted on its WeChat account that its services assisted the Chinese internet police in "cracking down on rumormongers." Seagate said on WeChat in 2022 that it sells hard drives "tailor made" for AI video systems in China for use by police to help them "control key persons," despite facing backlash for selling drives in Xinjiang.

"Everything was built on American tech," said Valentin Weber, a researcher at the German Council on Foreign Relations who studied the use of U.S. tech by Chinese police. "China's capability was close to zero."

IBM, Dell, Cisco, Intel, Thermo Fisher and Amazon Web Services all said they adhere to export control policies. Seagate and Western Digital said they adhere to all relevant laws and regulations where they operate.

Oracle, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, and tech conglomerate Broadcom, which acquired VMWare and cloud company Pivotal in 2023, did not comment on the record; HP, Motorola and Huadi did not respond, and Esri denied involvement but did not reply to examples. Microsoft told AP it found no evidence that it "knowingly sold technology to the military or police" as part of the "Golden Shield" update.

Some U.S. companies ended contracts in China over rights concerns and after sanctions. For example, IBM said it has prohibited sales to Tibet and Xinjiang police since 2015, and suspended business relations with defense contractor Huadi in 2019.

However, sanctions experts noted that the laws have significant loopholes and often lag behind new developments. For example, a ban on military and policing gear to China after the 1989 Tiananmen massacre does not take into account newer technologies or general-use products that can be applied in policing.

They also noted that the law around export controls is complicated. Raj Bhala, an expert in international trade law at the University of Kansas, said the issues the AP described fell into "the kind of gray area that we put in exams."



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"It would raise concerns about possible inconsistencies, possible violations," said Bhala, who emphasized he was speaking generally and not about any specific company. "But I really stress 'possible.' We need to know more facts."

While German, Japanese and Korean firms also played a role, American tech firms were by far the biggest suppliers.

The Xinjiang government said in a statement that it uses surveillance technologies to "prevent and combat terrorist and criminal activity," that it respects citizens' privacy and legal rights and that it does not target any particular ethnicity. The statement said Western countries also use such technology, calling the U.S. "a true surveillance state." Other government agencies did not respond to a request for comment, including China's police and authorities in the Yangs' province.

This technology still powers the police database that controls the Yangs and other ordinary people. An estimate based on Chinese government statistics found at least 55,000 to 110,000 were put under residential surveillance in the past decade, and vast numbers are restricted from travel in Xinjiang and Tibet. China's cities, roads and villages are now studded with more cameras than the rest of the world combined, analysts say — one for every two people.

"Because of this technology ... we have no freedom at all," said Yang Guoliang's elder daughter, Yang Caiying, now in exile in Japan. "At the moment, it's us Chinese that are suffering the consequences, but sooner or later, Americans and others, too, will lose their freedoms."

## **Selling surveillance superpowers**

Back when China was emerging from the chaotic violence of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, three in four Chinese were farmers, including the Yangs. They lived in a three-room home of tiles and pounded earth nestled among the lush, humid fields of the Yangtze River delta.

After Chairman Mao Zedong's death that year, Beijing's new leaders opened China to the world, and American tech firms like HP and IBM rushed in. But there were hard limits on how much change the government would accept. In 1989, the Tiananmen pro-democracy protests rattled Beijing, which sent tanks and troops to shoot students.

Soon after, Beijing began planning the "Golden Shield," aimed at digitizing China's police force.

In 2001, the 9/11 al-Qaida attacks turbocharged interest in surveillance technology. One researcher claimed authorities could have foiled the attack by unearthing connections between hijackers through public information in databases.

American companies cashed in, selling the U.S. billions of dollars in surveillance technologies they said could prevent crime and terror attacks.

They spotted the same sales opportunity in China. Researchers warned surveillance technologies would be "instruments of repression" in the hands of authoritarian states. Yet IBM, Cisco, Oracle, and other American companies clinched orders to supply Beijing's "Golden Shield."

"China didn't have this kind of thing before," said Wang, a former Chinese police official in Xinjiang who asked to be identified only by last name for fear of retaliation. "These concepts all came from the West."

Soon, disturbing stories emerged. Chinese police blocked sensitive news, pinpointing dissidents with unnerving precision. They stalked adherents of the Falun Gong sect banned by authorities. Congress demanded explanations from tech companies.

In 2008, documents leaked to the press showed Cisco saw the "Golden Shield" as a sales opportunity, quoting a Chinese official calling the Falun Gong an "evil cult." A Cisco presentation reviewed by AP from the same year said its products could identify over 90% of Falun Gong material on the web. Followers sued Cisco, which is now petitioning the U.S. Supreme Court to throw out the lower court ruling that allowed the lawsuit.

At a human rights conference in February, then-Cisco lawyer Katie Shay said companies had a responsibility to understand how customers might misuse their technology for "surveillance and censorship."

"A lot of people have suffered at the hands of their government, and I want to acknowledge that pain," said Shay, who left Cisco in June. "I also will say that Cisco disputes the allegations of Cisco's involvement."

Cisco told the AP it is committed to human rights, but the court allegations may "open the floodgates

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for suits against U.S. corporations merely for legal exports of off-the-shelf goods and services."

As Cisco was summoned before Congress, IBM partnered with a Chinese defense contractor on Phase Two of China's "Golden Shield."

Classified government blueprints obtained by AP show that in 2009, IBM worked with Huadi, the state-owned subsidiary of China's biggest missile military contractor spun off from China's Ministry of Defense, to build out predictive policing.

"Consolidate Communist Party rule," read the Huadi blueprint, which showed the databases would track hundreds of thousands of people online.

In response to AP's questions, IBM referred to any possible relationship it may have had with Chinese government agencies as "old, stale interactions":

"... If older systems are being abused today — and IBM has no knowledge that they are — the misuse is entirely outside of IBM's control, was not contemplated by IBM decades ago, and in no way reflects on IBM today."

Back in 2009, Beijing needed the technology urgently to quash critics bonding online. Among them were the Yangs.

In April that year, local authorities ordered the Yangs and more than 300 other families in their village off their land. Developers coveted their prime lakefront property for "Western-style" apartments and villas, with fountains, football fields and shopping centers.

The Yangs had no idea police were installing systems that could target families like theirs. They just knew their land was being seized — in return for just a unit in a five-floor walk-up, too many stairs for their elderly mother to climb.

The Yangs and other farmers across China filed complaints.

"I discovered the way the government took our land was illegal," Yang Caiying said. "They cheated us."

## **Predict and prevent**

In July 2009, three months after the Yang land was seized, riots erupted on the other side of the country in Xinjiang. Gory images of a Uyghur lynched at a toy factory spread online, angry Uyghurs took to the streets, and hundreds were killed.

Once again, American firms pitched their technology as the solution.

The government sent troops and cut Xinjiang's phone and internet connections. In secret meetings, officials concluded that police had failed to spot the danger signs because they couldn't identify Uyghurs deemed separatists, terrorists, and religious extremists, three engineers then working for the Xinjiang government told AP.

At the time, Xinjiang police and data systems were already running on American technology including IBM, Cisco, Oracle, and Microsoft, the engineers said, which AP verified by reviewing government contracts. But the databases were unconnected.

So Xinjiang launched an ambitious initiative to fuse data from all available sources, including banks, railways, and phone companies, into a central database. Officials demanded complete information on all suspicious individuals and their relatives going back three generations, according to the engineers, who described specific meetings in which they participated. Two asked to remain anonymous, fearing for their family in China; the third, Nureli Abliz, is now in Germany.

Soon, lucrative contracts went up for bidding. Among those seeking to profit was IBM.

"Prevent problems before they happen," IBM promised Chinese officials. In an August 2009 pamphlet, IBM cited the Xinjiang riots and said its technology could help the government "ensure urban safety and stability."

IBM executives fanned out across the country to court Chinese officials. In December 2009, they set up a new "IBM Institute for Electronic Governance Innovation" in Beijing. In 2011, IBM acquired i2, a software program designed to prevent "terrorist threats." IBM touted i2's ability to analyze Chinese social media and licensed a Shanghai-based firm called Landasoft to sell it to China's police, corporate records show.

Chinese police purchased tens of millions of dollars' worth of products from companies like IBM, Cisco,

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Oracle, and Microsoft to upgrade the “Golden Shield” policing systems, a leaked accounting ledger acquired by AP from a whistleblower shows.

In the confrontation between the Chinese state and its critics, American technology tipped the scales of power.

In 2011, thieves ransacked the Yangs’ house, hunting for their property deed. They didn’t find it.

Two years later, bald men with tattoos and gold chains smashed down their door, shattered windows and flipped furniture to bully them out of their home anyway. Yang’s mother dropped to the floor in terror. Doctors diagnosed a heart attack, but the Yangs didn’t have money for a pacemaker.

Furious, the Yangs sued local police. In June 2015, a judge ruled their land had been seized illegally. The Yangs celebrated.

But just weeks after the ruling, officers identified human rights lawyers through the “Golden Shield” technology, cuffed hundreds of them and pressed them into police vans across China. One lawyer later recalled how police monitored his messages on human rights in WeChat before they grabbed him, shackled him to a chair, and tortured him.

Overnight, China’s budding rights-defense movement was dealt a fatal blow — and with it, the Yangs’ case. The Yangs were called in and curtly told the judgment was being overturned, their lawsuit dismissed without trial.

“We really had too much faith in the law, you know?” Yang Guoliang said, his hands clenched in fists. “It turned out to be worthless.”

## **Technologies of terror**

In the meantime, Beijing was transforming Xinjiang into the most heavily surveilled place on earth, sweeping around a million people into camps and prisons.

When bombs tore through a train station in Xinjiang’s capital hours after a visit by leader Xi Jinping in 2014, Xi demanded a crackdown.

“He was super angry,” said Abliz, one of the engineers with the Xinjiang government. “They concluded they weren’t surveilling Uyghurs closely enough.”

The next year, in April 2015, Abliz attended a closed-door exposition in Xinjiang. A booth ran by Landasoft, the former IBM partner, caught his eye.

After years as a vendor of IBM’s i2 police surveillance analysis software to Xinjiang police, Landasoft had struck out on its own, touting i2-like software it said could detain extremists before they caused trouble. The similarity was no coincidence: Landasoft’s software was copied from i2, according to leaked emails and records.

“The platform is developed based on i2,” a Landasoft project manager wrote in an email.

It used a proprietary data visualization system developed by i2. The software powered what was called the Integrated Joint Operations Platform, or IJOP, with the authority to trigger arrests.

Abliz went numb.

“I thought then that this was the end of humanity,” he said.

Landasoft did not respond to repeated requests for comment. IBM said it cut ties with Landasoft in 2014 and was not aware of any interaction between Landasoft and the Public Security Bureau in Xinjiang.

In the autumn of 2015, months after the Xinjiang expo, Landasoft signed contracts with Xinjiang police, emails show. Workers installed millions of cameras and wired over 7,000 police outposts, often built just hundreds of meters apart. Nearly 100,000 officers were recruited to pound on doors and collect names, addresses, fingerprints and face-scans.

Though Chinese hardware was favored, foreign software was irreplaceable for its performance and compatibility with China’s American-built systems, engineers told AP. That included server and database software from Oracle and Microsoft and cloud software from VMWare, which Dell acquired in 2016.

In late 2016, the crackdown began. Internal documents, a leaked copy of the Landasoft software and interviews with 16 former Xinjiang police officers, officials and engineers reveal how the system worked.

Landasoft’s software combined data fed into a central police database to compile a dossier on vast swaths of Xinjiang’s population, tagging them with categories like “went on pilgrimage” or “studied abroad.”



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Administrators then questioned them, computed risk scores and decided who to detain.

Hundreds of thousands of people were tagged "untrustworthy", leaked messages show. Leaked documents show the IJOP flagged 24,412 people as "suspicious" in just one week in 2017, leading to most being detained.

"They thought it better to grab thousands of innocents than let a single criminal slip free," Abliz said.

The technology was crude and flawed. Landasoft emails show engineers frantically fixing a software bug to release hundreds of people categorized as high-risk. And surveillance cameras often misidentified people, a former Xinjiang police officer found when he checked their ID cards.

Yet officers were told "computers cannot lie" and that the IJOP's listed targets were "absolutely correct," Abliz said. The software's orders were often obeyed fearfully, unquestioningly.

"The tech companies told the government their software is perfect," Abliz said. "It's all a myth."

## Minority report

The all-encompassing surveillance forced total compliance: Officers arrested colleagues, neighbors informed on each other.

In May 2017, Kalbinur Sidik, a teacher now in the Netherlands, was summoned to her district government office in a yellow brick apartment building in Xinjiang's capital. A young Uyghur woman, fresh from college, rose and introduced herself as a local official. Sidik, the woman explained, was being appointed as the head of her building, responsible for collecting information on neighbors.

"What's this data going to be used for?" Sidik asked.

The woman looked at a computer, with a Landasoft program running and lists of names and tags: "Goes out at night," "Overseas phone," "unemployed." One button stood out: "Push Alert."

The woman clicked it, and the screen filled with names. These people, the woman explained, would be detained and interrogated for suspected ties to terrorism. Sidik's eyes widened.

"I hated her for what she was doing," Sidik said. "I knew those people would disappear."

Xinjiang officials issued arrest quotas, Sidik and five other former officers and administrators said. Sidik watched with horror as the number of people who attended her compound's weekly mandatory flag-raising ceremony shrank, from 400 to just over 100, as residents were arrested.

At the district office, she observed the logos popping up on screens: Oracle, Microsoft, Intel. The AP found evidence of products from all three companies used in Xinjiang's policing and data systems during the crackdown, along with Esri, Seagate, Western Digital, NVIDIA, Thermo Fisher, and VMWare, then owned by Dell, which advertised cooperation with Xinjiang authorities on its website.

Sidik asked her neighborhood official where it all came from.

"We've spent a lot of money to import foreign technology," she recalls the official telling her.

Among those caught in the digital dragnet was Parida Qabylqai, an ethnic Kazakh pharmacist at a military hospital in Xinjiang.

In February 2018, Qabylqai was flagged by the IJOP for visiting her parents in Kazakhstan. At first, her boss thought it was a mistake.

"You're a good person, you shouldn't be listed," she recalled him saying. Then he checked the IJOP and spotted her name.

"It's really serious! You're going to end up in the camps," he blurted out in shock.

An officer pressed a confession into her hands.

"What did I do wrong?" Qabylqai asked.

"Just sign!" the officer shouted.

Qabylqai was cuffed, hooded, and whisked to a camp, where cameras watched her day and night, even peering at her naked body in the toilet. Guards barking over speakers ordered her not to speak or even to move.

"They did things to us that no human being should ever have to experience," she said. "But they said my name was listed by the IJOP, so they didn't need to explain anything."

Even enforcers of the system weren't spared.

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In 2018, Liu Yuliang, a civil servant in Xinjiang, was ordered to the home of a young police officer in his village. He and dozens of others stood, silent, as the officer embraced his sobbing, pregnant wife.

The officer had forced many people into the camps. Then he himself was flagged for detention.

Too fearful to resist, Liu went along with the arrest, just as the young officer had done before him.

Landasoft software alerted police when flagged people did anything labeled suspicious, like going out at night or logging on the internet repeatedly. Liu was sent to knock on doors, questioning residents whose "eyes filled with fear."

As police swept Xinjiang, Landasoft purchased software from Pivotal, a cloud company later acquired by Broadcom, emails show. And Landasoft registered accounts on both Amazon Web Services and Microsoft Azure in 2018, seeking to expand cloud offerings to police clients, emails show.

AWS said Landasoft "consumed very limited cloud services for a brief period" and not for software in the Xinjiang crackdown. Microsoft said Landasoft used Azure services through a self-service portal retired in 2021, and that any Landasoft data was deleted.

The Xinjiang government told the AP: "There is absolutely no such thing as 'large-scale human rights violations.'"

Liu eventually resigned and returned to his hometown in eastern China, trying to forget what he had seen and done. But he noted with unease the new cameras and checkpoints being installed around his home.

Four days later, state security called and summoned him for questioning. The all-seeing surveillance apparatus had followed him home.

"The Xinjiang model is being copied everywhere, in every city in China," Liu said.

In 2024, Liu left China, ignoring an airport officer who warned that wherever he went, he would be watched.

"This technology has no emotions," Liu said. "But in the hands of a government that doesn't respect the law, it becomes a tool for evil."

## **Automated autocracy**

The Yangs are still trapped by U.S. technology. IBM, Dell, HP, Cisco, and Seagate servers, switches and drives power police systems targeting them, maintenance contracts dating to this year show. Intel and NVIDIA chips process data. Oracle and VMWare software run the database.

But the harder the Yangs push, the harder the system pushes back.

In February 2023, they went to the National Public Complaints Administration in Beijing with a letter. Two days later, police grabbed them from their hotel and drove them home.

The Yangs persisted, trying to plead their case to Beijing. In the following months, they were seized at bus and train stations, beaten at a hospital and abducted by ambulance.

Last July, Yang's mother tried again. She carried a letter for Chinese leader Xi Jinping:

"They're using violence and kidnapping to bar me from petitioning and seeking medical treatment ... We beg you, General Secretary, to save us."

Outside Beijing's leadership compound, burly men in black tackled Yang's mother to the ground. She was jailed for over a month, questioned, strip-searched, force-fed medication and deprived of food and water. In October, she and Yang's sister disappeared.

The Yangs' house is now the last left standing. The father lives alone.

His relatives have cut contact, unnerved by the flock of police that tail him. Thousands of pages of documents stashed in drawers, stuffed in bags, and piled in boxes in a bathtub chronicle every step of their 16-year quest for justice.

In April, Yang was sent criminal charges showing how much police had spent to stop the family's "ab-normal petitioning."

The cost: About \$37,000.

## Commercial shipping likely cut Red Sea cables that disrupted internet access, experts say

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A ship likely cut cables in the Red Sea that disrupted internet access in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, experts said Tuesday, showing the lines' vulnerability over a year after another incident severed them.

The International Cable Protection Committee told The Associated Press that 15 submarine cables pass through the narrow Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the southern mouth of the Red Sea that separates East Africa from the Arabian Peninsula.

Over the weekend, authorities in multiple countries identified the cables affected as the South East Asia–Middle East–Western Europe 4, the India–Middle East–Western Europe and the FALCON GCX cables. On Tuesday, that list expanded to include the Europe India Gateway cable as well, said Doug Madory, director of internet analysis at the firm Kentik.

Initial reporting suggested the cut happened off the coast of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, something authorities in the kingdom have not acknowledged, nor have the companies managing the cables.

"Early independent analysis indicates that the probable cause of damage is commercial shipping activity in the region," John Wrottesley, the committee's operations manager, told the AP. "Damage to submarine cables from dragged anchors account for approximately 30% of incidents each year representing around 60 faults."

Madory also told the AP that the working assumption was a commercial vessel dropped its anchor and dragged it across the four cables, severing the connections. Cabling in the Red Sea can be at a shallow depth, making it easier for an anchor drag to affect them.

Undersea cables are one of the backbones of the internet, along with satellite connections and land-based cables. Typically, internet service providers have multiple access points and reroute traffic if one fails.

However, rerouting traffic can cause latency, or lag, for internet users. Madory said it appeared at least 10 nations in Africa, Asia and the Middle East had been affected by the cable cut. Among those nations were India, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates.

"Nobody's completely offline, but each provider has lost a subset of their international transit," Madory said. "So if you imagine this is like an equivalent to plumbing and you lose some volume of water coming down the pipes ... and now you just have less volumes to carry the traffic."

Cable security also has been a concern amid attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels on ships over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. In early 2024, Yemen's internationally recognized government in exile alleged that the Houthis planned to attack undersea cables. Several later were cut, possibly by a ship attacked by the Houthis dragging its anchor, but the rebels denied being responsible.

## Czech Republic and allies break up Belarus spy network across Europe

By KAREL JANICEK Associated Press

PRAGUE (AP) — A spy network being built in Europe by Belarus was broken up by intelligence services from the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania, the Czech counterintelligence agency said Monday.

The Czech agency, also known as BIS, said in a statement that a team of European agents discovered spies in several European countries from Belarus' KGB security agency. BIS said that a former deputy head of Moldovan intelligence service SIS who handed over classified information to the KGB was among them.

The Czechs also expelled a Belarusian agent who was operating under the cover of a diplomat. That person was given 72 hours to leave the Czech Republic, the Czech Foreign Ministry said Monday.

The Czech agency said that Belarus managed to create the network because its diplomats are able to freely travel across European countries.



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"To successfully counter these hostile activities in Europe, we need to restrict the movement of accredited diplomats from Russia and Belarus within the Schengen (borderless) area," BIS head Michal Koudelka said in a statement.

The agency didn't immediately offer more details.

Romania's anti-organized crime agency, DIICOT, said on Monday that it implemented an arrest warrant for a 47-year-old suspect on treason charges. The suspect had previously held management positions within Moldova's SIS. The suspect allegedly disclosed state secrets to Belarusian intelligence officers that would likely "endanger national security," DIICOT stated.

The Romanian agency added that, between 2024 and 2025, the Moldovan suspect — who wasn't named — met twice with Belarusian spies in Budapest, Hungary, and that there is "reasonable suspicion" that the meetings involved "transmitting instructions" and exchanging payments for services provided.

The ongoing international investigation has been supervised by the European Union's judicial cooperation agency, Eurojust.

Belarus is led by authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko, who is a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Lukashenko let Russia use Belarusian territory as a staging ground for Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, and later allowed the deployment of Russian tactical nuclear missiles.

## **Brazil's Supreme Court nears a verdict in coup plot trial of former President Jair Bolsonaro**

By ELÉONORE HUGHES and MAURICIO SAVARESE Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — A panel of Supreme Court justices is set to decide this week whether former President Jair Bolsonaro is guilty or not of plotting to overthrow Brazil's democracy and hang onto power illegally after his 2022 electoral defeat.

The far-right ex-president is facing five counts at trial for allegedly conspiring to stage a coup after his narrow loss to current President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a leftist who first won the presidency two decades earlier.

If convicted by the five-judge panel in the verdict expected Thursday or Friday, Bolsonaro could be sentenced to decades behind bars.

Bolsonaro has always denied any wrongdoing, repeatedly calling the trial a politically motivated attack.

Dozens of Bolsonaro loyalists gathered Monday evening outside his Brasilia home. They prayed for him, criticized the Supreme Court justice overseeing the case — Alexandre de Moraes — and sought to exert pressure on lawmakers to approve some kind of amnesty for the embattled ex-leader.

Prosecutor-General Paulo Gonet said last week in court that Bolsonaro led a multipronged plot to cling to power illegally that included casting doubt over the country's electronic voting system and encouraging a Jan. 8, 2023, riot Gonet described as intended to force an army takeover.

Prosecutors have pointed to evidence that Bolsonaro assembled top Cabinet and military officials to discuss issuing an emergency decree aimed at suspending the election outcome of October 2022 in order to investigate alleged voting fraud.

But defense lawyer Celso Vilardi vehemently noted the decree was never issued.

"The planning is not the execution. No matter how detailed the planning may be, it is the act of violence that actually consummates the crime," Vilardi told the justices at the televised proceedings. "Bolsonaro ordered a transition."

Bolsonaro "did not act against the democratic rule of law," he added.

Bolsonaro called himself the victim of a "witch hunt," using the same expression as U.S. President Donald Trump in defending his right-wing ally. Trump has directly tied a 50% tariff on Brazilian goods to his ally's judicial situation and is expected to be closely watching the trial outcome.

On Sunday, tens of thousands of Bolsonaro supporters took to the streets. In Sao Paulo, his wife Michelle Bolsonaro said in a speech that he loves the country.

The trial resumes Tuesday with the judicial panel reviewing any final requests from the parties. Then,

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each of the five justices is to vote on Bolsonaro's guilt or innocence, with a majority of three votes enough to convict. If one of the justices requests a longer review, the verdict could be delayed for up to 90 days, but court experts have said that's unlikely.

Bolsonaro is charged with five counts: attempting to stage a coup, involvement in an armed criminal organization, attempted violent abolition of the democratic rule of law and two counts involving destruction of state property.

A guilty verdict on the coup plot charge alone carries a sentence of up to 12 years.

In the event of a guilty verdict, each justice can recommend a sentence. If recommendations differ, a single justice chosen among the panel would determine an average of the prison time and possible fines. Court sessions are scheduled every day through Friday.

Seven other close allies of Bolsonaro are being tried alongside the ex-president, including Walter Braga Netto, his former running mate and defense minister, and Paulo Sérgio Nogueira, another former defense minister.

Deemed a flight risk, Bolsonaro is wearing an ankle monitor and remains under house arrest. He did not appear in court last week due to ill health, Vilardi told journalists. The ex-president needs an unspecified medical procedure, Vilardi told the judge Monday, suggesting Bolsonaro might not attend court this week either.

The trial marks a historic moment in Brazil: For the first time, high-ranking military officers and a former president accused of plotting against democratic rule are standing trial.

Despite pressure from the White House, Brazil's Supreme Court has kept the trial on track.

Observers said any U.S. sanctions against Brazilian authorities could be announced after the trial, further straining their fragile diplomatic relations.

Government officials or other Supreme Court justices could be sanctioned, like De Moraes already was late July, said Oliver Stuenkel, a professor of international relations at the Getulio Vargas Foundation, a think tank and university.

The reaction "could also involve broader visa restrictions for government officials, or more tariffs," Stuenkel said. "It's quite unpredictable."

On Saturday night, Lula delivered a national message ahead of Sunday's Independence Day celebrations saying Brazil "will not be anyone's colony," taking an indirect swipe at the Trump administration.

Dorgelina Souza Oliveira de Medeiros, 72, wants Trump to put even more pressure on Brazil to help free Bolsonaro. For more than a week she has joined other supporters of the former president close to his home despite the fact many of them believe he will be jailed anyway.

"His sentence was ready before this trial began. We want amnesty for all so those jailed can be released, those in exile can come back," de Medeiros said. "We are suffering, but I trust God that things will change. I hope that even in this trial there could be a miracle."

## **Apple to unveil next iPhone amid Trump trade war that could result in higher prices**

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

Apple on Tuesday will unveil its next line-up of iPhones amid a global trade war that's added a potential price increase to the usual intrigue surrounding the annual evolution of the company's marquee product.

The new iPhones will be the first to be released since President Donald Trump returned to the White House and unleashed a barrage of tariffs, in what his administration says is an attempt to bring overseas manufacturing back to the U.S. — a crusade that has thrust Apple CEO Tim Cook into the hot seat.

If Apple follows the same naming scheme since the product's 2007 debut, the new models will be called the iPhone 17. But the Cupertino, California, company recently deviated from tradition with its naming formula for the iPhone operating system. When the next version of its iOS system was previewed at its developers conference in June, Apple revealed the free update will be called iOS 26 in reference to the

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upcoming year — a marketing technique that automakers have embraced for decades.

Regardless, these new iPhones are still expected to be made in Apple's manufacturing hubs in China and India, much to the Trump administration's consternation.

Both Trump and U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick have repeatedly insisted that iPhones be made in the U.S. instead of overseas. It's an unrealistic demand that analysts say would take years to pull off and would result in a doubling, or even a tripling, of the iPhone's current average price of about \$1,000.

Cook tried to placate Trump by initially pledging that Apple would invest \$500 billion in the U.S. over the next four years, and then upped the ante last month by adding another \$100 billion to the commitment. He also gifted Trump a statue featuring a 24-karat gold base.

That kind of diplomacy has helped insulate Apple from Trump's most severe tariffs. However, the iPhones being brought into the U.S. still face duties of about 25%, stoking speculation that the company will reveal its first across-the-board price increase in five years in an effort to preserve its hefty profit margins.

Since 2020, Apple has charged \$800 for its basic iPhone and \$1,200 for its top offering, but analysts now believe the company may raise prices by \$50 to \$100 on some of the new models. If Apple does announce price increases, it will come just weeks after Google held steady on prices for its new Pixel smartphones.

Whatever Apple ends up charging for the next iPhone, the new line-up isn't expected to be much different from last year's model — the first to be designed for a wide range of new artificial intelligence features. While the iPhone 16 has proven to be popular, the models didn't sell quite as well as analysts had anticipated because Apple failed to deliver all the AI-fueled improvements it had promised, including a smarter and more versatile Siri assistant. The Siri improvements have been pushed back until next year.

That has lowered the expectations for this year's line-up, which will likely include the usual improvements in camera quality and battery life on top of a slightly redesigned appearance. The most significant new twist could be the introduction of an ultra-thin iPhone dubbed "Air" — a moniker Apple already slaps on like its sleekest iPads and Mac computers.

The relatively minor updates to recent iPhone models are raising questions about Apple's ability to innovate in the fast-moving era of AI, said Forrester Research analyst Thomas Husson. "Apple is reaching a tipping point, and I expect 2026 and 2027 to be pivotal years."

Apple's AI follies, combined with its exposure in Trump's trade war, have weighed on the company's stock, while the market values of Big Tech peers like Microsoft, Nvidia, Meta Platforms and Google parent Alphabet have been surging.

Although Apple's stock price is still down by 4% so far this year, the shares have been bouncing back in recent months amid signs it won't be as hard hit by the tariffs as once feared, and a highly anticipated court ruling cleared the way for the company to continue receiving \$20 billion annually to lock in Google's search engine as the default option on iPhones.

## Takeaways from AP's investigation into how US tech companies enabled China's digital police state

By DAKE KANG and Yael Grauer Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Across China, tens of thousands of people tagged as troublemakers are trapped in a digital cage, barred from leaving their province and sometimes even their homes by the world's largest digital surveillance apparatus. Most of this technology came from companies in a country that has long claimed to support freedoms worldwide: the United States.

Over the past quarter century, American tech companies to a large degree designed and built China's surveillance state, playing a far greater role in enabling human rights abuses than previously known, an Associated Press investigation found. They sold billions of dollars of technology to the Chinese police, government and surveillance companies, despite repeated warnings from the U.S. Congress and in the media that such tools were being used to quash dissent, persecute religious sects and target minorities.

Most of the companies that responded said they fully complied with all laws, sanctions and U.S. export



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controls governing business in China, past and present. Here are key findings:

America brought 'predicative policing' to China

U.S. companies introduced systems that mine a vast array of information — texts, calls, payments, flights, video, DNA swabs, mail deliveries, the internet, even water and power use — to unearth individuals deemed suspicious and predict their movements. But this technology also allows Chinese police to threaten friends and family and preemptively detain people for crimes they have not even committed. The AP found a Chinese defense contractor, Huadi, worked with IBM in 2009 to design the main policing system for Beijing to censor the internet and crack down on alleged terrorists, the Falun Gong religious sect, and even villagers deemed troublesome. IBM referred to any possible relationship it may have had with Chinese government agencies as "old, stale interactions": " ... If older systems are being abused today — and IBM has no knowledge that they are — the misuse is entirely outside of IBM's control, was not contemplated by IBM decades ago, and in no way reflects on IBM today." Huadi did not respond.

US tech enabled the Xinjiang crackdown

American surveillance technologies allowed a brutal mass detention campaign in the far west region of Xinjiang — targeting, tracking and grading virtually the entire native Uyghur population to forcibly assimilate and subdue them. IBM agents in China sold its i2 software to the Xinjiang police, China's Ministry of State Security, and many other Chinese police units throughout the 2010s, leaked emails show. One agent, Landasoft, subsequently copied and deployed it as the basis for a predictive policing platform that tagged hundreds of thousands of people as potential terrorists. IBM said it has no record of its i2 software ever being sold to the Public Security Bureau in Xinjiang, was not aware of any interaction between Landasoft and that bureau and cut ties with Landasoft in 2014. Landasoft did not respond.

Some tech companies even specifically addressed race in their marketing. Dell and a Chinese surveillance firm promoted a "military-grade" AI-powered laptop with "all-race recognition" on its official WeChat account in 2019. And until contacted by AP in August, biotech giant Thermo Fisher Scientific's website marketed DNA kits to the Chinese police as "designed" for the Chinese population, including "ethnic minorities like Uyghurs and Tibetans." The Xinjiang government said that it uses surveillance technologies to prevent terrorism, and that Western countries also use such technology, calling the U.S. "a true surveillance state."

Companies pitched tech to control citizens

Though the companies often claim they aren't responsible for how their products are used, some directly pitched their tech as tools for Chinese police to control citizens, marketing materials from IBM, Dell, Cisco, and Seagate show. Their sales pitches — made both publicly and privately — cited Communist Party catchphrases on crushing protest, including "stability maintenance," "key persons," and "abnormal gatherings," and named programs that stifle dissent, such as "Internet Police," "Sharp Eyes" and the "Golden Shield." IBM, Dell, Cisco and Seagate said they adhere to all relevant laws.

American tech laid the foundation for Chinese surveillance

American technology laid the foundation for China's surveillance apparatus that Chinese companies have since built on and in some cases replaced. Intel and NVIDIA helped China's three biggest surveillance companies make their camera systems AI-powered. Contracts to maintain existing IBM, Dell, HP, Cisco, Oracle, and Microsoft software and gear remain ubiquitous, often with third parties. And to this day, concerns remain over where technology sold to China will end up, with former U.S. officials and national security experts criticizing a deal struck this summer for NVIDIA to sell chips used in artificial intelligence to China, saying the technology would fall into the hands of the Chinese military and intelligence. NVIDIA said in 2022 that Chinese surveillance firms Watix and GEOAI used its chips to train AI patrol drones and systems to identify people by their walk, but told the AP those relationships no longer continue. NVIDIA said it does not make surveillance systems or software, does not work with police in China and has not designed the H20 chips for police surveillance, and the White House and Department of Commerce did not respond to requests for comment.

Big loopholes in sanctions remain

Some U.S. companies ended contracts in China over rights concerns and after sanctions. IBM said it has prohibited sales to Tibet and Xinjiang police since 2015, and suspended business relations with defense

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contractor Huadi in 2019. NVIDIA and Intel also ended partnerships with China's top two surveillance companies in 2019. However, sanctions experts noted that the laws have significant loopholes and often lag behind new developments. For example, a ban on military and policing gear to China after the 1989 Tiananmen massacre does not take into account newer technologies or general-use products that can be applied in policing. They also noted that the law around export controls is complicated.

## A cautionary tale

What started in China more than a decade ago could be seen as a cautionary tale for other countries at a time when the use of surveillance technology worldwide is rising sharply, including in the United States. Emboldened by the Trump administration, U.S. tech companies are more powerful than ever, and President Donald Trump has rolled back a Biden-era executive order meant to safeguard civil rights from new surveillance technologies. As the capacity and sophistication of such technologies has grown, so has their reach. Surveillance technologies now include AI systems that help track and detain migrants in the U.S. and identify people to kill in the Israel-Hamas war. China, in the meantime, has used what it learned from the U.S. to turn itself into a surveillance superpower, selling technologies to countries like Iran and Russia.

"Because of this technology ... we have no freedom at all," said Yang Caiying, now in exile in Japan, whose family has been trapped in an increasingly tight noose of surveillance for the past 16 years. "At the moment, it's us Chinese that are suffering the consequences, but sooner or later, Americans and others, too, will lose their freedoms."

## Detailed findings from AP investigation into how US tech firms enabled China's digital police state

By DAKE KANG and Yael Grauer Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — American tech companies to a large degree designed and built China's surveillance state, playing a far greater role in enabling human rights abuses than previously known, an Associated Press investigation found. They sold billions of dollars of technology to the Chinese police, government and surveillance companies, despite repeated warnings from the U.S. Congress and in the media that such tools were being used to quash dissent, persecute religious sects and target minorities.

The AP investigation was based on tens of thousands of leaked emails and databases from a Chinese surveillance company; thousands of pages of confidential corporate and government documents; public Chinese language marketing material; and thousands of procurements, many provided by ChinaFile, a digital magazine published by the non-profit Asia Society. The AP also drew from dozens of open record requests and interviews with more than 100 current and former Chinese and American engineers, executives, experts, officials, administrators, and police officers.

American tech firms were by far the biggest suppliers, but German, Japanese, and Korean firms also had a role. Here are some examples:

**MILITARY ACCESS:** A Chinese military contractor worked with Armonk, New York-based IBM in 2009 to design national intelligence systems, including a counterterrorism system, according to classified Chinese government documents. These systems were used by China's secret police, the Ministry of State Security, and the Chinese military. IBM referred to any such deals as "old, stale interactions": "... If older systems are being abused today — and IBM has no knowledge that they are — the misuse is entirely outside of IBM's control, was not contemplated by IBM decades ago, and in no way reflects on IBM today."

**ANTI-TERROR ANALYSIS:** IBM agents in China sold IBM's i2 policing analysis software to the Xinjiang police, China's Ministry of State Security, and other Chinese police units throughout the 2010s, leaked emails show. i2 software was subsequently copied and deployed by one former IBM agent, Landasoft, as the basis for a predictive policing platform that tagged hundreds of thousands of people as potential terrorists during a brutal crackdown in China's far west Xinjiang region. IBM says it ceased relations with Landasoft in 2014, prohibited sales to police in Xinjiang and Tibet since 2015, and has no record of any sales of i2 software to the Public Security Bureau in Xinjiang.

**ETHNIC REPRESSION:** Dell and then-subsidary VMWare sold cloud software and storage devices to

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police and entities providing data to police in Tibet and Xinjiang, even as late as 2022 after ethnic repression there was widely known. Dell addressed race in its marketing: In 2019, Dell said on WeChat it had teamed up with surveillance firm Yitu to sell a "military-grade" AI-powered laptop for Chinese police with "all-race recognition." Dell, based in Round Rock, Texas, told AP it conducts "rigorous due diligence" to ensure compliance with U.S. export controls. Chinese policing systems, including in Xinjiang, also used software from Oracle, based in Austin, Texas, and from Microsoft, based in Seattle, according to procurements and a leaked database obtained by AP.

**FINGERPRINT RECOGNITION:** Chinese defense contractor Huadi worked with IBM to construct China's national fingerprint database; IBM said it never sold "fingerprinting-specific" products to the Chinese government and that any possible misuse "for fingerprinting purposes" was done without its knowledge or assistance. HP and VMware sold technology used for fingerprint comparison by Chinese police. Intel said in 2019 marketing material that it partnered with Hisign, a Chinese fingerprinting company that sold to Xinjiang police, to make their fingerprint readers more effective, and that the new reader was "fully tested in an actual application scenario" with a municipal police bureau. Hisign was still an Intel partner as of last year, according to Chinese media reports. California-based Intel said it has not had any technical engagement with Hisign since 2024, and told AP it would "act swiftly" if it became aware of any "credible misuse."

**AI CAMERAS:** IBM, Dell, Tokyo-based Hitachi, and VMware promoted facial recognition for use by Chinese police. Japanese electronics giant Sony said on its official WeChat account that it wired a Chinese prison with "intelligent" cameras, saying it was widely trusted for "surveillance projects." California chip giant NVIDIA and Intel partnered with China's three biggest surveillance companies to add AI capabilities to camera systems used for video surveillance across China, including in Xinjiang and Tibet, until sanctions were imposed. Relations with other Chinese surveillance companies continued more recently: NVIDIA posted on its WeChat social media account in 2022 that Chinese surveillance firms Watrix and GEOAI used its chips to train AI patrol drones and systems to identify people by their walk. NVIDIA told AP those relationships no longer continue.

**SURVEILLANCE RESEARCH:** NVIDIA, IBM, and Hitachi staff collaborated with Chinese police researchers and companies on surveillance technology. NVIDIA said in a post dating to 2013 or later that a Chinese police institute used its chips for surveillance technology research. NVIDIA said it doesn't currently work with Chinese police but did not address the past. And in 2021, an IBM and a U.S. Army researcher coauthored an AI video study with a Chinese police researcher working at a sanctioned company, according to a paper unearthed by IPVM, a surveillance research publication. The U.S. Army told AP the Chinese police researcher only worked on the paper after the Army researcher's work had concluded.

**DNA:** Chinese police DNA labs bought Dell and Microsoft software and equipment to save genetic data on police databases. In 2021, Hitachi advertised DNA sequencers to Chinese police, and police labs bought pipettes from German biotech firm Eppendorf last year. And until contacted by AP in August, Massachusetts-based biotech firm Thermo Fisher Scientific's website stated that its kits are made for China's national DNA database and "designed" for the Chinese population, including "ethnic minorities like Uyghurs and Tibetans," and featured the work of a Chinese police researcher who discussed using Thermo Fisher kits to identify ethnic Uyghur and Manchu populations at a 2016 conference. Thermo Fisher stopped sales in Xinjiang in 2021 and in Tibet in 2024, but still promotes kits to police elsewhere in China, including at a police trade show earlier this year. In a statement to AP, Thermo Fisher said its kits "are designed to be effective across diverse global populations" but "do not have the capability to distinguish among specific ethnic groups."

**INTERNET POLICE:** In 2014, VMware said internet police in cities across China used its software, and in 2016, Dell said on its WeChat account that its services assisted the Chinese internet police in "cracking down on rumormongers" — essentially promoting censorship. An undated IBM marketing presentation said that internet police in Shanghai and Guangzhou used its i2 software, with metadata suggesting it was from 2018. IBM held a conference in Beijing promoting i2 in 2018, according to its official WeChat account.

**ENCRYPTION TECHNOLOGY:** Leaked government blueprints show Illinois-based Motorola provided en-

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encrypted radio communications technology to the Chinese police for handling "sudden and mass events in Beijing." Motorola did not respond to requests for comment.

**AI DRIVES:** Californian hard disk giants Seagate and Western Digital and Tokyo-based Toshiba sell hard drives specialized for AI video systems for use by Chinese police. In 2022, Toshiba wrote about how its surveillance hard drives can help police monitor communities to "identify and control suspicious" or "blacklisted" individuals. "They're optimized and adapted for security systems," Toshiba sales director Feng Hao told AP. Last year, Western Digital touted its partnership with Chinese surveillance company Uniview at a policing trade expo, months before Uniview was sanctioned over complicity in rights abuses. And Seagate said on WeChat in 2022 that it sells hard drives "tailor made" for AI video systems in China for use by police to help them "control key persons," and promoted their drives to police at a security trade association in China this year.

**MAPPING SOFTWARE:** Blueprints show that in 2009, IBM, Oracle, and Esri, the creator of ArcGIS based in California, sold hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of software to build China's Police Geographic Information System, and in 2013, HP said it sold "digital fencing" solutions to Chinese police. Such systems alert Chinese police even today when Uyghurs, Tibetans or dissidents stray out of provinces, counties or even villages. The U.S. curbed exports of such mapping software to China in 2020. But the restrictions are narrow in scope, and Esri maintains a research center in Beijing that marketed to police and other Chinese clients. Esri denied involvement.

**POLICE GEAR:** Chinese police patrol the streets equipped with foreign technology. Officers stroll the streets of Beijing with Motorola walkie-talkies, for example, while Korean electronics giant Samsung sells microSD cards for police body cameras, advertising them at Chinese police trade shows in 2023 and 2024. And in WeChat posts, Chinese state-owned company Jinghua said it cooperated with German electronics giant Philips on China's first "AI-powered 5G" police body camera and advertised Philips-branded recorders and cameras to Chinese police. In a statement, Philips said it had no partnership with Jinghua, did not authorize sales of Philips-branded body cameras in China, and would be contacting Jinghua over the posts.

IBM, Dell, California network seller Cisco, Seattle-based Amazon Web Services, Seagate, Intel, Thermo Fisher and Western Digital all said they adhere to relevant export controls, laws and regulations where they operate. Eppendorf, Sony, and Hitachi declined to describe their business relationships in China but said they respected human rights.

Oracle, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, and California tech conglomerate Broadcom, which acquired VMware in 2023, did not comment on the record. HP, Motorola, Samsung, Toshiba, Huadi, and Landasoft did not respond. Microsoft said it did not knowingly provide software for updates to China's main policing system.

The Xinjiang government said in a statement that it uses surveillance technologies to "prevent and combat terrorist and criminal activity" and does not target any particular ethnicity. The statement said Western countries also use such technology, calling the U.S. "a true surveillance state." Other government agencies did not respond to a request for comment.

## Nepal internet crackdown part of global trend toward suppressing online freedom

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

Nepal's crackdown on social media companies, which led to protests and police killing at least 19 people, is part of a yearslong decline of internet freedoms around the world as even democracies seek to curtail online speech.

The Himalayan country's government said last week it was blocking several social media platforms including Facebook, X and YouTube because the companies failed to comply with a requirement that they register with the government. The ban was lifted Tuesday a day after the deadly protests.

What's happening in Nepal mirrors "this broader pattern of controlling the narrative and controlling of stories emerging from the ground," said Aditya Vashistha, an assistant professor of information science at Cornell University. "This has happened several times in the neighboring countries India, Pakistan, Ban-



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gladesh. So this is nothing new — in fact, I would say this is taken from the playbook, which is now very established, of trying to control social media narratives.”

Not just Nepal

Like neighboring countries, Nepal’s government have been asking the companies to appoint a liaison in the country. Officials are calling for laws to to monitor social media and ensure both the users and operators are responsible and accountable for what they share. But the move has been criticized as a tool for censorship and punishing opponents who voice their protests online.

“Governments absolutely have a valid interest in seeking to regulate social media platforms. This is such a daily part of our lives and in our business. And it is certainly reasonable for authorities to sit down and say we want to develop rules for the road,” said Kian Vesteinsson, senior research analyst for technology and democracy at the Washington-based nonprofit Freedom House.

“But what we see in Nepal is that wholesale blocks as a means of enforcing a set of rules for social media companies results in wildly disproportionate harms. These measures that were put in place in Nepal (cut) tens of millions of people off from platforms that they used to express themselves, to conduct daily business, to speak with their families, to go to school, to get healthcare information.”

It’s not just Nepal. Freedom House has found that global internet freedom has declined for the 14th consecutive year in 2024, as governments crack down on dissent and people face arrest for expressing political, social or religious views online. While China consistently tops the list as the “world’s worst environment” for internet freedom, last year Myanmar shared this designation as well. The organization did not track Nepal.

India passed a telecommunications law in 2023 that gave its government “broad powers to restrict on-line communications and intercept communications,” according to Freedom House. Three years earlier, a sweeping internet law put digital platforms like Facebook under direct government oversight. Officials say the rules are needed to quell misinformation and hate speech and to give users more power to flag objectionable content. But critics cautioned it would lead to censorship in a country where digital freedoms have already been shrinking.

In January, meanwhile, Pakistan’s lower house of parliament passed a bill that gives the government sweeping controls on social media, including sending users to prison for spreading disinformation.

Online freedom and democracy

Calling internet freedom a “pillar of modern democracy,” Freedom House said a healthy 21st-century democracy cannot function without a trustworthy online environment, where people can access information and express themselves freely.

Increasingly, though, governments are putting up roadblocks.

Often, regulations are in the name of child safety, cyber crime or fraud, Vesteinsson said, “but unfortunately, a lot of this regulation comes hand in hand with restrictive measures.”

In the Nepali law, for instance, “the same provision of this law, directs social media platforms to restrict content relating to child trafficking and human trafficking and labor, a really important issue,” he added. “Two bullet points above that, it orders platforms to restrict people from posting anonymously.”

The Committee to Protect Journalists said Monday that the protests “underscore the widespread concerns over Nepal’s ban on social media and the pressing need for the government to drop its order. Such a sweeping ban not only restricts freedom of expression, it also severely hinders journalists’ work and the public’s right to know.”

Can VPNs help?

The crackdown appears to have spurred a surge in use of virtual private networks, or VPNs, according to Proton, which provides encrypted services. Signups for Proton’s VPN service in Nepal have jumped by 8,000% since Sept. 3, according to data the company posted online. A VPN is a service that allows users to mask their location in order to circumvent censorship or geography-based online viewing restrictions.

But experts caution that VPNs are not an end-all solution to government internet blocks. They can be expensive and out of reach for many people, Vashistha noted, and they can be slow and lead to lower-quality experiences when people try to access blocked social platforms.

Google, Meta, X and TikTok (which registered and continues to operate) didn't respond to requests for comment.

Vesteinsson said companies can take important steps to safeguard privacy of their users — particularly human rights defenders and activists who might be a specific target for government repression in their countries.

"It's enormously important for social media platforms to be responsible to their users in that way," he said.

## **Charlotte leaders criticized over killing of Ukrainian woman as Trump, MAGA target another Dem city**

By ERIK VERDUZCO and SARAH BRUMFIELD Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Officials in Charlotte are facing sharp criticism over the fatal stabbing of a young Ukrainian refugee on a commuter train last month, a killing that quickly drew the attention of President Donald Trump and MAGA allies who blame Democrats for what they say is out-of-control crime in blue cities.

Critics say the death of Iryna Zarutka, 23, could have been prevented, and they're blaming officials for failing to keep a man with a history of mental illness, arrests and erratic behavior off the streets before he killed her. Trump wrote on his social media platform on Monday that "Criminals like this need to be LOCKED UP."

The suspect, Decarlos Brown Jr., 34, had served time in prison, been briefly committed for schizophrenia and was arrested earlier this year after repeatedly calling 911 from a hospital.

Zarutka had come to the United States to escape the war in Ukraine, relatives wrote in a GoFundMe post, describing her as determined to build a safer life.

The Aug. 22 attack, captured in a newly released video, is the latest flashpoint in the debate over whether cities like Charlotte are adequately addressing violent crime, mental illness and transit safety. It added to an ongoing political debate as Trump has deployed the National Guard in Washington and threatened to do so in other Democratic-led cities including Chicago and Baltimore. That's even as data show violent crime has decreased nationwide.

No apparent interaction before stabbing

Video released Friday shows Zarutka entering the light-rail train and taking a seat in front of Brown, who was seated behind her. Minutes later, without any apparent interaction, he pulls out a pocketknife, stands and slashes her in the neck, investigators said. Passengers scream and scatter as she collapses.

Brown was arrested at the scene and charged with first-degree murder. Court records show he had cycled through the criminal justice system for more than a decade, with 14 prior cases in Mecklenburg County, including serving five years for robbery with a dangerous weapon. His mother told local television she sought an involuntary psychiatric commitment earlier this year after he became violent at home. Doctors diagnosed him with schizophrenia.

A message seeking comment was left Monday with the attorney representing him on the murder charge.

In January, Brown was arrested after repeatedly calling 911 from a hospital, claiming people were trying to control him. A judge released him without bail.

Court records also show Brown faced charges ranging from making threats and shoplifting to felony larceny dating back to 2011, although some of those charges appear to have been dismissed.

Trump and MAGA target Democrats

The stabbing has sparked anger among allies of Trump and figures in his Make America Great Again movement. They say the attack shows how large cities and governors are failing to protect their residents and justifies the president's federal takeover of Washington and his plans to replicate that effort in other places.

In a speech at the Museum of the Bible in Washington on Monday, Trump sent his love to Zarutka's family and said video of the attack was "not really watchable because it's so horrible."

"They are evil people. We have to be able to handle that. If we don't handle that, we don't have a

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country," Trump said.

Elon Musk posted about the stabbing several times on social media, as did popular conservative activist Charlie Kirk and White House deputy chief of staff Stephen Miller.

Other Republicans are also using the homicide to criticize Democratic initiatives aimed at tackling discrimination within law enforcement and criminal justice systems. Former North Carolina's Gov. Roy Cooper, a Democrat, signed an executive order in 2020 to study solutions "to address racial inequity."

"Cooper bears direct responsibility for this heinous act and must answer to the public about why he prioritizes criminals over public safety," said Michael Whatley, a former chairman of the Republican National Committee. Whatley will likely run against Cooper for a U.S. Senate seat in 2026 in what is expected to be one of the country's most competitive races.

The Democratic mayor of Charlotte, Vi Lyles, also drew criticism from the right for her response, with some saying she came off as too lenient on the attacker because she referenced mental health issues.

Lyles, who is seeking reelection and running in the Democratic primary Tuesday, called Zarutsky's killing "a senseless and tragic loss."

"Like so many of you, I'm heartbroken — and I've been thinking hard about what safety really looks like in our city," she posted on X after authorities released footage of the attack.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, speaking on Fox News, referenced Trump's comment about "evil people," adding: "He's right, but it's also evil politicians."

"This monster had a track record longer than a CVS receipt, including prison time for robbery with a dangerous weapon, breaking and entering, and larceny," Duffy wrote on X on Sunday. "By failing to properly punish him, Charlotte failed Iryna Zarutsky and North Carolinians."

Most violent crime is down

Random attacks and violence in U.S. cities have taken on increasing significance nationally this year, colliding with the politics of crime and immigration as the Trump administration plans to ramp up a greater federal role on city streets.

That's even as data shows most violent crime has declined in recent years in Democratic-led cities where Trump has threatened to deploy the National Guard, as well as around the country.

Those same trends have largely held true in Charlotte, where the rates of homicides, robberies, aggravated assault and burglary all decreased between 2020 and 2024 but auto thefts rose significantly, according to AH DataLytics, which tracks crime using local law enforcement data for its Real-Time Crime Index.

In 2024, though, homicides in Charlotte did spike by nearly 20% over the previous year, but that number has dropped again during the first six months of this year, according to the data.

## New Chicago immigration campaign prompts confusion as city braces for federal intervention

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The Department of Homeland Security trumpeted the start of a new immigration operation Monday in Chicago, stirring up fresh confusion and anxiety as the city remained on alert for a federal intervention President Donald Trump has touted for days.

Blasting so-called sanctuary laws in Chicago and Illinois, the latest effort targets people without legal permission to live in the U.S. who have criminal records. Like other Trump administration plans, it was stamped with a splashy name, "Operation Midway Blitz," and circulated on social media with the mugshots of 11 foreign-born men it said should be deported.

"This ICE operation will target the criminal illegal aliens who flocked to Chicago and Illinois because they knew Governor (JB) Pritzker and his sanctuary policies would protect them and allow them to roam free on American streets," said a statement from DHS.

Pritzker, who has been locked in a back-and-forth with Trump for days, criticized the move. He and Mayor Brandon Johnson have defended the state and city's extensive sanctuary laws which bar coordination between local police and immigration agents. They've accused the Trump administration of using scare

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tactics, particularly with Latino residents in the nation's third-largest city.

"Once again, this isn't about fighting crime. That requires support and coordination — yet we've experienced nothing like that over the past several weeks," Pritzker said in a statement. "Instead of taking steps to work with us on public safety, the Trump administration's focused on scaring Illinoisians."

Chicago has been bracing for an influx of immigration agents and possibly the National Guard for two weeks. Numerous protests have cropped up downtown, outside a suburban military base DHS plans to use and at an immigration processing center that's expected to be a hub of activity.

Trump deployed the National Guard to Los Angeles over the summer and as part of his unprecedented law enforcement takeover in Washington, D.C., where he has direct legal control. For the federal intervention in Los Angeles, a judge deemed the National Guard deployment illegal, but the Trump administration got a victory related to immigration enforcement there when the U.S. Supreme Court lifted a restraining order barring agents there from stopping people solely based on their race, language, job or location.

U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois, the Senate's No. 2 Democrat, rejected the latest operation announced in Chicago.

"These actions don't make us safer," he said in a statement. "They are a waste of money, stoke fear, and represent another failed attempt at a distraction."

It remained unclear what role Monday's announced program would play in a Chicago surge.

Adding to the confusion was a handful of immigration arrests over the weekend in Chicago, which galvanized the city's vocal activist network and worries that it was the start of something bigger.

"This is about terrorizing our communities," said Chicago City Council member Jeylú Gutiérrez said. "But we will not be intimidated."

She and immigrant rights activists said that five people arrested were "beloved community members." Some were on their way to work when arrested Sunday. Another works as a flower vendor.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement confirmed four arrests but gave sparse information, noting criminal histories with previous arrests and one conviction for driving under the influence.

"ICE has always operated in Chicago," the agency said in a statement. "We will continue our law enforcement and public safety mission, undeterred, as we surge ICE resources in the city in coordination with our federal partners."

DHS said the operation announced Monday would be in honor of Katie Abraham, one of two Illinois women killed in a January fatal car crash. A grand jury indicted a 29-year-old man in the hit-and-run. The Guatemalan national also faces federal false identification crimes.

## Freight train slams into a bus outside Mexico City and kills at least 10 people

By RAMSES MERCADO VALDES and FERNANDO LLANO Associated Press

ATLACOMULCO, Mexico (AP) — A freight train sheared a double-decker bus in half at a crossing northwest of Mexico City on Monday, killing at least 10 people and injuring 55, authorities said.

The accident took place in an industrial area of warehouses and factories in the town of Atlacomulco, about 80 miles (130 kilometers) northwest of the Mexican capital.

The state of Mexico's civil defense agency said on X that authorities were still working at the site of the accident, and the state prosecutor's office said it had opened an investigation. The bus from the Herradura de Plata line was ripped apart by the collision.

Authorities said 10 people were killed and 55 were injured. Local media reports said the injured were taken to hospitals throughout the state.

The bus company did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The train line, Canadian Pacific Kansas City of Mexico, confirmed the accident and sent its condolences to the families of the victims. The Calgary, Canada-based company said its personnel were on site and cooperating with authorities.

Authorities did not immediately give details about how the accident occurred, but one video circulated on social platforms showed the bus in heavy traffic slowly moving across the train tracks when the fast-



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moving train suddenly appeared out of frame, ramming the bus at its midpoint.

The train's momentum carried the bus down the tracks and out of frame. The front half came to rest in the opposing traffic lanes beside the crossing and the rear half farther down on the opposite side of the tracks.

There were no visible crossing gates or other stop lights, witnesses said.

But shortly before 7 a.m., 33-year-old Miguel Sánchez said he heard the train blow its horn like trains always do well ahead of the crossing. Sánchez works at a service station about 100 yards (meters) away.

Cars continued to cross the track in the lead-up to the crash. Then, the train barreled into the bus.

Cars going in the other direction stopped crossing the tracks at the time the bus drove onto them, though a motorcycle scooted across seconds before the crash. The train hit the passenger side of the bus.

"We heard a crash. We thought it was just a car. We never thought it would be a bus with so many people aboard," Sánchez said.

Another video showed the bus at rest to the side of the tracks. The roof of the bus was gone and people could be seen moving on the top level as the train slowed to a stop.

A woman could be heard crying, "Help me, help me." Shortly after, a flood of ambulances arrived at the scene, Sánchez said.

Rebeca Miranda waited beside the tracks Monday for authorities to tell her what would happen with the victims' bodies. Her sister and her sister's daughter-in-law were on the bus when it was hit around 6:30 a.m., she said.

Her sister was taken to the hospital and was able to speak, but the other woman died in the accident, Miranda said. They were both domestic workers. Miranda said she couldn't be with her sister in the hospital because she needed to find out what would be done with the other woman's body.

Miranda said the bus should not have been crossing the tracks just as the train was careening through the intersection. "It's really unfortunate. Why? To beat the train. Those are lives."

According to the most recent report from Mexico's Rail Transportation Regulating Agency published in September, accidents at grade-level crossings are the most common and have been on an upward trend in recent years.

Last year there were 800 compared to 602 in 2020, the report said. The document did not include how many victims were involved in the accidents.

Last month, six people died when a train hit several vehicles in Guanajuato state. In 2019, nine people were killed when a freight train struck a passenger bus crossing the tracks in the central state of Queretaro.

## **Palestinian gunmen kill 6 people in attack on Jerusalem bus stop**

By MELANIE LIDMAN and JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Palestinian attackers opened fire at a bus stop during the morning rush hour in Jerusalem on Monday, killing six people and wounding another 12, according to Israeli officials.

An Israeli soldier and civilians who were at the scene shot and killed the two attackers, said police, who later arrested a third person in connection with the shooting. Footage of the attack showed dozens of people fleeing from the bus stop at a busy intersection. The windshield of a bus was riddled with bullet holes and belongings were scattered across the street.

The war in Gaza has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians and sparked a surge of violence in Israel and the occupied West Bank, with a rise in attacks by Palestinian militants as well as Israeli settler violence against Palestinians.

Monday's shooting — at a major intersection, with a road leading to Jewish settlements in east Jerusalem — was the deadliest in Israel since October 2024.

Later on Monday, the Palestinian Health Ministry said two 14-year-old Palestinians had been shot and killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank city of Jenin, where Israel has carried out several major military operations in recent years.

The military said troops fired at individuals who had entered an area under a closure order. It said they

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posed a threat to its forces, without specifying the nature of the threat or providing evidence, and that they had ignored instructions to leave.

Hamas welcomes attack but does not claim it

Paramedics who responded to the scene said broken glass covered the area, and people wounded lay unconscious on the road and a sidewalk near the bus stop. Israel's Shin Bet internal security agency said the two attackers were 20- and 21-year-old Palestinians from the West Bank with no prior arrests.

Hamas hailed the attack without claiming responsibility, calling it a "natural response to the occupation's crimes against our people."

President Mahmoud Abbas, head of the internationally recognized Palestinian Authority, condemned "any targeting of Palestinian and Israeli civilians," and "denounced all forms of violence and terrorism, regardless of their source," according to a statement from his office.

The Palestinian Authority, which administers parts of the West Bank and cooperates with Israel on security matters, has been largely sidelined since the start of the war.

Netanyahu threatens more major West Bank raids

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the scene after his ongoing corruption trial was delayed due to the attack. He praised the soldier who fired on the gunmen, who was from a newly-formed unit for ultra-Orthodox Jewish soldiers.

Later, he warned that Israel would respond to such attacks with wide military raids, referring to operations that inflicted heavy destruction on built-up refugee camps in Jenin and other parts of the West Bank, and displaced tens of thousands of Palestinians earlier this year.

"The fact that we eliminated these two terrorists is not enough. The fact that we go after the supporters and aides, that is not enough either," Netanyahu said.

"We have already eliminated nests of terror in refugee camps, in three. We simply evacuated the population from there and flattened all the terror infrastructure — and my instruction is to do the same in other nests of terror."

Hundreds of security forces searched for additional attackers or explosives that could have been planted around the area. On Monday afternoon, police said they arrested a resident of east Jerusalem who was connected to the attack.

The Israeli military said it is encircling Palestinian villages on the outskirts of the nearby West Bank city of Ramallah as it steps up defense in response.

In October 2024, two Palestinians from the West Bank opened fire inside a light rail train in Tel Aviv, killing seven people and leaving many others wounded. Hamas' military wing claimed responsibility for that attack, the deadliest in Israel since the Oct. 7, 2023 raid that started the war in Gaza.

Data from the U.N.'s humanitarian office says at least 49 Israelis, including some soldiers and police, have been killed by Palestinians in Israel or the West Bank between the start of the war and July this year.

During the same period, Israeli forces and civilians killed at least 968 Palestinians in Israel and the West Bank, according to the data. The Israeli military has said many were militants, though the dead have also included stone throwers and uninvolved civilians.

Israel bombs another Gaza City high-rise as US advances a new ceasefire proposal

By WAFSA SHURFA, MELANIE LIDMAN and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel struck and destroyed another high-rise building in Gaza City on Monday after warning residents to evacuate, part of an offensive aimed at taking over the largest Palestinian city. The military said it was targeting Hamas observation posts and bombs placed around the 12-story office building.

Over several days, Israel has destroyed multiple high-rise buildings in Gaza City, accusing Hamas of putting surveillance infrastructure in them. It has ordered people to flee ahead of its ground offensive into the city of some 1 million residents, which experts say is experiencing famine.

U.S. President Donald Trump said he was giving his "last warning" to Hamas regarding a possible ceasefire, as Arab officials described a new U.S. proposal for the immediate release of all the remaining hostages

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in exchange for 3,000 Palestinian prisoners and a temporary ceasefire. A senior Hamas official called it a "humiliating surrender document," but the militant group said it would keep negotiating.

In Jerusalem, two Palestinian gunmen opened fire at a bus station, killing six people and wounding 12 in the worst such attack on Israelis in nearly a year. Tensions have soared across Israel and the occupied West Bank in the two years since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack out of Gaza ignited the war.

Gaza's Health Ministry said hospitals received the bodies of 65 people killed by Israeli fire over the past 24 hours, with another 320 people wounded.

Four soldiers killed in Gaza City attack

The Israeli military said four soldiers were killed in Gaza City on Monday when a group of militants threw an explosive device into a tank. Another soldier was wounded in an ensuing gunbattle, according to the military, which said two of the militants were shot.

Israel's offensive has killed most of Hamas' top leadership and vastly diminished its military capabilities. But the group still carries out sporadic guerrilla-style attacks. More than 450 Israeli troops have been killed in Gaza since the ground invasion began in 2023.

The loss of more soldiers could further undermine support for the war in Israel, where mass protests have been held in recent weeks demanding a ceasefire agreement with Hamas that would return the hostages.

'Last warning' proposal

The "last warning" proposal, presented by Trump's Mideast envoy, Steve Witkoff, calls for a negotiated end of the war and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza once the hostages are released and a ceasefire is established, according to officials familiar with the talks.

The prisoner exchange would include hundreds of Palestinians serving life sentences, added the officials from Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Egypt, who all spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss closed-door talks. Details of the proposal were first reported by Axios.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar, speaking to reporters in Hungary, confirmed that Israel had accepted the latest U.S. proposal and expressed hope it would succeed.

Bassem Naim, a senior Hamas official, said the proposal seemed designed to be rejected because it calls for the release of all hostages on the first day, and for Hamas to disarm, and it conditions the withdrawal of Israeli forces on the establishment of a government in Gaza acceptable to Israel.

He said Hamas and allied groups seek an agreement that will "end the war, halt the genocide, and open the horizon for a political solution that achieves our legitimate national goals, but not by signing a humiliating surrender document."

An Egyptian official said the new proposal, which Arab mediators received from the U.S., was broader than previous ones and would require negotiations over ending the war, the withdrawal of Israeli forces and Israel's demand that Hamas disarm.

Dispute over war's end has stymied ceasefire efforts

Hamas-led militants abducted 251 people in the Oct. 7 attack and killed some 1,200, mostly civilians. Forty-eight hostages are still inside Gaza, around 20 of them believed to be alive.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed at least 64,522 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were civilians or combatants. It says around half of those killed were women and children. Large parts of major cities have been completely destroyed, and around 90% of the population of some 2 million Palestinians have been displaced.

Hamas has said it will only return the remaining hostages — its only bargaining chip — in exchange for Palestinian prisoners, a lasting ceasefire and a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. It says it is willing to hand over power to politically independent Palestinians.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected those terms, saying the war will continue until all the hostages are returned and Hamas has been disarmed. He says Israel will maintain open-ended security control over Gaza and facilitate what he describes as the voluntary emigration of much of its population, which the Palestinians and many others see as a plan for forcible expulsion.

Mediators had previously focused on brokering a temporary ceasefire and the release of some hostages,

with the two sides then holding talks on a more permanent truce. Witkoff walked away from those talks in July, after which Hamas accepted a proposal that the mediators said was almost identical to an earlier one that Israel had approved.

## Hegseth and Caine visit Puerto Rico as US steps up military operations in the Caribbean

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, arrived in Puerto Rico on Monday for an unexpected visit as the U.S. steps up its military operations against drug cartels in the Caribbean.

Their arrival in the U.S. territory comes more than a week after ships carrying hundreds of U.S. Marines deployed to Puerto Rico for what officials said was a training exercise, a move that some on the island have criticized.

But on Monday night, Hegseth said in a video posted on X that the deployed Marines were “on the front lines of defending the American homeland.”

“Make no mistake about it, what you’re doing right now is not training. This is the real-world exercise on behalf of the vital national interest of the United States of America to end the poisoning of the American people,” he said while aboard the USS Iwo Jima.

Earlier in the day, Puerto Rico’s Gov. Jenniffer González said Hegseth and Caine visited on behalf of President Donald Trump’s administration to support those participating in the training.

“We thank President Trump and his administration for recognizing the strategic importance of Puerto Rico to U.S. national security and for their fight against drug cartels and the narco-dictator Nicolás Maduro,” González said.

Hegseth and Caine met with officials at the 156th Wing Muñiz Air National Guard Base in Carolina, a city just east of the capital of San Juan.

González said Hegseth spoke to nearly 300 soldiers at the base and thanked those he described as “American warriors” for their work. He later departed for the USS Iwo Jima.

“The American people are counting on you to ensure the American homeland is kept safe,” Hegseth told the Marines aboard the USS Iwo Jima. “Narco terrorists and drug traffickers are on notice.”

The visit comes as the U.S. prepares to deploy 10 F-35 fighter jets to Puerto Rico for operations targeting drug cartels, a person familiar with the planning said Saturday. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because information about the deployments has not been made public.

Tensions escalating

On Sept. 2, Trump announced that the U.S. carried out a strike in the southern Caribbean against a vessel that had left Venezuela and was suspected of carrying drugs. Eleven people were killed in the rare U.S. military operation in the Caribbean, with the president saying the vessel was operated by the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua.

While the prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago praised the strike and said the U.S. should kill all drug traffickers “violently,” reaction from other Caribbean leaders has been more subdued.

Barbadian Foreign Minister Kerrie Symmonds recently told The Associated Press that members of Caricom, a regional trade bloc, sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio asking for an open line of communication on developments. He said they want to avoid being surprised by any U.S. moves against Venezuela.

Meanwhile, Venezuela’s government on Monday insisted that the U.S. is falsely accusing it of playing a crucial role in the global drug trade. Vice President Delcy Rodríguez told reporters the U.S. government should redirect its recently deployed maritime force to the Pacific, where fast boats and container ships have long carried Colombian cocaine.

“Those ships that are trying to intimidate Venezuela today should be there in the Pacific if they truly wanted to fight and prevent cocaine from reaching the United States of America,” she said. “They have a



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GPS location problem. They're where they shouldn't be. They need to calibrate their GPS."

Rodríguez, citing reports from the United Nations and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, added that Venezuela "has absolutely nothing to do with the deaths of (U.S.) citizens from drug overdoses" as the country "is not relevant" in global drug production.

She suggested the U.S. should focus on fighting consumption within its borders.

"There's a lot of hypocrisy, a lot of double standards, a lot of political manipulation of this issue to attack, to intervene, to aim for regime change in countries that aren't sympathetic," she said, referring to drug trafficking.

'No to War'

The ongoing training of the Marines in Puerto Rico and the upcoming deployment of fighter jets have rankled some in the U.S. territory, where the memories of the U.S. Navy using nearby islands as training ranges for decades remains fresh, with the cleanup still ongoing.

The April 1999 death of civilian security guard David Sanes Rodríguez sparked large protests at the time, eventually leading to the U.S. military leaving the island. Rodríguez was killed after two 500-pound (226-kilogram) bombs were dropped near him as part of a training mission in Vieques.

On Sunday, dozens of people gathered at the National Guard base in Carolina to decry the heightened U.S. military presence on the island.

They held signs that said, "No to War" and "No to military bases in P.R."

Organizers also warned against the use of Puerto Rico as a staging ground for potential U.S. military actions in the region.

"We denounce the existence of military bases in Puerto Rico," said Sonia Santiago Hernández, founder of Mothers Against War.

González has dismissed those concerns, saying that Puerto Rico is playing an important role in Trump's ongoing fight against drug trafficking since it represents a U.S. border in the Caribbean.

She also has noted that the ongoing training of Marines involves logistics exercises and no ammunition. Marines in Puerto Rico

Siul López, a spokesman for Puerto Rico's National Guard, told the AP that the Marines were practicing amphibious maneuvers with a variety of vehicles, adding that he did not know how many were on the island.

Meanwhile, González said last week that she estimates more than 1,000 Marines were in Puerto Rico.

The U.S. Marine Corps issued a statement on Aug. 31 noting that marines and sailors from the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit would be conducting amphibious training and flight operations in southern Puerto Rico.

"The challenging terrain and tropical climate of Puerto Rico provides an ideal environment for the 22nd MEU to conduct realistic amphibious training and hone specialized skills such as patrolling, reconnaissance and survival techniques, ensuring a high level of readiness while forward deployed," the Marine Corps said in a statement.

It wasn't immediately clear how long Hegseth and Caine planned to stay in Puerto Rico, or if they visited other sites while on the island.

López, the National Guard's spokesman, declined to comment on specifics of the visit.

## **Trump note to Epstein that he denies writing is released by Congress**

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats on the House Oversight Committee released on Monday a sexually suggestive letter to Jeffrey Epstein purportedly signed by President Donald Trump, which he has denied.

The letter was included as part of a 50th birthday album compiled in 2003 for Epstein, a wealthy and well-connected financier who was once a friend of Trump's. The full House committee on Monday night released a copy of the entire album, which bore names of some other prominent figures such as former President Bill Clinton and attorney Alan Dershowitz in a "friends" section, and included other letters with sexually provocative language.

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Trump has said he did not write the letter or create the drawing of a curvaceous woman that surrounds the letter, and he filed a \$10 billion lawsuit against The Wall Street Journal for earlier reporting on his link to the letter.

"As I have said all along, it's very clear President Trump did not draw this picture, and he did not sign it," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a statement posted on X. "President Trump's legal team will continue to aggressively pursue litigation."

White House deputy chief of staff Taylor Budowich posted various pictures on X of Trump's signature over the years and wrote, "it's not his signature."

As House Republicans left the Capitol on Monday night, many waved off questions about the letter, echoing a similar theme.

"It's not his signature. I've seen Donald Trump sign a million things," said Rep. Byron Donalds of Florida.

Rep. Thomas Massie, who is leading a bipartisan push for a House vote to force the Justice Department to release its Epstein files, downplayed the letter's relevance entirely.

"It doesn't prove anything. Having a birthday card from Trump doesn't help the survivors and the victims," Massie said.

The release of the drawing comes as the president has for months faced increasing pressure to force more disclosure in the case of Epstein and his former girlfriend Ghislaine Maxwell. Epstein was accused of paying underage girls hundreds of dollars in cash for massages and then molesting them, while Maxwell was convicted of luring teenage girls to be sexually abused by him.

It also once again puts a spotlight on Trump's former friendship with Epstein, which the president has said ended two decades ago after a falling-out. Trump said recently that he cut ties with Epstein because he "stole" young women — including Virginia Giuffre, who was among Epstein's most well-known sex trafficking accusers — who worked for the spa at his Mar-a-Lago resort.

The case against Epstein was brought more than a decade after he secretly cut a deal with federal prosecutors in Florida to dispose of nearly identical allegations. Trump had suggested during the presidential campaign that he'd seek to open the government's files into Epstein, but much of what the government has released so far had already been out there.

Democrats on the House Oversight Committee received a copy of the birthday album on Monday as part of a batch of documents from Epstein's estate.

Trump has denied writing the letter and creating the drawing, calling The Wall Street Journal report on it "false, malicious, and defamatory."

"These are not my words, not the way I talk. Also, I don't draw pictures," Trump said.

The letter released by the committee looks exactly as described by The Wall Street Journal in its report.

The letter bearing Trump's name and what appears to be his signature includes text framed by a hand-drawn outline of a curvaceous woman.

"A pal is a wonderful thing. Happy Birthday — and may every day be another wonderful secret," the letter says.

The letter's disclosure comes amid a bipartisan push in Congress for the release of the so-called Epstein files amid years of speculation and conspiracy theories. Calls for the release of the records came from Republicans, including Vice President JD Vance, before he was sworn into the country's No. 2 position.

The Justice Department in August began turning over records from the Epstein sex trafficking investigation to the House Oversight Committee.

The committee subpoenaed the Epstein estate for documents last month. In addition to the birthday book, lawmakers requested Epstein's last will and testament, agreements he signed with prosecutors, his contact books, and his financial transactions and holdings.

## Man accused of trying to assassinate Trump apologizes to potential jurors

By DAVID FISCHER Associated Press

FORT PIERCE, Fla. (AP) — The man charged with trying to assassinate Donald Trump while he played golf last year in South Florida stood before a group of potential jurors in a Florida courtroom on Monday and said he was “sorry for bringing you all in here.”

Ryan Routh, wearing a gray sports coat, red tie with white stripes and khaki slacks, is representing himself in the trial that began with jury selection on Monday in the federal courthouse in Fort Pierce, Florida.

“Thank you for being here,” Routh told the first group of 60 jurors who were brought into the courtroom after U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon introduced prosecutors and Routh to the panel.

Cannon signed off on Routh’s request to represent himself but said court-appointed attorneys needed to remain as standby counsel.

During a hearing earlier to go over questions that would be asked of jurors, Routh was partially shackled. But he did not appear to be restrained when the first of three batches of 60 potential jurors were brought into the courtroom on Monday afternoon.

Cannon dismissed the questions Routh wanted to ask jurors as irrelevant earlier Monday. They included asking jurors about their views on Gaza, the talk of the U.S. acquiring Greenland and what they would do if they were driving and saw a turtle in the road.

The judge approved most of the other questions for jurors submitted by prosecutors.

The panel of 120 potential jurors filled out questionnaires on Monday morning and the first group was brought into the courtroom during the afternoon session. The judge inquired about any hardships that would prevent them from sitting as jurors during a weeks-long trial. Twenty-seven noted hardships and the judge dismissed 20 of them on Monday.

The other two groups of jurors will return to the courtroom on Tuesday morning for similar questioning. Those who are not dismissed will then return at 2 p.m. Tuesday for further questioning about the case and their views.

The court has blocked off four weeks for Routh’s trial, but attorneys are expecting they’ll need less time.

Jury selection was expected to take three days in an effort to find 12 jurors and four alternates. Opening statements were scheduled to begin Thursday, and prosecutors will begin their case immediately after that.

Cannon told Routh last week that he would be allowed to use a podium while speaking to the jury or questioning witnesses, but he would not have free rein of the courtroom.

Cannon is a Trump-appointed judge who drew scrutiny for her handling of a criminal case accusing Trump of illegally storing classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach. The case became mired in delays as motions piled up over months, and was ultimately dismissed by Cannon last year after she concluded that the special counsel tapped by the Justice Department to investigate Trump was illegally appointed.

Routh’s trial begins nearly a year after prosecutors say a U.S. Secret Service agent thwarted Routh’s attempt to shoot the Republican presidential nominee. Routh, 59, has pleaded not guilty to charges of attempting to assassinate a major presidential candidate, assaulting a federal officer and several firearm violations.

Just nine weeks earlier, Trump had survived another attempt on his life while campaigning in Pennsylvania. That gunman had fired eight shots, with one bullet grazing Trump’s ear, before being shot by a Secret Service counter sniper.

Prosecutors have said Routh methodically plotted to kill Trump for weeks before aiming a rifle through the shrubbery as Trump played golf on Sept. 15, 2024, at his West Palm Beach country club. A Secret Service agent spotted Routh before Trump came into view. Officials said Routh aimed his rifle at the agent, who opened fire, causing Routh to drop his weapon and flee without firing a shot.

Law enforcement obtained help from a witness who prosecutors said informed officers that he saw a person fleeing. The witness was then flown in a police helicopter to a nearby interstate where Routh was

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arrested, and the witnesses confirmed it was the person he had seen, prosecutors have said.

The judge last week unsealed the prosecutor's 33-page list of exhibits that could be introduced as evidence at the trial. It says prosecutors have photos of Routh holding the same model of semi-automatic rifle found at Trump's club.

Routh was a North Carolina construction worker who in recent years had moved to Hawaii. A self-styled mercenary leader, Routh spoke out to anyone who would listen about his dangerous, sometimes violent plans to insert himself into conflicts around the world, witnesses have told The Associated Press.

In the early days of the war in Ukraine, Routh tried to recruit soldiers from Afghanistan, Moldova and Taiwan to fight the Russians. In his native Greensboro, North Carolina, he was arrested in 2002 for eluding a traffic stop and barricading himself from officers with a fully automatic machine gun and a "weapon of mass destruction," which turned out to be an explosive with a 10-inch fuse.

In 2010, police searched a warehouse Routh owned and found more than 100 stolen items, from power tools and building supplies to kayaks and spa tubs. In both felony cases, judges gave Routh either probation or a suspended sentence.

In addition to the federal charges, Routh also has pleaded not guilty to state charges of terrorism and attempted murder.

## **Attorney says detained Korean Hyundai workers had special skills for short-term jobs**

By RUSS BYNUM, KATE BRUMBACK and HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP) — A lawyer for several workers detained at a Hyundai factory in Georgia says many of the South Koreans rounded up in the immigration raid are engineers and equipment installers brought in for the highly specialized work of getting an electric battery plant online.

Atlanta immigration attorney Charles Kuck, who represents four of the detained South Korean nationals, told The Associated Press on Monday that many were doing work that is authorized under the B-1 business visitor visa program. They had planned to be in the U.S. for just a couple of weeks and "never longer than 75 days," he said.

"The vast majority of the individuals that were detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement that were South Korean were either there as engineers or were involved in after-sales service and installation," Kuck said.

The raid Thursday at the battery factory under construction at Hyundai's sprawling auto plant west of Savannah resulted in the detainment of 475 workers, more than 300 of them South Koreans. Some were shown being shackled with chains around their hands, ankles and waists in video released by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

South Korea expects to bring its detainees home

South Korea's foreign minister was flying to the U.S. on Monday to secure his citizens' return on a charter flight to South Korea, where many people have expressed confusion, shock and a sense of betrayal.

President Donald Trump said the workers "were here illegally," and that instead, the U.S. needs to arrange with other countries to have their experts train U.S. citizens to do specialized work such as battery and computer manufacturing.

But immigration lawyer Kuck said no company in the U.S. makes the machines that are used in the Georgia battery plant, so they had to come from abroad to install or repair equipment on-site — work that would take about three to five years to train someone in the U.S. to do, he said.

"This is not something new," Kuck said. "We've been doing this forever, and we do it — when we ship things abroad, we send our folks there to take care of it."

The Japanese and Germans did it, too, creating US jobs

While neither government has revealed details about all the workers' visas, it's not unusual for foreign companies to save time and money by sending workers from abroad to set up U.S. factories, and then train U.S. workers, said Rosemary Coates, executive director of the Reshoring Institute, a nonprofit that



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encourages U.S. manufacturing.

"We saw the same thing happening in the '80s with Japanese carmakers setting up U.S. factories, and in the '90s with German carmakers," she said.

A B-1 visitor for business visa allows foreign workers to stay for up to six months, getting reimbursed for expenses while collecting a paycheck back home. There are limits — for example, they can supervise construction projects but can't build anything themselves — but if it's spelled out in a contract, they can install equipment, Los Angeles immigration lawyer Angelo Paparelli said.

Also, South Korea is one of 41 countries whose citizens can use the U.S. Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), which provides a visa waiver if they can provide "a legitimate reason" for their visit, and this basically gives them B-1 visa status for up to 90 days, said immigration attorney Rita Sostrin in Los Angeles.

Rights advocates call for workers' release in Georgia

Advocates called for the detained workers to be released during a news conference Monday at a church in Savannah, about 25 miles east of the site where Hyundai began producing electric vehicles a year ago.

They included Sarah Park, president of the Korean American Coalition of Atlanta, who also said many of the detained South Korean workers had special skills needed to get the battery plant running.

Daniela Rodriguez, executive director of Migrant Equity Southeast, said immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador and Venezuela also were detained. She said the group's Savannah office has been flooded with calls from family members of workers who they can't reach and presume are detained.

Even some workers who weren't detained feel unsafe about returning to their jobs at the site, she said.

Workers described seeing armed agents and military-style vehicles during the raid, Rodriguez said, while drones and helicopters hovered overhead. She said one woman who had a work permit and wasn't detained told her: "We felt like we were being followed as animals, like they were hunting for us."

Labor leader accuses Hyundai of abusing work rules

A Savannah labor union leader said local unions have complained that Hyundai and its contractors were improperly using South Korean workers for basic construction that falls outside the visa waiver rules.

Christi Hulme, president of the Savannah Regional Central Labor Council, said unions that are part of her council believe Korean workers have been pouring cement, erecting steel, performing carpentry and fitting pipes.

"Basically our labor was being given to illegal immigrants," Hulme said.

Spokespersons for Hyundai's Georgia EV factory and the adjacent battery plant did not immediately reply to an email message seeking comment.

South Korean politicians roiled

Appearing before his departure at a legislative hearing where many lawmakers lamented the American operation, Foreign Minister Cho Hyun called the raid by South Korea's close ally "a very serious matter."

"If U.S. authorities detain hundreds of Koreans in this manner, almost like a military operation, how can South Korean companies investing in the U.S. continue to invest properly in the future?" said Cho Jeongsik, a lawmaker from the liberal governing Democratic Party.

Some lawmakers called for retaliatory investigations of Americans who allegedly work illegally in South Korea.

Experts say the raid won't likely prompt any major tit-for-tat measures given how much the country depends on the U.S. for security in deterring potential North Korean aggression and other spheres of cooperation, including business ties.

Many South Koreans are stunned

This was the Homeland Security agency's largest workplace raid yet as it pursues its mass deportation agenda, and it targeted Georgia — a symbol of bilateral cooperation where many large South Korean businesses operate and plan future investments. Only weeks ago, South Korea promised hundreds of billions in U.S. investments to reach a tariff deal. Trump and South Korean President Lee Jae Myung held their first summit in Washington on Aug. 25.

"The way that Trump is pressuring the Korean government and inflicting damages on its people is very

rough and unilateral," said Kim Taewoo, former head of Seoul's Korea Institute for National Unification. "Can this be forgotten easily in South Korea? In a long-term perspective, it won't be good for U.S. national interests as well."

## **Rupert Murdoch's family reaches deal on who will control media empire after his death**

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

Rupert Murdoch's family has reached a deal on control of the 94-year-old mogul's media empire after his death, ensuring no change in direction at Fox News, the most popular network for President Donald Trump and conservatives.

The deal creates a trust establishing control of the Fox Corp. for Lachlan Murdoch, Rupert's chosen heir who has been running Fox in recent years, along with his younger sisters, Grace and Chloe.

Lachlan Murdoch's three older siblings, Prudence MacLeod, Elisabeth Murdoch and James Murdoch, give up any claims to control of Fox in exchange for stock currently valued at \$3.3 billion, according to The New York Times, which first reported news of the deal.

The new trust will be in place until 2050, according to terms of the deal.

It ends a drama that has been like a real-life version of HBO's "Succession," only with huge financial implications and an impact on U.S. politics. Fox and its conservative opinion dominates news ratings, at points this summer more popular than the general broadcast networks, and is the go-to network for Trump and his team to spread news.

The court fight began when Rupert Murdoch and Lachlan sought to change terms of an established trust that gave the mogul's four oldest children equal say in control of his media holdings after his death. Prudence, Elisabeth and James are known not to be as conservative as their father, and the arrangement led to worries that they could force Lachlan out and change Fox's direction after the patriarch's death.

The three siblings sued to block the changes and won an initial ruling in a Nevada probate court. The Nevada probate commissioner, Edmund J. Gordon Jr., said the attempt to seize control represented a "carefully crafted charade" designed to entrench Lachlan Murdoch's control.

Yet with appeals dragging on and the outcome uncertain, representatives for Rupert Murdoch and his children met to hammer out a deal to end the family bitterness, and it was announced late Monday.

Lachlan's three older siblings have six months to sell any personal holdings in Fox and have agreed to a long-term ban on acquiring shares of Fox and News Corp. or taking any actions involving the company, Fox said.

The bid to give Lachlan control of the trust was euphemistically named "Project Family Harmony" and called James Murdoch the "troublesome beneficiary," according to sealed court papers obtained by the Times. The case grew to involve dozens of lawyers, including former Attorney General William Barr.

## **Supreme Court lifts restrictions on LA immigration stops set after agents swept up US citizens**

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Monday cleared the way for federal agents to conduct sweeping immigration operations for now in Los Angeles, the latest victory for President Donald Trump's administration at the high court.

The conservative majority lifted a restraining order from a judge who found that roving patrols were conducting indiscriminate stops in and around LA. The order had barred immigration agents from stopping people solely based on their race, language, job or location.

The court's 6-3 decision followed a pattern of at least temporarily allowing some of the Republican administration's harshest policies, while leaving room for the possibility of a different outcome after the

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legal case plays out fully. The net effect, meanwhile, has Trump pushing ahead in many of the areas he considers most critical.

The majority did not explain its reasoning, as is typical on the court's emergency docket. But Justice Brett Kavanaugh said the lower-court judge had gone too far in restricting how Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents can carry out brief stops for questioning. "The prospect of such after-the-fact judicial second-guessing and contempt proceedings will inevitably chill lawful immigration enforcement efforts," he wrote in a concurrence.

Dissent says constitutional freedoms threatened

In a stinging dissent joined by her two liberal colleagues, Justice Sonia Sotomayor said the decision erodes constitutional freedoms.

"Countless people in the Los Angeles area have been grabbed, thrown to the ground, and handcuffed simply because of their looks, their accents, and the fact they make a living by doing manual labor," she wrote. "Today, the Court needlessly subjects countless more to these exact same indignities."

Kavanaugh, for his part, suggested stops in which agents use force could yet face legal challenges.

The Supreme Court's decision comes as ICE agents also step up enforcement in Washington as part of Trump's unprecedented federal takeover of the capital city's law enforcement and deployment of the National Guard.

The lawsuit will now continue to unfold in California, with a hearing set for Sept. 24. It was filed by immigrant advocacy groups that accused the Trump administration of systematically targeting brown-skinned people during his administration's crackdown on illegal immigration in the Los Angeles area.

U.S. District Judge Maame E. Frimpong in Los Angeles had found a "mountain of evidence" that enforcement tactics were violating the Constitution. The plaintiffs included U.S. citizens swept up in immigration stops. An appeals court had left Frimpong's ruling in place.

Federal attorneys have said immigration officers target people based on illegal presence in the U.S., not skin color, race or ethnicity. Even so, the Justice Department argued that ICE agents can use at least some of those factors in combination with others, and Kavanaugh said apparent ethnicity could be a relevant factor for a stop.

More than 5,000 arrests made

The Department of Homeland Security said last week that authorities had made 5,210 immigration arrests since June 6 and praised the work of its lead commander there, Gregory Bovino, whose "success in getting the worst of the worst out of the Los Angeles region speaks for itself."

The agency promised in an online post to "continue to FLOOD THE ZONE in Los Angeles" after the high court's decision.

The region has been top priority for the Trump administration, and its hard-line immigration strategy has spurred protests and the deployment of the National Guard and the Marines.

The number of raids in the LA area appeared to slow shortly after Frimpong's order came down in July, but recently they have become more frequent again, including an operation in which agents jumped out of the back of a rented box truck and made arrests at an LA Home Depot store as the administration carries out the president's goal of mass deportations.

Attorney General Pam Bondi and border czar Tom Homan both separately applauded the ruling. "Now, ICE can continue carrying out roving patrols in California without judicial micromanagement," Bondi wrote in a social media post.

The order from Frimpong, who was nominated by Democratic President Joe Biden, barred authorities from using factors like apparent race or ethnicity, speaking Spanish or English with an accent, presence at a location such as a tow yard or car wash, or someone's occupation as the only basis for reasonable suspicion for detention. It had covered a combined population of nearly 20 million people, nearly half of whom identify as Hispanic or Latino.

'I was born here in the States'

The plaintiffs argued that Frimpong's order only prevents federal agents from making stops that do not

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align with the Constitution and Supreme Court precedent.

Chris Newman, legal director for the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, said the Supreme Court decision will fuel aggressive immigration enforcement in other major cities. "The Supreme Court majority makes clear that average non-white workers are targets, and it functionally gives its stamp of approval for Trump to trample their bedrock constitutional rights," he said.

Plaintiffs included three detained immigrants and two U.S. citizens. One of the citizens was Los Angeles resident Brian Gavidia, who was shown in a June 13 video being seized by federal agents and pressed against a metal fence with his arm twisted behind his back as he yelled: "I was born here in the States. East LA, bro!"

A terrified Gavidia was released about 20 minutes later after showing agents his identification, as was another citizen stopped at a car wash, according to the lawsuit.

Democratic leaders in California condemned the decision. Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said she has directed city departments to follow rules barring the use of municipal resources on federal immigration enforcement. "This isn't just an attack on the people of Los Angeles. This is an attack on every person in this city, and in every city in this country," Bass told reporters.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta pointed out the Supreme Court recently ruled that race can't be considered in college admissions. "They prevent the use of race (in college admissions) to tackle discrimination but allow the use of race to potentially discriminate," he said.

Gov. Gavin Newsom, a vocal Trump opponent, said the order would allow agents wide latitude to make stops "including U.S. citizens and children, to deliberately harm California's families and small businesses."

Plaintiff Pedro Vasquez Perdomo said ICE agents never explained why they stopped him or showed a warrant.

"I was treated like I didn't matter — locked up, cold, hungry, and without a lawyer. Now, the Supreme Court says that's okay?" he said in a statement. "That's not justice. That's racism with a badge."

## **Stocks tick higher after Wall Street flirts with another record**

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks drifted higher on Monday ahead of a week with several data reports that could dictate by how much or even whether the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates at its next meeting in a week.

The S&P 500 added 0.2% and finished just below its record set last week. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 114 points, or 0.3%, and the Nasdaq composite climbed 0.5% to its own all-time high.

AppLovin and Robinhood Markets helped lead the market after learning they will join the S&P 500 index later this month, along with Emcor Group. Many investment funds directly mimic the index or at least compare their performance against it, so a stock's joining the list of the 500 largest companies can draw investors' dollars immediately.

AppLovin climbed 11.6%, and Robinhood jumped 15.8% while Emcor slipped 0.6%. They will replace three companies that have shrunk enough in size to get demoted to S&P's index of small stocks, the SmallCap 600. Those stocks, MarketAxess Holdings, Caesars Entertainment and Enphase Energy, ranged from a loss of 2.1% to a gain of 0.2%.

EchoStar jumped 19.9% after saying it agreed to sell spectrum licenses to Elon Musk's SpaceX for \$17 billion in cash and stock. SpaceX also agreed to pay for roughly \$2 billion of interest payments on EchoStar debt through November 2027.

The deal will help SpaceX's Starlink business develop direct-to-cell service, and it knocked down stocks of several telecoms. Verizon sank 2.4%, and AT&T dropped 2.3%.

PNC Financial Services Group slipped 0.3% after it said it would pay \$4.1 billion to buy FirstBank, a bank owner based in Lakewood, Colorado.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 13.65 points to 6,495.15. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 114.09 to 45,514.95, and the Nasdaq composite climbed 98.31 to 21,798.70 and topped its prior all-time high set in



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August.

Trading across most of the market was relatively quiet ahead of updates coming later this week on the economy and inflation. They could alter expectations among traders, who at the moment are unanimously forecasting the Fed will cut its main interest rate for the first time this year at its meeting two Wednesdays from now.

Investors tend to love such cuts because they can give a boost to the economy and to prices for investments. The downside of them is that they can also push inflation higher.

So far this year, the Fed has been more worried about the potential of inflation worsening because of President Donald Trump's tariffs than about the job market. But a slew of recent reports showing the U.S. job market is slowing may be changing minds.

On Tuesday, the U.S. government will release preliminary revisions for job growth numbers reported through March, and it could show that hiring was weaker than earlier thought.

Reports on inflation will follow on Wednesday and Thursday, showing how much prices rose last month at the wholesale and at the consumer levels. If inflation proves to be worse than expected, it could tie the Fed's hands.

Fed officials would need to decide which problem is more pressing, either the job market or inflation, because they have only one tool to fix them. And raising or lowering interest rates to help one tends to hurt the other in the short term.

U.S. companies have been trying several ways to preserve their profits in the face of tariffs, which push up prices for all kinds of things imported to the country. Many industrial companies are talking about their ability to raise prices, according to strategists at Morgan Stanley led by Michelle Weaver. Companies that sell nonessentials directly to consumers, meanwhile, are talking more about stockpiled inventories, which could be delaying the hit that U.S. households will feel.

In the bond market, Treasury yields continued to ease as expectations remain high for the Fed to cut interest rates. The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 4.04% from 4.10% late Friday and from 4.28% last Tuesday.

In stock markets abroad, indexes rose across much of Europe and Asia.

Japan's Nikkei 225 jumped 1.5% for one of the larger gains after Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba announced that he plans to resign.

Analysts said Ishiba's announcement was expected for some time and welcomed it as moving things forward, although uncertainty remains as the ruling Liberal Democratic Party will need to hold an election to choose a new leader. Ishiba will remain prime minister until his successor is chosen and approved by parliament.

Also Monday, Japan's Cabinet Office said the economy expanded at a stronger rate in the fiscal first quarter than previously estimated, at a seasonally adjusted 2.2% annualized rate, better than the earlier 1.0% rate as solid consumer spending and inventories lifted growth more than previously thought.

## **New Banksy mural of a judge beating a protester to be removed from outside London court**

By LYDIA DOYE Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A new mural by elusive street artist Banksy showing a judge beating an unarmed protester with a gavel will be removed from a wall outside one of London's most iconic courts, authorities said Monday.

The mural appeared Monday and depicts a protester lying on the ground holding a blood-splattered placard while a judge in a traditional wig and black gown beats him with a gavel. Banksy posted a photo of the work on Instagram, his usual method of claiming a work as authentic. It was captioned "Royal Courts Of Justice. London."

Security officials outside the courthouse covered the artwork Monday with sheets of black plastic and

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two metal barriers, and it was being guarded by two officers and a security camera.

Because the Victorian gothic revival style building is 143 years old, the mural will be removed with consideration for its historical significance, according to HM Courts and Tribunals.

"The Royal Courts of Justice is a listed building and HMCTS are obliged to maintain its original character," it said in a statement. Listed buildings are considered the country's most significant historic buildings and sites and are protected by law.

While the artwork doesn't refer to a particular cause or incident, activists saw it as a reference to the U.K. government's ban on the group Palestine Action. On Saturday almost 900 people were arrested at a London protest challenging the ban.

Defend Our Juries, the group that organized the protest, said in a statement that the mural "powerfully depicts the brutality unleashed" by the government ban.

"When the law is used as a tool to crush civil liberties, it does not extinguish dissent, it strengthens it," the statement said.

The courts have weighed in on the Palestine Action case, with judges initially rejecting the organization's request to appeal its ban. A High Court judge then allowed the appeal to go forward, though the government is now challenging that decision.

Banksy began his career spray-painting buildings in Bristol, England, and has become one of the world's best-known artists. His paintings and installations sell for millions of dollars at auction and have drawn thieves and vandals.

Banksy's work often comments on political issues, with many of his pieces criticizing government policy on migration and war.

At the Glastonbury Festival last year, an inflatable raft holding dummies of migrants in life jackets was unveiled during a band's headline set. Banksy appeared to claim the stunt, which was thought to symbolize small boat crossings of migrants in the English Channel, in a post on Instagram.

The artist has also taken his message on migration to Europe.

In 2019, "The Migrant Child," depicting a shipwrecked child holding a pink smoke bomb and wearing a life jacket, was unveiled in Venice, Italy. In 2018, a number of works including one near a former center for migrants that depicted a child spray-painting wallpaper over a swastika were discovered in Paris.

Banksy has also created numerous artworks in the West Bank and Gaza Strip over the years, including one depicting a girl conducting a body search on an Israeli soldier, another showing a dove wearing a flak jacket, and a masked protester hurling a bouquet of flowers. He designed the "Walled Off Hotel" guest-house in Bethlehem, which closed in October 2023.

Last summer, Banksy captured London's attention with an animal-themed collection, which concluded with a mural of a gorilla appearing to hold up the entrance gate to London Zoo.

For nine days straight, Banksy-created creatures — from a mountain goat perched on a building buttress to piranhas circling a police guard post to a rhinoceros mounting a car — showed up in unlikely locations around the city.

## Terminal at London's Heathrow Airport reopens after possible hazardous substance investigation

LONDON (AP) — Part of a terminal temporarily closed at London's Heathrow Airport was reopened later Monday when police reported finding no sign of a hazardous substance blamed for harming about 20 people, authorities said.

The Metropolitan police said the patients treated at Terminal 4 were not seriously injured and that officers found no trace of any dangerous material.

The departures area of the terminal at the U.K.'s busiest airport was evacuated and closed as a precaution for about three hours as police, firefighters and ambulance crews responded.

Crowds of passengers with luggage crowded outside the terminal in the late afternoon. As the sun went down, some wrapped themselves in space blankets to keep warm.

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The arrivals area of the terminal remained open throughout and all other terminals were operating. The airport apologized for the disruption and said it was working to make sure all departures took off as planned.

## French government collapses in a confidence vote, forcing Macron to seek yet another prime minister

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Legislators toppled France's government in a confidence vote on Monday, a new crisis for Europe's second-largest economy that obliges President Emmanuel Macron to search for a fourth prime minister in 12 months.

Prime Minister François Bayrou was ousted overwhelmingly in a 364-194 vote against him. Bayrou paid the price for what appeared to be a staggering political miscalculation, gambling that lawmakers would back his view that France must slash public spending to rein in its debts. Instead, they seized on the vote that Bayrou called to gang up against the 74-year-old centrist who was appointed by Macron last December.

The demise of Bayrou's short-lived minority government — now constitutionally obliged to submit its resignation after just under nine months in office — heralds renewed uncertainty and a risk of prolonged legislative deadlock for France as it wrestles with pressing challenges, including budget difficulties and, internationally, wars in Ukraine and Gaza and the shifting priorities of U.S. President Donald Trump.

Hunt for a replacement

Although Macron had two weeks to prepare for the government collapse after Bayrou announced in August that he'd seek a confidence vote on his unpopular budget plans, no clear front-runner has emerged as a successor.

After Gabriel Attal's departure as prime minister in September 2024, followed by former Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier's ouster by parliament in December and Bayrou now gone, too, Macron again is hunting for a replacement to build consensus in the parliament's lower house that is stacked with opponents of the French leader.

Macron's office said that he'd accept the resignation of Bayrou's government on Tuesday and name a new prime minister "in the coming days."

As president, Macron will continue to hold substantial powers over foreign policy and European affairs and remain the commander in chief of the nuclear-armed military. But domestically, the 47-year-old president's ambitions are increasingly facing ruin.

The root of the latest government collapse was Macron's stunning decision to dissolve the National Assembly in June 2024, triggering a legislative election that the French leader hoped would strengthen the hand of his pro-European centrist alliance. But the gamble backfired, producing a splintered legislature with no dominant political bloc in power for the first time in France's modern republic.

Shorn of a workable majority, his minority governments have since lurched from crisis to crisis, surviving on the whim of opposing political blocs on the left and far-right that don't have enough seats to govern themselves but can, when they team up, topple Macron's choices.

Bayrou's gamble

Bayrou, too, rolled the dice by calling the confidence vote, a decision that quickly backfired on the political veteran as left-wing and far-right legislators seized the opportunity to oust him, seeking to increase pressure on Macron.

Bayrou conceded in his last speech as prime minister to the National Assembly that putting his fate on the line was risky. But he said that France's debt crisis compelled him to seek legislative support for remedies, in the face of what he called "a silent, underground, invisible, and unbearable hemorrhage" of excessive public borrowing.

"The greatest risk was to not take one, to let things go on without changing anything, to go on doing politics as usual," he said. "Submission to debt is like submission through military force. Dominated by weapons, or dominated by our creditors, because of a debt that is submerging us — in both cases, we

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lose our freedom.”

At the end of the first quarter of 2025, France’s public debt stood at 3.346 trillion euros, or 114% of gross domestic product. Debt servicing remains a major budget item, accounting for around 7% of state spending.

Le Pen wants new election

The 577-seat National Assembly interrupted its summer recess to convene for the extraordinary session of political drama. Macron’s opponents worked to leverage the crisis to push for a new legislative election, pressure for Macron’s departure or jostle for posts in the next government.

Far-right leader Marine Le Pen called for Macron to again dissolve the National Assembly, seemingly confident that her National Rally party and its allies would win a majority in another snap legislative election, positioning it to form a new government.

“A big country like France cannot live with a paper government, especially in a tormented and dangerous world,” she said.

Pressing problems

In a last-ditch effort to save his job before the vote, Bayrou warned that France is risking its future and its influence by racking up trillions in debts, pleading for belt-tightening.

Macron’s chosen replacement will operate in the same precarious environment and face the same pressing budget problems. Under the French political system, the prime minister is appointed by the president, accountable to the parliament and is in charge of implementing domestic policy, notably economic measures. Macron himself has vowed to stay in office until the end of his term in 2027, but risks becoming a lame duck domestically if political paralysis continues.

Arguing for sharp cuts to repair public finances, Bayrou had proposed to slashing 44 billion euros (\$51 billion) in spending in 2026, after France’s deficit hit 5.8% of GDP last year, way above the official EU target of 3%.

Speaking in the National Assembly, he painted a dramatic picture of France becoming beholden to foreign creditors and addicted to living beyond its means — problems that he warned would outlast his government without remedial action.

“You have the power to overthrow the government, but you do not have the power to erase reality,” Bayrou told lawmakers. “Reality will remain inexorable. Spending will continue to increase and the debt burden — already unbearable — will grow heavier and more costly.”

## **Appeals court upholds E. Jean Carroll’s \$83.3M defamation judgment against Trump**

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A federal appeals court on Monday upheld a civil jury’s finding that President Donald Trump must pay \$83.3 million to E. Jean Carroll for his repeated social media attacks and public statements against the longtime advice columnist after she accused him of sexual assault.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rejected Trump’s appeal of the defamation award, calling the jury’s damages awards “fair and reasonable.”

A three-judge panel, citing hundreds of death threats Carroll faced, said the case record supported the trial judge’s “determination that ‘the degree of reprehensibility’ of Mr. Trump’s conduct was remarkably high, perhaps unprecedented.”

Trump had argued the damages were unreasonably excessive, particularly a \$65 million punitive damage award, and pushed for a new trial after the Supreme Court expanded presidential immunity.

But the appeals court roundly rejected those arguments, writing that Trump’s “extraordinary and unprecedented” broadsides against Carroll, 81, justified the steep award, given “the unique and egregious facts of this case.”

Lawyers for Trump responded through a spokesperson to a request for comment by calling for “an immediate end to the political weaponization of our justice system and a swift dismissal of all of the Witch



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Hunts, including the Democrat-funded travesty of the Carroll Hoaxes." The case is likely headed to the Supreme Court.

In its ruling, the 2nd Circuit said there is "ample evidence" that Trump was recklessly indifferent to Carroll's health and safety after "castigating Ms. Carroll as a politically and financially motivated liar" and "insinuating that she was too unattractive for him to have sexually assaulted" and would "pay dearly" for speaking out.

Carroll's lawyer, Roberta Kaplan, welcomed the decision, saying in a statement that the appeals court affirmed that "Carroll was telling the truth, and that President Donald Trump was not." Noting the threats to her client, Kaplan said they "look forward to an end to the appellate process."

At trial, Carroll testified she feared for her safety after receiving hundreds of death threats and losing her decadeslong career at Elle magazine.

The ruling centered on the second — and far more expensive — of two defamation awards issued to Carroll over Trump's yearslong attacks on her character, which began after she accused Trump in her 2019 memoir of sexually assaulting her decades earlier at a Manhattan department store.

In her memoir and again at a 2023 trial, Carroll described how a chance encounter with Trump at Bergdorf Goodman's Fifth Avenue in 1996 started with the two flirting as they shopped, then ended with a violent struggle inside a dressing room.

Carroll said Trump slammed her against a wall, pulled down her tights and forced himself on her.

At the initial trial, a jury found Trump liable for sexual abuse, but concluded he hadn't committed rape as defined under New York law.

Trump repeatedly denied the encounter took place and accused Carroll of making it up to help sell her book. He also said Carroll was "not my type."

The 2023 jury awarded Carroll \$5 million to compensate her for both the alleged attack and statements Trump made denying after his first presidency ended that it had happened.

After that first verdict, the court conducted a second trial with a new jury for the sole purpose of deciding damages for statements Trump made attacking Carroll's character and truthfulness while he was president in 2019.

Trump skipped the first trial but attended the second, which took place during his 2024 presidential run. He portrayed the lawsuit as part of a broader effort to smear him and prevent him from regaining the White House.

His lawyers complained that the judge, in setting rules for the damages trial, had barred Trump and his defense team from claiming before the jury that he was innocent. The judge said that issue had been settled by the first jury and didn't need to be revisited.

On Monday, the appeals court agreed, saying the trial judge "did not err in any of the challenged rulings and that the jury's duly rendered damages awards were reasonable in light of the extraordinary and egregious facts of this case."

The 2nd Circuit noted that Trump continued his attacks against Carroll for at least five years, making them "more extreme and frequent as the trial approached."

"He also continued these same attacks during the trial itself," the appeals court said. "In one such statement, issued two days into the trial, Trump proclaimed that he would continue to defame Carroll 'a thousand times.'"

## **Chief justice lets Trump remove member of Federal Trade Commission for now**

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Chief Justice John Roberts on Monday let President Donald Trump remove a member of the Federal Trade Commission, the latest in a string of high-profile firings allowed for now by Supreme Court.

Trump first moved to fire Rebecca Slaughter in the spring, but she sued and lower courts ordered her

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reinstated because the law allows commissioners to be removed only for problems like misconduct or neglect of duty.

Roberts halted those decisions in a brief order, responding to an appeal from the Trump administration on the court's emergency docket.

The Justice Department has argued that the FTC and other executive branch agencies are under Trump's control and the Republican president is free to remove commissioners without cause.

Slaughter's lawsuit over her firing will keep playing out, as Roberts asked her lawyers to respond to the Trump administration's arguments by next week.

The court has previously allowed the firings of several other board members of independent agencies. It has suggested, however, that his power to fire has limitations at the Federal Reserve, a prospect that could soon be tested with the case of Fed Gov. Lisa Cook.

Monday's order is the latest sign that the Supreme Court's conservative majority has effectively abandoned a 90-year-old high court precedent that protected some federal agencies from arbitrary presidential action.

In the 1935 decision known as *Humphrey's Executor*, the court unanimously held that presidents cannot fire independent board members without cause.

The decision ushered in an era of powerful independent federal agencies charged with regulating labor relations, employment discrimination, the airwaves and much else. But it has long rankled conservative legal theorists who argue the modern administrative state gets the Constitution all wrong because such agencies should answer to the president.

The agency at the center of the case was also the FTC, a point cited by lower-court judges in the lawsuit filed by Slaughter. She has ping-ponged in and out of the job as the case worked its way through the courts.

The FTC is a regulator created by Congress that enforces consumer protection measures and antitrust legislation. Its seats are typically comprised of three members of the president's party and two from the opposing party.

## **Police open fire on protests of Nepal's social media policy, killing at least 17**

By BINAJ GURUBACHARYA Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Police in Nepal's capital of Kathmandu opened fire Monday on demonstrators protesting a government attempt to regulate social media that blocked some of the world's largest platforms, including Facebook, X and YouTube. At least 17 people were killed.

Rallies swept the streets around the Parliament building, which was surrounded by tens of thousands of people angry at authorities who said the companies had failed to register and submit to government oversight. At least 145 people were wounded, officials said.

Protesters pushed through barbed wire and forced riot police to retreat inside the Parliament complex.

The gunfire unfolded as the government pursues a broader attempt to regulate social media with a bill aimed at ensuring the platforms are "properly managed, responsible and accountable." The proposal has been widely criticized as a tool for censorship and for punishing government opponents who voice their protests online.

About two dozen social networks that are widely used in Nepal were repeatedly given notices to register their companies officially in the Himalayan nation, the government said. Those that failed to register have been blocked since last week.

Neither Google, which owns YouTube, nor Meta, the parent company of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, responded to requests for comment from The Associated Press. Elon Musk's X platform did not respond either.

The video-sharing app TikTok, Viber and three other platforms have registered and operated without interruption.

The death toll was announced by police official Shekhar Khanal. He said 28 officers were among the wounded, as smaller protests continued into late Monday evening.

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The situation remained tense, and the government announced a curfew around Parliament, the government secretariat, the presidential house and key parts of the city.

Seven of those killed and scores of wounded were received at the National Trauma Center, the country's main hospital in the heart of Kathmandu.

"Many of them are in serious condition and appear to have been shot in the head and chest," said Dr. Badri Risa. Families waited anxiously outside for news of their relatives while people lined up to donate blood.

"Stop the ban on social media. Stop corruption, not social media," the crowds outside Parliament chanted, waving the red and blue national flags. Monday's rally was called the protest of Gen Z, which generally refers to people born between 1995 and 2010.

The government's proposed bill includes asking the companies to appoint a liaison office or a point of contact in the country. Rights groups have called it an attempt by the government to curb freedom of expression and fundamental rights.

Nepal in 2023 banned TikTok for disrupting "social harmony, goodwill and diffusing indecent materials." The ban was lifted last year after TikTok's executives pledged to comply with local laws, including a ban of pornographic sites that was passed in 2018.

## **Howard Stern returns to SiriusXM radio show after trolling listeners**

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Howard Stern, the popular and highly paid radio host, returned to SiriusXM's airwaves Monday after trolling listeners into thinking he had departed his long-running show.

Stern, 71, who evolved from his shock jock origins to become a respected interviewer, enlisted a seemingly flustered Andy Cohen at the top of "The Howard Stern Show" to pretend to be his successor. "This was supposed to be a cleaner hand off. I'm kind of winging it," said Cohen.

Stern then came on the air and thanked the Bravo personality, who has his own SiriusXM show and podcast, for agreeing to do the bit. The stunt was the culmination of weeks of promos that promised a big reveal, following swirling speculation that Stern's show would be canceled. "The tabloids have spoken: Howard Stern fired, canceled," one promo video said. "Is it really bye-bye Booney?" The speculation grew after Stern postponed his return from a summer break last week.

While he did return Monday, Stern did not announce that he had reached a new contract with SiriusXM. His current deal expires at the end of 2025.

"Here's the truth: SiriusXM and my team have been talking about how we go forward in the future. They've approached me, they've sat down with me like they normally do, and they're fantastic," Stern said.

Stern joining what was then Sirius Satellite Radio Inc. in 2006 made him one of the highest-paid personalities in broadcasting and was a game-changer for both the company and the nascent satellite radio industry. His importance was highlighted on the SiriusXM homepage — tabs included For You, Music, Talk & Podcasts, Sports and Howard.

SiriusXM in the years after Stern joined has become home to top podcasts "Call Her Daddy," "SmartLess," "Freakonomics Radio," "Last Podcast on the Left," "99% Invisible" and "Conan O'Brien Needs a Friend" and features such personalities as Trevor Noah, Kevin Hart and Stephen A. Smith.

But SiriusXM's subscriber base has been slowly contracting, with the company reporting 33 million paid subscribers in the second quarter of 2025, a net loss of 68,000 from the first quarter and 100,000 fewer than the same period in 2024. It is a battling a saturated satellite market and competition from free, ad-supported platforms like Spotify.

Stern extended his contract with SiriusXM twice before, in 2010 and again in 2020 with a five-year, \$500 million deal, Forbes reported. He's recently had newsy and intimate chats with Lady Gaga and Bruce Springsteen.

"He's been with me and the company going on two decades, and so he's pretty happy, but he's also able, like many great artists, to stop whenever he wants," SiriusXM president and chief content officer

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Scott Greenstein told The Hollywood Reporter in 2024. "Nobody will ever replace them. We would never try to replace them."

Stern, who has liked to call himself the King of All Media, rose to national fame in the 1980s during his 20-year stint at the then-WXRK in New York. At its peak, "The Howard Stern Show" was syndicated in 60 markets and drew over 20 million listeners. Stern was lured to satellite radio by the lucrative payday and a lack of censorship, following bruising indecency battles with the Federal Communications Commission and skittish radio executives. His past on-air bits had included parading strippers through his New York studio and persuading the band then known as The Dixie Chicks to reveal intimate details about their sex lives.

His 1997 film "Private Parts" became a box office hit and offered a raw, humorous look at his rise to fame. He has also authored several bestselling books and served as a judge on "America's Got Talent" from 2012 to 2015.

## **Warming seas threaten key phytoplankton species that fuels the food web, study finds**

By ANNIKA HAMMERSCHLAG Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — For decades, scientists believed Prochlorococcus, the smallest and most abundant phytoplankton on Earth, would thrive in a warmer world. But new research suggests the microscopic bacterium, which forms the foundation of the marine food web and helps regulate the planet's climate, will decline sharply as seas heat up.

A study published Monday in the journal Nature Microbiology found Prochlorococcus populations could shrink by as much as half in tropical oceans over the next 75 years if surface waters exceed about 82 degrees Fahrenheit (27.8 Celsius). Many tropical and subtropical sea surface temperatures are already trending above average and are projected to regularly surpass 86 degrees Fahrenheit (30 Celsius) over that same period.

"These are keystone species — very important ones," said François Ribalet, a research associate professor at the University of Washington's School of Oceanography and the study's lead author. "And when a keystone species decreases in abundance, it always has consequences on ecology and biodiversity. The food web is going to change."

These tiny organisms hold a vital role in ocean life

Prochlorococcus inhabit up to 75% of Earth's sunlit surface waters and produce about one-fifth of the planet's oxygen through photosynthesis. More crucially, Ribalet said, they convert sunlight and carbon dioxide into food at the base of the marine ecosystem.

"In the tropical ocean, nearly half of the food is produced by Prochlorococcus," he said. "Hundreds of species rely on these guys."

Though other forms of phytoplankton may move in and help compensate for the loss of oxygen and food, Ribalet cautioned they are not perfect substitutes. "Evolution has made this very specific interaction," he said. "Obviously, this is going to have an impact on this very unique system that has been established."

The findings challenge decades of assumptions that Prochlorococcus would thrive as waters warmed. Those predictions, however, were based on limited data from lab cultures. For this study, Ribalet and his team tested water samples while traversing the Pacific over the course of a decade.

Over 100 research cruises — the equivalent of six trips around the globe — they counted some 800 billion individual cells taken from samples at every kilometer. In his lab at the University of Washington, Ribalet demonstrated the SeaFlow, a box filled with tubes, wires and a piercing blue laser. The custom-built device continuously pulls in seawater, which allowed the team to count the microbes in real time. "We have counted more Prochlorococcus than there are stars in the Milky Way," Ribalet said.

Experts warn of 'big consequences'

Paul Berube, a research scientist at Massachusetts Institute of Technology who studies Prochlorococcus but was not involved in the work, said the breadth of data is "groundbreaking." And he said the results fit with what is known about the microbe's streamlined genome, which makes it less adaptable to rapid



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environmental changes.

"They're at the very base of the food web, and they feed everything else — the fish eat the things that eat the phytoplankton and we eat the fish," he said. "When changes are being made to the planet that influence these particular organisms that are essentially feeding us, that's going to have big consequences."

To test whether *Prochlorococcus* might evolve to withstand hotter conditions, Ribalet's team modeled a hypothetical heat-tolerant strain but found that even those would "not be enough to fully resist the warmest temperature if greenhouse emissions keep rising," Ribalet said.

He stressed that the study's projections are conservative and don't account for the impacts of plastic pollution or other ecological stressors. "We actually tried to put forth the best-case scenario," Ribalet said. "In reality, things may be worse."

Steven Biller, an associate professor at Wellesley College, said the projected declines are "scary but plausible." He noted *Prochlorococcus* form part of the "invisible forests" of the ocean — tiny organisms most people never think about, but are essential to human survival.

"Half of all photosynthesis is happening in the oceans and *Prochlorococcus* is a really important part of that," Biller said. "The magnitude of the potential impact is kind of striking."

Biller, Berube and Ribalet said that while other microbes may compensate somewhat, the broader risks to biodiversity and fisheries are real.

"We know what drives global warming. There is no debate among the scientific community," Ribalet said. "We need to curb greenhouse gas emissions."

He hopes the findings bring more attention to tropical oceans, which could serve as natural laboratories for warming adaptations and as early warning signals for ecological collapse.

"For the first time, I want to be wrong. I would love to be wrong," he said. "But these are data-driven results."

## What Americans think about socialism and capitalism, according to a new Gallup poll

By AMELIA THOMSON-DEVEAUX Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For years, Republicans have disparaged their political rivals by describing them as socialists. But that may not be the insult it once was for rank-and-file Democrats, who have warmed to socialism and increasingly see "capitalism" as a barb.

A new Gallup poll finds that while U.S. adults overall are more likely to have a positive view of capitalism than socialism, Democrats feel differently. According to the survey, only 42% of Democrats view capitalism favorably, while 66% have a positive view of socialism.

Capitalism's image has slipped with U.S. adults overall since 2021, the survey finds, and the results show a gradual but persistent shift in Democrats' support for the two ideologies over the past 15 years, with socialism rising as capitalism falls. The shifts underscore deep divisions within the party about whether open support for socialism will hurt Democrats' ability to reach moderates or galvanize greater support from people who are concerned about issues like the cost of living.

Those tensions were cast into sharp relief earlier this year when Zohran Mamdani, a self-described democratic socialist, won the Democratic primary in the race for New York City mayor, leading some centrist Democrats to worry about his impact on the party's national brand. Meanwhile, years after independent Sen. Bernie Sanders' insurgent presidential campaigns put a new face and brand on socialism, Sanders is attracting massive crowds with a "fighting oligarchy" tour pushing Democrats to embrace his ideas as they search for a path back to viability.

The new poll, conducted in August among a sample of 1,094 U.S. adults, shows that both younger and older Democrats have both warmed slightly on socialism since 2010. But Democrats under 50 are much less likely to view capitalism favorably, while the opinions of Democrats ages 50 and older haven't shifted meaningfully, according to Gallup.

Other polls suggest that capitalism's waning popularity reflects a growing sense of economic unfairness,

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rather than a broader rejection of an economic system. Views of free enterprise remain largely positive, according to the new Gallup poll, but perceptions of big business have soured since 2010.

## Capitalism declines in popularity

Just over half of U.S. adults, 54%, have a positive view of capitalism, according to the new survey, a slight decline from 61% in 2010. Democrats have driven some of the shift, but favorable opinions of capitalism have fallen among independents as well.

Sanders' rise as a national political figure over the past decade also brought criticism of capitalism into the mainstream. He ran unsuccessfully for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016 and 2020. He fell short both times but built a devoted movement around his concept of democratic socialism, drawing crowds and engaging voters disaffected with politics with a message of class struggle between workers and elites. Mamdani and other young progressive Democrats, like Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, have drawn on his work.

Young adults generally — but particularly younger Democrats — are much less positive about capitalism than they were 15 years ago. Only 31% of Democrats under 50 have a positive view of capitalism, the new poll found, compared to 54% in 2010.

Other polling has found fundamental differences between Republicans and Democrats about capitalism's fairness.

A 2022 Pew Research Center survey found that only about 2 in 10 Democrats said "gives all people an equal chance to be successful" describes capitalism "extremely" or "very" well, and even fewer said that about "makes sure everyone's basic needs, such as food, health care, and housing, are met."

Around half of Republicans said that capitalism gives all people an opportunity to be successful, but fewer said it meets people's basic needs.

## More negative views of big business

Big business is also increasingly unpopular, according to the new poll. Only 37% of U.S. adults have a positive image of big business, down from 49% in 2010.

There's a wide partisan split in views of big business — 17% of Democrats have a positive view, compared to 60% of Republicans — but Republicans' assessments of big business have become more negative in the past few years.

The vast majority of U.S. adults continue to have a positive view of free enterprise, though, suggesting that many Americans continue to be happy with some elements of the country's economic system.

## Socialism grows more polarizing

While capitalism has gotten slightly less popular among Americans overall, views of socialism have remained stable. That's because while Democrats have warmed somewhat to the idea, Republicans' opinions of socialism — which were already negative — have curdled even more.

Now, the Gallup poll found that only 14% of Republicans have a positive view of socialism, compared to 66% of Democrats. Positive views of socialism have grown among older and younger Democrats, according to Gallup's polling.

These changing views present a conundrum for Democratic politicians, who are routinely accused of being "communists" or "socialists," but have historically tried to pivot away from those characterizations. Now, though, the label is increasingly appealing for their base, which could bolster efforts within the party to embrace the concept of socialism, rather than shying away from it.

The shift was apparent as Sanders and Mamdani held a joint town hall in New York City on Saturday as part of Mamdani's bid to lead the Democratic stronghold. As Mamdani was delivering his opening remarks, a man with a shirt that read Cuba and a Cuban flag approached the stage, yelling that Mamdani was a Communist. He was removed by security.

"You know that something has changed when it's not enough to call us democratic socialists anymore," Mamdani said.

## Star Trek plans packed lineup for the franchise's 60th anniversary, with Lego sets and YouTube show

By ITZEL LUNA Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Not many franchises have fueled society's timeless fascination with the boundless possibilities of a utopian future like "Star Trek."

Next year the sprawling franchise will add more shows, Lego sets and even a Rose Parade Float in a yearlong celebration of its 60th anniversary.

The hefty lineup of "fan-centric" celebrations was announced by the franchise on its 59th anniversary Monday, known as Star Trek Day. The projects are the first wave, Paramount said in its announcement.

"The 60th anniversary celebrates "Space for Everybody," extending an open invitation to celebrate the future that "Star Trek" aspires to — a future of HOPE, a future of EXPLORATION and a future where we rise to the challenge to BE BOLD," the announcement read.

The sci-fi franchise began with the TV series created by Gene Roddenberry that debuted in 1966 and has since sprawled into a multi-billion dollar cultural phenomenon.

Today, fans, known as Trekkies, have enjoyed countless movies, spinoff shows and video games based on the original series.

Set in the Milky Way a couple hundred years in the future, the series followed the crew behind the starship USS Enterprise. Their journey led them to, "Boldy go where no man has gone before," as William Shatner, who played Captain James T. Kirk, famously said at the top of every episode.

Celebration kicks off at the Rose Parade

The yearlong celebration will kick off on New Year's Day, with a float in the Rose Parade in California. The float "will reflect values of hope, inclusivity, exploration and unity," the franchise representatives wrote in a statement.

The float will also feature the upcoming new series "Star Trek: Starfleet Academy" set to launch in early 2026 on Paramount+. The show will center on a group of young cadets who navigate the responsibilities of becoming Starfleet officers all the while juggling new friendships, love interests and enemies.

Paramount gave a first look of the show, which starts actors Holly Hunter and Paul Giamatti, during a Comic-Con event in late July.

The franchise also announced "Star Trek: Scout" a new original, animated YouTube-first series. Created by Nickelodeon Digital Studio in association with CBS Studio, the show is the first preschool extension of the franchise. It follows three 8-year-old friends as they train to become future Starfleet Explorers.

The first two episodes of the 20-episode run were released Monday, and the rest will roll out into the next year.

A new scripted podcast, "Star Trek: Khan" also released its first episode Monday. New episodes will air weekly and chronicle Khan's descent into the iconic villain introduced in the 1982 film "Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan."

New partnerships

Following the longstanding success of Lego partnerships with similar franchises like "Star Wars," the company will partner with Paramount for the first time to bring "Star Trek" to life.

The franchise and the Lego company "have strong shared values of imagination, exploration and building a better tomorrow, making this an ideal partnership for fans of all ages," the statement read.

A "Star Trek" cruise will set sail in late February "filled with once-in-a-lifetime experiences in celebration of the franchise's 60th anniversary," according to the statement. Various "Star Trek" actors, including Shatner and Walter Koenig, will join the voyage.

## Trump asks Supreme Court for emergency order to keep billions of dollars in foreign aid frozen

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration on Monday asked the Supreme Court for an emergency order to keep billions of dollars in foreign aid frozen.

The crux of the legal fight is over nearly \$5 billion in congressionally approved aid that President Donald Trump last month said he would not spend, invoking disputed authority that was last used by a president roughly 50 years ago.

Last week, U.S. District Judge Amir Ali ruled that the Republican administration's decision to withhold the funding was likely illegal.

Trump told House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., in a letter on Aug. 28 that he would not spend \$4.9 billion in congressionally approved foreign aid, effectively cutting the budget without going through the legislative branch.

He used what's known as a pocket rescission. That's when a president submits a request to Congress toward the end of a current budget year to not spend the approved money. The late notice means Congress cannot act on the request in the required 45-day window and the money goes unspent.

Ali said Congress would have to approve the rescission proposal for the Trump administration to withhold the money. The law is "explicit that it is congressional action — not the President's transmission of a special message — that triggers rescission of the earlier appropriations," he wrote.

The Trump administration has made deep reductions to foreign aid one of its hallmark policies, despite the relatively meager savings relative to the deficit and possible damage to America's reputation abroad as foreign populations lose access to food supplies and development programs. The administration turned to the high court after a panel of federal appellate judges declined to block Ali's ruling.

Solicitor General D. John Sauer called the ruling "an unlawful injunction that precipitates an unnecessary emergency and needless interbranch conflict." He urged the justices to immediately block it.

But lawyers for the nonprofit organizations that sued the government said it's the funding freeze that violates federal law, noting that it has shut down funding for even the most urgent lifesaving programs abroad.

"This marks the third time in this case alone that the Administration has run to the Supreme Court in a supposed emergency posture to seek relief from circumstances of its own making — this time to defend the illegal tactic of a 'pocket rescission,'" attorney Lauren Bateman of Public Citizen Litigation Group, lead counsel for the AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition plaintiffs, said in a statement. "The Administration is effectively asking the Supreme Court to bless its attempt to unlawfully accumulate power."

Justice Department lawyers told a federal judge last month that another \$6.5 billion in aid that had been subject to the freeze would be spent before the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30.

The case has been winding its way through the courts for months, and Ali said he understood that his ruling would not be the last word on the matter.

"This case raises questions of immense legal and practical importance, including whether there is any avenue to test the executive branch's decision not to spend congressionally appropriated funds," he wrote.

In August, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit threw out an earlier injunction Ali had issued to require that the money be spent. But the three-judge panel did not shut down the lawsuit.

After Trump issued his rescission notice, the plaintiffs returned to Ali's court and the judge issued the order that's now being challenged.



## Noem says roundup of Koreans at Hyundai plant in Georgia won't deter investment in the US

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said Monday she doesn't think the detention of hundreds of South Koreans in an immigration raid at a Hyundai plant in Georgia will deter investment in the United States because such tough actions mean there is no uncertainty about the Trump administration's policies.

The detention of 475 workers, more than 300 of them South Korean, in the Sept. 4 raid has caused confusion, shock and a sense of betrayal among many in the U.S.-allied nation.

"This is a great opportunity for us to make sure that all companies are reassured that when you come to the United States, you'll know what the rules of the game are," Noem said at a meeting in London of ministers from the "Five Eyes" intelligence-sharing partnership focused on border security.

"We're encouraging all companies who want to come to the United States and help our economy and employ people, that we encourage them to employ U.S. citizens and to bring people to our country that want to follow our laws and work here the right way," she told reporters.

The detained Koreans would be deported after most were detained for ignoring removal orders, while "a few" had engaged in other criminal activity and will "face the consequences," Noem said.

Newly appointed U.K. Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood welcomed Noem and ministers from Canada, Australia and New Zealand to the 18th-century headquarters of the Honourable Artillery Company for talks on countering unauthorized migration, child sexual abuse and the spread of opioids.

Mahmood, who was given the interior minister job in a shakeup of Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Cabinet on Friday, said the ministers would "agree new measures to protect our borders with our Five Eyes partners, hitting people-smugglers hard."

The far-flung countries are close allies with some common problems but also widely differ in their approaches to migration. The Trump administration's program of street raids, mass detentions and large-scale deportations of unauthorized migrants has drawn domestic and international criticism and a host of legal challenges.

Noem says tough measures are an inspiration to others

Noem said there had not been disagreements among the ministers in talks focused on sharing information on criminal gangs, using technology to disrupt their networks and speeding extradition arrangements.

"I don't think that the discussion today has covered politics at all," she said. "It is what resources do we have that we can share so we can each protect our countries better?"

Noem said that "when we put tough measures in place, the more that we can talk about that and share that is an inspiration to other countries to do the same."

She denied a plan to expand immigration raids and deploy the National Guard in Chicago, which has met with opposition from local and state authorities, was on hold.

"Nothing's on hold. Everything is full speed ahead," Noem told reporters, saying "we can run as many operations every single day as we need to, to keep America safe."

Also attending Monday's talks were Canadian Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree, Australia's Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke and Judith Collins, the attorney general and defense minister of New Zealand.

UK grapples with migrant crossings

Britain's center-left Labour government is struggling to bring down the number of migrants crossing the English Channel in small boats, some 30,000 so far this year. It faces calls from opposition parties to leave the European Convention on Human Rights in order to take tougher action.

The government says it won't do that, but may tweak the interpretation of the rights convention in British law. It has struck a deal with France to return some migrants who cross the channel and is working on similar agreements with other countries.

Mahmood said Monday that the U.K. could suspend issuing visas to people from countries that do not

agree to take back their citizens with no right to remain in Britain, though she did not name any potential countries.

"We do expect countries to play ball, play by the rules, and if one of your citizens has no right to be in our country, you do need to take them back," she said.

## **A rebel-held Congolese city uses damaged banknotes due to a cash shortage**

By JANVIER BARHAHIGA and MARK BANCHEREAU Associated Press

BUKAVU, Congo (AP) — In the city of Bukavu in eastern Congo, Alain Mukumiro argues in a small wooden hut with a shopkeeper who refuses to take his money.

Like many in the rebel-controlled city, Mukumiro is using older, hole-punched banknotes that have been patched up and put back into circulation because of a shortage of new and intact bills.

"All my money has serial numbers, but they refuse it," Mukumiro said, upset about his ordeal.

Mukumiro, a fridge technician, said his family faces yet another night without food, like many in Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu province.

The Rwanda-backed M23 rebel group captured the city in February following an escalation of fighting between the insurgents and Congolese forces in the country's mineral-rich east. Congolese authorities closed the city's banks as the conflict intensified, leading to a shortage of cash in the region.

The perforated notes appear to be old bills that the banks intended to destroy to take them out of circulation. It's unclear how they went back onto the market, but residents suspect they were stolen from bank buildings during the rebel takeover.

The older bills exchange for new ones at a rate of about 10-to-1, said Ruboneka Mirindi Innocent, one of several local residents who now work on the black market as money-changers.

"We keep these banknotes because we don't know what else to do, it's just to help each other out," he said.

The fighting earlier this year worsened what was already one of the world's largest humanitarian crises, with around 7 million people displaced and more towns and cities falling under the control of the rebels.

'A real headache'

Banks have remained closed in Bukavu and other key cities in the region, such as Goma, preventing the cities' residents from accessing cash. That has made life difficult in Bukavu, which once was booming with economic activity.

Having both intact and patched up notes in circulation at the same time has resulted in confusion and tensions between businesses and customers.

"It's a real headache because some sellers accept them and others don't," said Mukumiro, 36. The father-of-three and his family are running out of ideas to cope as businesses decline the hole-punched banknotes — the only bills he has left.

Zihahirwa Rutchababisha, who owns a repair equipment business, said he does not accept the busted banknotes to avoid any loss.

"We are also facing the same situation as them," Rutchababisha said about his customers caught up in the situation. "If I take them, I won't be able to use them to purchase supplies and that would put me at a loss."

Rutchababisha's \$120 weekly profit last year has already plummeted to \$20 a week under the M23, mainly as a result of dwindling sales.

Note-exchange solution suspended

In the rebel-held territories including Bukavu, several state employees once paid in cash say they now get paid via online transfers.

But this solves the problem for a select few. The state employees only account for about 2% of Bukavu's population of over 1.3 million. Most of the city's residents work in the informal sector and are paid in cash.

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David Kyanga, a professor of economics at Bukavu's Higher Institute of Commerce, said the only solution is for the M23-controlled cities to adopt the defective banknotes as valid means of payment in the absence of cash supplies from Congolese banking authorities.

The M23 could calm tensions by informing people that the hole-punched banknotes are valid, he said.

Last week, Patrick Busu Bwasingwi Nshombo, the M23-appointed governor of South Kivu province, asked residents to exchange their perforated notes in one of the banks the rebels opened.

But Nshombo quickly suspended the operation days later, saying the bank agents were overwhelmed by the load of banknotes brought forward to be changed.

Congo's government spokesperson in Kinshasa Patrick Muyaya said Thursday that the authorities will not send banknotes or reopen banks in rebel-held territories like Bukavu.

"No bank can open its doors in a situation of insecurity like what is happening in areas occupied by the M23," Muyaya said at a press conference.

He questioned how banks could work with M23 when it faces U.S. Treasury sanctions.

"We don't know who will save us," Mukumiro said. "The government in Kinshasa turns a blind eye, and the liberators also watch the situation without taking action."

## **Ukraine shows diplomats damage after Russia's largest aerial attack since invasion**

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Senior Ukrainian officials led 60 foreign diplomats on a tour of damaged government offices in the heart of Kyiv on Monday, a day after Russia's largest aerial attack on Ukraine since its all-out invasion began more than three years ago.

Russia's assault on Sunday involved more than 800 drones and decoys and occurred as months of U.S.-led peace efforts appear to be getting nowhere. Four people were killed, including a mother and her infant, as drones hit apartment buildings. A plume of smoke rose from the capital's main government building where top officials have their offices.

It's believed to be the first time a Russian attack has struck the 10-story, Soviet-style building, which was built almost a century ago and has an imposing half-circle facade.

During the tour given to the diplomats, Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko, Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha and Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko showed them burnt-out offices littered with charred debris.

Svyrydenko called the attack a "clear signal that Russia does not want peace and is openly mocking the diplomatic efforts of the civilized world."

Another deadline by U.S. President Donald Trump, set in August, for the Kremlin to change course or face severe consequences has passed. Trump has shrunk from imposing more sanctions on Russia despite its onslaught and has blamed both sides in the war for the ongoing fighting, even though Ukraine is defending itself from the full-scale invasion launched by its bigger neighbor on Feb. 24, 2022.

Trump said Sunday that he expected to speak with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the next couple of days and acknowledged that the conflict had proved harder to resolve than he anticipated.

Katarina Mathernova, the European Union ambassador to Ukraine who was on the Kyiv government building visit, said it took a direct hit from an Iskander ballistic missile that failed to explode.

"We were shown sizeable remnants of the actual missile. And a multitude of shrapnel coming from the cluster munition embedded in the Iskander," Mathernova wrote in a Facebook post accompanied by picture of the missile.

Firefighters limited the blaze to three floors of the building, she said.

The Russian army apparently is unable to capture significant ground on the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line, meanwhile, though it has made creeping advances across rural areas.

Ukraine and European leaders are urging Washington to step up economic sanctions on Russia, whose war economy depends largely on crude oil exports, and on countries which buy its products.

A team of European officials, led by EU sanctions envoy David O'Sullivan, will visit the U.S. Treasury on Monday to discuss various forms of economic pressure to exert on Russia, including new sanctions, a person familiar with the meeting told The Associated Press. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity to preview the meeting.

Ukraine is unlikely to get any relief soon from the overnight bombardments, as Russia tries to grind down Ukrainians' appetite for the war. Ukrainian officials and analysts have previously warned that Russia intends to escalate its barrages to include more than 1,000 drones per day before the end of the year.

## Another New Hampshire man gets a pig kidney as transplant trials are poised to start

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A self-described science nerd is the latest American to get an experimental pig kidney transplant, at a crucial point in the quest to prove if animals organs really might save human lives.

The 54-year-old New Hampshire man is faring well after his June 14 operation, doctors at Massachusetts General Hospital announced Monday.

"I really wanted to contribute to the science of it," Bill Stewart, an athletic trainer from Dover, New Hampshire, told The Associated Press.

That's not the only milestone the Mass General team is marking: A pig kidney has kept another New Hampshire man, Tim Andrews, off dialysis for a record seven months and counting. Until now, the longest that a gene-edited pig organ transplant was known to last was 130 days.

Based on lessons from the New Hampshire men and a handful of other one-off attempts, the Food and Drug Administration approved pig producer eGenesis to begin a rigorous study of kidney xenotransplants.

"Right now we have a bottleneck" in finding enough human organs, said Mass General kidney specialist Dr. Leonardo Riella, who will help lead the new clinical trial.

More than 100,000 people are on the U.S. transplant list, most who need a kidney, and thousands die waiting. As an alternative, scientists are genetically altering pigs so their organs are more humanlike, less likely to be immediately attacked and destroyed by people's immune system.

Initial experiments, two hearts and two kidneys, were short-lived and included very ill patients. Chinese researchers also recently announced a kidney xenotransplant but released little information. Then an Alabama woman whose pig kidney lasted 130 days before rejection prompted its removal, sending her back to dialysis, helped researchers shift to not-as-sick patients.

In New Hampshire, high blood pressure caused Stewart's kidneys to fail but he had no other health problems. It can take up to seven years for people with his blood type to find a matching kidney from a deceased donor, and some would-be living donors didn't qualify. After two years in dialysis, he heard about Mass General's most recent xenotransplant recipient — Andrews — and applied to be the next candidate.

"I've always been a little bit of a science nerd," Stewart said. Conscious of how new these experiments are, he sought out Andrews for advice and ultimately decided, "worst case scenario, they can always take it out."

Thrilled to no longer have his time and energy sapped by dialysis, Stewart said he's easing back into desk duties at work and visited his old dialysis clinic to "let everyone know I'm doing all right and maybe kind of give some people some hope."

Riella, the kidney specialist, said Stewart had his anti-rejection drugs adjusted to counter an early concern and that Andrews has needed similar adjustments. He said it's far too early to predict how long pig kidneys might be able to last — but it would be useful even if initially they can buy people time off dialysis until they get a matching human organ.

"A year, hopefully longer than that — that's already a huge advantage," he said.

The new eGenesis trial will provide gene-edited pig kidney transplants to 30 people age 50 or older who are on dialysis and the transplant list. Another developer of gene-edited pig organs, United Therapeutics,



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is about to start enrolling people in a similar FDA-approved study.

## **Today in History: September 9, Attica prison uprising begins**

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Sept. 9, the 252nd day of 2025. There are 113 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 9, 1971, prisoners seized control of the maximum-security Attica Correctional Facility near Buffalo, New York, taking 42 staff members hostage and demanding improvements to inmate treatment and living conditions.

Also on this date:

In 1776, the second Continental Congress formally adopted the name "United States of America," replacing the "United Colonies of North America."

In 1850, California was admitted as the 31st U.S. state.

In 1919, about 1,100 members of Boston's 1,500-member police force went on strike. The strike was broken by Massachusetts Gov. Calvin Coolidge with replacement officers.

In 1948, the People's Democratic Republic of Korea (North Korea) was declared.

In 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the first civil rights bill to pass Congress since Reconstruction, a measure primarily concerned with protecting voting rights. It also established a Civil Rights Division in the U.S. Department of Justice.

In 2022, King Charles III gave his first speech to Britain as its new monarch, vowing to carry on the "lifelong service" of his mother Queen Elizabeth II, who died a day earlier.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Dee Dee Sharp is 80. Former NFL quarterback Joe Theismann is 76. Actor Angela Cartwright is 73. Musician-producer Dave Stewart (Eurythmics) is 73. Actor Hugh Grant is 65. Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., is 62. Actor Constance Marie is 60. Actor Adam Sandler is 59. Actor Julia Sawalha (suh-WAHL'-hah) is 57. Model Rachel Hunter is 56. Actor Eric Stonestreet is 54. Actor Henry Thomas is 54. Actor Goran Visnjic (VEEZ'-nihch) is 53. Pop-jazz singer Michael Bublé (boo-BLAY') is 50. Actor Michelle Williams is 45. Actor Zoe Kazan is 42. Soccer player Luka Modrić is 40. Country singer-songwriter Hunter Hayes is 34.