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## Wednesday, Oct. 22

Senior Menu: Hamburger cabbage soup, chicken salad sandwich, Mandarin oranges, oatmeal raisin cookie.

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

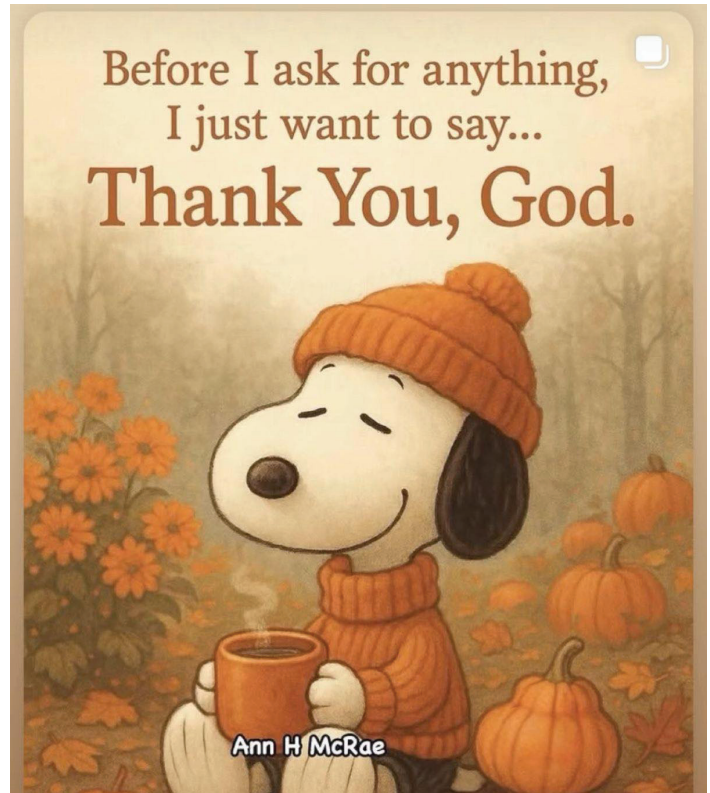
School Lunch: Mac and cheese, peas.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.

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

6th Grade GBB Practice, 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Confirmation, 5:30 p.m.



## Thursday, Oct. 23

Senior Menu: Goulash, green peas, apple crisp, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Cereal.

School Lunch: Burrito bowl.

3rd Grade GBB Practice, 5 p.m.

3rd-6th GBB Skills, 6 p.m.

First Round FB Playoffs, 7 p.m. at Clark/Willow Lake

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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.**

## Japan's New Leader

Japan elected conservative Sanae Takaichi as its first female prime minister yesterday after a coalition deal between her Liberal Democratic Party and the right-leaning Japan Innovation Party. Takaichi, 64, succeeds Shigeru Ishiba, who resigned last month after election losses left the LDP without an outright majority in parliament for the first time in 15 years.

An ally of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Takaichi supports conservative fiscal and defense policies and has pledged to strengthen national security, expand semiconductor production, and increase energy self-sufficiency. She called for US cooperation on regional defense and trade and is expected to meet President Donald Trump next week.

Some critics expressed concern that her policies could slow progress toward gender equality. Women hold less than 16% of lower house seats and about 10% of cabinet posts. Japan ranked 118 out of 148 countries in the 2025 World Gender Gap Report, the lowest among G7 countries (the US ranked 42).

## Media Giant Mulls Sale

Warner Bros. Discovery said yesterday it is weighing a full or partial sale after receiving unsolicited interest. The news comes roughly four months after the conglomerate announced plans to split its struggling cable networks from its more profitable studio and streaming arms, creating two publicly traded companies.

The HBO and CNN parent company did not disclose potential buyers, but Skydance Media founder David Ellison has reportedly expressed interest. Ellison, the son of Oracle cofounder Larry Ellison, acquired CBS owner Paramount for roughly \$8B in August, forming Paramount Skydance. He also bought conservative news startup The Free Press for about \$150M this month. Streaming company Netflix and NBC owner Comcast are reportedly interested parties as well.

Warner Bros. Discovery said it will continue working toward splitting the company by mid-2026 as it evaluates offers. Separately, the company yesterday raised prices for HBO Max streaming plans. Shares closed up 11%.

## Ballroom Bulldozing Begins

The White House began demolition this week to prepare for its \$250M, 90,000-square-foot ballroom. Parts of the East Wing's outer walls have been bulldozed, with staffers instructed not to take photographs at President Donald Trump's request.

Trump announced plans for the White House Ballroom in July and aims to complete the project by the end of his term. The space is expected to seat up to 900 people—over four times the capacity of the East Room, the White House's largest event space. Trump said he is privately funding the project alongside other donors. That reportedly includes corporate contributions from Apple, Amazon, Google, Palantir, and Coinbase, among others. The space will include gilded Corinthian columns, gold and crystal chandeliers, and a checkered marble floor.

As president, Trump has broad authority to make updates to the White House complex; construction is typically also overseen by federal agencies.

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Hermès appoints Grace Wales Bonner as menswear division creative director, making her the first Black woman to lead design at major fashion house.

All US women's gymnasts advance to World Gymnastics Championships finals.

California earmarks \$342M in tax credits to boost big-budget film production, with record \$43.9M for "Jumanji" franchise.

Netflix secures rights to "Catan" board game universe, developing film and TV adaptations.

Chess grandmaster Daniel Naroditsky, a former child prodigy credited with helping to popularize the game, dies at age 29; cause of death undisclosed as of this writing.

## Science & Technology

OpenAI launches Atlas web browser built around its generative AI chatbot ChatGPT; product puts OpenAI in direct competition with Google Chrome and Perplexity AI's Comet browser.

Dust samples from the moon's far side reveal debris from rare, water-rich meteorites, offering new clues into how the moon and Earth were first seeded with water.

Study of ultramarathon runners suggests biological limit to how many calories humans can burn over an extended period of time.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 +0.0%, Dow +0.5%, Nasdaq -0.2%); Dow rises to new record.

Gold prices fall in biggest daily drop in more than a decade.

Netflix shares fall in after-hours trading after missing revenue and earnings estimates, partly due to Brazilian tax dispute; company still records best-ever quarter for ad sales.

Beyond Meat shares soar 146% after plant-based meat producer is added to meme exchange-traded fund, announces plans to expand distribution into Walmart stores.

## Politics & World Affairs

President Donald Trump shelve planned summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Hungary following phone call between US and Russian diplomats.

Trump nominee to lead federal watchdog agency withdraws from consideration after offensive text messages are leaked, Republican senators pull support.

North Carolina's state Senate advances a new congressional map expected to provide Republicans with one additional House seat in the 2026 midterms; Republican-led state House is expected to approve the map this week.

Louvre heist loot is valued at \$102M, per French public prosecutor; four unnamed suspects are under investigation.

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## The Life of Dianne Schelle



Private family services for Dianne Schelle, 59, of Groton will be 2:00 p.m., Friday, October 24, 2025 at Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton. The Rev. Jeremy Yeadon will officiate. Burial will follow in Union Cemetery, Groton under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel. Visitation will be held for one hour prior to services.

Dianne passed away at her home on October 18, 2025.

Dianne Denise was born on October 6, 1966 in Aberdeen to Jack Lynn and Lillian Esther (Hein) Dixon.

She was baptized into the Lutheran faith. Dianne graduated from Groton High School in 1984 and continued her education at Stewarts School of Hair Styling. During cosmetology school, she worked at the Groton Dairy Queen. Following graduation in 1985, she was employed at Adam & Eve Salon in Aberdeen. She was united in marriage with Allen McKiver, Jr. in 1987 and they were blessed with a son Alex Allen McKiver.

Later, as a single mom, Dianne worked at the Ramkota Inn in Aberdeen while putting herself through nursing school. She graduated from Presentation College of Nursing in 1994 and was a born caregiver.

On June 28, 1997 she married Rick Schelle at the Presbyterian Church in Groton and together they had a son, Keegan Richard Schelle. After many years in the nursing field, she switched to caring for the precious little ones at St. John's Lutheran Church Daycare. She loved working with the kids.

Celebrating her life is her husband, Rick of Groton, her sons, Alex (Tandy) McKiver of Aberdeen, Keegan Schelle of Watertown, her siblings: Sherry (Rick) Koehler of Groton, Patty Smith of Sturgis, Jackie (Dennis) Hales of Aberdeen, Michael (Karen) Dixon of Rapid City, Kelli (Dan) Danburg of Aberdeen, Kathy (Jason) Holm of Mina, her mother-in-law, Jan Schelle of Groton, a host of brother and sister-in laws, along with many nieces and nephews.

Preceding her in death were her parents, brother, Steven Dixon, father-in-law, Larry Schelle and many aunts and uncles.

Casketbearers will be her nephews Aaron Dixon, Garrett Dixon, David Hales, Matthew Hales, Ryan Koehler & Austin Bieber.

Honorary casketbearers will be Alex McKiver, Keegan Schelle, Jack McKiver, Chris Smith, Tyler Holm and Jacob Dixon.

## Pennington County Fatal Crash

What: Two-vehicle fatal crash

Where: I-90 at mile marker 54, 2 miles west of Rapid City, SD

When: 7:30 a.m., Tuesday, October 21, 2025

Driver 1: 43-year-old male from Rapid City, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2019 Chevrolet Silverado

Seat Belt Used: Yes

Driver 2: 43-year-old male from Box Elder, SD, life-threatening injuries

Vehicle 2: 2022 International Truck-Tractor

Seat Belt Used: Yes

Pennington County, S.D.- A Rapid City, South Dakota man died following a two-vehicle crash Tuesday morning near Rapid City.

Names of the those involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2022 International Truck-Tractor was traveling eastbound on I-90 near mile marker 54. At the same time, the driver of a 2019 Chevrolet Silverado was traveling westbound at the same location when he crossed the median and struck the International Truck-Tractor. The I-90 eastbound lanes shut down at approximately 7:30 a.m. At 10:15 a.m., the passing eastbound lane reopened to traffic.

The driver of the Chevrolet died from his injuries. The driver of the International Truck-Tractor was transported to a local hospital with life-threatening injuries.

All information released is preliminary.

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



## South Dakota WIC Services Continue Without Disruption

PIERRE, SD – The South Dakota Department of Health (DOH) confirms that the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program continues to operate as normal.

“There is no disruption to South Dakota WIC services,” said Melissa Magstadt, Secretary of Health. “Our dedicated WIC team continues to provide support and services to families across the state, and participants should attend their scheduled appointments as usual.”

The Department of Health is actively monitoring the status of the federal government shutdown and remains in close contact with federal partners. Participants will be notified promptly if any changes occur.

The South Dakota WIC program provides families with healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and connections to community resources that help them thrive.

“We understand that times of uncertainty can cause concern,” Secretary Magstadt said. “We want to reassure South Dakota families that WIC services remain available and uninterrupted. Our top priority is ensuring families continue to receive the care and nutrition resources they rely on.”

For more information and the latest updates, visit <https://www.sd.gov/wic>.

At the heart of the Department of Health’s mission is a simple goal: to protect and improve the health of all South Dakotans. The department is entrusted with the vital task of promoting wellness, preventing disease, and ensuring access to quality healthcare for all South Dakotans.

## Locke Reaches 1,000 Career Digs as Tigers Battle Wildcats in Four Sets

The Groton Area Tigers hosted the Northwestern Area Wildcats on Tuesday night in a matchup between two of the region's premier volleyball programs. After a fast start from the Tigers, the Wildcats rallied to take the match 3–1 by set scores of 21–25, 25–18, 25–20, and 25–15.

Groton came out on fire in the opening set, jumping to a 12–7 lead and stretching it to 18–10 before Northwestern began to close the gap. The Tigers held on to take the first set 25–21 behind a dominant effort from Tevan Hanson, who recorded nine kills in the set. Jaedyn Penning added four kills, while Chesney Weber and Taryn Traphagen each tallied three.

For Northwestern, Ashley Haven led the way early with three kills, two solo blocks, and one assisted block.

The second set was a battle, featuring ten ties and seven lead changes. The Wildcats used a late five-point surge to break the final tie and take control, pulling away for a 25–18 win. Haven led Northwestern with six kills in the set, while Breelyn Satter chipped in five. Penning paced Groton with three kills.

The third set was equally competitive, with ten ties and six lead changes. Groton led 20–18 before Northwestern closed on a seven-point run to win 25–20. Weber and Traphagen each had four kills for the Tigers, and senior libero Jerica Locke reached a major career milestone—recording her 1,000th dig. Haven again led the Wildcats with six kills, an ace serve, a solo block, and an assisted block.

In the fourth and final set, the teams traded points early before Northwestern pulled away. After an 8–8 tie, the Wildcats went up 14–9 and never looked back, closing the match 25–15. Hanson led Groton with five kills in the set, while Haven continued her outstanding night with six kills and another solo block.

### Final Match Totals

#### Groton Area (21–5):

Tevan Hanson 17 kills; Jaedyn Penning 12 kills; Chesney Weber 10 kills; Taryn Traphagen 9 kills, 1 solo block, 1 assisted block; Makenna Krause 5 kills; Rylee Dunker 5 kills, 1 assisted block.

#### Northwestern (31–2):

Ashley Haven 23 kills, 1 ace serve, 3 solo blocks, 2 assisted blocks; Breelyn Satter 8 kills, 1 solo block, 1 assisted block; Brenna Halverson 2 ace serves; Ella Boekelheide 6 kills, 1 assisted block; Lila Johnson 5 kills, 2 solo blocks, 3 ace serves; Kylee Henjum 4 kills, 1 solo block, 1 assisted block; Taylor Vetter 8 kills, 1 assisted block.

### Coach Hanson's Reflections

Despite the loss, Head Coach Chelsea Hanson said she was proud of her team's effort and the opportunity to play at such a high level.

"Honestly, all four sets were fantastic," Hanson said. "There were so many times in that game where I told the girls, this is something we need to learn. I told them before the game it didn't really matter in terms of points—we just needed to go out and compete. It's been a while since we've really had a chance to do that."

She noted that Northwestern's size at the net made a difference.

"I'd say we probably scored the ball better, but they blocked the ball better," Hanson explained. "Their



**Jerica Locke got her 1,000th dig Tuesday night in the Northwestern match.** (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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block was big and definitely affected us. But overall, I'm just super proud of the way we competed. They could have come out and laid down because it's Northwestern and they're 30-2, but they didn't. They went after it."

Hanson said the match provided valuable lessons heading into the postseason.

"We've been looking forward to this one for a long time, and I wish we could play matches like this every night because it would make us so much better," she said. "For us to come out and take a set off them is good. Now we just have to find a way to finish."

The evening also included a milestone moment for Jerica Locke, who notched her 1,000th career dig.

"We really didn't fill her in ahead of time, so when everyone started cheering, she didn't know what was going on," Hanson laughed. "She needed 29 digs coming in and had around 14 in the first set. It's a huge accomplishment, and we're so proud of her."

Groton Area (21-5) will next travel to Redfield on Friday to close out the regular season before post-season play begins.

## Junior Varsity Results

Groton Area won the junior varsity match in straight sets, 25-22, 25-22.

Kinsley Rowen had two kills, Sydney Locke tallied two kills and an ace serve, and McKenna Krause added an ace serve. Abby Fjeldheim led the attack with six kills, while Emily Jones had three kills and Elizabeth Cole contributed two kills and an assisted block. Liby Althoff served four aces and added a kill, and Kella Tracy finished with six kills, one solo block, and one assisted block.

**Football**  
Groton Area at Clark  
Thurs., Oct. 23  
7:00 p.m.  
First Round Playoffs



Groton  
Area  
Tigers  
Groton, SD

**GDILIVE**  
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**Groton Daily Independent**  
For more info: [GDILIVE.COM](http://GDILIVE.COM)

**Varsity Volleyball**  
Groton Area at Redfield  
Fri., Oct. 24  
7:00 p.m.



Groton  
Area  
Tigers  
Groton, SD

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## City Council reviews budget priorities, recreation programs, more by Elizabeth Varin

The Groton City Council covered a range of community updates Tuesday evening, from upcoming budget planning to facility improvements and program reports.

While official adoption of a budget isn't scheduled until the first meeting in November, Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich told the council, "this is figuring out which of the big ticket items you want."

Some budget requests include painting the exterior of City Hall (\$20,000), purchasing four radar signs for the highways in town (\$20,000), a new scoreboard at the baseball/softball complex (\$25,000), purchase of a new electric department bucket truck (\$261,000) and rebuilding a transmission line (\$1 million).

Two requests have already been penciled in for the 2026 budget. About \$120,000 has been set aside for street resurfacing, and \$35,000 has been allocated to complete the city's financial contribution to the new baseball/softball facility concession stand.

Other projects discussed included improvements needed at the Community Center.

Councilman Brian Bahr said some of the siding there is swelling at the bottom, and it's just time to invest in the community center.

Some specific-project funds were included in the presentation Tuesday, but Councilman Mike Shilhanek said a larger list of projects through the next few years would be helpful to get ahead of big projects.

Heinrich agreed, saying they should take the time to build a capital improvement plan. There's a running list of budget requests at City Hall, but it's not set in stone.



**Keith Wipf with Ringneck Construction goes over concrete poured Tuesday at the Groton airport.** (Photo by Elizabeth Varin)

### Recreation reports reviewed

The council reviewed two summer recreation reports.

The swimming pool had total revenues of \$49,249.74, which includes admission, concessions, donations and advertisement signs.

Expenses, though, outweighed revenue. A total of \$154,212.94 was spent on things such as salaries, water testing fees, insurance, training and supplies.

The pool had a net loss of \$104,963.20, slightly higher than 2024's net loss of \$103,037.43.

The net loss has risen through the last five years, from a low of \$68,106.53 in 2022. Some of the major cost increases include training (\$3,860 in 2022 to \$5,340 in 2025) and salaries (\$64,430.60 in 2022 and \$95,949.89 in 2025).

The council also approved the 2025 baseball report.

The baseball complex had total revenues of \$91,477.50, which includes gate fees, tournament fees, concession stand receipts and sales of hats and shirts.

Expenses totaled \$138,211.77, a total made up by coaching, gatekeeper and groundskeeper salaries, paying umpires, tournament expenses, travel expenses, repairs and supplies.

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The baseball program recorded a \$44,161.30 loss in 2025. It was a smaller net loss than 2024, which had a \$60,598.95 loss.

## Park bathroom renovation proposed

Topper Tastad, with the Groton Lions Club, presented a proposal to renovate the city park bathrooms during the council meeting. The plan calls for removing the roof and the wall dividing the men's and women's restrooms, then adding a new structure that connects to the existing building. This would allow for both a men's and women's restroom with multiple stalls and showers for the campground. The updates would also make the facility ADA accessible and modernize the structure, which was originally built more than 50 years ago.

"It's a real do-able deal," Tastad said, estimating the project cost between \$150,000 and \$175,000. "We can have a usable, new, nice facility next summer. It does everything we need it to do."

While council members expressed appreciation for the idea, they opted not to move forward at this time. The city has been developing its own renovation and funding plan for the facility, which also includes converting the structure into a tornado shelter.

"I'm not trying to argue the bathrooms aren't in bad shape. They are," said Councilman Brian Bahr. "I just feel like we have to see this through."

The city is waiting for a decision from the Federal Emergency Management Agency about a funding request to help with the project.

"If we get rejected and the door gets slammed on us, we can do this," Bahr said.

Councilman Jon Cutler added that because the proposal under review by FEMA includes a storm shelter, that's reason enough to see the process through. The city could get word that the project funding request has been denied by the federal agency within the next few months, he said. If that happens, there would still be time to get Tastad's idea started by the time the frost comes out of the ground in the spring.

## Updates continue at Groton Airport

Darrell Hillestad updated the council on progress made at the airport.

Hillestad called out individuals that have been helping build a foundation for a building at the airport. Mike Dunbar has helped prep the area and make the concrete forms. And Keith Wipf with Ringneck Construction had a crew out Tuesday to pour concrete.

The hope is to have the old baseball complex concession stand on the concrete slab on Sunday, he said.

Hillestad also asked if the city's electric department could provide the electric wire to bring power out to the building.

- A portion of Main Street will be blocked off on Oct. 31 for Downtown Trick or Treat.
- The council approved renewing liquor licenses for 2026 to various businesses in town.
  - o Package off-sale liquor and retail on-sale liquor for The Jungle
  - o Package off-sale liquor and retail on-sale liquor for American Legion Post No. 39
  - o Package off-sale liquor for Ken's Food Fair
  - o Retail on-sale liquor for American Grain LLC formerly Red Horse Inn
  - o Retail on-sale liquor for Olive Grove Golf Course
  - o Retail on-off sale wine and cider for Dollar General
  - o Package off-sale liquor for MJ's Sinclair
- The council authorized a request to transfer \$50,000 from the Groton Community Fund to the Groton Development Corporation. That amount was earmarked for economic development by David Olson. The community fund through Thrivent Charitable has \$259,000 as of this month, said city Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Senator 'encouraged' Trump will 'do right' amid backlash over Argentinian beef comments

**BY: SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF-OCTOBER 21, 2025 9:14 PM**

Amid a backlash against President Donald Trump's recent suggestion to import more Argentinian beef, a U.S. senator from South Dakota said he came away from a Tuesday meeting at the White House "encouraged by the desire" that Trump and his top agriculture official showed to "do right by the American producer."

Republican Mike Rounds said he met with Trump and Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins about "the concerns I've heard from hundreds of South Dakota ranchers" since Trump's comments.

"We agree that we need an America First game plan that prioritizes American ranchers," Rounds said in a written statement about the meeting, adding "I encourage patience as we await final details to be released, and in the meantime, continue to share your opinions with the administration."

Rounds said that instead of importing beef, policymakers should "place an emphasis on creating better conditions for American farmers and ranchers to drive prices down by increasing their ability to supply more product."

The average price of ground chuck is more than a dollar-a-pound higher than it was in January, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Trump made his comments Sunday while speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One about how he would bring down prices for American consumers.

"We would buy some beef from Argentina," Trump said. "If we do that, that will bring our beef prices down."

The comments sparked widespread criticism from ranchers and groups representing them. That included the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, which said "although beef prices have increased, consumer demand for beef remains strong because of the work American cattle producers have done to improve the quality and safety of U.S. beef."

"We call on President Trump and members of Congress to let the market work, rather than intervening in ways that do nothing but harm rural America," the association said.

Lawmakers want ambulance services reimbursed for helping patients at home

### State could move to pay for 'treatment in place' by adjusting Medicaid rules

**BY: JOHN HULT-OCTOBER 21, 2025 5:14 PM**

A group of lawmakers voted Tuesday to back efforts to get ambulance services paid for helping low-income and elderly patients without taking them to a hospital.

The vote came during a meeting of the Legislature's Emergency Medical Services Interim Committee at the Capitol in Pierre.

Ambulance services in South Dakota need to take patients to a hospital to get reimbursement for their work through Medicare or Medicaid.

That's unfortunate in a lot of situations, according to Maynard Konechne, statewide advocacy director for the South Dakota Emergency Medical Services Association. It's not uncommon for an EMT to arrive at the home of a diabetic patient who hasn't been eating right, give that patient some food or a glucose pouch, and then hear the patient say they're well and don't want to go anywhere.

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EMTs don't force patients into the ambulance, said Konechne, of Kimball, but "if we don't haul them to the hospital, we don't get paid."

## Medicare, Medicaid tried reimbursements

Konechne told committee members that the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid could choose to reimburse ambulance services for the on-site care, called "treatment in place."

The centers did that for a while a few years ago, but the practice didn't last.

The Emergency Triage, Treatment and Transport (ET3) pilot program was meant to reimburse providers for that kind of care over a five-year period. It ended two years early, in 2023, "due to lower than expected participation and lower than projected interventions," according to the centers.

Data released last year by the centers, however, showed an average cost savings to Medicare and Medicaid of \$537 per patient for the ambulance services that participated. The National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians used that data as a selling point in its current push for the federal government to set rates for non-transport care.

## State could make change

Rep. Eric Emery, D-Rosebud, moved that the interim committee draft a letter of its own to send to the federal government urging coverage for treatment in place. That passed unanimously.

South Dakota doesn't need a policy change at the federal level to cover at least some of the costs of treatment without transport, though.

Emery, who's the director of the Rosebud Ambulance Service, told the committee that North Dakota has reimbursed services for non-transport care since the mid-2010s, writing reimbursements for those costs into their state-level Medicaid pay schedules. As of 2025, ambulances are reimbursed \$323 for a Medicare or Medicaid call without a transport.

Sen. Kevin Jensen, R-Canton, said he'd like to encourage the South Dakota Department of Social Services to change the rules in South Dakota to allow similar reimbursements.

"We can do that as a state," Jensen said. "We don't have to wait for the feds to do that."

Reimbursements for trips to a patient's home wouldn't be as high as hospital transports, "but it would at least cover the expenses," Jensen said, and would likely help save the state money by avoiding hospital bills for Medicare and Medicaid enrollees. The two programs are jointly funded by the federal government and states.

## Other funding woes

The committee voted unanimously to support the "concept" of reimbursement changes at the state level, and to include that support in a report it will present to the legislature's Executive Board next month. Sen. Tim Reed, R-Brookings, said it's not clear at this point if legislation would be necessary to make the change.

The full Legislature ought to be made aware of the idea, Reed said, "because there could be enough savings to actually pay for treatment in place in our Medicaid system."

South Dakota Searchlight's questions to the state Department of Social Services on reimbursement for non-transport ambulance services were not immediately answered Tuesday.

Such reimbursements would be welcome, said Scott Jongbloed, assistant chief for Watertown Fire Rescue, but they wouldn't necessarily solve the larger financial woes of South Dakota's emergency care providers.

Treatment-in-place calls represent only 20% of the Watertown agency's call outs, Jongbloed told the committee.

But a combination of high call volume and low Medicaid reimbursement rates for hospital transports have put the service on such unsteady financial footing that break-even payouts for home visits wouldn't be enough to fix the problem.

"We're in a position now that our EMS is going to be \$2 million, greater than \$2 million, in the hole," Jongbloed said.

## 'Essential service' issue remains

Tuesday was the committee's last meeting before turning in its findings. The group opted against endorsing a bill that would designate EMS as an essential service, which typically means the government



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has to guarantee access by providing or funding it. Currently, a large share of EMS work in South Dakota is performed by volunteers.

Some committee members said there are too many questions about funding and too small an appetite for additional spending in Pierre to designate a new essential service.

"If you make it an essential service, that's going to require a lot of money," said Rep. Dave Kull, R-Brandon. "And you hate to hear the word 'taxes,' but that's what pays for all of our essential services."

Rep. Josephine Garcia, R-Watertown, said it's a "disgrace" that EMS isn't legally considered essential.

"It's a necessity of life. It's like a grocery store, it's like gasoline," Garcia said. "So I think it has to be an essential service. We will find the money."

Reed, co-chairman of the committee, said the next step will be to convince more lawmakers to take the issue that seriously.

"We've got to have the conversation at the Legislature, and for the whole Legislature to have that fortitude," Reed said.

Ultimately, the committee voted unanimously to include language in its final report "to encourage continued dialog concerning EMS as an essential service."

*John is the senior reporter for South Dakota Searchlight. He has more than 15 years experience covering criminal justice, the environment and public affairs in South Dakota, including more than a decade at the Sioux Falls Argus Leader.*

## Western SD Catholic leaders 'firmly reject' decision to affirm Wounded Knee Massacre medals

**BY: SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF-OCTOBER 21, 2025 12:35 PM**

Leading Catholic officials in western South Dakota have issued a statement saying they "firmly reject" the secretary of defense's recent affirmation of medals awarded for the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre.

The written statement is from the Most Rev. Scott Bullock, bishop of Rapid City, and the De Smet Jesuit Community of West River, South Dakota. The faith leaders said the facts of the historical tragedy are "clear," and the massacre "was not a battle."

"Those who died at Wounded Knee are sacred. Jesus stands with all who suffer and die at the hands of others," said the statement, issued Monday. "Those who committed the violence are also sacred; for this reason, Jesus offers them mercy and healing. Yet the acts themselves were grave evils and cannot be honored."

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth announced last month that the medals awarded to soldiers for their participation in the massacre will not be rescinded. He called the massacre a "battle" and said soldiers "deserve" the medals they were awarded.

Hegseth's predecessor during the Biden administration, Lloyd Austin, created a panel last year to review the medals. At the time, the Department of Defense said "approximately 20" soldiers had received a Medal of Honor for participating in the massacre. Historians have said the records associated with some of the medals are incomplete or unclear.

There was no public report from the panel and no public action on the matter before Biden left office. Hegseth made his announcement in a social media video, while holding a report that he said was generated by the panel. The Defense Department has not published the report or responded to South Dakota Searchlight's requests for a copy.

Hegseth said the review panel recommended against rescinding the medals, and he alleged that Austin declined to publicize the recommendation because "he was more interested in being politically correct than historically correct."

The Catholic faith leaders addressed that criticism in their statement.

"To recognize these acts as honorable is to distort history itself," the statement said. "Our response,



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therefore, is rooted not in 'political correctness' but in prayerful correctness, grounded in truth, conscience, and compassion."

The massacre occurred after years of conflict between the Lakota nation and the U.S. government had concluded with many Lakota people ordered onto reservations. On Dec. 29, 1890, a large group of Lakota people traveling to the Pine Ridge Agency in southwestern South Dakota made camp near Wounded Knee Creek, where they were surrounded by hundreds of Army soldiers. A shot rang out while the soldiers tried to disarm the camp, and the soldiers opened fire.

Fewer than 40 soldiers were killed (some by friendly fire, according to historians), while estimates of Lakota deaths ran from 200 to 300 or more, depending on the source, including men, women and children. After some of the bodies froze on the ground for several days, a military-led burial party placed them in a mass grave.

One hundred years later in 1990, Congress passed a resolution expressing "deep regret" for the massacre.

## **Report: Trump administration mulling transfer of special ed from Education Department**

**BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA-OCTOBER 21, 2025 5:24 PM**

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Education Department is looking to move the \$15 billion Individuals with Disabilities Education Act program outside of the agency, the Washington Post reported Tuesday.

In a statement to States Newsroom, department spokesperson Madi Biedermann did not explicitly confirm the report, but said the department is generally looking for ways to move its operations to other agencies. President Donald Trump has pledged to eliminate the Education Department.

The agency "is exploring additional partnerships with federal agencies to support special education programs without any interruption or impact on students with disabilities, but no agreement has been signed," Biedermann wrote.

Biedermann said Education Secretary Linda McMahon "has been very clear that her goal is to put herself out of a job by shutting down the Department of Education and returning education to the states" and that McMahon is "fully committed to protecting the federal funding streams that support our nation's students with disabilities."

Trump's administration moved to lay off 465 department employees, including 121 at the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, earlier this month amid the ongoing government shutdown.

A federal judge has temporarily blocked the administration from carrying out the layoffs, but the ruling provides only short-term relief as legal proceedings unfold.

The department's many responsibilities include guaranteeing a free public education for students with disabilities through IDEA.

Trump has already suggested rehousing special education services under the Department of Health and Human Services.

HHS secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said on social media in March that the agency is "fully prepared" to take on that responsibility.

Fully transferring responsibility for IDEA would require an act of Congress — a significant undertaking given that at least 60 votes are needed to break a Senate filibuster and Republicans hold just 53 seats.

Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom's Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.

## One stopgap after another: Shutdown puts Congress on the verge of failed spending process

**South Dakota's Sen. Rounds says Democrats 'made a very serious strategic error'**

**BY: JENNIFER SHUTT-OCTOBER 21, 2025 4:49 PM**

WASHINGTON — On day 21 of the federal government shutdown, the political tensions and policy differences that contributed to it appeared likely to destroy any chance for the GOP-controlled Congress to find the bipartisanship needed to pass the dozen bills needed to fund the government.

While that is very inside baseball, failing to approve the 12 appropriations bills will block lawmakers' funding requests for high-profile projects in their home states, known as earmarks, from becoming law—like highway construction, water systems, education projects, research facilities and more.

A full-year stopgap spending bill would also cause significant headaches for departments throughout the government that have faced challenges adjusting to the series of stopgaps that funded the government for the last year, even without the turmoil of the layoffs and funding cancellations enacted by the Donald Trump administration.

The full-year spending bills are also the best chance Congress has to exercise its constitutional authority over government spending and are supposed to spur debate about where taxes paid by Americans can most help the country.

Skipping that process and avoiding tough conversations about where funding is most needed, and where it is not, absolves lawmakers of a core job responsibility — securing money to help their constituents have better lives.

As of Tuesday, Democrats and Republicans appeared nowhere near any kind of deal to reopen the government, which has been shuttered since Oct. 1. Members of the House are not in session and last voted on Sept. 19. The Senate has voted unsuccessfully 11 times on the same House-passed stopgap spending bill, failing to gain the 60 votes needed for it to advance.

### **'Extremely harmful' effect of another stopgap**

Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Susan Collins, R-Maine, said she's opposed to using what's called a continuing resolution for the rest of the fiscal year instead of working out an agreement on the full-year government funding bills.

"The impacts of another year-long CR would be extremely harmful to federal programs, particularly the Department of Defense, and should be avoided at all costs," Collins said.

Congress used three continuing resolutions to keep government funded during the last fiscal year, which ended on Sept. 30.

Lawmakers have relied on stopgap spending bills to fund the government for the entire fiscal year a handful of times during the past several decades.

But Congress has not used stopgap spending bills for two consecutive years since the late 1970s, according to a report from the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service.

### **Senate Republicans lunch with Trump**

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said after a lunch at the White House with President Donald Trump and other GOP senators that talks about the full-year government funding bills can only begin after the shutdown ends.

"We want a normal appropriations process. We want to give them an opportunity to sit down and litigate some of the issues they want to talk about," Thune said. "But that can't happen until the government gets opened up again."

North Dakota Republican Sen. John Hoeven, chairman of the Agriculture appropriations subcommittee, said a full-year continuing resolution is "absolutely" possible if the process doesn't start moving forward soon.

But Hoeven declined to say if he'd vote for a stopgap spending bill that voids the appropriations process for the second year in a row. And said he's "of course" concerned about the negative impacts of a full-year continuing resolution.

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"I don't want to get ahead of the process. What I want to do is get government open and get back to regular order," Hoeven said.

Rhode Island Sen. Jack Reed, the top Democrat on the Armed Services Committee and a senior appropriator, said it will take real leadership in both chambers to get any movement on the full-year bills. He also said he's vehemently opposed to a stopgap spending bill for the entire year.

"I think if we vote for a full-year CR, we've fully abdicated our responsibility, constitutionally, to be the power of the purse," Reed said.

South Dakota Republican Sen. Mike Rounds, who sits on the Appropriations Committee, said he "could not support a full-year CR."

"We've gotten so much of the work done, and now it's just a matter of whether or not Democrats allow us to bring them to the floor," Rounds said, referring to the full-year Defense spending bill that failed to advance last week.

Rounds said he thinks Democrats are struggling to figure out a way to end the government shutdown, which would potentially allow work on the full-year bills to get going again.

"I think they made a very serious strategic error when they decided to jump on and to shut down government in the first place," Rounds said. "And now they don't have a graceful way out, and that's a problem."

## Process, interrupted

Normally, by now, Republicans and Democrats would have agreed how much to spend on defense and domestic programs and divvied up that roughly \$1.8 trillion to the dozen full-year government spending bills.

The lawmakers tasked with writing those appropriations bills would have started meeting to work out spending levels and policy differences between the original House bills and the original Senate bills.

That is all on hold because of the shutdown and may never even happen, potentially leading Republicans to write a stopgap spending bill for the rest of the year.

Alabama Republican Sen. Katie Britt, chairwoman of the Homeland Security appropriations subcommittee, said she wants Democrats to vote to reopen the government, so she can get back to working on her full-year appropriations bill.

"I want to do my job, which is why I am so frustrated that we didn't get to move forward with appropriations bills on Thursday," Britt said, also referring to the Defense bill. "I think it was incredibly short-sighted of my Democratic colleagues to vote that down, because this is our opportunity to actually do work for the American people. And I think we should get our job done, not pass the buck."

Hawaii Sen. Brian Schatz, the top Democrat on the State-Foreign Operations appropriations subcommittee, said he still has "hope for the appropriations process."

"Obviously, we have to get through the shutdown, but there's bipartisan desire to get something done and to avoid a full-year CR," Schatz said, adding that it's hard to do anything with the House out of session.

New Hampshire Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, the top Democrat on the Agriculture appropriations subcommittee, opposes using a full-year continuing resolution over negotiating bipartisan versions of the full-year government funding bills.

"I am concerned about a full-year CR, and I do think that we should get back to the appropriations process and get those bills done," Shaheen said. "I think there's interest on both sides of the aisle to do that."

## Uncharted waters

Wisconsin Sen. Tammy Baldwin, the top Democrat on the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations subcommittee, said that GOP leaders will have to accept the regular give-and-take of bipartisan negotiations if they want to get anything through the upper chamber.

"I think first and foremost, we have to really make sure that Speaker (Mike) Johnson recognizes that the only way forward with appropriations and other matters is a bipartisan way forward," Baldwin said. "That's the only way you pass things that require 60 votes in the Senate."

Baldwin said that means both chambers should use the total spending level that received bipartisan backing in the Senate Appropriations Committee, not the lower spending level used by the House panel.

Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy, the top Democrat on the Homeland Security appropriations subcommittee,

tee, was far more pessimistic than many of his colleagues.

"I think you're living in a world that does not exist," Murphy told States Newsroom. "I think 2025 is totally unlike every other year that has existed before. Our democracy is literally dying under our feet. The president is engaged in mass scale illegality and corruption, and nothing that we have done here in the past will be precedent for what will happen in the future. The House of Representatives has never boycotted Washington for a month-and-a-half. The majority party has never refused to negotiate with the minority party. So I think we're in really uncharted waters, and nothing can happen until the House Republicans return and Senate Republicans decide to negotiate."

*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.*

## From jingle dresses to beadwork, tariffs hit home for Indigenous designers, small businesses

**The Trump tariffs on imported materials are raising the cost of making regalia**

BY: AMELIA SCHAFER, ICT-OCTOBER 21, 2025 8:00 AM

Every piece of regalia Sharona Crane creates is infused with her Anishinaabe culture.

Her designs for jingle dresses, ribbon skirts, jackets, appliques and other items reflect a modern take on historical woodland motifs and designs using elements such as shimmering floral jacquard satin and colorful velveteen. Her items are authentically Anishinaabe and made for the Anishinaabe people.

The last few months, however, Crane's business has hit a bump in the road as the Trump administration tariffs kicked in, sometimes doubling the price of materials she uses for her work and increasing the costs for shipping.

She's had to increase prices more than 10 percent on some items to accommodate her increased production costs.

"I had a rough summer, financially, because with those kinds of prices there's even fewer people that can afford them," said Crane, Naongashiing First Nation Ojibwe. "I do understand that I do charge more than a lot of other people, and I do feel bad, but there's nothing that I can do. I've got to keep my lights on, too."

The tariffs are impacting other artisans and businesses in Indian Country, as well. The majority of items that go into making regalia – jingle cones, beads, wool, fabric and store-bought leather – are largely imported from overseas. So when tariffs are introduced for overseas products, the cost of making regalia becomes even higher than it already was.

"This situation with the tariffs has been exceptionally challenging," said Beth Simmons, owner of Shipwreck Beads in Lacey, Washington, a major resource for beaders on the West Coast that had been a frequent vendor at the annual Black Hills Powwow.

Simmons said Shipwreck Beads primarily imports from the Czech Republic, China and India as a main source for beads, though it does work with some U.S. manufacturers. All three of those countries have been the recipients of new tariffs.

"We're trying to make [the price increases] as little as possible, but we still have to be able to pay for the beads and pay all of our employees," Simmons told ICT. "We're hopeful that the situation is resolved sometime in the next year and that it won't be a thing moving forward, but we have to keep the lights on between now and then."

### **'No one is immune'**

Since taking office, President Donald Trump has rolled out various new tariffs on imported goods, including broad tariffs on products from Taiwan, China and India, and the removal of the "de minimis" exemption on shipments from Canada into the United States. He also launched a 50 percent tariff on steel and aluminum imports and derivatives in June.



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The tariffs are part of Trump's plan to boost domestic production and manufacturing. But that's easier said than done, according to experts.

Any migration of manufacturing back to the U.S. would take two to four years to actually happen, leaving small businesses to deal with tariffs on imported goods in the meantime, Francisco Sánchez, the former U.S. Undersecretary of Commerce for Trade under President Barack Obama, told a gathering of journalists at the National Press Foundation in Washington, D.C., in September.

"You can't turn that on a dime," Sanchez said. "So it's going to be challenging in terms of supply chain, it's going to be challenging in terms of costs, and it affects across-the-board, whether it's construction, whether it's retail, hospitality, restaurants. No one is immune."

## A recognizable brand

Crane got serious about her regalia business in 2020, making it her full-time career.

An Ojibwe brand from the heart of Anishinaabe country, her business, Zazegaakwe, which means "prosperous woman" in Ojibwemowin, is known for its unique jingle dresses and woodland regalia with bright floral applique and eyecatching embellishments.

It's a recognizable brand at powwows across Canada and into the United States.

Crane is based in Lake of the Woods in Ontario, Canada, and ships regularly to the United States, she told ICT.

"Lake of the Woods, this is like the home of the jingle dress, where the stories and the creation, everything came out of," Crane said. "So making jingle dresses here is essential for my business. It is literally, I would say, 75 percent of everything that I make."

But it's becoming more costly since the Trump administration ordered in June the 50 percent tariff on steel and aluminum imports and derivatives. The tariff directly impacts all jingle cone producers, since no jingle cones are manufactured in the United States.

For Crane, that means the price of a bag of 100 cones has more than doubled, from about \$25 Canadian to about \$56 Canadian, or about \$40 in U.S. dollars. Previously, she had been able to buy in bulk, but new shipping tariffs made that impossible.

Jingle cones, which were originally made from chewing tobacco can lids, are now factory-made using tinplated metal. There are three major producers of jingle cones in the United States — Missouri River, which is owned by Crazy Crow Trading Post; the McPherson brand, which is owned by Wandering Bull Trading Post; and Teton Trade Cloth LLC's new brand of jingle cones.

All three source their products from overseas, with Teton's cones coming from China, according to federal import records. From there, the companies outsource their cones to smaller businesses across the country, to be sold typically in bags typically of 100.

None of the companies responded to requests from ICT for comment on the impact of tariffs.

In June, Taiwan, a major producer of jingle cones, was hit with a separate 30 percent tariff on goods imported to the United States, prompting a boost in jingle cone prices in the U.S.

Singing Horse Trading Post, an Indigenous-owned small business on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, has seen the most change from tariffs on jingle cones and imported leather goods. One employee said the business has had to change an extra one to two dollars per bag for the cones.

At least some of the cost, inevitably, is transferred to the consumer. Because of her brand recognition, Crane's designs were already sold a little higher than typical regalia, but with the increase in cost to produce, she's had no choice but to raise prices even more.

Previously, she sold cotton-based jingle dresses without jingle cones attached for \$750 Canadian. She's now had to increase the prices to between \$830-\$850 Canadian because of her increased production costs.

## Shipping costs go up as well

The impact on First Nations artisans in Canada has been even steeper since the end of shipping tariff exemptions by the United States and another Canada Post strike.

Starting on Aug. 29, the United States suspended all duty-free "de minimis" thresholds on shipping from all countries, even Canada. The de minimis threshold previously allowed small amounts of purchases of



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under \$800 to be exempt from tariffs, with the threshold's removal all foreign shipments are now eligible for tariffs. Additionally, the elimination of the threshold means that postal shipments to the U.S. from Canada require prepaid duties before the package crosses the border and sometimes even after.

Now, when using the U.S. Postal Service, customers in the U.S. who received packages from Canada will need to pay fees when the packages arrive at their doors. These import fees are charges that the United States government has applied to goods shipped (or imported) into the United States from other countries. These fees can come in three different forms: duties, taxes and tariffs. UPS refers to these as International Collect on Delivery, or ICOD. Often these fees can only be paid by check, unless the customer goes through a lengthy process to pay online. The fee money collected from the receiver is then paid to the federal government by the postal service.

For something like a \$20 T-shirt, the American customer can expect to pay between \$20 and \$30 U.S. dollars in fees when the package arrives in addition to shipping costs already paid when ordering. If the customer doesn't pay after the third delivery attempt, the package will be sent back to its place of origin.

Crane said she primarily buys Missouri River Jingle Cones, which are produced in Taiwan and shipped to the United States. Previously, she purchased from the Manitoba-based company, Anishinaabe Bimishimo, before the company went on hiatus, leaving a gap in the domestic market until it returns.

## **'Astronomical' increases**

Regalia was already costly to make when factoring in labor, fabric and other expenses, but now the tariffs have made the cost of production even higher, and not just because of jingle cones. The fabric is also harder and more-expensive to come by.

Crane used to purchase directly from a retailer in the Los Angeles Fabric District, but that's not possible anymore, she said. She also previously purchased trims, embellishments and branding tags from the United States, but with tariffs she's had to change her sourcing for nearly all elements of design.

Even heat and bond, a material used for creating applique, is more expensive.

"They're astronomical," Crane said about the tariffs. "I completely had to stop that [purchasing]. It wasn't worth it anymore."

She now shops locally in Canada, but the options are limited. Crane lives more than two hours from Winnipeg, the closest major city.

Until the tariffs end, there's not much that small businesses can do but wait for prices to go down, she said.

"I do feel I feel for my customers," Crane said. "Those tariffs, for lack of a better word, they suck. But hopefully whatever's going on with American politics, it gets settled and the prices stop rising so fast."

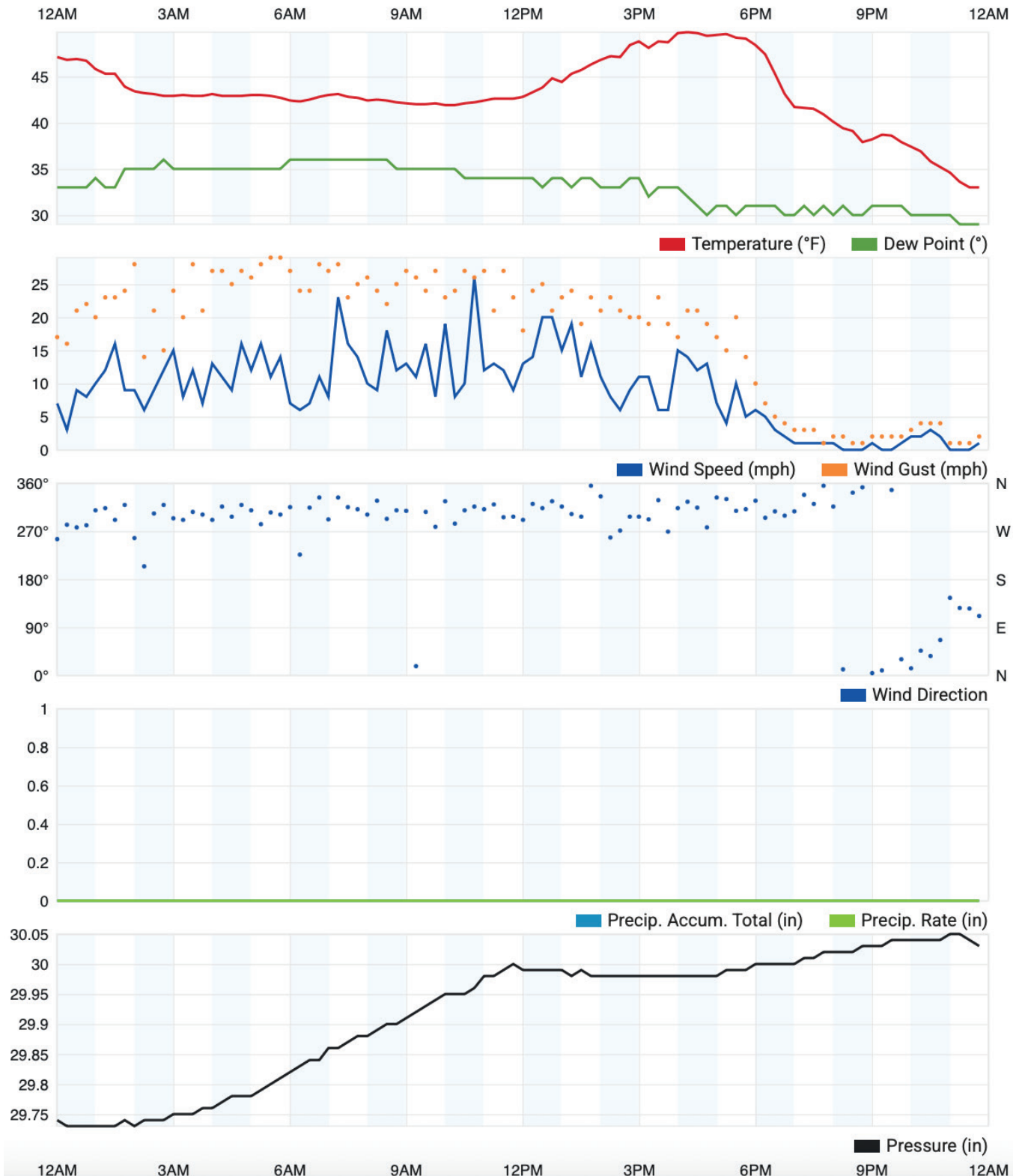
*Amelia Schafer is the Indigenous Affairs reporter for ICT and is based in Rapid City. She is of Wampanoag and Montauk-Brothertown Indian Nation descent.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

October 21, 2025



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Today



**High: 57 °F**

Sunny

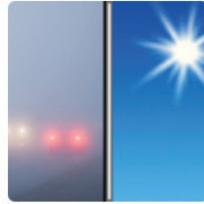
Tonight



**Low: 29 °F**

Mostly Clear

Thursday



**High: 56 °F**

Dense  
Freezing Fog  
and Areas Fog  
then Sunny

Thursday  
Night



**Low: 33 °F**

Mostly Clear

Friday



**High: 63 °F**

Sunny

## Near Seasonal Temperatures Today and Thursday



**50-60°**

Lows Tonight in the 20s and 30s



Northwest Winds with Gusts of  
15 to 25 mph Today

weather.gov/aberndeen  
October 22, 2025



Near seasonal temperatures can be expected today through Thursday with highs in the 50s and low 60s. Northwesterly winds will continue today with gusts of 15 to 25 mph. The winds subside tonight, with a gradual increase from the south on Thursday.



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 50 °F at 4:05 PM

Low Temp: 33 °F at 11:24 PM

Wind: 33 mph at 7:04 AM

Precip: : 0.00

## Today's Info

Record High: 82 in 1992

Record Low: 8 in 1895

Average High: 56

Average Low: 31

Average Precip in Oct.: 1.64

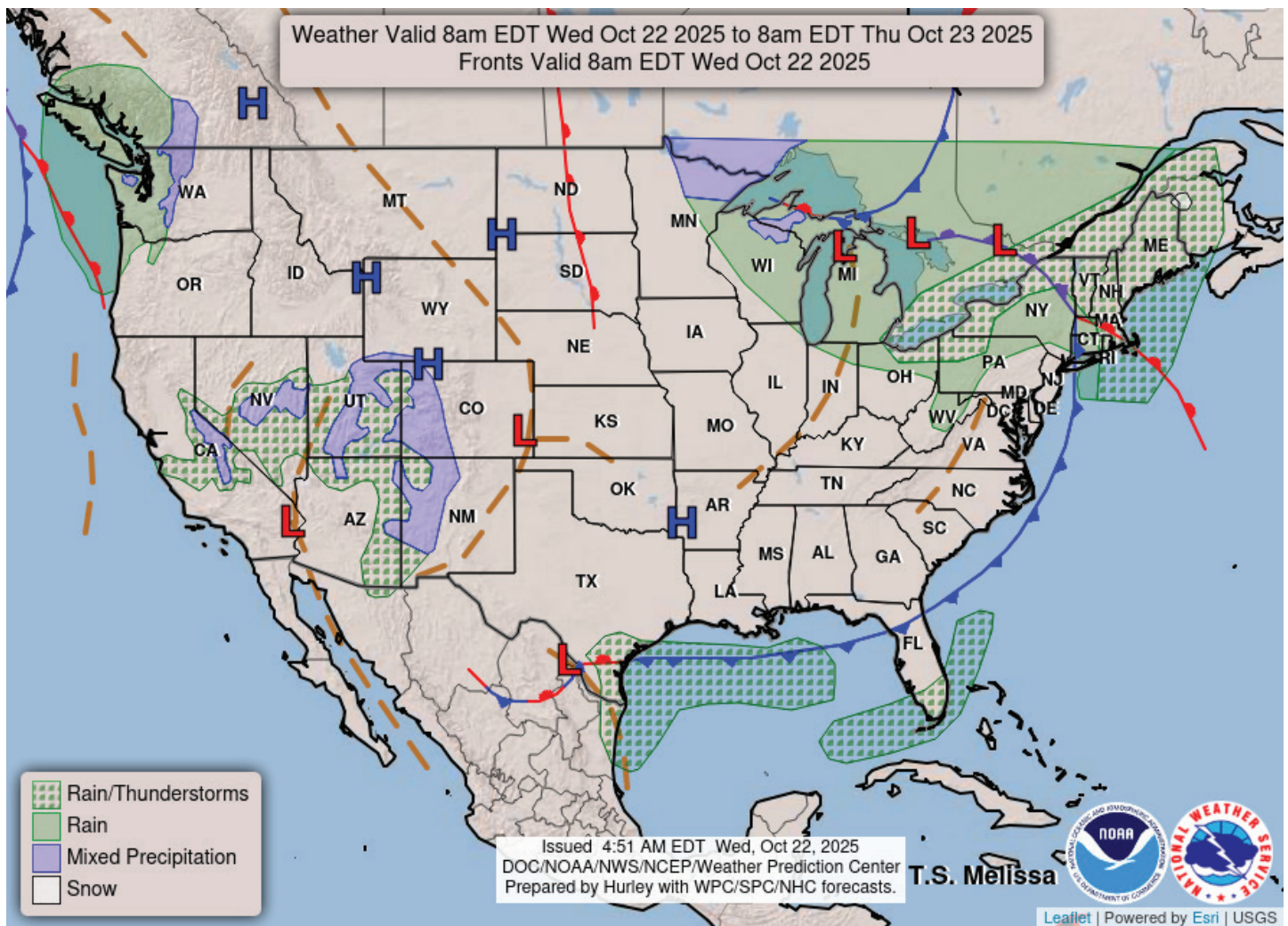
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.48

Average Precip to date: 19.97

Precip Year to Date: 23.40

Sunset Tonight: 6:35 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:59 am



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## Today in Weather History

October 22, 1992: Record heat occurred on this date. Temperatures rose into the upper 70s to the mid-80s across central and northeast South Dakota as well as west central Minnesota. The record highs were 79 degrees at Mobridge and Timber Lake, 80 degrees at Sisseton, 82 degrees at Aberdeen, 83 degrees at Wheaton, and 85 degrees at Pierre. Although not a record high, Kennebec rose to 87 degrees on this date in 1992.

1884: A drought which began in August, extended through September and continued until the last week October brought hardship to Northern, Central, and Eastern Alabama. The 22nd was the first day of general showers, and gentle rains fell from the 26th to the 29th.

1965 - The temperature soared to 104 degrees at San Diego, CA. Southern California was in the midst of a late October heat wave that year. Los Angeles had ten consecutive days with afternoon highs reaching 100 degrees. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1985 - A guest on the top floor of a hotel in Seattle, WA, was seriously injured while talking on the phone when lightning struck. Several persons are killed each year when the electrical charge from a lightning bolt travels via telephone wiring. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Yakutat, AK, surpassed their previous all-time yearly precipitation total of 190 inches. Monthly records were set in June with 17 inches, in September with 70 inches, and in October with more than 40 inches. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987) Twenty-two cities in the eastern U.S., most of them in the southeast states, reported record low temperatures for the date. Morning lows of 30 degrees at Athens GA, 28 degrees at Birmingham AL, and 23 degrees at Pinson AL, were the coldest of record for so early in the season. (The National Weather Summary) Showers produced heavy rain in southern California, with amounts ranging up to five inches at Blue Jay. Flash flooding resulted in two deaths, ten injuries, and more than a million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A "nor'easter" swept across the coast of New England. Winds gusted to 75 mph, and large waves and high tides caused extensive shoreline flooding. A heavy wet snow blanketed much of eastern New York State, with a foot of snow reported in Lewis County. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A storm system moving out of the Gulf of Alaska brought rain to the Northern and Central Pacific Coast Region, with snow in some of the mountains of Oregon, and wind gusts to 60 mph along the Oregon coast. Six cities in Florida reported record low temperatures for the date, including Tallahassee with a reading of 34 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1997: Game 4 of the World Series between the Cleveland Indians and the Florida Marlins was the coldest game in World Series history. The official game-time temperature was 38 degrees at Jacobs Field in Cleveland. Wind chills as low as 18 degrees was reported during the game.

1998: Tropical Depression Thirteen formed on October 22 over the southwestern the Caribbean Sea. By the 24th, this tropical depression became Hurricane Mitch. This hurricane would rapidly intensify over the next two days, reaching Category 5 strength on the 26th. Hurricane Mitch would end up being the second deadliest hurricane in the history of the Atlantic Ocean.



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Daily Devotion

## A Godly Heart

**Sometimes God changes your dreams—because His plan is better. Trust Him.**

Psalms 37:1-8

The Lord promises to give us the desires of our heart. But many people take this scripture out of context, forgetting that their own mindset plays a vital part in bringing it to fruition. What is your responsibility when it comes to claiming promises from God?

Delight yourself in the Lord (Ps. 37:4). Christians are called to rejoice in God and desire to walk in obedience. The Lord should have first place in your life.

Commit your way to the Lord (v. 5). Allow God to change any aspect of your ambition that is not His will.

Trust in Him (v. 5). God is merciful, all-knowing, kind, and generous. You can trust Him with your hopes and dreams.

Rest in Him (v. 7). Resting in the Lord means trusting Him to answer prayers in His timing or transform your aspirations so they conform to His will.

Wait upon the Lord (v. 7). Jesus waited three decades before beginning His three-year ministry on earth. According to His example, waiting is one of the key principles of Christian living.

Do your desires align with God's purpose and plan for your life? He longs to give us abundant blessings and fullness of joy. So allow your dreams to be conformed to the Lord's will, and follow His guidance faithfully.

*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:

10.21.25

2 18 27 34 59 18

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$680,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 22 Mins 53 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.20.25

20 32 35 43 51 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$5,190,000**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 37 Mins 53 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.21.25

8 9 15 31 32 12

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 52 Mins 53 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.18.25

3 8 9 21 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$55,000**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 52 Mins 53 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.20.25

33 48 52 55 68 9

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 21 Mins 53 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.20.25

32 38 66 67 69 19

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$320,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 21 Mins 53 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

Aberdeen Central def. Mitchell, 26-24, 25-12, 25-18  
Aberdeen Christian def. Ipswich, 25-14, 25-21, 17-25, 25-22  
Aberdeen Roncalli def. Milbank, 25-16, 21-25, 25-15, 25-17  
Alcester-Hudson def. Flandreau Indian, 25-18, 25-21, 26-24  
Arlington def. Oldham-Ramona-Rutland, 25-20, 25-7, 25-13  
Avon def. Corsica/Stickney, 25-14, 18-25, 25-18, 25-20  
Baltic def. Centerville, 25-19, 25-15, 25-16  
Bison def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-15, 25-11, 25-17  
Brandon Valley def. Sioux Falls Washington, 18-25, 25-13, 25-22, 23-25, 16-14  
Britton-Hecla def. Great Plains Lutheran, 29-31, 25-22, 25-15, 25-13  
Brookings def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 25-21, 25-23, 25-18  
Chamberlain def. McLaughlin, 25-13, 25-21, 25-20  
Chester def. Sioux Valley, 25-10, 25-21, 25-9  
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte def. McLaughlin, 27-25, 25-19, 17-25, 19-25, 15-4  
Clark-Willow Lake def. Tiospa Zina, 25-0, 25-6, 25-15  
Colman-Egan def. Deubrook, 25-17, 25-23, 26-24  
DeSmet def. Castlewood, 21-25, 25-15, 25-22, 19-25, 15-8  
Dell Rapids St Mary's def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-23, 25-17, 25-23  
Dell Rapids def. Madison, 25-13, 25-18, 25-15  
Deuel def. Florence-Henry, 24-26, 25-18, 25-21, 21-25, 15-9  
Elk Point-Jefferson def. Tri-Valley, 13-25, 25-22, 25-19, 25-16  
Estelline-Hendricks def. Iroquois-Lake Preston, 25-15, 25-9, 25-13  
Freeman def. Hanson, 27-29, 22-25, 25-20, 25-14, 15-13  
Gayville-Volin High School def. Burke, 25-15, 25-22, 25-13  
Gregory def. Mt. Vernon/Plankinton, 25-23, 25-18, 26-24  
Harding County def. Hettinger-Scranton, N.D., 25-14, 25-22, 25-14  
Harrisburg def. Sioux Falls Christian, 25-10, 25-12, 25-22  
Herreid-Selby def. Sully Buttes, 27-25, 25-8, 25-9  
Highmore-Harrold def. Lyman, 26-24, 25-19, 25-21  
Hill City def. Custer, 25-21, 25-16, 22-25, 25-18  
Hitchcock-Tulare def. Sanborn Central-Woonsocket, 25-20, 25-23, 25-20  
Hot Springs def. Spearfish, 25-21, 14-25, 20-25, 28-26, 15-13  
Huron def. T F Riggs High School, 25-13, 25-14, 25-11  
Irene-Wakonda def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-23, 25-21, 20-25, 25-19  
Jones County def. Colome, 25-9, 25-10, 25-8  
Kadoka def. Stanley County, 25-11, 25-10, 25-4  
Kimball-White Lake def. Platte-Geddes, 25-21, 24-26, 17-25, 25-20, 16-14  
Lakota Tech def. Edgemont, 25-16, 25-23, 25-20  
Lead-Deadwood def. Douglas, 23-25, 25-23, 19-25, 25-14, 17-15  
Lemmon High School def. Bowman County, N.D., 25-10, 25-22, 25-11  
Lennox def. McCook Central-Montrose, 25-10, 25-12, 27-25  
Leola-Frederick High School def. Waverly-South Shore, 18-25, 25-22, 25-20, 25-23  
Menno def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-21, 25-17, 25-19  
Mobridge-Pollock def. Linton, N.D., 13-25, 25-16, 25-27, 25-15  
Northwestern def. Groton, 21-25, 25-18, 25-20, 25-15

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Omaha Nation, Neb. def. Marty, 25-10, 25-18, 25-9  
Parker/Marion def. Flandreau, 25-20, 25-11, 25-15  
Parkston def. Bon Homme, 25-16, 25-19, 25-14  
Rapid City Christian def. Sturgis Brown High School, 25-19, 25-12, 25-22  
Sioux Falls Lutheran def. Canistota  
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 21-25, 23-25, 25-21, 25-23, 15-13  
St Thomas More def. Belle Fourche, 25-12, 25-12, 25-13  
Vermillion def. Beresford, 25-14, 25-15, 25-20  
Wagner def. Winner, 21-25, 25-20, 25-21, 25-21  
Watertown def. Sioux Falls Jefferson, 25-22, 18-25, 25-19, 25-22  
Webster def. Langford, 25-9, 21-25, 25-9, 25-19  
Wessington Springs def. James Valley Christian School, 25-22, 25-21, 22-25, 25-16  
West Central def. Garretson, 25-22, 25-16, 25-17  
White River def. Lower Brule, 25-23, 23-25, 25-14, 25-20  
Wolsey-Wessington def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-13, 25-3, 25-12

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

## **US ranchers oppose Trump's plan to import more Argentine beef and experts doubt it will lower prices**

By JOSH FUNK and SARAH RAZA Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — President Donald Trump's plan to cut record beef prices by importing more meat from Argentina is running into heated opposition from U.S. ranchers who are enjoying some rare profitable years and skepticism from experts who say the president's move probably wouldn't lead to cheaper prices at grocery stores.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association along with the Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund United Stockgrowers of America and other farming groups — who are normally some of the president's biggest supporters — all criticized Trump's idea because of what it could do to American ranchers and feedlot operators. And agricultural economists say Argentine beef accounts for such a small slice of beef imports — only about 2% — that even doubling that wouldn't change prices much.

South Dakota rancher Brett Kenzy said he wants American consumers to determine whether beef is too expensive, not the government. And so far there is little sign that consumers are substituting chicken or other proteins for beef on their shopping lists even though the average price of a pound of ground beef hit its highest point ever at \$6.32 in the latest report before the government shutdown began.

"I love 'Make America Great Again' rhetoric. I love 'America First' rhetoric," he said. "But to me this feels a lot like the failed policies of the past — the free trade sourcing cheap global goods."

Several factors have sent beef prices soaring, starting with continued strong demand combined with the smallest U.S. herd size since 1961. In part, that small herd is due to years of drought and low cattle prices.

Beef imports also are down overall because of the 50% tariffs that Trump imposed on Brazil, a big beef exporter, and limits on Mexico, where the country is fighting a flesh-eating pest.

Kansas State University agricultural economist Glynn Tonsor said Argentina can't produce enough beef to offset those other losses of imports.

Through July, the United States has imported 72.5 million pounds of Argentine beef while producing more than 15 billion pounds of beef. Much of what is imported is lean beef trimmings that meatpackers mix with fattier beef produced in the United States to produce the varieties of ground beef that domestic consumers want, so any change in imports would affect primarily hamburger. Steak prices that were averaging \$12.22 per pound probably wouldn't change much.

Idea creates uncertainty among US ranchers

Even if increased imports from Argentina won't reduce prices, the idea creates uncertainty for ranchers,

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making them less likely to invest in raising more cattle.

"We're always going to have uncertainty in the world. But the more uncertain something is, the less likely most are to put money on the line," Tonsor said.

Argentine livestock producers like Augusto Wallace are excited about the prospect of selling more beef to America because he said "whenever an additional buyer comes, it's beneficial for everyone, right? For all the producers."

But economists caution that exporting too much beef could backfire for Argentina because that would drive up prices for consumers there.

American ranchers say the idea of boosting imports from Argentina runs counter to the stated purpose of Trump's tariffs to encourage more domestic production and help American ranchers compete.

"It's a contradiction of what we believed his new course of action was. We thought he was on the right track," said the president of R-CALF, Bill Bullard, who hoped Trump's policies would discourage imports and encourage ranchers to expand their herds.

Texas A&M livestock economist David Anderson said "ranchers are finally getting prices that are going to make up for some really bad years in the past with the drought, low prices and high costs. We finally get some good prices. And we start talking about government policy to bring down prices."

Bryant Kagay, part owner of Kagay Farms in Amity, Missouri, said he thinks the plan would hurt ranchers. Cattle prices that had been averaging around \$3,000 for a 1,250-pound animal slipped more than \$100 immediately after Trump mentioned the idea of intervening in beef prices last week, though they have recovered a bit since then.

Ranchers hope Trump changes his mind

Although Kagay voted for Trump in the last election, he worries the trade war is hurting farmers and ranchers by driving up costs and costing them major markets like China.

"I continue to see things that I don't really think are in the best interest of our country and the average citizen," Kagay said. "I guess I hope he starts to see that and quits worrying about punishing opponents and winning whatever battle he's involved in, and then tries to do what's best for everybody."

Ranchers are hopeful Trump will reconsider this plan. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins said Tuesday on CNBC that the administration remains committed to helping ranchers prosper while trying to reduce consumer prices. She promised more details soon about the Argentina plan and a larger effort to reinvigorate U.S. beef production by opening up more land and opening new processing plants while securing trade deals for new markets. The administration wants ranchers to raise more cattle and produce more beef.

"The bigger supply — even aligned with a bigger demand — is going to allow those prices to come down, but also to have a vital industry for these ranchers to be able to survive, which is what we've got to do," Rollins said.

Sen. John Hoeven, a North Dakota Republican, said Tuesday that after talking to Trump and others in the administration, he expected to see more details about the policy.

"It's very important that we support our cattle ranchers," Hoeven said.

Rancher Cory Eich, who lives near Epiphany, South Dakota, said he doesn't consider the Argentina idea a serious threat in the long term and doubts ranchers will make changes to their operation in light of the news.

"Nobody's happy about it, let's put it that way," Eich said. "Personal opinion, I thought it was kind of a ruse when he mentioned it. I mean, it's coming from Trump, so take everything there with a grain of salt."

## The Louvre reopens 3 days after thieves took off with French crown jewels in daylight heist

By THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The Louvre reopened on Wednesday to long lines beneath its landmark Paris glass pyramid, just three days after one of the highest-profile museum thefts of the century

The thieves slipped in and out of the famed museum — making off with eight pieces from France's Crown

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Jewels — a cultural wound that some officials compared to the burning of Notre-Dame cathedral in 2019.

The Sunday morning heist, which unfolded just 250 meters (270 yards) from the Mona Lisa, has prompted a national reckoning and raised questions about the museum's newly proposed security measures.

Crowds bunched at the barriers as they were being removed, a coda to frantic forensic work and staff briefings that had taken place. Inside, the scene of the crime — the Apollo Gallery housing the Crown Diamonds — stayed sealed, a folding screen closing off the doorway at the gallery's rotunda entrance.

France acknowledges failings

Authorities say the thieves spent less than four minutes inside the Louvre on Sunday morning: a freight lift was wheeled to the Seine-facing façade, a window was forced open and two vitrines were smashed.

Then came the getaway on motorbikes through central Paris. Alarms had gone off drawing agents to the gallery and forcing the intruders to bolt.

"We have failed," Justice Minister Gérald Darmanin said, noting that the ability to plant a freight lift undetected on a public way projects "a very negative image of France."

As it reopened, the Louvre declined questions from The Associated Press to detail any reinforced protocols. It said no uniformed police were posted in the corridors. With school holidays swelling demand, the day was fully booked and access limited in places.

Wednesday's opening followed a routine closer on Tuesday, a day when the museum is normally shut.

The loot

The thieves made away with a total of eight objects, including a sapphire diadem, necklace and single earring from a set linked to 19th-century queens Marie-Amélie and Hortense.

They also made off with an emerald necklace and earrings tied to Empress Marie-Louise, Napoleon Bonaparte's second wife, as well as reliquary brooch. Empress Eugénie's diamond diadem and her large corsage-bow brooch — an imperial ensemble of rare craftsmanship — were also part of the loot.

One piece — the emerald-set imperial crown of Empress Eugénie, with more than 1,300 diamonds — was later found outside the museum, damaged but recoverable.

Fears the jewels will be destroyed

Prosecutor Laure Beccau valued the haul at about €88 million (\$102 million), a "spectacular" figure that still fails to capture the works' historical weight. She warned the thieves would be unlikely to realize anything close to that sum if they pry out stones or melt the metals — a fate curators fear would pulverize centuries of meaning into anonymous gems for the black market. The jewels remain missing; no arrests have been announced.

Beccau said expert analyses are underway; four people have been identified as present at the scene, and roughly 100 investigators are mapping the crew and any accomplices.

The heist has sharpened scrutiny of the museum's security and brought its president-director, Laurence des Cars, before the Senate's culture committee on Wednesday — though top officials have refused to remove her.

Questions about Louvre's security overhaul

All this comes after President Emmanuel Macron's government announced new measure in January for the Louvre — complete with a new command post and expanded camera grid that the culture ministry says is being rolled out.

It also raises hard questions, including whether Sunday's breach is tied to staffing levels, and how uniformly the upgrades in the overhaul are being applied.

Protection for headline works is airtight — the Mona Lisa is behind bulletproof glass in a climate-controlled case — yet the break-in exposed seams elsewhere in a 33,000-object labyrinth. For many French, the contrast is a public embarrassment at the landmark.

There is another raw nerve: the issue of swelling crowds and overstretched staff.

A June staff walkout delayed opening over overcrowding and chronic understaffing. Unions argue that mass tourism leaves too few eyes on too many rooms and creates pressure points where construction zones, freight access and visitor flows intersect.



On Wednesday, the Louvre's other star attractions — from the Venus de Milo to the Winged Victory of Samothrace — were open again. But the cordoned-off vitrines in the Apollo Room, guarded and empty, told a different story: one of a breach measured not just in minutes and euros, but in the fragility of a nation's patrimony.

## More than 40 people killed in a crash of buses and other vehicles in western Uganda

By RODNEY MUHUMUZA Associated Press

KAMPALA, Uganda (AP) — Two buses and two other vehicles crashed early Wednesday on a highway in western Uganda, killing at least 46 people, police said, in one of the worst motor accidents in the East African country in recent years.

Police initially gave the death toll as 63 in a statement sent to reporters, but later revised it to 46, saying in another statement that some people found unconscious at the crash scene were actually still alive. "At the time of the crash, several victims were found unconscious, and some may have been mistakenly included in the initial fatality count," the statement said.

Several others were injured in the crash that happened after midnight local time on the highway to Gulu, a major city in northern Uganda.

Two bus drivers going in opposite directions attempted to overtake other vehicles and collided near the town of Kiryandongo, according to police.

"In the process, both buses met head-on during the overtaking maneuvers," the police statement said.

Fatal road crashes are common in Uganda and elsewhere in East Africa, where roads are often narrow. Police usually blame such accidents on speeding drivers. In August, a bus carrying mourners back home from a funeral in southwestern Kenya overturned and plunged into a ditch, killing at least 25 people and injuring several others.

The death toll in the latest crash in Uganda is uncommonly high, said Irene Nakasiita, a Red Cross spokeswoman who described victims left bleeding with broken limbs. She said the images from the scene were too gruesome to share.

"The magnitude of this incident is so big," Nakasiita said.

While accident victims can expect to get help from onlookers and other first responders who rush to crash sites, "at night even bystanders are not there," she said.

Most of the injured people are receiving treatment at a government hospital nearby.

In Uganda, 5,144 people were killed in road crashes in 2024. That number rose from 4,806 in 2023 and 4,534 in 2022, according to official police figures, which show a worrisome rise in the total number of those killed or injured in road crashes in recent years.

Careless overtaking and speeding accounted for 44.5% of all crashes documented in 2024, the police's latest crime report said.

"As investigations continue, we strongly urge all motorists to exercise maximum caution on the roads, especially avoiding dangerous and careless overtaking, which remains one of the leading causes of crashes in the country," the police said in their statement after the latest crash.

In addition to reckless driving and bad infrastructure, there is poor enforcement of traffic rules especially for heavy vehicles moving at night, said Joseph Beyanga, a road safety campaigner who for years has been trying to raise awareness about road carnage in Uganda.

He told The Associated Press that the crash in Kiryandongo showed he and others have more work to do. "These crashes are just a cruel reminder that we still have a long way to go," he said. "On the government side, there is total absence of enforcement. What's happening on the roads is anarchy."

Beyanga, campaigning as Joe Walker, organizes regular walks from Kampala, the Ugandan capital, into the countryside that are often attended by hundreds of followers.

His next event, planned for November, will be a memorial walk of more than 60 kilometers (37 miles) in

memory of hundreds of thousands killed or maimed in road crashes over the years, he said.

## Israel identifies two more hostages' bodies as Vance meets Netanyahu

By MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel has completed the identification of the bodies of two more hostages, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Wednesday, as U.S. Vice President JD Vance held high-level meetings in Israel to nudge forward Gaza's fragile ceasefire.

Authorities identified the deceased hostages as Arie Zalmanovich and Tamir Adar. Their bodies were transported in coffins by the Red Cross and handed over to the Israeli military in the Gaza Strip.

The two were killed in Kibbutz Nir Oz during the Oct. 7, 2023, attack by Hamas militants, which triggered the two-year war.

Since the ceasefire began on Oct. 10, the remains of 15 hostages have been returned to Israel. Another 13 still need to be recovered in Gaza and handed over, a key element to the ceasefire agreement.

Meanwhile, the burial of 54 Palestinians is set for Wednesday at a cemetery in Deir al Balah, Gaza. The bodies were displayed outside Nasser hospital in Khan Younis ahead of burial.

Vance is meeting Netanyahu and President Isaac Herzog on Wednesday. He is accompanied by U.S. Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, U.S. President Donald Trump's son-in-law.

On Tuesday, Vance, Witkoff and Kushner said the ceasefire had exceeded expectations but acknowledged flareups of violence in recent days.

Uncertainty remains over the peace plan, including disarming Hamas, the deployment of an international security force in Gaza and who will govern the territory. Vance said Tuesday officials are brainstorming on the composition of the security force, mentioning Turkey and Indonesia as countries expected to contribute troops.

Britain is also sending a small contingent of military officers to Israel to assist in monitoring the ceasefire.

Funeral prayers for Palestinians

Dozens of people, some carrying Palestinian flags, gathered outside the Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis for funeral prayers over the bodies of 54 Palestinians clad in white shrouds.

The unidentified bodies were among 165 that Israel sent back to Gaza last week. They will be transported to Gaza's central city of Deir al-Balah for burial.

A senior health official in Gaza said some bodies bore "evidence of torture" and called for an investigation.

Israel has not provided identification for the bodies or explained their origins. They could include Palestinians who died during the Oct. 7 attacks, detainees who died in custody or bodies that were taken from Gaza by Israeli troops during the war.

So far, authorities in Gaza have identified 52 of the returned bodies, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

Charity says an armed group took over its Gaza facility

A top Palestinian non-governmental organization that offers mental health services to people in Gaza said Wednesday that there had been an "armed raid and brutal takeover" of one its facilities in the territory last week.

The Gaza Community Mental Health Programme said an "armed group" it didn't identify stormed the facility in Gaza City on Oct. 13, seized the building, expelled guards by force and put up their own families there.

"This blatant attack and serious crime represents a flagrant violation of all laws and norms," the group said.

It was unclear why the organization waited more than a week to report the takeover, but it said that although it had made immediate requests for authorities to intervene, there had been no "concrete action" to return the facility "despite repeated promises to evacuate."

They urged Palestinian authorities to act immediately and called on countries sponsoring the ceasefire to "intervene decisively."

Israelis to bid farewell to a Thai hostage killed on Oct. 7, 2023

Israelis were set on Wednesday to bid farewell to a Thai farm worker whose body will be repatriated to his native Thailand later in the day.

Sonthaya Oakkharasri was killed during the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel, and his body was held in Gaza until it was returned last weekend.

A statement by the Families' Headquarters for the Return of the Abductees said a gathering will be held at Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv to pay last respects to Oakkharasri, calling him a "devoted father and farmer who dreamed of establishing his own farm."

In the 2023 attack on Israel that started the war, Hamas-led militants killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted 251 people as hostages.

The Israel-Hamas war has killed more than 68,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count. The ministry maintains detailed casualty records that are seen as generally reliable by U.N. agencies and independent experts. Israel has disputed them without providing its own toll.

## **A major Russian drone and missile attack on Ukraine kills at least 6 people, officials say**

By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A large-scale Russian drone and missile attack across Ukraine killed at least six people, including a woman and her two young daughters, officials said Wednesday, as U.S.-led efforts to end the war floundered and Ukraine's president appealed for more military help.

Repeated waves of missiles and drones throughout the night shook at least eight Ukrainian cities, including a village in the Kyiv region where a strike set fire to a house in which the mother and her 6-month and 12-year-old daughters were staying, regional head Mykola Kalashnyk said.

At least 18 people were injured in Kyiv alone, authorities said.

The barrage, which began at night and extended into Wednesday morning, also targeted Ukraine's energy infrastructure and caused rolling blackouts, officials said. Russia has been trying to cripple the country's power grid before the bitter winter sets in.

U.S. President Donald Trump's efforts to end the war that started with Russia's all-out invasion of its neighbor more than three years ago have failed to gain traction. Trump has repeatedly expressed frustration with Russian President Vladimir Putin's refusal to budge from his conditions for a settlement after Ukraine offered a ceasefire and direct peace talks.

Trump said Tuesday his plan for a swift meeting with Putin was on hold because he didn't want it to be a "waste of time."

Zelenskyy urged the European Union, the United States and the Group of Seven industrialized nations to heap more pressure on Russia and force it to the negotiating table.

Pressure can be applied on Moscow "only through sanctions, long-range (missile) capabilities, and coordinated diplomacy among all our partners," he said.

Zelenskyy credited Trump's remarks that he was considering supplying Tomahawk missiles to Ukraine for Putin's willingness to meet.

Zelenskyy was set to visit Stockholm on Wednesday, where he's expected to meet with Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson at the start of what the Ukrainian leader has said will be a week of intense diplomacy.

More international economic sanctions on Russia are likely to be discussed at an EU summit in Brussels on Thursday, while on Friday, a meeting of the Coalition of the Willing — a group of 35 countries who support Ukraine — is due to take place in London.

Also Wednesday, Trump is expected to hold talks at the White House with NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte. The military alliance has been coordinating deliveries of weapons to Ukraine, many of them purchased from the United States by Canada and European countries.

In Kyiv, residents reeled from the drone and missile bombardment.

"We heard a loud explosion and then the glass started to shatter, and then everything was caught up in

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a burst of fire, the embers were everywhere," Biriukova Olena, a 58-year-old resident of a city apartment building told The Associated Press. "It was very scary for kids, I never thought that this could happen in our neighborhood."

The attack caused damage in the cities of Kyiv and Zaporizhzhia, as well as Odesa, Chernihiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kirovohrad, Poltava, Vinnytsia, and the wider regions of Kyiv, Cherkasy, and Sumy, Zelenskyy said.

Two more people were found dead in the Dnipro district of the Ukrainian capital, where emergency services rescued 10 people after a fire caused by drone debris hit the sixth floor of a 16-story residential building, local authorities said.

The attack also blew out windows of a medical facility and debris was found at another residential building, Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko reported on his Telegram channel.

In the Darnytskyi district of the capital, emergency services were responding after drone debris hit a 17-story residential building causing a fire on five floors. Fifteen people had to be rescued, including two children.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's army general staff said the country's forces struck a chemical plant in Russia's Bryansk region Tuesday night using British-made air-launched Storm Shadow missiles. The plant is an important part of the Russian military and industrial complex producing gunpowder, explosives, missile fuel and ammunition, it said.

## **Finding the jewels and the brazen thieves in the Louvre heist is now a race against time**

By LAURIE KELLMAN and JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The glittering sapphires, emeralds, and diamonds that once adorned France's royals could well be gone forever, experts say after a brazen, four-minute heist in broad daylight left the nation stunned and the government struggling to explain a new debacle at the Louvre.

Each stolen piece — an emerald necklace and earrings, two crowns, two brooches, a sapphire necklace and a single earring — represents the pinnacle of 19th century "haute joaillerie," or fine jewelry. For the royals, they were more than decoration. The pieces were political statements of France's wealth, power and cultural import. They are so significant that they were among treasures saved from the government's 1887 auction of most royal jewels.

The Louvre reopened Wednesday for the first time since the heist Sunday morning, although the Apollo Gallery where the theft occurred remained closed.

Laure Beccau, the Paris prosecutor whose office is leading the investigation, said Tuesday that in monetary terms, the stolen jewelry is worth an estimated \$102 million (88 million euros) — a valuation that doesn't include historical worth. About 100 investigators are involved in the police hunt for the suspects and the gems, she said.

The theft of the crown jewels left the French government scrambling — again — to explain the latest embarrassment at the Louvre, which is plagued by overcrowding and outdated facilities. Activists in 2024 threw a can of soup at the Mona Lisa. And in June, the museum was brought to a halt by its own striking staff, who complained about mass tourism. President Emmanuel Macron has announced that the Mona Lisa, stolen by a former museum worker in 1911 and recovered two years later, will get its own room under a major renovation.

Now the sparkling jewels, artifacts of a French culture of long ago, are likely being secretly dismantled and sold off in a rush as individual pieces that may or may not be identifiable as part of the French crown jewels, experts say.

"It's extremely unlikely these jewels will ever be retrieved and seen again," said Tobias Kormind, managing director of 77 Diamonds, a major European diamond jeweler, said in a statement. "If these gems are broken up and sold off, they will, in effect, vanish from history and be lost to the world forever."

Crown jewels are symbols of heritage and national pride

At once intimate and public, crown jewels are kept secured from the Tower of London to Tokyo's Impe-



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rial Palace as visual symbols of national identities.

The four suspected robbers split into two pairs, with two people aboard a truck equipped with a cherry picker they used to climb up to the Galerie d'Apollon and two others piloting motorbikes used in the gang's getaway, authorities said.

Taken, officials said, were eight pieces, part of a collection whose origin as crown jewels date back to the 16th century when King Francis I decreed that they belonged to the state. The Paris prosecutor's office said that two men with bright yellow jackets broke into the gallery at 9:34 a.m. — half an hour past opening time — and left the room at 9:38 a.m. before fleeing on two motorbikes.

The missing pieces include two crowns, or diadems. One, given by Emperor Napoleon III to the Empress Eugenie in 1853 to celebrate their wedding, holds more than 200 pearls and nearly 2,000 diamonds. The second is a starry sapphire-and-diamond headpiece — and also a necklace and single earring— worn by, among others, Queen Marie-Amelie, French authorities said.

Also stolen: a necklace of dozens of emeralds and more than 1,000 diamonds that was a wedding gift from Napoleon Bonaparte to his second wife, Marie-Louise of Austria, in 1810. The matching earrings also were stolen. The thieves also made off with a reliquary brooch and a large bodice bow worn by Empress Eugenie — both pieces diamond-encrusted, French officials said.

The robbers dropped or abandoned a hefty ninth piece, which was damaged: a crown adorned with gold eagles, 1,354 diamonds and 56 emeralds, worn by Empress Eugenie.

Left untouched were other items in the crown jewel collection, which before the heist included 23 jewels, according to the Louvre. Remaining, for example, is the plum-sized Regent, a white diamond said to be the largest of its kind in Europe.

Now it's a race against time

Beyond the monetary value of the stolen jewels, the emotional loss is keenly felt. Many have described France's failure to secure its most precious items as a wounding blow to national pride.

"These are family souvenirs that have been taken from the French," conservative lawmaker Maxime Michelet said Tuesday in Parliament, quizzing the government about security at the Louvre and other cultural sites.

"Empress Eugenie's crown — stolen, then dropped and found broken in the gutter, has become the symbol of the decline of a nation that used to be so admired," Michelet said. "It is shameful for our country, incapable of guaranteeing the security of the world's largest museum."

The theft was not the first Louvre heist in recent years. But it stood out for its forethought, speed and almost cinematic quality as one of the highest-profile museum thefts in living memory. In fact, it echoed the fictional theft from the Louvre of a royal crown by a "gentleman thief" in the French television show "Lupin" — which in turn is based on a 1905 series of stories.

The romance of such a theft is mostly a creation of showbiz, according to one theft investigator. Christopher A. Marinello, a lawyer with Art Recovery International, said he's never seen a "theft-to-order" by some shadowy secret collector.

"These criminals are just looking to steal whatever they can," Marinello said. "They chose this room because it was close to a window. They chose these jewels because they figured that they could break them apart, take out the settings, take out the diamonds and the sapphires and the emeralds" overseas to "a dodgy dealer that's willing to recut them and no one would ever know what they did."

What happens now is a race against time both for the French authorities hunting the thieves and for the perpetrators themselves, who will have a hard time finding buyers for the pieces in all their royal glory.

"Nobody will touch these objects. They are too famous. It's too hot. If you get caught you will end up in prison," said Dutch art sleuth Arthur Brand. "You cannot sell them, you cannot leave them to your children."

## North Carolina GOP poised to redraw House map, aiming to secure another seat for Trump

By GARY D. ROBERTSON Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — North Carolina Republican legislative leaders were poised Wednesday to complete a retooling of part of the state's U.S. House map in hopes of picking up an additional GOP seat and helping President Donald Trump retain majority control of the lower chamber of Congress in next year's midterm elections.

The state House scheduled floor debate and votes on proposed boundaries that if enacted would attempt to impede next year's reelection of Democratic U.S. Rep. Don Davis, who currently represents more than 20 northeastern counties. The state Senate already approved the plan along party lines on Tuesday.

Republicans hold majorities in both General Assembly chambers, and Democratic Gov. Josh Stein is unable under state law to use his veto stamp on redistricting maps. So the GOP's proposal would be implemented following affirmative House votes — barring successful litigation likely filed by Democrats or voting rights advocates to stop it. Candidate filing for 2026 is scheduled to begin Dec. 1.

Republican lawmakers have said the proposed changes attempt to satisfy Trump's call in GOP-led states to secure more seats for the party nationwide and retain its grip on Congress and advance his agenda. Democrats are resisting those attempts with rival moves and need to gain just three more seats to seize control of the House. The president's party historically has lost seats in midterm elections.

"The purpose of this map was to pick up a Republican seat. We've stated that over and over again," state Sen. Ralph Hise, who helped draw the altered map, said this week.

The national redistricting battle began over the summer when Trump urged Republican-led Texas to reshape its U.S. House districts. After Texas lawmakers acted, California Democrats reciprocated by passing their own plan, which still needs voter approval in November.

Under the replacement map, which would exchange several counties in Davis' current 1st District with another coastal district, the proposed map would favor Republicans winning 11 of the state's 14 congressional district seats — statewide election data suggests — up from the 10 they now hold.

Davis is one of North Carolina's three Black representatives, and his 1st District includes several majority Black counties. Map critics have suggested upcoming lawsuits could accuse Republicans of creating an illegal racial gerrymander in a district that's elected African Americans to the U.S. House continuously since 1992.

Davis won his second term in 2024 by less than 2 percentage points, and the 1st District was one of 13 congressional districts won both by a Democratic House member and by Trump, according to the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia.

Davis on Tuesday called the proposed map "beyond the pale."

Hundreds of Democratic and liberal activists swarmed the legislative complex this week registering their opposition to the plan. They blasted GOP legislators for doing Trump's bidding and criticized what they called a power grab through a speedy and unfair redistricting process.

"If you pass this, your legacy will be shredding the Constitution, destroying democracy," Karen Ziegler with the grassroots group Democracy Out Loud, told senators this week. Instead, she added, "we're letting Donald Trump decide who represents the people of North Carolina."

Democrats allege the proposed map creates a racial gerrymander that would dismantle decades of voting rights progress for those who live in what's known as North Carolina's "Black Belt" region. Republicans counter no such gerrymandering occurred and mention that no racial data was used in forming the districts.

State GOP leaders defended their actions, saying Trump won the state's electoral votes all three times that he's run for president — albeit narrowly — and thus merits more potential support in Congress to carry out his agenda.

"It is something that is an appropriate thing for us to do under the law and in conjunction with basically listening to the will of the people," Senate leader Phil Berger told reporters.

## **Tropical Storm Melissa brings heavy rain and a flood risk to Haiti, Dominican Republic and Jamaica**

MIAMI (AP) — Tropical Storm Melissa began dumping heavy rain on Hispaniola on Tuesday as forecasters warned of a significant flood risk in parts of the Caribbean region later this week.

The rains snarled traffic in the Dominican Republic's capital, Santo Domingo, and at least one traffic light was downed as winds whipped around the city. Games in the country's professional baseball league were canceled.

People in Haiti grew concerned over the possibility of heavy flooding, which has devastated the country during past storms given widespread erosion.

Melissa was about 325 miles (520 kilometers) south-southwest of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, with maximum sustained winds of 50 mph (80 kph) as of Tuesday night, the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said. It was moving west at 13 mph (20 kph).

A hurricane watch was issued for southern Haiti, while a tropical storm watch was in effect for Jamaica. Five to 10 inches (12-25 centimeters) of rain was possible in southern Haiti and the southern Dominican Republic through Friday, with several inches also expected in Jamaica. Heavy rain was also forecast for northern areas of Hispaniola, Aruba and Puerto Rico.

More heavy rain was possible past Friday, and there was a significant risk of flash flooding and landslides. Melissa was forecast to gain strength gradually, but the U.S. forecasters warned that its track and forward movement were uncertain and people in the region should remain alert.

## **Vance is optimistic about Gaza ceasefire but notes 'very hard' work to come**

By RENATA BRITO, MELANIE LIDMAN and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

KIRYAT GAT, Israel (AP) — U.S. Vice President JD Vance on Tuesday called progress in Gaza's fragile ceasefire better than anticipated but acknowledged during an Israel visit the challenges that remain, from disarming Hamas to rebuilding a land devastated by two years of war.

Vance noted flareups of violence in recent days but said the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas that began on Oct. 10 is going "better than I expected." The Trump administration's Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff, added that "we are exceeding where we thought we would be at this time."

They visited a new center in Israel for civilian and military cooperation as questions remain over the long-term plan for peace, including when and how an international security force will deploy to Gaza and who will govern the territory after the war.

Vance tried to downplay any idea that his visit — his first as vice president — was urgently arranged to keep the ceasefire in place. He said he feels "confident that we're going to be in a place where this peace lasts," but warned that if Hamas doesn't cooperate, it will be "obliterated."

Jared Kushner, U.S. President Donald Trump's son-in-law and one of the architects of the ceasefire agreement, noted its complexity: "Both sides are transitioning from two years of very intense warfare to now a peacetime posture."

Vance is expected to stay in the region until Thursday and meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other officials.

On Tuesday, Netanyahu fired his national security adviser, Tzachi Hanegbi, but gave no reason for the decision. Israeli media said Hanegbi had opposed the renewal of Israel's Gaza offensive in March, and Israel's failed attempt to assassinate Hamas' leadership in an airstrike in Qatar in September. In a statement, Hanegbi noted "times of disagreement" with Netanyahu.

Hamas hands over remains of 2 more hostages

Late Tuesday, Israel's military said the remains of two more Gaza hostages had been returned to Israel, where they would be identified.

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Since the ceasefire began on Oct. 10, the remains of 15 hostages have been returned to Israel. Another 13 still need to be recovered in Gaza and handed over.

On his visit to Israel Tuesday, Vance urged a "little bit of patience" amid Israeli frustration with Hamas' pace of returning the hostages.

"Some of these hostages are buried under thousands of pounds of rubble. Some of the hostages, nobody even knows where they are," Vance said.

Israel is releasing 15 Palestinian bodies for the remains of each dead hostage, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. It said Tuesday that Israel had so far transferred 165 bodies since earlier this month.

As he faced journalists' questions over the ceasefire's next steps, he said "a lot of this work is very hard" and urged flexibility.

"Once we've got to a point where both the Gazans and our Israeli friends can have some measure of security, then we'll worry about what the long-term governance of Gaza is," he said. "Let's focus on security, rebuilding, giving people some food and medicine."

Although some 200 U.S. troops were recently sent to Israel, Vance emphasized that they would not be on the ground in Gaza. But he said officials are beginning to "conceptualize what that international security force would look like" for the territory.

He mentioned Turkey and Indonesia as countries expected to participate. The flags of Jordan, Germany, Britain and Denmark were on the stage where he spoke. Britain said late Tuesday it would send a small contingent of military officers to Israel to assist in monitoring the ceasefire.

While the ceasefire has been tested by fighting and mutual accusations of violations, both Israel and Hamas have said they are committed to the deal.

Aid into Gaza increases, while prices rise

International organizations said they were scaling up humanitarian aid entering Gaza, while Hamas-led security forces cracked down against what it called price gouging by private merchants.

The World Food Program said it had sent more than 530 trucks into Gaza in the past 10 days, enough to feed nearly half a million people for two weeks. That's well under the 500 to 600 that entered daily before the war.

The WFP also said it had reinstated 26 distribution points across Gaza and hopes to scale up to its previous 145 points as soon as possible.

Residents said prices for essential goods soared on Sunday after militants killed two Israeli soldiers and Israel responded with strikes that killed dozens of Palestinians. Israel also threatened to halt humanitarian aid.

At a market in the central city of Deir al-Balah, a 25-kilogram (55-pound) package of flour was selling for more than \$70 on Sunday, up from about \$12 shortly after the ceasefire. By Tuesday, the price was around \$30.

Mohamed al-Faqawi, a Khan Younis resident, accused merchants of taking advantage of the perilous security situation. "They are exploiting us," he said.

On Monday, Hamas said its security forces raided shops across Gaza, closing some and forcing merchants to lower prices. Hamas also has allowed aid trucks to move safely and halted looting of deliveries.

Nahed Sheheiber, head of Gaza's private truckers' union, said there was no stealing aid since the ceasefire started.

But other significant challenges remain as Gaza's financial system is in tatters. With nearly every bank branch and ATM inoperable, people pay exorbitant commissions to a network of cash brokers to get money for daily expenses.

On Tuesday, dozens of people in Deir al-Balah spent hours in line at the Bank of Palestine hoping to access their money but were turned away.

"Without having the bank open and without money, it does not matter that the prices (in the market) have dropped," said Kamilia Al-Ajez.

Gaza doctors say bodies returned with signs of torture

A senior health official in Gaza said some bodies of Palestinians returned by Israel bore "evidence of



torture" and called for a United Nations investigation.

Dr. Muneer al-Boursh, the health ministry's general director, said on social media late Monday that some had evidence of being bound with ropes and metal shackles, and had deep wounds and crushed limbs.

It was not immediately clear if any of the bodies had been prisoners; they are returned without identification or details on how they died. The bodies could include Palestinian detainees who died in Israeli custody or bodies taken out of Gaza by Israeli troops during the war.

The Israel Prisons Service denied that prisoners had been mistreated, saying it had followed legal procedures and provided medical care and "adequate living conditions."

Israeli hostages released from Gaza have also reported metal shackles and harsh conditions, including frequent beatings and starvation.

In the 2023 attack on Israel that started the war, Hamas-led militants killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted 251 people as hostages.

The Israel-Hamas war has killed more than 68,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count. The ministry maintains detailed casualty records that are seen as generally reliable by U.N. agencies and independent experts. Israel has disputed them without providing its own toll.

## Trump says he'd have final say on money he seeks over past federal investigations into his conduct

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Tuesday that the federal government owes him "a lot of money" for prior Justice Department investigations into his actions and insisted he would have the ultimate say on any payout because any decision will "have to go across my desk."

Trump's comments to reporters at the White House came in response to questions about a New York Times story that said he had filed administrative claims before being reelected seeking roughly \$230 million in damages related to the FBI's 2022 search of his Mar-a-Lago property for classified documents and for a separate investigation into potential ties between Russia and his 2016 presidential campaign.

Trump said Tuesday he did not know the dollar figures involved and suggested he had not spoken to officials about it. But, he added, "All I know is that, they would owe me a lot of money."

Though the Justice Department has a protocol for reviewing such claims, Trump asserted, "It's interesting, 'cause I'm the one that makes the decision, right?"

"That decision would have to go across my desk," he added.

He said he could donate any taxpayer money or use it to help pay for a ballroom he's building at the White House.

The status of the claims and any negotiations over them within the Justice Department was not immediately clear. One of Trump's lead defense lawyers in the Mar-a-Lago investigation, Todd Blanche, is now the deputy attorney general at the Justice Department. The current associate attorney general, Stanley Woodward, represented Trump's valet and co-defendant, Walt Nauta, in the same case.

"In any circumstance, all officials at the Department of Justice follow the guidance of career ethics officials," a Justice Department spokesperson said. A White House spokesperson referred comment to the Justice Department.

Trump signaled his interest in compensation during a White House appearance last week with Blanche, FBI Director Kash Patel and Attorney General Pam Bondi, who was part of Trump's legal team during one of the impeachment cases against him.

"I have a lawsuit that was doing very well, and when I became president, I said: 'I'm suing myself. I don't know. How do you settle the lawsuit?'" he said. "I'll say, 'Give me X dollars,' and I don't know what to do with the lawsuit. It's a great lawsuit and now I won, it looks bad. I'm suing myself, so I don't know."

The Times said the two claims were filed with the Justice Department as part of a process that seeks to resolve federal complaints through settlements and avert litigation.

One of the administrative claims, filed in August 2024 and reviewed by The Associated Press, seeks compensatory and punitive damages over the search of his Mar-a-Lago estate and the resulting case alleging he hoarded classified documents and thwarted government efforts to retrieve them.

His lawyer who filed the claim alleged the case was a "malicious prosecution" carried out by the Biden administration to hurt Trump's bid to reclaim the White House, forcing Trump to spend tens of millions of dollars in his defense.

That investigation produced criminal charges that Justice Department special counsel Jack Smith abandoned last November because of department policy against the indictment of a sitting president.

The Times said the other claim seeks damages related to the long-concluded Trump-Russia investigation, which continues to infuriate the president.

## Trump pick to lead federal watchdog agency withdraws after offensive text messages were revealed

By SEUNG MIN KIM and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's pick to lead a federal watchdog agency withdrew from consideration Tuesday evening, after his offensive text messages were made public and GOP senators revolted.

Paul Ingrassia, who was nominated to lead the Office of Special Counsel, had been scheduled to have his confirmation hearing this week.

On Monday, however, Politico reported on a text chat that showed him saying the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday should be "tossed into the seventh circle of hell." Ingrassia also described himself in the chat as having "a Nazi streak" at times.

After the texts came to light, several Republican senators said they would not support his nomination. They included some of the most conservative and stalwart Trump allies in the Senate.

"I will be withdrawing myself from Thursday's HSGAC hearing to lead the Office of Special Counsel because unfortunately I do not have enough Republican votes at this time," Ingrassia posted in an online message. "I appreciate the overwhelming support that I have received throughout the process and will continue to serve President Trump and the administration to Make America Great Again!" HSGAC is the Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs.

Asked for comment on Ingrassia withdrawing his name from consideration, the White House said simply, "He is no longer the nominee." But Ingrassia's post came after Senate Majority Leader John Thune had said he hoped the White House would withdraw Ingrassia's nomination and several GOP senators said they would not support him.

"I'm a no," said Wisconsin Sen. Ron Johnson, who sits on the committee that would've taken up Ingrassia's nomination. "It never should have got this far."

Republicans have been able to muscle through the vast majority of Trump's nominees in roll call votes despite stiff Democratic opposition. But there have been sporadic instances when Republicans have pushed back, generally behind the scenes, showing there are limits to their support.

Most notably, Matt Gaetz withdrew as Trump's first choice for attorney general soon after being tabbed for the job. In May, Trump pulled his nomination of Ed Martin Jr. to be the top federal prosecutor for the nation's capital, bowing to bipartisan concerns about the conservative activist's modest legal experience and support for Jan. 6 rioters.

Last month, the White House announced it would be withdrawing the nomination of E.J. Antoni to lead the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Antoni was supposed to succeed a BLS director who was fired following a disappointing jobs report.

But Democrats weren't satisfied with Ingrassia's withdrawal, with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., calling on the president to fire him from his current position as a White House liaison for the Department of Homeland Security.

"This isn't anywhere near enough," Schumer said on social media.

According to texts viewed by Politico, Ingrassia told those in the chat that "MLK Jr. was the 1960s George Floyd and his 'holiday' should be ended and tossed into the seventh circle of hell where it belongs."

Politico spoke to Ingrassia's lawyer, who said the text messages might have been manipulated or were missing context. The lawyer did not confirm the texts were authentic.

The Office of Special Counsel is an investigative and prosecutorial office that works to protect government employees and whistleblowers from retaliation for reporting wrongdoing. It's also responsible for enforcing the Hatch Act, which restricts the partisan political activities of government workers.

In May, Trump described Ingrassia in a social media post as a "highly respected attorney, writer and Constitutional Scholar."

## Things to know about Nicolas Sarkozy, France's new prison inmate who used to be president

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Once the most powerful person in France, Nicolas Sarkozy is now behind bars.

Being locked up in Paris' La Santé prison for criminal conspiracy is the latest twist in the uncommon life of the 70-year-old former president.

Proudly tough on crime when he was in government, Sarkozy now has to adjust to the strict constraints of hours and days governed by penitentiary rules. He is appealing his conviction and maintains his innocence.

In sentencing Sarkozy to five years in prison for plotting to finance his 2007 campaign with funds from Libya, judges took a swing at privilege and impunity in France and signaled that all people are equal before the law.

But the newest of more than 80,000 inmates in French prisons is the only one who used to command the country's nuclear arsenal.

Sarkozy still has friends in high places. President Emmanuel Macron welcomed him back to the presidential Elysée Palace last week for a farewell meeting before Sarkozy became, on Tuesday, modern France's first ex-leader to be incarcerated. A police motorcade escorted his car to prison.

Here are other things to know about France's president from 2007 to 2012:

One-term president

Sarkozy's election marked a generational change for France: Born in Paris in 1955, he was France's first president with no memory of World War II.

A conservative, Sarkozy beat Socialist candidate Ségolène Royal in the election's second-round run-off, thwarting her bid to become France's first woman president.

After a five-year term buffeted by the 2008 crisis in the U.S. financial system that rocked the global economy, Sarkozy's reelection effort in 2012 ended in defeat to another Socialist leader — François Hollande, Royal's ex-partner and father of their four children.

'President Bling-Bling'

Blunt-speaking and purposefully provocative at times, Sarkozy was, and remains, a polarizing figure.

His admiration of money and glitz earned him the nickname "President Bling-Bling," not a positive thing in a country with a complicated, even hostile, relationship with wealth that guillotined aristocrats during the French Revolution.

Sarkozy ostentatiously celebrated his 2007 win with rich friends at the chic Brasserie Fouquet's on the Champs-Élysées and jetted off to holiday aboard a billionaire industrialist's yacht.

One of his government's first acts was to more than double his salary as president. Sarkozy once suggested that a person who doesn't have a Rolex watch by age 50 is a failure.

Carla Bruni-Sarkozy

Sarkozy was still married to his second wife, Cécilia, when he entered the Elysée Palace.

But within a year, they divorced — a first for a French president — and weeks later, he appeared at Disneyland with supermodel-turned-singer Carla Bruni, now Carla Bruni-Sarkozy.

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Their romance and lifestyle made them tabloid fare. But their relationship has endured his legal troubles. They're both skilled in using the spotlight.

He embraced her before getting into the car for his ride to prison. She then slowly walked back to their house without him, an image that feeds their narrative of a family laboring against injustice.

An outsider

The son of a Hungarian immigrant father and French-Greek mother, Sarkozy described himself as an "outsider" and self-styled "man of the people."

A lawyer by training, it was in politics that he quickly shone. He became a mayor at age 28. He made national headlines in 1993 when he helped negotiate the release of children held by a hostage-taker strapped with explosives, who called himself "Human Bomb."

Unafraid to break French taboos, Sarkozy breathed some real-world modernity into the tradition-bound presidency, going jogging and biking in public.

Dubbed "Sarko the American," he tightened ties with the U.S. and Israel.

He also championed Western military intervention to oust Libyan leader, Moammar Gadhafi. Their relationship later became the focus of police investigations in France and the trial this year over the financing of Sarkozy's 2007 campaign.

'Poor jerk!'

First as a minister and later as president, Sarkozy sometimes shocked and angered with crude and direct language. His energy was sometimes seen as impetuosity. French media dubbed him the "hyper-president."

He once told a man at an agricultural fair who refused to shake his hand: "Get lost, you poor jerk!"

On his path to the presidency, as an ambitious interior minister in charge of fighting crime, he infuriated blue-collar towns by describing some of their residents as "scum" and suggesting that high-pressure hoses should be used to clean them up.

He pushed for tighter controls on immigration, warning of France being potentially overwhelmed by migration, especially from Africa. Under Sarkozy, France banned the wearing of face-covering Islamic veils, known as burqas, in public places.

In the wake of his presidency, far-right leader Marine Le Pen has relentlessly focused on immigration and the place of France's 5 million Muslims with growing success, edging closer to power.

## Trump doesn't want 'wasted meeting' with Putin as he confirms talks on Ukraine war are off for now

By MATTHEW LEE and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Tuesday his plan for a swift meeting with Russian leader Vladimir Putin was on hold because he didn't want it to be a "waste of time." It was the latest twist in Trump's stop-and-go effort to resolve the war in Ukraine.

The decision to hold off on the meeting in Budapest, Hungary, which Trump had announced last week, was made following a call Monday between Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

"I don't want to have a wasted meeting," Trump said. "I don't want to have a waste of time — so we'll see what happens."

Lavrov made clear in public comments Tuesday that Russia is opposed to an immediate ceasefire. Trump, meanwhile, has been shifting his stance all year on key issues in the war, including whether a ceasefire should come before longer-term peace talks, and whether Ukraine could win back land seized by Russia during almost four years of fighting.

Trump's hesitancy in meeting Putin will likely come as a relief to European leaders, who have accused Putin of stalling for time with diplomacy while trying to gain ground on the battlefield.

The leaders — including the British prime minister, French president and German chancellor — said they opposed any push to make Ukraine surrender land captured by Russian forces in return for peace,



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as Trump most recently has suggested.

They also plan to push forward with plans to use billions of dollars in frozen Russian assets to help fund Ukraine's war efforts, despite some misgivings about the legality and consequences of such a step.

The U.S. and Russian presidents last met in Alaska in August, but the encounter did not advance Trump's stalled attempts to end a war that began with Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022.

The Kremlin didn't seem to be in a rush to get Trump and Putin together again either. Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Tuesday that "preparation is needed, serious preparation" before a meeting.

Trump suggested that decisions about the meeting would be made in the coming days.

What Ukraine wants from the US

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been trying to strengthen Ukraine's position by seeking long-range Tomahawk missiles from the U.S., although Trump has waffled on whether he would provide them.

"We need to end this war, and only pressure will lead to peace," Zelenskyy said Tuesday in a Telegram post.

He noted that Putin returned to diplomacy and called Trump last week when it looked like Tomahawk missiles were a possibility. But "as soon as the pressure eased a little, the Russians began to try to drop diplomacy, postpone the dialogue," Zelenskyy said.

On Wednesday, Trump is expected to hold talks in the White House with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte. The military alliance has been coordinating deliveries of weapons to Ukraine, many of them purchased from the U.S. by Canada and European countries.

A meeting of the Coalition of the Willing — a group of 35 countries who support Ukraine — is due to take place in London on Friday.

How Trump's stance on the war has shifted

Trump initially focused on pressuring Ukraine to make concessions, but then grew frustrated with Putin's intransigence. Trump often complains that he thought his good relationship with his Russian counterpart would have made it easier to end the war.

Last month, Trump reversed his long-held position that Ukraine would have to give up land and suggested it could win back all the territory it has lost to Russia. But after a phone call with Putin last week and a subsequent meeting with Zelenskyy on Friday, Trump shifted his position again and called on Kyiv and Moscow to "stop where they are" and end the war.

On Sunday, Trump said the industrial Donbas region of eastern Ukraine should be "cut up," leaving most of it in Russian hands.

Trump said Monday that while he thinks it is possible that Ukraine can ultimately defeat Russia, he's now doubtful it will happen.

Ukrainian and European leaders trying to keep Trump on their side

"We strongly support President Trump's position that the fighting should stop immediately, and that the current line of contact should be the starting point of negotiations," the leaders' statement said. "We can all see that Putin continues to choose violence and destruction."

Lavrov made clear Tuesday that Russia opposes a ceasefire, Russian state news agencies reported. He told journalists in Moscow that it would go against what the two presidents agreed upon in Alaska. Trump had hoped to get Russia to stop the fighting, but he was rebuffed by Putin, who has pushed for a comprehensive settlement to end the war.

Russia occupies about one fifth of Ukraine, but carving up their country in return for peace is unacceptable to Kyiv officials.

Also, a conflict frozen on the current front line could fester, with occupied areas of Ukraine offering Moscow a springboard for new attacks in the future, Ukrainian and European officials fear.

The statement by the leaders of Ukraine, the U.K., Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Poland, Denmark and EU officials came early in what Zelenskyy said Monday would be a week that is "very active in diplomacy."

More international economic sanctions on Russia are likely to be discussed at an EU summit in Brussels on Thursday.

"We must ramp up the pressure on Russia's economy and its defense industry, until Putin is ready to make peace," Tuesday's statement said.

## What to know about efforts to block National Guard deployments in Chicago, Portland, other US cities

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — President Donald Trump's attempts to deploy the military in Democratic-led cities — over the objections of mayors and governors — has brought a head-spinning array of court challenges and overlapping rulings.

As the U.S. Supreme Court ponders whether to clear the way for the National Guard in Chicago, a federal appeals court is hearing arguments in California Gov. Gavin Newsom's challenge to the deployment of troops in Los Angeles. Guard troops could also soon be on the ground in Portland, Oregon, pending legal developments there.

Here are some things to know about legal efforts to block, or deploy, National Guard troops in various cities.

Supreme Court ruling to come; federal judge weighs National Guard in Chicago

A federal judge in Chicago already blocked deployment of National Guard troops to the Chicago area for two weeks. On Wednesday, she'll hold a hearing to consider whether to extend that order — but anything she does could be moot if the U.S. Supreme Court rules in the meantime.

Attorneys representing the Trump administration said in court filings Tuesday that they would agree to possibly extend the block on deployment of troops for 30 days. However, they are also continuing to ask the U.S. Supreme Court to intervene. The Trump administration is pressing for an emergency order from the U.S. Supreme Court that would allow Guard troops to be deployed.

"Every day this improper TRO remains in effect imposes grievous and irreparable harm on the Executive," Solicitor General D. John Sauer wrote in a Supreme Court filing Tuesday.

Lawyers representing Chicago and Illinois have asked that the Supreme Court continue to block the deployment to the Chicago area, calling it a "dramatic step."

National Guard deployment in Portland also in limbo

An appeals court said Monday that Trump could take command of 200 Oregon National Guard troops, but for now a separate court order blocks him from actually deploying them.

U.S. District Judge Karin Immergut, a Trump appointee, issued two temporary restraining orders early this month. One prohibited Trump from calling up the Oregon troops so he could send them to Portland. The other prohibited him from sending any National Guard members to Oregon at all, after he tried to evade the first order by deploying California troops instead.

The Justice Department appealed the first order, and in a 2-1 ruling Monday, a panel from the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals sided with the administration.

However, Immergut's second order remains in effect, so no troops may immediately be deployed.

The case is still before the courts.

Legal battle in California goes before appellate panel

A panel of judges with the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Pasadena is set to hear arguments Wednesday related to Trump's deployment of National Guard troops to Los Angeles.

A district court found the Trump administration violated federal law when he sent the troops to Los Angeles in early June after protests to his immigration crackdown.

Judge Charles Breyer handed Newsom an early victory in the case on June 13 when he ordered control of National Guard troops back to California. But in an emergency ruling, an appeals court panel sided with the Trump administration, allowing the troops to remain in federal hands as the lawsuit unfolds.

The appeals court will weigh whether to vacate Breyer's June order.

The same three-judge panel is also handling the Trump administration's appeal to a Sept. 2 ruling by Breyer who found the president violated the Posse Comitatus Act, an 1878 law that prohibits military enforcement of domestic laws.

Groups aim to stop National Guard deployment in D.C.

In Charleston, West Virginia, a state court hearing is set for Friday in a lawsuit filed by two groups who want to block the deployment of the state National Guard to Washington, D.C. More than 300 Guard members have been in the nation's capital supporting Trump's initiative since late August.

Democrats sue to stop National Guard deployment in Memphis

In Tennessee, Democratic elected officials sued last Friday to try to stop the ongoing Guard deployment in Memphis. They said Republican Gov. Bill Lee, acting on a request from Trump, violated the state constitution, which says the Guard can be called up during "rebellion or invasion" but only with the blessing of state lawmakers.

Since their arrival on Oct. 10, troops have been patrolling areas of downtown Memphis, including near the iconic Pyramid, wearing fatigues and protective vests that say "military police," with guns in holsters. Officials have said Guard members have no arrest power.

## Appeals court overturns conviction of Colombian ex-President Uribe for bribery and witness tampering

By ASTRID SUÁREZ Associated Press

BOGOTÁ, Colombia (AP) — An appeals court on Tuesday overturned the conviction of former Colombian President Álvaro Uribe for bribery and witness tampering for which he had been sentenced to 12 years of house arrest.

Uribe, 73, has denied any wrongdoing. He was sentenced in August following a nearly six-month trial in which prosecutors presented evidence that he attempted to influence witnesses who accused the law-and-order leader of having links to a paramilitary group in the 1990s.

The court on Tuesday said the conviction had "structural deficiencies," used vague premises and lacked comprehensive analysis. Two of the three judges on the panel voted to overturn the conviction; the third thought it should be upheld.

Uribe, who governed from 2002 to 2010, has called his conviction political persecution, claiming that the judge was biased against him. In the appeal, his lawyers questioned the validity of the evidence and argued that the former president's responsibility was not "unequivocally" proven.

Prosecutors and victims can appeal Tuesday's ruling to Colombia's Supreme Court. The former president, who was free pending his appeal, watched the proceedings remotely via video link.

The case has energized both Uribe's supporters and critics, as the latest turn comes amid campaigning for next year's legislative and presidential elections in Colombia. Uribe's party, Democratic Center, has already said that Uribe will run for senator if his legal situation allows it. The original sentence included an 8-year ban on holding public office.

Sen. Paloma Valencia, an Uribe supporter, wrote on social platform X that she felt relieved by the latest decision.

"We have always trusted in his innocence, always defended his legacy and his good name," she said.

The former president governed with strong support from the United States. He is a polarizing figure in Colombia, where many credit him for saving the country from becoming a failed state, while others associate him with human rights violations and the rise of paramilitary groups in the 1990s.

The judge in Uribe's original trial said she had seen enough evidence to determine that Uribe conspired with a lawyer to coax three former paramilitary group members, who were in prison, into changing testimony they had provided to Iván Cepeda, a leftist senator who had launched an investigation into Uribe's alleged ties to a paramilitary group.

Uribe in 2012 filed a libel suit against Cepeda in the Supreme Court. But in a twist, the high court in 2018 dismissed the accusations against Cepeda and began investigating Uribe.

A key point in the appeals court's rationale to overturn Uribe's conviction was the legality of wiretaps of Uribe's phone. The court determined they had to be excluded as evidence because they were initiated by mistake while another person was under investigation.

President Gustavo Petro on Tuesday criticized the court's decision to exclude the wiretaps, explaining on X that they were not private information because "Uribe's voice appears speaking about bribes."

The conservative former president is one of the most vocal opponents of Petro, Colombia's first leftist head of state.

Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on X that "justice has prevailed" in the case of Uribe, who he said was the victim of a "witch hunt."

## **Crews rescue 80 miners trapped in the Dominican Republic with no injuries or deaths reported**

By MARTÍN ADAMES Associated Press

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP) — Crews in the Dominican Republic on Tuesday rescued 80 miners who became trapped after a mine partially collapsed. No one was injured or killed, according to the Civil Defense Agency.

The miners became trapped when a portion of a zinc and copper mine in the Cerros of Maimón collapsed, a statement from the Ministry of Energy and Mines said.

The mine is located in a rural area northwest of the capital, Santo Domingo, where relatives had anxiously awaited the rescue of their loved ones.

The ministry said earlier that all miners were located underground in a safe area and were being lifted to upper ground.

The Dominican Mining Corp., a subsidiary of the Australian company Perilya, holds the concession for the Cerro of Maimón mine, which spans an area of 2,245 hectares (5,547 acres).

The company operates an open-pit copper and zinc mine with reserves of approximately 6 million tons of those minerals. The concession was acquired from Falconbridge Dominicana in April 2002.

Local media reported that similar incidents have occurred in the past, with one miner killed in a collapse in December 2021.

Then in 2022, two workers, one Dominican and the other Colombian, were rescued after spending several days trapped by an underground landslide.

## **Trump hosts Senate Republicans at renovated White House as the shutdown drags into fourth week**

By LISA MASCARO, MARY CLARE JALONICK and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Head Start programs for preschoolers are scrambling for federal funds. The federal agency tasked with overseeing the U.S. nuclear stockpile has begun furloughing its 1,400 employees. Thousands more federal workers are going without paychecks.

But as President Donald Trump welcomed Republican senators for lunch in the newly renovated Rose Garden Club — with the boom-boom of construction underway on the new White House ballroom — he portrayed a different vision of America, as a unified GOP refuses to yield to Democratic demands for health care funds, and the government shutdown drags on.

"We have the hottest country anywhere in the world, which tells you about leadership," Trump said in opening remarks, extolling the renovations underway as senators took their seats in the newly paved over garden-turned-patio.

It was a festive atmosphere under crisp, but sunny autumn skies as senators settled in for cheeseburgers, fries and chocolates, and Trump's favored songs — "YMCA" and "You Can't Always Get What You Want" — played over the new sound system.



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And while Trump said the shutdown must come to an end — and suggested maybe Smithsonian museums could reopen — he signaled no quick compromise with Democrats over the expiring health care funds.

Later at another White House event, Trump said he's happy to talk with Democrats about health care once the shutdown is over. "The government has to be open," he said.

**Shutdown drags into record books**

As the government shutdown enters its fourth week — on track to become one of the longest in U.S. history — millions of Americans are bracing for health care sticker shock, while others are feeling the financial impact. Economists have warned that the federal closure, with many of the nearly 2.3 million employees working without pay, will shave economic growth by 0.1 to 0.2 percentage points per week.

The Democratic leaders Sen. Chuck Schumer and Rep. Hakeem Jeffries had outreached to the White House on Tuesday, seeking a meeting with Trump before the president departs for his next overseas trip, to Asia.

"We said we'll set up an appointment with him anytime, anyplace before he leaves," Schumer said.

With Republicans in control of Congress, the Democrats have few options. They are planning to keep the Senate in session late into the night Wednesday in protest. The House has been closed for weeks.

The Republican senators, departing the White House lunch with gifts of Trump caps and medallions, said there is nothing to negotiate with Democrats over the health care funds until the government reopens.

"People keep saying 'negotiate' — negotiate what?" Senate Majority Leader John Thune said after the hour-long meeting. He said Republicans and the president are willing to consider discussions over health care, "but open up the government first."

**Missed paychecks and programs running out of money**

While Capitol Hill remains at a standstill, the effects of the shutdown are worsening.

Federal workers are set to miss additional paychecks amid total uncertainty about when they might eventually get paid. Government services like the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, known as WIC, and Head Start preschool programs that serve needy families are facing potential cutoffs in funding. On Monday, Energy Secretary Chris Wright said the National Nuclear Security Administration is furloughing its federal workers. The Federal Aviation Administration has reported air traffic controller shortages and flight delays in cities across the United States.

At the same time, economists, including Goldman Sachs and the nonpartisan CBO, have warned that the federal government's closure will ripple through the economy. More recently, Oxford Economics said a shutdown reduces economic growth by 0.1 to 0.2 percentage points per week.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce noted that the Small Business Administration supports loans totaling about \$860 million a week for 1,600 small businesses. Those programs will close to new loans during the shutdown. The shutdown also has halted the issuance and renewal of flood insurance policies, delaying mortgage closings and real estate transactions.

**Rising health care costs**

And without action, future health costs are expected to skyrocket for millions of Americans as the enhanced federal subsidies that help people buy private insurance under the Affordable Care Act, come to an end.

Those subsidies, in the form of tax credits that were bolstered during the COVID-19 crisis, expire Dec. 31, and insurance companies are sending out information ahead of open enrollment periods about the new rates for the coming year.

Most U.S. adults are worried about health care becoming more expensive, according to a new Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll, as they make decisions about next year's health coverage.

Members of both parties acknowledge that time is running out to fix the looming health insurance price hikes, even as talks are quietly underway over possible extensions or changes to the ACA funding.

Democrats are focused on Nov. 1, when next year's enrollment period for the ACA coverage begins and millions of people will sign up for their coverage without the expanded subsidy help. Once those sign-

ups begin, they say, it would be much harder to restore the subsidies even if they did have a bipartisan compromise.

What about Trump?

Tuesday's White House meeting offered a chance for Republican senators to engage with the president on the shutdown after he had been more involved in foreign policy and other issues.

But senators left the meeting, some saying it was more of a luncheon than a substantial conversation. They said they could hear, but not see, the ballroom construction nearby.

Trump had previously indicated early on during the shutdown that he may be willing to discuss the health care issue, and Democrats have been counting on turning the president's attention their way. But the president later clarified that he would only do so once the government reopens.

## **NFL sees a surge in returns with the new dynamic kickoff. Onside kicks remain a concern**

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The NFL is pleased by an increase in returns as a result of adjustments to the so-called dynamic kickoff, with more plays and fewer injuries, though a change could eventually be coming to onside kicks.

There have been 877 kick returns so far this season, a rate of 79.3% that is up significantly from the 31.7% through the first seven weeks of last season. It's the highest return rate at this point since 2006, with the second-most yards through Week 7 in history, according to league officials.

Owners voted in April to make the kickoff format permanent after experimenting with it in 2024, while moving touchbacks on kicks that reach the end zone on the fly from the 30 to the 35 in the hopes of leading to more kicks in play and more returns.

"I'm just happy that the foot is still in the game," Troy Vincent, executive VP of football operations and a retired defensive back, said Tuesday at the NFL's annual fall owners meeting. "We've brought the foot and preserved the foot in the game. We still got some work to do in some other areas like the onside kick, so we talked about that."

Vincent did not express concern about there being only one kick return touchdown so far, but the inability of teams to successfully recover onside kicks led him to broach the topic with owners about considering proposals by Denver and Philadelphia to offer the alternative of a long fourth-down play to get the ball back when trailing.

The league this season gave teams the ability to attempt an onside kick any time when trailing, after it was only allowed in the fourth quarter last year, but the opponent still has to be notified, taking away any element of surprise.

"When you start getting a less than 5% recovery rate, now that we've seen what has happened with the dynamic kickoff, it may be time for the membership to revisit some of those things that may be out of ordinary," Vincent said.

The kickoff change was also implemented as a way of decreasing injuries that were frequent because of the speed and physicality. Jeff Miller, NFL executive VP of player health and safety initiatives, said that worked in the preseason, with just two concussions and no ACL injuries in exhibition games even though 77% of kicks were returned.

"The speeds have slowed down given the different formation, and they're substantially slower," Miller said. "Therefore the blocks and tackles are happening at slower speeds."

One area of concern is how many kickers have been involved in making tackles — 17 already after a total of 19 all last season and 15 in 2023, according to Sportradar.

"Just by the way of formation, oftentimes that kicker's not only the last line of defense, in most cases when the returner hits that crease, he's right in the face of the kicker," Vincent said. "But that is something that the committee asked us to continue to keep monitoring."

Very little tush push debate among NFL owners

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After narrowly failing to pass a proposal that would have banned the tush push play that the Philadelphia Eagles have used effectively to win the Super Bowl and make another appearance, Vincent said there wasn't much discussion about it other than talk about how difficult the quarterback sneak maneuver is to officiate.

The NFL said in a training video sent to officials last month that the Eagles should have been penalized for at least one false start when they used the tush push against the Kansas City Chiefs in Week 2.

"What we're seeing is that line judge, sometimes on a replay we see in some cases, well, the guard jumped or the guard moved or the guard was in the neutral zone or someone else was in the neutral zone," Vincent said. "It is really hard for that line judge to identify that based on where he's at looking down the line of scrimmage."

While acknowledging "there's a team that still does it well," Vincent said the league is hoping to get better at identifying tush push penalties.

Field surfaces were also discussed

Season-ending knee injuries to New York Giants receiver Malik Nabers on the turf at MetLife Stadium and Pittsburgh Steelers special teams captain Miles Killebrew on grass at Acrisure Stadium, which some teammates described as an unplayable field, have reignited the debate about surfaces and player safety.

The topic came up Tuesday, and chief administrator of football operations Dawn Aponte said there is a heightened focus on playing surfaces.

"What we've seen thus far is not a significant difference in terms of the injury risks on grass versus synthetic," Aponte said. "We're tracking not just surface hardness now, but we're also looking at injury restitution and traction — making progress there in terms of how we're going to both improve the consistency and the performance of synthetic."

MetLife Stadium at the Meadowlands has gained an anecdotal reputation for being unsafe, and receiver Odell Beckham Jr. posted to social media asking the NFL to get rid of the turf.

Miller said league data tells a different story.

"As it relates to MetLife, they had one of the lowest injury rates — not just as synthetic but across the league — last year," Miller said. "Any injury that occurs on our surfaces, regardless of what they are, are things that we want to investigate and learn from and if they can be deterred, we want to do that. But as far as how MetLife is playing, it's playing really well and has for a while."

Giants' concussion protocol investigation is ongoing

A conclusion has not yet been reached in the investigation into the Giants' handling of the concussion protocol when coach Brian Daboll and running back Cam Skattebo each broached the blue medical tent while quarterback Jaxson Dart was being evaluated during a game on Oct. 9, according to Miller, who added no other details.

"The investigation's ongoing," Miller said. "In these things, we try to expedite it with the Players Association to get to a resolution. I don't know what 'soon' means in this context, but we're making progress in it."

No LA Olympic resolution yet

The league and the NFL Players Association are still working on details concerning participation in flag football at the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, executive VP of international events Peter O'Reilly said, citing strong support from the union as well as owners, who voted unanimously to give permission to make it happen pending an agreement.

"There's just strong momentum and people see the broader value of both growing flag and supporting the players' interest in representing their country, whether that's the U.S. or otherwise," O'Reilly said. "Still finalizing that, and then as we turn the corner into '26, we'll do broader outreach once we have that in place to really get an expression of interest from players — who's interested in playing — and then start in that two-year run-up to LA create a lot of excitement, we think."

## Los Angeles Angels hire former catcher Kurt Suzuki as their next manager

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — The Los Angeles Angels hired former major league catcher Kurt Suzuki as their next manager on Tuesday.

Suzuki has spent the past three seasons as a special assistant to Angels general manager Perry Minasian, who didn't have to look far to find the fifth person to serve as the Halos' manager during Minasian's five years in charge.

Suzuki played 16 seasons in the major leagues for five teams, earning an All-Star selection with Minnesota in 2014 and winning a World Series with Washington in 2019.

Suzuki finished his career with two years in Anaheim, retiring after the 2022 season. Suzuki also won the College World Series while playing for Cal State Fullerton, located a few miles from Angel Stadium.

The 42-year-old Suzuki replaces Ron Washington, who wasn't brought back to the Angels' dugout after two losing seasons. Washington missed the second half of the current season after undergoing quadruple bypass heart surgery, with Ray Montgomery filling in while Los Angeles finished in last place in the AL West.

The Angels pivoted to Suzuki and fellow special assistant to the GM Torii Hunter as their top candidates after talks with former slugger Albert Pujols broke down in recent days. Pujols, who has a personal services contract with the Angels, was the early front-runner for the job as a longtime favorite of owner Arte Moreno.

Pujols and Suzuki both have no major league coaching experience.

Suzuki is the Angels' fifth full-time manager in the past eight seasons since Mike Scioscia was let go. The team has the majors' longest active streaks of futility, with 10 straight losing seasons and 11 consecutive non-playoff seasons.

Although Minasian has assembled a modestly exciting young core led by shortstop Zach Neto and outfielder Jo Adell to join three-time MVP Mike Trout, the team has shown few signs of emerging from its decade-plus of profound struggle under Moreno's stewardship. The Angels went 72-90 last season, finishing 13th in the American League.

A fourth-generation Japanese-American from Hawaii, Suzuki joins Don Wakamatsu and Dave Roberts on the short list of former and current MLB managers with Asian heritage. Suzuki is also the first Hawaiian-born full-time manager in major league history, the Angels said.

Suzuki would take over the Angels' dugout during another chapter of negative publicity for the beleaguered franchise, which is currently involved in a highly public trial over a wrongful death lawsuit filed by the family of pitcher Tyler Skaggs, who died of a drug overdose in 2019. Trout testified in the trial Tuesday.

## Warner Bros. Discovery confirms it has received buyout interest and is considering its options

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Warner Bros. Discovery — the home of HBO, CNN and DC Studios — has signaled that it may be open to selling all or parts of its business, just months after announcing plans to split into two companies.

In an announcement Tuesday, the entertainment and media giant said it had initiated a review of "strategic alternatives" in light of "unsolicited interest" it had received from multiple parties, for both the entire company and Warner Bros. specifically.

Warner Bros. Discovery did not specify where that interest was coming from, and a spokesperson said the company couldn't share additional information when reached by The Associated Press. But its review arrives after growing reports of a potential bidding war — including from Skydance-owned Paramount, which closed its own \$8 billion merger in early August.

Citing anonymous sources familiar with the matter, The Wall Street Journal recently reported that Paramount approached Warner Bros. Discovery about a majority-cash offer in late September — but that



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Warner Chief Executive David Zaslav had rebuffed those first overtures. According to the outlet, Paramount Skydance CEO David Ellison later considered taking a more aggressive approach, such as going directly to shareholders.

CNBC has also reported that Netflix and Comcast are among other interested parties, citing unnamed sources. Comcast declined to comment Tuesday. Paramount and Netflix did not immediately respond to the AP's requests for statements.

If a sale of all or part of Warner Bros. Discovery arrives, it would mark a considerable shift in the U.S. media landscape that is "already trending towards a concerning level of consolidation," said Mike Proulx, VP research director at Forrester.

He pointed to the streaming space in particular — noting that, on one hand, a potential transaction could help scale the company's streamers to better compete with other platforms. But on the other hand, consumers could see fewer choices controlled by just a handful of corporate giants.

"When just a few conglomerates, like Skydance, increasingly control the lion's share of some of the most popular platforms, it raises all sorts of questions around the future of content diversity and expression," Proulx said over email Tuesday. "Bigger is better might be good for shareholders but will consumers ultimately benefit with better quality content, lower prices, and accessibility?"

Still, he added, much of that will depend on if a sale happens and who ends up buying Warner Bros. Discovery.

Back in June, Warner Bros. Discovery outlined plans to split its cable and streaming offerings — with HBO, HBO Max, as well as Warner Bros. Television, Warner Bros. Motion Picture Group, DC Studios, to become part of a new streaming and studios company; while networks like CNN, Discovery and TNT Sports and digital products such as the Discovery+ streaming service and Bleacher Report would make up a separate cable counterpart.

Warner expected the split to be complete by mid-2026 — and said Tuesday that continuing to advance this separation was still among the options it's considering.

"We took the bold step of preparing to separate the Company into two distinct, leading media companies, Warner Bros. and Discovery Global, because we strongly believed this was the best path forward," Zaslav said in a statement. Still, he added, "it's no surprise that the significant value of our portfolio is receiving increased recognition by others in the market."

The company said that there's no definite timeline for its review process — and noted that, beyond the separation that is already underway, "there can be no assurance" that a transaction will emerge.

Shares of Warner Bros. Discovery, headquartered in New York, were up nearly 11% by market close on Tuesday.

Warner Bros. Discovery was created just three years ago when AT&T spun off WarnerMedia, which was merged with Discovery Communications in a \$43 billion deal. An even bigger transaction could attract antitrust scrutiny — but like other recent mega-mergers and proposed transactions, could find success under the Trump administration.

## Takeaways from AP's investigation on anti-science legislation in US statehouses

By MICHELLE R. SMITH and LAURA UNGAR Associated Press

A wave of anti-science bills has been introduced in statehouses across America this year, pushed by people with special interests who have close ties to Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

An Associated Press investigation found more than 420 bills attacking longstanding public health protections such as vaccines, milk safety and fluoride in most states. More than two dozen have already been enacted or adopted.

They are part of an organized, politically savvy effort that normalizes ideas fueled by the anti-vaccine movement that Kennedy has helped lead for years. His Make America Healthy Again agenda masks anti-science ideas while promoting goals such as making food more natural or reducing chemicals. Meanwhile,

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vaccination rates continue to fall, allowing the infectious diseases measles and whooping cough to make comebacks as Kennedy has sought to broadly remake federal policies on public health matters including fluoride and vaccines.

Kennedy's allies dispute that their agenda is anti-science or driven by conspiracy theories, but many experts disagree.

Here are some key takeaways from AP's investigation.

Hundreds of anti-science bills were introduced

The AP focused on three public health policies – vaccines, fluoridation of water and milk safety – which have clear medical evidence behind them yet are targets of the MAHA movement.

AP searched 2025 legislation in all 50 states, analyzing bills collected by the National Conference of State Legislatures and the bill-tracking software Plural for whether they undermined science-based protections for human health.

Anti-vaccine bills – at least 350 of them – were by far the most common. Most haven't passed, but at least two dozen anti-vaccine laws have been adopted in 11 states this year.

AP found more than 70 bills that would roll back access to fluoride or make it easier to sell or consume raw milk products. Many fluoride bills would prohibit its addition to water systems outright.

Most of the bills that were enacted were supported by at least one of four national groups connected to Kennedy: MAHA Action, Stand for Health Freedom, the National Vaccine Information Center and the Weston A. Price Foundation. The groups also opposed dozens of science-driven bills.

These groups are part of a well-organized effort with a clear strategy to change policies

The groups AP tracked send out alerts, organize phone campaigns, flood lawmakers' inboxes and social media, hold Zoom calls with activists nationwide, and send members to testify in statehouses.

Their work reflects the small anti-vaccine movement's growing clout, said Northe Saunders, president of American Families for Vaccines. Advocates know how to raise money for candidates and create anti-vaccine champions and use legislative maneuvers to hold up some bills and help others past hurdles, he said.

"They're really a sophisticated political operation as opposed to just a couple of parents that don't want to vaccinate their kids," Saunders said.

The groups defended their advocacy, and some leaders said they were gratified by their success. NVIC's leader said the federal response to the COVID-19 pandemic was heavy-handed and a wake-up call in state legislatures, where "lawmakers understood the danger to liberty posed by vaccine mandates."

One MAHA leader who has joined the Zoom calls said his positions "are rooted in credible scientific literature and the public's right to make informed choices," while the current leader of MAHA Action said the point of the calls is to educate people. He objected to the term anti-science, saying, "It's just an inflammatory statement meant to get millions of people to think something bad is happening."

The president of Weston Price told AP the benefits of raw milk are immense and the risks minimal, denying that such beliefs are conspiracies.

Stand for Health Freedom did not respond to emails. A spokesman for Kennedy and the Department of Health and Human Services would not comment to AP for this story.

Many people involved in groups pushing anti-science bills have built lucrative careers on their anti-science stance

Powerful anti-vaccine advocates and people selling potentially harmful goods such as raw milk are profiting from the push to write anti-science policies into law across the U.S.

Whether by advancing their careers or selling more products, these leaders are finding ways to benefit.

One way activists promote those ideas is through state legislation. Supporters argued that making money or increasing sales for businesses — such as dairy farmers — was a reason to pass some of the bills that would remove consumer protections, AP found. In at least one case, that reasoning was spelled out in the text of the bill.

Rising anti-science sentiment has a human cost and is already taking a toll

For example, vaccination rates are continuing to fall, allowing making it easier for infectious diseases to spread.

Ashlee and Erik Dahlberg of Lowell, Indiana, lost their 8-year-old son, Liam, to a vaccine-preventable disease in April.

"I thought having the vaccines would protect our children," Erik Dahlberg said. "Unfortunately, it did not because other kids, other adults, need to be vaccinated as well in order for it to work."

Liam was particularly vulnerable because he had severe asthma and allergies. He was vaccinated against Haemophilus influenzae type b, or Hib, but the disease still caused his brain to swell and killed him less than two days after he complained of a headache. Hib is transmitted by respiratory droplets, often spread by coughs and sneezes. Doctors said Liam's case likely stemmed from someone who was unvaccinated, Ashlee Dahlberg said.

With two other children, the Dahlbergs worry about living in one of the many U.S. communities with low immunization rates. State statistics show one in five kindergartners in their county don't meet vaccination requirements.

"There's no pain that is worse than the pain of losing a child," said Ashlee Dahlberg. "I do not – and can't – live through the loss of another."

## **Anti-science bills hit statehouses, stripping away public health protections built over a century**

By MICHELLE R. SMITH and LAURA UNGAR Associated Press

More than 420 anti-science bills attacking longstanding public health protections – vaccines, milk safety and fluoride – have been introduced in statehouses across the U.S. this year, part of an organized, politically savvy campaign to enshrine a conspiracy theory-driven agenda into law.

An Associated Press investigation found that the wave of legislation has cropped up in most states, pushed by people with close ties to Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. The effort would strip away protections that have been built over a century and are integral to American lives and society. Around 30 bills have been enacted or adopted in 12 states.

Trump administration officials are directing activists to push anti-science legislation in the states – where public health authority rests – with the ultimate goal of changing laws and minds nationally.

The effort normalizes ideas fueled by the anti-vaccine movement that Kennedy has helped lead for years. His Make America Healthy Again agenda masks anti-science ideas while promoting goals such as making food more natural or reducing chemicals. Meanwhile, vaccination rates continue to fall, allowing the infectious diseases measles and whooping cough to make comebacks as Kennedy has sought to broadly remake federal policies on public health matters including fluoride and vaccines.

Kennedy's allies dispute that their agenda is anti-science or driven by conspiracy theories, but many experts disagree.

"The march of conspiracy thinking from the margins to the mainstream now guiding public policy should be a wake-up call for all Americans," said Devin Burghart, president and executive director of the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights, who has tracked the anti-vaccine movement for decades. "People are literally going to die from it as a result."

Ashlee and Erik Dahlberg of Lowell, Indiana, lost their 8-year-old son, Liam, to a vaccine-preventable disease in April.

"I thought having the vaccines would protect our children," Erik Dahlberg said. "Unfortunately, it did not because other kids, other adults, need to be vaccinated as well in order for it to work."

Liam was particularly vulnerable because he had severe asthma and allergies. He was vaccinated against Haemophilus influenzae type b, or Hib, but the disease caused his brain to swell and killed him less than two days after he complained of a headache. Hib is transmitted by respiratory droplets, often spread by coughs and sneezes. Doctors said Liam's case likely stemmed from someone unvaccinated, Ashlee Dahlberg said.

With two other children, the Dahlbergs worry about living in one of the many U.S. communities with low immunization rates. State statistics show one in five kindergartners in their county don't meet vaccination requirements.

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"There's no pain that is worse than the pain of losing a child," said Ashlee Dahlberg, who brings an urn with Liam's ashes on family camping trips so he won't be left out. "I do not – and can't – live through the loss of another."

Hundreds of anti-vaccine bills

The Dahlbergs and others are fighting a strong anti-science movement that stresses "health freedom" but disputes proven health measures. Experts say global vaccine efforts have saved more than 150 million lives since 1974, cavities have declined dramatically since community water fluoridation began in 1945, and milk pasteurization has saved millions from foodborne illness.

Despite those successes, activists spread false conspiracy theories, some dating back decades, that safe vaccines injure or kill large numbers of people, that fluoride is used to poison the population, or that pasteurization makes milk less nutritious and primarily benefits the dairy industry.

In its analysis of legislation, AP focused on these three public health policies, which have clear medical evidence behind them and are targets of the Make America Healthy Again movement. AP searched 2025 legislation in all 50 states, analyzing more than 1,000 bills collected by the National Conference of State Legislatures and the bill-tracking software Plural for whether they undermined science-based protections for human health.

Anti-vaccine bills – 350 of them – were by far the most common. They come at the issue from various angles: barring discrimination against unvaccinated people, creating the criminal offense of vaccine harm, requiring blood banks to test for evidence of vaccinations and instituting a 48-hour vaccine waiting period.

Legislators acknowledge they sometimes draw inspiration from other states: Bills in numerous places target mRNA vaccines, which were credited with saving millions of lives during the COVID-19 pandemic. Two bills in Minnesota falsely designate them as "weapons of mass destruction."

Since vaccines became more politicized during the pandemic, more extreme vaccine bills have passed, said Dorit Reiss, a vaccine law expert at UC Law San Francisco.

"At times of uncertainty and trouble, conspiracy theories have more of a wedge," Reiss said.

Most bills haven't passed – some died and others are pending – but at least 26 anti-vaccine laws have been adopted in 11 states this year.

Most of those bills were supported by at least one of four national groups connected to Kennedy: MAHA Action, Stand for Health Freedom, the National Vaccine Information Center and the Weston A. Price Foundation.

The groups also opposed dozens of science-driven bills, including one that would protect people by tightening rabies vaccine requirements for pets.

There's a web of connections among the groups and Kennedy. MAHA Action has been run by people close to him, including his longtime book publisher, Tony Lyons, and former campaign staffer Del Bigtree. Stand for Health Freedom was co-founded by Sayer Ji, who now advises the group and volunteers with MAHA Action.

The group Kennedy used to lead, Children's Health Defense, was a sponsor of conferences held by NVIC and Weston Price. Kennedy has been a featured speaker for both groups. When Kennedy purged the federal committee that advises on vaccines, he picked NVIC's research director as a new member.

While the groups don't always agree or coordinate efforts, they sometimes work together. NVIC, Stand for Health Freedom and Weston Price collaborated on a June letter to President Donald Trump's Religious Liberty Commission, asking that the federal government stay out of state public health lawmaking — including religious exemptions for vaccines.

Anti-vaccine activists have noticed the tide turning away from science-driven legislation, and there has been a reversal: NVIC said that in 2015, it opposed six times as many bills as it supported. Last year, it supported more than twice as many bills as it opposed.

In an email to AP, NVIC leader Barbara Loe Fisher called the federal response to the COVID-19 pandemic heavy-handed but a wake-up call in state legislatures, where "lawmakers understood the danger to liberty posed by vaccine mandates in a way they had not understood it before."

She said mandatory vaccination is bad public health policy.



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The groups AP tracked send out alerts, organize phone campaigns, flood lawmakers' inboxes and social media, hold Zoom calls with activists nationwide, and send members to testify in statehouses.

Lyons told AP the point of the calls is to educate people. He objected to the use of the terms anti-science and conspiracy theories, saying, "It's just an inflammatory statement meant to get millions of people to think something bad is happening."

The groups' work reflects the small anti-vaccine movement's growing clout, said Northe Saunders, president of American Families for Vaccines. Advocates know how to raise money for candidates and create anti-vaccine champions, he said, and use legislative maneuvers to hold up some bills and help others past hurdles.

"They're really a sophisticated political operation as opposed to just a couple of parents that don't want to vaccinate their kids," Saunders said.

In Indiana, Republican Rep. Bruce Borders sponsored two bills at the request of the group Hoosiers for Medical Liberty. One would allow people to opt out of employer vaccine mandates; another would require vaccine manufacturers to conduct certain safety studies.

Borders, who owns an insurance company and works as an Elvis impersonator, said he's driven by concern about his grandson, who he believes developed autism after getting vaccinated – though there's no credible scientific evidence that's possible.

He said these bills aren't anti-science and that he respects doctors but believes some medical questions deserve more scrutiny.

"I've done tons of research on this issue because of my grandson," Borders said. "I would say that my study on these issues would equal that of many people in the medical field."

Other anti-science bills

People are often drawn into anti-science ideas in a roundabout way, Reiss said. They might come to the MAHA movement with legitimate concerns about nutrition, for example, then be exposed to others who believe forces are conspiring to keep people sick.

"Misinformation is infectious," she said.

The overlap in conspiracy-driven ideas is evident in the slate of bills supported by some groups riding MAHA's popularity. MAHA Action and Stand for Health Freedom both supported legislation to ban fluoride in drinking water. Stand for Health Freedom and Weston Price both opposed a North Carolina bill they said threatened raw milk sales.

Their arguments often rely on the idea of staying healthy naturally. Stand for Health Freedom, which did not respond to AP's requests for comment, told its followers, "Water should hydrate not medicate" while pushing an anti-fluoride bill. Weston Price runs a campaign for raw milk, which it calls "real milk," and the group's website contains unproven claims it can help treat asthma, allergies and eczema.

AP found more than 70 bills that would roll back access to fluoride or make it easier to sell or consume raw milk products. Many fluoride bills would prohibit its addition to water systems outright. One in Pennsylvania was dubbed the "Fluoride Choice Act" by its sponsor, who said individuals would be empowered "to make informed health decisions" and could get fluoride supplements or topical treatments instead.

On raw milk, bills would allow for sales beyond farms in Arkansas, decriminalize its sale in Hawaii and let Oklahoma farms sell raw donkey milk.

Sally Fallon Morell, president of Weston Price, told AP the benefits of raw milk are immense and the risks minimal, denying that such beliefs are conspiracies. Though she shared studies touting benefits, experts say drawing direct links is difficult. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says pasteurized milk offers the same nutritional benefits without the risks.

Meanwhile, raw milk continues to spark outbreaks, with one in Florida sickening 21 people in August.

In response, Florida Surgeon General Dr. Joseph Ladapo said he supports people's decision to consume raw milk for potential benefits.

"Floridians have the freedom to make informed health choices," he wrote on social media.

Other anti-science ideas are also in full bloom in Florida.

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Along with Utah, Florida banned fluoride in public drinking water this year. Experts stress that fluoride not only prevents tooth decay but staves off problems and even heart issues.

A coalition including MAHA Action, Stand for Health Freedom and Children's Health Defense backed a slate of bills that went after vaccines, fluoride and other parts of the MAHA agenda. It organized buses to bring people to the Capitol for a legislative day.

MAHA Action has held regular Zoom calls since the summer featuring Trump administration officials and Kennedy advisors who emphasize the importance of advancing MAHA priorities in the states. In Zoom chats obtained by AP, activists ask for talking points and to get connected to local groups.

Kennedy's deputy chief of staff, Stefanie Spear, told activists on one call that it's critical to "get activated" in state government: "That is going to be when we move the needle enough to enact federal legislation." A spokesman for Kennedy and the Department of Health and Human Services would not comment to AP for this story.

On the same call, Ji celebrated a new Florida law making "geoengineering" a felony. Its sponsor explained the bill addresses constituents' concerns about chemtrails, invoking a conspiracy theory that the condensation trails that appear in the sky behind jets are actually chemicals they're spraying into the atmosphere.

Ji told AP the bill "reflects legitimate public concern ... not something that should or can be cynically dismissed as 'conspiracy' theory."

"The positions I advocate for — on issues like fluoride, vaccines, and environmental health — are rooted in credible scientific literature and the public's right to make informed choices," Ji wrote in an email.

Meanwhile, Kennedy is elevating anti-science ideas nationally. This spring, a wellness influencer shared video of Kennedy doing shots of raw milk with him at the White House.

Less than a week later, Emily Marris' toddler, Brooklyn, was hospitalized and nearly died after drinking raw milk.

The Southern California mom did research online, finding a homesteader Facebook group and buying raw goat's milk from a seller who called it "clean and tested." Retail sales are legal in California.

Brooklyn ended up on dialysis and a ventilator, suffering three cardiac arrests before finally turning a corner. She now has high blood pressure and walks with a limp.

Marris believes it's a dangerous path to make raw milk more available.

"You're going to have the average mom like me that thinks they've done their research, think they're doing something to help their baby and end up hurting their baby," she said.

The cost

Lawmakers fighting for science-based policies say what's missing in the discussion is concern for the public good.

Rep. Andy Vargas, a Massachusetts Democrat, has been sponsoring legislation since 2019 to eliminate religious exemptions from childhood vaccines. Despite high vaccination rates in Massachusetts, Vargas said, pockets in every county have lost herd immunity for measles.

People who want to participate in public life have responsibilities to others, he said. "It's just part of the social contract."

In Indiana, Democratic State Rep. Maureen Bauer, of South Bend, said these issues are often falsely framed as parents' rights and individual freedom.

"If your personal decision puts others at risk, it is no longer a personal decision," she said. "You are impacting the freedom of others."

Ashlee Dahlberg said that includes her son Liam. Though there's no way to know for sure who exposed him, research shows unvaccinated people are more likely to carry Hib and spread it. Severe cases dropped by over 99% after the federal government recommended the vaccine in 1991.

In recent years, however, overall vaccination rates have dropped.

After Liam died, the Dahlbergs learned that vaccine policies vary by state. Hib shots are recommended, not required, to enter pre-kindergarten in Indiana, though they are required in Illinois, a 10-minute drive from home. These states and nearly every other allow parents to opt children out of vaccine mandates for nonmedical reasons such as religion.

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Ashlee Dahlberg channeled her anger into purpose, starting a change.org petition to eliminate religious exemptions in public schools nationally. While most feedback has been positive, she said, they've received hateful messages, including: "Your son deserved to die."

But, Dahlberg said, "I want to reach those parents who are on the fencepost about vaccinations."

The Dahlbergs feel it's up to them to protect their two surviving children from vaccine-preventable diseases. They can't rely on their government anymore.

They've considered homeschooling 6-year-old Ava and 11-year-old Khloe. For now, they've made arrangements with Ava's school to ensure every student in her class is vaccinated. Like her brother, she has severe asthma. In common areas such as hallways or buses, she wears a mask.

On the first day of school this year, Dahlberg called Ava to the kitchen to take puffs from her twice-a-day inhaler before ushering the girls outside for first-day pictures. They walked past the collection of mementos reminding them of Liam – his handprint, a photo of him with his dirt bike, a plaster cast of his hand in his mom's. The girls held a photo of their brother as they stood near a flowering crab apple tree planted in his memory.

Shortly before the bus came, Ava broke her mask, ran inside and grabbed another. Dahlberg instructed: "You are to wear that on the bus. You do not take it off."

Bus 21 finally made its way down their street. As Ava got on, her mother nervously waved goodbye.

## **Japan's parliament elects Sanae Takaichi as nation's first female prime minister**

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's parliament on Tuesday elected ultraconservative Sanae Takaichi as the country's first female prime minister, and she underlined her commitment to boosting Japanese defense as she prepared to host visiting U.S. President Donald Trump next week.

Takaichi replaces outgoing Shigeru Ishiba after the long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party suffered disastrous losses in July elections for parliament's upper house and lost its majority in the lower house last year. Her election comes a day after the LDP struck a deal in a fragile coalition with a new partner expected to pull her governing bloc further to the right.

"I'm determined to build a strong Japanese economy and protect Japan's national interest with diplomacy and security," said Takaichi, a security hawk who was elected head of the LDP on Oct. 4 after Ishiba resigned to take responsibility for the latest election defeat.

Takaichi cited the Japan-U.S. alliance as a "cornerstone" of Japanese diplomacy and stressed that Japan is an indispensable partner for America in its strategy to provide counterweights to China in the Indo-Pacific region. Trump is scheduled to visit Japan next Monday to Wednesday.

A first, but not a feminist

While Takaichi made history by becoming the first female leader of a country where men still largely hold sway, she has not promoted gender equality or diversity.

An admirer of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Takaichi is among the Japanese politicians who have stonewalled measures for women's advancement. She supports the imperial family's male-only succession, and opposes allowing separate surnames for married couples.

And despite a pledge to drastically increase the number of women in the Cabinet, she appointed only two woman ministers — Satsuki Katayama as finance minister and Kimi Onoda as economic security minister.

Takaichi also opposes same-sex marriage.

"The birth of Japan's first female prime minister is epoch-making, but she casts a dark cloud over gender equality and sexual minority rights," LGBTQ+ rights activist Soshi Matsuoka said, adding that Takaichi's "extremely conservative" views could be a "serious setback" for the rights of sexual minorities.

However, some Japanese feel that her breaking the glass ceiling in politics is an important marker of progress in itself.

Takayuki Eguchi, a 62-year-old Tokyo resident, said he had doubted that a woman would even be able

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to get enough votes in parliament. He celebrated Takaichi's achievement by collecting a free special newspaper edition distributed on Tuesday.

"I really hope she serves for a long time, and that the political stagnation we've been seeing finally starts to move, and that things improve in Japan and in the eyes of the world," Eguchi said.

## A fragile governing alliance

The LDP's alliance with the Osaka-based right-wing Japan Innovation Party, or Ishin no Kai, is short of a majority in both houses, but Takaichi was still able to win the premiership because the opposition is not united.

Her alliance's lack of a majority will mean that it will need to court opposition groups to pass any legislation — a risk that could make her government unstable and short-lived.

Takaichi on Tuesday stressed the need to cooperate. "Without political stability, we cannot achieve strong economic policies, diplomacy, security or anything," she said.

Her coalition's two parties signed agreement on policies underscoring Takaichi's hawkish and nationalistic views. Their last-minute deal came after the Liberal Democrats lost the party's longtime partner, the Buddhist-backed Komeito, which has a more dovish and centrist stance. The breakup threatened a change of power for the LDP, which has governed Japan almost uninterrupted for decades.

## Her challenges

Takaichi is preparing for a major policy speech later this week, talks with Trump and regional summits during which she also needs to ensure stable ties with China and South Korea. She needs to quickly tackle rising prices and compile economy-boosting measures by late December to address public frustration.

A protege of assassinated former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Takaichi is expected to emulate his policies, including a stronger military and economy. With her potentially weak grip on power, it's not clear how much Takaichi will be able to achieve.

Developing friendly ties with Trump might be a challenge, but her close ties and admiration of Abe, who apparently had won Trump's trust, may help her.

"At first, I hope to develop relations of trust between the two leaders through candid exchange of views about the challenges that Japan and the United States face," Takaichi said.

Takaichi was first elected to parliament in 1993 and has served in senior posts including as minister of economic security and internal affairs, but her diplomatic background is thin.

## Concerns about her nationalism

When Komeito left the governing coalition, it raised concern about Takaichi's view of Japan's wartime past. She has taken part in regular prayers at the Yasukuni Shrine despite protests from Beijing and Seoul, which see the visits as a sign of lack of remorse for Japanese aggression. Some of Takaichi's remarks have also been denounced as xenophobic.

Takaichi, who is pro-Taiwan, has toned down her hawkish rhetoric. On Friday, she sent a religious ornament to Yasukuni instead of going there herself.

On Tuesday, she said she wants stable ties with Seoul and hopes to meet with South Korean President Lee Jae Myung. "There may be worries, but I love Korean seaweed, I use Korean cosmetics, and I watch Korean dramas too."

## China, South Korea and EU react

South Korea's president congratulated Takaichi and said he hopes to hold a summit with her during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meetings in South Korea this month. He said South Korea-Japan relations are more important than ever as global uncertainty deepens.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Guo Jiakun, said that he hoped Japan would "honor its political commitments on major issues including on history and Taiwan, maintain the political foundation of bilateral relations and advance the China-Japan strategic relations of mutual benefit." China considers Taiwan, a former Japanese colony, its own breakaway province to be annexed by force if necessary.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen congratulated Takaichi and pledged to work with her on behalf of the 27-nation European Union.



"As Japan's first female PM, you're making history," von der Leyen wrote. "I look forward to working closely together to take the unique-EU Japan partnership to the next level."

## Paris prosecutor says stolen Louvre jewels worth an estimated \$102 million

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The Paris prosecutor said Tuesday that crown jewels stolen in a dramatic weekend Louvre heist were worth an estimated 88 million euros (\$102 million), but that the monetary estimate doesn't include their historical value to France.

Prosecutor Laure Beccau, whose office is leading the investigation, said about 100 investigators are now involved in the police hunt for the suspects and gems after Sunday's theft from the world's most-visited museum.

"The wrongdoers who took these gems won't earn 88 million euros if they had the very bad idea of disassembling these jewels," she said in an interview with broadcaster RTL. "We can perhaps hope that they'll think about this and won't destroy these jewels without rhyme or reason."

Also Tuesday, France's culture minister said that the security apparatus installed at the Louvre worked properly during the theft.

Questions have arisen about the Louvre security — and whether security cameras might have failed — after thieves rode a basket lift up the Louvre's facade, forced a window, smashed display cases and fled with priceless Napoleonic jewels on Sunday morning.

"The Louvre museum's security apparatus did not fail, that is a fact," the minister, Rachida Dati, told lawmakers in the National Assembly. "The Louvre museum's security apparatus worked."

Dati said she launched an administrative inquiry that comes in addition to a police investigation to ensure full transparency into what happened. She did not offer any details about how the thieves managed to carry out their heist given that the cameras were working.

But she described it as a painful blow for the nation.

The robbery was "a wound for all of us," she said. "Why? Because the Louvre is far more than the world's largest museum. It's a showcase for our French culture and our shared patrimony."

Interior Minister Laurent Nuñez said Monday that the museum's alarm was triggered when the window of the Apollo Gallery was forced.

Police officers arrived on site two or three minutes after they were called by an individual that witnessed the scene, he said on LCI television.

Officials said the heist lasted less than eight minutes in total, including less than four minutes inside the Louvre.

Nuñez did not disclose details about video surveillance cameras that may have filmed the thieves around and in the museum pending a police investigation. "There are cameras all around the Louvre," he said.

Sunday's theft focused on the gilded Apollo Gallery, where the Crown Diamonds are displayed. Alarms brought Louvre agents to the room, forcing the intruders to bolt, but the robbery was already over.

Eight objects were taken, according to officials: a sapphire diadem, necklace and single earring from a matching set linked to 19th-century French queens Marie-Amélie and Hortense; an emerald necklace and earrings from the matching set of Empress Marie-Louise, Napoleon Bonaparte's second wife; a reliquary brooch; and Empress Eugénie's diadem and her large corsage-bow brooch, a prized 19th-century imperial ensemble.

## In Chicago, an immense show of force signals a sharp escalation in White House immigration crackdown

By TIM SULLIVAN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The music begins low and ominous, with the video showing searchlights skimming along a Chicago apartment building and heavily armed immigration agents storming inside. Guns are drawn. Unmarked cars fill the streets. Agents rappel from a Black Hawk helicopter.

But quickly the soundtrack grows more stirring and the video — edited into a series of dramatic shots and released by the Department of Homeland Security days after the Sept. 30 raid — shows agents leading away shirtless men, their hands zip-tied behind their backs.

Authorities said they were targeting the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua, but only two of the 37 immigrants arrested were gang members. The others were in the country illegally, they said, including some with criminal histories. One U.S. citizen was arrested on an outstanding narcotics warrant.

But the apartments of dozens of other U.S. citizens were also targeted, residents said, and at least a half-dozen Americans were held for hours.

The immense show of force signaled a sharp escalation in the White House's immigration crackdown and amplified tensions in a city already on edge.

"To every criminal illegal alien: Darkness is no longer your ally," Homeland Security said in a social media post accompanying the video, which racked up more than 6.4 million views. "We will find you."

But Tony Wilson, a third-floor resident born and raised on Chicago's South Side, sees only horror in what happened.

"It was like we were under attack," Wilson said days after the raid, speaking through the hole where his door knob used to be. Agents had used a grinder to cut out the deadbolt, and he still couldn't close the door properly, let alone lock it. So he had barricaded himself inside, blocking the door with furniture.

"I didn't even hear them knock or nothing," said Wilson, a 58-year-old U.S. citizen on disability.

Dreams and decay

The raid was executed in the heart of South Shore, an overwhelmingly Black neighborhood on Lake Michigan that has long been a tangle of middle-class dreams, urban decay and gentrification.

It's a place where teams of drug dealers troll for customers outside ornate lakeside apartment buildings. It has some of the city's best vegan restaurants but also takeout places where the catfish fillets are ordered through bullet-proof glass.

It has well-paid professors from the University of Chicago but is also where one-third of households scrape by on less than \$25,000 a year.

The apartment building where the raid occurred has long been troubled. Five stories tall and built in the 1950s, residents said it was often strewn with garbage, the elevators rarely worked and crime was a constant worry. Things had grown more chaotic after dozens of Venezuelan migrants arrived in the past few years, residents said. While no residents said they felt threatened by the migrants, many described a rise in noise and hallway trash.

Owned by out-of-state investors, the building hasn't passed an inspection in three years, with problems ranging from missing smoke detectors to the stench of urine to filthy stairways. Repeated calls to a lead investor in the limited liability company that owns the building, a Wisconsin resident named Trinity Flood, were not returned. Attempts to reach representatives through realtors and lawyers were also unsuccessful.

Crime fears spiked in June when a Venezuelan man was shot in the head "execution-style," the Department of Homeland Security said in a statement. Another Venezuelan was charged in the death.

Days after the raid, the doors to dozens of the building's 130 apartments hung open. Nearly all those apartments had been ransacked. Windows were broken, doors smashed, and clothes and diapers littered the floors. In one apartment, a white tuxedo jacket hung in the closet next to a room knee-deep in broken furniture, piles of clothing and plastic bags. In another, water dripping from the ceiling puddled next to a refrigerator lying on its side. Some kitchens swarmed with insects.

Wilson said a trio of men in body armor had zip-tied his hands and forced him outside with dozens of

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other people, most Latino. After being held for two hours he was told he could leave.

"It was terrible, man," he said. He'd barely left the apartment in days.

A city under siege?

Chicago, the White House says, is under siege.

Gang members and immigrants in the U.S. illegally swarm the city and crime is rampant, President Donald Trump insists. National Guard soldiers are needed to protect government facilities from raging left-wing protesters.

"Chicago is the worst and most dangerous city in the World," he posted on Truth Social.

The reality is far less dramatic. Violence is rare at protests, though angry confrontations are increasingly common, particularly outside a federal immigration center in suburban Broadview. And while crime is a serious problem, the city's murder rate has dropped by roughly half since the 1990s.

Those realities have not stopped the Trump administration.

What started in early September with some arrests in Latino neighborhoods, part of a crackdown dubbed "Operation Midway Blitz," has surged across Chicago. There are increasing patrols by masked, armed agents; detentions of U.S. citizens and immigrants with legal status; a fatal shooting; a protesting pastor shot in the head with a pepper ball outside the Broadview facility, his arms raised in supplication.

By early October, authorities said more than 1,000 immigrants had been arrested across the area.

The raids have shaken Chicago.

"We have a rogue, reckless group of heavily armed, masked individuals roaming throughout our city," Mayor Brandon Johnson said after the Sept. 30 raid. "The Trump administration is seeking to destabilize our city and promote chaos."

To Trump's critics, the crackdown is a calculated effort to stir anger in a city and state run by some of his most outspoken Democratic opponents. Out-of-control protests would reinforce Trump's tough-on-crime image, they say, while embarrassing Johnson and Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker, seen as a possible Democratic presidential contender.

So the South Shore raid, ready-made for social media with its displays of military hardware and agents armed for combat, was seen as wildly out of proportion.

"This was a crazy-looking military response they put together for their reality show," said LaVonte Stewart, who runs a South Shore sports program to steer young people away from violence. "It's not like there are roving bands of Venezuelan teenagers out there."

Officials insist it was no reality show.

The operation, led by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, was based on months of intelligence gathering, according to a U.S. official who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly. The building's landlord told authorities that Venezuelans in about 30 units were squatters and had threatened other tenants, the official said, adding that the building's size necessitated the show of force. Immigration agencies declined further comment.

Even before the "Midway Blitz," Trump's election had whipsawed through Chicago's Latino communities.

Stewart said Venezuelan children began disappearing from his programs months ago, though it's often unclear if they moved, returned to Venezuela or are just staying home.

"I had 35 kids in my program from Venezuela," he said. "Now there's none."

A wave of migrant newcomers

The raid echoed through South Shore, pinballing through memories of the surge in violence during the 1990s drug wars as well as economic divides and the sometimes uncomfortable relations between Black residents and the wave of more than 50,000 immigrants, most Latino, who began arriving in 2022, often bused from southern border states.

Chicago spent more than \$300 million on housing and other services for the immigrants, fueling widespread resentment in South Shore and other Black neighborhoods where the newcomers were settled.

"They felt like these new arrivals received better treatment than people who were already part of the community," said Kenneth Phelps, pastor at the Concord Missionary Baptist Church in Woodlawn, a largely

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Black neighborhood.

It didn't matter that many migrants were crowded into small apartments, and most simply wanted to work. The message to residents, he said, was that the newcomers mattered more than they did.

Phelps tried to fight that perception, creating programs to help new arrivals and inviting them to his church. But that stirred more anger, including in his own congregation.

"I even had people leave the church," he said.

In South Shore it's easy to hear the bitterness, even though the neighborhood's remaining migrants are a nearly invisible presence.

"They took everyone's jobs!" said Rita Lopez, who manages neighborhood apartment buildings and recently stopped by the scene of the raid.

"The government gave all the money to them — and not to the Chicagoans," she said.

Changing demographics and generations of suspicion

Over more than a century, South Shore has drawn waves of Irish, Jewish and then Black arrivals for its lakeside location, affordable bungalows and early 20th-century apartment buildings.

Each wave viewed the next with suspicion, in many ways mirroring how Black South Shore residents saw the migrant influx.

Former first lady Michelle Obama's parents moved to South Shore when it was still mostly white, and she watched it change. A neighborhood that was 96% white in 1950 was 96% Black by 1980.

"We were doing everything we were supposed to do — and better," she said in 2019. "But when we moved in, white families moved out."

But suspicion also came from South Shore's Black middle-class, which watched nervously as many housing projects began closing in the 1990s, creating an influx of poorer residents.

"This has always been a complex community," Stewart said of those years.

"You can live on a block here that's super-clean, with really nice houses, then go one block away and there's broken glass, trash everywhere and shootings," he said. "It's the weirdest thing and it's been this way for 30 years."

## Hidalgo, Betts, Booker headline AP All-America preseason women's college basketball team

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

Hannah Hidalgo of Notre Dame, Lauren Betts of UCLA and Madison Booker of Texas headline The Associated Press All-America women's college basketball team released Tuesday.

The trio were first-team All-Americans last spring after having stellar seasons. They were joined on the preseason team this year by UConn's Sarah Strong and South Carolina's Ta'Niya Latson. Latson transferred to the Gamecocks this year after spending the first three years of her career at Florida State.

Hidalgo and Betts each earned 29 votes from from the 31-member national media panel that chooses the AP Top 25 each week. Strong garnered 28 votes while Booker had 23 and Latson 14.

Hidalgo is coming off a season that saw the talented guard become just the fourth sophomore to earn All-America honors in her first two years. USC's JuJu Watkins also accomplished that feat last season, but is out for this year while she's recovering from a torn ACL she suffered in the NCAA Tournament. Courtney Paris and Maya Moore were also All-Americans their first two seasons.

Hidalgo averaged 23.8 points, 5.0 rebounds and 3.6 assists for the Fighting Irish last season. She will take on a bigger role this season with the loss of the other four starters to either the WNBA or the transfer portal.

"I know the weight of that is heavy, the crown is super heavy," Notre Dame coach Niele Ivey said. "But I feel like she has done a great job of surrounding herself with the right network, the Notre Dame network, but also her family. She is very grounded with her family and her faith."

Betts, a senior, helped UCLA reach No. 1 in the AP Top 25 for the first time in school history last season. The 6-foot-7 center averaged 20.2 points and 9.5 rebounds to get the Bruins to their first Final Four before



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they lost to Strong and UConn.

Strong had a sensational freshman season for the Huskies, helping them win the school's 12th national championship. She averaged 16.4 points and 8.9 rebounds, and coach Geno Auriemma has said she is even better this year. UConn is No. 1 in the preseason Top 25.

"Every day, there isn't a day that goes by that one of the coaches and I don't look at each other and go, 'Man, there's just something about her right now,'" Auriemma said. "I can't wait. I look forward to going to practice just to see what might happen next, some things she might pull off."

Latson led the country in scoring at Florida State last season, averaging 25.2 points a game. With one year left of eligibility, it's not just about trying to win a national championship but getting prepared for the WNBA. Coach Dawn Staley has had a lot of success producing pros, including four-time WNBA MVP A'ja Wilson.

Latson will have to face Booker at least once this season in the SEC. The Longhorns' junior wing averaged 16.0 points, 6.6 rebounds and 2.6 assists last season. Booker helped Texas reach the Final Four last season before the Longhorns lost to South Carolina.

Betts, Hidalgo and Booker were all first-team All-Americans last spring while Latson and Strong were on the second team. The AP began releasing a preseason All-America team before the 1994-95 season.

## **NBA rosters feature a record 135 international players. And more things to know entering season**

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

Basketball keeps getting more global.

The NBA season opens Tuesday, and the league's opening night rosters show a record 135 players who were born outside the U.S. They come from 43 countries — tying a record — and 71 are from Europe, the most ever from that continent.

That development comes with the NBA in talks, along with FIBA — the sport's global governing body — to develop a new league in Europe, something that could happen as early as 2027.

"The state of the game of basketball in Europe I think is fantastic," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said last month. "They have their own traditions, which we of course want to maintain, but we think there's an opportunity to bring an NBA-style league to the continent and to take the game to another level."

Canada has the most non-U.S. players with 23, followed by 19 from France and 13 from Australia. And the Atlanta Hawks are opening the season with 10 international players on their roster, tying an NBA record.

All 30 teams have at least one international player on their opening night rosters. And the NBA is expected to finalize a new All-Star Game format before long, one that will have U.S. players taking on international players in a tournament.

Oklahoma City's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander — a Canadian — is the reigning MVP. Players born outside the U.S. (Serbia's Nikola Jokic three times, Greece's Giannis Antetokounmpo twice, Cameroon-born Joel Embiid once and Gilgeous-Alexander once) have won the last seven NBA MVP awards, the longest such streak in league history. It should be noted that Embiid is an American citizen and helped the U.S. win Olympic gold at the Paris Games in 2024.

LeBron watch ...

At this point, every time Los Angeles Lakers star LeBron James plays he updates league records. He's the NBA's all-time leader in points and minutes and has a few more milestones in his sights this season.

— His first game of the year will officially make this his 23rd season, breaking a tie with Vince Carter for the most in NBA history by a player.

— If he plays in 50 games, he'll break the record of 1,611 (regular season only) held by Robert Parish.

— If he makes 350 field goals, he'll break Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's mark of 15,837.

Milestones on the way

— James Harden of the Los Angeles Clippers has 27,687 points in his career and needs 603 more points to pass Hall of Famer Carmelo Anthony for 10th on the NBA's all-time list.

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— Sacramento's Russell Westbrook needs 75 assists to become the eighth player in NBA history with 10,000.

— Indiana coach Rick Carlisle is seven wins shy of 1,000 in his career. He'll be the 11th coach to get it and probably the last for at least a few more years; Miami's Erik Spoelstra enters this season with 787 wins.

— Spoelstra is nine wins shy of passing Red Auerbach for the most wins coaching one team. Auerbach won 795 with the Celtics; only Gregg Popovich (1,390 with San Antonio) and Jerry Sloan (1,127 with Utah) had more wins with one franchise.

— Milwaukee coach Doc Rivers has been on the sideline for 1,978 games, which is eighth-most — for now — in league history. If he coaches the full season, he'll climb to No. 4 on the all-time games coached list, passing Bill Fitch (2,050), Jerry Sloan (2,024), Larry Brown (2,002) and George Karl (1,999). No. 1 on that list is Lenny Wilkens (2,487), No. 2 is Don Nelson (2,318) and No. 3 is Gregg Popovich (2,214).

— Denver, Brooklyn, Indiana and San Antonio will all play their 4,000th all-time NBA game this season. Denver will get there against Brooklyn on Jan. 29, Indiana's milestone game comes Feb. 2 at home against Houston, while San Antonio and Brooklyn will both get there on Feb. 5 — the Spurs doing so in Dallas, the Nets doing so in Orlando.

— Atlanta is 33 wins away from becoming the sixth franchise with 3,000 regular season wins, joining Boston, the Los Angeles Lakers, Philadelphia, New York and Golden State.

— Indiana is 20 wins from 2,000 regular season wins.

14 million coming

The league enters this season about 46,000 points shy of someone scoring the 14 millionth point in NBA history.

Based on last year's average of about 228 points per game being scored, it'll take somewhere around 200 games this season for someone to reach the milestone.

That means it'll happen somewhere around Nov. 17, give or take a day or two either way.

Name game

Among the name highlights in the NBA this season, based on the opening night rosters:

— There are seven Jordans (Boston's Jordan Walsh, the Los Angeles Clippers' Jordan Miller, New Orleans' Jordan Hawkins and Jordan Poole, New York's Jordan Clarkson, Phoenix's Jordan Goodwin and San Antonio's Jordan McLaughlin). Combined, they're about 10,000 points behind Michael Jordan's career total.

— There are five players named Nikola (Denver's Nikola Jokic, Miami's Nikola Jovic, Oklahoma City's Nikola Topic, Atlanta's Nikola Durisic and Chicago's Nikola Vucevic).

— There are five James (the Lakers' LeBron and Bronny James, the Clippers' James Harden, Indiana's James Wiseman and Charlotte's Sion James).

— Orlando Robinson might be the only player in the league who'll wear his first name on the front of his jersey and his last name on the back. He has a two-way deal with the Magic.

— The Bucks have three Antetokounmpo brothers: Giannis, Thanasis and two-way player Alex.

The Nets are young. Really young

The Brooklyn Nets are young. So young, in fact, that they don't have anyone on their roster who ranks among the league's top 100 active scorers headed into this season.

The numbers are wild when put into perspective. Players on the Nets' opening night roster have combined for 21,708 points and 1,018 starts at this point in their careers.

There are eight active players — LeBron James, Kevin Durant, James Harden, Russell Westbrook, Stephen Curry, DeMar DeRozan, Chris Paul and Damian Lillard — with more points than the Nets' roster starts this season with.

James, Paul, DeRozan, Mike Conley, Durant, Al Horford, Russell Westbrook, Brook Lopez and Stephen Curry all have more starts.

James, Andre Drummond and Nikola Vucevic have more rebounds than everyone on the Nets roster. Curry — the NBA's all-time 3-point king — leads a group of six players with more 3s than the Nets, while there are 10 players with more steals and 26 players with more assists.

The leading scorer on the Nets' roster right now is Michael Porter Jr., with 5,597 points in his career to

this point.

## Former French President Sarkozy begins a 5-year prison sentence for campaign finance conspiracy

By SYLVIE CORBET and MASHA MACPHERSON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy entered a prison in Paris on Tuesday to begin serving a 5-year sentence for a criminal conspiracy to finance his 2007 election campaign with funds from Libya — a historic moment that makes him the first ex-leader of modern France to be imprisoned.

Sarkozy, 70, was greeted by hundreds of supporters when he walked out of his Paris home earlier in the day hand-in-hand with his wife, supermodel-turned-singer Carla Bruni-Sarkozy. He embraced her before getting into a police car.

Minutes later, the vehicle passed through the gates of the notorious La Santé prison — where Sarkozy will now serve his sentence in solitary confinement.

Sarkozy was convicted last month for criminal conspiracy in a scheme to finance his 2007 election campaign with funds from Libya.

He contests both the conviction and a judge's unusual decision to incarcerate him pending appeal. His lawyers said Tuesday that they filed an immediate request for his release.

A show of defiance

"It's an ominous day for him, for France and for our institutions, because this incarceration is a disgrace," Sarkozy's lawyer Jean-Michel Darrois told reporters soon after his incarceration.

In a show of defiance and while on his way to the prison, Sarkozy released a statement on social media declaring that "an innocent man" was being locked up.

"I will continue to denounce this judicial scandal," he wrote. "The truth will prevail."

Sarkozy told Le Figaro newspaper that he would bring three books in prison — the maximum allowed — including Alexandre Dumas' "The Count of Monte Cristo," in which the hero escapes from an island prison before seeking revenge. He also picked a biography of Jesus Christ.

"I'm not afraid of prison. I'll hold my head high, including in front of the doors of La Santé," he told La Tribune Dimanche newspaper last week. "I'll fight till the end."

Sarkozy has repeatedly said he is the victim of "a plot" staged by some people linked to the Libyan government and denounced the Sept. 25 verdict as a "scandal."

Solitary confinement

Sarkozy's lawyers said he will be kept away from all other prisoners for security reasons. They said he packed a bag with a few sweaters because the prison is cold and earplugs because it's noisy.

Christophe Ingrain, another of Sarkozy's lawyers, denounced "a serious injustice."

"It's a very difficult time, but the president has stood strong," Ingrain said. "He doesn't complain, hasn't asked for anything, no special treatment."

Solitary confinement implies that Sarkozy will never see other inmates and will spend most of his time alone in his cell, Ingrain said.

He will be allowed to go outdoors one hour per day alone in the prison yard and to get three visits per week from his family, Ingrain said, adding that he is planning to write a book about his prison experience.

An outpouring of support for the ex-president

Sarkozy's journey from the presidential Elysée Palace to La Santé prison has captivated France.

After leaving their home, Sarkozy and his wife walked slowly to join family members, including his children and grandchildren, outside his home.

"I'm very proud to share his name, and very proud of how he's reacting," said his brother, Guillaume Sarkozy. "I'm truly convinced that he is innocent."

Hundreds of supporters applauded and chanted "Nicolas, Nicolas" and sang the French anthem. Two French flags were hung on a nearby fence, with the words "Courage Nicolas, return soon" and "true France with Nicolas."

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Parisian resident Virginie Rochon, 44, came in support of Sarkozy, calling it "scandalous" to see "a former president being taken away while still presumed innocent."

Another supporter, Véronique Maurey, 50, said "it's just not possible. And on top of that, calling it a 'criminal conspiracy' kind of makes all of us feel like criminals too because we voted for him. It's not right to say that."

Meeting with Macron

Embattled centrist President Emmanuel Macron hosted the conservative Sarkozy at the presidential palace last week, explaining it was "normal on a human level" to receive one of his predecessors in this context.

On Tuesday, Macron said he would not comment on a justice decision. "Nevertheless, it's normal that the image of a president being imprisoned ... may prompt comments," he said.

"We must distinguish emotion, including the legitimate emotion of relatives and part of the country ... and the proper functioning of justice," Macron added.

Sarkozy has been retired from active politics for years but remains very influential, especially in conservative circles.

France's top magistrate Rémy Heitz, Prosecutor-General at the Court of Cassation, warned Tuesday about a risk of "hindering (justice) serenity" and of "undermining the independence of judges," including when the justice minister — a former conservative who joined Macron's party — plans to visit Sarkozy in prison.

"The goal for everyone must be serenity, to allow justice to truly rule independently... free from any pressure," Heitz said.

The Paris court ruled last month that Sarkozy would start to serve prison time without waiting for his appeal to be heard, due to "the seriousness of the disruption to public order caused by the offense."

The court said Sarkozy, as a presidential candidate and interior minister, used his position "to prepare corruption at the highest level" from 2005 to 2007, to finance his presidential campaign with funds from Libya — then led by longtime ruler Moammar Gadhafi.

Under the ruling, Sarkozy was able to file a request for release to the appeals court only once behind bars. Judges have up to two months to process it.

## **Today in History: October 22, Lance Armstrong stripped of Tour titles**

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 22, the 295th day of 2025. There are 70 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Oct. 22, 2012, cyclist Lance Armstrong was formally stripped of his seven Tour de France victories and received a lifetime ban from Olympic sports after the International Cycling Union chose not to appeal doping charges against Armstrong by the United States Anti-Doping Agency.

Also on this date:

In 1836, Sam Houston was inaugurated as the first elected president of the Republic of Texas, which earned its independence from Mexico that year in a military rebellion.

In 1934, bank robber Charles "Pretty Boy" Floyd was shot to death by federal agents and local police at a farm near East Liverpool, Ohio.

In 1962, in a nationally televised address, President John F. Kennedy revealed the presence of Soviet missile bases under construction in Cuba and announced a naval blockade of all offensive military equipment shipped to Cuba.

In 1968, Apollo 7, the first crewed mission of NASA's Apollo space program, returned safely from Earth orbit, splashing down in the Atlantic Ocean.

In 2014, a gunman shot and killed a soldier standing guard at a war memorial in Ottawa, then stormed the Canadian Parliament building before he himself was shot and killed.

In 2016, the Chicago Cubs won their first pennant since 1945, beating the Los Angeles Dodgers in Game 6 of the National League Championship Series. (The Cubs would go on to beat Cleveland in the World



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Series in seven games, their first series championship since 1908.)

Today's Birthdays: Black Panthers co-founder Bobby Seale is 89. Actor Christopher Lloyd is 87. Actor Derek Jacobi is 87. Actor Catherine Deneuve is 82. Physician and author Deepak Chopra is 79. Actor Jeff Goldblum is 73. Actor-comedian Bob Odenkirk is 63. Olympic gold medal figure skater Brian Boitano is 62. Country singer Shelby Lynne is 57. Reggae deejay and singer Shaggy is 57. Film director Spike Jonze is 56. Argentine President Javier Milei is 55. Former MLB All-Star Ichiro Suzuki is 52. Actor Jesse Tyler Ferguson is 50. Actor Corey Hawkins is 37. Actor Jonathan Lipnicki is 35. Rapper 21 Savage is 33. Rapper Roddy Ricch is 27.