

Groton Daily Independent

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Sept. 30

School Breakfast: Scones.
School Lunch: Chicken breast, baby bakers.
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.
5th Grade Girls Basketball, 4:15 p.m.
Volleyball hosts Great Plains Lutheran: ((C at 5, JV at 6, V-7:15))

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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.

Fiscal Face-Off

Congress must pass a federal funding bill by midnight tonight to avert the shutdown of all nonessential government operations. President Donald Trump met with congressional leaders yesterday in a last-minute bid to break an impasse on a short-term spending measure, but disagreements remain.

Earlier this month, the Republican-led House passed a stopgap bill to fund the government through Nov. 21, but the Senate rejected it in a 44-48 vote. Senators are set to reconsider the measure today. The House is not scheduled to return until Oct. 7. The Republican-led Senate lacks enough votes to pass the bill without Democratic support. Senate rules require 60 votes to pass a measure; Republicans hold 53 seats. Democrats are seeking concessions, including extending Affordable Care Act subsidies, reversing Medicaid cuts, and protecting previously approved state aid.

The administration has warned of mass firings if the government temporarily closes, framing the lapse in funding as a chance to permanently downsize.

Gaming Giant Buyout

Electronic Arts, the US video game giant behind "Madden NFL" and "EA Sports FC," announced yesterday it will be taken private in a \$55B all-cash deal with Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund and two American private equity firms. The transaction is set to be the largest-ever private equity-funded buyout.

The Saudi fund, alongside PE firms Silver Lake and Affinity Partners, will pay stockholders \$210 per share. Silver Lake is also among the investors poised to oversee TikTok's US operations, while Affinity Partners is managed by President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner. For Saudi Arabia, the acquisition will advance an ongoing push into the gaming industry as the kingdom seeks to diversify its oil-dependent economy. PIF already owns about 10% of EA and launched Savvy Games Group in 2021 to spearhead multibillion-dollar gaming investments.

The deal is subject to approval by the US Committee on Foreign Investment. Lawmakers previously raised concerns about Saudi investments in American golf.

AOL Dials Down

AOL ends its dial-up service today after more than 35 years. The decision, announced last month, marks the end of a service once synonymous with accessing the internet.

When the company (then called America Online) launched dial-up in 1989, it was among the first. The approach used a modem to convert computer data into audio signals, which could then travel over phone lines. The dial-up tone (see explanation) was so ubiquitous in the 1990s that it was considered part of the soundtrack of the decade, with the service inspiring Nora Ephron's hit 1998 rom-com "You've Got Mail." At its height in 1999, AOL boasted over 18 million subscribers with a market capitalization of \$222B.

Broadband internet overtook dial-up in the mid-2000s, thousands of times faster than the service's 56 kilobits per second speed. Still, roughly 163,000 Americans relied on AOL in 2023—a little over 0.1% of the US population. The company today offers email, media, and data services.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Bad Bunny tapped to headline the Super Bowl LX (Feb. 8) halftime show; the Puerto Rican artist is a three-time Grammy winner with multiple Billboard No. 1 albums.

President Donald Trump announces a 100% tariff on films produced outside the US.

"The Simpsons" theatrical film set for 2027 release.

WNBA semifinal between the Indiana Fever and Las Vegas Aces (9:30 pm ET, ESPN2) to decide who faces the Phoenix Mercury in the finals.

MLB playoffs wild card series kicks off tonight.

Science & Technology

OpenAI introduces parental controls to ChatGPT following lawsuit linking teenager's death by suicide to the chatbot.

Anthropic releases latest Claude Sonnet 4.5 model designed to excel at coding and meet business needs.

High-resolution images and biochemical experiments show for the first time how polymyxin antibiotics infiltrate E. coli cells to treat deadly bacterial infections; finding reveals why antibiotics are ineffective against dormant E. coli (More, w/photos)

Geochemists unearth over 541-million-year-old chemical fossils suggesting ancestors of modern-day sea sponges were among the first animals on Earth.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close up (S&P 500 +0.3%, Dow +0.2%, Nasdaq +0.5%).

YouTube to pay \$24.5M to settle President Donald Trump's lawsuit over his account suspension following the Jan. 6, 2021, storming of the US Capitol.

Charlie Javice sentenced to seven years in prison for defrauding JPMorgan Chase, which bought her financial aid startup, Frank, for \$175M in 2021 after she inflated user numbers by millions.

German airline Lufthansa to cut 4,000 jobs—nearly 4% of workforce—by 2030 amid declining profits; cites plans to automate administrative work with AI.

Politics & World Affairs

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu endorses President Donald Trump's 20-point postwar Gaza plan, requiring Hamas to surrender, and for Israel to eventually cede control of Gaza to the Palestinian Authority under certain conditions.

Taliban severs fiber optic connections across Afghanistan in its first nationwide internet shutdown amid morality crackdown.

Supreme Court considers whether to take up an appeal by convicted sex trafficker Ghislaine Maxwell, former partner of Jeffrey Epstein; the high court's next term begins Oct. 6 (More)

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GT on **GDILIVE**
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Volleyball at Groton
Great Plains Lutheran Panthers
Tues., Sept. 30
Varsity around 7:15 p.m.

Groton Area Tigers Groton, SD



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Anyone interested in sponsoring the
C and/or JV match with
Great Plains Lutheran's volleyball
match on GDILIVE.COM?
Text Paul at 605-397-7460
\$25 per match

Groton Area Tigers Groton, SD



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Football
Dacotah Stadium
Vs. Roncalli Cavaliers
Fri., Oct. 3, 7 p.m.

Groton Area Tigers Groton, SD



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Redfield Volleyball
Tournament
vs. Redfield
Sat., Oct. 4, 9 a.m.

Groton Area Tigers Groton, SD



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Redfield Volleyball
Tournament
vs. North Central
Sat., Oct. 4, 10 a.m.

Groton Area Tigers Groton, SD



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Redfield Volleyball
Tournament
vs. Madison
Sat., Oct. 4, Noon

Groton Area Tigers Groton, SD



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Redfield Volleyball
Tournament
vs. Timber Lake
Sat., Oct. 4, 3 p.m.

Groton Area Tigers Groton, SD



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Redfield Volleyball
Tournament
Finals
Sat., Oct. 4, 4 p.m.

Groton Area Tigers Groton, SD



Hughes County Fatal Crash

What: Mini-Van/Pedestrian fatal crash

Where: Highway 34, mile marker 231, Hughes County, SD

When: 8:43 p.m., Sunday, September 28, 2025

Driver 1: 27-year-old male from Rock Valley, IA, no injuries

Vehicle 1: 2014 Chrysler Town & Country

Pedestrian: 23-year-old female from Kennebec, SD, fatal injuries

Hughes County, S.D.- A pedestrian was struck and died from injuries sustained in a single vehicle crash Sunday evening in Hughes County, SD.

The names of the persons involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2014 Chrysler Town & Country was traveling west-bound on Highway 34 near mile marker 231 in Hughes County and struck a pedestrian. The pedestrian was pronounced deceased at the scene.

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

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

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Groton Soccer Sweeps Dakota Valley

Girls upset #1 Panthers, Boys roll to 3-0 shutout

The Groton Area soccer teams gave their fans a night to remember Monday, as the girls stunned the state's top-ranked team and the boys rolled to a decisive win on their home pitch.

Girls: Groton 1, Dakota Valley 0

The Groton Area girls pulled off a signature victory, defeating #1 Dakota Valley 1-0 in front of an energized home crowd. After a scoreless first half, the Tigers finally broke through with 8:32 left in regulation.

Taryn Traphagen delivered a perfectly placed corner kick into the box, where Sydney Locke connected for the lone goal of the night — and the Tigers' first score off a corner kick all season.

Head coach Matt Baumgartner said it was the product of persistence:

"We've been working on corners left and right this year, and Taryn has been putting the ball in the right spot. It was just about us capitalizing, and tonight Sydney finished it beautifully. To get our first corner goal against the number one team in the state is just phenomenal."

Sydney Locke led the offense with four shots, while Jerica Locke and Mia Crank had three apiece, Carly Gilbert two, and Tietz and Avery Crank one each.

Baumgartner praised his team's discipline and focus in shutting down a fast Panther attack.

"We put together a game plan to minimize their speed and opportunities going forward, and the girls executed it A-plus. The defense aced the game plan. They brought the energy, they brought the juice, and they stayed locked in for the full 80 minutes."

The coach said the team also drew inspiration from its season-long goals.

"Before the game we revisited what we set out to do this year: make it to state, have fun, teach the younger girls what's coming, and lead by example. The girls showed tonight how much they care and how much they're willing to focus on the moment. Their attention span was right here, right now — and it showed."

The win lifted Groton to 7-4 on the year and gave them a boost heading into Thursday's regular-season finale at Watertown.

"Watertown's a quality, fast team, much like Dakota Valley. It's going to be another big challenge, but this win gives us momentum to finish strong and set ourselves up for the playoffs."

Boys: Groton 3, Dakota Valley 0

The Groton boys turned in an equally impressive performance, shutting out Dakota Valley 3-0. Karson Zac led the way, converting two penalty kicks — the first with 21:50 left in the opening half, and the second with 22:52 remaining in the game. Logan Olson added the final strike with 13:22 left to seal the win.

Head coach Ryan Olson said the penalties came from his team's hustle and determination.

"We earned those penalties by putting pressure on their defense, and Carson stepped up with a lot of composure. To bury not just one, but two penalty kicks in a game shows confidence and leadership. Then Logan came through to put it out of reach."

Olson also credited his defense for locking down Dakota Valley's chances and giving the Tigers momentum heading into the postseason.

"The back line was solid. We controlled the tempo, we kept them frustrated, and we got the clean sheet. That's the kind of soccer we need heading into October."

The victory boosted Groton to 7-5-2, while Dakota Valley fell to 0-9-1.

Olson said the boys are now in great shape to host in the postseason.

"We're sitting right where we want to be. It looks like we'll host West Central in the first round here in Groton on October 7. The boys are excited, they're hungry, and they're ready to make a playoff run."

With both programs gaining momentum at the right time, the Tigers will enter the final week of the regular season full of confidence — and aiming to carry Monday's sweep into the playoffs.

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Johnson Qualifies for State Golf Tournament

Jace Johnson will advance to the State Class A Boys Golf Tournament after finishing 10th at the Region 1A Tournament on Monday. Johnson carded an 87 on the par-71 course, securing his spot among the state qualifiers.

Other golfers competing for Groton Area were Liam Johnson with a 97; Jarrett Erdmann with a 99; Haden Harder with a 109; and Jayden Schwan with a 111.

With 35 golfers in the Region 1A field, the top 19 finishers (plus ties) advanced to the State Tournament. Johnson's 10th-place finish was well inside that cutoff.

The Class A Boys State Golf Tournament is scheduled for October 6-7 in Vermillion.

| Yardage | 320 | 218 | 351 | 206 | 482 | 146 | 333 | 393 | 363 | 281 | 178 | 475 | 411 | 369 | 371 | 192 | 388 | 502 | 491 | 337 | 77 | 618 | 9 |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-----|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | Out | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | In | Total | | |
| Par | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 34 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 37 | 71 | | |
| 10. Jace Johnson | 6 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 38 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 49 | 87 | | |
| 23. Liam Johnson | 6 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 48 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 49 | 97 | | |
| 25. Jarrett Erdmann | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 49 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 8 | 50 | 99 | | |
| 28. Haden Harder | 7 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 51 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 58 | 109 | | |
| 30. Jayden Schwan | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 55 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 12 | 56 | 111 | | |

Groton Runners Compete at Olive Grove Meet

The Groton Area cross country teams competed Monday on their home course at Olive Grove Golf Course.

In the girls' varsity 5000 meters, Ryelle Gilbert was the top finisher for the Tigers, placing 6th in 21:25.66. On the boys' varsity side, Riley Shellenberger finished 12th with a time of 20:11.70.

In the girls' JV 3000 meters, Sydney Holmes crossed the line in 3rd place in 16:38.24.

The girls' middle school group turned in several solid finishes, led by Avery Huber, who won the race in 14:06.68. Teammates Ryan Hanson (4th), Taylor Fliehs (6th), Rowan Hanson (8th), and Kacie McComsey (11th) also placed in the top 15.

On the boys' JV side, Grady Zeck took 9th in 14:16.43, followed by Tate Johnson in 11th and Logan Clocksene in 16th. In the boys' middle school race, Calvin Locken finished 12th in 17:31.99.



Babcock VCSU Receives Alumni Service Award

The Alumni Service Award was adopted by the Valley City a State University Alumni Association to recognize alumni or university friends who have attained exceptional achievement in their careers and have made significant contributions to the University through dedicated service, promotion, financial support or other efforts. This year's recipient is Bruce Babcock '78 from Groton, S.D.

First Lutheran Church Votes to Begin Process of Leaving ELCA

Sioux Falls, SD — First Lutheran Church of Sioux Falls, one of the city's largest and most historic congregations, took a significant step toward leaving the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) this past Sunday. Congregation members voted 360–170 in favor of a resolution to terminate affiliation, exceeding the two-thirds threshold of 354 votes by six.

The vote follows months of study, listening sessions, and work by a Church Governance Task Force that examined theological and legal implications of continued ELCA membership. Church leaders cited concerns about recent and proposed ELCA governance changes, including limits on congregational control, property issues, and language that could affect pastors' public speech and congregational autonomy.

First Lutheran also consulted the Lutheran Congregational Support Network (LCSN), which assists churches in evaluating ELCA policies and, if needed, navigating disaffiliation.

This first vote is just the initial step in a two-vote process required by ELCA rules. A second vote, to be held at least 90 days later, must also pass with a two-thirds majority before the congregation can officially disaffiliate.

According to The Christian Post, about half a dozen South Dakota congregations have recently pursued or pledged to pursue similar exits, signaling a broader regional trend. First Lutheran has not announced whether it would join another Lutheran body or remain independent after disaffiliation.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

School superintendents urge lawmakers to tread carefully with property tax reform

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER-SEPTEMBER 29, 2025 5:15 PM

SIOUX FALLS — Lawmakers should be careful in their approach to property tax reform and education funding, superintendents from two of South Dakota's largest school districts said after a panel discussion Monday.

Jamie Nold is superintendent of the Sioux Falls School District, which has the state's highest enrollment with more than 24,000 students. Jennifer Lowery is the superintendent at Harrisburg School District, the third largest in the state with 6,000 students, and the fastest growing.

"Property taxes are complex, and you can't have simple solutions without unintended consequences to a complex mechanism," Lowery said.

The two shared their perspectives with the Downtown Sioux Falls Rotary Club, reacting to ideas generated by lawmakers on the Comprehensive Property Tax Task Force this summer.

The task force is aiming to reduce property taxes for South Dakota homeowners. It's heard ideas including state government funding cuts that could be redirected toward property tax relief and new sales taxes to replace property taxes.

One focus of the task force is to analyze education funding's connection to property taxes. Task force member and House Majority Leader Scott Odenbach, R-Spearfish, said at the last task force meeting that school funding is the number one cost driver of high property taxes because schools are "incentivized" to spend and collect more property taxes. Some task force members, including Odenbach, have expressed interest in simplifying the process by rewriting or adjusting the school funding formula.

During Monday's panel and in media interviews afterward, Lowery worried that shifting toward sales taxes and eliminating property taxes for schools would disconnect taxpayers from their communities and shift the onus of investing in school infrastructure onto the state rather than local taxpayers.

Lawmakers should continue to study the issue to identify the property tax "breaking point" for different communities, Lowery said, and seek out a more tailored approach to expand property tax relief programs for some South Dakotans, such as elderly and disabled residents.

"How much tax is too much," Lowery said, "and how much is an investment in your community and school?"

Lowery added that for the first time in two decades, Harrisburg School District is not constructing a new building. The debt for an old project is also paid off, which will decrease the levy used to determine property taxes in the district.

The change comes at the same time as a "small" 1.25% increase in annual state funding for schools and "detrimental" impacts from Gov. Larry Rhoden's recently adopted property tax relief package, Lowery said. The package sets five-year, 3% annual caps on countywide growth in owner-occupied home assessments and the amount that school capital outlay budgets can increase as a result of new construction, which means districts growing at a higher rate than 3% are losing funds.

"It's not allowing us to just take care of our general operation needs, such as our roads and parking lots and brick and mortar," Lowery said. "Growth causes expense."

Nold, of Sioux Falls, told attendees he doesn't care what source the funding for the district comes from as long as it "continues to provide the quality services that we do for our kids."

The two superintendents are monitoring the property tax discussion, as well as other legislative issues that'll affect South Dakota education during the annual legislative session that begins in January. Nold added that task force members "don't have the final say" on property tax reform.

"There will be a lot of other input that'll take place outside of what was said in that committee, so we'll see what the final outcome is," Nold said.

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.

North Dakota attorney general says legal action against South Dakota pipeline law not an option

BY: JEFF BEACH-SEPTEMBER 29, 2025 4:42 PM

North Dakota Attorney General Drew Wrigley said Monday he does not see a legal option for suing the state of South Dakota over that state's eminent domain law regarding carbon dioxide pipeline projects.

Wrigley had made comments on a Fargo-based radio station earlier this month that he felt a South Dakota law enacted earlier this year may infringe on interstate commerce and was researching possible legal action.

"Our conclusion has been that there is not, at this time, a legal avenue available to us," Wrigley told the North Dakota Monitor on Monday.

Carbon pipelines have become a hot political topic in the two states in recent years as Iowa-based company Summit Carbon Solutions seeks to build a multi-state pipeline to capture carbon emission from ethanol plants. Summit plans a network of pipelines that would send the CO2 to an underground permanent storage area in western North Dakota.

Summit has obtained pipeline route and storage permits in North Dakota. South Dakota has thus far denied Summit a route permit and the South Dakota Legislature passed a law making it harder for CO2 pipeline companies to obtain easements from landowners.

The South Dakota law, signed in March by Gov. Larry Rhoden, forbids companies such as Summit from using the legal tactic of eminent domain to force landowners to provide right-of-way for a carbon pipeline.

Wrigley called the South Dakota legislation "a bad policy choice" and a "hostile act" against North Dakota in an interview with Scott Hennen on WZFG, The Flag, based in Fargo.

South Dakota political leaders defended the legislation after Wrigley's comments circulated, saying its Legislature was standing up for the property rights of citizens.

Wrigley, who voted for Summit's CO2 sequestration permit as a member of North Dakota's Industrial Commission, did not mention Summit in the interview.

The main trunk of Summit's pipeline would run through South Dakota.

Last week, David Owen, president of the South Dakota Chamber of Commerce before retiring earlier this year, told a panel at the Greater North Dakota Chamber's annual policy summit that the idea Summit could route its pipeline through South Dakota without eminent domain was a "fantasy."

Summit recently has been trying to alter the terms of its pipeline permit in Iowa. It has obtained a permit for a small section of its route in Minnesota, which also does not allow eminent domain for CO2 pipelines. Nebraska does not have a state agency with authority over carbon pipelines.

Wrigley on Monday also highlighted North Dakota's role in siding with property owners on an eminent domain case with the U.S. Supreme Court. North Dakota and South Dakota were among 12 Republican-led states that earlier this month filed a friend-of-the-court brief taking the side of landowners as they seek to be reimbursed for legal fees after winning a court battle with an energy company.

"There's a lot of interest in pipelines and transmission lines, things that impact private property rights," Wrigley said. "I am a strong private property rights advocate."

This story was originally produced by North Dakota Monitor, which is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit news network which includes South Dakota Searchlight, and is supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity. North Dakota Monitor Deputy Editor Jeff Beach is based in the Fargo area. His interests include agriculture, renewable energy and rural issues.

Q&A: As GOP argues about economic development, new commissioner says 'choice should be to grow'

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR-SEPTEMBER 29, 2025 9:37 AM

At a moment of Republican soul-searching about the state's role in economic development, Bill Even says the choice is clear.

"The choice should be to grow, and being thoughtful about doing that," he said. "Because the alternative — and I've seen it with farms and over the course of my career — when they stop growing, when they stop innovating, when they stop buying new equipment, when they stop building things, those farms wither up and they go away. And I think as a state, we don't want that. We don't look backward for inspiration. We look forward."

South Dakota Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden appointed Even in April to lead the Governor's Office of Economic Development. Even previously led the office from 2006 to 2007.

Rhoden hasn't officially declared himself a candidate to keep his job yet, while at least three other people are already running, including U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota. The other two candidates have been vocal in their criticism of the state's economic development efforts. Gubernatorial candidate and current Speaker of the House Jon Hansen, R-Dell Rapids, has criticized Even's office and pledged to end what Hansen calls "corporate welfare," while Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden has said the state should focus on helping existing businesses thrive instead of recruiting new ones.

Even's roots run deep in the state. He is a fifth-generation family farmer from rural Humboldt, where his ancestors homesteaded in Dakota Territory in 1884. His career has included stints as state secretary of agriculture, state energy policy director and CEO of the National Pork Board.

The following interview with Even has been edited for length and clarity.

What is your economic development philosophy?

Everything grows, right? So as a farmer, we grow crops, and we grow livestock, and we as people, we also grow. We grow, not only physically, but we should also be growing in our knowledge, wisdom and faith.

I kind of bring that same mindset to the question of "what does growth look like for the state of South Dakota," knowing that we all grow, because the opposite choice is stasis, which leads to decline.

Recognizing that we're living in a competitive environment — both in the United States amongst the states, as well as globally — I want to make sure that we bring that idea that we're frugal, but not cheap. So, when we do build things, we're going to build them and do it well and do it right.

And then also I think a key point is that we're bold but not reckless. You've got to be bold enough to take a leap of faith in business and to build things and do things. You've got to take some risks. But you don't want to be reckless about it either.

I think that's where a lot of these conversations tend to land: Where's that appropriate sweet spot, so that we are looking at expansion of businesses in South Dakota, retention of businesses in South Dakota, as well as any recruitment we want to do. We want to make sure it's the right place and the right fit with the right business model.

What is your message to Republicans calling the state's incentive-based approach "corporate welfare?"

At a really high level, South Dakota is a conservative state. I reflect that as a person. And I completely understand that as a taxpayer in South Dakota.

But I think it comes back to the question of, "Do we want to grow the pie here in South Dakota or look at everything as a fixed pie?" That's this idea that everything grows. And if we want to grow our economy and grow our tax base, well, we're operating in a highly competitive environment. I don't think it would be wise for South Dakota to unilaterally disarm in this space.

Number one, it starts with the retention of businesses in the state. Number two, then you move on to focus on what can be done to help them expand and make sure that they are successful here. And then third on the list are the businesses looking around the world and saying, "You know what? South Dakota's got the business climate. It's got the accessibility of its leadership. And they're hard workers. This is a place where I would like to have my business located."

We all came here from somewhere at some point in time, and I think we also need to acknowledge the

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fact that if businesses want to come to South Dakota, we want to make sure that we are open for that opportunity.

How competitive is the recruitment and retention of businesses?

When states are looking to grow and expand, they're always looking to recruit workers and businesses into their states to help grow their economies. They know that it's not a zero-sum game and that by growing the pie, there are benefits.

I worked in sales with Pioneer Seed. For three years, I ran their commercial business here in the Upper Midwest, and had 350 people on the sales team. And you're in a competitive environment where there are other people trying to get to your customers. Our job was to be on their farm and be their provider of choice.

I kind of look at South Dakota as being in a similar position, where we're in a highly competitive environment with other states. Instead of other brands that may be selling against you, it's other states that are talking about their quality of life, their workforce, the tools they have available, like low-interest loans and the like. And so we operate in that space, whether we like it or not.

We can choose to be in the game, and be in the game smart, or we can choose to be out of the game and sit on the sidelines. Those are choices.

What do you say to those who feel economic development incentives are undermining the concept of a free market?

There are the rules of the game and the playing field. And if there were no incentives with any state, anywhere, anytime — if there were no partnership programs and no low-interest loan programs — then that would be the playing field that you were on and those are the rules you would follow.

The way that the reality works in economic development and business is that there are 50 different U.S. states, and they are all in the business of looking to attract people, attract businesses and workers. I think South Dakota is merely playing by the same rules of the game and the way the field is set up today, nationally.

I truly do appreciate the sentiment. But the reality is, on the ground, if we choose not to play and everybody else is still playing, I know how that'll turn out. Sitting at the bench on the sideline doesn't give you a chance.

Are you looking to introduce any measures to alleviate the frustrations of some Republicans regarding economic development?

I said in front of the Legislature's Appropriations Committee right after I started, "Look, the question you always ask people is are you here to help fix the problem, or are you here to affix blame?" And I'm here to help fix problems, to the extent that there are any problems. And at the end of the day, if you are doing good work with good companies, you're going to have a good track record.

For example, the default rate on the REDI [Revolving Economic Development and Initiative] loan program over 38 years is like two-tenths of 1%. It's incredibly solid. Across the 38 years of just the Future Fund alone, 1,687 grants have gone out. Over \$630 million adjusted for inflation. The successful track record here is incredible.

At the end of the day, we also know this is an election year. So, there's a lot more talk and discussion, but my intent here, as a public servant, is to fix any problems.

My pickup's got a huge windshield. It's got a small rearview mirror. You need to look in it from time to time to kind of see where you've been and what's worked and what's not, but I'm looking forward.

How do you ensure your office's return on investment is adequate?

We have a team whose job it is to track South Dakota's status nationally, track what other states are doing, what our competitors are doing, and how the competitive landscape is changing. But they also do a return on investment analysis in conjunction with our finance and loan team and the Board of Economic Development.

A lot of people call here, a lot of people talk to GOED, but only projects that are deemed viable are the ones that we bring forward. I think the public should rest assured that there's a team and there's a process in place that evaluates all of these things.

Ultimately, out in the free market, you never know what will happen. Something may change. Circum-

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stances may change. But at the end of the day, we try to tee up the ones that are best positioned for success, and that's what we put in front of the Board of Economic Development for their evaluation. And they evaluate things separately and independently from us. They're bankers and business owners in the state that are very experienced.

There is a lot of anxiety regarding economic development opportunities like wind and solar energy, data centers, small nuclear reactors. How do you think about those developments?

As a businessperson, you evaluate every opportunity on its merits when it arises, right?

We take a look at the project and say, "Is this project viable? Is this something that could fit in South Dakota? And if so, where would it be a good fit in South Dakota?" And then you take a look at the alternatives.

In many cases, if the alternative is carte blanche saying, "Well, I don't want this particular business, I don't want this type of business," the marginal tax revenue is zero, because the business was never built, the people were never here, the money was never invested. That's stasis.

Versus saying, "There's an opportunity to build something or do something, and well, let's evaluate it. What's the credibility of the business? Where might it be a good fit?" And when you do that, it should have a marginal increase to the gross domestic product in South Dakota. It brings jobs, it brings property tax revenue, and it brings sales tax revenue.

It doesn't mean that things don't cost money, that roads don't need to be built, and power lines don't need to be built, and water lines don't need to be built. But at the end of the day, you have a choice between stasis or taking a chance on something after you've had the opportunity to vet it.

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

Governors call for Congress to avert federal shutdown but differ on how

BY: JACOB FISCHLER-SEPTEMBER 29, 2025 6:31 PM

State officials from both parties urged Congress to avoid a government shutdown Monday, though Republicans were pushing harder for an extension of current funding.

Though they sometimes clash with federal directives, states depend on funding from the federal government for numerous programs. A government shutdown, which would have a wider effect than any in recent years because Congress has not passed any of the dozen annual funding bills, would delay or cancel that support.

The National Governors Association issued a statement Monday from its chair and vice chair, Oklahoma Republican Gov. Kevin Stitt and Maryland Democratic Gov. Wes Moore, calling on Congress to come together to avoid a shutdown. The bipartisan group comprising all the nation's governors generally avoids commenting on controversial issues that divide its membership.

"The consistent use of political brinksmanship when it comes to our government funding does not serve our states, territories or our people well," they wrote. "It is long past time to stop kicking the can down the road and return to the regular order of debating and passing a budget, but at this juncture, Congress has a responsibility to ensure the government remains operational. We urge federal leaders from both sides to work to set aside political games and pass a budget that reflects the values and promises states commit to every day."

While members of both parties expressed a desire to avoid a shutdown, they proposed different solutions. Republicans urged lawmakers to approve the "clean" continuing resolution to keep the government funded at current levels, while Democrats backed up their party's position in Congress to seek an extension of health insurance subsidies in a funding bill.

"Allowing a shutdown would consequently and needlessly disrupt our economies, threaten public safety,

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and undermine public confidence in our institutions," 25 Republican governors wrote in a Monday letter to congressional leaders. "Our families and communities would feel the pain with immediate effect and confusion."

Partisan differences over shutdown extend beyond the Beltway

The U.S. House, where Republicans hold a majority, passed a stopgap spending measure this month, but it failed to clear the 60-vote threshold needed to pass the U.S. Senate, as Democrats have declined to support a proposal that does not address health care costs.

At the state level, the debate has fallen along similar lines.

"Put simply, a government shutdown should not be used as political leverage to pass partisan reforms — these are not chips Congress should be bargaining with," the Republican governors wrote "The proposed budget extension is a straightforward, bipartisan solution. There are no gimmicks or partisan poison pills; it's a clean, short-term funding measure that both parties have historically supported."

Republican state attorneys general sent a similar letter, which noted a shutdown would affect state and local law enforcement.

Democrats throughout the country, though, echoed congressional messaging that Congress should extend the health care subsidies that were included in the 2010 health care law known as the Affordable Care Act, and take more steps to reduce the cost of health care. Republicans' failure to include such provisions would put blame for the shutdown on the GOP, Democrats have said.

"Instead of supporting a plan that would lower costs and stop making health care more expensive, Senate Republicans are blindly following Donald Trump and pushing the country towards a devastating government shutdown," Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York, who chairs Senate Democrats' campaign organization, said in a Sept. 19 statement.

In a press release last week, the Democratic Governors Association touted efforts by its members to call for extending subsidies.

"DGA Chair Kansas Governor Laura Kelly, Delaware Governor Matt Meyer, and New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham called on Congressional Republicans to extend critical Affordable Care Act subsidies that 22 million Americans rely on and avoid a government shutdown," the release read.

"Without action from Republicans in Congress, health care costs for hardworking Americans who rely on these subsidies will balloon by an average of over 75 percent."

Jacob covers federal policy and helps direct national coverage as deputy Washington bureau chief for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.

'We're headed to a shutdown': White House meeting ends with no deal as deadline nears

Majority Leader Thune accuses Democrats of 'hostage-taking'

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY-SEPTEMBER 29, 2025 6:10 PM

WASHINGTON — Democratic and Republican lawmakers remained far apart Monday with just over 24 hours until a federal government shutdown begins, after a White House meeting with President Donald Trump and congressional leaders meant to spur negotiations.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, House Speaker Mike Johnson, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries emerged from the White House just after 4:30 p.m. Eastern still entrenched in their positions.

Democrats are demanding promises to lower rising health care costs, and Republicans are pushing for a "clean" stopgap bill to keep the government running through mid-November.

Schumer said he believed "for the first time the president heard our objections," but "large differences" remained.

"It is our job as legislative leaders to try and solve this problem, or at least fix the problem, and we focused in the room in particular on the (Affordable Care Act) and its extension," Schumer, a New York

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Democrat, told reporters on Capitol Hill a short time later.

Vice President JD Vance, flanked by Thune, Johnson and Office of Management and Budget Director Russ Vought, separately told reporters outside the White House, "We're headed to a shutdown."

"If they want to talk about how to fix American health care policy, let's do it. The speaker would love to do it. The Senate majority leader would love to do it. Let's work on it together, but let's do it in the context of an open government that's providing essential services to the American people," Vance said.

Government funding runs out at midnight Tuesday. If no compromise is reached, hundreds of thousands of government employees would be furloughed, while many would be required to keep working without pay. States Newsroom published a guide explaining what happens.

Health care premium increases

Democrats point the finger to changes made in the recent tax and spending cuts law — commonly referred to as the "one big beautiful bill" — as the reason for rising health care costs.

The law allows enhanced premium tax credits for those who use health insurance on the government marketplace to expire as previously scheduled, by Democrats in an earlier law, at the end of 2025. Republican lawmakers also cut roughly \$1 trillion in Medicaid funding over the next decade to help account for the law's extended and new tax cuts.

"We're deadly serious about addressing the Republican-caused health care crisis, because it's a deadly serious issue for the American people — the largest cut to Medicaid in American history, hospitals, nursing homes and community-based health funding closing right now," Jeffries, also a New York Democrat, said.

Health insurance companies on the Affordable Care Act marketplace have requested or finalized price increases of at least 20% in 29 states, according to an analysis released Thursday by U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell, a Washington state Democrat.

All marketplace insurer rate increase requests are publicly available at healthcare.gov.

Schumer also pointed to the Trump administration's impoundment and GOP lawmakers' rescissions of federal funds, including those for medical research, foreign aid and public media, as another hard line for Democrats.

"We made the point clear that how could we negotiate a bipartisan agreement and then have the president unilaterally through impoundment, or the Republican Party through rescissions, and the president unilaterally through pocket rescissions, undo it all without any input," Schumer said.

GOP slams 'hostage-taking' in shutdown

Republican leaders accused Democrats of "hostage-taking," and pointed to a five-year, \$50 billion fund for rural hospitals that was tucked at the eleventh hour into the massive tax and spending cuts package to compensate for health care cuts.

Thune raised in his hand the GOP's temporary funding bill that would keep the government open until Nov. 21 and said he didn't understand why Democrats are "saying this is some huge partisan thing."

"This is something we do fairly routinely," Thune, of South Dakota, said of temporary stopgap funding bills.

"This is purely and simply hostage-taking on behalf of the Democrats," he added.

Johnson said the House had "done its job" roughly two weeks ago when all Republicans and one Democrat passed the seven-week stopgap funding bill.

"That is the record, and don't forget it," the Louisiana Republican said.

Republicans failed to gain enough Democratic votes in the Senate, which they control with 53 seats, to clear the final hurdle of 60 votes to advance legislation. Two Republican senators, Alaska's Lisa Murkowski and Kentucky's Rand Paul, also voted against the measure.

Jennifer Shutt and Shauneen Miranda contributed to this story.

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

Hundreds of thousands of federal employees face furloughs under Trump shutdown plans

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT-SEPTEMBER 29, 2025 2:22 PM

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration began posting plans over the weekend that detail how hundreds of thousands of federal workers will be furloughed during a government shutdown, while others will keep working without being paid.

The updated guidance gives the clearest picture yet into how President Donald Trump and White House budget director Russ Vought hope to reduce the size and scope of government when given increased authority over the federal workforce during a funding lapse.

A shutdown will begin Wednesday unless Republicans and Democrats in Congress reach agreement on a stopgap spending bill. Congressional leaders were set to meet Monday afternoon with Trump, but it was unclear if any agreement would result that would avert a shutdown.

The Defense Department's plan shows it would keep about 406,500 of its 741,500 civilian employees working without pay during the shutdown, with the remaining going on furlough.

The nearly 2.1 million military personnel housed within the department would continue to work throughout a shutdown but would not be paid until after it ends.

The plan says the Defense Department believes operations to secure the U.S. southern border, Middle East operations, Golden Dome for America defense system, depot maintenance, shipbuilding and critical munitions are the "highest priorities" in the event of a shutdown.

Medical and dental services, including private sector care under the TRICARE health care program, would largely continue at the Defense Department, though "(e)lective surgery and other routine/elective procedures in DoW medical and dental facilities are generally not excepted activities, unless the deferral or delay of such procedures would impact personnel readiness or deployability."

Thousands of workers to be sent home from HHS

The Health and Human Services Department plans to furlough about 32,500 of its nearly 80,000 employees during a shutdown.

The various components of HHS — including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Food and Drug Administration, and National Institutes of Health — have individual plans for a shutdown.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services plans to retain 3,311, or 53%, of its employees during a shutdown and "will maintain the staff necessary to make payments to eligible states for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)."

The CDC plans to have 4,891, or 35.88%, of its employees as well as those at the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry keep working.

The contingency plans says that "(r)esponses to urgent disease outbreaks and continuing efforts to support the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), World Trade Center (WTC) Health Program, the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA), and the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program" would continue during a shutdown.

The CDC would not be able to undertake several other activities, including providing "guidance to state and local health departments implementing programs to protect the public's health (e.g., opioid overdose prevention, HIV prevention, diabetes prevention)."

Departments with plans

Here is a list of the departments that have posted updated contingency plans in September:

- Defense Department contingency plan
- Education Department contingency plan
- Health and Human Services contingency plan
- Homeland Security Department contingency plan
- Labor Department contingency plan
- Justice Department contingency plan
- Social Security Administration contingency plan

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- Treasury Department contingency plan
- Here is a list of the departments that hadn't posted updated contingency plans as of Monday afternoon:
- Agriculture Department contingency plan
 - Commerce Department contingency plan
 - Energy Department contingency plan
 - Housing and Urban Development contingency plan
 - Interior Department contingency plan
 - State Department contingency plan
 - Transportation Department contingency plan
 - Veterans Affairs Department contingency plan

States Newsroom's Washington, D.C. Bureau reached out to the departments that didn't have contingency plans posted to ask when those might become public.

A spokesperson for the USDA wrote in an email the department "is prepared for all contingencies regarding Department operations, including critical services and supports."

A State Department spokesperson said leadership "is undergoing all necessary planning efforts to sustain critical missions."

Federal employees who work without pay will be paid after the shutdown concludes.

According to the Office of Personnel Management — the executive branch's chief human resources agency — "after the lapse in appropriations has ended, employees who were furloughed as the result of the lapse will receive retroactive pay for those furlough periods."

The Government Employee Fair Treatment Act of 2019 requires furloughed government employees to receive back pay as a result of a government shutdown.

That law does not apply to federal contractors, who face uncertainty in getting paid during a shutdown.

Ashley Murray, Ariana Figueroa, Shauneen Miranda and Jacob Fischler contributed to this report.

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.

Trump asks US Supreme Court to take birthright citizenship case

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA-SEPTEMBER 29, 2025 1:34 PM

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration has again petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court regarding birthright citizenship, this time on the merits of the administration's effort to rewrite the constitutional right afforded to children born on U.S. soil.

In two cases brought to the high court, lower courts kept in place a preliminary injunction against President Donald Trump's executive order that ended birthright citizenship.

U.S. Solicitor General D. John Sauer petitioned the court Friday to reverse those decisions. The high court case was docketed Monday. Responses from both parties are due by Oct. 29.

Sauer is asking the justices to revisit the 14th amendment, arguing that it was meant to grant citizenship to newly freed Black people after the Civil War, not for the children of immigrants with temporary visas or in the country without legal authorization.

"The mistaken view that birth on U.S. territory confers citizenship on anyone subject to the regulatory reach of U.S. law became pervasive, with destructive consequences," Sauer wrote.

Sauer did not ask the court to fast-track the petition, so if the justices decide to take up the case the earliest they would do so would be the summer of next year.

One case is from Washington state on behalf of attorneys general in that state, Arizona, Illinois and Oregon. The other case is from New Hampshire, where a national of Honduras is due to give birth in October and fears her child will not be granted U.S. citizenship.

Immigration policy stymied

Sauer said the president's executive order aimed to advance his immigration policy and that lower courts' decisions to block that agenda harms the U.S.

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"The government has a compelling interest in ensuring that American citizenship—the privilege that allows us to choose our political leaders—is granted only to those who are lawfully entitled to it. The lower court's decisions invalidated a policy of prime importance to the President and his Administration in a manner that undermines our border security," he wrote. "Those decisions confer, without lawful justification, the privilege of American citizenship on hundreds of thousands of unqualified people."

The Trump administration in March brought the issue to the high court on an emergency basis, but did not ask the justices to determine the constitutionality of birthright citizenship. Instead, the administration asked the court to address the issue of nationwide injunctions from the lower courts.

In June, the Supreme Court reined in nationwide injunctions by some lower courts that had blocked the executive order rewriting birthright citizenship.

Executive order rewrote 14th Amendment

The order Trump signed in January directs the federal government to not recognize or issue citizenship documentation to any child born after Feb. 19 to parents who are in the country without proper authorization, or if the parent is in the United States on a temporary visa and the other parent is a noncitizen or green card holder.

Under birthright citizenship, all children born in the U.S. are considered citizens, regardless of their parents' legal status, except for the children born to foreign diplomats.

The administration interprets that phrase in the 14th Amendment that confers birthright citizenship to people "subject to the jurisdiction of the United States" to exclude people in the U.S. without legal status or temporary legal status. Those people are subject to the laws of their home country, the administration argues.

The Supreme Court has ruled on birthright citizenship many times, including a 1898 decision in which the justices upheld birthright citizenship in *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*.

Ark was born in San Francisco to parents who were citizens of the Republic of China, but had visas giving them legal authority to be in the country. Ark's citizenship was not recognized when he left the U.S. and he was denied reentry due to the Chinese Exclusion Act — a racist law designed to restrict and limit nearly all immigration of Chinese nationals.

The high court ruled in Ark's case that children born in the U.S. to parents who were not citizens automatically become citizens at birth.

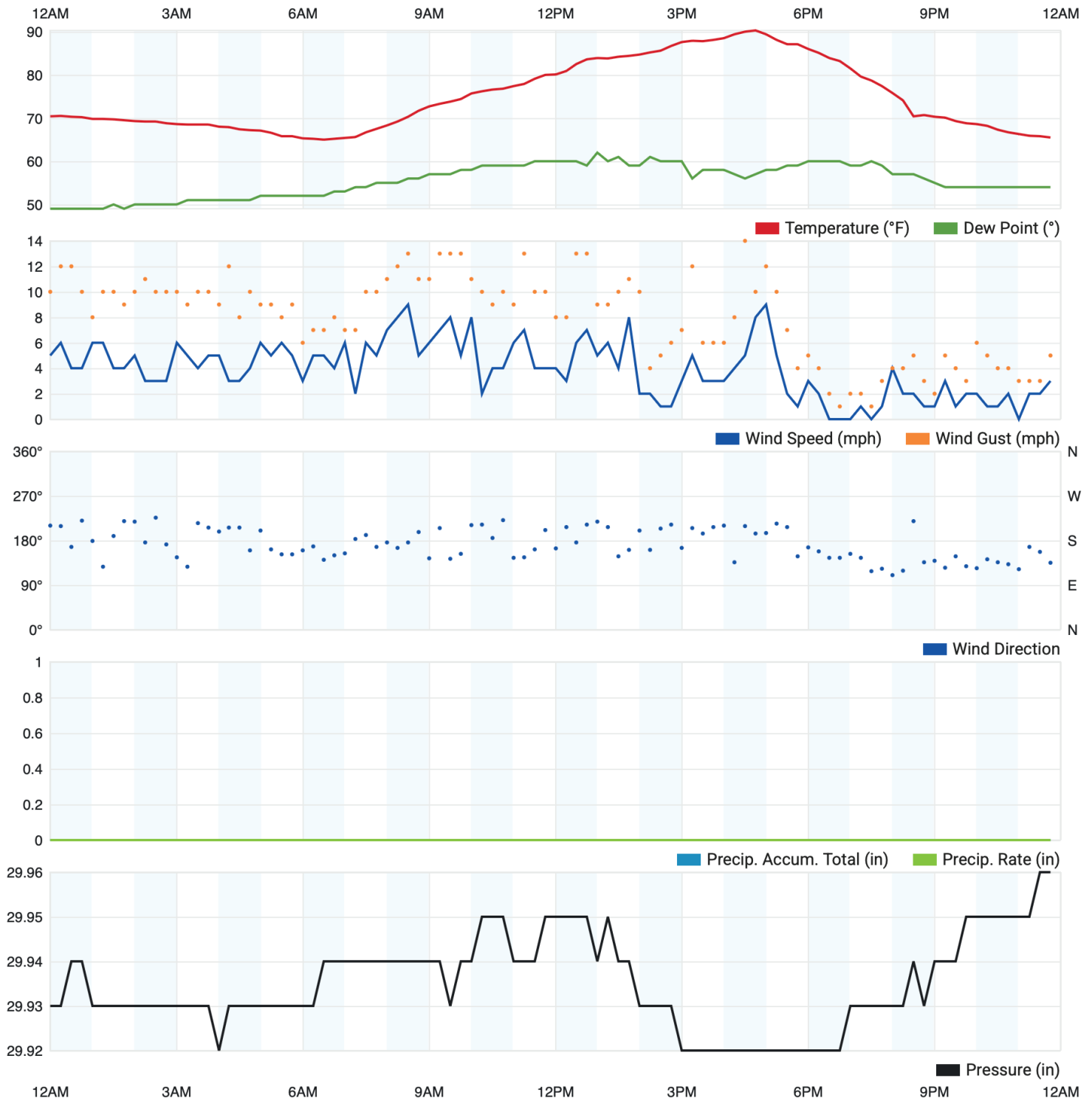
Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

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Today



High: 83 °F

Mostly Sunny
then Partly
Sunny and
Breezy

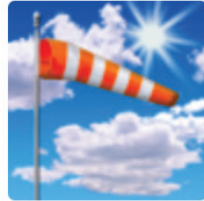
Tonight



Low: 62 °F

Partly Cloudy

Wednesday



High: 82 °F

Mostly Sunny
and Breezy

Wednesday
Night



Low: 58 °F

Mostly Clear

Thursday



High: 86 °F

Sunny



Above Normal Temperatures Continue

September 30, 2025

3:12 AM

Isolated Light Showers This Morning & Tonight

Key Messages

- Highs through Friday in the 80s
- Windy (See Chart)
- Pattern change for the weekend features moisture and cooler temperatures

| | Tue | | | | | Wed | | | | | | | | Thu | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|--|
| | 9am | 12pm | 3pm | 6pm | 9pm | 12am | 3am | 6am | 9am | 12pm | 3pm | 6pm | 9pm | 12am | 3am | 6am | 9am | 12pm | 3pm | 6pm | |
| Aberdeen | 24↓ | 29↑ | 30↑ | 29↓ | 28↓ | 28↓ | 29↑ | 31↑ | 32↑ | 32↑ | 32↑ | 25↓ | 22↓ | 21↓ | 16↓ | 13↓ | 14↑ | 17↑ | 18↑ | 15↓ | |
| Britton | 22↓ | 28↑ | 29↑ | 28↓ | 28↓ | 29↑ | 30↑ | 33↑ | 36↑ | 35↓ | 35↓ | 28↓ | 28↓ | 26↓ | 23↓ | 18↓ | 17↓ | 18↓ | 20↑ | 15↓ | |
| Chamberlain | 26↓ | 33↑ | 35↑ | 35↓ | 33↓ | 31↓ | 30↓ | 30↓ | 31↑ | 31↑ | 31↑ | 26↓ | 23↓ | 21↓ | 16↓ | 12↓ | 16↓ | 22↑ | 24↑ | 21↑ | |
| Clark | 25↓ | 30↑ | 31↑ | 29↓ | 29↓ | 28↓ | 30↑ | 32↑ | 35↑ | 36↓ | 36↑ | 30↑ | 29↑ | 29↑ | 25↑ | 22↑ | 22↑ | 22↑ | 22↑ | 17↑ | |
| Eagle Butte | 30↓ | 33↓ | 35↓ | 32↓ | 29↓ | 29↓ | 26↓ | 24↓ | 22↓ | 21↓ | 20↓ | 13↓ | 9↓ | 9↓ | 9↓ | 10↓ | 15↓ | 20↓ | 20↓ | 14↓ | |
| Eureka | 28↓ | 35↓ | 35↓ | 32↓ | 31↓ | 31↓ | 31↓ | 32↓ | 32↓ | 31↓ | 29↓ | 20↓ | 13↓ | 12↓ | 10↓ | 9↓ | 14↓ | 18↓ | 20↓ | 16↓ | |
| Gettysburg | 30↓ | 33↓ | 35↓ | 32↓ | 32↓ | 31↓ | 31↓ | 31↓ | 31↓ | 30↓ | 26↓ | 20↓ | 14↓ | 12↓ | 12↓ | 12↓ | 16↓ | 21↓ | 21↓ | 16↓ | |
| McIntosh | 33↓ | 37↓ | 38↓ | 33↓ | 32↓ | 32↓ | 31↓ | 26↓ | 24↓ | 22↓ | 20↓ | 13↓ | 9↓ | 8↓ | 7↓ | 9↓ | 15↓ | 21↓ | 21↓ | 14↓ | |
| Milbank | 16↓ | 22↓ | 23↓ | 20↓ | 17↓ | 17↓ | 17↓ | 22↓ | 26↓ | 29↓ | 29↓ | 24↓ | 23↓ | 22↓ | 21↓ | 18↓ | 20↓ | 20↓ | 20↓ | 15↓ | |
| Miller | 28↓ | 31↓ | 33↓ | 32↓ | 30↓ | 29↓ | 31↓ | 33↓ | 35↓ | 33↓ | 32↓ | 26↓ | 23↓ | 22↓ | 20↓ | 15↓ | 17↓ | 20↓ | 21↓ | 20↓ | |
| Mobridge | 29↓ | 35↓ | 35↓ | 32↓ | 32↓ | 31↓ | 31↓ | 31↓ | 30↓ | 28↓ | 24↓ | 15↓ | 9↓ | 8↓ | 7↓ | 8↓ | 14↓ | 20↓ | 21↓ | 14↓ | |
| Murdo | 30↓ | 33↓ | 35↓ | 33↓ | 32↓ | 32↓ | 31↓ | 28↓ | 28↓ | 25↓ | 24↓ | 17↓ | 13↓ | 13↓ | 13↓ | 13↓ | 16↓ | 21↓ | 23↓ | 20↓ | |
| Pierre | 26↓ | 32↓ | 33↓ | 32↓ | 31↓ | 29↓ | 26↓ | 28↓ | 28↓ | 25↓ | 24↓ | 17↓ | 12↓ | 9↓ | 8↓ | 8↓ | 13↓ | 20↓ | 21↓ | 18↓ | |
| Redfield | 26↓ | 31↓ | 33↓ | 32↓ | 28↓ | 28↓ | 28↓ | 32↓ | 35↓ | 35↓ | 35↓ | 29↓ | 24↓ | 22↓ | 18↓ | 15↓ | 17↓ | 20↓ | 21↓ | 18↓ | |
| Sisseton | 17↓ | 23↓ | 25↓ | 23↓ | 21↓ | 20↓ | 22↓ | 26↓ | 29↓ | 29↓ | 29↓ | 25↓ | 23↓ | 22↓ | 21↓ | 20↓ | 17↓ | 17↓ | 17↓ | 14↓ | |
| Watertown | 22↓ | 28↓ | 28↓ | 25↓ | 25↓ | 24↓ | 25↓ | 29↓ | 32↓ | 32↓ | 32↓ | 28↓ | 29↓ | 29↓ | 26↓ | 22↓ | 23↓ | 23↓ | 23↓ | 16↓ | |
| Webster | 23↓ | 29↓ | 29↓ | 26↓ | 28↓ | 26↓ | 29↓ | 31↓ | 33↓ | 33↓ | 33↓ | 29↓ | 28↓ | 28↓ | 24↓ | 21↓ | 21↓ | 21↓ | 21↓ | 16↓ | |
| Wheaton | 16↓ | 22↓ | 22↓ | 22↓ | 20↓ | 20↓ | 22↓ | 24↓ | 28↓ | 29↓ | 28↓ | 25↓ | 23↓ | 23↓ | 21↓ | 17↓ | 17↓ | 16↓ | 16↓ | 14↓ | |



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Mild temperatures and windy conditions continue through mid-week, with lighter winds for the latter half of the work week. Mild temperatures will come to a close this weekend, with a system that could also bring some moisture to the region.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 90 °F at 4:45 PM

Low Temp: 65 °F at 6:24 AM

Wind: 16 mph at 9:48 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 92 in 1989

Record Low: 15 in 1939

Average High: 69

Average Low: 41

Average Precip in Sept.: 1.99

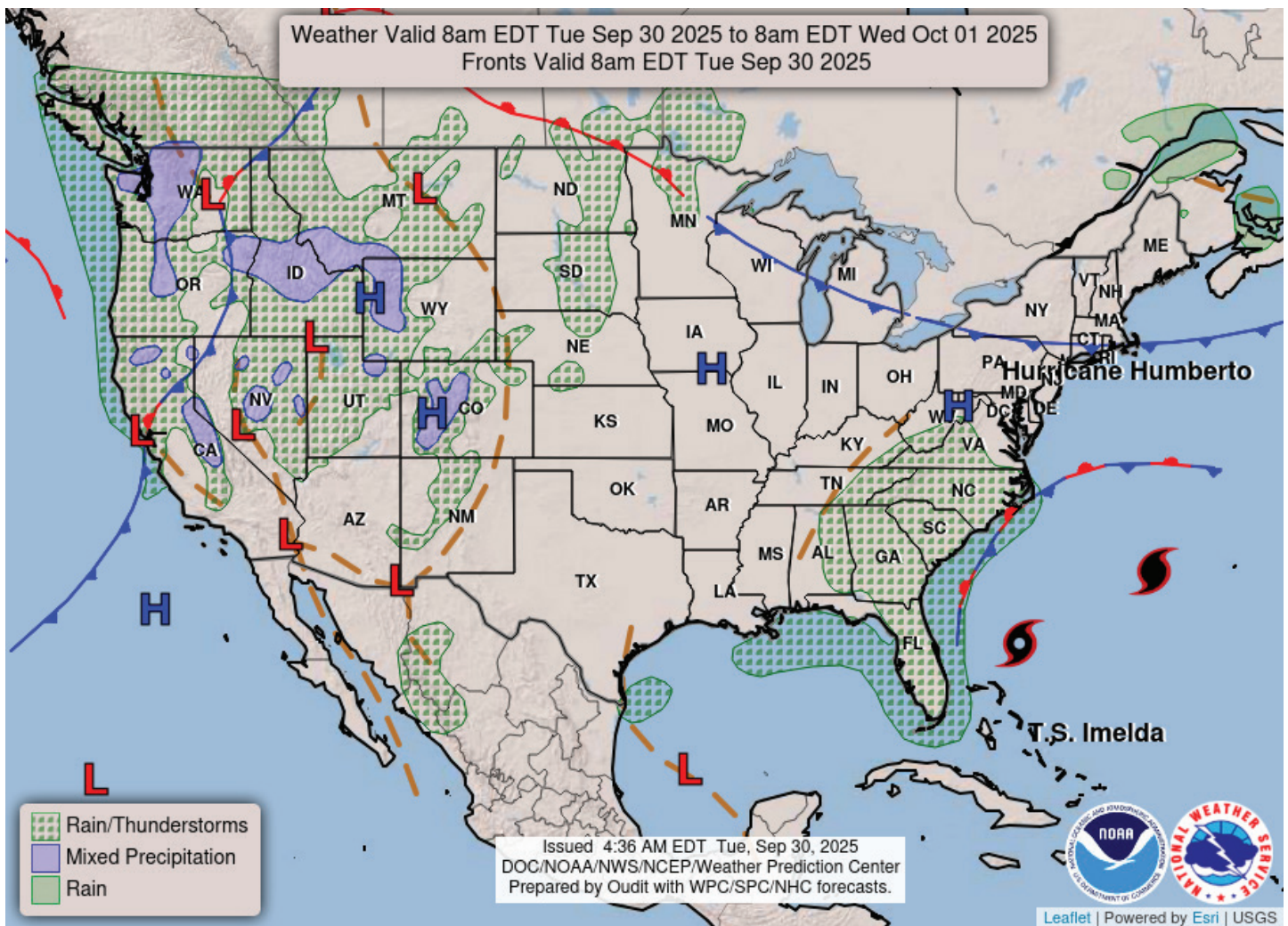
Precip to date in Sept.: 2.62

Average Precip to date: 18.33

Precip Year to Date: 22.92

Sunset Tonight: 7:14 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:30 am



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Today in Weather History

September 30, 2006: Severe to exceptional drought conditions improved dramatically by the end of the month across central and north central South Dakota as above normal rainfall was recorded for the month of September.

1896: A hurricane formed on September 22 and lasted until September 30. It formed directly over the Lesser Antilles and hit Cuba, Florida, Georgia, South and North Carolina, Virginia, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania. Its maximum sustained winds were at 130 mph. The heaviest rainfall deposited in association with the storm was 19.96 inches at Glennville, Georgia. This hurricane was responsible for an estimated 130 deaths and \$1.5 million in damage (1896 dollars).

1959 - Three tornadoes spawned by the remnants of Hurricane Gracie killed 12 persons at Ivy VA. (The Weather Channel)

1970 - A nineteen month drought in southern California came to a climax. The drought, which made brush and buildings tinder dry, set up the worst fire conditions in California history as hot Santa Anna winds sent the temperature soaring to 105 degrees at Los Angeles, and to 97 degrees at San Diego. During that last week of September whole communities of interior San Diego County were consumed by fire. Half a million acres were burned, and the fires caused fifty million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1977 - The temperature at Wichita Falls, TX, soared to 108 degrees to establish a record for September. (The Weather Channel)

1986 - Thunderstorms, which had inundated northern sections of Oklahoma with heavy rain, temporarily shifted southward producing 4 to 8 inches rains from Shawnee to Stilwell. Baseball size hail and 80 mph winds ripped through parts of southeast Oklahoma City, and thunderstorm winds caused more than half a million dollars damage at Shawnee. (Storm Data)

1987 - Afternoon thunderstorms in Michigan produced hail an inch in diameter at Pinckney, and wind gusts to 68 mph at Wyandotte. A thunderstorm in northern Indiana produced wet snow at South Bend. Seven cities in the northwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including readings of 98 degrees at Medford OR and 101 degrees at downtown Sacramento CA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

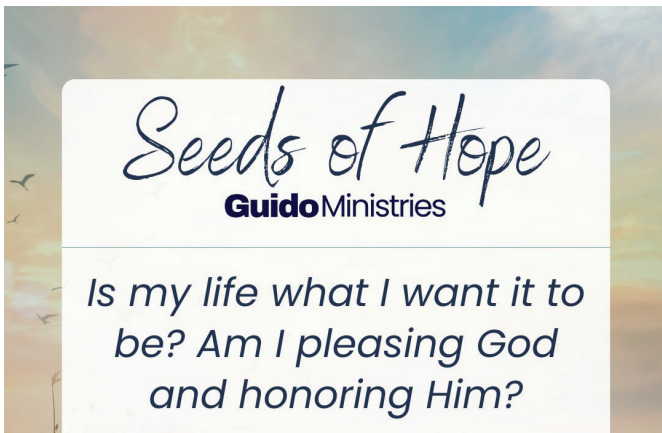
1988 - Unseasonably warm weather prevailed over Florida, and in the western U.S. The afternoon high of 94 degrees at Fort Myers FL was their tenth record high for the month. Highs of 98 degrees at Medford OR and 99 degrees at Fresno CA were records for the date, and the temperature at Borrego Springs CA soared to 108 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thirteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date, as readings soared into the upper 80s and 90s from the Northern and Central High Plains Region to Minnesota. Bismarck ND reported a record high of 95 degrees, and the temperature reached 97 degrees at Broadus MT. Afternoon thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced wind gusts to 60 mph at Wendover UT. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1992: The past month was the coldest September ever recorded in interior Alaska. Fairbanks averaged a frigid 31.7° which was 13.2° below normal and the first below freezing September ever. Beginning on the 9th and on every day for the rest of the month, a new record low was set for either low minimums or low maximums, or both. On this date, the city plunged to 3° to set a new all-time record low for September. Snowfall for the month totaled 24.4 inches which was more than three times the previous record for September.

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Ladies Bible Study was a weekly event when I was a child. My mother always wanted me to be present but with certain limitations. "Larry," she would remind me, "children are to be seen and not heard." My role, unless called upon to say something, was to sit silently, smile occasionally, and not wiggle. Impossible for a small child!

But the "be seen" always put pressure on me. I had to wear a shirt and tie, shine my shoes, and make sure my pants had a sharp crease. I still follow those rules to this day whenever I attend a meeting or appear in public. So, things worked then and still do!

Solomon wrote, "Even small children are known by their actions—so is their conduct really pure and upright?" The

word "actions" implies patterns of behavior that become second nature and last a lifetime. What is in our behavior is a reflection of our character. Or, what's on the inside will be seen on the outside.

Even in children, we see patterns that reveal what's at the center of the heart. From childhood through adulthood, our behaviors remain consistent because they get us what we want.

When we step back and ask: "Is my life what I want it to be? Am I pleasing God and honoring Him?" If the answer is no—it's time to turn to the Lord and ask for His mercy, grace, and forgiveness. We must never give up on ourselves or others.

Today's Prayer: Lord, help us to focus on how we think and then act. May we be careful in everything we say and do. May we reflect You, Your love, and Your grace in all things. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Scripture: "Even small children are known by their actions," wrote Solomon, "so is their conduct really pure and upright?" Proverbs 20:11

You never know who's carrying a heavy load. If this brought peace to your heart, take a moment to pass it on to someone who might need a little light and love today.

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: 09.26.25

4 21 27 33 49 21

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$497,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 46 Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.29.25

5 38 49 51 52 8

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$3,870,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 1 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.29.25

1 25 29 40 43 1

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 16 Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.27.25

4 9 11 21 26

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$35,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 16 Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.29.25

2 9 12 18 65 26

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 45 Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.29.25

1 3 27 60 65 16

Power Play: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$174,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 45 Mins 59 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 Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Baltic def. Dell Rapids St Mary's, 25-18, 25-21, 24-26, 25-14
Crow Creek Tribal School def. Stanley County, 21-25, 25-11, 25-14
Deuel def. Flandreau, 25-22, 25-19, 25-19
Gayville-Volin High School def. Vermillion, 25-15, 25-13, 25-21
Ipswich def. North Central, 28-26, 26-24, 25-14
Lennox def. Tea, 25-9, 25-20, 25-18
Parkston def. Tri-Valley, 25-13, 23-25, 25-23, 25-20
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Aberdeen Central, 25-16, 25-14, 25-19
South Border, N.D. def. Leola-Frederick High School, 25-9, 35-33, 25-23
Winner def. White River, 25-19, 25-10, 25-19

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

The Latest: Hamas says it will study Trump's peace plan before responding

By The Associated Press undefined

Hamas said Tuesday it will discuss U.S. President Donald Trump's peace plan for Gaza within the group and with other Palestinian factions before responding. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has already thrown his support behind it but it's unclear whether Hamas will agree and when it would give its response.

The proposal demands that Hamas effectively surrender and disarm in return for an end to fighting, humanitarian aid for Palestinians and the promise of reconstruction in Gaza — all desperately hoped for by the population in the devastated territory where the death toll in the Israel-Hamas war has topped 66,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

Meanwhile, backing and support were pouring in for the proposal from the international community. Trump and Netanyahu said after talks Monday in the White House that they had agreed on the plan.

Here's the latest:

The UN, though not involved in Trump's plan, says it's ready to step up Gaza aid

The United Nations says it's prepared to increase aid deliveries into Gaza whenever possible. Deliveries by U.N. agencies and its partners have been largely limited in recent months as Israel has allowed a separate organization — the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation — to ferry in aid.

Trump's plan says that aid entries will proceed "without interference" by Israel or Hamas "through the United Nations and its agencies, and the Red Crescent" in addition to other international institutions "not associated in any manner with either party."

Alessandra Vellucci, a U.N. Geneva spokesperson, said the world body is in contact "with the various parties about the peace efforts ... we welcome all the mediation."

Jens Laerke, a spokesman for U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said the U.N. stands "ready and prepared and capable to increase aid deliveries inside Gaza, whenever the opportunity is such that we are allowed to do so and the ... safety and security of doing so is there indeed."

China reiterates its support for a 2-state solution

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said Beijing calls "on all relevant parties" to "immediately achieve a comprehensive ceasefire in Gaza, release all detainees and alleviate the humanitarian disaster in the region as soon as possible."

China supports a two-state solution and is willing to work with the international community for a "com-

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prehensive, just, and lasting resolution of the Palestinian issue," Guo added.

Germany's chancellor says Trump's plan is 'best chance for ending the war'

Chancellor Friedrich Merz thanked Trump for his "persistent efforts" and Arab and Muslim countries in the Middle East for their "influence" with Hamas. He said Germany remained in close contact with its European neighbors and the United States on the issue.

Merz's came shortly after Merz on Tuesday hosted relatives of German hostages of Hamas. During the meeting, he said the suffering of the hostages "must end now," and called on Hamas to release all hostages, according to the statement.

Spain says a 2-state solution is the 'only possible one' for Israel and the Palestinians

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez welcomed the U.S. peace proposal and said a two-state solution was "the only possible one" for the Middle East.

"It is time for the violence to cease, for the immediate release of all the hostages to take place, and for humanitarian aid to be provided to the civilian population," Sánchez wrote on X.

Spain has been an outspoken critic of Israel's war in Gaza, with Sánchez earlier this month calling Israel's conduct a genocide.

Turkey ready to help the Gaza flotilla with humanitarian needs

Turkey's defense ministry says it's closely monitoring the eastern Mediterranean and that its ships in the region are prepared to assist "humanitarian missions if needed" — a reference to the Gaza-bound Global Sumud Flotilla seeking to break the Israeli blockade of the territory.

A day earlier, Turkish navy helped evacuate activists on board Johnny M, one of the flotilla vessels — after it began taking in water in an area off the coast of Crete, Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency reported.

Meanwhile, at least three activists working with the flotilla from Egypt were arrested in Cairo, the flotilla committee said. It's unclear where they are being detained.

Some of the activists in Egypt plan to join the group of more than 50 small vessels carrying activists from dozens of countries attempting to break Israel's blockade on Gaza.

The flotilla includes 52 mostly small vessels carrying activists from dozens of countries and a symbolic amount of humanitarian aid, mainly food and medicine, for Palestinians in Gaza.

'Hamas has no choice' but to release hostages and accept the peace plan, Macron says

French President Emmanuel Macron says he welcomes Trump's "commitment to ending the war in Gaza and securing the release of all hostages."

"I expect Israel to engage resolutely on this basis. Hamas has no choice but to immediately release all hostages and follow this plan," Macron posted on X.

"These elements must pave the way for in-depth discussions with all relevant partners to build a lasting peace in the region, based on the two-state solution," he wrote. "France stands ready to contribute. It will remain vigilant regarding the commitments of each party."

Hamas to study Trump's proposal before responding

A senior Hamas official told The Associated Press that the group's leaders will hold internal discussions as well as talks with other Palestinian factions before they respond to the Trump proposal.

The official added that Hamas received the proposal from the two Mideast mediators — Egypt and Qatar — and "will begin studying it today" with other factions.

There was no indication when Hamas could give its response to the plan. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

—By Bassem Mroue in Beirut;

India's Modi says Trump's plan is a 'viable pathway' to peace

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday welcomed Trump's announcement of a plan to end the Gaza conflict.

"It provides a viable pathway to long term and sustainable peace, security and development for the Palestinian and Israeli people, as also for the larger West Asian region," Modi said on X, hoping that all concerned will come together behind Trump's initiative and support the effort to end the conflict and secure peace.

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Arab and Muslim nations approve of Trump's proposal

The foreign ministers of Pakistan, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Egypt on Tuesday welcomed the plan and expressed confidence in Trump's ability to help chart a path to peace.

In a joint statement, the ministers said they supported Trump's plan to halt the fighting, rebuild Gaza, prevent the displacement of Palestinians, and block any annexation of the West Bank by Israel.

They also emphasized the importance of their partnership with Washington in securing peace in the region and affirmed their readiness to work constructively with the United States and other parties toward peace and stability.

Australia's leader calls on all parties in the war to help make Trump's plan a reality

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has welcomed the U.S. peace plan for Gaza and urged all parties to make it a reality without delay.

"We commend the plan's focus on Palestinian self-determination and statehood, and the Palestinian Authority taking back effective control of Gaza," Albanese said Tuesday.

"President Trump's plan reflects a clear rejection of annexation and forced displacement of Palestinians," he added. "Australia urges all parties to engage seriously with the plan and to work to bring its vision into reality without delay."

Australia last month joined Britain and Canada in formally recognizing a Palestinian state, prompting an angry response from Israel, which ruled out the prospect.

Palestinian Authority in the occupied West Bank welcomes Trump's plan

The Palestinian Authority pledged to implement reforms in order to return to Gaza and potentially clear the way for the establishment of a Palestinian state.

"The State of Palestine welcomes the sincere and determined efforts of President Donald J. Trump to end the war on Gaza and affirms its confidence in his ability to find a path toward peace," it said.

"We have affirmed our desire for a modern, democratic, and nonmilitarized Palestinian state, committed to pluralism and the peaceful transfer of power," the statement said and promised reforms, including new elections and ending a system that pays the families of militants involved in attacks on Israelis.

What's in Trump's plan

Trump's 20-point plan for ending the war and establishing a postwar Gaza governance does not require people to leave Gaza and calls for the war to end immediately if both sides accept it.

It also calls for all remaining hostages to be released by Hamas within 72 hours of Israel accepting the plan.

The plan would effectively put the territory and its more than 2 million people under international control, deploying an international security force and installing a "Board of Peace" headed by Trump and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair to oversee the administration and reconstruction.

The territory would remain surrounded by Israeli troops. Hamas would have no part in administering Gaza, and all its military infrastructure — including tunnels — would be dismantled.

The international security force would keep order and train Palestinian police to take over law enforcement. Egypt has said it is training thousands of Palestinian police to deploy to Gaza.

What to know about the Gaza peace plan agreed to by Trump and Netanyahu

By SAMY MAGDY and LEE KEATH Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — After Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threw his support behind the U.S. peace plan for Gaza, the question now is whether Hamas will agree.

Hamas faces a bitter tradeoff — the proposal demands that the militant group effectively surrender in return for uncertain gains. But if it rejects the deal, the U.S. could give Israel an even freer hand to continue its punishing campaign in the already devastated territory.

Under the proposal, the militant group would have to disarm in return for an end to fighting, humanitarian

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aid for Palestinians, and the promise of reconstruction in Gaza — all desperately hoped for by its population.

But the proposal has only a vague promise that some day, perhaps, Palestinian statehood might be possible. For the foreseeable future, Gaza and its more than 2 million Palestinians would be put under international control. An international security force would move in, and a “Board of Peace” headed by Trump and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair would oversee Gaza’s administration and reconstruction. The territory would remain surrounded by Israeli troops.

Trump and Netanyahu said they agreed on the plan Monday after talks at the White House.

The proposal includes one provision that Netanyahu and his hard-line government most strongly oppose: It says the Palestinian Authority will eventually govern Gaza. But Netanyahu is likely betting that will never come to pass. Israel also rejects any Palestinian state.

The White House issued the text on Monday of its 20-point proposal. Here is what to know.

The ceasefire

The plan calls for all hostilities to immediately end. Within 72 hours, Hamas would release all hostages it still holds, living or dead. The militants still hold 48 hostages — 20 of whom are believed by Israel to be alive.

In return, Israel would free 250 Palestinians serving life sentences in its prisons as well as 1,700 people detained from Gaza since the war began, including all women and children. Israel would also hand over the bodies of 15 Palestinians for each body of a hostage handed over.

Troop withdrawal

The plan calls for an Israeli troop withdrawal. But it would only take place after Hamas disarms and as the international security force deploys to fill in areas that Israeli forces leave.

Israel would also maintain a “security perimeter presence” — a vague phrasing that could mean it would keep a buffer zone inside Gaza.

Those terms could bring pushback from Hamas, which has said it will not release all its hostages unless it receives a “clear declaration” the war will end and Israel will leave Gaza completely.

The fate of Hamas and postwar Gaza

Hamas would have no part in administering Gaza, and all its military infrastructure — including tunnels — would be dismantled. Members who pledge to live peacefully would be granted amnesty, and those who wish to leave Gaza would be allowed to.

The international security force would ensure Hamas’ disarmament and keep order. It would also train Palestinian police to take over law enforcement. Mediator Egypt has said it is training thousands of Palestinian police to deploy to Gaza.

Meanwhile, humanitarian aid would be allowed to flow into Gaza in large amounts and would be run by “neutral international bodies,” including the U.N. and the Red Crescent. It is unclear whether the Gaza Humanitarian Fund, a controversial alternative food distribution system backed by Israel and the U.S., would continue to operate.

The plan also specifies that Palestinians will not be expelled from Gaza, and that there will be an international effort to rebuild the territory for Palestinians.

In normal cases, that might not need spelling out. But Palestinians have feared mass expulsion after both Trump and the Israeli government spoke of pushing out Gaza’s population — ostensibly in a “voluntary” manner — and rebuilding the strip as a sort of international real estate venture.

The interim administration of Palestinian technocrats would run day-to-day affairs in Gaza. But it would be overseen by the “Board of Peace.” The board would also supervise funding of reconstruction, a role that could give it enormous power over governing Gaza since that is the biggest task facing the territory, almost completely destroyed by Israel’s campaign.

The Palestinian Authority and statehood

During this interim administration, the Palestinian Authority would undergo reforms so it can eventually take over governing Gaza.

The plan has only a slight nod to the issue of statehood. It says that if the Palestinian Authority reforms

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sufficiently and Gaza redevelopment advances, "the conditions may finally be in place for a credible pathway to Palestinian self-determination and statehood."

The response so far

Qatar's prime minister and Egypt's intelligence chief shared the 20-point plan Monday evening with Hamas negotiators. The Hamas negotiators said they would review it in good faith and provide a response.

Hamas has so far rejected disarmament, saying it has a right to resist until Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands ends.

Arab countries appear to back the outline. The governments of Egypt, Jordan, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates issued a joint statement applauding Trump's proposal.

Netanyahu could face resistance from within his own ultra-nationalist coalition allies.

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who is part of Netanyahu's security Cabinet, published a list of his "red lines" on X on Monday. Top among them, he wrote, any deal must not allow involvement of the Palestinian Authority in Gaza or allow a Palestinian state. Smotrich is one of the more vocal members of the right-wing bloc of Netanyahu's coalition who have previously threatened to leave the government if Netanyahu halts the war in Gaza.

Netanyahu may see a loophole. The proposal makes PA involvement in Gaza conditional on it completing internal reforms, which it pledged to do, saying it welcomed Trump's plan to end the war.

But in his comments alongside Trump on Monday, Netanyahu expressed his belief it will never successfully do so.

Former aide to German far-right lawmaker in the European Parliament is convicted of spying for China

BERLIN (AP) — A man who worked for a prominent German far-right lawmaker in the European Parliament was convicted Tuesday of spying for China for more than four years, according to German news agency dpa.

Jian Guo, a German citizen, was accused of working for a Chinese intelligence service and of repeatedly passing on information on negotiations and decisions in the EU Parliament between September 2019 and April 2024, when he was arrested.

He was sentenced Tuesday to four years and nine months in prison, dpa reported. He denied wrongdoing during a court hearing last week.

China's foreign ministry last year said reports in Europe about Chinese spying are all "hyping up with an aim to smear and suppress China."

Guo also snooped on Chinese dissidents in Germany and gathered information on prominent politicians with the far-right Alternative for Germany, or AfD.

The federal prosecutor has named him as Jian G., in line with the country's privacy rules. His former boss, far-right lawmaker Maximilian Krah, previously identified him.

Krah was a witness in Guo's trial and said he did not have any knowledge of his former aide's activities, dpa reported.

Earlier this month, Germany's parliament lifted Krah's immunity in connection with allegations that he also has had ties to China and was involved in corruption and spying scandals. Lifting his immunity as a lawmaker was a necessary step for authorities to prosecute him. Authorities searched his home and offices under a court order.

Krah denies wrongdoing, and says the allegations are politically motivated.

AfD last year banned Krah from EU elections weeks after he told an Italian newspaper that not all members of the Nazis' elite SS unit, which was involved in major war crimes during World War II, were war criminals.

Still, he won a seat in the German parliament earlier this year as part of the party's historic gains in the Bundestag during the national election.

AfD's second-place finish cemented the party's status as a factor that other politicians can't ignore, but

mainstream German parties have upheld the so-called "firewall" by refusing to work with it.

Rescuers run oxygen to survivors in Indonesia school building collapse that buried dozens

By TRISNADI and NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

SIDOARJO, Indonesia (AP) — Rescuers ran oxygen and water to students trapped in the unstable concrete rubble of a collapsed school building in Indonesia, as they desperately worked to free survivors Tuesday a day after the structure fell. At least three students were killed, more than 100 were injured and dozens were presumed buried in the rubble.

Rescue workers, police and soldiers digging through the night pulled out eight weak and injured survivors more than eight hours after the collapse at Al Khoziny Islamic Boarding School in the East Java town of Sidoarjo. Rescuers saw additional bodies, indicating the death toll was likely to rise.

Rescue efforts were temporarily suspended at 10:15 a.m. as the collapsed concrete shook suddenly. People immediately ran for their lives, fearing another collapse, as rescuers urged everyone in the area to avoid the building, including more than a dozens of ambulances that parked near the scene. The work resumed around 1:45 p.m.

The students are mostly boys in grades seven to 11, between ages 12 and 18.

Grieving relatives

Families anxiously awaited news at hospitals or near the collapsed building. A notice posted at the school complex Tuesday morning listed 65 students as missing. National Disaster Management Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari revised the number of people presumed buried in the rubble to 38 by midday.

"Oh my God... my son is still buried, oh my God please help!" a mother cried hysterically upon seeing her child's name on the board, followed by the cries of other parents whose relatives had suffered a similar fate.

"Please, sir, please find my child immediately," cried a father, holding the hand of one of the rescue team members.

Heavy slabs of concrete and other rubble and unstable parts of the building hampered search and rescue efforts, said Nanang Sigit, a search and rescue officer who lead the effort. Heavy equipment was available but not being used due to concerns that it could cause further collapse.

"We have been running oxygen and water to those still trapped under the debris and keeping them alive while we work hard to get them out," Sigit said. He added that rescuers saw several bodies under the rubble but were focused on saving those who were still alive.

Several hundred rescuers were involved in the effort and had equipment for breathing, extrication, medical evacuation and other support tools.

A century-old Islamic boarding school

Islamic boarding schools are commonly called as "pesantren" in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation, and its students who are called as "santri." Unlike students in public schools, the santri board in dormitories, because apart from studying formal education, they also study Islamic religious knowledge intensively, and they return home only during school holidays.

Government data showed more than 42,400 pesantren listed in 2024 in Indonesia with 3,4 million santris and 370,000 Islamic teachers and preachers.

Al Khoziny is named after K.H. Raden Khozin Khoiruddi, an influential figure in East Java, and several prominent Islamic scholars have studied at the school. The community often calls it the Buduran Islamic Boarding School, referring to its location in Buduran village of Sidoarjo district.

It's the oldest among 7,300 pesantrens in the province. The first students were recorded as studying in 1920, before the boarding school was officially established in 1927.

More than 2,000 santris study at al Khoziny, ranging from junior high school level to college.

The casualties and injuries

The students had been performing afternoon prayers in a building that was undergoing an unauthorized expansion when it suddenly collapsed on top of them, provincial police spokesperson Jules Abraham

Abast said.

Residents, teachers and administrators assisted injured students, many with head injuries and broken bones. Female students were praying in another part of the building and managed to escape, survivors said.

One male student, a 13-year-old boy, was found dead on Monday and 102 students and teachers were injured and taken to hospitals, some of them in critical condition, Muhari said. By Tuesday, 75 students and two teachers were still hospitalized, he said.

On Tuesday, two male students died from their injuries while being treated in Notopuro General Hospital, the hospital director Atok Irawan said. The two were among 11 students who initially were pulled out alive from the rubble by rescuers, he said.

At least one student had to have his arm amputated and two others underwent surgery for head injuries, Irawan said.

Authorities were investigating the cause of the collapse. Abast said the old prayer hall was two stories but two more were being added without a permit.

"The old building's foundation was apparently unable to support two floors of concrete and collapsed during the pouring process," Abast said.

FBI boss Kash Patel gave New Zealand officials 3D-printed guns illegal to possess under local laws

By CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-McLAY and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — On a visit to New Zealand, FBI Director Kash Patel gave the country's police and spy bosses gifts of inoperable pistols that were illegal to possess under local gun laws and had to be destroyed, New Zealand law enforcement agencies told The Associated Press.

The plastic 3D-printed replica pistols formed part of display stands Patel presented to at least three senior New Zealand security officials in July. Patel, the most senior Trump administration official to visit the country so far, was in Wellington to open the FBI's first standalone office in New Zealand.

Pistols are tightly restricted weapons under New Zealand law and possessing one requires an additional permit beyond a regular gun license. Law enforcement agencies didn't specify whether the officials who met with Patel held such permits, but they couldn't have legally kept the gifts if they didn't.

It wasn't clear what permissions Patel had sought to bring the weapons into the country. A spokesperson for Patel told the AP Tuesday that the FBI would not comment.

The pistols were surrendered and destroyed

Inoperable weapons are treated as though they're operable in New Zealand if modifications could make them workable again. The pistols were judged by gun regulators to be potentially operable and were destroyed, New Zealand's Police Commissioner Richard Chambers told AP in a statement Tuesday.

Chambers didn't specify how the weapons had been rendered inoperable before Patel gifted them. Usually this means the temporary disabling of the gun's firing mechanism.

Three of New Zealand's most powerful law enforcement figures said they received the gifts at meetings July 31. Chambers was one recipient, and the other two were Andrew Hampton, Director-General of the country's human intelligence agency NZSIS, and Andrew Clark, Director-General of the technical intelligence agency GCSB, according to a joint statement from their departments.

A spokesperson for the spy agencies described the gift as "a challenge coin display stand" that included the 3D-printed inoperable weapon "as part of the design." The officials sought advice on the gifts the next day from the regulator that enforces New Zealand's gun laws, Chambers said.

When the weapons were examined, it was discovered they were potentially operable.

"To ensure compliance with firearms laws, I instructed Police to retain and destroy them," Chambers said.

James Davidson, a former FBI agent who is now president of the FBI Integrity Project, a nonprofit that seeks to safeguard the bureau from undue partisan influence, has criticized Patel's appointment.

But Davidson said the gift of the replica pistols appeared "a genuine gesture" from Patel and their destruction was "quite frankly, an overreaction by the NZSIS, which could have simply rendered the replica

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inoperable," he said.

New Zealand has strong gun controls

3D-printed weapons are treated the same as other guns in New Zealand. The country bolstered its gun restrictions following a 2019 white supremacist attack on two mosques in the city of Christchurch, when 51 Muslim worshipers were shot dead by an Australian man who had amassed a cache of semiautomatic weapons legally.

The guns Patel gifted to the law enforcement chiefs were not semiautomatic models now prohibited after the Christchurch massacre. But there are a suite of other reasons New Zealanders might not legally be able to possess certain weapons, including the specific permits required for pistols.

New Zealand doesn't have a passionate culture of gun ownership and the weapons have been viewed more dimly since the mass shooting. Gun ownership is enshrined in New Zealand law as a privilege, not a right.

The country isn't short on guns; they're common in rural areas for pest control. But violent gun crime is rare and many urban residents might never have even seen a firearm in person.

It's uncommon even to see police officers carrying weapons. Front-line officers aren't usually armed on patrol and leave their weapons locked in their vehicles.

Patel caused discomfort with China remarks

News of Patel's visit caused ripples in New Zealand at the time because the opening of the new FBI field office in Wellington wasn't divulged to news outlets or the public until it had already happened. An FBI statement in July said the move aligned New Zealand with FBI missions in other Five Eyes intelligence-sharing nations, which also include the United States, Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom.

The office would provide a local mission for FBI staff who have operated with oversight from Canberra, Australia, since 2017, the statement said.

Public records disclosed to local news outlets this month revealed that Patel met with and dined with a more than a dozen senior public servants and elected officials, including Cabinet ministers, during his visit. It wasn't immediately clear Tuesday how many officials received the pistols as gifts.

Patel had already provoked mild diplomatic discomfort in Wellington by suggesting in remarks supplied to reporters that the new FBI office aimed to counter China's influence in the South Pacific Ocean, where New Zealand is located. The comments prompted polite dismissal from officials in Wellington, who said the bolstered FBI presence was primarily to collaborate on child exploitation and drug smuggling crimes. Beijing decried Patel's remarks.

Prosecutors seek over 11 years in prison for Sean 'Diddy' Combs

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Prosecutors urged a New York federal judge Tuesday to send Sean "Diddy" Combs to prison for over 11 years following his conviction on prostitution-related charges, citing one of his accusers who said she lives in fear of the music mogul's release from detention.

"His crimes of conviction are serious and have warranted sentences over ten years in multiple cases for defendants who, like Sean Combs, engaged in violence and put others in fear," they wrote in a presentence submission requesting at least 11 years and three months in prison.

They filed their sentencing recommendation shortly after midnight, including letters from some of his accusers describing how his violence and demands had impacted their lives.

They called Combs "unrepentant" and said Combs had conceded his acts of violence and abuse throughout his trial but "incredibly, ... he now argues that his victims should shoulder the blame."

Combs, 55, has remained jailed since his July conviction on charges related to arranging male sex workers to travel to hotels or residences where he directed them to have sex with his girlfriends.

Combs faces sentencing Friday

The elaborate dayslong, drug-fueled sexual events were often filmed by Combs. Defense attorneys have asked that he be sentenced to no more than 14 months in prison. Sentencing is set for Friday.

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In July, Combs was convicted of two charges for violating the Mann Act, which outlaws interstate commerce related to prostitution, for arranging the paid sexual encounters between his girlfriends and male sex workers. Each count carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

The same jury acquitted the Bad Boy Records founder of racketeering conspiracy and sex trafficking charges that could have resulted in a life sentence.

Last week, the defense submitted its presentence arguments, saying Combs has suffered enough during his nearly 13 months behind bars that he should be freed soon.

They wrote that he became a changed man in a Brooklyn federal lockup, where he has been under constant suicide watch and learned to react calmly to threats rather than violently, even when a fellow inmate confronted him with a shiv.

They said Combs has realized that his overuse of drugs, including some prescribed by doctors, had contributed to violent acts he participated in.

Prosecutors say Combs is not the victim

Prosecutors said Combs was now trying to cast himself as a victim.

"He is not the victim," they wrote. "The Court should focus on the very real effects that the defendant's conduct had on the lives of the actual victims, his victims."

At trial, two of Combs' former girlfriends testified that they felt forced to participate in the drug-fueled sex marathons with male sex workers as Combs watched and sometimes filmed.

R&B singer Casandra "Cassie" Ventura described being beaten by Combs when she displeased him during their decadelong relationship. Another ex-girlfriend, testifying under the pseudonym "Jane," said she felt pressured to perform sexually with male sex workers. She testified that an enraged Combs once put her in a chokehold and punched her in the face.

In a letter accompanying the prosecutors' submission, Cassie wrote that she testified while nine months pregnant during Combs' trial "in front of a packed courtroom about the most traumatic and horrifying chapter in my life. I testified that from age nineteen, Sean Combs used violence, threats, substances, and control over my career to trap me in over a decade of abuse."

Cassie says she still suffers from nightmares

Cassie wrote that Combs controlled her like a puppet.

"These events were degrading and disgusting, leaving me with infections, illnesses, and days of physical and emotional exhaustion before he demanded it all again. Sex acts became my full-time job, used as the only way to stay in his good graces," she said.

Cassie said she still has nightmares and flashbacks on an everyday basis and requires psychological care to cope.

"My worries that Sean Combs or his associates will come after me and my family is my reality. I have in fact moved my family out of the New York area and am keeping as private and quiet as I possibly can because I am so scared that if he walks free, his first actions will be swift retribution towards me and others who spoke up about his abuse at trial," Cassie said.

The AP does not typically name people who say they have been sexually abused unless they come forward publicly, as Cassie has.

In an indictment, prosecutors asserted that Combs used his fame, wealth and violence to force and manipulate Cassie and Jane, now-ex-girlfriends, into the sexual performances he called "freak-offs" or "hotel nights."

After Combs was convicted, Judge Arun Subramanian immediately refused a defense request to grant him bail.

He denied it again in August as he rejected Combs' \$50 million bail proposal, saying the hip hop impresario hadn't proven that he did not pose a flight risk or danger, nor shown an "exceptional circumstance" after a conviction that otherwise requires detention.

Illinois governor says troops could be deployed to Chicago as immigration agents patrol downtown

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The sight of armed, camouflaged and masked Border Patrol agents making arrests near famous downtown Chicago landmarks has amplified concerns about the Trump administration's growing federal intervention across U.S. cities.

As Illinois leaders warned Monday of a National Guard deployment, residents in the nation's third-largest city met a brazen weekend escalation of immigration enforcement tactics with anger, fear and fresh claims of discrimination.

"It looks un-American," said Chicago Alderman Brandon Reilly, who represents downtown on the City Council. He deemed the Sunday display a "photo opp" for President Donald Trump, echoing other leaders.

Memphis, Tennessee, and Portland, Oregon, also braced for a federal law enforcement surge. Meanwhile, Louisiana's governor asked for a National Guard deployment to New Orleans and other cities.

Trump has called the expansion of federal immigration agents and National Guard troops into American cities necessary, blasting Democrats for crime and lax immigration policies. Following a crime crackdown in the District of Columbia and immigration enforcement in Los Angeles, he's referred to Portland as "war-ravaged" and threatened apocalyptic force in Chicago.

"Whether it takes place here in the city or the suburbs, it's all the same to us," Border Patrol agent Gregory Bovino said in Chicago.

Attorney General Pam Bondi has issued a memo that also directs component agencies within the Justice Department, including the FBI, to help protect U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities, including in Chicago and Portland.

Here's a snapshot of where things stand with federal law enforcement activity in Chicago, Portland, Memphis and New Orleans.

Chicago raises alarm about racial profiling

Many Chicagoans were already uneasy after an immigration crackdown began earlier this month. Agents have targeted immigrant-heavy and largely Latino areas.

Trump has waffled on sending the military, but Democratic Gov. JB Pritzker said Monday it appeared the federal government would deploy 100 troops. Pritzker said the Illinois National Guard received word that the Department of Homeland Security sent a memo to the Defense Department requesting troops to protect ICE personnel and facilities.

An immigration processing center outside Chicago has been the site of frequent protests and aggressive tactics by federal agents.

The enforcement recently escalated, with agents using boats on the Chicago River and marching Sunday on Michigan Avenue and in upscale neighborhoods.

Activists and elected leaders are concerned about discriminatory stops, particularly after the U.S. Supreme Court lifted restrictions on roving patrols in LA. The court cleared the way for immigration agents to stop people based on race, language, job or location.

"ICE is running around the Loop, harassing people for not being white," Pritzker said, describing the city's core business district.

Activists said a Latino family of four was led away by federal agents Sunday near the popular "Cloud Gate" sculpture, commonly called "The Bean." Construction workers and bicyclists were also targeted.

"The downtown operation of being racially profiled and kidnapped by immigration in broad daylight represents a major escalation by the Trump administration," said Veronica Castro with Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.

Bovino told The Associated Press that agents will go after "anyone who is here illegally," an approach that fell under immigration authority, known as Title 8. He told the Chicago Sun-Times that a person's appearance goes into the calculation.

"It would be agent experience, intelligence that indicates there's illegal aliens in a particular place or loca-

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tion," he told the newspaper. "Then, obviously, the particular characteristics of an individual, how they look."

DHS did not return messages Monday.

Chicagoans trail Border Patrol

As Border Patrol agents marched near downtown, a few onlookers nodded in approval and shouted praise while a trail of activists and others urged agents to leave.

Shirley Zuniga was celebrating her 24th birthday when she saw agents. Still wearing a pink birthday sash, she left brunch to follow them.

Zuniga, among the first in her family of Honduran immigrants to be born in the United States, said she forgot all about her birthday plans as she yelled at the agents to go home.

"This is much more important to me," she said as she grew emotional. "I'm celebrating my people."

Portland goes to court

In Oregon, Democratic Attorney General Dan Rayfield filed a motion in federal court Monday seeking to temporarily block the Trump administration from deploying the National Guard.

The motion is part of a lawsuit Rayfield filed Sunday, after state leaders received a Defense Department memo that said 200 members of the state's National Guard will be placed under federal control for 60 days to "protect Federal property, at locations where protests against these functions are occurring or are likely to occur."

Portland Mayor Keith Wilson and Democratic Gov. Tina Kotek are among local leaders who object to the deployment.

"Putting our own military on our streets is an abuse of power and a disservice to our communities and our service members," Rayfield said in a statement Monday.

The ICE building outside of Portland's downtown has been the site of nightly protests that peaked in June, with smaller clashes occurring since then.

A larger crowd demonstrated at the building Sunday. Two people were arrested for assault, according to authorities. That followed a peaceful march earlier in the day that drew thousands to the city's downtown and saw no arrests, police said.

Some residents are already frustrated.

The building manager of the affordable housing complex adjacent to the ICE building said "the impacts of violent tactics, including tear gas and late-night altercations, are traumatizing for residents," including the veterans who live there.

"Sending federal troops will only escalate the situation. The last thing we need is an escalation," Reach Community Development said in statement.

Meanwhile, federal agents on Monday searched a home associated with someone who allegedly aimed a laser at a U.S. Customs and Border Protection helicopter as it flew over Portland on Saturday evening, the FBI said. Four people, who were found to be in the country illegally, were detained and placed under the custody of ICE, according to the FBI, which did not specify the charges they face.

Memphis residents worry

Memphis was in wait-and-see mode Monday, the first day of a planned federal law enforcement surge ordered by Trump to fight crime. There were no immediate reports of large-scale federal law enforcement operations.

Still some residents, including Latinos, expressed concerns that immigration agents will detain people regardless of immigration status.

"We know the presence of the National Guard will lead to our neighbors being afraid to seek help when they need medical care, need to report crimes, or require social services, because of this military presence," said Sandra Pita, a community organizer.

The city has experienced high numbers of violent crimes such as carjackings and homicides in recent years, but both Democratic and Republican officials have noted that the majority-Black city is seeing decreases this year in some categories.

Louisiana's governor asks for National Guard

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In a letter sent to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, Landry also praised the president's decision to send troops to Washington and Memphis.

Landry said there has been "elevated violent crime rates" in Shreveport, Baton Rouge and New Orleans as well as shortages in local law enforcement.

But crime in some of the state's biggest cities has actually decreased recently, with New Orleans, seeing a particularly steep drop in 2025 that has put it on pace to have its lowest number of killings in more than five decades.

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Trump and Hegseth set to meet with hundreds of military leaders as speculation grows

By BEN FINLEY and KONSTANTIN TOROPIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth plan to address hundreds of U.S. military officials in person Tuesday after the Pentagon suddenly asked top commanders from around the world to convene at a base in Virginia without publicly revealing the reason.

The gathering at the Marine Corps base in Quantico near Washington has fueled intense speculation about the purpose and value of summoning such a large number of generals and admirals to one place, with many stationed in more than a dozen countries that include conflict zones in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Meetings between top military brass and civilian leaders are nothing new. But experts say the scale of the gathering, the haste with which it was called and the mystery surrounding it are particularly unusual.

"The notion that the secretary is going to talk to the generals and give them his vision for running the department — and maybe also for strategy and organization — that's perfectly reasonable," said Mark Cancian, a senior adviser with the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a retired Marine colonel.

"What's mystifying is why it's on such short notice, why it's in person and what else might be involved," he said.

The uncertainty comes as the country faces a potential government shutdown this week and as Hegseth, who has hammered home a focus on lethality and what he calls the "warrior ethos," has taken several unusual and unexplained actions, including ordering cuts to the number of general officers and firings of other top military leaders.

News about the abruptly scheduled meeting broke Thursday, and top Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell confirmed it but declined to release further details.

Trump didn't seem to know about it when he was asked by reporters during an Oval Office appearance later that day. The president said he'll "be there if they want me, but why is that such a big deal?"

A White House official said Sunday that Trump also will speak at the gathering. The president told NBC News that he and Hegseth would be "talking about how well we're doing militarily, talking about being in great shape, talking about a lot of good, positive things."

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Vice President JD Vance argued last week that the media had turned it into a “big story” and that it was “not particularly unusual that generals who report to” Hegseth are coming to speak with him.

Italian Adm. Giuseppe Cavo Dragone, the chair of NATO’s Military Committee, described the meeting as unusual and told reporters Saturday after a NATO meeting in Riga, Latvia, that “as far as my 49 years of service, I’ve never seen that before.”

The lack of detailed information has prompted many in Washington to speculate about the meeting’s focus. Whatever it is, Michael O’Hanlon of the Brookings Institution said he suspects there will be a dramatic element that may be “as important as any substantive element.”

“Just the sheer scale makes you wonder what kind of meaningful interaction can occur,” said O’Hanlon, Brookings’ director of research for foreign policy. “And therefore it smacks more of theatrics or of trying to impose than of trying to exchange views.”

Bryan Clark, a senior fellow and director of the Center for Defense Concepts and Technology at the Hudson Institute, said he expects the meeting to center on the Trump administration’s shift in defense policy. The U.S. military is expected to focus less on Europe and Asia and more on the Northern Hemisphere, a change that breaks with decades of precedent, he said.

Hegseth has championed the military’s role in securing the U.S.-Mexico border, deploying to American cities as part of Trump’s law enforcement surges, and carrying out strikes on boats in the Caribbean that the administration says targeted drug traffickers.

“I think they’re trying to set the tone, set the context, for these generals and admirals to say the strategy we have coming out is very different than what you’re used to — we need you to all be on board with it,” Clark said.

Video teleconferencing across the world is difficult because leaders are spread across time zones, Clark said. Forcing them to attend the meeting in person will drill the point home.

“It’s a way of demonstrating that this is important,” Clark said.

Women in Gaza say they were promised food, money or work in exchange for sexual interactions

By SAM MEDNICK and SALLY ABOU ALJOUD Associated Press

After weeks of scraping by to feed her six children in Gaza, the 38-year-old woman thought she’d found a lifeline.

At a shelter, a friend told her about a man who could help with food, aid, maybe even a job. The woman — separated from her husband, and forced to shutter the business that once kept the family afloat — approached him.

It was about a month into the war in Gaza, she said, and he promised her work, a six-month contract with an aid agency. On the day she believed she’d sign the paperwork, he drove her not to an office but to an empty apartment. He complimented her, she said, and told her to remove her headscarf.

He told her he loved her and wouldn’t force her, she said, but he also wouldn’t let her leave. Eventually, they had a sexual encounter, she said. She declined to give details of the nature of their interaction, saying she felt fear and shame.

“I had to play along because I was scared, I wanted out of this place,” the woman said.

Before she left, she said, he handed her some money — 100 shekels, about \$30. Two weeks later, he gave her a box of medicine and a box of food. But for weeks, the job didn’t materialize.

As Gaza’s humanitarian crisis grows, women say they have been exploited by local men — some associated with aid groups — promising food, money, water, supplies or work in exchange for sexual interactions. Six women detailed their experiences to The Associated Press, each speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of retribution from their families or the men and because sexual harassment and assault are considered taboo topics. Sometimes, they said, the men’s solicitation was blatant: “Let me touch you,” one woman recalled being told. Other times, it was culturally coded: “I want to marry you,” or “Let’s go together somewhere.”

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Aid groups and experts say exploitation often arises during conflicts and other times of desperation, particularly when people are displaced and reliant on assistance. Reports of abuse and exploitation have emerged during emergencies in South Sudan, Burkina Faso, Congo, Chad and Haiti.

"It's a horrible reality that humanitarian crises make people vulnerable in many ways — increased sexual violence is often a consequence," said Heather Barr, associate director for the women's rights division at Human Rights Watch. "The situation in Gaza today is unspeakable, especially for women and girls."

Four psychologists working with women in Gaza described patients' accounts to AP. One said her organization — focused on protecting women and children — treated dozens of cases involving men sexually exploiting vulnerable women, including some in which they became pregnant. The psychologists, all Palestinians working for local organizations in Gaza, spoke on condition of anonymity because of privacy concerns for the women involved and the sensitive nature of the cases, in a conservative culture where sex outside of marriage in any context is seen as a grave offense. They said none of their patients wanted to speak with AP directly.

Five of the women who shared their stories with AP said they did not engage in sexual interaction with the men. The psychologists said some women who came to them agreed to the men's demands, while others refused.

Six human rights and relief organizations — including the local Palestinian group the Women's Affairs Center and the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse network, which coordinates with various aid groups including United Nations agencies — told AP they were aware of reports of sexual abuse and exploitation linked to receiving aid.

Aid groups say the context in Gaza — nearly two years of war, the displacement of at least 90% of the population, and turmoil over aid access — has made humanitarian work for vulnerable people particularly challenging. As hunger and desperation grow across the enclave, women in particular say they've been pushed to make impossible decisions.

The groups blame Israel's offensive and blockade for the humanitarian crisis and say the war has made documenting exploitation cases difficult. More than 66,000 Palestinians have been killed, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which is part of the Hamas-run government and staffed by medical professionals. The ministry does not say how many of those killed were civilians or combatants, but it says women and children make up around half the fatalities.

"Israel's siege on the Gaza Strip and the restrictions on humanitarian aid are what's forcing women to resort to this," said Amal Syam, director of the Women's Affairs Center.

Israel says there are no restrictions on aid and that it has taken steps to expand what comes into Gaza. Israel also accuses Hamas of siphoning off aid — without providing evidence of widespread diversion — and blames U.N. agencies for failing to deliver food it has allowed in. The U.N. denies there is widespread aid diversion.

Some say limited data is just 'the tip of the iceberg'

One of the women who spoke to AP described phone calls that began in October, a year into the war. At first, she said, the man's questions were simple. What happened to her husband? How many children did they have? But, the 35-year-old widow said, his tone took a turn. What underwear was she wearing? How did her husband please her?

She said she'd met the man in Muwasi, a strip of land Israel designated a humanitarian zone. She described standing in line to get assistance and giving her phone number to an aid worker — a Palestinian in a uniform labeled UNRWA, or the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

Shortly after he took her number, the late-night calls began. He would ask sexual questions, she said, and she'd stay silent. She said that at one point, he asked to come to her, for sex. She refused, and after nearly a dozen calls but no aid, she blocked his number, she added.

The woman said she reported him to UNRWA in Gaza in a verbal complaint. She said she was told she needed a recording of the conversations as proof, but she had an old phone that couldn't record calls.

UNRWA communications director Juliette Touma said via email that the agency has a zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation, takes each report seriously, and doesn't require proof. But she wouldn't say

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whether staff were aware of this particular incident, citing UNRWA's policy against discussing individual cases, and wouldn't comment further on its awareness or work on exploitation cases overall.

The PSEA network — to which UNRWA belongs — said survivors can report anonymously or without naming the perpetrator and are never required to provide proof.

Understanding the scale of exploitation is challenging, said Sarah Achiro, a coordinator for the network, which works to prevent, and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian and development settings. Gaza's limited connectivity restricts calls that could report abuse, and constant displacement makes it harder for survivors to seek in-person help and for aid groups to build trust.

Achiro noted that sexual violence is vastly underreported, particularly in humanitarian and conflict settings, where data often shows just "the tip of the iceberg."

The PSEA network said that last year, it received 18 allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation linked to receiving humanitarian aid in Gaza, all involving either aid workers or those associated with it, such as community representatives or private contractors. Allegations against aid workers are investigated by the employer organization. The network wouldn't indicate how many of the cases were being investigated, saying it can't disclose information unless they are formally concluded.

'I told myself that no one would believe it'

Four of the women who spoke to AP said the men who solicited them identified themselves as aid workers, and, in one case, a community leader promising aid.

Like the widow, several women said it happened while registering or trying to register for aid, with men taking their numbers — frequently a step in the aid process — and later calling. The women said all the men were Palestinian. Several said they weren't able to identify which aid group the men seemed to be associated with.

The U.N. and aid groups generally work with local communities: paying people as contractors, using volunteers, or having leaders appointed by the community as liaisons.

The mother of six said the man who promised her a job drove a car with U.N. markings. After their interaction, she said, the messages kept coming — late-night sexual calls and requests for photos. She described dodging them with excuses: She was busy, her phone was broken, she couldn't talk.

But about a month after their sexual interaction, she saw the man at an aid site, in December 2023. He then helped her get a six-month position with UNRWA, which she completed, she said.

She told AP she never reported the man, their encounter or his exploitation attempts.

"I told myself that no one would believe it," she said. "Maybe they would say I am only saying this so that they would give me a job."

Asked about the woman's story, UNRWA's Touma emphasized the organization's zero-tolerance policy and said it would seek more information on the exploitation incidents and accusations.

Since the interaction and her job, the woman has been displaced, doesn't have work and struggles to feed her family. She said she blocked the man's number but he's tried to contact her as recently as this summer.

Groups say that despite stigma, exploitation is clearly on the rise

Some women say they've been solicited multiple times, by various men throughout the war.

A 37-year-old mother of four told AP she was approached twice, once by the head of a shelter. She said the man offered food and shelter if they could "go together somewhere," like the sea. She said she understood he was asking for something sexual. She refused.

Psychologists and women's groups said cases have increased as the crisis worsened — with more people displaced, reliant on aid, and crammed into camps. One psychologist said some women were kicked out when their husbands learned what happened.

Before the war, exploitation reports happened once or twice a year, but are up dramatically, said Syam, of the Women's Affairs Center. But she said many organizations won't highlight the numbers or the issue.

"Most of us prefer to keep the focus on the violence and violations committed by the Israeli occupation," Syam said.

Israel says it is fighting to dismantle Hamas and release the hostages taken in the 2023 attack that sparked the war, and that it mitigates civilian harm as much as possible.

The women who spoke to AP said it's important to try to hold on to their dignity as the war continues.

For weeks last fall, a 29-year-old mother said she received calls from an aid worker asking her to marry him in exchange for nutritional supplements for her four children.

She refused and blocked his number, she said, but he called from different phones. He insisted he liked her and made distasteful comments that she called too vulgar to repeat.

"I felt completely humiliated," she said. "I had to go and ask for help for my children. If I didn't do it, who would?"

How Electronic Arts' \$55 billion go-private deal could impact the video game industry

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — In what could become the largest-ever buyout funded by private equity, video game maker Electronic Arts has agreed to be acquired in a deal valued at \$55 billion.

Beyond the potentially record-breaking price tag, the deal could bring wider shifts in the gaming world. Electronic Arts (EA) owns popular titles like Madden NFL, Battlefield and The Sims — and going private could potentially grant the company more freedom in developing and distributing future games. Still, what its future under new ownership could look like has yet to be seen.

The proposed buyout also marks the latest move from Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund PIF to invest in gaming. If the transaction gets the green light, PIF would join Silver Lake Partners and Affinity Partners, run by U.S. President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, as EA's new owners. The companies aim to close the all-cash acquisition by the first quarter of 2027.

Here's what we know.

Why is EA an attractive takeover target?

The size of the video game market has attracted significant investment from large investors in recent years. And analysts note that Redwood City, California-based EA brand and lineup of titles make it a popular acquisition target.

The proposed acquisition also arrives as competition grows. One of EA's biggest rivals, Activision Blizzard, was snapped up by technology powerhouse Microsoft for nearly \$69 billion in 2023, for example, while the competition from mobile video game makers such as Epic Games has intensified.

PIF, Silver Lake and Affinity's combined offer to acquire EA far exceeds the \$32 billion price tag to take Texas utility TXU private in 2007, which had previously shattered records for leveraged buyouts. A leveraged buyout means a company is purchased largely using borrowed funds, and requires the acquired company to repay the debt taken on to finance the deal.

Could going private give EA more business advantages?

It's possible that the deal could give EA more freedom in future development and distribution of its games.

By going private, EA will be able to retool operations without worrying about shareholder interest or other market scrutiny. As a result, EA could get "a little bit more breathing room to do what they do," explains Joost van Dreunen, a longtime games industry researcher and adjunct assistant professor at New York University's Stern School of Business.

Theoretically, that could "result in more or better games," adds Ben Schneider, a professor of practice in the Interactive Media and Game Development program at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. But at the same time, he notes, "gamers are generally not enthralled with corporate owners influencing how game makers make their games, to say the least."

EA has recently faced criticism for moves toward live-service gaming — which features a continuous stream of new content often aimed to keep players online longer — and other monetization efforts that have been seen as aggressive among some gamers.

Experts like van Dreunen, who is also CEO of market research firm Aldora, say a hope is that the extra

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capital from privatization might allow EA “to take this foot off the gas from aggressive microtransaction strategies.”

Still, time will tell. EA’s proposed buyers haven’t indicated any plans to part from those models. In Monday’s announcement, company executives just pointed broadly to coming growth.

“Looking ahead, we will continue to push the boundaries of entertainment, sports, and technology, unlocking new opportunities,” Andrew Wilson, CEO of EA, who will continue to stay in the top seat if the go-private deal goes through.

Meanwhile, some analysts are skeptical about whether a buyout is the best thing for EA right now — particularly ahead of its “Battlefield 6” launch slated for October 10.

“It is still unclear to us why EA would agree to be acquired right before a very promising BF6 launch,” TD Cowen analysts Doug Creutz and Mei Lun Quach wrote in a Monday note. The analysts had previously pointed to the positive responses “Battlefield 6” received from players in its testing period — noting that expected revenue could push up EA’s share price even further.

Others have similarly argued that the proposed acquisition price — which divvies up to \$210 per share — undervalues what EA has to offer. But Nick McKay of Freedom Capital Markets thinks an increase in share price is likely limited, given the success of EA’s sports offerings being baked into the price, and that the pricing makes sense.

Is a takeover expected to shut down more game studios and lead to layoffs?

After being taken private, formerly public companies often undergo extensive cost-cutting.

EA hasn’t indicated any expected cuts spanning from its proposed buyout at this time, although the company has gone through several layoff rounds recently. After jettisoning about 5% of its workforce in 2024, EA ended March with 14,500 employees and then laid off several hundred people in May.

Experts like Schneider also point to the sizeable debt financing the deal takes on: amounting to about \$20 billion per Monday’s announcement. He notes that’s concerning news for video game developers, as it could result in more cuts.

“These changes in ownership are a very far distance from the people and studios who actually make games,” Schneider said. “Any direct impact will come in the form of what budgets are given to those studios and, downstream, which projects get cancelled or greenlit.”

EA has also already shuttered many game studios over the years. Just this past May, the company reportedly canceled the development of a video game based on Marvel’s “Black Panther,” for example, as part of the closure of Cliffhanger Games.

Saudi’s PIF fund has many hands in the video game industry now. Why?

Among EA’s proposed buyers is Saudi Arabia’s sovereign wealth fund PIF — which has increasingly upped its gaming investments. It already holds a 9.9% stake in EA, and is also a minority investor in fellow gaming giant Nintendo.

Van Dreunen explains that gaming is popular with younger audiences and the majority of people living in the country are under 30 years old (accounting for 63% of the population as of the kingdom’s 2022 census). That helps drive demand in a tech-forward industry that can also be “easily transported into a new location,” he adds.

Amanda Cote, an associate professor and director of the serious games certificate at Michigan State University, notes that the attempted EA acquisition is particularly in line with PIF’s recent moves in esports, with competitive gaming platforms like ESL FACEIT also among its portfolio today.

“EA’s game portfolio simultaneously aligns with Saudi Arabia’s expansions into sports, gaming, and esports,” Cote said, alluding to EA’s esports and sports properties like Madden Football and EA Sports FC (formerly FIFA).

At the same time, she also noted human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International, have been highly critical of Saudi Arabia’s overall investments in sports and esports — with some accusing the nation of “sportswashing” to distract international attention. “This proposed deal is likely to face similar criticism,” Cote added.

Among the other notable names in the proposed buyout is Kushner.

The deal still needs shareholder and regulatory approval. Experts like van Dreunen expect there might be some regulatory pushback — perhaps not in the U.S., but from other consumer watchdogs globally.

Still, Baird Equity Research analysts noted Monday that the “connections to both the Saudi government and the Trump administration” may be “a strategic asset for EA in navigating any regulatory speed-bumps.”

Judge suspends Trump administration’s plan to eliminate hundreds of Voice of America jobs

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge agreed Monday to temporarily suspend the Trump administration’s plan to eliminate hundreds of jobs at the agency that oversees Voice of America, the government-funded broadcaster founded to counter Nazi propaganda during World War II.

U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth in Washington, D.C., ruled that the U.S. Agency for Global Media cannot implement a reduction in force eliminating 532 jobs for full-time government employees on Tuesday. Those employees represent the vast majority of its remaining staff.

Kari Lake, the agency’s acting CEO, announced in late August that the job cuts would take effect Tuesday. But the judge’s ruling preserves the status quo at the agency until he rules on a plaintiffs’ underlying motion to block the reduction in force.

Lamberth previously ruled that President Donald Trump’s Republican administration must restore VOA programming to levels commensurate with its statutory mandate to “serve as a consistently reliable and authoritative source of news.” He also blocked Lake from removing Michael Abramowitz as VOA’s director.

Judge cites ‘concerning disrespect’ toward court from administration

Lamberth accused the administration of showing “concerning disrespect” toward the court in response to his earlier orders to produce information about its plans for Voice of America. He noted that the agency initiated the job cuts only hours after a hearing last month in which government lawyers said a reduction in force, or RIF, was merely a possibility.

“The defendants’ obfuscation of this Court’s request for information regarding whether their RIF plans comported with the preliminary injunction has wasted precious judicial time and resources and readily support contempt proceedings,” Lamberth wrote.

But he said he wouldn’t initiate contempt proceedings on his own because the plaintiffs haven’t sought it yet.

“However, (the court’s) deference to the plaintiffs with respect to further proceedings should not be mistaken for lenience toward the defendants’ egregious erstwhile conduct,” he added.

Employees who sued to block the dismantling of Voice of America claimed the planned cuts would hamper the judge’s ability to enforce the injunction he issued in April. “This Court should therefore preserve the status quo while the parties litigate compliance,” their attorneys wrote.

Government lawyers accused the plaintiffs of impermissibly trying to micromanage the agency’s operations. “Enjoining the reductions in force would be a wholly overbroad and improper remedy,” they wrote.

Lamberth, a senior judge, was nominated to the bench by Republican President Ronald Reagan in 1987. Can media agency continue to fulfill its ‘statutory mission’?

The U.S. Agency for Global Media also houses Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, Middle East Broadcasting Networks and Radio Marti, which beams Spanish-language news into Cuba. The networks, which together reach an estimated 427 million people, date to the Cold War and are part of a network of government-funded organizations trying to extend U.S. influence and combat authoritarianism.

Congress appropriated \$875 million to the agency for fiscal year 2025 and required that \$260 million of the funds must be spent by VOA.

In March, Trump signed an executive order called for the agency to reduce its “statutory functions and associated personnel to the minimum presence and function required by law.” A day later, VOA stopped broadcasting for the first time in 83 years. The agency placed almost all of its full-time employees on

administrative leave.

In announcing the job cuts on social media last month, Lake said the agency "will continue to fulfill its statutory mission ... and will likely improve its ability to function."

"I look forward to taking additional steps in the coming months to improve the functioning of a very broken agency and make sure America's voice is heard abroad where it matters most," she wrote.

Plaintiffs' attorney Georgina Yeomans argued Monday that the cuts would cement the agency's programming at deficient levels that don't comply with the judge's orders. Yeomans said it's unclear who at the agency is making key decisions, such as which jobs to eliminate.

"We simply do not know," she said.

YouTube to pay \$24.5 million to settle lawsuit over Trump's account suspension after Jan. 6 attack

By BARBARA ORTUTAY and MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writers

Google's YouTube has agreed to pay \$24.5 million to settle a lawsuit President Donald Trump brought after the video site suspended his account following the Jan. 6, 2021 attacks on the Capitol following the election that resulted in him leaving the White House for four years.

The settlement of the more than four-year-old case earmarks \$22 million for Trump to contribute to the Trust for the National Mall and a construction of a White House ballroom, according to court documents filed Monday. The remaining \$2.5 million will be paid to other parties involved in the case, including the writer Naomi Wolf and the American Conservative Union.

Alphabet, the parent of Google, is the third major technology company to settle a volley of lawsuits that Trump brought for what he alleged had unfairly muzzled him after his first term as president ended in January 2021. He filed similar cases Facebook parent Meta Platforms and Twitter before it was bought by billionaire Elon Musk in 2022 and rebranded as X.

Meta agreed to pay \$25 million to settle Trump's lawsuit over his 2021 suspension from Facebook and X agreed to settle the lawsuit that Trump brought against Twitter for \$10 million. When the lawsuits against Meta, Twitter and YouTube were filed, legal experts predicted Trump had little chance of prevailing.

After buying Twitter for \$44.5 billion, Musk later became major contributor to Trump's successful 2024 campaign that resulted in his re-election and then spent several months leading a cost-cutting effort that purged thousands of workers from the federal government payroll before the two had a bitter falling out. Both Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai and Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg were among the tech leaders who lined up behind Trump during his second inauguration in January in a show of solidarity that was widely interpreted as a sign of the industry's intention to work more closely with the president than during his first administration.

ABC News, meanwhile, agreed to pay \$15 million in December toward Trump's presidential library to settle a defamation lawsuit over anchor George Stephanopoulos' inaccurate on-air assertion that the president-elect had been found civilly liable for raping writer E. Jean Carroll. And in July, Paramount decided to pay Trump \$16 million to settle a lawsuit regarding editing at CBS' storied "60 Minutes" news program.

The settlement does not constitute an admission of liability, the filing says. Google confirmed the settlement but declined to comment beyond it.

Google declined to comment on the reasons for the settlement, but Trump's YouTube account has been restored since 2023. The settlement will barely dent Alphabet, which has a market value of nearly \$3 trillion — an increase of about \$600 billion, or 25%, since Trump's return to the White House.

The disclosure of the settlement came a week before a scheduled Oct. 6 court hearing to discuss the case with U.S. District Judge Yvonne Gonzalez-Rogers in Oakland, California.

Sentencing hearing begins for man convicted of killing 8 people in metro Phoenix in 2017

By JACQUES BILLEAUD Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — A man convicted of killing eight people in metro Phoenix in 2017 waived his presence in court Monday at the start of the sentencing portion of his trial, where prosecutors are seeking the death penalty.

Cleophus Cooksey Jr., 43, was found guilty last week of murder, kidnapping, armed robbery and sexual assault charges in attacks over a three-week span that targeted random victims and his own mother and stepfather.

The victims in Phoenix and nearby Glendale also included two men found dead in a parked car, a security guard shot while walking to his girlfriend's apartment and a woman who was kidnapped, her body found in an alley after she was sexually assaulted.

Authorities say they linked Cooksey to the slayings through evidence found at his mother's apartment in the aftermath of her killing. That evidence included a gun used in several of the killings, vehicle keys belonging to another victim and a victim's necklace that Cooksey was wearing when he was arrested, investigators said.

Authorities never offered a motive.

Cooksey, an aspiring musician, knew some of the victims but he wasn't acquainted with others, police said. He has maintained his innocence.

It will be up to the jury to decide whether an aggravated circumstance exists and Cooksey is eligible for the death penalty.

In making his case, prosecutor Josh Maxwell pointed out to jurors that Cooksey was convicted of multiple counts of first-degree murder stemming from the 2017 killing spree and had previous armed robbery and manslaughter convictions. Prosecutors also alleged that some victims in the 2017 case were killed in an especially cruel manner.

Questions posed by a defense attorney to a forensic pathologist who reviewed autopsy reports focused heavily on whether the victims felt pain and were conscious before their deaths.

The killings started four months after Cooksey was released from prison on a manslaughter conviction for his participation in a 2001 strip club robbery in which an accomplice was fatally shot.

The first victims, Parker Smith, 21, and Andrew Remillard, 27, were found Nov. 27, 2017. They had been fatally shot while sitting in a vehicle in a parking lot. Five days later, security guard Salim Richards, 31, was shot to death while walking to his girlfriend's apartment.

Over the next two weeks, Latorrie Beckford, 29, and Kristopher Cameron, 21, were killed in separate shootings at apartment complexes in Glendale, and the body of Maria Villanueva, 43, was found naked from the waist down in an alley in Phoenix. Authorities said Cooksey's DNA was found on her body.

Finally, on Dec. 17, 2017, Cooksey answered the door when officers responded to a shots-fired call at his mother's apartment. He told officers who had noticed a large amount of blood that he had cut his hand and was the only one home. Police say when an officer tried to detain him, Cooksey threatened to slit the officer's throat. Rene Cooksey, 56, and Edward Nunn, 54, were found dead.

Cooksey's arrest followed two other serial shooting cases in metro Phoenix.

In 2015, 11 shootings occurred on Phoenix-area freeways between late August and early September. No one was seriously injured, and charges were later dismissed against the only person charged.

The next case occurred over nearly a one-year period ending in July 2016. Bus driver Aaron Juan Saucedo was arrested in April 2017 and charged with first-degree murder in attacks that killed nine people.

Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty against Saucedo, with a trial scheduled for December. He has declared his innocence.

Trump and Netanyahu say they've agreed on a plan to end the

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Gaza war. Hamas is now reviewing it

By ADAM GELLER, SAM MEDNICK and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Monday laid out a 20-point proposal supported by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that would end the war in Gaza and free remaining hostages, leaning heavily into conditions that Hamas has previously rejected.

The U.S. president, who has become increasingly frustrated by the bloody conflict, seems to be betting that the militants are now so decimated that they have no choice but to accept what he and Netanyahu are framing as a last, best offer.

"If Hamas rejects your plan, Mr. President, or if they supposedly accept it and then do everything to counter it, then Israel will finish the job by itself," Netanyahu said after meeting with Trump at the White House. "This can be done the easy way or it can be done the hard way, but it will be done."

Qatar's prime minister and Egypt's intelligence chief presented Trump's proposal to Hamas negotiators, who are now reviewing it in "good faith," according to a person familiar with the matter. The person was not authorized to comment and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The Palestinian government in the occupied West Bank said it welcomed Trump's plan to end the war and pledged to implement the reforms called for in his plan. And the governments of Egypt, Jordan, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates issued a joint statement applauding Trump's proposal.

While Trump claimed he is now on the precipice of victory in his long effort to forge peace, the prospects of a finding an endgame to a war that is coming up on the start of its third year still appeared shaky. Many points of tension remain.

There's little mention of the goal of Palestinian statehood, what many in the region and beyond say is the linchpin for long-term peace. The proposal largely sidelines the Palestinian Authority until it completes vast reforms. And a requirement for Hamas to disarm has been dismissed as a non-starter in earlier negotiations.

Trump's plan calls for establishing a temporary governing committee that would be headed by Trump and include former British Prime Minister Tony Blair. A Palestinian committee of technocrats would oversee civilian affairs, with power handed over later to a reformed Palestinian Authority.

The plan does not require people to leave the Gaza Strip as laid out in an earlier Trump plan roundly rejected by Palestinians and regional leaders.

It does call for all remaining hostages to be released by Hamas within 72 hours of Israel accepting the plan, an effort that would seem difficult to complete with the captives believed to be spread throughout the territory. A senior Trump administration official, who was not authorized to discuss the plan's details publicly, said the 72 hours starts when Hamas accepts the proposal.

Hundreds of Palestinians, including many serving life sentences, will be released by Israel, according to the proposal.

"I think we are beyond very close," Trump said. "We're not quite finished. We have to get Hamas."

While Hamas has said in the past that it would agree to step back from governing Gaza, the militant group has refused to disarm, something Netanyahu has long demanded as part of any long-term truce to end the war.

The president promised Netanyahu that Israel would have his administration's "full backing" to further decimate Hamas if the group doesn't agree to the proposal.

"This is a different Hamas," Trump said. "Their leadership has been killed three times over. So you're really dealing with different people."

Netanyahu expresses regret to Qatar

Netanyahu on Monday also attempted to mend fences with Qatar, the key Hamas interlocutor and an important U.S. ally.

He expressed his regret to his Qatari counterpart for a Sept. 9 military strike targeting Hamas officials in the Gulf emirate that infuriated Arab leaders and triggered rare criticism by the U.S. of Israel.

Netanyahu made the call to Qatar's prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, as

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he met with Trump. Trump described the exchange between the Israeli and Qatari leaders as a "heart-to-heart" call.

"As a first step, Prime Minister Netanyahu expressed his deep regret that Israel's missile strike against Hamas targets in Qatar unintentionally killed a Qatari serviceman," the White House said in a statement. "He further expressed regret that, in targeting Hamas leadership during hostage negotiations, Israel violated Qatari sovereignty and affirmed that Israel will not conduct such an attack again in the future."

Israel struck the headquarters of Hamas' political leadership in Qatar as the group's top figures gathered to consider a U.S. proposal for a ceasefire in Gaza.

The strike on the territory of a U.S. ally was a stunning escalation and risked upending talks aimed at winding down the war and freeing hostages. No senior Hamas officials were killed in the strike.

The attack on an energy-rich Gulf nation hosting thousands of American troops, which has served as a key mediator between Israel and Hamas throughout the war and even before, was described by Trump as out of step with Israeli and U.S. interests. And Trump sought to move quickly to assuage his Qatari allies.

The White House said Sheik Mohammed welcomed Netanyahu's "assurances" and emphasized "Qatar's readiness to continue contributing meaningfully to regional security and stability."

But even as the White House was spotlighting the apology, Israel's far-right national security minister newly defended the decision to carry out the attack.

Itamar Ben-Gvir, a key coalition partner of Netanyahu's, in a posting on X called the operation "an important, just and ethical attack."

"It is very good that it happened," he added.

Netanyahu's acquiescence comes at a delicate moment

The White House talks, and apology from Netanyahu, come at a tenuous moment. Israel is increasingly isolated, losing support from many countries that were long its steadfast allies. At home, Netanyahu's governing coalition appears more fragile than ever. And the White House is showing signs of impatience.

It remains to be seen how Netanyahu will be able to justify to far-right members of his coalition his acceptance of the proposal after promising to press against the militant organization until it was "eliminated."

The Trump plan indicates that once all hostages are returned, Hamas members who "commit to peaceful co-existence and to decommission their weapons will be given amnesty." The plan adds that members of Hamas who wish to leave Gaza would be provided safe passage to receiving countries.

Trump has been growing more frustrated with conflict

Trump joined forces with Netanyahu during Israel's brief war with Iran in June, ordering U.S. stealth bombers to strike three nuclear sites, and he's supported the Israeli leader during his corruption trial, describing the case as a "witch hunt." Monday's visit was Netanyahu's fourth to the White House in the eight months since the start of Trump's second term.

But the relationship has become more tense lately. Trump was frustrated by Israel's failed strike on Hamas officials in Qatar.

Last week, Trump vowed to prevent Israel from annexing the West Bank — an idea promoted by some of Netanyahu's hard-line governing partners. The international community opposes annexation, saying it would destroy hopes for a Palestinian state.

Hamas is believed to be holding 48 hostages, 20 of whom are believed by Israel to be alive. The militant group has previously demanded Israel agree to end the war and withdraw from all of Gaza as part of any permanent ceasefire.

Trump discussed the plan with Arab and Islamic leaders in New York last week on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly. He hailed the deal, if it coalesces, as a potential breakthrough moment that would usher in lasting peace and an era prosperity in the Middle East.

"I challenge the Palestinians to take responsibility for their destiny because that's what we're giving them. We're giving them responsibility for their destiny," he said.

In UN speech, Beijing makes clear its intent to remold global norms, seizing on Trump's retreat

By DIDI TANG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hardly a month after Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed his “Global Governance Initiative,” Beijing made its intent clear at the most global of forums — that it should, and is qualified to, help shape the world order even as the United States tips more inward under Donald Trump.

In a seemingly jargon-filled speech delivered to the U.N. General Assembly on Friday, Chinese Premier Li Qiang told the audience that “a China that bears in mind the greater good of humanity and stands ready to take up responsibilities will bring more positive energy into the world.” His words seized on the retreat by the American president from international organizations and on his apparent disdain towards the United Nations.

Li never once mentioned the United States by name. But in not-so-subtle swipes at recent actions by the United States, he touted his country's credentials: lowering tariffs to promote global economy, vowing to cut greenhouse gas emissions to combat climate change and committing to safeguarding the authority of the United Nations.

It represents a shift in approach to global affairs that experts say reflects a China that sees itself on the ascent.

“Li's speech confirms that China's foreign policy posture today is firmly anchored in the ambition of turning a Western-dominant world order into one that is much more conducive to Chinese interests, values, and leadership,” said Olivia Cheung, lecturer in politics at King's College London. “China's foreign policy today is notably more confident, strategic, and coherent than how it was in 2017, where Beijing's presentation of global governance reform lacked content.”

The speech has come amid growing worries in Washington that China, the world's second-largest economy, might seek to unseat the United States as the global leader, even though Beijing has repeatedly assured Washington that it has no intention to challenge or replace the U.S. Instead, Xi has said Beijing should enjoy a global say befitting of its economic might and global stature.

Li says China has the answer

Li opened his speech by evoking the history of the United Nations and crediting it for the by-and-large peace and prosperity in the ensuing eight decades. Then, he lamented on the “chaos” the world is faced with today.

“The world has entered a new period of turbulence and transformation,” Li said, leveling his criticisms at “unilateralism and Cold War mentality” and repeated disruptions to the international system.

“How could we, when confronted with unscrupulous acts of hegemonism and bullying, remain silent and submissive for fear of might?” the Chinese premier asked. The terms “unilateralism,” “Cold War mentality,” “hegemonism” and “bullying” are usually associated with the U.S. in Beijing's diplomatic talks.

Then, the Chinese premier portrayed China as a desirable answer to such problems — a founding member of the United Nations that has in recent years shared “China's wisdom and solution for navigating global transformations and overcoming pressing challenges.”

The Global Governance Initiative, as proposed by Xi in early September, “points the right direction and provides an important pathway for building a more just and equitable global governance system,” Li said.

China's foreign policy shifts under Xi

The reframing is, on some levels, fundamental.

In a podcast aired Sept. 26, Cheung told the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations that Beijing's strategic thinking has shifted under Xi — from maintaining good ties with the U.S. and other Western nations for China's economic growth to “reshaping the international system so that the rest of the world respect and accept China's interest in the way that Beijing defines it.”

She said Beijing has viewed the global governance system as “dominated by Western powers, especially the United States” and serving their interests in a way that is “often unfair or unrepresentative.”

What Beijing is most interested in, Cheung said, is “changing global governance in a way that puts the

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United Nations front and center" where China can have "a lot more involvement and influences and leverage in how it functions."

Li's speech Friday conveys the impression that Xi's proposition of "forging the common destiny for humankind" is not only an aspiration but "policy actions that are noble and urgent, with which China uniquely has strong technical competencies to lead," Cheung told the Associated Press.

As the Trump administration imposes steep tariffs, threatens territorial annexations and goes after multilateral institutions, "China seeks to present itself as a key upholder of a postwar order in whose viability the United States seems to be losing confidence", said Ali Wyne, a senior research and advocacy advisory for U.S.-China relations at the International Crisis Group.

But China does not appear to have either the capacity or the desire to offer a wholesale alternative, Wyne said. Instead, he said, China appears interested in deepening its influences in certain areas and attempting to legitimize its longstanding contention that new norms are needed to reflect emerging geopolitical trends.

Gap in rhetoric and reality

The gulf between Beijing's words and its actions is another question. Where the Chinese government is concerned, its action often fails to align with its word, said Craig Singleton, senior director of the China Program at the Washington-based think tank Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

"Premier Li's remarks leaned heavily on multilateral language, but Beijing's track record tells a different story," Singleton said. "China champions sovereignty at the U.N. while systematically eroding it in practice, from Hong Kong to the South China Sea."

He added: "Li's calls for 'cooperation' and 'openness' sound constructive, but they're designed to blunt pressure on China's economy and technology sector."

A day earlier, Li held a meeting with American businesspeople and scholars in New York. He assured the group that China would "continuously expand market access and increase imports" and provide foreign businesses with "the certainty they need to operate and develop in China," according to a Chinese government statement.

The two countries are locked in a trade dispute, and Xi and Trump are scheduled to meet on the sidelines of the summit of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation grouping of 21 economies, to be held at the end of October in South Korea, to help recalibrate bilateral relations.

The Chinese premier said the two countries "could and should" become partners and friends, and he repeated a line from Xi: "The Pacific Ocean is vast enough to accommodate both China and the United States, as well as other countries."

Congressional leaders leave White House meeting without deal to avoid government shutdown

By STEPHEN GROVES and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A government shutdown fast approaching, Democratic and Republican congressional leaders left a White House meeting with President Donald Trump Monday afternoon showing no sign of compromising from their entrenched positions in order to avoid a lapse in funding.

If government funding legislation isn't passed by Congress and signed by Trump on Tuesday night, many government offices across the nation will be temporarily shuttered and nonexempt federal employees will be furloughed, adding to the strain on workers and the nation's economy.

But lawmakers were locked in an impasse Monday. Democrats are using one of their few points of leverage to demand legislation to extend health care benefits. But Republicans are refusing to compromise and daring Democrats to vote against legislation that would keep government funding mostly at current levels.

"There are still large differences between us," Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said as he left the White House.

Vice President JD Vance told reporters after the meeting, "I think we're headed into a shutdown because the Democrats won't do the right thing."

Negotiating with Trump

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Trump has shown little interest in entertaining Democrats' demands on health care, even as he agreed to hold a sit-down meeting Monday with Schumer, along with Senate Majority Leader John Thune, House Speaker Mike Johnson and House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries.

It was Trump's first meeting with the "big four" leaders in Congress since retaking the White House for his second term, yet the Republican president said repeatedly heading into the meeting that he fully expects the government to enter a shutdown this week.

As he headed into the meeting, Trump made it clear he had no intention to negotiate on Democrats' current terms.

"They're going to have to do some things because their ideas are not very good ones," he said.

Still, Schumer said after the meeting that they had "had candid, frank discussions" with Trump about health care and suggested that the president was more open to their proposals than the Republican leaders who were also in the meeting. Vance also said that Trump found several points of agreement on policy ideas.

Schumer said the president "was really listening to us," adding, "It's in his hands."

Democrats' health care demands

Democrats are pushing for an extension to Affordable Care Act tax credits that have subsidized health insurance for millions of people since the COVID-19 pandemic. The credits, which are designed to expand coverage for low- and middle-income people, are set to expire at the end of the year.

"Democrats are fighting to protect the health care of the American people," said Jeffries, a New York Democrat. "We are not going to support a partisan Republican spending bill that continues to gut the health care of everyday Americans."

Some Republicans are open to extending the tax credits but want changes. But Thune, a South Dakota Republican, has pressed Democrats to vote for the funding bill and take up the debate on tax credits later.

"We're willing to sit down and work with them on some of the issues they want to talk about," he told reporters at the White House, adding, "But as of right now, this is a hijacking of the American people, and it's the American people who are going to pay the price."

How will Democrats vote?

To hold on to their negotiating leverage, Senate Democrats will likely have to vote against a bill to temporarily extend government funding on Tuesday, just hours before a shutdown — an uncomfortable position for a party that has long denounced shutdowns as pointless and destructive.

The bill has already passed the Republican-controlled House and would keep the government funded for seven more weeks while Congress works on annual spending legislation.

Any legislation to fund the government will need support from at least 60 senators in the 100-member Senate. That means that at least eight Democrats would have to vote for the short-term funding bill, because Republican Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky is expected to vote against it.

During the last potential government shutdown in March, Schumer and nine other Democrats voted to break a filibuster and allow a Republican-led funding bill to advance to a final vote. The New York Democrat faced fierce backlash from many in his own party for that decision, with some even calling for him to step down as Democratic leader.

Senate Democrats have begun to discuss some possible next steps if the government does shut down — potentially a proposal for a one- or two-week stopgap if Republicans will work with them on a health care fix, according to several people familiar with the private talks who requested anonymity to discuss them. But there is no consensus in the caucus about how to proceed, or guarantees that Republicans and Trump would negotiate.

Shutdown preparations begin

Federal agencies were sending out contingency plans if funding lapses at 12:01 a.m. Wednesday. They included details on what offices would stay open and which employees would be furloughed.

The Trump administration is using the process to potentially layoff more federal employees. The plans heap more pressure Democratic lawmakers to back away from their demands.

Russ Vought, Trump's budget director, told reporters at the White House that a shutdown would be

managed “appropriately, but it is something that can all be avoided” if Senate Democrats accepted the House-passed bill.

Before joining the administration, Vought had advised hardline conservatives in Congress to use the prospect of a shutdown to negotiate for policy concessions. But on Monday, he berated Democrats for engaging in a similar ploy.

“This is hostage taking. It is not something that we are going to accept,” he said.

In a rare UN appearance, senior North Korean diplomat insists his country won't give up nukes

By EDITH M. LEDERER and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — A senior North Korean diplomat reiterated at the U.N. Monday that his country won't give up its nuclear weapons despite numerous international demands to do so, calling them crucial to keeping a “balance of power” with South Korea. “We will never walk away from this position,” he said.

Under the spotlight of the General Assembly's annual meeting of world leaders, Vice Foreign Minister Kim Son Gyong amplified his country's longstanding complaints about U.S.-led military exercises with South Korea and Japan. Complaining that the U.S. and its allies are mounting a “growing threat of aggression,” he portrayed his own country's arsenal as the reason “the balance of power on the Korean Peninsula is ensured.”

Still, his address was more tempered, especially toward the United States, than many of his country's prior remarks on the world stage and elsewhere. While Kim lambasted — without naming names — “hegemonic forces” and an “indiscriminate tariff war,” there were no direct references to U.S. President Donald Trump or personal insults, and there was more sternness than over-the-top bellicosity.

Kim vowed that “we will never give up nuclear,” noting that North Korea's nuclear program is enshrined in its constitution.

He asserted that security on the Korean Peninsula “is faced with serious challenges more than ever,” saying that the U.S.-Japanese-South Korean exercises “are breaking all the previous records in terms of scale, nature, frequency and scope.” The North routinely characterizes such war games as preludes to an attack.

South Korea says military exercises necessary but wants ‘peaceful coexistence’

South Korea, for its part, has said the recent trilateral military exercises were necessary to counter North Korea's growing nuclear and missile threats. Numerous U.N. Security Council resolutions have demanded that the North stop building nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

But South Korean President Lee Jae Myung told the high-level meeting last week that his new government “will begin a new journey toward peaceful coexistence and shared growth on the Korean Peninsula.” He said, “The first step will be to restore broken inter-Korean trust and shift to a stance of mutual respect.”

North Korea's Kim did not respond to this overture in his speech.

Kim's appearance at the United Nations marked the first time since 2018 that North Korea sent a senior diplomat to the General Assembly gathering.

The U.N., he said, “should not feel relieved, nor congratulate ourselves, on the non-occurrence of the World War III for the past 80 years. Instead, we should pay due attention to the fact that the inducible threat has persisted and is now becoming more serious, and take measures accordingly.”

The diplomat's appearance at the U.N. comes amid signs of renewed interest in a possible meeting between its leader, Kim Jong Un, and U.S. President Donald Trump.

Trump and the North Korean leader met three times in 2018-2019 as Pyongyang was building a nuclear weapons stockpile, which Kim Jong Un views as key to its the country's security and his continued authority in the northeast Asian nation. The talks collapsed over U.S.-led sanctions against the North, and its leader has since shunned any diplomacy with the U.S. and South Korea.

Since Trump returned to power in January, he has repeatedly expressed hope of restarting talks with Kim. Last Monday, the North Korean leader said he still has “good memories” of Trump but urged the

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United States to drop its demand that the North surrender its nuclear arms as a precondition for resuming diplomacy.

South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Hyun said in an Associated Press interview on Friday that President Lee Jae Myung has asked Trump to become "a peacemaker" and use his leadership to get North Korea to talks to reduce military tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

Cho said Trump "expressed his willingness to be engaged with North Korea again."

Trump has an Asia visit upcoming

Trump is expected to visit South Korea next month to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, and some in the region wonder if he could meet Kim Jong Un on that trip. Trump is expected to meet with Chinese leader Xi Jinping during that meeting.

North Korea has always had close ties to neighboring China but in recent years has focused on expanding cooperation with Russia, another neighbor, by supplying combat troops and ammunitions to support its war against Ukraine.

The leaders of North Korea and China recently held their first summit in more than six years and pledged mutual support and enhanced cooperation. That meeting followed a first-ever joint appearance by the DPRK's Kim, China's President Xi Jinping and Russian leader Vladimir Putin at a massive Beijing military parade marking the end of the World War II.

At a follow-up meeting in Beijing on Sunday, the foreign ministers of North Korea and China agreed to deepen their bilateral ties and resist "hegemonism," an apparent reference to their pushback against the United States.

Death toll from attack at Michigan church stays at 4 after police sweep charred ruins

By ISABELLA VOLMERT and MARK VANCLEAVE Associated Press

GRAND BLANC TOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP) — In the chaotic moments after a former Marine smashed his pickup truck into a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chapel in Michigan and began shooting, church members pulled others to safety while smoke filled the building, officials said Monday.

Four people died and eight others were wounded in Sunday's attack just as services were underway in the crowded sanctuary. Authorities feared they would find additional victims, but by Monday everyone was accounted for after a sweep of the charred ruins, police said.

Investigators were focusing on what motivated the 40-year-old veteran to open fire and set ablaze the church in Grand Blanc Township, about 60 miles (96 kilometers) north of Detroit. The suspect was also killed while exchanging gunfire with two officers, said Township Chief of Police William Renye.

Eight people — ages 6 to 78 — were shot and wounded but all are expected to recover, the chief said. Two people were treated for smoke inhalation, he said.

"This was an evil act of violence," Renye said.

The FBI considered the attack — the second on an American church in little over a month — an "act of targeted violence," said Ruben Coleman, a special agent in charge for the bureau.

Investigators declined to discuss possible motives during a news conference Monday.

Authorities identified the shooter as Thomas Jacob Sanford, 40, of the neighboring town of Burton. Investigators deployed a robot while searching Sanford's residence Sunday but did not say what they found or provide any additional details about him, including whether he had any connection to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, widely known as the Mormon church.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said investigators were looking into how much planning went into the attack and whether any clues about the motive were left behind.

"From what I understand, based on my conversations with the FBI director, all they know right now is this was an individual who hated people of the Mormon faith," she said Monday during an interview on Fox News Channel's "Fox and Friends."

Heroic efforts at the church

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Employees from a nearby hospital were inside the church at the time of the attack and jumped into action, said Dr. Michael Danic, medical chief of staff for Henry Ford Genesys Hospital, where most of the victims were treated.

He described how the employees went "in and out of the fire" to help drag people out.

"Those on the scene were absolute heroes," Danic said.

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said a Grand Blanc police officer and a conservation officer with the state's Department of Natural Resources brought down the attacker.

The DNR officer was on duty nearby when he responded, said Marc Curtis, an attorney representing him. "I can tell you that he acted without hesitation," Curtis said.

Searching for answers

Crews in white coveralls and hard hats searched through what remained of the church Monday morning. The suspect's silver truck with two American flags in the back remained where it had smashed into a brick wall near a sign that says "visitors welcome."

Across the street, there was an SUV with apparent bullet holes in the windshield and driver window.

A woman who knew Sanford saw him two days before the attack and said that while she and her daughter were crossing a street, he revved up his truck and started driving toward them, causing them to jump back. Kara Pattison told WDIV-TV that Sanford was laughing and said "Oh, got you guys."

Sanford apparently used gas to start the fire and also had explosive devices, said James Dier of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Flames and smoke poured from the church for hours after the attack. The fire gutted nearly all of the building, consuming its towering white steeple and sanctuary — only its outer walls and a few side rooms remained standing.

Suspect was deployed to Iraq

According to records released by the Marine Corps, Sanford served for four years after enlisting in 2004 and was discharged at the rank of sergeant. He deployed once to Iraq for seven months and was awarded a Good Conduct Medal, indicating three years of service without any major infractions.

The shooting was the latest of several attacks on houses of worship in the U.S. over the past 20 years, including one in August that killed two children at the Church of the Annunciation in Minneapolis.

The shooting occurred a day after Russell M. Nelson, the oldest-ever president of the Utah-based faith, died at 101. Dallin H. Oaks, expected to be the next president per church protocol, posted his condolences on social media.

"We all seek answers and understanding in the wake of trauma, shock, and grief," he wrote. "We are grateful to all who are reaching out with service, prayers, and words of support during this difficult time."

Shooting leaves area in state of shock

Michigan's governor, a Democrat, said she spoke with Republican President Donald Trump and that he shared his condolences. "We cannot continue living our lives like this," Whitmer said.

Brandt Malone, a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who was attending services at a different church Sunday morning, said his congregation was evacuated when they heard about the attack.

"Everyone's in a state of shock right now," he said, adding he knows quite a few people who were in the Grand Blanc church. "We view church and our worship services really as a sanctuary."

Marine veteran charged in deadly North Carolina waterfront shooting appears subdued in court

By CAROLYN THOMPSON and ALLEN G. BREED Associated Press

A decorated Marine veteran charged with firing an assault rifle from a boat at a waterfront bar in North Carolina, killing three people and wounding five, appeared subdued in court Monday as prosecutors said they may seek the death penalty.

Nigel Edge, 40, a Purple Heart recipient whose last assignment was with a Wounded Warrior battalion,

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made his first court appearance via video link after Saturday's mass shooting. He's charged with murder, attempted murder and assault.

Law enforcement officers "got the confession" from the suspect following his arrest, said North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation Director Chip Hawley at a news conference Monday. He did not elaborate.

Five people remained hospitalized from the violence in Southport, a historic port town about 30 miles (48 kilometers) south of Wilmington. None of the victims' identities have been released.

On Sunday, another 40-year-old former Marine crashed a pickup into a Michigan church during services, shot into the building and set it ablaze, killing four people and wounding eight. It was the second mass shooting in the U.S. in less than 24 hours.

'Highly premeditated' attack

District Attorney Jon David said his office had yet to review medical records but described Edge as having "significant mental health issues" after experiencing a traumatic brain injury, according to WECT News.

Authorities said Edge piloted a boat close to shore, stopped briefly and opened fire at a crowd of vacationers and other patrons in what Southport Police Chief Todd Coring called a "highly premeditated" targeted attack. A charging document says he used an AR-style rifle with a silencer and scope.

He was arrested about a half an hour later after a U.S. Coast Guard crew spotted him pulling a boat from the water at a public ramp on Oak Island, where he lives.

Edge requested a court-appointed attorney and declined to comment during his appearance in Brunswick County Court, WECT News reported. He showed no obvious emotion as the district attorney said his office would review whether the death penalty is appropriate.

No plea was entered. Edge was ordered to remain in custody pending his next court hearing, scheduled for Oct. 13.

Name change and legal disputes

Edge, who was born in Suffern, New York, and changed his name from Sean DeBevoise in 2023, told police he was injured in combat and suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, Southport's police chief said.

Oak Island Police Chief Charles Morris said Edge was known to officers who frequently saw him by the town pier, and that Edge filed "numerous lawsuits" against the department and town in recent years. In one, he sought body camera video from an encounter after his boat trailer was vandalized.

Legal records indicate Edge turned to the court system to air a variety of perceived grievances.

Among a number of local and federal lawsuits, one from May 12 accused an area church of trying to make him commit suicide because "he is not LGBTQ or a pedophile."

In another, in 2024, he made numerous claims against his parents, including that they'd falsified a birth certificate "for a feral child."

"Plaintiff suffers from war injuries and he suffers from delusions and PTSD. The VA needs to take care of him!!!" his mother, Sandra Lynn DeBevoise, wrote in response.

The DeBevoises could not be reached for comment Monday. Telephone listings could not be located.

In his petition to change his name, he gave this reason: "There have been alot of events in my life that I don't understand. Therefore I do not trust my family, and I would feel more comfortable starting my life in a new path with a new name."

Military deployment and combat injuries

Edge served in the military from 2003-2009, achieving the rank of sergeant in 2007, according to military records, which list his specialties as assault man and reconnaissance man. He had deployments in 2005 and 2006 as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom and was awarded a Purple Heart, a medal given to those wounded or killed in action. Other awards include a Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, Combat Action Ribbon (Iraq) and Iraq Campaign Medal with two bronze stars, which denote time spent in Iraq.

His last duty assignment was with Wounded Warrior Battalion East, II Marine Expeditionary Force in Camp Lejeune, records show. The battalions' mission is to maximize recovery and ensure a smooth transition, whether returning to duty or civilian life, military officials said.

Details of his injuries were not released. A 2017 news story in the Wilmington Star-News described De-

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Bevoise as a Marine sniper who said he'd been left for dead after being shot four times, including in the head, during a raid on a warehouse in Iraq in May 2006. The story detailed his efforts to raise money to start a commercial fishing business.

A public profile

A 2012 post on singer Kellie Pickler's X account appears to show her with a picture of the suspect in a Marine uniform at the Country Music Awards. The photo, first reported by the New York Post, was captioned: "Me and my date (Sgt Sean Debevoise)."

Pickler could not be reached for comment.

Mental health and gun laws

Gov. Josh Stein said the weekend shootings were further proof of the need for improvements to "fix our broken mental health care system."

"We know that the vast majority of folks with mental health challenges pose no risk to others, but some can," Stein said. "There are too many people in our communities with dangerous obsessions exhibiting threatening behavior who do pose risks."

The North Carolina legislature passed a criminal justice reform bill last week in the wake of the stabbing death of a Ukrainian refugee on a Charlotte commuter train that in part includes a greater emphasis upon defendants who need mental health examinations. Stein hasn't yet said whether he'd let the bill become law or veto it.

The legislation lacks a "red flag" law pushed by Democrats for years that would allow a judge to take guns away temporarily from a person whom a judge has found to be a grave risk to the community or themselves. Stein said he thinks such a law is a good idea, although he didn't know whether it would have been triggered in this case.

Bad Bunny tapped for Super Bowl halftime, spotlighting Latin pride and his clashes with Trump

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. and ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The selection of Bad Bunny to headline the Super Bowl halftime show is about more than music.

The move signals a cultural spotlight for Latin identity at America's most-watched television event. It also raises fresh questions about how much space there will be for his trademark symbolism and social commentary — including his past criticism of President Donald Trump — given the NFL's history of keeping performances tightly managed.

Here are some things to know about the selection.

How the show comes together

The halftime show is a collaboration between the NFL, Roc Nation and Apple Music.

Roc Nation, Jay-Z's entertainment company, has curated performers since 2019 and returns alongside veteran producer Jesse Collins. Apple Music distributes the performance, while the NFL ultimately controls the stage, broadcast and branding.

Artists don't get a paycheck for performing. However, their payoff is global exposure. That imbalance gives the league leverage, though history shows that high-powered stars sometimes defy the league's guardrails.

A stage with boundaries

The NFL has a track record of pushing back when artists get political. However, some performers don't always comply.

- In 2020, the league asked Jennifer Lopez to cut a segment featuring children in cages, a critique of U.S. immigration policies. She refused.

- In 2022, it was reported that Dr. Dre and Eminem were both advised not to kneel or reference police, but they went forward.

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• Rapper M.I.A. flashed a middle finger during Madonna's set, earning a hefty fine in 2012. She and the NFL ultimately reached a settlement ending their multimillion dollar dispute a couple years later.

Why Bad Bunny matters

While Bad Bunny is a known hitmaker, he's also an artist who ties his music to Puerto Rican identity, colonial politics and immigrant struggles. His Super Bowl announcement included a pointed dedication: "This is for my people, my culture, and our history."

That alone sets the stage for a performance that could carry layered meanings far beyond spectacle.

In his career, Bad Bunny has become one of the world's most streamed artists with albums such as "Un Verano Sin Ti," an all-Spanish-language record.

The 31-year-old artist born Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio has won three Grammys and 12 Latin Grammys. He has become a global ambassador for Latin music, starred in films such as "Bullet Train," "Caught Stealing" and "Happy Gilmore 2," and collaborated with top fashion houses. He enters November's Latin Grammys as the leading nominee with 12, dethroning producer and songwriter Edgar Barrera.

Bad Bunny v. Trump

Bad Bunny has been vocal in his opposition to Trump and his policies. In the final weeks of the 2024 campaign, he backed former Vice President Kamala Harris after a comedian at Trump's Madison Square Garden rally mocked Puerto Rico as a "floating island of garbage."

Days later, Bad Bunny posted a video showcasing Puerto Rico's beaches and artists, captioned simply: "garbage."

Since Trump took office, Bad Bunny's criticism hasn't slowed. This year, he shared an Instagram video appearing to show immigration agents making arrests in Puerto Rico, with the voice behind the camera cursing the agents.

On July 4, he released the video for "NUEVAYoL," featuring a Trump-like voice apologizing to immigrants: "This country is nothing without the immigrants."

Bad Bunny also shifted his touring strategy. The first nine nights of his 31-show Puerto Rico residency were reserved for island residents, and he skipped U.S. tour stops.

"There was the issue of—like, (expletive) ICE could be outside," he told i-D magazine. He's since taken his tour to Latin America, Europe, Asia and Australia.

But on Sunday, before Bad Bunny made the Super Bowl announcement, he said: "I've been thinking about it these days, and after discussing it with my team, I think I'll do just one date in the United States."

A divided reaction

The halftime announcement has already drawn split responses. California Gov. Gavin Newsom cheered the booking, writing on X: "California is excited to welcome you to Super Bowl LX."

Some Make America Great Again-aligned influencers were quick to push back.

Ryan Fournier, chair of Students for Trump, said "whoever picks these people should be fired."

Conservative podcaster Benny Johnson called Bad Bunny a "massive Trump hater" and "anti-ICE activist," and criticized that he doesn't have songs in English.

Bad Bunny has long shrugged off such critiques. Asked by The New York Times earlier this year how he felt about fans who don't understand his lyrics, he sang into the microphone: "I don't care."

Trump's attention on sports and culture

Trump has a long history of inserting politics into sports. He's pushed for the late Pete Rose's Hall of Fame induction, threatened to block Washington's new stadium deal if the team didn't restore its old name, and frequently used sporting events as political platforms.

The moves are part of his broader efforts to shape the country's cultural mood, weighing in on entertainers and companies alike. He blasted late-night host Jimmy Kimmel, whose show briefly faced suspension after the Trump administration signaled potential repercussions following remarks in the wake of conservative activist Charlie Kirk's assassination.

He also revived his long-running feud with Rosie O'Donnell, saying earlier this year that he was considering "taking away" her U.S. citizenship after she criticized his proposed spending cuts.

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And just last month, Trump inserted himself into the backlash over Cracker Barrel's new logo, posting on Truth Social that the company should stick with its old design. When the chain reversed course, he celebrated the decision as a personal victory.

What's at stake

For Bad Bunny, the halftime show is the ultimate stage to showcase his music, heritage and global influence. For the NFL and Apple Music, it's a balancing act: deliver a spectacle that celebrates diversity without igniting controversy that scares off advertisers.

If Bad Bunny leans strictly into spectacle, the moment could be historic for Latin music. If he threads in political symbolism, it could become one of the most dissected halftime performances in Super Bowl history.

From all over the planet, they came to the UN with a message: Fix things, particularly yourself

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — It's not polite, as a general rule, to visit your hosts and criticize the way they do things. Unless, that is, you're helping to pay the rent.

World leaders have spent the past week at the United Nations doing just that, convening at its grandiloquent headquarters to tell each other — and those who administer the planet's most prominent global institution — that the foundational pillars are cracked, outdated and not in good working order.

Some version of this happens every year. It's part of the overall theater. Leaders point out the U.N.'s flaws and tell it to buckle down and get things done. Then, at the end of speeches, they congratulate themselves for doing important work and go home saying, effectively, "Good talk!" And the conversation pauses for a year.

Yet in recent years, as the United Nations increasingly becomes one of its members' favorite subjects at the General Assembly, a particular turn of phrase has been emerging from world leaders' mouths more and more, aimed at the U.N. itself. It can be mapped sort of like this: We need you, we support you, BUT ...

And this year, with Secretary-General Antonio Guterres himself setting the bleak and critical tone after his team proposed major reforms for the institution's 80th anniversary, the critiques from dozens of nations as they "address this august assembly" feel even more prominent and pointed than usual. Two particularly sharp comments this past week draw that notion out in stark relief.

"We must ask ourselves today: How has the U.N. lived up to expectations? And just look at the state of the world," said Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, India's foreign minister. "Where has the U.N. actually made a difference?"

And from Amara Camara, the foreign minister of Guinea: "The best years of our shared organization may be behind us."

Can that truly be the case?

A pervasive sense that the UN isn't living up to potential

Much of the criticism focuses on the U.N. generally not getting things done and bending a knee to what Terrance Michael Drew, the prime minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, called "the large and the loud" while effectively muzzling multiple smaller, quieter nations and thus undermining its mandate of multilateralism. But there are specific recurring complaints as well.

Among them: inequitable representation on the U.N. Security Council, where Africa has a particular beef. For three decades, it has been calling for a permanent, veto-empowered seat on the Security Council, which has only five permanent members while other nations rotate. Each year, African leaders express frustration about being treated with what Botswana President Duma Boko called "affable indifference."

"We must free the Security Council from this humiliating paralysis," said Mohamad Hasan, Malaysia's foreign minister. "Reform is no longer a choice. It is imperative."

The critical rhetoric came from all geographies. Day after day, leader after leader found things they didn't like about the U.N. and its operations, even as they often couched it in praise.

"We have reason to honor what has been achieved: rights extended, ladders out of poverty raised,

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medicines and measures moved across borders,” Drew said. “Yet alongside those triumphs are truths we must not hide: partial pledges, procrastination and the persistent practice of putting profit before people. Where progress has been made, too often it has been piecemeal; where promises have been given, too often they have been broken.”

As with so many organizations, much of the most salient work goes on behind the scenes and even off site. The United Nations has hundreds of programs around the world that do on-the-ground good for many people facing all manner of challenges. And the performative nature of the U.N. General Assembly makes it sometimes politically expedient to criticize the United Nations when things in the world go bad. Certainly that’s what U.S. President Donald Trump, no fan of the U.N. for many years, did in his own speech.

“What is the purpose of the United Nations?” he said. “It has such tremendous, tremendous potential, but it’s not even coming close to living up to that potential, for the most part. At least for now, all they seem to do is write a really strongly worded letter and then never follow that letter up. It’s empty words, and empty words don’t solve war.”

He also added, pointedly: “All I got from the United Nations was an escalator that on the way up, stopped right in the middle.”

Amid the critiques, though, there were many acknowledgments of a different kind of responsibility — that of the nations that belong to it. “The U.N. is only the sum of its parts. Any lack of impact lies at the feet of member states. The solution is not to abandon it, but to fix it,” said Philip Davis, prime minister of the Bahamas.

And from Germany’s foreign minister, Johann Wadephul: “It is up to us — the member states. WE are the United Nations. We want these United Nations to be strong.”

Maybe the idea itself is the main accomplishment

Multilateralism, the main thread of the United Nations since its post-World War II founding, remains the organization’s cornerstone. It’s a particularly potent notion for less powerful states, which rely on the U.N. to level the playing field between smaller countries and the dominant powers.

But Trump’s all but complete rejection of multilateralism set the tone this year for this kind of wide frustration that the U.N. is a bloated functionary that doesn’t really fix things.

“Reform is not only about structures. It is about credibility. And credibility lives or dies with trust in multilateralism,” said Abdulla Khaleel, foreign minister of the Maldives. “That trust is eroding.”

Lurking behind many of the comments is the ghost of the League of Nations, the post-World War I prototype for the United Nations that collapsed under its own failure to prevent World War II and was replaced by the U.N. in 1946. “We all know of the League of Nations. We must not repeat it,” said Romania’s foreign minister, Oana-Silvia Toiu.

Ultimately, the United Nations may be an aspirational institution more than anything else. It is the embodiment of a era past, yes — but also an ever-receding dream that people might be able to stop fighting by working together. Even if the house is, and to some extent always remains, not quite ready for company. And in the meantime, talking bluntly about the problems during such a chaotic epoch stands as one way to nudge the path forward, even if it takes some serious pokes.

“What the U.N. has achieved so far is not a minor feat. They are the very essence of our shared humanity,” said Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof, the foreign minister of Brunei. “Yet we would be dishonest to speak only of successes.”

Madagascar’s president fires the government following days of deadly Gen Z protests

By SARAH TÉTAUD and GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

ANTANANARIVO, Madagascar (AP) — Madagascar President Andry Rajoelina fired the prime minister and the rest of his government Monday in response to days of deadly Gen Z-led protests in the Indian Ocean island over the failure of the electricity and water supplies.

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Rajoelina said in a speech on national television that Prime Minister Christian Ntsay and other government officials would stay on an interim basis until a new government is formed. He invited applications for government positions and gave a three-day time frame to review proposals for a new prime minister.

"Your demands have been heard, and I apologize if there are members of the government who have not done the work that the people expected," Rajoelina said.

The protesters had called for the resignation of both Ntsay and Rajoelina, but Rajoelina gave no indication that he would step down.

The protests against chronic electricity and water cuts began on Thursday and drew thousands onto the streets, prompting the government to order nighttime curfews in the capital, Antananarivo, and other major cities. The demonstrations gathered momentum on social media and have mirrored recent youth-led anti-government protests in Nepal and Kenya.

The United Nations human rights office said earlier Monday that 22 people had been killed in clashes surrounding the protests. The U.N. agency blamed a "violent response" by security forces. More than 100 people also have been injured in the protests, the agency said.

Protesters and bystanders were killed by security forces, but some of the deaths also came in violence and looting by gangs not associated with the protesters, the U.N. rights office said in a statement.

U.N. high commissioner for human rights Volker Turk was shocked "at the violent response by security forces to the ongoing protests in Madagascar," the U.N. rights office said. It said the protests began peacefully on Thursday, "but the security forces intervened with unnecessary force, lobbing tear gas and beating and arresting protesters. Some officers also used live ammunition."

Madagascar Foreign Minister Rasata Rafaravavitaika disputed the U.N.'s death toll in a statement, saying "the government strongly denies" that 22 people had died. Yet Madagascar authorities have not given any figures of their own for how many people died or were injured.

Rajoelina said that he sympathized with anyone who had lost a loved one in the protests but also didn't offer a death toll on Monday.

Thousands of protesters had returned to the streets in Antananarivo and other cities earlier on Monday, prompting security forces to again fire tear gas at the crowds.

Over the last five days, protesters have barricaded roads with burning tires and rocks, while several stations for Antananarivo's new cable car public transport system were set on fire. Local media reported that the homes of some politicians known to be close to Rajoelina were attacked by protesters.

The government has imposed a nighttime curfew in Antananarivo since Thursday and in other major cities since Friday.

Madagascar is a large island of 31 million people off the east coast of Africa. Protesters have been angered by widespread poverty as well as the failure of authorities to provide reliable supplies of water and electricity. The World Bank has recorded a sharp rise in poverty levels in urban areas in Madagascar in recent years.

Protesters have been carrying flags or wearing T-shirts with a cartoon skull and bones image from the Japanese anime TV series "One Piece" that was used by anti-government protesters in Nepal and parts of Southeast Asia recently. The Madagascan protesters carried placards reading "Justice for Madagascar," "Leo" — which means "we're fed up" — and "We want to live, not just survive."

Rajoelina, 51, has been president since 2019 and was previously the leader of a provisional government following a 2009 coup. He was reelected in 2023 in a vote that was boycotted by most opposition candidates.

AI is transforming how software engineers do their jobs. Just don't call it 'vibe-coding'

By MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writer

One of the hottest markets in the artificial intelligence industry is selling chatbots that write computer code. Some call it "vibe-coding" because it encourages an AI coding assistant to do the grunt work as human software developers work through big ideas. Others dislike that term. But there's no question that these

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tools are transforming the job experience for many tech workers amid an intense rivalry between leading AI companies to make the best one.

"The essence of it is you're no longer in the nitty-gritty syntax," said Cat Wu, project manager of Anthropic's Claude Code. "You're not looking at every single line of code. You're more trying to communicate this higher-level goal of what you want to accomplish."

Wu added, however, that "vibe-coding" is not a term she uses. "We definitely want to make it very clear that the responsibility, at the end of the day, is in the hands of the engineers."

Anthropic launched the latest version of its flagship Claude chatbot on Monday, boasting that Claude Sonnet 4.5 will be the "world's best" for coding and other complex tasks.

Large language models behind generative AI chatbots like Claude, ChatGPT and Google's Gemini are capable of many things, from homework help to organizing meal plans, but the "top use case" for most businesses has been in coding and software engineering, said Gartner analyst Philip Walsh.

"That is often the first thing large organizations go after," Walsh said. "I think there's broad recognition among these AI model providers that coding is really where they're getting the most traction."

And while Walsh said Anthropic's products are a favorite for software developers, it is hardly the only player in a rapidly growing and consolidating market.

San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area remain the center of the battle to make the best AI coder, home not just to fierce rivals OpenAI and Anthropic but startups like Anysphere, Cognition and Harness, as well as Microsoft-owned GitHub.

"This is the most competitive space in the industry right now," said Windsurf CEO Jeff Wang, speaking by video call from the startup's office in Mountain View, California.

Windsurf's coding assistant launched less than a year ago, but as its popularity grew, hitting 200,000 users in its first two months, it found itself at the center of a bidding war between tech giants. OpenAI sought to acquire it. Then, Google scooped up Windsurf's founders and research team, leaving a shell of a company that Cognition acquired in July.

"It's been a really volatile time at Windsurf," Wang wrote to employees in July as he announced the merger with Cognition, maker of the AI coding assistant Devin. Two months later, the two companies' integration is "going really well," Wang told The Associated Press from a conference room called New Kelp City, named for a setting in SpongeBob SquarePants.

Some AI coding assistants automatically finish the code that human programmers are writing, much like the "autocorrect" features that suggest the next lines of an email or text. More advanced tools known as AI agents are given more autonomy to access computer systems and do the work themselves.

Anthropic said its new Sonnet 4.5, on a test before its public release Monday, was able to code autonomously for more than 30 hours on a project for London-based startup iGent.

Anthropic's first coding assistant was developed largely by accident when the company's Boris Cherny built an internal toy project and started using it to accelerate his own work. Then the rest of his team adopted it.

"Over time, we realized that it was just virally spreading within Anthropic," Wu said.

Anthropic has said coding is the top use for Claude, with about 39% of its users saying they use the chatbot for coding.

OpenAI, by contrast, says writing is the most common work task for ChatGPT, with coding and self-expression as more "niche" activities. Even so, OpenAI has sought to catch up, introducing in September a new GPT-5-Codex that it says can work for longer on complex coding tasks.

Among the most coveted customers for big AI model developers are coding startups like Anysphere, maker of the popular coding tool Cursor, which relies heavily on Anthropic's Claude and recently cemented a partnership with OpenAI.

It was Cursor's Composer, combined with Anthropic's Claude Sonnet, that prominent AI researcher Andrej Karpathy was playing with for weekend projects when he coined the phrase "vibe-coding" in February.

"There's a new kind of coding I call 'vibe coding', where you fully give in to the vibes, embrace exponentials, and forget that the code even exists," he wrote on X.

It was "getting too good," he said, so much so that he could speak his instructions and "barely even touch the keyboard."

"It's not really coding - I just see stuff, say stuff, run stuff, and copy-paste stuff, and it mostly works."

Anthropic shipped Claude Code a few weeks later.

Some platforms, like Sweden-based Lovable, cater to vibe-coders with an approach that encourages anyone to "create apps and websites by chatting with AI." But most tools are designed for professionals with programming expertise.

The phenomenon has raised fears of job loss in software careers, fueled by comments from tech CEOs who say AI is speeding up software development and making their teams more efficient.

Walsh said Gartner's position is that AI will not replace software engineers and will actually require more.

"There's so much software that isn't created today because we can't prioritize it," Walsh said. "So it's going to drive demand for more software creation, and that's going to drive demand for highly skilled software engineers who can do it."

Economists, however, are also beginning to worry that AI is taking jobs that would otherwise have gone to young or entry-level workers. In a report last month, researchers at Stanford University found "substantial declines in employment for early-career workers" — ages 22-25 — in fields most exposed to AI.

Stanford researchers also found that AI tools by 2024 were able to solve nearly 72% of coding problems, up from just over 4% a year earlier.

Karpathy didn't respond to requests for comment. But the idea that non-technical people in an organization can "vibe-code" business-ready software is a misunderstanding of what Karpathy meant when he came up with the term, Walsh said.

"That's simply not happening. The quality is not there. The robustness is not there. The scalability and security of the code is not there," Walsh said. "These tools reward highly skilled technical professionals who already know what 'good' looks like."

Wu said she's told her younger sister, who's still in college, that software engineering is still a great career and worth studying.

"When I talk with her about this, I tell her AI will make you a lot faster, but it's still really important to understand the building blocks because the AI doesn't always make the right decisions," Wu said. "A lot of times the human intuition is really important."

Lawyer for suspect in Charlie Kirk killing wants more time to review 'voluminous' evidence

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

PROVO, Utah (AP) — An attorney for the 22-year-old man charged with killing Charlie Kirk asked a judge Monday for more time to review the large amount of evidence in the case before deciding if the defense will seek a preliminary hearing.

A preliminary hearing would determine if there is enough evidence against Tyler Robinson to go forward with a trial. Defendants can waive that step, but Robinson's newly appointed attorney Kathryn Nester said her team did not intend to do so.

Utah prosecutors have charged Robinson with aggravated murder and plan to seek the death penalty.

Both the defense and prosecution acknowledged at a brief hearing Monday that the amount of evidence prosecutors have is "voluminous." Robinson was not present for the hearing and appeared via audio from jail at his defense team's request.

Judge Tony Graf set the next hearing for Oct. 30.

Defense attorneys for Robinson and prosecutors with the Utah County Attorney's Office declined to comment after Monday's hearing. It took place in Provo, just a few miles from the Utah Valley University campus in Orem where many students are still processing trauma from the Sept. 10 shooting and the day-and-a-half search for the suspect.

Authorities arrested Robinson when he showed up with his parents at his hometown sheriff's office in

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southwest Utah, more than a three-hour drive from the site of the shooting, to turn himself in. Prosecutors have since revealed incriminating text messages and DNA evidence that they say connect Robinson to the killing.

A note that Robinson left for his romantic partner before the shooting said he had the opportunity to kill one of the nation's leading conservative voices, "and I'm going to take it," Utah County Attorney Jeff Gray told reporters before the first hearing. Gray also said Robinson wrote in a text about Kirk to his partner: "I had enough of his hatred."

The assassination of Kirk, a close ally of President Donald Trump who worked to steer young voters toward conservatism, has galvanized Republicans who have vowed to carry on Kirk's mission of moving American politics further right.

Trump has declared Kirk a "martyr" for freedom and threatened to crack down on what he called the "radical left."

Workers across the U.S. have been punished or fired for speaking out about Kirk after his death, including teachers, public and private employees and media personalities — most notably Jimmy Kimmel, whose late-night show was suspended then reinstated by ABC.

Kirk's political organization, Arizona-based Turning Point USA, brought young, evangelical Christians into politics through his podcast, social media and campus events. Many prominent Republicans are filling in at the upcoming campus events Kirk planned to attend, including Utah Gov. Spencer Cox and Sen. Mike Lee at Utah State University on Tuesday.

Trump takes his tariff war to the movies announcing 100% levies on foreign-made films

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS and PAUL WISEMAN AP Business Writers

President Donald Trump says he will slap a 100% tax on movies made outside the United States — a vague directive aimed at protecting a business that America already dominates.

Claiming that movie production "has been stolen" from Hollywood and the U.S., Trump posted on his Truth Social platform that "I will be imposing a 100% tariff on any and all movies that are made outside of the United States."

It was unclear how these tariffs would operate, since movies and TV shows can be transmitted digitally without going through ports. Also unclear is what it would mean for U.S. movies filmed on foreign locations — think James Bond and Jason Bourne — or what legal basis the president would claim for imposing the tariffs.

The president had first issued the threat back in May. He has yet to specify when the tariff might go into effect.

Movies are an odd battleground for a U.S. trade war. "Unlike any other country's film industry, U.S. movies are the most accessible, well-known, and best performing due to the numerous language options and worldwide reach provided by U.S.-based studios," trade analyst Jacob Jensen of the center-right American Action Forum wrote in a July commentary.

In movie theaters, American-produced movies overwhelmingly dominate the domestic marketplace. Data from the Motion Picture Association also shows that American films made \$22.6 billion in exports and \$15.3 billion in trade surplus in 2023 — with a recent report noting that these films "generated a positive balance of trade in every major market in the world" for the U.S.

Barry Appleton, co-director of the Center for International Law at the New York Law Center, warned that other countries may retaliate with levies on American movies or other services. In movies, "Brand America is way, way ahead," he said. "What this policy does is actually cook the golden goose that's laying the golden eggs."

Tariffs are Trump's go-to solution for America's economic problems, a tool he likes to use to extract concessions from other countries. Reversing decades of U.S. support for lower trade barriers, he's slapped double-digit tariffs on imports from almost every country on earth. And he's targeted specific products,

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including most recently pharmaceuticals, heavy trucks, kitchen cabinets and bathroom vanities.

Unlike other sectors that have recently been targeted by tariffs, movies go beyond physical goods, bringing larger intellectual property ramifications into question.

Here's what we know.

Why is Trump threatening this steep movie tariff?

Trump has cited national security concerns, a justification he's similarly used to impose import taxes on certain countries and a range of sector-specific goods.

In May, Trump claimed that the American movie industry is "DYING to a very fast death" as other countries offer "all sorts of incentives" to draw filmmaking away from the U.S.

In recent years, U.S. film and television production has been hampered between setbacks from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hollywood guild strikes of 2023 and the recent wildfires in the Los Angeles area. Incentive programs have also long-influenced where movies are shot both abroad and within the U.S., with more production leaving California to states like Georgia and New Mexico — as well as countries like Canada.

At the same time, international markets make up a large chunk of Hollywood's total box office revenue — accounting for over 70% last year, according Heeyon Kim, an assistant professor of strategy at Cornell University. She warned that tariffs and potential retaliation from other countries impacting this industry could result in billions of dollars in lost earnings and thousands of jobs.

"To me, (this) makes just no sense," Kim previously told The Associated Press, adding that such tariffs could "undermine otherwise a thriving part of the U.S. economy."

The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, which represents behind-the-scenes entertainment workers across the U.S. and Canada, said in May that Trump had "correctly recognized" the "urgent threat from international competition" that the American film and television industry faces today. But the union said it instead recommended the administration implement a federal production tax incentive and other provisions to "level the playing field" while not harming the industry overall.

How could a tax on foreign-made movies work?

That's anyone's guess.

"Traditional tariffs apply to physical imports crossing borders, but film production primarily involves digital services — shooting, editing and post-production work that happens electronically," Ann Koppuzha, a lawyer and business law lecturer at Santa Clara University's Leavey School of Business, explained when Trump first made his May threat.

Koppuzha added that film production is more like an applied service that can be taxed, not tariffed. But taxes require Congressional approval, which could be a challenge even with a Republican majority.

Making a movie is also an incredibly complex — and international — process. It's common for both large and small films to include production in the U.S. and in other countries, or overseas altogether. Steven Schiffman, a longtime industry veteran and adjunct professor at Georgetown University, pointed to popular titles filmed outside the U.S. — such as Warner Bros' "Harry Potter" series, which was almost entirely shot in the U.K.

U.S. studios shoot abroad because tax incentives can aid production costs. But a blanket tariff across the board could discourage that or limit options — hurting both Hollywood films and the global industry that helps create them.

"When you make these sort of blanket rules, you're missing some of the nuance of how production works," Schiffman said previously. "Sometimes you just need to go to the location, because frankly it's way too expensive just to try to create in a soundstage"

Could movie tariffs have repercussions on other intellectual property?

Overall, experts warn that the prospect of tariffing foreign-made movies ventures into uncharted waters.

"There's simply no precedent," Koppuzha said in May. And while the Trump administration could extend similar threats to other forms of intellectual property, like music, "they'd encounter the same practical hurdles."

But if successful, some also warn of potential retaliation. Kim pointed to "quotas" that some countries

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have had to help boost their domestic films by ensuring they get a portion of theater screens, for example.

Many have reduced or suspended such quotas over the years in the name of open trade — but if the U.S. places a sweeping tariff on all foreign-made films, these kinds of quotas could come back, “which would hurt Hollywood film or any of the U.S.-made intellectual property,” Kim said.

And while U.S. dominance in film means “there are fewer substitutes” for retaliation, Schiffman noted that other forms of entertainment — like game development — could see related impacts down the road.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams abandons his reelection campaign

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ and ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York City Mayor Eric Adams ended his struggling reelection campaign Sunday, an acknowledgment that he was no longer a credible contender after a year of scandal and political turmoil.

In a video released on social media, Adams spoke proudly of his tenure as mayor. But he said his now-dismissed federal corruption case left voters wary of him, and “constant media speculation” about his future made it impossible to raise enough money to run a serious campaign.

“Despite all we’ve achieved, I cannot continue my reelection campaign,” he said.

Adams did not endorse any of the remaining candidates in the race, but he warned of “insidious forces” using local government to “advance divisive agendas.”

“That is not change, that is chaos,” Adams said. “Instead, I urge New Yorkers to choose leaders not by what they promise, but by what they have delivered.”

Adams’ capitulation could potentially provide a lift to the campaign of former Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a fellow centrist who portrayed himself as the only candidate able to beat the Democratic Party’s nominee, state Assemblymember Zohran Mamdani.

It is unclear, though, whether enough Adams supporters will shift their allegiances to Cuomo to make a difference.

Mamdani, 33, would be the city’s youngest and most liberal mayor in generations if elected. He beat Cuomo decisively in the Democratic primary by campaigning on a promise to try to lower the cost of living in one of the world’s most expensive cities.

Mamdani, Cuomo and Sliwa remain in the race

In a statement after Adams’ announcement, Mamdani took aim at Cuomo, who is trying to make a political comeback after resigning the governor’s office after being accused of sexual harassment by multiple women.

“New York deserves better than trading in one disgraced, corrupt politician for another. On November 4th, we are going to turn the page on the politics of big money and small ideas and deliver a government every New Yorker can be proud of,” Mamdani said.

Cuomo, in a statement on social media, praised Adams for “putting the well-being of New York City ahead of personal ambition.”

“We face destructive extremist forces that would devastate our city through incompetence or ignorance, but it is not too late to stop them,” Cuomo said.

Republican Curtis Sliwa also remains in the race, though his candidacy has been undercut from within his own party; Trump in a recent interview called him “not exactly prime time.”

Rough showing in polls

Speculation that Adams wouldn’t make it to Election Day has been rampant for a year. His campaign was severely wounded by both the bribery case and liberal anger over his warm relationship with President Donald Trump. He skipped the Democratic primary and got on the ballot as an independent.

Polls conducted in early September illustrated his challenges. One poll by The New York Times and Siena University and another by Quinnipiac University showed likely voters favoring Mamdani over Cuomo, with Sliwa and Adams trailing further behind.

The Quinnipiac poll suggested the gap between Mamdani and Cuomo could narrow if Adams dropped out. The Times/Siena poll suggested that if both Adams and Sliwa withdrew, Mamdani’s advantage over Cuomo could shrink even further.

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Sliwa, though, has repeatedly insisted he will not quit.

"Curtis Sliwa is the only candidate who can defeat Mamdani," his spokesperson, Daniel Kurzyna, said Sunday.

In recent weeks, Trump administration intermediaries interested in blocking Mamdani's path to victory by getting him into a one-on-one matchup with Cuomo had approached Adams to see if he could be coaxed out of the contest with an offer of a government job.

Amid reports on those discussions, Adams called a news conference where he pledged to keep running and derided Cuomo and Mamdani as "spoiled brats." Later, on social media, Adams called Cuomo "a liar and a snake."

Indictment overshadows progress

Adams, 65, is the city's second Black mayor. A former New York City police captain and Brooklyn borough president, he took office in 2022 promising to crack down on crime and revitalize a city still bouncing back from the coronavirus pandemic.

On his signature issue, he succeeded. Crime rates that ticked upward after COVID-19 hit the city have fallen back to pre-pandemic levels, though it's unclear how much that had to do with Adams' policies.

But scandals and corruption probes have crippled Adams' chances at another term.

Over a head-spinning period of weeks last year, his police commissioner, schools chancellor and several deputy mayors resigned following a series of federal raids on their homes. None have faced criminal charges.

Then, in late September, federal prosecutors brought fraud and bribery charges accusing Adams of accepting illegal campaign contributions and steep travel discounts from a Turkish official and others, and in exchange later accelerating the opening of Turkey's diplomatic building, among other favors.

Trump intervenes

Adams denied wrongdoing and pledged to remain in office. He also began speaking warmly about Trump, then seen as having a growing chance of regaining the White House. He defended Trump in media briefings, urged his party to tone down rhetoric against the Republican and refrained from criticizing him.

After Trump won, Adams met with Trump's border czar, Thomas Homan.

Then, in February, Trump's Justice Department ordered federal prosecutors in New York to drop the charges against Adams so the mayor could assist with the Republican president's immigration agenda.

The extraordinary intervention triggered fresh tumult in City Hall and the Manhattan U.S. Attorney's Office, with some of Adams' closest allies suggesting he had struck a deal with the White House for his freedom.

Adams announced he would skip the June Democratic primary but would stay in the race.

In late August, Adams former top adviser — who served as a campaign volunteer — was hit with fresh bribery charges. Another former aide was removed from the campaign after handing a potato chip bag full of cash to a local reporter.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, who has endorsed Mamdani, said after Adams' announcement that she has been proud to have worked with him for the past four years, adding in her statement that he leaves the city "better than he inherited it."

Iran hangs a man accused of spying for Israel in a wave of executions

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran said Monday it hanged a man accused of spying for Israel, the latest in the largest wave of executions by Tehran in decades.

Iran identified the executed man as Bahman Choobiasl. His case wasn't immediately known in Iranian media reports or to activists monitoring the death penalty in the Islamic Republic.

The execution came as Iran vowed to confront its enemies after the United Nations reimposed sanctions on Tehran over its nuclear program this weekend. The European Union followed suit Monday, imposing similar sanctions on Iran.

Iran accused Choobiasl of meeting with officials from the Israeli spy agency Mossad, calling him the

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agency's "most trusted" spy. Iran's Mizan news agency, which is the judiciary's official mouthpiece, said Choobiasl worked on "sensitive telecommunications projects" and reported about the "paths of importing electronic devices."

Iran is known to have hanged nine people for espionage since its June war with Israel. Israel waged an air war with Iran, killing some 1,100 people, including many military commanders. Iran launched missile barrages targeting Israel in response.

Earlier this month, Iran executed Babak Shahbazi, who it alleged spied for Israel. Activists disputed that, saying Shahbazi was tortured into a false confession after writing a letter to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy offering to fight for Kyiv.

Iran routinely conducts closed-door trials of those accused of espionage, with the suspects often unable to access the evidence against them.

Iran has faced multiple nationwide protests in recent years, fueled by anger over the economy, demands for women's rights and calls for the country's theocracy to change.

In response to those protests and the June war, Iran has been putting prisoners to death at a pace unseen since 1988, when it executed thousands at the end of the Iran-Iraq war.

The Oslo-based group Iran Human Rights and the Washington-based Abdorrahman Boroumand Center for Human Rights in Iran put the number of people executed in 2025 at over 1,000, noting the number could be higher as Iran does not report on each execution.

Independent human rights experts at the United Nations also criticized Iran's executions Monday.

"The sheer scale of executions in Iran is staggering and represents a grave violation of the right to life," the experts said. "With an average of more than nine hangings per day in recent weeks, Iran appears to be conducting executions at an industrial scale that defies all accepted standards of human rights protection."

Today in History: September 30, Berlin Airlift concludes

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, Sept. 30, the 273rd day of 2025. There are 92 days left in the year.

On Sept. 30, 1949, the Berlin Airlift came to an end after delivering more than 2.3 million tons of cargo to blockaded residents of West Berlin over the prior 15 months.

In 1777, the Continental Congress — forced to flee in the face of advancing British forces — moved to York, Pennsylvania, after briefly meeting in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

In 1791, Mozart's opera "The Magic Flute" premiered in Vienna, Austria.

In 1938, addressing the public after cosigning the Munich Agreement, which allowed Nazi annexation of Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain proclaimed, "I believe it is peace for our time."

In 1947, the World Series was broadcast on television for the first time, as the New York Yankees defeated the Brooklyn Dodgers 5-3 in Game 1; the Yankees would go on to win the Series four games to three.

In 1954, the first nuclear-powered submarine, the USS Nautilus, was commissioned by the U.S. Navy.

In 1955, actor James Dean was killed at age 24 in a two-car collision near Cholame, California.

In 1972, Pittsburgh Pirates star Roberto Clemente connected for his 3,000th and final hit, a double against Jon Matlack of the New York Mets at Three Rivers Stadium.

In 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed treaties to illegally annex more occupied Ukrainian territory in a sharp escalation of his seven-month invasion.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Angie Dickinson is 94. Singer Johnny Mathis is 90. Actor Len Cariou is 86. Singer Marilyn McCoo is 82. Actor Barry Williams is 71. Singer Patrice Rushen is 71. Actor Fran Drescher is 68. Country musician Marty Stuart is 67. Actor Crystal Bernard is 64. Actor Eric Stoltz is 64. Rapper-producer Marley Marl is 63. Country musician Eddie Montgomery (Montgomery Gentry) is 62. Rock singer Trey Anastasio (Phish) is 61. Actor Monica Bellucci is 61. Actor Tony Hale is 55. Actor Jenna Elfman is 54. Actor Marion Cotillard is 50. Author and journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates is 50. Tennis Hall of Famer Martina Hingis is 45. Olympic gold medal gymnast Dominique Moceanu is 44. Actor Lacey Chabert is 43. Actor Kieran Culkin is 43. Singer-rapper T-Pain is 41. Racing driver Max Verstappen is 28. Actor-dancer Maddie Ziegler is 23.