

Groton Daily Independent

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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

Friday, Oct. 24

Senior Menu: Parmesan chicken, creamy noodles, California blend, fruit cocktail.
School Breakfast: Egg wraps.
School Lunch: Cheese pizza, green beans.
Volleyball at Redfield: (Aux. Gym: 7th-5, 8th-6; Greeno Gym: C-5, JV-6, V-7:15)



Saturday, Oct. 25

State Cross Country Meet at Huron.

Sunday, Oct. 26

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday School 10:15 a.m.; Choir 6 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m., and Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

4th-6th GBB hosts Britton-Hecla, 2 p.m.

1st Grade GBB Practice, 3:30 p.m.

5th Grade GBB Practice, 4 p.m.

2nd Grade GBB Practice, 4 p.m.

Dance Team Practice, 5 p.m.

Groton Daily Independent

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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.

Second-Longest Shutdown

The federal government shutdown enters its 23rd day today, after becoming the second-longest funding lapse in modern history, eclipsing the 1995-96 shutdown during the Clinton administration.

The holdup continues to be over healthcare. The House last month passed a seven-week bill extending government funding at its current levels. Democrats seek an extension of COVID-era subsidies for health-care plans, otherwise set to expire Dec. 31. More than 24 million people in the US are insured through the programs, with nearly 4 million expected to lose coverage if costs increase next year. Federal subsidies cost an estimated \$1.8T in 2023, roughly 7% of the US' gross domestic product.

The Senate failed to pass the House bill yesterday for the twelfth time. Tomorrow, federal workers will miss their first full paychecks; hundreds of thousands of employees received partial paychecks on Oct. 10.

270 Park Avenue

JPMorgan Chase unveiled a new, roughly \$3B, 60-story global headquarters in Midtown Manhattan this week, underscoring its over 225-year presence in New York City and commitment to in-person work post-pandemic.

The sixth-tallest building in Manhattan will house about 10,000 of JPMorgan's 24,000 New York-based employees. Executives considered scaling the project back amid the rise of remote work, but CEO Jamie Dimon held firm to the original plan, which required rerouting part of the subway system. The 2.5-million-square-foot building features 19 restaurants and lighting calibrated to circadian rhythms. Gov. Kathy Hochul (D) praised 270 Park Avenue as emblematic of Manhattan's post-pandemic rebound; office leasing in the borough hit a 19-year high in the first nine months of 2025. JPMorgan Chase is also renovating and buying nearby properties.

With roots in a New York bank started by Aaron Burr in 1799, JPMorgan Chase is now the world's largest bank by market capitalization, valued at over \$800B.

Antidepressants Analysis

Researchers have compared 30 antidepressants for a variety of side effects, including impact on weight, heart rate, total cholesterol, and blood pressure.

The meta-analysis, published Tuesday, reviewed 151 randomized trials with data on 58,534 people. Researchers analyzed the drugs' side effects for around eight weeks, with impacts ranging widely. People taking agomelatine lost over 5 pounds on average, while those taking maprotiline gained nearly 4.5 pounds. Some antidepressants—desvenlafaxine, venlafaxine, duloxetine, and paroxetine—were associated with higher total cholesterol. Nortriptyline was associated with a 14 beats-per-minute increase in heart rate, while fluvoxamine was associated with a decrease of 8 beats-per-minute.

More than 11% of US adults take medication for depression. Researchers hope the analysis—and an online tool they had previously developed—will help practitioners better tailor prescriptions to meet patients' unique concerns and preferences.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Fox to air all 2026 FIFA World Cup games (June 11-July 19), more than doubling 2022 coverage.
NHL signs first-of-its-kind multiyear licensing deal with prediction markets Kalshi and Polymarket.
San Francisco Giants hire University of Tennessee coach Tony Vitello as manager, marking first MLB manager hire directly from college program.
NFL reaffirms Bad Bunny Super Bowl show after conservative backlash.
Misty Copeland gives farewell performance at American Ballet Theatre after five-year hiatus; Copeland became the elite company's first Black principal dancer in 2015.

Science & Technology

General Motors to integrate Google's Gemini AI into cars next year as part of push to transform vehicles from modes of transportation into intelligent assistants.
Physicians discover link between COVID-19 mRNA vaccines and survival of patients with late-stage lung cancer and melanoma, suggesting mRNA vaccines train the immune system to kill tumors.
Researchers find female mice can become more aggressive toward their pups when deprived of food, revealing interaction between the hunger and parenting circuits in the brain.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close lower (S&P 500 -0.5%, Dow -0.8%, Nasdaq -0.9%).
Tesla shares fall in after-hours trading after Q3 earnings miss analyst estimates; company reports 12% Q3 revenue growth following two quarters of declines.
Meta to cut 600 jobs in AI unit.
Amazon planning to expand robots to meet rising demands, equivalent to replacing 600,000 workers by 2033, per report.
Influencer platform ShopMy raises \$70M at a \$1.5B valuation; founded in 2020, ShopMy connects brands to consumers via content creators.

Politics & World Affairs

Treasury Department sanctions Russia's two largest oil companies, Rosneft and Lukoil, each valued at over \$50B; announcement comes after President Donald Trump cancels Budapest summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin.
White House will reportedly demolish the entire East Wing as part of its project to construct a new 90,000-square-foot ballroom; White House pledges to submit blueprints to federal agency for review.
US military kills two people in eighth strike on an alleged narcotrafficking boat, this time in the Pacific Ocean (More)

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It was Pink Night

Pink night was celebrated at the Volleyball Match held Tuesday in Groton. The night was dedicated to Casey Johnson. Carrie Cole was also recognized. October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

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Reports from the Field: Early Season Success Setting up for a Great Pheasant Season

The 2025 South Dakota Pheasant Season is underway, and the reports from opening week have been fantastic!

"We live for pheasants, my family came back to town for the hunt, it was a little windy but we got our birds. On the second day we hunted a food plot and got 25 pheasants and must have seen 500 hens. The corn is not out yet and we walked some just to see if they were in there, we probably saw 50 roosters in the short distance we walked. This year is going to be really good."

-Jim, Sully County Landowner

"Pheasant Opener 2025 was a good one! A fun day in the field with family and friends and a limit of birds by 2:30. It was amazing"

-Amber, Hughes County Hunter

"No question about it bird numbers are up"

-Ken, Charles Mix County Landowner

"Best bird numbers we've seen in the last 10 years, very happy with how our hunting group did the first day."

-Dean, Jerauld County Landowner

Current Field Conditions

As a whole, hunters are reporting an abundance of birds on the landscape. Windy conditions have been present to start the season. Despite these windy days making hunting conditions a bit more challenging, early results have been extremely promising.

The delayed harvest is the most important component to factor in to opening weekend success. There is still a fair amount of crop harvest yet to take place, which is providing additional areas for pheasants to hide. As crop harvest progresses, the hunting conditions are going to get better and better!

Hunters are also reporting seeing some young birds, which indicates re-nesting efforts took place.

"This is a good thing indicating habitat conditions were good enough for hens to keep attempting nest. Personally, I saw about 8-10-week-old chicks this weekend. If a mild fall continues, it won't be long until they color up and are more easily distinguishable and available for harvest." -Alex Solem, Senior Upland Game Biologist

The mix of young and adult birds also indicates very good production took place throughout the summer months, which is what was anticipated with the weather conditions throughout the season.

Names Released in Lincoln County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: SD Highway 11, mile marker 47, eight miles south of Canton, SD

When: 6:21 a.m., Sunday, October 19, 2025

Driver 1: Robert Carey Tinklepaugh, 52-year-old male from Alcester, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 1992 Ford Ranger

Seat belt Used: Yes

Driver 2: Jared Ray Gibson, 49-year-old male from Sioux Falls, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 2: 2002 Volkswagen Jetta

Seat belt Used: No

Lincoln County, S.D.- Two people died in a two-vehicle crash early Sunday morning eight miles south of Canton, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Robert Carey Tinklepaugh, the driver of a 1992 Ford Ranger, was traveling northbound on SD Highway 11 near mile marker 47. At the same time, Jared Ray Gibson, the driver of a 2002 Volkswagen Jetta, was traveling southbound at the same location and drifted into the northbound lane, colliding with the Ford head-on. The Ford entered the east ditch where it rolled onto its roof. The Volkswagen came to rest in the southbound lane.

Both drivers sustained fatal injuries.

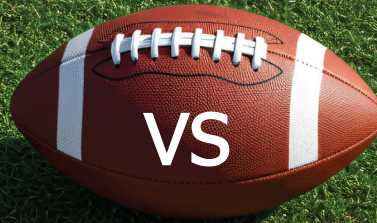
The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

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

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GOOD LUCK!

First Round Football Playoffs
Thursday, Oct. 23, 7 p.m., at Clark

**These GDILIVE.COM sponsors wish the Tigers good luck at the
First Round of the Football Playoffs!**

Bary Keith at Harr Motors
BaseKamp Lodge
Bierman Farm Service
Dacotah Bank
Doug Abeln Farms
Farmers Union Co-op
Greg Johnson Construction
Groton Ag Solutions
Groton American Legion
Groton Daily Independent
Groton Dairy Queen
Groton Ford

Hanlon Construction
Harry Implement
John Sieh Agency
Ken's Food Fair
Lori's Pharmacy
Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.
Poet
Professional Management Services
Rix Farms/R&M Farms
S & S Lumber
Spanier Harvesting & Trucking
The MeatHouse

Watch the Game for Free at GDILIVE.COM

with the voice of the Tigers, Justin Olson, along with Paper Paul and Jeslyn Kosel

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Lucky For Life Second Prize Winner Purchased in Sturgis

PIERRE, S.D. —For the second time in less than a week, the South Dakota Lottery drawings resulted in “luck that lasts a lifetime”.

Wednesday’s Lucky for life drawing resulted in a second prize winner. The winning ticket was purchased at Kwik Mart, which is located at 2217 Junction Ave. in Sturgis.

The winning ticket matched 5 of 5 winning numbers and was just the Lucky Ball away from a jackpot win. The winning numbers are 1, 20, 30, 37 and 46 with a Lucky Ball of 1.

Lucky for Life’s second prize gives the winning player the option of \$25,000 a year for life or a one-time payment of \$390,000.

Wednesday’s win comes off the heels of Friday’s Lucky for Life drawing also featuring a second prize winner. Friday’s winning ticket was purchased at Boyd’s Drug Mart in Rapid City.

The South Dakota Lottery advises the winner to sign the back of the ticket immediately and consult with a financial advisor before claiming the prize. The prize may be claimed by visiting any South Dakota Lottery redemption center. The South Dakota Lottery’s Rapid City validation center is located at 221 Mall Dr., Suite 103.

Wednesday’s second prize winner marks the 12th Lucky for Life second prize winner since the game’s South Dakota debut in 2017.

The Lucky for Life drawings are just a part of an exciting conclusion to October for South Dakota Lottery players. Friday’s Mega Millions drawing has a \$680 million jackpot, which is the ninth largest in the game’s history.

The state’s General Fund, which supports K-12 schools, state universities and technical institutes, receives 70 percent of net revenue from lotto games such as Lucky for Life. The state’s Capital Construction Fund receives the remaining 30 percent. This supports the Water and Environment Fund, the Ethanol Fuel Fund, and the State Highway Fund.

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



Groton Area Tigers Groton, SD

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



Groton Area Tigers Groton, SD

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SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Oglala Sioux Tribe files another federal lawsuit against Interior Department over police funding

Case cites continued denial of money for MMIP unit, school resource officers, drug investigations

BY: JOHN HULT-OCTOBER 22, 2025 2:05 PM

For the third time since 2022, the Oglala Sioux Tribe has sued the federal government over inadequate funding for its reservation's public safety operations.

The case filed last week in U.S. District Court for the District of South Dakota alleges that the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs has yet to address the shortage of officers the tribe initially sued over in 2022. It also says the BIA's justice division once again denied requests to fund school resource officers, a canine unit, an internal affairs division and a Missing and Murdered Indigenous People investigation unit in federal fiscal year 2025, which began at the start of last October.

The other two cases, filed in 2022 and 2024, were consolidated as one in July. Those issues remain unresolved, and nothing has been filed by the tribe or the federal government since they were combined.

Treaty obligations for the federal government form the foundation for all three of the lawsuits. The first treaty that committed the U.S. government to provide for the safety of Oglala Sioux Tribal members was signed in 1825, and the commitment was reaffirmed in treaties signed in 1851 and 1868.

"It is the foundation of the trust obligation owed by Defendants to the Tribe to provide adequate and effective law enforcement services," the new lawsuit says.

According to the U.S. Census, around 20,000 people live in the borders of the tribe's Pine Ridge Reservation, which has a land area approximately the size of Connecticut. The tribe has around 50,000 enrolled members nationwide.

Some tribes in South Dakota, like Crow Creek, rely exclusively on BIA police for law enforcement. Oglala is one of the six tribes in South Dakota that maintains its own police force using BIA funding.

In the 1990s, the force had around 150 officers. Today, there are around 30 tribal police. The tribe argues that the loss in officers dates back to 1999. The BIA altered its funding calculations that year, setting a base funding level that hasn't changed since, the lawsuit says. The agency factored in funding provided through police-specific federal grants when it set that level, but those grants ceased to pay Oglala Sioux Tribal Police officer salaries in 2006.

The tribe's lawsuit says the BIA has never moved to replace the grant funding.

The result, the tribe says, has been long wait times for citizens who call 911 — sometimes longer than 30 minutes — and an unworkable case load for police, who often respond without backup.

"Many E-911 calls for police service are abandoned, are not being responded to in the time required to ensure public safety or are not being properly investigated or prosecuted because there simply are not enough police officers," the lawsuit says.

There were 165,000 calls for service in 2023. Those calls included 1,133 assaults, 1,245 domestic violence calls, 589 calls related to guns and 653 missing person reports. The figures are updates to similar statistics that appeared in the cases filed in 2022 and 2024.

The case also again points to specific areas of policing the tribe has asked for but never received.

The tribe requested \$31.1 million for public safety in fiscal year 2025, including amounts for missing people, school policing, a canine unit and an office of internal affairs to manage misconduct allegations against officers.

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In response, the new case says, the BIA sent the tribe a letter saying it could offer \$4.2 million, which was the same amount offered in fiscal year 2024.

Similar requests were made in previous years, and are noted in the earlier lawsuits.

The new case again asks a judge to order the Department of Interior to fund the additional units the tribe proposed for 2025 and increase base funding enough to staff the Oglala Sioux Tribal Police Department at a ratio of 2.8 officers per 1,000 residents. It also demands an accounting of the BIA's past funding decisions, and for an injunction to immediately stop the agency from continuing to use a 1999 base funding level as a starting point for policing budget requests, and a declaration that the federal government has failed to meet its treaty obligations.

Emails to Oglala Sioux Tribal President Frank Star Comes Out, the tribe's lawyers, and a spokesperson from the BIA were not immediately returned Wednesday.

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.

Shutdown likely to halt food benefits for 42 million in just days

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA-OCTOBER 22, 2025 1:02 PM

WASHINGTON — More than 42 million low-income Americans are at risk of losing food assistance Nov. 1 if the government shutdown continues.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which operates the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, has about \$6 billion in a multi-year contingency fund. That's short of the roughly \$9 billion needed to cover a full month of the program.

Even if a shutdown deal were reached immediately, the time needed to process the payments and make them available for recipients means benefits would likely be delayed.

The shortfall is caused by the shutdown, which hit its 22nd day Wednesday. The fund is supposed to maintain a balance of about \$9 billion, but \$3 billion of the funds expired at the end of the fiscal year Sept. 30. Because Congress has not approved the next year's funding, the fund only has \$6 billion.

USDA would have to come up with the remaining \$3 billion. The department could try something similar to its shuffle of more than \$300 million in tariff revenue into its Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or WIC, through the rest of the month.

It's unclear if USDA plans to use the SNAP contingency fund or any other maneuvers to extend benefits.

Nearly 40% of the 42 million SNAP recipients nationwide are children 17 and younger, according to the USDA. About 20% are seniors aged 60 and older and the remaining 40% are adults aged 18 to 59.

USDA did not respond to multiple requests for comment from States Newsroom.

Parties in Congress remained nowhere near a deal to end the shutdown as of Wednesday.

States scrambling

A Democratic congressional staffer familiar with the SNAP program said that even if Congress passes a stopgap before Nov. 1, the month's benefits will still be delayed because it takes time to process the benefits and there are limited vendor processors.

The program issues electronic benefits on a card that can be used like cash to purchase food. States will upload either all or part of a month's benefits on the first day of the month.

Even in states that say they have enough funds to extend SNAP through November, such as North Dakota, state officials have said they are unable to load the funds on the cards.

Kansas officials said once Congress passes a stopgap, the state can distribute benefits to the state's 188,000 SNAP recipients within 72 hours, meaning any deal would have to be completed by next week to avoid an interruption of services.

Other states, including Minnesota, have halted new enrollments in SNAP.

Wisconsin's Gov. Tony Evers warned that 700,000 residents are at risk of losing their SNAP benefits.

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Tennessee officials have informed SNAP recipients — nearly 700,000 people — that it received notice from USDA that SNAP funding will cease entirely on Nov. 1 if the government shutdown doesn't end.

Unheeded warnings

USDA on Oct. 10 warned states to hold off on sending SNAP files to electronic benefit transfer vendors due to the government shutdown

"Considering the operational issues and constraints that exist in automated systems, and in the interest of preserving maximum flexibility, we are forced to direct States to hold their November issuance files and delay transmission to State EBT vendors until further notice," SNAP acting Associate Administrator Ronald Ward wrote.

"This includes on-going SNAP benefits and daily files," Ward continued.

Last week, Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins said that SNAP will run out of funds by the end of the month if Congress fails to strike a deal and end the government shutdown.

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

Shutdown on day 22 sets record as second-longest in US history, with no sign of a deal

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT-OCTOBER 22, 2025 6:12 PM

WASHINGTON — The government shutdown became the second longest in U.S. history Wednesday, though the mounting repercussions for dozens of federal programs, including food aid for some of the country's most vulnerable residents, failed to spur any momentum in Congress.

The Senate was unable for the 12th time to advance a stopgap spending bill that would have reopened the government and kept funding mostly on autopilot through Nov. 21.

The 54-46 vote was nearly identical to those that have come before, a predictable outcome since neither Republicans nor Democrats are talking to each other. The legislation needed at least 60 votes to advance under the Senate's legislative filibuster.

Nevada Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto and Pennsylvania Sen. John Fetterman, both Democrats, and Maine independent Sen. Angus King voted with Republicans to advance the legislation. Kentucky GOP Sen. Rand Paul voted no.

The vote came shortly after Oregon Democratic Sen. Jeff Merkley held the floor for nearly 23 hours, speaking at length about his concerns and objections to President Donald Trump's administration.

The government staying shut down much longer will lead to a funding shortfall for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, which is relied on by 42 million low-income Americans, nearly 40% of them children younger than 17.

Despite that looming deadline, congressional leaders remain in their political silos, just as they have since before the shutdown began 22 days ago. They've repeatedly held press conferences and meetings with their own members instead of making the types of compromises needed to keep government functioning on the most basic level.

Republican leaders are waiting for Democrats to help advance the stopgap spending bill in the Senate and say they won't negotiate on anything until after that happens.

Democrats maintain they won't support the House-passed continuing resolution until there is bipartisan agreement to extend tax credits that are set to expire at the end of the year for people who buy their health insurance through the Affordable Care Act Marketplace.

Johnson warns funding process at risk

The stalled short-term spending bill is supposed to give lawmakers more time to work out agreement on the dozen full-year government funding bills, which Congress was supposed to pass by the Oct. 1 start of the fiscal year.

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But Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., warned during a morning press conference that lawmakers may scrap that process for a second year in a row if Democrats don't advance the continuing resolution soon.

"We're getting closer to November. It is going to be more and more difficult with each passing hour to get all the appropriations done on time," Johnson said. "We acknowledge that, but we have to do this on a day-by-day basis."

House Democratic leadership dismissed the notion of a longer temporary spending bill or continuing resolution, possibly for a full year, during an afternoon press conference.

Democratic Whip Katherine Clark, of Massachusetts, said her message to Republicans is, "Why are you talking about the length of the (continuing resolution)? Come to the table and negotiate with us. End this health care crisis, help the American people."

Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries sidestepped specifics when asked about a longer stopgap funding bill. "At this point, we need to reopen the government. We need to enact a spending bill that actually meets the needs of the American people in terms of their health, their safety and economic well-being, particularly in terms of driving down the high cost of living, while at the same time decisively addressing the Republican health care crisis that grows greatly by the day," the New York Democrat said.

Lawmakers have been unable to approve all the annual funding bills on time since 1996 and have consistently relied on stopgap spending bills to give themselves more time to work out agreements between the House and Senate.

The alternative to full-year government funding bills is to use a series of stopgap spending bills, or one that lasts the entire year that keeps spending mostly on autopilot.

Either option requires bipartisanship to gain the support of at least 60 senators, since Republicans control 53 seats. That means the only solution to the shutdown is for Republican and Democratic leaders to compromise.

But that seemed like a remote possibility Wednesday.

Democrats criticize layoffs

House Democrats' Steering and Policy Committee held a mock hearing where they railed against Republicans and Trump for how they've managed unified control of government.

House Appropriations Committee ranking member Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., rebuked Trump administration officials for trying to lay off federal workers by the thousands and for canceling funding to projects in regions of the country that vote for Democrats.

"It is a corrupt abuse of power that they have chosen to carry out," DeLauro said.

White House budget director Russ Vought and Trump, she said, "have launched a scorched earth campaign to decimate the federal government and the programs and services the American people depend on."

Rob Shriver, managing director of the civil service strong and good government initiatives at Democracy Forward, who worked as deputy director at the Office of Personnel Management during the Biden administration, said the layoffs could negatively affect federal operations for years.

"The government has had historic challenges in recruiting young people and recruiting tech talent, and what this administration is doing is turning it into a workforce that doesn't try to recruit the best and the brightest, but that tries to recruit the most loyal," Shriver said.

Lawsuit gains more unions

The Trump administration's efforts to lay off thousands of workers during the shutdown have been on hold since last week, when a federal judge issued a temporary restraining order that was later expanded.

The lawsuit was originally brought by the American Federation of Government Employees and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. It expanded last week to include the National Federation of Federal Employees, the National Association of Government Employees and the Service Employees International Union.

The updated restraining order issued by U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California Judge Susan Illston applies to any federal department or agency that includes employees represented by those unions, even if the Trump administration doesn't recognize their contracts.

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Illston on Wednesday granted a request to add the National Treasury Employees Union, International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers and American Federation of Teachers to the case.

Illston wrote that she found "good cause exists to modify the existing TRO without a written response from defendants due to the emergency nature of this case."

Those three unions represent hundreds of thousands more federal workers, including those at the departments of Commerce, Defense, Energy, Health and Human Services, Interior, Justice and Veterans Affairs.

Employees at the Environmental Protection Agency, Internal Revenue Service, National Aeronautics and Space Administration and Social Security Administration are also represented by the three new unions seeking to join the case.

The next stage in the lawsuit comes on Oct. 28, when the judge has set a hearing to determine whether to issue a preliminary injunction in the case.

'Patently illegal'

AFGE National President Everett Kelley wrote in a statement released Wednesday that the "administration's move to fire thousands of patriotic civil servants while the government is shut down is patently illegal, and I'm glad we are able to expand our lawsuit to protect even more federal workers from facing termination."

"President Trump has made no secret that this is about punishing his political enemies and has nothing to do with the actual work that these employees perform," Kelley added. "Data provided by the administration under court order illustrates how vast and unlawful these intended firings are and validates our union's determination to challenge this illegal action."

Ashley Murray contributed to this report.

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

Senator praises limited reopening of Farm Service agency offices

BY: SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF-OCTOBER 22, 2025 2:17 PM

U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds, R-South Dakota, is praising the federal Department of Agriculture's plan to reopen Farm Service Agency offices for what he described as "a few days a week" while the government shutdown continues.

Rounds said he discussed the issue Tuesday with Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins.

"We've heard from producers who are selling their livestock and their grain who can't get their checks endorsed while the government has been shut down, resulting in missed loan payments," Rounds said in a news release. "Many producers use the FSA as a lender and they need to be able to release these funds as their loans are paid off."

In response to questions from South Dakota Searchlight, a spokesperson for Rounds said the employees needed to reopen the offices are working without receiving a paycheck, but will receive backpay when the government reopens.

Rollins said earlier Tuesday on social media that the Farm Service Agency's 2,100 offices nationwide

Trump seeks to approve his own \$230M payback from DOJ over past probes

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY-OCTOBER 22, 2025 11:41 AM

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said late Tuesday he is personally owed a massive payment from the Department of Justice and would have the authority to approve it, saying he was "damaged very greatly" during the government's investigations into his alleged hoarding of classified documents and Russia's meddling in the 2016 presidential election.

Responding to a question about reports that he was seeking up to \$230 million in compensation from the Justice Department, Trump replied, "I don't know what the numbers are. I don't even talk to them about it. All I know is that they would owe me a lot of money, but I'm not looking for money."

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"I'd give it to charity or something. I would give it to charity, any money. But look what they did. They rigged the election," Trump said, apparently referring to his false claim that President Joe Biden did not win the 2020 election. Trump's attempt to overturn the election results, including sparking the Jan. 6, 2021 Capitol riot, was the subject of a separate federal criminal investigation.

The situation shines a spotlight on ethical concerns that Trump's former defense attorneys, who now occupy top positions at the Justice Department, would presumably play a role in deciding whether the president receives the money.

Trump claimed he would make the final call on whether to pay himself the damages.

"It's interesting because I'm the one that makes the decision, right? And you know that decision would have to go across my desk, and it's awfully strange to make a decision where I'm paying myself," Trump told CNN's Kaitlan Collins Tuesday evening after a White House Diwali celebration.

The New York Times reported Tuesday that Trump submitted claims in 2023 and 2024 seeking compensation for violations to his rights during a special counsel probe into whether his 2016 presidential campaign colluded with Russia, and violations to his privacy when federal agents searched his Florida Mar-a-Lago residence in 2022 for classified documents.

"But I was damaged very greatly, and any money that I would get, I would give to charity," he added.

The Department of Justice declined to comment on the status of Trump's claims.

"In any circumstance, all officials at the Department of Justice follow the guidance of career ethics officials," department spokesperson Chad Gilmartin said.

Attorney General Pam Bondi has been a vocal advocate and legal adviser for Trump on multiple probes, including the handling of the 2016 Russian meddling inquiry. Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche defended Trump during the government's investigation into classified documents stored at Mar-a-Lago following the president's first term.

Stanley Woodward, the former defense lawyer for Trump's co-defendant in the classified documents probe, now heads the Justice Department's civil division, which reviews compensation claims, according to the Times.

When asked Wednesday morning, House Speaker Mike Johnson told reporters he was not aware of the details, but largely defended Trump.

"I didn't talk with him about that. I know that he believes he's owed that reimbursement. What I heard yesterday was if he receives it, he was going to consider giving it to charity. I mean, he doesn't need those proceeds. But we're for the rule of law, we're for what is just and right. And it's just absurd. As has been noted here several times this morning, they attack him for everything he does. It doesn't matter what it is," the Louisiana Republican said.

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, a New York Democrat, slammed Trump's request for compensation as the president trying to "rob taxpayers of \$230 million to continue to line his pockets."

Jennifer Shutt contributed to this report.

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

Veterans, rural residents, older adults may lose food stamps due to Trump work requirements

States are scrambling to implement changes, and the federal shutdown is further threatening benefits

BY: KEVIN HARDY-OCTOBER 22, 2025 7:00 AM

States are rushing to inform some residents who rely on food stamps that they will soon be forced to meet work requirements or lose their food assistance.

Recent federal legislation ended exemptions to work requirements for older adults, homeless people, veterans and some rural residents, among others. A rapid timeline to put the changes into effect has

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sparked chaos in state agencies that must cut off access if residents don't meet certain work, education or volunteer reporting requirements.

States are implementing these permanent changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — commonly called food stamps — amid the uncertainty of the federal government shutdown. The budget impasse could result in millions of Americans not getting their SNAP benefits next month if money runs out. But even before the shutdown, states were assessing the new work rules for food stamps — the first in a wave of cutbacks to the nation's largest food assistance program required under President Donald Trump's major tax and spending law enacted in July.

Known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, the law mandates cuts to social service programs, including Medicaid and food stamps. In the coming years, the law will require states to pay a greater share of administering SNAP and could cause millions of Americans to lose benefits.

But states are currently confronting the end of exceptions to work requirements for older adults, homeless people, veterans and those recently living in foster care. Those could threaten benefits even for people who are working but who may struggle with the paperwork to prove they're meeting the requirements, advocates say.

Under the new law, states have also lost funding for nutrition education programs, must end eligibility for noncitizens such as refugees and asylees, and will lose work requirement waivers for those living in areas with limited employment opportunities.

And the federal government wants those changes made quickly.

"They've given us a virtually nonexistent window — I'll just describe it that way — in which to implement the changes, so we are working on them very quickly," Andrea Barton Reeves, commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Social Services, told lawmakers last week.

She said changing work requirements could threaten the benefits of tens of thousands of people in Connecticut.

"We do believe that if we cannot in some way either move them into another exemption category or they don't meet the requirements, we have about 36,000 people in these new categories that are at risk of losing their SNAP benefit," Barton Reeves told lawmakers.

The federal government issued guidance to states earlier this month saying several key changes to food stamps would need to be implemented by early November.

The Food Research & Action Center, a nonprofit working to address poverty-related hunger, characterized that deadline as an "unreasonable" timeline for states.

In California, for example, the state previously had been approved for a waiver to work requirements through January 2026. But this month, USDA told states they had 30 days to terminate waivers issued under the previous guidelines. In California, the end of that waiver could affect benefits for an estimated 359,000 people.

Gina Plata-Nino, interim SNAP director at the Food Research & Action Center, said states must quickly train their social services workers on eligibility changes, communicate those changes to the public and deal with an onslaught of calls from people relying on the program.

"It's incredibly complex," she said.

Plata-Nino said implementation will be uneven: Some states are already in compliance with the changes, while others will phase them in as households go through regular eligibility reviews.

USDA and the White House did not respond to Stateline's questions about the changes.

Republicans, including House Speaker Mike Johnson of Louisiana, have said the cuts would eliminate waste in the food assistance program. In a June news release, he characterized SNAP as a "bloated, inefficient program," but said Americans who needed food assistance would still receive it.

"Democrats will scream 'cuts,' but what they're really defending is a wasteful program that discourages work, mismanages billions, and traps people in dependency. Republicans are proud to defend common-sense welfare reform, fiscal sanity, and the dignity of work," Johnson said in the release.

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Rural residents

Changes to work requirements will prove especially burdensome for rural residents, who already disproportionately rely on SNAP. Job opportunities and transportation are often limited in rural areas, making work requirements especially difficult, according to Plata-Nino.

"None of these bills came with a job offer," Plata-Nino said. "None of them came with additional funding to address the lack of transportation. Remote and rural areas don't have public transportation — they don't even have taxis or Ubers."

With waivers, states previously could show USDA evidence that certain areas had limited job opportunities, thus exempting people from work requirements.

"Because it doesn't make sense to punish SNAP participants for not being able to find a job when there are no jobs available, right?" said Lauren Bauer, a fellow in economic studies at the left-leaning Brookings Institution and the associate director of The Hamilton Project, an economic policy initiative.

The legislation changed the criteria for proving weak labor markets to what Bauer characterized as an "utterly insane standard," of showing unemployment rates above 10%. (The national unemployment rate was 4.3% in August, according to the most recently released figures by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.)

"The national economy during the Great Recession hit 10% in one month," Bauer said. "Ten percent unemployment is a very, very high level. So they set this standard basically to end the waiver process."

That change will not only affect recipients now but also will drastically impair the program's ability to respond to recessions: Traditionally, SNAP has quickly helped people who lose their jobs. But the new law requires states to cover more costs, meaning they will be stretched even thinner during economic downturns when demand increases.

"Not only are these changes difficult to implement — and certainly at the speed that the administration is asking for — they could be devastating to the program, to residents who are in need in their states, and eventually SNAP may no longer be a national program because states will not be able to afford to participate," Bauer said.

'Widespread confusion'

Since July, Pennsylvania officials have been working to not only inform the public about the federal changes, but also to update information technology systems — a process that generally takes a minimum of 12 months.

"Strictly speaking from an IT perspective, we're talking about massive systems that generate terabytes of data and are working with records for hundreds of thousands — and in the case of Pennsylvania, 2 million people," said Hoa Pham, deputy secretary of the Office of Income Maintenance for the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services.

Pham said the timing of the federal legislation and lagging guidance from USDA was "simply not ideal." But the state is doing its best to train thousands of employees on the changes and help affected recipients get into compliance by finding work, education or volunteer opportunities that meet federal guidelines.

The end of geographic waivers put the benefits of about 132,000 SNAP recipients at risk in Pennsylvania.

"It is difficult, it requires time, it requires planning, it requires money," she told Stateline. "And I want to be super clear that H.R. 1 [the new law] delivered a ton of unfunded mandates to state agencies."

Pennsylvania created a detailed webpage outlining the changes and will notify individuals if their eligibility is jeopardized in the coming months. Pham said those who depend on SNAP should make sure their contact information is up to date with both the department and the post office.

"As a state agency, we're working very hard to make sure that people have accurate, factual information when it is most immediately necessary for them to know it," she said.

States are implementing the SNAP changes even as the ongoing federal government shutdown might temporarily cost recipients their benefits.

New Hampshire leaders say they are days away from running out of food stamp funds. No new applications will be approved in Minnesota until the government is reopened, officials announced last week.

And the changes hit agencies already strained from staffing shortages and outdated software, said Brit-

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tany Christenson, the CEO of AidKit, a vendor that helps states administer SNAP and other public benefits.

"The result is widespread confusion among both administrators and beneficiaries, as states are tasked with integrating new compliance requirements while maintaining service continuity.

"The changes not only increase workloads for states, but they can lead to more errors and longer wait time or applicants," Christenson said.

"Beneficiaries face a heightened risk of losing aid not because they are unwilling to work, but because they cannot meet new documentation or compliance requirements on time," she said.

Slow trickle of changes

In Maine, the new work requirement rules are in place, but recipients have some time to meet the altered guidelines, the Portland Press Herald reported. The state estimates changes to work requirements could affect more than 40,000 recipients as soon as this fall.

The state's Department of Health and Human Services did not respond to Stateline requests for comment. But advocates said food banks are already struggling to keep up with increased demand and decreased supply because of the high cost of food.

"They're seeing huge increases in families and individuals showing up, needing groceries, needing food every month, some every week, and that's before any of these cuts to SNAP have happened. So we're really, we're very worried," said Anna Korsen, deputy director of Full Plates Full Potential, a nonprofit focused on ending childhood hunger in Maine.

More than 70% of Maine households receiving SNAP have at least one person working, Korsen said. While some recipients — including those who are caretakers for relatives — cannot work, many more who are employed will struggle to meet documentation requirements.

"They call them work requirements, but we've started calling them work reporting requirements, because we think that's a more accurate way to portray what they are," she said.

Alex Carter, policy advocate at the nonprofit legal aid organization Maine Equal Justice, said SNAP recipients will be affected on a rolling basis because of regular six-month eligibility reviews. For example, a 59-year-old who previously would have been exempt from the work requirement may not be notified until next month that their eligibility status is in jeopardy.

"So people are not going to be losing their benefits this month because of those changes, which I think is the thing that is hard to explain to people," she said. "These things are happening, but we can't tell people this will happen to you in October or this will happen to you in January. It's different on a case-by-case basis."

Carter said her organization is urging Mainers to ensure their contact information is correct with the state and to remain vigilant for official communications on SNAP.

While states are forced to implement the federal changes, Carter said they should emphasize they're only the messengers. She said Congress and the president should be held responsible for the fallout when people begin losing benefits.

"It's very natural to think this is a state decision, or this is a departmental decision, and to direct your anger and your frustration there," she said. "... In this case, this is not a state decision. They are required by federal law to implement these work reporting changes."

Stateline reporter Kevin Hardy can be reached at khardy@stateline.org.

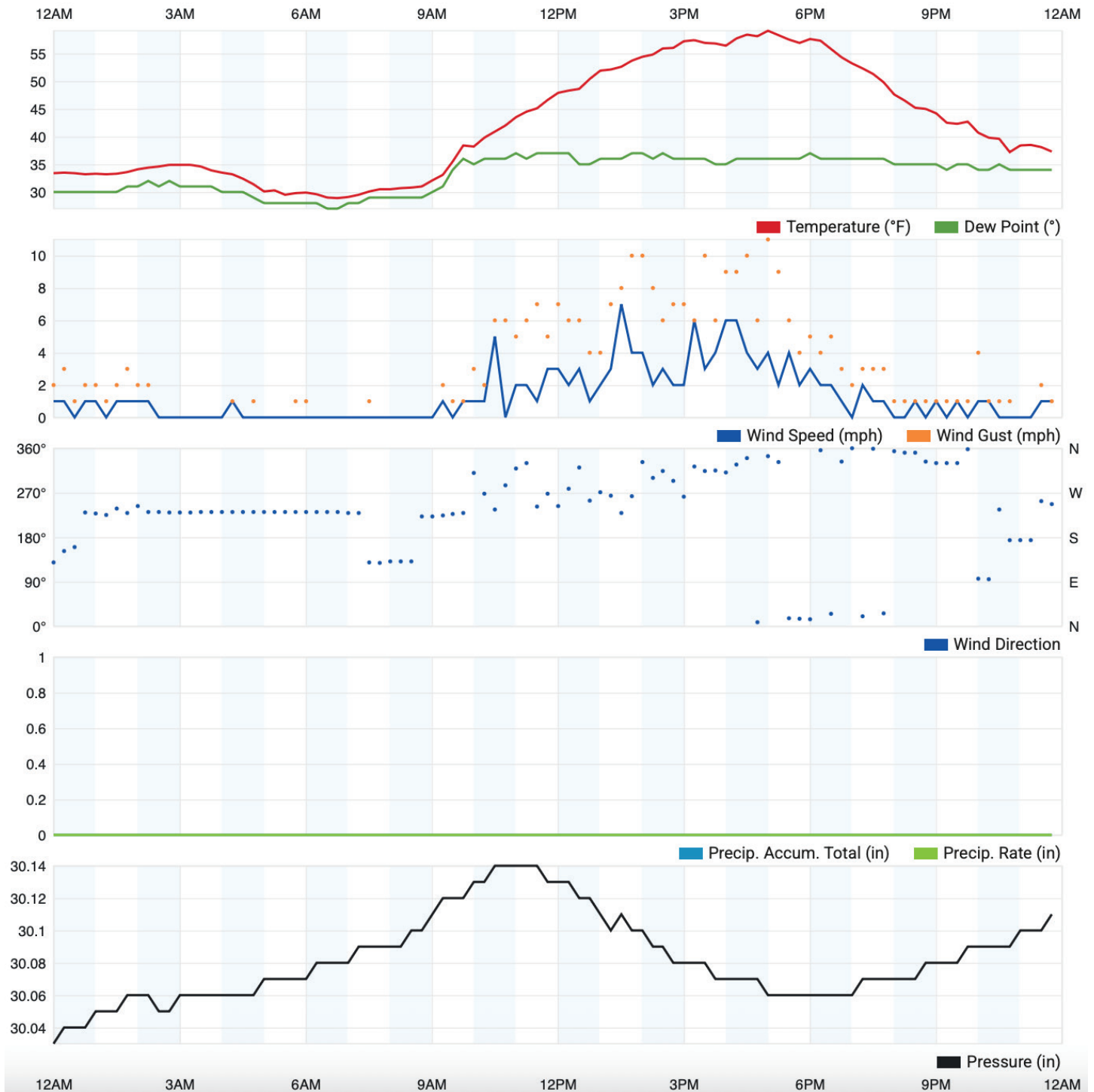
This story was originally produced by Stateline, which is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit news network which includes South Dakota Searchlight, and is supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity.

Kevin Hardy covers business, labor and rural issues for Stateline from the Midwest.

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Today

Tonight

Friday

Friday Night

Saturday



High: 57 °F

Patchy Fog
then Sunny



Low: 35 °F

Mostly Clear



High: 62 °F

Sunny



Low: 41 °F

Mostly Clear



High: 65 °F

Sunny

Today



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

Weekend Forecast

Friday



59-65°F

-Mostly Sunny

Saturday



60-67°F

-Mostly Sunny
-Windy

Sunday



60-67°F

-Mostly Cloudy
-Windy

-Scattered rain
showers starting
in the evening and
overnight

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Mostly sunny conditions will be around for the next couple day for central and northeastern SD as temperatures start to warm into the low 50s and 60s today and low to mid 60s during the weekend. Winds will start to pick up Saturday and Sunday, with chances for rain increasing for Sunday night.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 59 °F at 4:55 PM

Low Temp: 29 °F at 6:43 AM

Wind: 11 mph at 3:21 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 80 in 1963

Record Low: 5 in 1895

Average High: 55

Average Low: 30

Average Precip in Oct.: 1.71

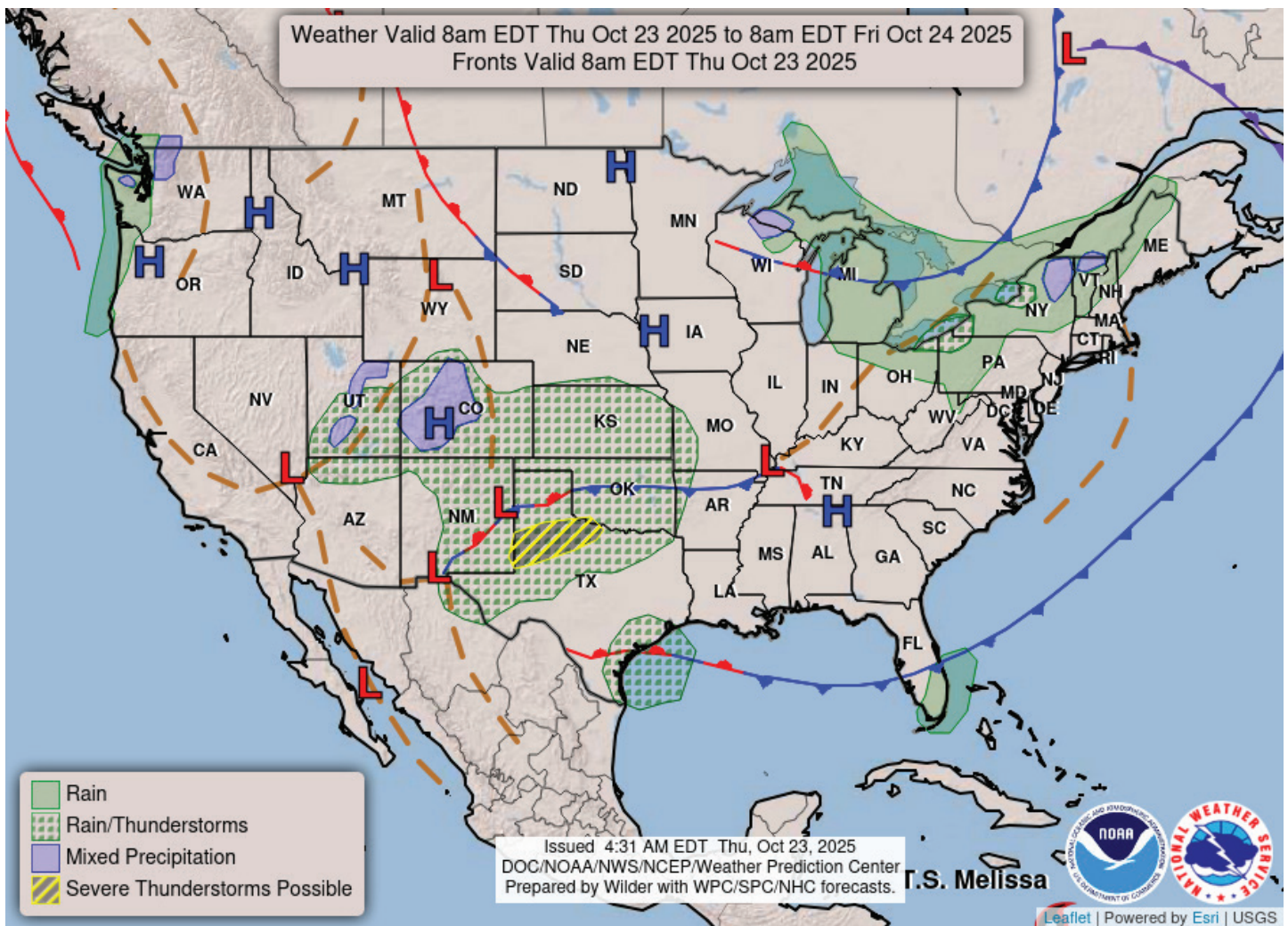
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.48

Average Precip to date: 20.04

Precip Year to Date: 23.40

Sunset Tonight: 6:33 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:00 am



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Today in Weather History

October 23, 1995: A major fall storm hit Central and Northeast South Dakota and dropped from four inches to one foot of wet snow. The heavy wet snow combined with high winds gusting up to 50 mph snapped several thousand power poles and downed hundreds of miles of line in the counties of Buffalo, Hand, Spink, Roberts and Grant. In Day and Lyman Counties, a few poles were downed with some short lived power outages. Marshall County had no reports of damage or power outages. Several thousand people were left without power for several hours up to several days. Power was not restored to some people until the fourth of November. Portions of Interstate 90 and Interstate 29 were closed from the evening of the 23rd until the morning of the 24th leaving hundreds of motorists stranded. There were also numerous school delays and closings. Many trees and some crops were also damaged as a result of the weight of the snow and high winds. Some snowfall amounts included, 4 inches near Reliance, at Doland, and near Victor, 5 inches southeast of Stephan and at Sisseton, 6 inches south of Ree Heights and at Eden, eight inches at Waubay and Grenville, 9 inches at Clear Lake, 10 inches at Watertown, and 12 inches at Summit and Milbank. This storm was the third damaging storm to the rural electric cooperatives this year and has been called the worst natural disaster in the history of the rural electrics. The total damage estimated for the rural state electrics was \$9.5 million.

1091: The earliest known tornado in Britain, possibly the most severe on record, hit central London. The church at St. Mary le Bow was severely damaged. Four rafters, each 26 feet long were driven into the ground with such force that only four feet protruded above the surface. Other churches in the area were also demolished along with over 600 houses. 1878: One of the most severe hurricanes to affect eastern Virginia in the latter half of the 19th century struck on October 23, 1878. This storm moved rapidly northward from the Bahamas on October 22nd and hit the North Carolina coast late that same day moving at a forward speed of 40 to 50 mph. The storm continued northward passing through east central Virginia, Maryland and eastern Pennsylvania. The barometric pressure fell to 28.78". The five minute sustained wind reached 84 mph at Cape Henry. During the heaviest part of the gale, the wind at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina registered 100 mph. The instrument itself has finally blown away and therefore no further record was made.

1761 - A hurricane struck southeastern New England. It was the most violent in thirty years. Thousands of trees blocked roads in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. (David Ludlum)

1843 - "Indian Summer" was routed by cold and snow that brought sleighing from the Poconos to Vermont. A foot of snow blanketed Haverhill NH and Newberry VT, and 18 to 24 inches were reported in some of the higher elevations. Snow stayed on the ground until the next spring. (22nd-23rd) (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987) (The Weather Channel)

1920: Famed research meteorologist Theodore Fujita, was born on this date in Kitakyushu City, Japan. Fujita, known as "Mr. Tornado" after developing the international standard for measuring tornado severity, also discovered microbursts.

1947: Fish fell from the sky in Marksville, LA. Thousands of fish fell from the sky in an area 1,000 feet long by 80 feet wide possibly due to a waterspout.

2015: On this day, Hurricane Patricia became the most powerful tropical cyclone ever measured in the Western Hemisphere as its maximum sustained winds reached an unprecedented 200 mph (320 kph) and its central pressure fell to 879 millibars (25.96 inches of mercury). Hurricane Patricia became the strongest Pacific hurricane on record shortly after midnight CDT early on Oct. 23. Air Force Hurricane Hunters had flown through the eye of Patricia and reported a sea-level pressure of 894 millibars as measured by a dropsonde inside the eye itself. Wind measurements suggested that the pressure measurement was not in the exact center of the eye and was probably not the absolute lowest pressure, prompting NHC to estimate the minimum central pressure at 892 millibars in its special 12:30 a.m. CDT advisory. Tropical cyclone strength comparisons are typically based on minimum central pressure. At 892 millibars, Patricia shattered the Eastern Pacific basin's previous record of 902 millibars set by Hurricane Linda in 1997. While a number of typhoons in the western North Pacific have been stronger, Patricia is now by far the strongest hurricane on record in any basin where the term "hurricane" applies to tropical cyclones – namely, the central and eastern North Pacific basins and the North Atlantic basin, which includes the North Atlantic Ocean itself plus the Gulf of America and Caribbean Sea.

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Daily Devotion

You Can Trust God

In troubling seasons, trust the Lord to provide all you need.

Matthew 7:9-11: 9 "Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

As we all know, life oftentimes confronts us with unexpected or painful circumstances. During such troubling moments, we can rest on this essential truth: The Lord is perfect in His love.

Consider 1 John 1:5: "God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all." In other words, everything our heavenly Father does is righteous. And if He is a God of love, then it is impossible for Him to mistreat any of His children. We can be assured that whatever He places or permits in our life is good and that His motives are pure.

Jesus demonstrated this deep care for us when He offered His blood on the cross—there exists no greater display of love than giving one's life for someone else (John 15:13). Christ, the perfect lamb, was willing to die in our place so that we could have an eternal relationship with the Father. If God gave us His Son—the most precious gift He could possibly give—to take care of our greatest need, then we can trust Him to provide for all areas of our life.

When difficulty arises, remember how much God loves you. Even when circumstances are painful, you can be confident that because of the heavenly Father's love, you're always held in His capable and caring hands.

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: 1 Days 17 Hrs 12
Mins 11 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.22.25

4 15 28 33 35 6

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$5,380,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 27
Mins 11 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.22.25

1 20 30 37 46 1

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 42 Mins 11
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.22.25

3 4 7 18 23

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$59,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 42
Mins 11 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.22.25

23 37 43 60 64 5

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 11
Mins 11 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.22.25

18 37 52 54 60 12

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$344,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 11
Mins 11 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

News from the **AP** Associated Press

USDA is reopening some 2,100 offices to help farmers access \$3B in aid despite the ongoing shutdown

By JOSH FUNK AP Business Writer

The Agriculture Department will reopen about 2,100 county offices all across the country Thursday despite the ongoing government shutdown to help farmers and ranchers get access to \$3 billion of aid from existing programs.

The USDA said each Farm Service Agency office will have two workers who will be paid even though the government remains shutdown. These offices help farmers apply for farm loans, crop insurance, disaster aid and other programs. Thousands of other federal employees like air traffic controllers are working without pay during the shutdown.

A USDA spokesperson said this move reflects President Trump's commitment to helping farmers and ranchers, who are traditionally some of his strongest supporters. Recently, some of them have been unhappy with Trump's latest moves although his support remains strong across rural America.

Just this week, ranchers were unhappy with Trump's idea to import more beef from Argentina because that could hurt their profits, and earlier this month soybean farmers complained that a \$20 billion aid package for Argentina allowed that country to sell soybeans to China. Farmers are also still waiting on details of an aid package Trump promised to help them survive his trade war with China, but that aid has been put on hold because of the shutdown.

"President Trump will not let the radical left Democrat shutdown impact critical USDA services while harvest is underway across the country," the USDA spokesman said.

A White House official said the administration is using funds from the Commodity Credit Corporation, a USDA agency that addresses agricultural prices. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the administration's plans were not yet publicized.

Republicans like Senate Majority Leader John Thune, Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley and North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven along with farm groups like the National Corn Growers Association and Illinois Soybean Association praised the move while Democrats accused the administration of using farmers as political pawns in the shutdown fight. Both parties have been unable to reach an agreement to fund the government and end the shutdown that began Oct. 1.

Thune said reopening these offices, like he has been urging the administration to do, will give farmers access to critical services in the midst of harvest season.

"Like many hardworking Americans, producers in South Dakota and across the country – who work tirelessly to provide high-quality food for our nation – are being hurt by Senate Democrats' reckless government shutdown," Thune said.

Kenneth Hartman Jr., who is chairman of the Corn Growers Association, said this is a crucial time because farmers are getting ready to place orders for next year's seed and fertilizer right now as well as settling up with the bankers for this year's operating loans. And farmers are grappling with soaring costs.

"Because of the inflation factor, the farm economy is really in a critical situation here. So anything that the farmers can get when it comes to support from the farm programs from the farm bill of last year, we need to get that open and get that money out to them," said Hartman, who is in the middle of harvesting his crop near Waterloo, Illinois.

The House Agriculture Committee Democrats said on X that this shows that Trump and Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins "could have supported farmers all along, but you chose not to because you'd rather use farmers' pain to score cheap political points while increasing the cost of living for ordinary Americans by making food and health care more expensive."

Minnesota Rep. Angie Craig, who is the ranking Democrat on the Agriculture Committee, said the administration should have done this sooner to ensure that farmers can get the help they need.

"I am glad the administration is finally doing right by America's farmers by partially opening FSA offices, though I question why the administration waited so long and made this decision only after putting farmers through three weeks of uncertainty," Craig said.

Speculation grows around whether the Louvre's stolen jewels could end up on the market

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS and R.J. RICO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Just days after a stunning heist at the Louvre Museum in Paris, speculation is growing around where the lavish, stolen jewels that once adorned France's royals might end up.

A handful of experts warn that the artifacts valued at more than \$100 million (88 million euros) could soon — if not already — be melted or broken into parts. If done successfully, some say those smaller pieces could later go up for sale as part of a new necklace, earrings or other jewelry, without turning too many heads.

"You don't even have to put them on a black market, you just put them in a jewelry store," said Erin Thompson, an art crime professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York. "It could be sold down the street from the Louvre."

Thompson and others say that this has become increasingly common with stolen jeweled and metal goods, noting that it's a way thieves can try to cover their tracks and make money. It's not like someone could publicly wear one of France's Crown Jewels stolen on Sunday — and finding a market to sell the full artifacts would be incredibly difficult after "everyone and their sister" has seen photos of them over the last week, said Christopher Marinello, a lawyer and founder of Art Recovery International.

The jewels may be hard to monetize

"By breaking them apart, they will hide their theft," Marinello said, adding that these items could become even more "traceless" if they're taken out of France and through jewel cutters and robust supply chains in other countries.

Still, such pieces are often sold for a fraction of the value of what was stolen — due to their smaller size, but also because melting or breaking down high-profile items removes the historical worth.

It isn't a simple process.

"The real art in an art heist isn't the stealing, it's the selling," explained Robert Wittman, former senior investigator of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's art crime team. Wittman, who has since formed his own private practice, said that the individuals behind such heists are typically "better criminals or thieves than they are businessmen."

Unlike others, Wittman is skeptical about Sunday's thieves successfully monetizing the artifacts they stole from the Louvre — which include an emerald necklace and earrings, two crowns, two brooches, a sapphire necklace and a single earring worn by 19th-century royals. He notes the gems may still be identifiable by their clarity, for example, and gold that was refined when the pieces were made hundreds of years ago is not as pure as what's typically in demand today.

"Because of what they are, there's really no point destroying them," Wittman said, while pointing to the risks of selling such high-profile stolen goods.

Scott Guginsky, executive vice president of the Jewelers' Security Alliance, a nonprofit trade association focused on preventing jewelry crime, also notes the age and quality of the artifacts' diamonds. He suspects they're probably not graded.

"It's not something that you can move on the open market. It's nothing that can go through an auction house," said Guginsky, who used to run the New York Police Department's organized theft squad.

Given the amount of preparation that the thieves likely put into this, Guginsky believes they have a plan for selling the jewels, even if they might first decide to "sit on" the jewelry and wait out suspicion.

"I can't see them stealing it without having an idea what they want to do," he said. "There's always a person willing to buy stolen jewelry. No matter what it is, somebody will buy it."

Sara Yood, CEO and general counsel of the Jewelers Vigilance Committee, notes most jewelry businesses

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implement anti-money laundering programs and look out for red flags like unusual orders, repeated purchases and requests for secrecy.

Still, she and others say the age of some jewels — if broken down effectively — could actually make it harder to track. Newer gemstones, for example, sometimes carry a laser inscription inside that can be evaluated in a lab. But “because these are historical pieces, it’s rather unlikely that it has those identifying features,” noted Yood.

Experts like Thompson say bigger gems can be recut to a point that they’re unrecognizable. A challenge is finding people who have the skill to do that and don’t ask too many questions — but it’s possible, she said.

Whether the people behind Sunday’s heist had those contacts or certain buyers lined up is unknown. But it’s important to also note that “the guys who actually enter the museums are usually all hired hands, and they’re almost always caught in these cases,” Thompson added.

Chances of recovery look dim

She and others say that museums have increasingly faced a rash of similar thefts over recent years. Thompson notes that stealing from storage can go undetected for longer: the British Museum in London, which has accused a former curator of stealing artifacts and selling them online, is still trying to recover some of the 2,000 items stolen.

Some past thieves have made ransom demands for stolen artwork overall, or wait for a potential “no questions asked” reward from an insurance company — which can amount to about a 10% cut for some insured pieces in Europe, Thompson says. The jewels stolen from the Louvre Sunday, however, were reportedly not privately insured.

Sometimes government offers of a reward for information about a high-profile heist can also quicken the investigation, although the French government has yet to publicize such an incentive. If that changes, or promising leads are uncovered from the evidence left behind at the Louvre, experts like Wittman note it could increase the chances of recovering the artifacts.

Still, as more time passes, others feel that the fate of finding the historic jewels looks dim.

“I think they’re going to catch the criminals,” said Marinello. “But I don’t think they’ll find them with the jewels intact.”

Federal agents sent to San Francisco area and mayor says it’s meant to incite ‘chaos and violence’

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The U.S. Coast Guard said Wednesday it is providing a base of operations for U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents in the San Francisco area as part of its effort to support federal efforts to track down immigrants in the country illegally and provide border and maritime security.

The San Francisco Chronicle, citing an anonymous source with knowledge of the operation, reported more than 100 CBP and other federal agents will begin arriving Thursday at the base in Alameda, a move immediately condemned by San Francisco Mayor Daniel Lurie and California Gov. Gavin Newsom. The two Democrats said the surge is meant to provoke violent protests.

CBP did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press. A statement provided to media by the Coast Guard said in part that “through a whole of government approach, we are leveraging our unique authorities and capabilities to detect, deter, and interdict illegal aliens, narco-terrorists, and individuals intent on terrorism or other hostile activity before they reach our border.”

Soon after the deployment was first reported, Lurie livestreamed a nine-minute statement from City Hall, flanked by other elected officials, and cautioned against giving federal officials working from “a playbook” any excuse to crack down. President Donald Trump has repeatedly said he plans to deploy National Guard troops to the city to quell crime, but his administration hasn’t offered a timeline for doing so.

“In cities across the country, masked immigration officials are deployed to use aggressive enforcement tactics that instill fear so people don’t feel safe going about their daily lives,” Lurie said. “These tactics are designed to incite backlash, chaos and violence, which are then used as an excuse to deploy military

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personnel.”

As is his custom, Lurie did not refer to the president or address him by name.

Trump has deployed the Guard to Washington, D.C., and Memphis, Tennessee, to help fight what he says is rampant crime. Los Angeles was the first city where Trump deployed the Guard, arguing it was necessary to protect federal buildings and federal agents as protesters fought back against mass immigration arrests.

He has since said they are needed in Chicago and Portland, Oregon, as well, although lawsuits by Democratic officials in both cities have so far blocked troops from going out on city streets.

Trump recently renewed his musings about sending the Guard to San Francisco, saying in a Fox News interview Sunday that the city “was truly one of the great cities of the world” before it went “wrong” and “woke.”

His assertions of out-of-control crime in the city of roughly 830,000 has baffled local and state leaders who point to statistics showing that many crimes are at record lows.

Newsom’s administration said it would push back forcefully on any deployment, as it did when Trump first ordered the guard into Los Angeles against the governor’s wishes. California Attorney General Rob Bonta vowed to “be in court within hours, if not minutes” if there is a federal deployment, and San Francisco City Attorney David Chiu has promised the same.

At a news conference Wednesday, Newsom held up what he said was a lawsuit the state would file if Trump sends troops to San Francisco.

“We’re going to be fierce in terms of our response,” said Newsom, a former mayor of San Francisco. “This is the lawsuit that I will file within a nanosecond of any efforts to send the military to one of America’s great cities.”

The Coast Guard base in Alameda that is hosting the CBP agents is between Oakland and San Francisco, both sanctuary cities that do not cooperate with the federal government on civil immigration operations. A Homeland Security statement said the agency is “targeting the worst of the worst criminal illegal aliens — including murderers, rapists, gang members, pedophiles, and terrorists.”

Lurie urged the public to protest peacefully. He said he had just signed an executive directive to coordinate the city’s response to a potential federal deployment and provide support for immigrants.

Oakland Mayor Barbara Lee issued a statement saying: “Real public safety comes from Oakland-based solutions, not federal military occupation.”

Rubio will travel to Israel after Vance’s visit to ensure fragile Gaza ceasefire holds

By RENATA BRITO and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — As U.S. Vice President JD Vance’s visit to Israel comes to a close, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said he would be traveling to the country to keep the momentum on the U.S.-brokered ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas.

Earlier this week, Vance announced the opening of a civilian military coordination center in southern Israel where some 200 U.S. troops are working alongside the Israeli military and delegations from other countries planning the stabilization and reconstruction of Gaza.

Rubio told journalists at Joint Base Andrews late Wednesday that he plans to visit the center and appoint a Foreign Service official to work alongside the top U.S. military commander in the Middle East, Vice Adm. Brad Cooper.

The U.S. is seeking support from other allies, especially Gulf nations, to create an international stabilization force to be deployed to Gaza and train a Palestinian force.

“We’d like to see Palestinian police forces in Gaza that are not Hamas and that are going to do a good job, but those still have to be trained and equipped,” he said.

Rubio also criticized efforts by far-right politicians in the Israeli parliament who on Wednesday took the symbolic step of giving preliminary approval to a bill that would give Israel authority to annex the occupied West Bank — a move the U.S. opposes.

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President Donald Trump "has made clear that's not something we'd be supportive of right now, and we think it's potentially threatening to the peace deal," he said.

The bill passed in a 25-24 vote. It is unclear whether the bill has support to win a majority in the 120-seat parliament, and Netanyahu has tools to delay or defeat it.

Vance visits Holy Sepulcher

Meanwhile, Vance visited the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the sprawling 12th century basilica where Christians believe Jesus was crucified, died and rose again, in Jerusalem's Old City.

He is then expected to meet Israel's Defense Minister, Israeli military leaders and other officials at the army's headquarters in Tel Aviv.

On Wednesday, Vance sought to ease concerns that the Trump administration was dictating terms to its closest ally in the Middle East.

"We don't want in Israel a vassal state, and that's not what Israel is. We want a partnership, we want an ally," Vance said, speaking beside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in response to a reporter's question about whether Israel was becoming a "protectorate" of the U.S.

Netanyahu, who will meet with Rubio on Friday, expressed similar sentiments while acknowledging differences of opinion as they push forward the U.S.-proposed ceasefire agreement.

Israeli media referred to the nonstop parade of American officials visiting to ensure Israel holds up its side of the fragile ceasefire as "Bibi-sitting." The term, utilizing Netanyahu's nickname of Bibi, refers to an old campaign ad when Netanyahu positioned himself as the "Bibi-sitter" whom voters could trust with their kids.

Palestinians in Gaza in dire need of medical care

In the first medical evacuation since the ceasefire began on Oct. 10, the head of the World Health Organization said Thursday they had evacuated 41 critical patients and 145 companions out of the Gaza strip.

In a statement posted to X, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called on nations to show solidarity and help some 15,000 patients who are still waiting for approval to receive medical care outside Gaza.

On Wednesday, an official with the U.N. Population Fund described the "sheer devastation" that he witnessed on his most recent travel to Gaza, saying that there is no such thing as a "normal birth in Gaza now."

Andrew Saberton, an executive director at UNFPA, told reporters how difficult the agency's work has become due to the lack of functioning or even standing health care facilities.

"I was not fully prepared for what I saw. One can't be. The sheer extent of the devastation looked like the set of a dystopian film. Unfortunately, it is not fiction," he said.

Saberton added that Palestinian women cannot get access to a hospital. "They often don't even have access to a private space in a tent. We have stories of women giving birth actually in the rubble, beside the road," he said.

Court hearing on journalists' access to Gaza

Separately on Thursday, Israel's Supreme Court held a hearing into whether to open the Gaza Strip to the international media and gave the state 30 days to present a new position in light of the new situation under the ceasefire.

Israel has blocked reporters from entering Gaza since the war erupted on Oct 7, 2023.

The Foreign Press Association, which represents dozens of international news organizations including The Associated Press, had asked the court to order the government to open the border.

In a statement after Thursday's decision, the FPA expressed its "disappointment" and called the Israeli government's position to deny journalists access "unacceptable."

The court rejected a request from the FPA early in the war, due to objections by the government on security grounds. The group filed a second request for access in September 2024. The government has repeatedly delayed the case.

Palestinian journalists have covered the two-year war for international media. But like all Palestinians, they have been subject to tough restrictions on movement and shortages of food, repeatedly displaced and operated under great danger. Some 200 Palestinian journalists have been killed by Israeli fire, accord-

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ing to the Committee to Protect Journalists.

"It is time for Israel to lift the closure and let us do our work alongside our Palestinian colleagues," said Tania Kraemer, chairperson of the FPA.

Tropical Storm Melissa lumbers through the Caribbean as islands take cover from rain

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Tropical Storm Melissa lumbered through the Caribbean Sea on Thursday, bringing a risk of dangerous landslides and life-threatening flooding to Jamaica and southern Hispaniola. Officials urged residents of flood-prone areas to seek higher ground.

Dozens of people were already in shelters in the Dominican Republic, and schools, businesses and government agencies were closed in the nine provinces under alert. Dozens of water supply systems were out of service Wednesday, affecting more than half a million customers.

In Jamaica, officials said 881 shelters would be made available as needed. Courts were ordered closed and schools were to switch to remote classes Thursday.

Evan Thompson, director of Jamaica's Met Service, said the island's eastern region could see up to 12 inches (30 centimeters) of rain. "Now that is significant rainfall, and that is the main thing that we should be mindful of at this time," he said.

Similar rainfall amounts were expected for southern Haiti and the southern Dominican Republic through Saturday, with even more rain possible locally depending on Melissa's path later in the week. Heavy rain was also forecast for western Jamaica, southern Hispaniola, Aruba and Puerto Rico.

People were also concerned about the impact in Haiti, which shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic and has been devastated by past storms. Gang violence, poverty and ineffective governance mean storm preparations are limited.

Early Thursday, Melissa had maximum sustained winds of 50 mph (80 kph) and was moving west-northwest at 3 mph (5 kph), the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said.

The slow-moving storm was centered about 300 miles (485 kilometers) south-southwest of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and some 240 miles (390 kilometers) south-southeast of Kingston, Jamaica.

Melissa was expected to move closer to Jamaica and southwestern Haiti later this week. It was forecast to strengthen gradually and could be a hurricane by Friday and a major hurricane by the late weekend.

"Unfortunately, it is becoming increasingly likely that Melissa will become a large and dangerous hurricane," the U.S. center warned.

Melissa is the 13th named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, and the first named storm to form in the Caribbean this year.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration had predicted an above-normal season with 13 to 18 named storms. Of those, five to nine were forecast to become hurricanes, including two to five major hurricanes, which pack winds of 111 mph or greater.

The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 to Nov. 30.

Mamdani, Cuomo and Sliwa clash bitterly during final NYC mayoral debate

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Zohran Mamdani was attacked over his thin resume, Republican Curtis Sliwa strove to prove his seriousness as a candidate and former Gov. Andrew Cuomo was pressed on the sexual harassment allegations that drove him from office in a contentious final debate in New York City's mayoral race.

While Mamdani, the frontrunner, began by accusing his rivals of being consumed by fighting — suggesting he would try to focus instead on his vision for New Yorkers — the state assemblymember joined them in mud as he tried to create viral social media moments, included inviting one of Cuomo's accusers to appear in the audience.

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Cuomo, running as an independent after losing the Democratic primary to Mamdani, fared better Wednesday than during their first debate. He used its focus on the day-to-day of running the city to showcase his political experience.

Though he has urged Sliwa to drop his bid to avoid splitting the anti-Mamdani vote, he didn't bring up his request during the debate. Instead he worked to cast Mamdani, a 34-year-old democratic socialist, as out of his league, highlighting his pro-Palestinian advocacy and President Donald Trump's threats to take over the city if he wins.

Here are some key takeaways from the debate:

Barbs all around

Mamdani had said he planned to keep his focus on issues, like affordability, that have fueled his momentum and earned him national attention, but he landed plenty of digs against his rivals, whom he accused of spending more time calling on each other to drop out "than actually proposing their own policies."

Cuomo and Sliwa, he said, "speak only in the past because that is all they know." He said Cuomo is "a desperate man, lashing out because he knows that the one thing he cares about, power, is slipping away from him."

Cuomo, meanwhile, touted his experience.

"You have never had a job. You've never accomplished anything," he said, insisting Mamdani lacks the merit and qualifications to run the nation's biggest city or handle its emergencies.

Sliwa accused both men of "fighting like kids in a school yard," but piled on as well.

"Zorhan, your resume could fit on a cocktail napkin. And, Andrew, your failures could fill a public school library in New York City," he quipped. He also made frequent references to Cuomo's decision to resign as governor amid a barrage of sexual harassment allegations, which Cuomo denies.

Local issues and the Canal Street raid

While the race has often been dominated by questions about the Israel-Hamas war, Trump and other national subjects, the candidates Wednesday were peppered for specifics about crime, the subways and the notorious Rikers Island jail complex.

Mamdani came under fire after he declined to take a position on a set of initiatives that will appear on the November ballot.

Mamdani also said as mayor he would ask New York City's police Commissioner Jessica Tisch to remain in her post. Mamdani, who was deeply critical of the city's police in the past, has been trying to moderate his most contentious positions.

The candidates also railed against this week's immigration enforcement sweep targeting vendors on Manhattan's famed Canal Street that led to 14 arrests.

Cuomo said the city does not need Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents in the city to handle quality-of-life crimes like dealing in counterfeit bags.

Mamdani similarly pledged to oppose federal interventions in the city, saying "ICE is a reckless entity that cares little for the law and even less for the people that they're supposed to serve."

The Trump factor

The candidates were again pressed on Trump and insisted that they would be most adept at handling the mercurial president.

Cuomo spoke repeatedly about how he had held Trump at bay during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic and said a Mamdani win would be a "dream" for the president.

"He has said he'll take over New York if Mamdani wins, and he will! Because, he has no respect for him. He thinks he's a kid and he's going to kick him on his tuchus," Cuomo said.

Mamdani, meanwhile, tried to depict Cuomo as Trump's "puppet" and too aligned with the president.

"He wants Andrew Cuomo to be the mayor not because it will be good for New Yorkers, but because it will be good for him," Mamdani said.

Sliwa warned both were taking the wrong approach by antagonizing the president.

"You can't beat Trump," he said.

Mamdani pulls from Trump's playbook

Cuomo, meanwhile, continued to be dogged by the allegations that forced his resignation.

Mamdani said one of the women who had accused Cuomo of sexual harassment, his former aide Charlotte Bennett, was in the audience Wednesday. Trump used a similar strategy in 2016 when he appeared at a debate with accusers of Democratic rival Hillary Clinton's husband, former President Bill Clinton, who has denied the accusations against him.

"What do you say to the 13 women that you sexually harassed?" he asked as he pressed Cuomo on the allegations and the millions in taxpayer dollars that were spent to defend him in court.

Cuomo denied wrongdoing and chided Mamdani.

"If you want to be in government, then you have to be serious and mature," he said.

Bennett was the second woman to accuse Cuomo of sexual harassment, alleging he subjected her to invasive questions about her personal life and sexual relationships. Cuomo denies Bennett's allegations.

Several candidates noted at the start of the debate that New Yorkers would probably rather be watching the Knicks opening game of the season, which tipped off at the same time. Cuomo made it to the game's second half, where he was photographed sitting next to incumbent Mayor Eric Adams.

European Union agrees on new sanctions against Russia targeting its shadow oil fleet and LNG imports

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union has agreed on a new raft of sanctions against Russia targeting its shadow fleet of oil tankers and banning its imports of liquefied natural gas, the Danish EU presidency announced Thursday.

"Today is a good day for Europe and Ukraine," Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen said in a statement, as EU leaders were gathering for a summit in Brussels.

He said that the new sanctions "will introduce new and comprehensive measures on oil and gas, the shadow fleet and Russia's financial sector." A new system for limiting the movement of Russian diplomats within the 27-nation EU will also be introduced.

The move comes a day after U.S. President Donald Trump's administration announced new sanctions against Russia's oil industry that are aimed at moving Russian President Vladimir Putin to the negotiating table and ending Moscow's war on Ukraine.

Energy revenue is the linchpin of Russia's economy, allowing Putin to pour money into the armed forces without worsening inflation for everyday people and avoiding a currency collapse.

The new EU measures took almost a month to decide. The 27-nation bloc has already slapped 18 packages of sanctions against Russia over the war, but getting final agreement on who and what to target can take weeks.

The sanctions agreement was sealed at a Thursday morning meeting of EU ambassadors, just a few hours before Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy joins his European counterparts for the one-day summit, as they press for a ceasefire to halt almost four years of fighting.

The summit comes after Trump said that his plan for a swift meeting with Putin was on hold because he didn't want it to be a "waste of time." It was yet another twist in Trump's stop-and-go effort to end the war.

The leaders are also eager for any progress on Trump's Gaza peace plan, and will debate ways to keep the 27-nation bloc involved in proceedings.

The EU is the world's biggest provider of aid to Palestinians but has little leverage over Israel — in part because European nations are divided over how to handle the conflict — and it has struggled to play a role of consequence.

Its role in the war in Ukraine is clearer, and the summit takes place as Russian armed forces strike at the conflict-torn country's power grid just as the weather starts to turn colder.

Earlier this week, Ukraine's strongest European backers who form part of the "coalition of the willing" said they opposed any push to make Ukraine surrender land captured by Russian forces in return for peace,

as Trump most recently has suggested.

The U.K. will host a meeting of the members of that coalition of more than 30 countries on Friday.

On the EU side, leaders intend 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 consequences of such a step.

The biggest tranche of frozen assets – some \$225 billion worth – are held in Belgium, and the Belgian government has been reluctant to take any risks on using the money without firm guarantees from its European partners.

Ukraine's budget and military needs for 2026 and 2027 are estimated to total around \$153 billion.

The EU leaders are also likely to sign off on a new "road map" to prepare Europe to defend itself against a Russian attack by the end of the decade. Top officials believe that Russia could be ready to take aim at another European country within 3-5 years.

US strikes two more alleged drug-carrying boats, this time in the Pacific Ocean

By KONSTANTIN TOROPIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military on Wednesday launched its ninth strike against an alleged drug-carrying vessel, killing three people in the eastern Pacific Ocean, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said, expanding the Trump administration's campaign against drug trafficking in South America.

It followed another strike Tuesday night, also in the eastern Pacific, that killed two people, Hegseth posted on social media hours earlier. The attacks were departures from the seven previous U.S. strikes that had targeted vessels in the Caribbean Sea. They bring the death toll to at least 37 from attacks that began last month.

The strikes represent an expansion of the military's targeting area as well as a shift to the waters off South America where much of the cocaine from the world's largest producers is smuggled. Hegseth's social media posts also drew a direct comparison between the war on terrorism that the U.S. declared after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and the Trump administration's crackdown.

"Just as Al Qaeda waged war on our homeland, these cartels are waging war on our border and our people," Hegseth said, adding "there will be no refuge or forgiveness — only justice."

Later Wednesday, he referred to the alleged drug-runners as "the 'Al Qaeda' of our hemisphere."

Republican President Donald Trump has justified the strikes by asserting that the United States is engaged in an "armed conflict" with drug cartels and proclaiming the criminal organizations unlawful combatants, relying on the same legal authority used by President George W. Bush's administration for the war on terrorism.

Trump says strikes on land could be next

Asked about the latest boat attack, Trump insisted that "we have legal authority. We're allowed to do that." He said similar strikes could eventually come on land.

"We will hit them very hard when they come in by land," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office. "We're totally prepared to do that. And we'll probably go back to Congress and explain exactly what we're doing when we come to the land."

Lawmakers from both political parties have expressed concerns about Trump ordering the military actions without receiving authorization from Congress or providing many details.

Appearing alongside Trump, Secretary of State Marco Rubio defended such strikes, saying, "If people want to stop seeing drug boats blow up, stop sending drugs to the United States."

Trump said the strikes he is ordering are meant to save Americans and "the only way you can't feel bad about it ... is that you realize that every time you see that happen, you're saving 25,000 lives."

Targeting a boat in a thoroughfare for cocaine smuggling

In the first brief video Hegseth posted Wednesday, a small boat, half-filled with brown packages, is seen moving along the water. Several seconds into the video, the boat explodes and is seen floating motionless

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on the water in flames.

The second video shows another boat moving quickly before being struck by an explosion. Video apparently recorded after the explosion shows packages floating in the water.

The U.S. military has built up an unusually large force in the Caribbean Sea and the waters off the coast of Venezuela since this summer, raising speculation that Trump could try to topple Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. Maduro faces charges of narcoterrorism in the U.S.

In his posts on the strikes, Trump has repeatedly argued that illegal narcotics and the drug fentanyl carried by the vessels have been poisoning Americans.

While the bulk of American overdose deaths are from fentanyl, the drug is transported by land from Mexico. Venezuela is a major drug transit zone, but the eastern Pacific Ocean, not the Caribbean, is the primary area for smuggling cocaine.

Colombia and Peru, countries with coastlines on the eastern Pacific, are the world's top cocaine producers. Wedged between them is Ecuador, whose world-class ports and myriad maritime shipping containers filled with bananas have become the perfect vehicle for drug traffickers to move their product.

The administration has sidestepped prosecuting any occupants of alleged drug-running vessels after returning two survivors of an earlier strike to their home countries of Ecuador and Colombia.

Ecuadorian officials later said they released the man who was returned because they had no evidence he committed a crime in their country.

Questions from Congress as strikes continue

Some Republican lawmakers have asked the White House for more clarification on its legal justification and specifics on how the strikes are conducted, while Democrats insist they are violations of U.S. and international law.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal, a Democratic member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said he was alarmed and angry about a lack of information on the strikes.

"Expanding the geography simply expands the lawlessness and the recklessness in the use of the American military without seeming legal or practical justification," Blumenthal said.

He said the way to target trafficking would be stopping the boats and interrogating those aboard to find the source of the drugs, "not just destroy the smugglers who are likely to be at the bottom of the smuggling chain."

The Republican-controlled Senate recently voted down a Democratic-sponsored war powers resolution, mostly along party lines, that would have required the president to seek authorization from Congress before further military strikes.

Republican Sen. John Kennedy of Louisiana said he's met with Rubio.

"He has researched the legal ramifications carefully and he believes we're on solid ground in attacking these narcoterrorists," Kennedy said. "I trust his judgment."

Trump levies new sanctions on Russian oil giants in a push on Putin to end Ukraine war

By AAMER MADHANI, SUSIE BLANN and FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's administration announced Wednesday new "massive sanctions" against Russia's oil industry that are aimed at moving Russian President Vladimir Putin to the negotiating table and bringing an end to Moscow's brutal war on Ukraine.

The sanctions against oil giants Rosneft and Lukoil followed months of calls from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as well as bipartisan pressure on Trump to hit Russia with harder sanctions on its oil industry, the economic engine that has allowed Russia to continue to execute the grinding conflict even as it finds itself largely internationally isolated.

"Hopefully he'll become reasonable," Trump said of Putin not long after the Treasury Department announced the sanctions against Russia's two biggest oil companies and their subsidiaries. "And hopefully Zelenskyy will be reasonable, too. You know, it takes two to tango, as they say."

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The U.S. administration announced the sanctions as NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte was in Washington for talks with Trump. The military alliance has been coordinating deliveries of weapons to Ukraine, many of them purchased from the United States by Canada and European countries.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the new sanctions were a direct response to Moscow's refusal to end its "senseless war" and an attempt to choke off "the Kremlin's war machine."

Bessent added that the Treasury Department was prepared to take further action if necessary to support Trump's effort to end the war. "We encourage our allies to join us in and adhere to these sanctions."

The announcement came after Russian drones and missiles blasted sites across Ukraine, killing at least six people, including a woman and her two young daughters.

The attack came in waves from Tuesday night into Wednesday and targeted at least eight Ukrainian cities, as well as a village in the region of the capital, Kyiv, where a strike set fire to a house in which the mother and her 6-month-old and 12-year-old daughters were staying, regional head Mykola Kalashnyk said.

At least 29 people, including five children, were wounded in Kyiv, which appeared to be the main target, authorities said.

Russian drones also hit a kindergarten in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, later Wednesday when children were in the building, Mayor Ihor Terekhov said. One person was killed and six were hurt, but no children were physically harmed, he said.

Rutte, in his Oval Office appearance, went out of his way to underscore that the weaponry the U.S. is selling Europe to provide to Ukraine has been essential to helping stop many attacks like the one that ravaged the kindergarten.

"We need to make sure that the air defense systems are in place, and we need the U.S. systems to do that, and the Europeans are paying for that," Rutte said. "It is exactly the type of actions we needed, and the President is doing that and trying everything to get this work done."

Zelenskyy said many of the children were in shock. He said the attack targeted 10 separate regions: Kyiv, Odesa, Chernihiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kirovohrad, Poltava, Vinnytsia, Zaporizhzhia, Cherkasy and Sumy.

Peace efforts stall

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 Putin's refusal to budge from his conditions for a settlement after Ukraine offered a ceasefire and direct peace talks.

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

Meanwhile, in what appeared to be a public reminder of Russian atomic arsenals, Putin on Wednesday directed drills of the country's strategic nuclear forces.

Zelenskyy urged the European Union, the United States and the Group of Seven industrialized nations to force Russia 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.

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

Zelenskyy credited Trump's remarks that he was considering supplying Tomahawk missiles to Ukraine for Putin's willingness to meet. The American president later said he was wary of tapping into the U.S. supply of Tomahawks over concerns about available stocks.

Russia has not made significant progress on the battlefield, where a war of attrition has taken a high toll on Russian infantry and Ukraine is short of manpower, military analysts say. Both sides have invested in long-range strike capabilities to hit rear areas.

Ukraine says it hit key Russian chemical plant

The Ukrainian army's general staff said its forces struck a chemical plant Tuesday night in Russia's Bryansk region 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.

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Russian officials in the region confirmed an attack but did not mention the plant.

Ukraine also claimed overnight strikes on the Saransk mechanical plant in Mordovia, Russia, which produces components for ammunition and mines, and the Makhachkala oil refinery in the Dagestan republic of Russia.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its air defenses downed 33 Ukrainian drones over several regions overnight, including the area around St. Petersburg. Eight airports temporarily suspended flights because of the attacks.

In other developments, Zelenskyy arrived Wednesday in Oslo, Norway, and after that flew to Stockholm, where he and Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson signed an agreement exploring the possibility of Ukraine buying up to 150 Swedish-made Gripen fighter jets over the next decade or more. Ukraine has already received American-made F-16s and French Mirages.

Trump says Russia is on the agenda for upcoming Xi talks

The U.S. president is expected to meet next week with Chinese President Xi Jinping when the two leaders travel to South Korea for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit.

Beijing has not provided Russia with direct support in the war, but has surged sales to Russia of machine tools, microelectronics and other technology that Moscow in turn is using to produce missiles, tanks, aircraft and other weaponry for use in its war against Ukraine, according to a U.S. assessment.

Trump has said he believes the Russia-Ukraine war would end if all NATO countries stopped buying oil from Russia and placed tariffs on China of 50% to 100% for its purchases of Russian petroleum.

"I think he could have a big influence on Putin," Trump said of Xi Jinping.

Beijing has yet to confirm that Trump and Xi will meet.

Maine Senate candidate Platner says tattoo recognized as Nazi symbol has been covered

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI and PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

OGUNQUIT, Maine (AP) — His U.S. Senate campaign under fire, Maine Democrat Graham Platner said Wednesday that a tattoo on his chest has been covered to no longer reflect an image widely recognized as a Nazi symbol.

The first-time political candidate said he got the skull and crossbones tattoo in 2007, when he was in his 20s and in the Marine Corps. It happened during a night of drinking while he was on leave in Croatia, he said, adding he was unaware until recently that the image has been associated with Nazi police.

The revelation that the tattoo had been hastily covered up is just the latest bizarre twist that the high-stakes Senate race had taken in just the past 10 days. The unfolding drama has so far included a sweep of old internet posts, a drunken video of Platner in his underwear, and now the urgently edited tattoo.

Amid the frenzy, another Democratic candidate released his own shirtless photo to show off his arm tattoo of former President Barack Obama's presidential campaign logo.

A Senate race intensifies quickly

Platner launched his campaign in August, but the intensity of the race ratcheted up last Monday when Gov. Janet Mills announced her entry into a race Democrats feel they must have if they are going to reclaim a Senate majority. Her entry had the backing of Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., who is looking to unseat incumbent Republican Sen. Susan Collins, who has held the Senate seat for nearly 30 years.

Shortly after Mills jumped in, news began trickling out from Platner's past.

Platner, an oyster farmer who is running as a progressive, pushed back, saying the onslaught demonstrated that he wasn't the preferred candidate of establishment Democrats. Platner also accused his political opponents of attempting to "destroy my life" and vowed that he wasn't going to be scared off from the campaign.

"All this is doing is galvanizing my commitment to this project," he said.

Platner's campaign initially said he would remove the tattoo, yet Platner said he later chose to cover it up with another tattoo due to the limited options where he lives in rural Maine.

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"Going to a tattoo removal place is going to take a while," he said. "I wanted this thing off my body."

The initial tattoo image resembled a specific symbol of Hitler's paramilitary Schutzstaffel, or SS, which was responsible for the systematic murders of millions of Jews and others in Europe during World War II.

A Celtic knot and a dog-like creature

The new tattoo, completed late Tuesday, now is a Celtic knot with a dog-like creature splayed in the middle of it. The animal has four gangly legs and an elongated head with a curly tongue spiraling out. The image is mostly filled in with black ink, but the Celtic knot is green.

In a moment unlikely to be replicated in any campaign, let alone a contest for a U.S. Senate seat, Platner agreed to take his shirt off during an interview with WGME-TV, a Maine outlet based in Portland, on Wednesday to show off the new design. He also lifted his shirt to display it in a video he shared on social media in which he complained that it was distracting from issues that matter to him and to Maine voters.

Platner said he had never been questioned about the tattoo's connections to Nazi symbols in the 20 years he has had it. He said that after serving three tours as a Marine, he later went to enlist in the Army, which requires an examination for tattoos of hate symbols.

"I also passed a full background check to receive a security clearance to join the Ambassador to Afghanistan's security detail," Platner said.

Other controversial statements surface in old Reddit posts

Questions about the tattoo come after the recent discovery of Platner's now-deleted online statements that included dismissing military sexual assaults, questioning Black patrons' gratuity habits and criticizing police officers and rural Americans. More old Reddit posts surfaced Wednesday, with The Advocate reporting that Platner used homophobic slurs and made anti-LGBTQ+ jokes between 2018 and 2021.

Platner has apologized for those comments, saying they were made after he left the Army in 2012, when he was struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder and depression.

He has resisted calls to drop out of the race and has the backing of Sen. Bernie Sanders, a Vermont independent who has described Platner as a stronger candidate for the seat than Mills. Another primary rival, Jordan Wood, a onetime chief of staff to former U.S. Rep. Katie Porter, D-Calif., said Wednesday that Platner should drop out because "Democrats need to be able to condemn Trump's actions with moral clarity" and Platner "no longer can."

The National Republican Senate Committee, meanwhile, was fundraising off the controversy on Collins' behalf.

Platner said he was not ashamed to confront his past comments and actions because it reflects the lessons he needed to take to get where he is today.

"I don't look at this as a liability," he told the AP, adding he sees it as "a life that I have lived, a journey that has been difficult, that has been full of struggle, that has also gotten me to where I am today. And I'm very proud of who I am."

Rally draws a raucous crowd

During a rally in the southern Maine town of Ogunquit on Wednesday night, Platner again addressed his regret about the tattoo and the recent concerns about his history on social media.

His mother, Leslie Harlow, who introduced him, also acknowledged it has been a rough week for her son, but that she has faith in his campaign to get through it. The event packed a 500 person-capacity theater and included frequent raucous applause.

"I am ashamed of things I once said. But I am not ashamed of who I am today," Platner said from the stage before a round of applause.

Outside the rally, David Tufts of Eliot, Maine, said he felt Platner has done a good job addressing the week's controversies. Tufts said he is a supporter of Platner because of his stance on issues such as increasing taxes on the wealthy and keeping the nation out of war.

"I feel like he has done a pretty good job of explaining the Reddit history, the tattoo. I feel like I kind of understand where he was coming from," Tufts said, adding that it "doesn't increase my faith in him," but he's still on board with the campaign.

Plan to sell golf course built on slaves' graves sparks outrage in Florida's capital city

By KATE PAYNE Associated Press/Report for America

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — A dark history long buried under the towering live oak trees and manicured lawns of a country club in Florida's capital city of Tallahassee is reviving painful memories of the community's segregated past and fueling some residents' calls for a public reckoning.

Under the rolling hills of the Capital City Country Club in one of Tallahassee's most sought-after neighborhoods, the evidence of Florida's slave-holding past lies just beneath the surface, in the form of the long-lost burial grounds of enslaved people who lived and died on the plantation that once sprawled with cotton there.

Across the country, many thousands of unmarked and forgotten cemeteries of enslaved people are at risk of being lost, as descendants and volunteers fight development and indifference.

Less than a mile from Florida's state Capitol, archaeologists with the National Park Service have identified what they believe to be 23 unmarked graves and 14 possible graves near the 7th hole of the golf course, which is semiprivate and currently operates on city-owned land.

"We know they were enslaved. But who were they?" said Tiffany Hill, a Tallahassee resident whose family maintains a historic Black cemetery that dates to the 1800s.

More than four years after the Tallahassee City Commission approved plans to create a commemorative site to preserve and protect the unmarked graves at the golf course, no such memorial has been built. Now, city officials are considering selling the land to the country club, which has paid a nominal \$1 a year in rent for nearly 70 years.

That lease has been in place since 1956, when the club reverted to private ownership, allowing it to sidestep a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that banned the segregation of public parks and recreational facilities. Among the club's former members was a judge whose nomination to the nation's highest court failed after he faced questions about whether he helped privatize the club to avoid integration.

After receiving a recent offer from the country club, the city had proposed selling the 178-acre (72-hectare) golf course for \$1.25 million to the club — with the legal requirement that it perpetually operate the property as an 18-hole golf course and that the city be allowed to build and maintain a commemorative site for the graves, with public access guaranteed.

After residents opposed to the sale crowded the City Hall chambers on Wednesday, the commission voted to postpone the issue until its next meeting.

Prospect of sale angers activists

The prospect of selling the land that includes the burial grounds is an outrage to Delaitre Hollinger, a local activist whose ancestors were enslaved in Leon County, where on the eve of the Civil War, three out of every four residents were human chattel owned by elite white families. Hollinger helped lead the push to memorialize the rediscovered graves.

"They were sold on the auction blocks of Leon County, and now we are willing to sell them again," Hollinger said at Wednesday's commission meeting.

In Leon County, there are only a handful of known slave burial sites — despite the scores of plantations that once dominated the area, which was the epicenter of Florida's slavery economy.

Now residents and some commissioners are questioning why it has taken city staff years to act on plans to commemorate the site.

City administrators have attributed the delay to negotiations around enacting the agreement, as well as damaging tornadoes that hit the area in 2024.

Calls to identify those interred at the site

Kathleen Powers Conti, a Florida State University history professor who specializes in the preservation of sites of trauma and contested history, decried the proposal and urged the city to proactively work to

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identify those interred at the site.

"I am frankly shocked that in all of these conversations, no one in the country club, no one in the city commission is actually looking to find the descendants of those people buried there," she said at Wednesday's meeting.

For Hill and other advocates, the people whose final resting place is now another Florida golf course have been denied dignity for too long — in life as well as in death.

"It's our history," Hill told the commission. "It could be my ancestor that's in there."

With Supreme Court decision still pending, judge extends block on Guard in Chicago indefinitely

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO and GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — National Guard troops won't be deploying in the Chicago area anytime soon unless the U.S. Supreme Court intervenes because a judge on Wednesday extended her temporary restraining order indefinitely.

Elsewhere around the country, it will be at least days before the Guard could be deployed in Portland, Oregon, and federal appeals judges are weighing whether hundreds of California National Guard members should remain under federal control.

President Donald Trump's push to send the military into Democratic-run cities despite fierce resistance from mayors and governors has unleashed a whirlwind of lawsuits and overlapping court rulings.

Here's what to know about legal efforts to block or deploy the National Guard in various cities:

Judge weighs Guard in Chicago while awaiting Supreme Court decision

U.S. District Judge April Perry on Wednesday blocked the deployment of Guard troops to the Chicago area until the case has been decided either in her court or the U.S. Supreme Court intervenes. Perry had already blocked the deployment for two weeks through a temporary restraining order, or TRO.

Attorneys representing the federal government said they would agree to extend the order but emphasized that they would continue pressing for an emergency order from the Supreme Court that would allow for the deployment.

"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 the Supreme Court to continue to block the deployment, calling it a "dramatic step."

Guard deployment in Portland also in limbo

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

U.S. District Judge Karin Immergut, a Trump appointee, issued two temporary restraining orders earlier this month. One prohibited Trump from calling up Oregon troops so he could send them to Portland. The other prohibited him from sending any 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 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals panel sided with the administration.

However, Immergut's second order remains in effect, so no troops may immediately be deployed. She has scheduled a hearing for Friday on the administration's request to dissolve that order. Meanwhile, the state is asking the 9th Circuit to reconsider Monday's ruling.

California legal battle goes before appellate panel

A 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals panel in Pasadena heard arguments Wednesday related to Trump's deployment of Guard troops to Los Angeles.

A district court found the administration violated federal law when it sent troops to Los Angeles in June after protests over Trump's immigration crackdown.

Judge Charles Breyer handed California Gov. Gavin Newsom a victory on June 13 when he ordered con-

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trol of California's Guard members back to the state. But in an emergency ruling, an appeals court panel sided with the Trump administration, putting Breyer's decision on hold and allowing the troops to remain in federal hands as the lawsuit unfolds.

The appeals court is now weighing whether to vacate Breyer's June order.

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

Groups aim to stop Guard deployment in DC

In Charleston, West Virginia, a state court hearing is set for Friday in a lawsuit filed by two groups seeking to block 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.

A separate federal court hearing centers on a request by District of Columbia Attorney General Brian Swalb for a temporary injunction to stop the deployments of more than 2,000 guardsmen.

Forty-five states have entered filings in that case, with 23 supporting the administration's actions in D.C. and 22 supporting the attorney general's lawsuit.

Republican governors from several states also sent units to D.C. Although the emergency period ended in September, more than 2,200 troops remain. Several states told The Associated Press they would bring their units home by Nov. 30, unless extended.

Democrats sue to stop Guard deployment in Memphis

In Tennessee, Democratic elected officials sued last Friday 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 state lawmakers' blessing.

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

University of Virginia strikes deal to pause Trump administration investigations

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The University of Virginia has agreed to abide by White House guidance forbidding discrimination in admissions and hiring, becoming the latest campus to strike a deal with the Trump administration as the college tries to pause months of scrutiny by the federal government.

The Justice Department began investigating the admissions and financial aid processes at the Charlottesville campus in April. Federal officials accused Virginia's president of failing to end diversity, equity and inclusion practices that President Donald Trump has labeled as unlawful discrimination.

The mounting pressure prompted James Ryan to announce his resignation as university president in June, saying the stakes were too high for others on campus if he opted to "fight the federal government in order to save my job."

Unlike some universities' deals with the Trump administration, the Virginia agreement announced Wednesday does not include a fine or monetary payment, said Paul Mahoney, interim president of the university, in a campus email. Instead, the university agreed to follow the government's anti-discrimination criteria. Every quarter, the university must provide relevant data showing compliance, personally certified by its president.

The deal, Mahoney wrote, preserves the university's academic freedom and doesn't hurt its attempts to secure federal research funding. And the university won't have external monitoring by the federal government beyond quarterly communications with the Department of Justice.

If Virginia complies, the Justice Department said it would officially end its investigations. If not, possible consequences include a fine or termination of federal funding.

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Virginia's settlement follows other agreements signed by Columbia and Brown universities to end federal investigations and restore access to federal funding. Columbia paid \$200 million to the government, and Brown paid \$50 million to Rhode Island workforce development organizations.

Along with omitting a fine, Virginia's agreement is less prescriptive than those signed by Columbia and Brown. The deal requires Virginia to adhere to four pages of terms, compared to nine at Brown and 22 at Columbia. It includes a clear affirmation of academic freedom, with an acknowledgement that the government "does not aim to dictate the content of academic speech or curricula."

Although the college will adopt new federal definitions of discrimination in hiring, "we will also redouble our commitment to the principles of academic freedom, ideological diversity, free expression, and the unyielding pursuit of 'truth, wherever it may lead,'" wrote Mahoney, quoting Thomas Jefferson, who founded the University of Virginia.

As a public university, the University of Virginia was an outlier in the Trump administration's effort to reform higher education according to the president's vision. Previously, the administration had devoted most of its scrutiny to elite private colleges, including Harvard and other Ivy League institutions, accused of tolerating antisemitism.

Since then, the White House has expanded its campaign to other public campuses, including the University of California, Los Angeles, and George Mason University.

The Charlottesville campus became a flashpoint this year after conservative critics accused it of simply renaming its DEI initiatives rather than ending them. Much of the federal scrutiny had centered on complaints that Ryan, the college president who resigned in June, was too slow to implement a March 7 resolution by the university's governing board demanding the eradication of DEI on campus. The Justice Department expanded the scope of its review several times and announced a separate investigation into alleged antisemitism in May.

Among the most prominent critics was America First Legal, a conservative group created by Trump aide Stephen Miller. In a May letter to federal officials, the group said Virginia had only moved to "rename, repackage and redeploy the same unlawful infrastructure under a lexicon of euphemisms."

Similar accusations have embroiled George Mason University, where the governing board came to the defense of the president even as the Education Department cited allegations that he promoted diversity initiatives above credentials in hiring. On Aug. 1, the board unanimously voted to give President Gregory Washington a pay increase of 1.5%. The same day, the board approved a resolution forbidding DEI in favor of a "merit-based approach" in campus policies.

The University of Virginia deal with the Justice Department did not include one of the investigations the federal government had launched into the college. The Education Department had included the Charlottesville campus in a March 10 list identifying 60 universities that were under investigation for alleged antisemitism.

A department spokesperson said she could not confirm whether the investigation is still open because the agency's Office for Civil Rights is furloughed during the government shutdown. She said the agreement does not resolve any department investigations.

Still, Education Secretary Linda McMahon praised the Justice Department for pressing for "a renewed commitment to merit" at universities.

"The Trump Administration is not backing down in our efforts to root out DEI and illegal race preferencing on our nation's campuses," McMahon said in a post on X.

What to know about redistricting efforts across US at Trump's prodding

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

President Donald Trump's desire to secure the Republican majority in Congress has prompted an unusual burst of mid-decade redistricting in multiple states.

North Carolina is the latest to take action. The Republican-led General Assembly approved changes

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Wednesday to U.S. House district designed to help the party unseat a Democratic incumbent.

Texas was the first to answer Trump's call to redraw its congressional districts for the GOP's advantage ahead of next year's elections. Democrats in California countered with their own redistricting effort, followed by Republicans in Missouri. Other states are considering joining the redistricting battle.

U.S. House districts typically are redrawn once a decade, immediately after a census. But some states have no rules against redistricting more frequently than that. And the U.S. Supreme Court has said there is no federal prohibition on political gerrymandering, in which districts are intentionally drawn to favor one party.

The stakes are high, because Democrats need to gain just three seats in the 2026 elections to take control of the House, which would allow them to impede Trump's agenda. Historically, the president's party has lost seats in midterm elections, a fate Trump is trying to avoid.

Why Republicans are targeting a North Carolina seat

The new congressional map reshapes the state's only current swing district, held by Democratic U.S. Rep. Don Davis, by adding more Republican-leaning voters along the coast and shifting some inland voters into an adjacent Republican-held district. The GOP already controls 10 of the 14 House districts in North Carolina, a state Trump won by 51% last year. Davis won last year by less than 2 percentage points.

The revised districts cannot be vetoed by Democratic Gov. Josh Stein, though Democrats or civil rights groups are likely to bring a legal challenge.

How a Louisiana court case could affect other states

Louisiana lawmakers are to convene Wednesday in a special session called by Republican Gov. Jeff Landry to consider changes to next year's election schedule. Republicans are trying to position the state for redistricting, in case the U.S. Supreme Court overturns the state's current congressional map.

During arguments last week, the court's six conservative justices seemed inclined to effectively strike down a Black-majority district in Louisiana because the districts relied too heavily on race. Such a ruling could upend a central provision of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, opening the door for lawmakers in Louisiana and other states to eliminate majority Black and Latino districts that tend to favor Democrats.

Where Republicans are still pressing for redistricting

Some Republicans in Indiana, Kansas and Nebraska are trying to rally support for redistricting.

Trump and Vice President JD Vance have pressed Indiana lawmakers to redraw the state's congressional districts to try to expand Republicans' current 7-2 edge over Democrats. Republican Gov. Mike Braun has said a legislative session on redistricting probably will happen, but legislators have yet to round up enough votes.

In Kansas, Republican lawmakers are trying to collect enough signatures from colleagues to call themselves into a special session on redistricting. The petition drive is necessary because Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly isn't likely to call a session to redraw the current map that has sent three Republicans and one Democrat to the House.

Republican Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen has expressed support for redistricting, though it remains tough to ensure enough Republican votes in the officially nonpartisan Legislature. Republicans already hold all three of the state's U.S. House seats but are looking to shore up a competitive district that includes Omaha.

Why two states have to redraw their maps

Though the details remain to be worked out, Ohio will have new congressional districts for the 2026 elections. The state constitution requires new districts because the ones adopted by Republican officials after the 2020 census didn't have sufficient bipartisan support. Republicans could use this as an opportunity to try to expand their current 10-5 seat advantage over Democrats.

Utah's Republican-led Legislature passed a revised U.S. House map Oct. 6 in response to a court ruling striking down the districts they originally adopted after the 2020 census because the Legislature had unlawfully circumvented an independent redistricting commission. The same judge is now weighing whether to sign off on the new map. Republicans currently hold all four districts, though some could become more competitive for Democrats under the revisions.

What challenges persist in Texas, California and Missouri

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The revised Texas congressional map could improve Republicans' chances of winning five additional seats. The GOP currently holds 25 of the state's 38 seats. But the map faces a legal challenge from civil rights groups and Black and Latino voters who have said it intentionally reduces the influence of their votes in violation of the Voting Rights Act and the U.S. Constitution.

Missouri's revised map could help Republicans pick up one additional seat. They currently hold six of the state's eight U.S. House seats. But opponents are pursuing a referendum petition that, if successful, would force a statewide vote on the new map. Several lawsuits also assert that mid-decade redistricting isn't allowed under the state constitution.

California's revised congressional map could help Democrats win five additional seats. They already hold 43 of the 52 seats. But the new map can take effect only if approved by voters in a Nov. 4 election. The vote is necessary to override a map adopted by an independent citizens commission after the 2020 census.

How other states might act

Officials in Florida, Illinois, Maryland and New York all have raised the possibility of redrawing U.S. House districts.

Republican Florida House Speaker Daniel Perez has created a special committee to look into redistricting. Republicans currently hold 20 of the state's 28 seats.

In Maryland, where Democrats already hold seven of the eight U.S. House seats, some Democratic state lawmakers have said they will file redistricting legislation for the 2026 session.

Democrats already hold 14 of the 17 U.S. House seats in Illinois, but Democratic Gov. JB Pritzker has said it's possible to draw even more districts favoring Democrats.

New York has an independent commission that redraws districts after every census. State Democrats have introduced legislation to allow mid-decade redistricting, but the soonest that new maps could be in place is the 2028 election. That is because the proposal would require an amendment to the state constitution, a change that would have to pass the Legislature twice and be approved by voters.

US stocks and gold sink, while meme stocks swerve, as momentum reverses on Wall Street

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks and the price of gold fell on Wednesday, as momentum on Wall Street reverses.

The S&P 500 sank 0.5%, though it's still within 1% of its all-time high set earlier this month. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 334 points, or 0.7%, from its record set the day before, while the Nasdaq composite fell 0.9%.

Netflix helped drag the market lower after delivering a weaker profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected. The pressure is on the video streamer and on companies broadly to deliver solid growth in profits. That would counter criticism that their stock prices shot too high following a 35% romp for the S&P 500 from a low in April.

Netflix's stock came into the day with a jump of 39.3% for the year so far, more than double the S&P 500's gain, before it dropped 10.1% on Wednesday.

AT&T fell 1.9% after delivering a profit that only matched analysts' expectations, while Texas Instruments sank 5.6% after its profit fell just short of forecasts.

On the winning side of Wall Street was Intuitive Surgical, which sells robotic-assisted surgical systems. It jumped 13.9% after reporting better profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected. Boston Scientific climbed 4% after likewise topping analysts' profit expectations.

Capital One Financial rose 1.5%, and Western Alliance Bancorp climbed 3.2% following their own profit updates that beat analysts' expectations. The report from Western Alliance was particularly welcome after it helped shake confidence in the industry last week. It's one of several banks that had warned of potentially bad loans on its books, possibly because of fraud.

Beyond Meat, meanwhile, swung sharply through a manic Wednesday. After surging as much as 112%

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in the morning, its stock erased all of that to finish with a drop of 1.1%. It's still up 454.5% for the week so far in the midst of its meme-stock run.

The maker of plant-based meat alternatives was the biggest holding in the Roundhill Meme Stock exchange-traded fund, as of Tuesday. The ETF holds stocks where investors have piled in because they're hoping to catch a wave of momentum, almost regardless of how or even what the businesses themselves are doing.

All told, the S&P 500 fell 35.95 points to 6,699.40. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 334.33 to 46,590.41, and the Nasdaq composite sank 213.27 to 22,740.40.

Momentum continued to head the other way for gold, which fell 1.1% to \$4,065.40 per ounce. That's after Tuesday's 5.3% slide knocked it off its record high.

Many of the same factors that drew buyers to gold this year are still there. The expectation along Wall Street is still for the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates through next year. Concerns are growing about inflation remaining high. And the worrisome mountains of debt that the U.S. and other governments worldwide have amassed are only rising further.

But no investment's price goes up forever, and criticism had been growing that gold's price had gone too far, too fast after it shot up even more than the U.S. stock market. Gold's price is still up 56% for the year so far.

In stock markets abroad, indexes were mixed across Europe and Asia.

London's FTSE 100 added 0.9% after a report on U.K. inflation raised hopes for another cut to interest rates next month. South Korea's Kospi jumped 1.6% for another one of the world's bigger gains. But indexes fell 0.9% in Hong Kong and 0.6% in Paris.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury eased to 3.95% from 3.98% late Tuesday.

After others departed, Pentagon announces 'new' press corps filled with conservative news outlets

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

Several conservative news outlets said Wednesday they had agreed to a new press policy rejected by virtually all legacy media organizations and will take their place in the Pentagon to cover Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and the U.S. military.

The new Pentagon press corps will include the Gateway Pundit, the National Pulse, Human Events, podcaster Tim Pool, the Just the News website founded by journalist John Solomon, Frontlines by Turning Point USA and LindellTV, run by "MyPillow" CEO Mike Lindell.

The Pentagon's announcement came less than a week after dozens of reporters from outlets like The New York Times, The Associated Press, CNN and the Washington Post turned in their access badges rather than agree to a policy the journalists say will restrict them to covering news approved by Hegseth.

Hegseth's spokesman, Sean Parnell, announced the "next generation" of the Pentagon press corps with more than 60 journalists who had agreed to the new policy. He said 26 journalists who had previously been part of the press corps were among the signees. The department wouldn't say who any of them were, but several outlets reposted his message on X saying they had signed on.

There isn't even unanimity among organizations that appeal to conservative consumers. Fox News Channel, by far the most popular news source for fans of President Donald Trump, was among the walkouts, as was Newsmax.

Accusations of 'self-righteous media'

In a post on X, Parnell denounced the "self-righteous media who chose to self-deport from the Pentagon."

"Americans have largely abandoned digesting their news through the lens of activists who masquerade as journalists in the mainstream media," Parnell wrote. "We look forward to beginning a fresh relationship with members of the new Pentagon press corps."

The journalists who left the Pentagon haven't stopped working covering the U.S. military. Many have

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been reporting aggressively, for example, on stories about strikes against boats in central America alleged to be part of the drug trade.

By not being in the Pentagon, "reporters will have to work harder, there's no question about it," said Barbara Starr, a longtime Pentagon reporter retired from CNN.

"But the real price is paid by the American people and the American military families," Starr said. "Military families who have their sons and daughters serving, they want to know everything and they want to know it fast."

Starr wondered about Hegseth: "What is he so afraid of?" New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd wrote a biting piece about the defense secretary over the weekend titled "Fraidy-Cat at the Pentagon." But Hegseth's boss, President Trump, has expressed support for the new media policy and Hegseth's aggressive moves mirror some of those made by the administration. The president has sued outlets like The New York Times and Wall Street Journal for their coverage of him.

New outlets must add staff

Some of the outlets that accepted Hegseth's rules will have to staff up for their new roles: Just the News, for example, posted an ad online seeking a Pentagon reporter.

The Gateway Pundit's White House correspondent, Jordan Conradson, posted on Wednesday that he was excited to join the Pentagon press corps "and help restore honest journalism after agreeing to follow basic rules ... something the legacy media refuses to do!"

Lindell, whose My Pillow ads once blanketed Fox News before he joined the political media, posted a statement that LindellTV was "proud to be part of a new generation of news organizations reshaping how real information reaches the public."

Some of the publications pronounce themselves conservative in their mission statements. The "about" page on the National Pulse features a picture of Trump.

North Carolina adopts new Trump-backed US House districts aimed at gaining a Republican seat

By GARY D. ROBERTSON Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — North Carolina's Republican legislative leaders completed their remapping of the state's U.S. House districts on Wednesday, intent on picking up one more seat for President Donald Trump's push to retain GOP control of Congress in next year's midterm elections.

The boundaries approved by the state House aim to thwart the reelection of Democratic U.S. Rep. Don Davis, an African American who currently represents more than 20 northeastern counties in what's been the state's only swing seat. The state Senate already approved the plan in a similar party-line vote Tuesday.

Republicans hold majorities in both General Assembly chambers, and Democratic Gov. Josh Stein cannot veto redistricting maps under state law. So the GOP's lines can now be implemented unless anticipated litigation by Democrats or voting rights advocates stops them. Candidate filing for 2026 is scheduled to begin Dec. 1.

Republican lawmakers made crystal clear that their proposed changes answer Trump's call for GOP-led states to secure more seats for the party nationwide, so that Congress can continue advancing his agenda. Democrats have responded with rival moves in blue states. A president's party historically loses seats in midterm elections, and Democrats currently need to gain just three more seats to flip House control.

"The new congressional map improves Republican political strength in eastern North Carolina and will bring in an additional Republican seat to North Carolina's congressional delegation," GOP Rep. Brenden Jones said during a debate that Republicans cut off after about an hour.

Black Democratic state Rep. Gloristine Brown accused mapmakers of purposefully diluting African American votes in her region with the plan.

"North Carolina is a testing ground for the new era of Jim Crow laws," Brown said. "You are silencing Black voices and are going against the will of your constituents."

North Carolina the latest state in remapping battle

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Republican-led Texas and Missouri revised their maps. Democrats then asked California voters to approve a map in their favor. Jones accused California Gov. Gavin Newsom of ramping up the redistricting fight.

"We will not let outsiders tell us how to govern, and we will never apologize for doing exactly what the people of this state has elected us to do," Jones said.

By exchanging several counties in Davis' current district with another coastal district, Republicans have calculated based on election data that they can increase their dominance from holding 10 of the state's 14 House seats to 11, in a state where Trump got 51% of the popular vote in 2024 and statewide elections are often close.

District altered has elected Black lawmakers for decades

Davis is one of North Carolina's three Black representatives. Map critics argue this latest GOP map should be sued over as an illegal racial gerrymander in a district that has included several majority Black counties, electing African Americans to the U.S. House continuously since 1992.

"It is morally reprehensible and legally indefensible — and it will be challenged in court," former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, who heads the national Democratic Party's redistricting efforts, said in a news release.

Republicans countered that the redrawing was based not on race but on gaining political advantage, an allowable aim based on recent federal and state court decisions.

Davis won in district that also chose Trump

Davis, a political moderate, was already vulnerable — he won his second term by less than 2 percentage points, and the 1st District was one of 13 nationwide where both Trump and a Democratic House member was elected last year, according to the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia.

Davis on Tuesday called the replacement map "beyond the pale." He still plans to run in 2026 if the map stands, his campaign spokesperson confirmed Wednesday — either in the 1st or the adjoining 3rd District represented by GOP Rep. Greg Murphy, a district also altered in the legislation.

Hundreds of Democratic and liberal activists swarmed the legislative complex this week and accused GOP legislators of doing Trump's bidding through a speedy and unfair redistricting process.

During Wednesday's debate, General Assembly police cleared the House gallery of dozens of protesters who disrupted the proceedings.

State GOP leaders say Trump won North Carolina all three times that he's run for president and thus merits more GOP support in Congress. Senate leader Phil Berger called it appropriate "under the law and in conjunction with basically listening to the will of the people."

Stein said in a video released Wednesday that passing the map was "disgraceful" and he would veto it if he could.

House Minority Leader Robert Reives warned Republican colleagues that one day they'd be targeted by the same Trump-backed GOP that's going after Davis should they fail to toe the party line.

"Mark this day because one day they're coming to you, they're going to ask you to do something that you just can't do," Reives said. "And because we have set the precedent that only one person in the party matters, you're going home."

COVID-19 vaccines may help some cancer patients fight tumors

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The most widely used COVID-19 vaccines may offer a surprise benefit for some cancer patients — revving up their immune systems to help fight tumors.

People with advanced lung or skin cancer who were taking certain immunotherapy drugs lived substantially longer if they also got a Pfizer or Moderna shot within 100 days of starting treatment, according to preliminary research being reported Wednesday in the journal Nature.

And it had nothing to do with virus infections.

Instead, the molecule that powers those specific vaccines, mRNA, appears to help the immune system respond better to the cutting-edge cancer treatment, concluded researchers from MD Anderson Cancer

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Center in Houston and the University of Florida.

The vaccine “acts like a siren to activate immune cells throughout the body,” said lead researcher Dr. Adam Grippin of MD Anderson. “We’re sensitizing immune-resistant tumors to immune therapy.”

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has raised skepticism about mRNA vaccines, cutting \$500 million in funding for some uses of the technology.

But this research team found its results so promising that it is preparing a more rigorous study to see if mRNA coronavirus vaccines should be paired with cancer drugs called checkpoint inhibitors — an interim step while it designs new mRNA vaccines for use in cancer.

A healthy immune system often kills cancer cells before they become a threat. But some tumors evolve to hide from immune attack. Checkpoint inhibitors remove that cloak. It’s a powerful treatment — when it works. Some people’s immune cells still don’t recognize the tumor.

Messenger RNA, or mRNA, is naturally found in every cell and it contains genetic instructions for our bodies to make proteins. While best known as the Nobel Prize-winning technology behind COVID-19 vaccines, scientists have long been trying to create personalized mRNA “treatment vaccines” that train immune cells to spot unique features of a patient’s tumor.

The new research offers “a very good clue” that maybe an off-the-shelf approach could work, said Dr. Jeff Collier, an mRNA specialist at Johns Hopkins University who wasn’t involved with the work. “What it shows is that mRNA medicines are continuing to surprise us in how beneficial they can be to human health.”

Grippin and his Florida colleagues had been developing personalized mRNA cancer vaccines when they realized that even one created without a specific target appeared to spur similar immune activity against cancer.

Grippin wondered if the already widely available mRNA coronavirus shots might also have some effect, too.

So the team analyzed records of nearly 1,000 advanced cancer patients undergoing checkpoint inhibitor treatment at MD Anderson — comparing those who happened to get a Pfizer or Moderna shot with those who didn’t.

Vaccinated lung cancer patients were nearly twice as likely to be alive three years after beginning cancer treatment as the unvaccinated patients. Among melanoma patients, median survival was significantly longer for vaccinated patients — but exactly how much isn’t clear, as some of that group were still alive when the data was analyzed.

Non-mRNA vaccines such as flu shots didn’t make a difference, he said.

Vance denies the US dictates to Israel as he meets with Netanyahu over Gaza ceasefire

By MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — U.S. Vice President JD Vance sought Wednesday to ease concerns in Israel that the Trump administration was dictating terms to its closest ally in the Middle East, as he and other top U.S. envoys visit Israel this week to support the Gaza ceasefire agreement.

“We don’t want in Israel a vassal state, and that’s not what Israel is. We want a partnership, we want an ally,” Vance said beside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in response to a reporter’s question about whether Israel was becoming a “protectorate” of the U.S.

Netanyahu — who will meet with visiting U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Friday — expressed similar sentiments while acknowledging differences of opinion as they push forward the U.S.-proposed ceasefire agreement.

“One week they say that Israel controls the United States. A week later they say the United States controls Israel. This is hogwash. We have a partnership, an alliance of partners who share common values, common goals,” Netanyahu said.

One concern in Israel is that an international security force in Gaza — envisioned in the ceasefire’s second phase — could limit the Israeli military’s ability to take action in the Palestinian territory if it perceives a threat to its own security.

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Vance acknowledged that the road to long-term peace is challenging, with the ceasefire less than two weeks old, but tried to maintain the buoyant tone he sounded Tuesday after arriving in Israel.

"We have a very, very tough task ahead of us, which is to disarm Hamas but rebuild Gaza to make life better for the people in Gaza, but also to ensure that Hamas is no longer a threat to our friends in Israel. That's not easy," Vance said. "There's a lot of work to do, but I feel very optimistic about where we are."

Vance also met with relatives of Israeli hostages. He was accompanied by U.S. Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, President Donald Trump's son-in-law.

UN court rules on aid to Gaza

The International Court of Justice said on Wednesday that Israel must allow the U.N. aid agency in Gaza, known as UNRWA, to provide humanitarian assistance to the territory.

The Hague-based court was asked last year by the U.N. General Assembly to determine Israel's legal obligations after the country effectively banned the agency, the main provider of aid to Gaza, from operating there.

Israel "is under the obligation to agree to and facilitate relief schemes provided by the United Nations and its entities, including UNRWA," ICJ President Yuji Iwasawa said.

Israel has denied it has violated international law, saying the court's proceedings are biased, and the country didn't attend hearings in April. UNRWA has faced criticism from Netanyahu and his far-right allies, who claim the group is deeply infiltrated by Hamas.

Questions about ceasefire plan's next steps

Uncertainty surrounds next steps in the ceasefire, including the territory's postwar governance and the disarming of Hamas.

Vance said Tuesday officials are brainstorming on the composition of the international security force, mentioning Turkey — with whom Israel has had tense relations in recent years — and Indonesia as countries expected to contribute troops. Vance was flanked by flags from a number of countries expected to participate, including Germany, Denmark and Jordan.

An Israeli official said the issue of Turkish participation in the security force was discussed in the meeting between Vance and Netanyahu, and that Netanyahu expressed his opposition to Turkish troop presence. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were discussing closed diplomatic talks.

Meanwhile, in an apparent effort to embarrass Netanyahu during Vance's visit, far-right politicians in the Israeli parliament on Wednesday took the symbolic step of giving preliminary approval to a bill that would give Israel authority to annex the occupied West Bank — a move that the U.S. opposes.

The bill passed in a 25-24 vote. It is unclear whether the bill has support to win a majority in the 120-seat parliament, and Netanyahu has tools to delay or defeat it.

Returns of remains on both sides

Israel said Wednesday it completed the identification of the remains of two more hostages that were handed over on Tuesday. Arie Zalmanovich and Tamir Adar were killed in Kibbutz Nir Oz during the Oct. 7, 2023, attack by Hamas militants which triggered the war.

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

In Gaza, the Health Ministry said Wednesday that Israel returned the bodies of 30 Palestinians. That brings the number of bodies of Palestinians returned to Gaza to 195, of whom 57 have been identified by families, according to the ministry, which operates under the Hamas-run government.

Dozens of people gathered outside Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis on Wednesday for funeral prayers over the bodies of 54 Palestinians returned since the ceasefire began.

A senior health official in Gaza has said some of the 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 attack, detainees who died in custody or bodies taken from Gaza by Israeli troops during the war.

Israelis bid farewell to Thai hostage killed in 2023

Thousands of people in Israel on Wednesday attended the funeral of Tal Haimi, who was killed during the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that started the war, and whose remains had been returned from Gaza a day earlier, according to a statement from the Hostages and Missing Families Forum.

Israelis were also set to bid farewell to a Thai farmworker whose body will be repatriated. Sonthaya Oakkharasri was killed during the Oct. 7 attack. His remains were returned last weekend.

Hamas-led militants in that attack killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted 251 others.

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.

Louvre director acknowledges failure after jewel heist and says she offered to resign

By THOMAS ADAMSON and SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The Louvre's director on Wednesday acknowledged a "terrible failure" at the Paris tourist attraction after a daylight crown jewel heist over the weekend, and said that she offered to resign but it was refused.

The world's most-visited museum reopened earlier in the day to long lines beneath its landmark glass pyramid for the first time since one of the highest-profile museum thefts of the century stunned the world with its audacity and scale.

In testimony to the French Senate, Louvre director Laurence des Cars said that the museum had a shortage of security cameras outside the monument and other "weaknesses" exposed by Sunday's theft.

Under heavy pressure over a heist that stained France's global image, she testified to a Senate committee that she submitted her resignation, but that the culture minister refused to accept it.

"Today we are experiencing a terrible failure at the Louvre, which I take my share of responsibility in," she said.

The thieves slipped in and out, making off with eight pieces from France's Crown Jewels — a cultural wound that some compared to the burning of Notre Dame Cathedral in 2019.

Late detection

The theft — steps away from the "Mona Lisa" and valued at more than \$100 million — has put embattled President Emmanuel Macron, Culture Minister Rachida Dati, des Cars and others under new scrutiny. It comes just months after employees went on strike, warning of chronic understaffing and not enough resources for protection, with too few eyes on too many rooms.

"We did not detect the arrival of the thieves soon enough," des Cars said.

She said that the museum's alarms had worked properly, but that it currently doesn't have full video surveillance of the perimeter outside the museum, though there is a plan to provide full coverage of all the Louvre's facades.

She also suggested barriers to prevent vehicles from parking directly alongside the museum's buildings, and said that she would push for a police station inside the museum, which welcomes 30,000 visitors a day and 2,300 workers.

Disbelief among visitors

Three days on, the jewels remain missing and the thieves are still at large — and reactions are divided.

"For a place like the Louvre, it's unfathomable," said Amanda Lee, 36, an art teacher from Chicago. "I heard it took under four minutes. How is that possible here, with no police in sight?"

Others were unperturbed.

Claire Martin, a 41-year-old French lawyer from Versailles visiting with her two children during a school holiday, said that "we saw the masterpieces" even though the Apollo Gallery was shut.

"We told the kids it's a history lesson. We came for the art," she said. "The police can deal with the

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thieves.”

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 facade, 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.

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

“I didn’t notice extra security — guards as always, and no police inside. It felt like a normal day,” said Tomás Álvarez, 29, a software engineer from Madrid.

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 a 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 — Eugénie’s emerald-set imperial crown, with more than 1,300 diamonds — was later found outside the museum, damaged but recoverable.

Fears the jewels will be destroyed

Prosecutor Laure Beccauau valued the haul at about 88 million euros (\$102 million), a “spectacular” figure that still fails to capture the works’ historical weight. She warned that 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.

Beccauau said that expert analyses are underway; four people have been identified as being present at the scene, and roughly 100 investigators are mapping the crew and any accomplices, in addition to forensics experts.

Security overhaul

All this comes after Macron announced new measures 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.

It touches a raw nerve: the issue of swelling crowds and overstretched staff.

In June, a staff walkout over overcrowding and chronic understaffing delayed opening. Unions argue that mass tourism leaves security lacking 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 Gallery, 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.

Trump is expected to host Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman next month, AP sources say

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump’s administration is preparing for a visit to the United States by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman next month, in what could be the first state visit to

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the U.S. by a foreign leader in Trump's second term, according to several people familiar with the planning.

Work is underway to prepare a package of agreements that Trump and the crown prince could sign or witness during the visit, U.S. officials familiar with the plans for the trip said. The trip is tentatively scheduled for Nov. 17-19, but the timing and status of the visit could change, according to two people familiar with the planning.

Those people and the officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the trip before it has been announced.

The planned trip would be a significant part of the push Trump has made to restore relations with Gulf Arab nations incensed by Israel's attack on Hamas leaders in Qatar as they discussed a U.S. ceasefire proposal. The first major foreign trip of Trump's second term was to Saudi Arabia, where he expressed hope that the countries would further cement their commercial and business ties and suggested that increased military cooperation was also in the cards.

It also would be the first visit to the United States by the crown prince since the killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul during Trump's first term in office in 2018. U.S. intelligence agencies have said Prince Mohammed likely directed the killing, resulting in U.S. sanctions against several Saudi officials. He denies his involvement.

But in the years since, both the Trump and Biden administrations have tried to mend ties with Saudi Arabia, whose crown prince has also sought to rehabilitate his global image. That has included U.S. presidential visits to the oil-rich Gulf ally, with a lavish, pomp-filled welcome for Trump in May.

The first Trump administration unsuccessfully sought to have Saudi Arabia join the Abraham Accords, the agreements that normalized relations between Israel and Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco and Sudan.

The Biden administration sought to negotiate a similar deal, but those attempts were derailed by the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attacks in Israel that sparked the war in Gaza. A fragile ceasefire in Gaza that Trump negotiated has given the administration new hope for the possibility that Saudi Arabia could be brought into the Abraham Accords.

Details of the agreements to be signed during the planned visit were not immediately clear, but many are expected to be commercial and trade deals under the framework of a Strategic Economic Partnership that Trump signed with the crown prince during the Republican president's visit to Saudi Arabia in May.

A bilateral security deal, long sought by the Saudis, is also under discussion, according to the officials. Trump signed an executive order last month offering Saudi Arabia's fellow Gulf state neighbor Qatar security assurances in the wake of Israel's attack on Hamas leadership in Doha.

The White House didn't respond to a request for comment, and the Saudi Embassy declined to comment. Bloomberg first reported the expected visit.

Today in History: October 23, Beirut barracks bombings

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Thursday, Oct. 23, the 296th day of 2025. There are 69 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Oct. 23, 1983, 241 U.S. service members, most of them Marines, were killed in a suicide truck-bombing at the U.S. Marine Corps barracks at Beirut International Airport in Lebanon, while a near-simultaneous attack on French barracks in Beirut killed 58 paratroopers.

Also on this date:

In 1915, an estimated 25,000 women marched on Fifth Avenue in New York City in support of women's suffrage.

In 1942, during World War II, Britain launched a major offensive against Axis forces at El Alamein (el ah-lah-MAYN') in Egypt, resulting in an Allied forces victory.

In 1944, the Battle of Leyte (LAY'-tee) Gulf began; the largest naval battle of World War II resulted in a major Allied victory against Japanese forces, paving the way for the retaking of the Philippines.

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In 1956, a student-sparked revolt against Hungary's Communist rule began; as the revolution spread, Soviet forces entered the country, ending the uprising on November 4.

In 1987, the U.S. Senate rejected the Supreme Court nomination of Robert H. Bork, 58-42.

In 1989, 23 people were killed in an explosion at a Phillips Petroleum chemical complex in Pasadena, Texas.

In 1995, a Houston jury convicted Yolanda Saldivar of murdering Tejano singing star Selena; Saldivar was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole and remains in prison.

In 2001, Apple released the iPod. An estimated 450 million iPod devices were sold before the line was discontinued in 2022.

In 2002, Chechen rebels stormed a Moscow theater and took about 800 hostages, demanding that Russian forces withdraw from Chechnya. Russian special forces raided the theater on Oct. 26; most of the rebels and 120 hostages were killed.

Today's Birthdays: Film director Philip Kaufman is 89. Advocate and humanitarian Graça Machel is 80. Film director Ang Lee is 71. Jazz singer Dianne Reeves is 69. Country singer Dwight Yoakam is 69. Activist and philanthropist Martin Luther King III is 68. Author and commentator Michael Eric Dyson is 67. Film director Sam Raimi is 66. Comedic musician "Weird Al" Yankovic is 66. Rock musician Robert Trujillo (Metallica) is 61. Racing driver and paracyclist Alex Zanardi is 59. CNN medical reporter Dr. Sanjay Gupta is 56. TV personality Cat Deeley is 49. Actor Ryan Reynolds is 49. TV personality, author and political commentator Meghan McCain is 41. R&B singer Miguel is 40. Actor Emilia Clarke is 39. Actor Margaret Qualley is 31. Actor Amandla Stenberg is 27.