

# Groton Daily Independent

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## **Tuesday, Oct. 28**

5th Grade GBB practice, 4:15 p.m.  
Volleyball host s Milbank: (Arena: C-5, JV-6, V-7:30)  
FFA National Convention, Indianapolis, Ind.

## **Wednesday, Oct. 29**

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.  
St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.  
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Confirmation, 5:30 p.m.; UMYF, 6:15 p.m.  
FCCLA Blood Drive, 8 a.m.  
6th Grade GBB Practice, 6 p.m.  
4th-6th Grade GBB hosts Britton-Hecla, 6 p.m.

**Oh No! Clocks go back  
Sunday and I can't  
remember where  
I bought mine from!**



## **Thursday, Oct. 30**

3rd Grade GBB Practice, 5 p.m.  
Football Playoffs

## **Friday, Oct. 31**

St. John's Lutheran: Reformation Day Service, 7 p.m.  
United Methodist: Trunk or Treat, 5 p.m.  
Downtown Trick or Treat, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

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# 1440

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

## **Jamaica Braces for Melissa**

Hurricane Melissa is expected to make landfall in Jamaica today as a Category 5 storm, with sustained winds of more than 157 miles per hour. If it does, it will be the strongest system to have hit the island since record-keeping began in 1851.

As of this writing, Melissa is responsible for at least seven deaths—three in Jamaica, three in Haiti, and one in the Dominican Republic. A life-threatening storm surge of up to 13 feet is forecast along the island's southern coast, with the capital of Kingston seeing the highest risk, and near southwestern Black River, the projected landfall site. Warnings are in effect for parts of Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. The storm is not expected to directly impact the mainland US as the hurricane veers upward and eastward into the North Atlantic Ocean.

Melissa is the 13th named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June 1 through Nov. 30.

## **US Supercomputing Deal**

The US Department of Energy has inked a \$1B partnership with Advanced Micro Devices to develop two next-generation artificial intelligence supercomputers at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee. The systems will accelerate research in areas such as nuclear fusion, medical science (including cancer treatments), and national security.

The first machine, named Lux, is expected to be operational in six months, while the second machine, named Discovery, will be completed in 2028. Supercomputers perform massive calculations millions, or even billions, of times faster than a regular laptop. They link thousands of processors to work on problems at the same time rather than doing one calculation after another—a method known as parallel processing.

The US is home to more than 170 supercomputers, including five of the world's top 10 most powerful machines. China and Germany rank second and third in total number of supercomputers.

## **World's Oldest President**

Cameroon's top court yesterday declared 92-year-old incumbent Paul Biya the winner of a controversial presidential election. Biya—already the world's oldest head of state—is now set to remain in power through 2032, when he will be nearly 100 years old.

The announcement follows nationwide protests that resulted in at least four civilian deaths and over 100 arrests. Demonstrators allege election fraud has kept Biya as president since 1982. Biya's former ally turned primary challenger, 76-year-old Issa Tchiroma Bakary, claims to have won the election with 54.8% of the vote. Official results, however, show Tchiroma Bakary with 35.2% to Biya's 53.7%—the narrowest margin since 1992. Earlier this year, Cameroon's electoral commission barred high-profile opposition leader Maurice Kamto, 71, from running on contested grounds.

Biya is Cameroon's second president since independence from France in 1960, and the only president most citizens have ever known. Over 70% of the country's population is under the age of 35.

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

LA Dodgers gain edge in World Series after beating Toronto Blue Jays in 18-inning Game 3, which ties for longest World Series game in MLB history by innings; Game 4 tonight at 8 pm ET.

Lululemon and NFL launch apparel collection for all 32 league teams.

Sean "Diddy" Combs scheduled for release from federal prison May 8, 2028, though eligible for earlier release for good conduct.

Producer Taylor Sheridan, known for "Yellowstone" and "Landman," to join NBCUniversal after Paramount deal ends in 2028.

## **Science & Technology**

US chipmaker Qualcomm to enter AI semiconductor market, creating new competition for Nvidia and AMD; Qualcomm shares rise 11% on the news.

Engineers replicate irregular patterns on animals by controlling how differently sized cells move through tissue; simulations could inform synthetic material design and targeted drug delivery.

Researchers calculate human eye's resolution limit, at which further screen display improvements offer no noticeable benefits.

Free calculator helps consumers determine optimal TV specs.

## **Business & Markets**

Amazon reportedly set to announce largest corporate layoffs in company history, potentially impacting as many as 30,000 people, starting today; roughly 27,000 workers have been laid off since 2022.

US stock markets close up (S&P 500 +1.2%, Dow +0.7%, Nasdaq +1.9%), with all three indexes notching record highs over potential US-China trade truce.

iRobot shares fall nearly 34% after the Roomba maker warns search for buyer has stalled after negotiations fell apart with last bidder.

## **Politics & World Affairs**

Indiana and Virginia convene special legislative sessions to consider mid-decade redistricting efforts after Texas, Missouri, North Carolina, and California each take steps to redraw maps.

Argentina's dollar bonds surge after President Javier Milei's conservative party secures over 40% of the vote in midterm elections Sunday; President Donald Trump credits his earlier pledge to support Argentina's currency if Milei's party won.

President Donald Trump reveals he underwent an MRI following his annual physical exam in April.

## Tigers Sweep Faulkton; Hanson Praises Team Balance and Late-Season Focus

GROTON — The Groton Area Tigers volleyball team continued their strong late-season form Monday night with a commanding 3-0 win over the Faulkton Area Trojans. The Tigers took the match by scores of 25-10, 25-20, and 25-16, improving to 23-5 on the season heading into Tuesday's Senior Night against Milbank.

### First Set: Tigers Set the Tone

After two early ties, Groton broke open the first set with a nine-point surge to lead 18-7 and never looked back, winning 25-10. The Tigers totaled 15 kills and two ace serves in the opener, earning 17 of their 25 points (68%).

Taryn Traphagen led with four kills, while Jaedyn Penning added three kills and an ace.

Faulkton recorded five kills and one ace serve, led by Brooklyn Mueller with two kills.

Coach Chelsea Hanson said her team took advantage early but credited Faulkton for improving as the night went on.

"I think the first set they made quite a few errors," Hanson said. "When they cleaned that up in the second and third, it became much more competitive. Their defense was really good—they were everywhere on the floor. It felt like there were 10 of them out there."

### Second Set: Faulkton Pushes Back

The second set featured six ties and two lead changes before Groton regained control at 17-16 and finished strong for a 25-20 win. The Tigers posted 14 kills and four aces, earning 19 of 25 points (76%).

Faulkton's defense kept rallies alive, but Groton's balance at the net proved too much.

"Our girls did a really good job of finding new ways to score," Hanson noted. "For us to be putting up 14 or 15 kills in a set—it's tough to stop, especially when our middles and Makenna [Krause] are having strong offensive nights."

### Third Set: Dunker Delivers

Groton never trailed in the third set, gradually pulling away for a 25-16 victory. Rylee Dunker powered the Tigers with seven of her 12 kills in the final frame, while Traphagen added four kills and both Krause and Chesney Weber chipped in three each.

The Tigers earned 17 of their 25 points in the set (68%), closing out the match with steady serving and sharp ball control.

"The best part of this team," Hanson said, "is that anyone can lead us on any given night. In our last two matches, Tevan [Hanson] led us in kills one night and was the lowest the next—someone else steps up. Who do you stop? That's what makes this group special."

### Team Totals

Groton finished 64-of-67 from the service line with three aces. Penning went 16-of-17 with one ace and also added six kills, while Talli Wright was 8-of-10 with two.

The Tigers were 92-of-107 on attacks with 38 kills, led by Dunker (19-24, 11 kills), Traphagen (14-15, 6 kills), and Weber (10-11, 6 kills).

Weber also dished out 28 of the team's 35 assists, and Groton dug 58 balls defensively—led by Sydney Locke (14), Jerica Locke (12), and Penning (11). Traphagen and Dunker each recorded solo blocks. McKenna Tietz had three ace serves and a kill.

Faulkton finished 41-of-47 serving with five aces, led by Claire Cotton (7-of-7, 2 aces) and Austina Sorensen (9-of-10, 1 ace). The Trojans went 94-of-104 attacking with 14 kills, paced by Brooklyn Mueller (15-19, 6 kills) and Annika Mueller (36-39, 4 kills). Cotton added 11 of Faulkton's 14 assists and 11 digs.

### Looking Ahead

Groton will celebrate Senior Night and Parents Night Tuesday as they host Milbank in their regular-season finale. The first round regions are November 4 at Aberdeen Roncalli. The final round on November 6 will be in Groton. Groton has a first round bye and will not play until November 6.

"It's a fun time of year," said Hanson. "We've done everything we can to put ourselves in a great position."



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We've beaten the teams we should beat, and our only losses are to ranked teams. We're playing pretty good volleyball at the right time."

Groton's junior varsity team also won, 25-15 and 25-17.

Kinsley Rowan had five kills, while Tevan Hanson added a kill and ace. Abby Fjeldheim had two kills, Emerlee Jones three kills and an ace, Elizabeth Cole six kills, Liby Althoff one kill and an ace, and Kella Tracy three kills.

The varsity volleyball match was streamed live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Agtegra, Avantara, Barry Keith at Harr Motors, Bierman Farm Service, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Full Circle Ag, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, Groton Legion, Heartland Energy, John Sieh Agency, Jungle Lanes & Lounge, and The MeatHouse of Andover. A grandparent sponsored the junior varsity match on GDILIVE.COM.



## **Community Rallies for "Team Baylor" During Down Syndrome Awareness Night**

A powerful sense of unity and compassion filled the Groton Area gym Tuesday night as the community gathered for Down Syndrome Awareness Night — a celebration of inclusion, strength and togetherness.

Groton Area HOSA hosted the evening and shared deep gratitude for everyone who attended, from the crowd that packed the stands to those who stopped by the awareness booth and generously donated to support the Torrence family. Parents Brooke and Chance Torrence and their daughter, Baylor, were honored as the community wrapped around them with love and encouragement.

The night's highlight came before the first serve, when both the Groton Area and Faulkton volleyball teams took the floor wearing "Team Baylor" warm-up shirts. The gesture — simple in sight but powerful in meaning — served as a visible show of support for Baylor as she prepares for upcoming heart surgery. The athletes' solidarity reflected the best of high school sports: compassion, character and care for one another beyond the competitive court.

From heartfelt conversations to uplifting cheers, the evening reinforced what makes this community special. Groton didn't simply show up — it stood together, proving once again that here, no one faces their challenges alone.

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## Names Released in Todd County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: US Highway 83, mile marker 29, seven miles north of Mission, SD

When: 3:30 a.m., Friday, October 24, 2025

Driver 1: Kenneth George Peters, 65-year-old male from Torrington, WY, life threatening injuries

Vehicle 1: Ford F250

Seat belt Used: Under investigation

Passenger 1a: Talon Jacob Hostetler, 20-year-old male from Torrington, WY, no injuries

Seat belt Used: Under investigation

Driver 2: Priscilla M. Wagner, 73-year-old female from Laurel, DE, fatal injuries

Vehicle 2: 2023 Kenworth T680 with trailer

Seat belt Used: Under investigation

Passenger 2a: Richard Arthur Wagner, 70-year-old male from Laurel, DE, fatal injuries

Seat belt Used: Under investigation

Todd County, S.D.- Two people died in a two-vehicle crash early Friday morning, seven miles north of Mission, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Priscilla M. Wagner, the driver of a 2023 Kenworth T680, was traveling northbound on US Highway 83 near mile marker 29. At the same time, Kenneth George Peters, the driver of a Ford F250 was traveling southbound and sideswiped the semi. The Ford came to rest in the southbound ditch. After the collision, the semi caught fire and the cab separated from the chassis and rolled into the northbound ditch.

Priscilla Wagner and a passenger in the semi, Richard Arthur Wagner, both died at the scene. Peters sustained life-threatening injuries and a passenger, Talon Jacob Hostetler, was not injured.

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.

The poster is for a Varsity Volleyball match between Milbank and Groton. It features a large 'GT' logo with 'on' in red below it. To the right is a bulldog mascot. The text 'Varsity Volleyball' is at the top right, followed by 'Milbank at Groton', 'Tues., Oct. 28', and '7:15 p.m.'. Below the 'GT' logo, it says 'Groton Area Tigers Groton, SD'. In the center is the 'GDILIVE' logo with a YouTube icon and 'A production of the Groton Daily Independent'. At the bottom is 'For more info: GDILIVE.COM'. On the right is a tiger mascot.

**GT** on

**Varsity Volleyball**  
Milbank at Groton  
Tues., Oct. 28  
7:15 p.m.

Groton Area Tigers  
Groton, SD

**GDILIVE**  
YouTube  
A production of the  
Groton Daily Independent

For more info: GDILIVE.COM

## **Union County Fatal Crash**

What: Two vehicle fatal crash  
Where: Interstate 29, exit 18 southbound  
When: 3:52 p.m., Thursday, October 23, 2025

Driver 1: 58-year-old male from Vermillion, SD, fatal injuries  
Vehicle 1: 2024 Subaru Outback  
Seat belt Used: Under investigation

Driver 2: 36-year-old male from Omaha, NE, no injuries  
Vehicle 2: 2021 Toyota Tundra  
Seat belt Used: Under investigation

Union County, S.D.- A Vermillion man died from injuries sustained in a two-vehicle crash Thursday afternoon on Interstate 29 at exit 18.

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

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2024 Subaru Outback was traveling northbound near mile marker 18 when his vehicle left the roadway, crossed the median and went into the southbound lane of traffic. The Outback struck the rear of a southbound Toyota Tundra, with both vehicles coming to rest in the west ditch.

The driver of the Subaru was transported to a Sioux City hospital where he died from his injuries. The driver of the Toyota was treated at the scene and released.

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.

## Lakota Music Project is more than a synthesis of cultures

By Jim Speirs, Executive Director, Arts South Dakota

I have always believed that music is the universal language, but seldom have I seen people and cultures brought together as beautifully as at the concert by the Lakota Music Project on Native American Day at Crazy Horse Memorial.

The Lakota Music Project is the flagship of the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra's Bridging Cultures program—an internationally recognized, exclusive and distinctive musical blending of South Dakota culture. LMP builds bridges between Native and non-Native Americans and creates an environment of openness through the sharing of music. At Crazy Horse, a diverse and appreciative audience that was a cross section of South Dakota's population was profoundly moved by the celebration of sound created by South Dakota Symphony musicians, Lakota drumming group The Creekside Singers and Dakota cedar flutist Bryan Akipa.

The world premieres of works by composer Derek Bermel in collaboration with Creekside Singers drum keeper Emmanuel Black Bear and by composer Jeffrey Paul in collaboration with Bryan Akipa were soaring, inspiring new pieces of music performed on a holiday that has historical significance in our state. South Dakota is leading the world in blending these musical languages and encouraging the writing of bold new music that interweaves traditions in ways that honor the cultural threads that make up the fabric of our state and its people.

But the Lakota Music Project is more than a synthesis of cultures—it's a collaboration among creative people to energize future generations and imagine new and exciting possibilities for understanding. Not only are audiences inspired, entertained and uplifted—the musicians who participate report being fired by a new spirit of musical potential. Simply put, the Lakota Music Project captures the best in arts programming and its ability to transform our state through music and the arts.

To learn more about the Lakota Music Project and the work of South Dakota artists, please visit [www.ArtsSouthDakota.org](http://www.ArtsSouthDakota.org).



## Gov. Rhoden Signs Hours of Service Waiver to Bring Relief for Fuel Supplies During Harvest

PIERRE, S.D. – Today, Governor Larry Rhoden signed Executive Order 2025-09 granting an hours-of-service waiver for propane and other liquid products being transported through South Dakota associated with the ongoing harvest.

The 14-day order exempts delivery of gasoline or gasoline blends, diesel, fuel oil, ethanol, propane, jet fuel, and biodiesel from federal motor carrier regulations regarding drivers' hours of service. The waiver will address supply shortages being reported in the state by residents and businesses.

Although hours of service have been temporarily suspended for commercial deliveries, companies may not require or allow fatigued drivers to make deliveries. All other road safety and vehicle compliance regulations still apply.

The executive order expires at midnight on November 10th, 2025.



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**Group picture by FCS Adopt a Highway sign on North Hwy 37.** (Courtesy Photo)



**Ryan Hanson is not keen on her bottle find.** (Courtesy Photo)

## FCS Students Combine Service and Fellowship

Members of the Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS) gathered on Saturday, October 25, for their monthly service project, cleaning ditches along North Highway 37. The students turned the task into a friendly competition to see who could find the most unusual item.

After completing their cleanup, the group headed to The Jungle Lanes, where they enjoyed pizza and bowling. The outing provided a well-earned opportunity for fellowship and relaxation after a productive day of service.



**Emerlee Jones, Tegan Hanten and TC Schuster like The Jungle Lanes new shoes.** (Courtesy Photo)



**SOUTH DAKOTA  
NEWS WATCH**

Inform. Enlighten. Illuminate.

## Governor poll: Rhoden, Johnson lead but Doeden, Hansen surge By Kevin Killough

South Dakota News Watch

Editor's note: This story was updated on Oct. 27 at 8:17 a.m. Central Time to state that South Dakota places term limits on House members, and Rep. Jon Hansen's final term ends next year.

PIERRE, S.D. – U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson and Gov. Larry Rhoden are effectively tied atop the race for the Republican nomination for governor, while Toby Doeden and Rep. Jon Hansen have surged in popularity over the past six months, according to a scientific poll of registered GOP voters co-sponsored by South Dakota News Watch.

Of those voters surveyed, 28% would support Johnson and 27% would vote for Rhoden. The margin of error was no more than 4.5 percentage points, meaning they are statistically tied. Rhoden has not officially announced his bid for governor, but he is anticipated to seek the Republican nomination. Fundraising letters have also asked for donations to support a "competitive campaign," The Dakota Scout reported.

The statewide survey, co-sponsored by the Chiesman Center for Democracy at the University of South Dakota, showed Doeden, an Aberdeen businessman, taking 15% of the vote. Hansen, speaker of the South Dakota House, was the choice for 10% of those polled. About 21% were undecided.

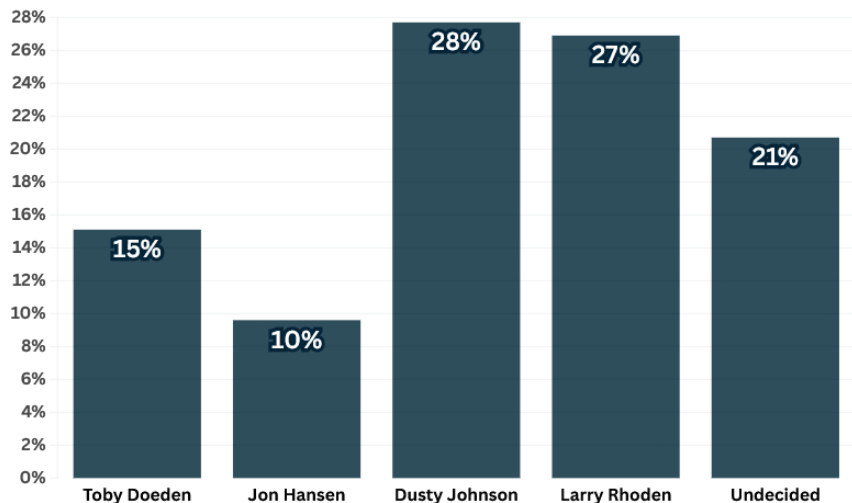
"I think that there's a race that's going to happen. That's the big picture," said Julia Hellwege, director of the Chiesman Center and USD associate professor in political science.

Mason-Dixon Polling and Strategy conducted the poll of 502 registered Republican voters Oct. 16-20 using random selections from a telephone-matched state voter registration list that included both landline and cellphone numbers.

- Doeden has never run for office. He bought Aberdeen Chrysler in 2020 after working there for 23 years. He also owns a Ford dealership in Redfield, as well as rental properties and retail establishments.
- Hansen served in the state House of Representatives from 2011 to 2013 before resigning to attend law school. The Dell Rapids lawyer was again elected to the House in 2019 and rose to speaker this year. South Dakota limits House members to four consecutive terms, and Hansen's term ends next year.
- Johnson was elected to South Dakota's at-large congressional district in 2018. Prior to that, the Pierre native served on the Public Utilities Commission from 2004 to 2011 and was chief of staff to Gov. Dennis Daugaard. Upon announcing his intention to run for governor, he also announced he isn't running for reelection to the U.S. House.

### Poll: South Dakota Republican preference for governor

Registered Republican voters were asked who they would vote for if the primary was held today.



Source: Mason-Dixon Polling and Strategy conducted the poll of 502 registered Republican voters Oct. 16-20 using random selections from a telephone-matched state voter registration list that included both landline and cellphone numbers from across the state. The margin of error was no more than 4.5 percentage points. • Graphic: Kevin Killough/SD News Watch

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- Rhoden became governor in January when former Gov. Kristi Noem was appointed to head up the Department of Homeland Security. The Union Center rancher was elected to lieutenant governor in 2018 and 2022. A Morning Consult poll in October found 57% of those surveyed approved of his job performance, with 22% undecided.

## **Takeaways from analysts**

Here are some observations from News Watch partners as the campaign for the June 2 primary heats up.

### **Changes since April**

The poll shows that there are clearly two front-runners in the four-way race with Johnson and Rhoden, but Doeden and Hansen have gained support. An April poll by News Watch and Chiesman showed 4% of Republican voters would vote for Doeden and 2% for Hansen. Johnson polled at 28% and Rhoden 27% at the time, the same level of support as this month's poll.

Since then, Attorney General Marty Jackley, who had polled at 18% in April, dropped out of the governor's race to run for U.S. House. Doeden announced his campaign in May and has since spent heavily on television and social media ads.

If none of the candidates receives 35% of the vote, a runoff election between the two top vote-getters will be held eight weeks after the primary election.

### **Moving to the right**

Doeden has been running a populist campaign, presenting himself as a "political disruptor" of the establishment, Hellwege said. Meanwhile, Rhoden and Johnson present as moderate Republicans.

The Hansen and Doeden campaigns are likely pulling more away from Rhoden than from Johnson, Hellwege said.

With Doeden gaining ground as a candidate, the Rhoden and Johnson campaigns might move further to the right to capture voters Doeden is pulling away, she said.

### **Successful template**

Brad Coker, founder of Mason-Dixon Strategy and Polling, which conducted the poll, said similar campaigns following Doeden's outsider strategy have proved successful — namely President Donald Trump and former North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum.

"That template has worked," Coker said.

As the sitting governor, Rhoden has a lot of influence, including the ability to veto bills. "People might be hedging their bets a little bit," Coker said.

Johnson has been in Washington since first being elected to the House in 2018, and Congress doesn't have a great overall rating, which might influence some of the voter preferences, he said.

"When Washington is dysfunctional and politicians don't seem to be getting the job done, a guy with a business background starts to get an appeal," Coker said of Doeden.

### **Seven months to go**

Conventional wisdom suggests that Johnson would normally be the front-runner, and while he is leading, it's neck-in-neck with Rhoden, Coker said.

Doeden still has seven months before the primary to make further progress. How far he can go depends on the ability of the other campaigns to counter his messaging, said Michael Card, emeritus professor of political science at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. Rhoden will have his influence as governor and Johnson can take actions in Congress to show he's working for South Dakota.

"Those are defensive strategies that those two candidates might consider, which would really make Doeden work hard. He's going to have to work hard," Card said.

### **Voter differences**

With 21% still undecided, those voters will be moving toward one of the candidates in the coming months. The poll showed that Hansen has pull among women Republicans when compared to Doeden and Johnson but not compared to Rhoden or undecided voters.

The candidates' appeal to voters shows the most divergence among geographical groups. Doeden polls weaker in all areas except the northern part of East River, which includes Aberdeen.



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Hansen is coming in stronger in the southern part of East River. While East River polls more moderate among all voters, a GOP-only poll shows Republican voters in the southeast part of the state are quite conservative, Hellwege said.

Hellwege said the race will be shaped by whether Hansen and Doeden stay in the race. As a "disruption" candidate, Doeden will likely stay in to make a statement regardless of polling, but Hansen is running a different campaign.

"I'd be curious to see if he (Hansen) stays in the race and then becomes more of a three-way. And then that would be interesting to see what could happen," Hellwege said.

*This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, an independent, nonprofit organization. Read more stories and donate at [sdnewswatch.org](https://sdnewswatch.org) and sign up for an email to get stories when they're published. Contact statehouse investigative reporter Kevin Killough at [kevin.killough@sdnewswatch.org](mailto:kevin.killough@sdnewswatch.org).*



**Toby Doeden**



**Jon Hansen**



**Dusty Johnson**



**Gov. Larry Rhoden**





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **South Dakota doesn't have a plan to cover federal food assistance for 75,000 if shutdown continues**

**Hunger relief nonprofit braces for increased need but 'can't meet the entire gap'**

**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER-OCTOBER 27, 2025 6:36 PM**

Nearly 75,000 South Dakotans — roughly one in 12 residents — will lose food assistance benefits if the federal government shutdown persists into next week, state officials acknowledged Monday.

The state has no plan to cover benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program if Congress doesn't act before the program's funding runs out. The program provides qualifying low-income people — who must meet work requirements, unless they qualify for an exemption — with a preloaded card they can use to help cover grocery purchases.

"If the federal government's shutdown continues and SNAP benefits are not funded in November, recipients will not receive SNAP benefits for that month," said the state Department of Social Services. "The federal government has communicated that states would not be reimbursed if they choose to fund benefits to SNAP recipients."

The federal program provided \$14.76 million worth of assistance to 74,459 South Dakotans in September — including 33,198 children.

Another safety net program supplying food and formula to women, infants and children, known as WIC, is also set to run out of federal funding next week if the shutdown continues. WIC serves about 13,800 South Dakotans monthly.

The South Dakota Department of Health did not answer a question from South Dakota Searchlight asking if the department plans to use state funding to keep the program running.

"At this time, WIC benefits remain available, and the program operations are continuing as normal," a department spokesperson said in an emailed statement.

### **Impossible for nonprofits to fill federal funding gap**

Food insecurity professionals told members of the Downtown Sioux Falls Rotary Club during a panel discussion on Monday that food shouldn't be used as a political bargaining chip.

One in five South Dakota children are food insecure, Feeding South Dakota Executive Director Lori Dykstra said. More than 70% of participants in South Dakota's SNAP program have children in their families.

Dykstra said she understands South Dakota's decision not to fund November SNAP benefits "from a budgeting standpoint," but she added that "a lot of states are making those decisions; some states are choosing to fund it."

New York, for example, will supply \$30 million in state emergency food assistance. On Friday, 23 state attorneys general sent a letter to Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins and questioned the legal basis for the agency to pause benefits for SNAP.

The state Department of Social Services said it is "closely monitoring federal developments" with the program and working to connect people with local resources, including through the Helpline Center. The department's website says remaining balances from October and earlier will stay available for use.

Panelists encouraged South Dakotans to volunteer their time or donate to food pantries across the state.

Dykstra added that Feeding South Dakota is working to create an emergency response plan to address a spike in food insecurity if the shutdown continues. The hunger relief nonprofit already lost 1.5 million pounds of food to federal cuts in March.

"We need to be prepared," Dykstra said. "But we also can't meet the entire gap."

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For every one meal Feeding South Dakota provides, SNAP provides nine. "We cannot make that up in a matter of a couple of weeks," Dykstra added.

## **Disruption could stress hospital systems, child safety**

Stasia Elsinger, a dietitian with Avera Health, told South Dakota Searchlight after the panel discussion that she expects hospitalizations to rise across South Dakota if SNAP benefits end — especially in areas of the state with high rates of diabetes and other chronic illnesses. Native Americans are 1.8 times more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes than other South Dakotans, according to the state Department of Health.

"We are all one medical diagnosis, one car accident, one family emergency away from also being food insecure," Elsinger told Rotary members. "We have patients who went from doing great to needing to utilize programs like these just to survive. We see it every day, and we're seeing it more and more now."

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe declared a state of emergency due to the government shutdown over the weekend, citing the temporary impact to SNAP and WIC programs.

Department of Social Services Secretary Matt Althoff said in a Board of Social Services meeting earlier this month that the department is "crossing our fingers that reason prevails in Washington" to continue the SNAP program.

Board member Stacey Tieszen said at the meeting that the fallout from the disrupted program will happen right away and could cost the state more in the long run. Tieszen serves as CEO of the Sioux Falls Area Court Appointed Special Advocate nonprofit.

"Families that are stressed are not good parents. Those parents might end up making poor choices," Tieszen said at the time. "That might lead to substance abuse issues; they might hurt their children. Then that all impacts DSS because then there are removals and foster care."

## **SNAP loss could hurt grocery stores**

Dykstra told South Dakota Searchlight after the panel that the loss of SNAP benefits would impact the state economically, and is especially important for rural grocery stores.

"I don't want to see more closures," Dykstra said.

RF Buche, president and CEO of GF Buche Co. in South Dakota, told South Dakota Searchlight that his stores stay open past midnight on days that benefits are loaded on SNAP cards — the 10th of each month.

All 25 stores owned by Buche, which include Buche Foods and Gus Stops, are on or near tribal land. A majority of Buche's customers use SNAP, he added.

Parents carry or push their sleeping children in carts as they stock up for the month, Buche said, adding that some customers likely "haven't eaten in days." He added that if the SNAP funding is disrupted, it'll be "devastating" for communities he serves.

"I don't know how anybody in good conscience could sit there and not worry about those struggles," Buche said.

Team Buche Cares had been planning to donate 50,000 Thanksgiving meals this year, but Buche said he now plans to give \$100 worth of groceries per SNAP household if the shutdown continues past Nov. 10. If the shutdown ends before then, he plans to use that money for Thanksgiving.

"Unfortunately, we may not have the choice to get to Thanksgiving," Buche said. "I don't think starvation will wait around until Team Buche Cares provides Thanksgiving meals. It's going to begin November 10th."

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

## Architects, consultants, sewer pipe, travel: Where millions in wasted prison money went

**Preparation for now-abandoned site stretched across 2024, 2025**

**BY: JOHN HULT-OCTOBER 27, 2025 9:50 AM**

South Dakota's governor and lawmakers put more than two years of debate behind them recently with a decision to build a prison, but there's more than rhetoric in the rearview.

They're also leaving behind more than \$20 million.

That's how much unrecoverable money the state spent on a rural Lincoln County prison site before the Legislature rejected it in February over concerns about the location and the project's \$825 million cost. Those concerns — and opposition that included a lawsuit from neighboring Lincoln County landowners — led the Legislature and governor to approve a different plan last month for a \$650 million prison in Sioux Falls.

By that time, the executive branch under the leadership of former Gov. Kristi Noem and her successor Gov. Larry Rhoden had already spent or obligated \$52.7 million on the Lincoln County plan, from an incarceration construction fund lawmakers had been filling up for several years. The expenditures covered an array of costs, ranging from design work and contracts for infrastructure installation to everyday expenses such as herbicide application and travel.

In the process of working out an alternative plan, Rhoden's office said it was able to claw back more than half of that money for use in the prison project on Benson Avenue in Sioux Falls.

South Dakota Searchlight used an itemized spreadsheet from Rhoden's office and searched the state's database of contracts to piece together where the sunk costs landed at the Lincoln County site.

The figures listed below account for around \$20.4 million in wasted money, but not an additional \$10 million in federal funding the state directed to the city of Lennox for wastewater treatment plant upgrades to service the Lincoln County site. That money had to be used for infrastructure under federal rules, and spent by the end of 2024. The upgrades will still happen, and although the state Department of Corrections won't benefit from them, the growing city of Lennox will, so the Rhoden administration argues that's not wasted money.

### **Partial losses**

#### **Nelco: \$10.2 million**

Nelco, a Minneapolis architecture firm, produced designs for the Lincoln County facility, at a cost of \$24.7 million. The state was able to reuse \$14.5 million worth of those designs for the Benson Road site.

#### **Land swap: \$3.4 million**

The state valued the Lincoln County land at \$7.9 million as a prison site. It transferred that amount from its incarceration construction fund to the school trust fund managed by the Office of School and Public Lands to obtain the 320 acres on which the Lincoln County prison would've sat. The land had passed into the office's possession years ago when the owners died without heirs or a will.

After abandoning its plan to put a prison on the site, the state valued the land at \$4.5 million for agricultural purposes. The difference — \$3.4 million — is considered a loss.

But the Rhoden administration considers the \$4.5 million of ag value to be recovered, because the land was swapped at that value for the Sioux Falls site, in a deal that also included the state paying \$12.5 million.

#### **JE Dunn/Henry Carlson: \$1.5 million**

These two companies, headquartered in Kansas City and Sioux Falls, respectively, are partnered as the state's construction manager at-risk, which acts as a consultant before building and the general contractor once building begins. By the time lawmakers voted to endorse the Benson Road site, the state had paid the team a total of \$3.14 million. Of that, \$1.5 million was work specific to the Lincoln County site.

#### **Tegra: \$340,000**

This Twin Cities-area company was hired as an owner's representative. Its job is to oversee a construction project with an eye to the best interests of the client. It worked with the Office of the State Engineer to coordinate the project, doing things like overseeing project milestones and deliverables, investigating

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how long it might take to get construction materials, and reviewing and delivering proposals and estimates for various tasks. Of the \$540,000 of work the company completed for the Lincoln County site, the state was able to reuse \$200,200 for Benson Road.

## **Soukup Construction: \$212,340**

The state hired Soukup, of Sioux Falls, to prepare the Lincoln County land for construction and the sewer piping that would have connected the Lincoln County prison to Lennox. The contract for that work, signed Dec. 2, 2024, was for \$3.7 million.

Between payments and pending invoices, Soukup did \$503,380 worth of that contract's work in Lincoln County before a stop work order was issued.

Rhoden's office said \$291,040 of the sewer piping and casings, now being stored in Sioux Falls, can be used for the Benson Road prison.

## **Office of State Engineer: \$147,722**

The office of Stacy Watters, state engineer, did about \$352,000 of work on the Lincoln County site. Of that, the state will reuse about \$204,000. Gov. Rhoden's office told South Dakota Searchlight that a majority of that money represented labor costs paid to engineers within the state office working on the project.

## **Bureau of Information and Telecommunications: \$41,036**

This line item is listed as IT Development Services. Rhoden's office said much of that expense is tied to an information technology project manager for the new prison's security systems. "Much of that will be reused," Rhoden's office said, but the exact amount hasn't been calculated.

## **Total losses**

## **South Lincoln Rural Water: \$1.58 million**

The state paid \$1.58 million of what was to be a \$3.15 million agreement for South Lincoln Rural Water to deliver water to a tower that would've served the Lincoln County prison through 2044. The water system would've owned and maintained the tower.

The purchase agreement from Aug. 27, 2024, required half the money to be paid upfront. Rhoden's office told Searchlight the payment was meant to get the system moving on the upgrades it needed to have done in order to service the prison on the state's construction schedule (the prison was meant to open in 2029).

As with the federal money paid to Lennox, the money will be used for upgrades that will benefit local customers.

## **Sayre Associates: \$738,905**

The state paid this Sioux Falls firm to design the wastewater infrastructure that would've been used to connect the Lincoln County prison to Lennox.

## **East River Electric: \$250,000**

The state paid a quarter million dollars to this cooperative for a stake in a new electric substation meant to allow for the delivery of electricity to the Lincoln County site. The total estimated cost of the state's stake in the substation was \$4 million, according to a purchase agreement signed on Aug. 6, 2024. The \$250,000 payment was the amount payable "upon execution of this agreement." The state has released its stake in the substation, according to Rhoden's office.

## **Southeastern Electric: \$153,000**

Southeastern was meant to provide power to the Lincoln County prison. To secure access to electricity, the state paid Southeastern \$153,000. It's unclear how much the state was set to pay the cooperative for power. The rate schedule is blacked out in the publicly available contract between the state and the co-op, dated Nov. 22, 2024.

## **Burns & McDonnell: \$173,200**

This Kansas City firm was used to commission the prison's mechanical, electrical, lighting, security and other systems. Commissioning is meant to verify that such systems are designed as ordered prior to construction, and installed as designed afterward. Because the mechanical system is changing for the new building, this work will need to be redone, Rhoden's office said.



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## **Geotek: \$100,300**

The state paid Geotek, of Stewartville, Minnesota, \$100,300 to prepare the Lincoln County site for dirt moving, testing and monitoring. It also did preparatory testing work for the land where the sewer line from the Lincoln County site to Lennox would've been built.

## **Steffl Drilling and Pump: \$82,500**

Steffl's contract asked the Willmar, Minnesota, company to "install three 500-foot deep wells with 1.25 inch piping and thermally enhanced grout" by Aug. 30, 2024. The wells were installed in May 2024, Rhoden's office said, and were later filled.

## **Geothermal Resource Technologies: \$12,000**

This Elkton company was meant to use the three wells dug by Steffl to test the viability of geothermal heating and cooling at the prison site.

## **Lincoln County Title Company: \$13,680**

This company sold the state title insurance on the Lincoln County land, plus title reporting fees.

## **Property taxes: \$11,973**

The 320 acres in Lincoln County cost the state \$11,973 in property taxes across two years, 2024 and 2025. The land was taxed as agricultural. The state typically doesn't pay property taxes, but the Lincoln County land was operated under a unique, decades-old crop sharing agreement, which had been leased for agricultural use. The land has not been in production since 2023, but the Department of Corrections paid the property tax bills after it obtained the land. The property now belongs to the family that sold South Dakota the Benson Road land on which the new Sioux Falls prison will be built.

## **Travel reimbursement: \$12,206**

The state Department of Transportation spent \$12,206 to reimburse its employees for travel-related expenses tied to work done to prepare the Lincoln County prison project. The largest travel expense, according to Rhoden's office, was a trip to Utah to tour a correctional facility in that state.

## **CHS Inc.: \$9,012**

In July, the state paid this company to spray herbicides on the Lincoln County land, which had been rented to farmers but had gone unplanted for two seasons.

## **Project Prison Reset costs**

After the Legislature shot down the \$825 million Lincoln County prison plan, Rhoden convened a task force to study the state's prison needs, and to decide on the appropriate size and site for any new prisons it deemed necessary. The group landed on the Benson Road site approved by lawmakers during the special session in September. Task force costs were paid out of the state's incarceration construction fund.

## **Arrington Watkins: \$872,194**

This Arizona-based consulting firm did an assessment of Department of Corrections facilities, population trends, and future needs on behalf of the Project Prison Reset task force. The firm essentially redid and updated the work performed by a consultant group called DLR three years ago, but did so in a few months. The firm also looked at proposed prison sites that emerged during the task force process, which added another \$140,000 to the cost of its consulting work.

## **Travel cost reimbursements: \$30,730**

The Department of Corrections paid \$27,155 to cover the travel of the 22 members of the Project Prison Reset task force. There were two meetings in Sioux Falls, where a dozen of the group's members live, and two others, in Pierre and Springfield. The Department of Transportation paid \$3,575 to pay for the travel of the state employees involved in the task force.

## **South Dakota Veterans Alliance: \$4,494**

The task force's first and last meetings were held at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance facility in Sioux Falls, located on Russell Street near Howard Wood Field and the Denny Sanford Premier Center. The money paid for use of the facility and food for task force members.

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## TKOs Custom Catering: \$350

The operators of the cafe at the state Capitol were reimbursed for opening up on the day of the task force's meeting in Pierre.

*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.*

## Thousands of preschoolers could lose access to Head Start due to shutdown

**BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA-OCTOBER 27, 2025 5:39 PM**

WASHINGTON — Funding for scores of Head Start programs hung in the balance as the government shutdown continued Monday without an end in sight.

Unless a deal is reached to end the ongoing funding lapse that began Oct. 1, more than 65,000 children in 140 local Head Start programs across 41 states and Puerto Rico will not get their federal grant funding come Nov. 1, according to the National Head Start Association. The federal government spent about \$12.3 billion on the program in fiscal 2025.

Community programs that receive Head Start funding have different start dates for when their grants are available.

Head Start helps fund roughly 1,600 community programs that served more than 790,000 children during the 2023-2024 program year.

The program is managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the employees in that agency who would disburse those awards are currently furloughed because of the shutdown.

Six programs serving 6,525 children did not receive a grant award Oct. 1 and are already tapping into outside resources and local funds to stay afloat. If the shutdown continues past Friday, another 134 programs that serve 58,627 children will lose federal grant funding.

Head Start provides early childhood education, nutritious meals, health screenings and other support services to low-income families.

It is a discretionary program and subject to congressional approval each year, making it particularly vulnerable to the government shutdown.

"There's just so much instability ... that this is causing," Tommy Sheridan, deputy director of the advocacy group the National Head Start Association, told States Newsroom. "And while we're hopeful and we're going to be doing everything we possibly can to try to minimize the impact directly on children and families, there is going to be a long-term impact, no matter what, that is felt."

## Shutdown standoff

The shutdown began Oct. 1, the start of the fiscal year, when Congress failed to appropriate money for federal programs.

Democrats have voted against bills that would temporarily reopen the government as they ask Republicans to negotiate a fix to expiring tax credits for health insurance premiums purchased on the Affordable Care Act marketplace. Republicans have refused to negotiate while the government is shut down, leading to an ongoing stalemate.

In a statement Monday, Emily Hilliard, a spokesperson for HHS, blamed the impending lack of funds on Democrats.

"More than 58,000 children are on course to lose access to Head Start funding and programs on November 1 due solely to the Democrat-led government shutdown," she wrote.

Hilliard added that "the Trump Administration is committed to reopening the government for the American people."

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## **'Collateral damage'**

Sheridan criticized the political landscape that will likely lead to a lack of funding.

"I can't stress enough — this is purely due to politics," Sheridan said. "This has nothing to do with Head Start not being an effective program or people in Congress and the administration not supporting Head Start."

He pointed to the "strong bipartisan support" the program has received since its launch in 1965.

"This is just us being collateral damage in a bigger fight that is going to be hurting working families and children," Sheridan added.

Sheridan noted that "when programs don't have access to federal resources, generally speaking, they can try, depending on the size of the program, to stay open for a certain period of time, but they're going to be basically using other funds, and then would be reimbursing those costs down the road, kind of like an accounting maneuver, to be able to keep their programs running."

He added: "That's why we're seeing so many programs either close or have to consider closures or things of that kind and why ... we are just urging Congress and the administration to stop having children and families be the collateral damage of a political fight."

## **Consequences for local Head Start programs**

For programs that have to shut down because of the loss of federal funding, Sheridan pointed to several impacts.

Children would lose access to healthy meals and other resources. Families would be without affordable child care options, forcing some to quit their jobs or reduce their work hours. Community members could see economic ripple effects if staff who work in Head Start programs lose their paychecks or their jobs.

"We also have community partners that we rely on for services, and they rely on us for business — small businesses, contractors, vendors, other small businesses, things like that — but they rely on their Head Start contracts, and if we can't pay the bills, they're not going to be able to count on us for what they need as well," he said.

## **Program already reeling**

Under President Donald Trump's administration, the program was already experiencing chaos prior to the government shutdown, including reports of delays in accessing approved grant funding, regional office closures and firings at HHS' Office of Head Start.

That office also told grant recipients in March that it "will not approve the use of federal funding for any training and technical assistance (TTA) or other program expenditures that promote or take part in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives."

A federal judge in September temporarily blocked the administration's directive that aimed to prevent immigrants living in the United States illegally from accessing Head Start programs.

Meanwhile, Trump's fiscal 2026 budget request calls for maintaining Head Start funding at its prior fiscal year level of roughly \$12.3 billion.

The Senate Appropriations Committee passed its annual bill to fund HHS, including Head Start, back in July and provided \$12.4 billion for the program, a roughly \$85 million increase.

The corresponding panel in the House also approved its bill to fund HHS in September, aligning with the administration's request of maintaining funding for Head Start at \$12.3 billion in fiscal 2026.

Sheridan pointed out that the program has operated through challenges before, whether natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic, or previous government shutdowns.

"Our programs are absolutely dedicated, hopeful and are working tirelessly to minimize that impact on children and families, but we cannot operate a program on hope and goodwill alone," he said. "We need Congress and we need the president to come together to keep our classrooms open and also to ensure that Head Start funding can stay in line with the rising costs that we've seen over this last year."

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

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## Upcoming federal food assistance pause intensifies shutdown fight

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA AND JENNIFER SHUTT-OCTOBER 27, 2025 3:15 PM

WASHINGTON — The stakes of the ongoing government shutdown rose Monday as the U.S. Department of Agriculture doubled down on its position that food benefits for November could not be paid and a union for federal workers implored lawmakers to pass a stopgap measure.

As the government shutdown entered day 27, President Donald Trump's administration sought to add pressure on U.S. Senate Democrats to approve the House Republicans' stopgap government funding bill by refusing to use USDA resources to stretch critical food assistance benefits to the most vulnerable Americans.

USDA confirmed over the weekend it will not follow its own contingency plan — which the department has removed from its website — to tap into its multi-year contingency fund to cover food assistance for more than 42 million people for November.

The department also pinned a fiery message to its website blaming Democrats for the lapse in benefits and U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson called on Democrats to approve a stopgap funding measure to restore food assistance.

Democrats have voted against the GOP short-term spending bill to draw attention to and force negotiations on tax credits that will expire at the end of the year for people who buy their health insurance through the Affordable Care Act Marketplace.

"Bottom line, the well has run dry," according to the banner across USDA's website. "At this time, there will be no benefits issued November 1. We are approaching an inflection point for Senate Democrats."

The banner falsely indicated that Democrats' sole goal was to provide health insurance to immigrants in the country without legal authorization and transgender patients.

### Reversal on SNAP contingency

But the move represents a reversal from the administration's own policy, laid out in a Sept. 30 contingency plan on the eve of the shutdown that States Newsroom reported Friday.

The plan detailed how the agency would use the contingency fund provided by Congress to continue benefits. The fund holds roughly \$6 billion, about two-thirds of a month of SNAP benefits, meaning USDA would still have to reshuffle an additional \$3 billion to cover the remainder for November.

Hundreds of Democratic lawmakers, and the top Senate Republican appropriator, Susan Collins of Maine, have pressed USDA to use its contingency fund.

Democrats, such as New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker, have also criticized the Trump administration for refusing to use its resources, despite the contradiction in its own Sept. 30 contingency plan and its shuffling of funds for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or WIC.

"We know that Trump has the resources to continue SNAP and other programs like WIC," Booker said. "Weaponizing food assistance is, simply put, a new and disgusting low."

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer echoed that sentiment in a floor speech Monday.

"The administration is making an intentional choice not to fund SNAP this weekend," the New York Democrat said. "The emergency funding is there. The administration is just choosing not to use it."

USDA did not respond to a request for comment Monday.

Millions of vulnerable people, such those who have low incomes or are living with disabilities, rely on SNAP. About 40% of SNAP recipients are children 17 and younger.

### Union calls for stopgap

Another form of pressure on Democrats arrived Monday with the American Federation of Government Employees, the largest union representing federal workers, calling for lawmakers to strike a deal to reopen the government.

As the shutdown nears a month, most of the roughly 2 million civilian federal workers have already missed paychecks.

The AFGE is typically more politically aligned with Democrats and had held off on publicly weighing in in favor of a stopgap until Monday when Everett Kelley, the union's president, called for Congress to end the government shutdown and pass a continuing resolution to resume funding.



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"Because when the folks who serve this country are standing in line for food banks after missing a second paycheck because of this shutdown, they aren't looking for partisan spin," Kelley said in the statement. "They're looking for the wages they earned. The fact that they're being cheated out of it is a national disgrace."

Johnson added that he hopes the recent statement from the union representing 800,000 federal workers pushes Senate Democrats to approve the House's stopgap.

"They understand the reality of this," he said.

## **Johnson defends USDA move**

Johnson defended USDA's decision not to use its contingency fund for SNAP during a morning press conference.

USDA has argued that those funds can only be used for natural disasters or similar emergencies.

Johnson, a Louisiana Republican, agreed with that reasoning.

"It certainly looks legitimate to me," he said. "The contingency funds are not legally available to cover the benefits right now. The reason is because it's a finite source of funds. It was appropriated by Congress, and if they transfer funds from these other sources, it pulls it away immediately from school meals and infant formula. So ... it's a trade off."

USDA earlier this month reshuffled funds to several nutrition programs, including WIC, the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

## **States scrambling**

States are demanding answers about why USDA has paused SNAP benefits. On Friday, 23 state attorneys general sent a letter to Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins and questioned the legal basis for the agency to pause benefits for SNAP.

In the face of disappearing federal funds, states may choose to spend more on food assistance,

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, a Democrat, said Monday she would "fast-track" \$30 million in state emergency food assistance to supplement SNAP benefits.

Johnson said that if Senate Democrats are worried about SNAP benefits not being available for November, they should pass the House's stopgap government funding bill.

"The best way for SNAP benefits to be paid on time is for the Democrats to end their shutdown, and that could happen right now, if they would show some spine," Johnson said.

*Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include immigration, congressional policy and legal challenges with a focus on how those policies impact the lives of immigrants and migrants coming to the U.S.*

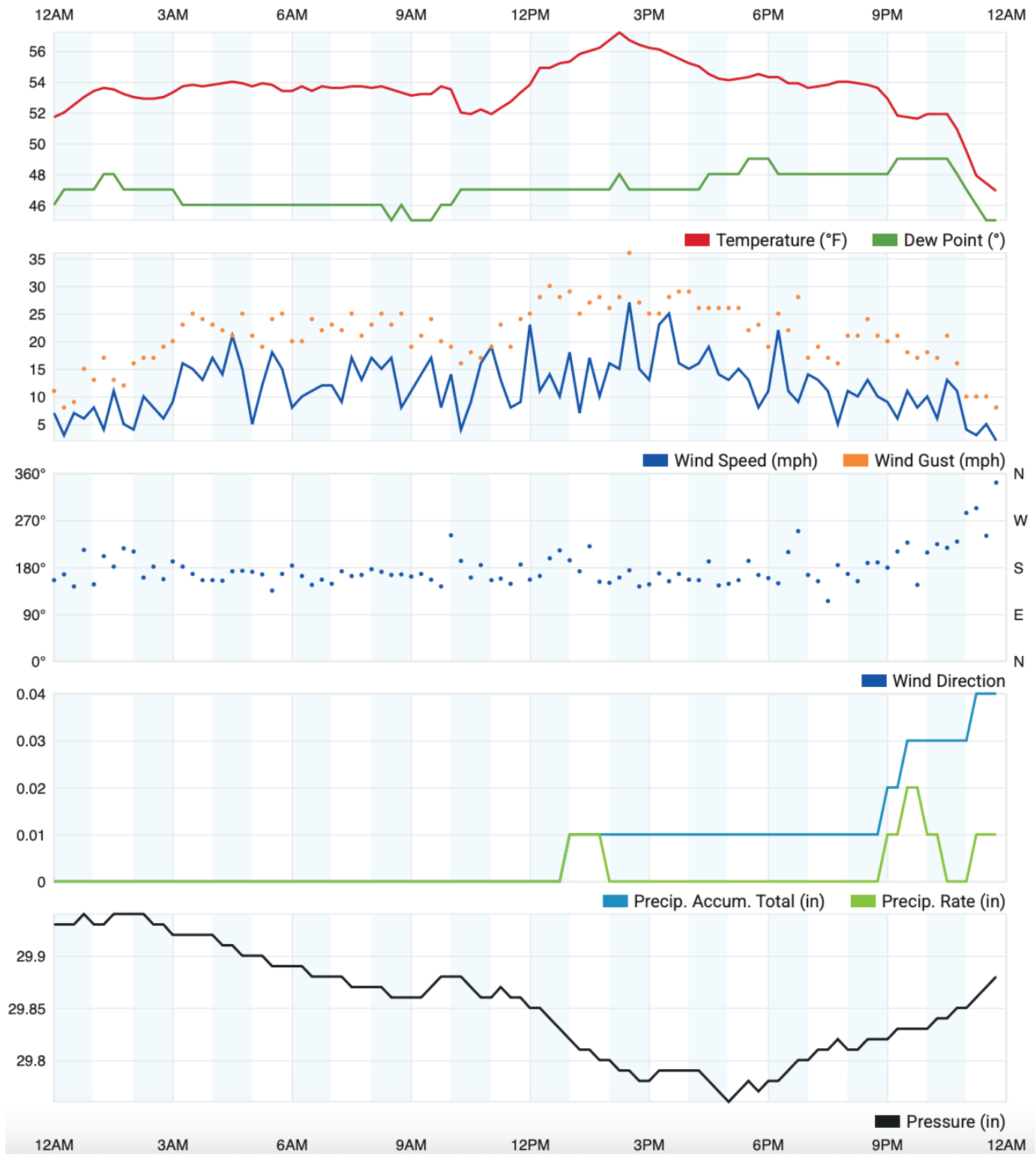
*Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

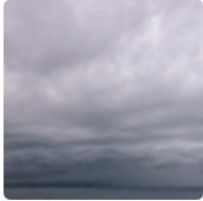
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Today



High: 52 °F

Cloudy

Tonight



Low: 29 °F

Gradual  
Clearing

Wednesday



High: 50 °F

Sunny

Wednesday  
Night



Low: 29 °F

Increasing  
Clouds

Thursday



High: 55 °F

Mostly Sunny

## Light Rain Lingers this A.M. Along/East of I-29



48-53°

Lows tonight in the 20s and 30s



Northwest winds with gusts  
of 30 to 40 mph today,  
strongest over south central  
South Dakota

4:45 AM

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
47-52°F	50-57°F	40-45°F
-Mostly Sunny	-Partly Cloudy -Becoming Windy Central SD	-Mostly Cloudy -Cool and Breezy -Slight Chance Light Rain far Northeast SD & West Central MN

weather.gov/aberndeen  
October 28, 2025



A departing frontal boundary will keep some lingering light rain this morning across portions of northeast SD and west central MN, mainly along and east of I-29. Otherwise, look for mostly sunny skies across central SD today, but with northwest winds gusting from 30 to 40 mph. For the rest of the week, generally dry with highs in the 40s and 50s. Winds increasing again Thursday and Friday.



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 57 °F at 2:14 PM

Low Temp: 47 °F at 11:29 PM

Wind: 37 mph at 2:31 PM

Precip: : 0.04

## Today's Info

Record High: 82 in 1937

Record Low: -6 in 1919

Average High: 52

Average Low: 28

Average Precip in Oct.: 1.99

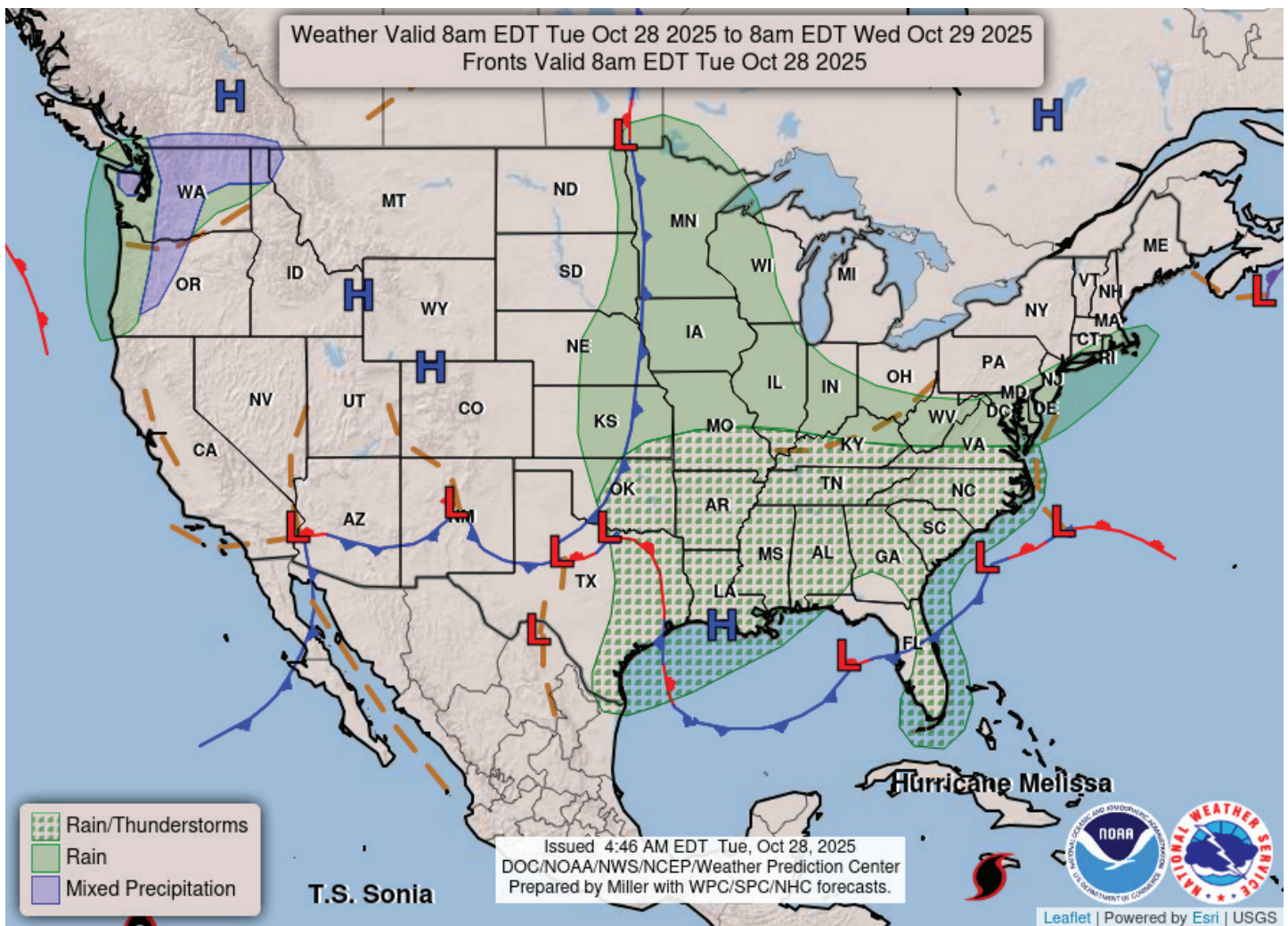
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.52

Average Precip to date: 20.32

Precip Year to Date: 23.44

Sunset Tonight: 6:25 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:07 am





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## **Today in Weather History**

October 28, 1989: The season's first snowfall brought much-needed moisture to the Black Hills and portions of western South Dakota as up to nearly a foot of snow fell in the higher elevations. The storms caused motorists some problems. A build-up of ice and slush in combination with blowing snow prompted the State Highway Patrol to close the portion of Interstate-90 from Rapid City to Wall. Numerous multiple vehicle accidents were reported.

October 28, 1993: Very strong northwest winds gusting to 50 to 60 mph raked South Dakota. A new home under construction southwest of DeSmet collapsed in the winds. Reported peak winds included 56 mph at Huron, 55 mph at Rapid City, and 52 mph at Sioux Falls.

1846: In the spring of 1846, a group of nearly 90 emigrants left Springfield, Illinois, and headed west to California. The Donner party arrived at the Great Salt Lake and still needed to cross the Sierra Nevada Mountains late in the season. On this day, a heavy snowfall blocked the pass, thus trapping the emigrants. Only 45 of the original 89 emigrants reached California the following year.

1936 - The temperature at Layton, NJ, dipped to 9 above zero to establish a state record for the month of October. (The Weather Channel)

1971 - A severe early season blizzard raged across the Plateau Region and Rocky Mountain Region. Heavy snow blocked railroads and interstate highways, and record cold accompanied the storm. Lander WY received 27 inches of snow, and the temperature at Big Piney WY plunged to 15 degrees below zero. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Thunderstorms over the San Joaquin Valley of California produced three-quarters of an inch of rain in thirty minutes at Placerville, and caused numerous power outages due to lightning. Rain began to diminish in the northeastern U.S., but some flooding continued in Vermont, eastern New York and northern New Jersey. One inch rains in Vermont clogged culverts and sewers with fallen leaves, resulting in erosion of dirt roads. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Arctic cold invaded the north central U.S. Valentine, NE, dipped to 8 degrees, and Cutbank, MT, reported a morning low of one degree above zero. The temperature at Estes Park CO dipped to 15 degrees, but then soared thirty degrees in less than thirty minutes. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - A storm crossing the western U.S. produced 10 to 20 inches of snow across northern and central Wyoming, with 22 inches reported at Burgess Junction. Seven cities in the Lower Ohio Valley and the Upper Great Lakes Region reported record high temperatures for the date as readings again warmed into the 70s. Alpena MI reported a record high of 75 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1999: A Super Typhoon, known as Cyclone 05B reached the equivalent of the Category 5 hurricane on this day. This storm is the strongest tropical cyclone ever record in the North Indian Ocean. Cyclone 05B hit the Indian State of Odisha near the city of Bhubaneswar on October 29. An estimated 10,000 individuals would die from this cyclone, and 1.67 million people were left homeless.

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Daily Devotion

## Our Generous Provider

**Because the Lord has richly provided for us, we should respond generously to the needs of others.**

Psalms 65:1-13

Have you ever considered how generous the Lord is toward us? He created the earth and all it contains. He made the sun to both give light and help living things to thrive, and He sends rain to water the land and quench our thirst.

God's abundant provision for physical needs should cause us to stand in awe of His love and care for us, but His generosity doesn't end there. He has also provided for all our spiritual needs through His Son. By means of Jesus' death on the cross, we are reconciled to the Father and given a wealth of blessings: His Word supplies guidance, His Spirit empowers us and transforms us into Christ's image, and His church offers encouragement and support. Yet His generosity goes even further than this.

The Lord has also given us the promise of an inheritance in heaven (1 Peter 1:4). All that He's prepared for us is beyond our human understanding, but Revelation 21:1-27 and Revelation 22:1-21 describe the new heaven and earth as a place of abundance and blessing.

Since the Lord has so richly provided for us, our first response should be gratitude, followed by generosity toward others. Based on His example, let's tend to more than physical needs. We can also help spiritually by encouraging fellow believers and proclaiming the gospel to people who don't yet know Jesus.

*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:

10.24.25

11 18 31 51 56 24

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$714,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 22 Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.27.25

12 21 27 35 39 2

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$5,680,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 37 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.27.25

1 10 30 32 33 4

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 52 Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.25.25

13 15 22 23 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$63,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 52 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.27.25

16 31 60 63 65 17

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 21 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.27.25

17 39 43 51 66 20

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$376,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 21 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)



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## **Upcoming Groton Events**

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

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

### PREP VOLLEYBALL

Arlington def. Chester, 25-10, 25-9, 25-9  
Baltic def. Canton, 25-12, 25-18, 25-12  
Bridgewater-Emery def. Centerville, 25-14, 25-19, 25-10  
Burke def. Wagner, 25-17, 25-20, 25-20  
Colome def. Kimball-White Lake, 25-14, 25-11, 25-8  
Dupree def. Lemmon High School, 25-16, 25-13, 25-14  
Edgemont def. Pine Ridge, 19-25, 25-22, 25-17, 25-16  
Ethan def. Tripp-Delmont-Armour, 25-15, 28-26, 23-25, 25-15  
Freeman def. Canistota, 25-22, 25-15, 25-15  
Gayville-Volin High School def. Avon, 25-14, 19-25, 25-19, 25-23  
Groton def. Faulkton, 25-10, 25-20, 25-16  
Hamlin def. Deuel, 25-20, 23-25, 25-15, 25-23  
Harding County def. Bison, 25-15, 25-22, 26-24  
Ipswich def. Herreid-Selby, 25-18, 20-25, 25-20, 25-22  
Lyman def. Chamberlain, 25-22, 25-13, 25-20  
McCook Central-Montrose def. Hanson, 25-21, 19-25, 25-21, 25-21  
McIntosh High School def. McLaughlin, 25-18, 18-25, 25-21, 25-16  
Parker/Marion def. Vermillion, 25-12, 25-19, 20-25, 21-25, 15-13  
Sioux Falls Christian def. Lennox, 25-23, 26-24, 25-16  
Sioux Valley def. Garretson, 25-15, 25-19, 25-18  
Todd County def. Mahpiya Luta Red Cloud, 25-23, 25-16, 25-22  
Tri-Valley def. West Central, 24-26, 25-19, 26-24, 25-23  
Warner def. Langford, 25-9, 25-13, 25-14  
Waubay/Summit def. Florence-Henry, 25-17, 25-21, 25-27, 25-18  
Waverly-South Shore def. Tiospa Zina, 25-15, 25-9, 25-16  
White River def. St. Francis Indian, 25-13, 25-11, 25-13  
Winner def. Platte-Geddes, 25-17, 21-25, 25-10, 25-21  
Wolsey-Wessington def. Redfield, 25-19, 25-15, 25-20

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

### **The Latest: Trump meets with Japan's newly elected, first female leader, Sanae Takaichi**

By The Associated Press undefined

U.S. President Donald Trump is meeting with Japan's newly elected, ultraconservative leader in Tokyo during one of the busiest days of his Asia trip, the itinerary of which includes speaking to U.S. troops aboard an aircraft carrier and mingling with business leaders.

Just days after taking office, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi may look to build a personal connection with Trump to ease trade tensions. One key to this strategy might be an idea floated by Japan's government to buy a fleet of American Ford F-150 trucks.

Trump spent Sunday in Malaysia as part of his ongoing trip through Asia to discuss mostly trade with world leaders, aiming to highlight America's influence on the global economy.

The Latest:

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## **Trump and Takaichi sign two agreements**

Both leaders signed the implementation of an agreement for the "golden age" of their countries' alliance. Held up after the signing, the document ran to less than one-page.

Trump and Takaichi then signed a second agreement, this one laying out a U.S.-Japan framework for securing the supply of critical minerals and rare earths.

When the signing ceremony had concluded, a reporter called out a question to Trump but got no answer. Organizers asked in English that the press please move on to the next event.

## **Japan planning to give Washington 250 new cherry trees next year**

Takaichi told Trump that her country would give Washington some 250 additional cherry trees next year, in honor of the nation's 250th anniversary celebration — as well as fireworks from Akita Prefecture for July 4 celebrations in 2026.

Then-Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida gifted 250 new cherry trees to Washington during a visit to the White House with President Joe Biden in 2024.

Last year's gift was meant to replace trees removed for construction to repair the crumbling seawall around the nation's capital's Tidal Basin, while also commemorating the 250th anniversary of the U.S. in 2026.

## **Trump says Takaichi as Japan's first female prime minister is 'a big deal'**

The president offered especially effusive praise to Takaichi, telling her, "Anything I can do to help Japan, we will be there."

"You're going to do a fantastic job, and we're going to have a fantastic relationship," he said.

Trump also hailed Takaichi being the first woman to hold the post, saying, "That's a big deal," before adding, "You will be one of the great prime ministers."

The president told Takaichi that his offer to support Japan in all situations extended to any "favors you need."

## **Takaichi mentions her mentor's bond with Trump**

Takaichi used her early remarks to mention former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, her archconservative mentor who forged a strong bond with Trump during the U.S. president's first term.

"As a matter of fact, Prime Minister Abe often told me about your dynamic diplomacy," she said.

In his own comments, Trump said, "I want to thank you very much and I want to congratulate you."

He continued: "Shinzo Abe was a great friend of mine," and added, "he spoke so well of you."

Trump said Abe "would be very happy to know that" Takaichi was now prime minister.

Abe was assassinated on July 8, 2022, during an election campaign speech. Trump recalled being saddened by Abe's killing.

## **Takaichi starts meeting with Trump by talking about US World Series**

Before meeting with Trump, the Japanese prime minister said she was watching the Los Angeles Dodgers play the Toronto Blue Jays in the U.S. World Series.

Takaichi said the Dodgers were up 1-0 and that she really enjoyed watching it.

Baseball is a shared pastime in the U.S. and Japan. Dodgers star Shohei Ohtani is a near ubiquitous presence across Japan in ads and the Dodgers ballpark increasingly caters to tourists from Japan coming to the U.S. to watch him.

## **Trump praises Takaichi's 'strong handshake'**

The president arrived for a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi at the Akasaka palace in Tokyo.

Trump was surrounded by U.S. officials, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent.

While posing for photos, Trump shook hands with Takaichi and said, "That's a very strong handshake."

The U.S. delegation also included White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt, who said to Takaichi, "Congratulations, we're so excited for you."

Trump and Takaichi are scheduled to hold upcoming meetings.

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## White House pulls the nomination for the top US diplomat for the Middle East

The White House has pulled the nomination of a retired Army colonel and former special envoy for Syria during the first Trump administration to become the top U.S. diplomat for the Middle East, according to a congressional aide and a State Department official familiar with the matter.

Joel Rayburn's nomination had been held up for months in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee by Republican Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky before it was finally cleared last week for a full Senate confirmation vote, according to the aide and the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the White House withdrawal has not yet been announced.

Neither could or would say why exactly the nomination was pulled, but Rayburn had been seen by some in the White House as not supportive enough of Trump administration priorities.

The State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs has not had a Senate-confirmed assistant secretary since January.

— By Matthew Lee, AP Diplomatic Writer

## Top US Senators are demanding NBA provide information over alleged gambling scheme

Sen. Ted Cruz, the Republican Chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, and Sen. Maria Cantwell, the top Democrat on the panel, want information "about how the NBA investigated and handled these allegations as well as what steps the Association is taking to maintain the public's trust."

"Americans love basketball because it is fast-paced and unpredictable," the senators wrote to NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, in a letter obtained by The Associated Press.

"That volatility is the sport's magic, and precisely why allegations that current and former National Basketball Association (NBA) players and coaches compromised the game's integrity are so troubling," they said.

The Commerce Committee, which has vast authority over sports and other matters, is seeking the information after last week's arrests in relation to the alleged gambling scheme. The senators want a response by Nov. 10.

## Who is Sanae Takaichi, Japan's new prime minister?

Ultraconservative Sanae Takaichi is Japan's first female prime minister and was tapped by parliament for her post mere days before Trump's arrival.

A hawk on security issues and fan of heavy metal music, Takaichi replaced the outgoing Shigeru Ishiba after his long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party suffered big losses in July elections.

The 64-year-old Takaichi grew up near the ancient Japanese capital of Nara and is an admirer of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. She has opposed efforts aimed at boosting women's achievements in a country where men still largely hold sway.

Takaichi meets Tuesday with Trump and has called the Japan-U.S. alliance a "cornerstone" of Japanese diplomacy. She's also stressed that Japan is an indispensable partner for America in its strategy to provide counterweights to China in the Indo-Pacific region.

## Senators seek probe over the costs of National Guard deployments

Sen. Jeff Merkley of Oregon, the top Democrat on the Senate Budget Committee, said Trump's deployment of the National Guard into American cities for security "marks a significant departure from long-standing practice" and "carries substantial cost implications that have not been publicly disclosed or formally justified to Congress."

Merkley and other Democrats on the panel are asking the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office to provide an accounting of the deployments and operations.

"Congress must have a clear understanding of both the immediate and long-term budgetary consequences of this policy," the senators wrote.

## Senators ask Trump administration to let Americans preview next year's Affordable Care Act options

In Monday's letter to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the largely Democratic group of 28 lawmakers noted that this "window shopping" period has opened on Oct. 25 or 26 over the past eight years.



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On Monday, Healthcare.gov appeared to show 2025 health insurance plans and estimated prices, instead of next year's options. A banner on the website instructs enrollees to "come back November 1 for a more accurate estimate" of their 2026 health costs.

CMS on Monday was expected to temporarily bring back all its workers furloughed during the shutdown, in part to manage the ACA open enrollment period that starts Saturday.

Many states that operate their own health insurance marketplaces have already given enrollees a peek into 2026 prices. Premiums are expected to skyrocket next year in anticipation of rising health costs and expiring subsidies that have made the plans more affordable.

## **Senate GOP leader talks with Trump, but no easy fix to end shutdown or save SNAP**

Senate Majority Leader John Thune says he spoke with the president late Sunday but offered no new strategy for ending the government shutdown, now in its 27th day.

"He, like all of us, wants the government opened up," Thune said.

Thune also signaled there's no easy fix ahead to pay air traffic controllers and other federal workers, or to ensure food stamps are not turned off Saturday.

Republicans are pushing Democrats to drop their demands for health care funds, for now, and reopen government.

"The answer is very simple. Paying SNAP recipients, paying the military, paying all federal workers — ATC, TSA, Border Patrol — it's all really simple," he said

"We are where we are."

## **Hegseth departs on southeast Asia trip**

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has departed on his own, separate trip to southeast Asia early on Monday and he plans to visit four countries as part of his travel.

Hegseth will visit Japan, Malaysia, Vietnam, and South Korea, according to a statement released by the Pentagon late on Sunday. As part of this trip, Hegseth will attend a meeting of the region's defense ministers and co-chair an annual security meeting with his South Korean counterpart.

It was not clear from the Pentagon's announcement how much, if any, of Hegseth's trip would overlap with Trump, who is travelling in the region largely to discuss trade. Trump is currently in Japan and he's set to visit South Korea next. Hegseth was in Hawaii on Monday morning.

## **World Central Kitchen provides food to federal workers in Washington, DC**

The food charity, known for opening public kitchens and distributing meals in war zones and in the aftermath of natural disasters, was providing food to federal workers furloughed by the government shutdown. It was distributing fresh food, ranging from vegetarian to meat options, and fruit and water to dozens of people on Monday.

Elizabeth Anderson, a furloughed NASA employee, said it's tough being a federal worker during this moment. She said the food provided "a little extra cushion for the furlough."

Humberto Lopez, a furloughed federal worker with the Department of Defense, said he is starting to feel the financial squeeze of the shutdown.

"It's starting to get real," he said, waiting in line for food. "You know you can't sustain this for much longer."

## **Ontario premier brags about anti-tariff Reagan ad that prompted Trump cancel trade talks**

The leader of Canada's most populous province is bragging about the impact of his anti-tariff ad that prompted U.S. President Donald Trump to end trade talks with Canada.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford says the ad had over a "billion impressions around the world" and "generated a conversation that wasn't happening in the U.S."

The populist Conservative premier says it was the "best ad I ever ran" and says he's achieved his goals.

Ontario's television advertisement criticizes Trump's tariffs by citing a speech from former U.S. President Ronald Reagan.

The ad upset Trump who said he plans to hike tariffs on imports of Canadian goods by an extra 10%.

"You know why President Trump is so upset right now? It was because it was effective," Ford says.

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## **Democrats see GOP's Indiana remap effort as a desperate manipulation**

Republicans outnumber Democrats in Indiana's congressional delegation 7-2, limiting possibilities of squeezing out another seat. But many in the party see this mid-cycle redistricting effort as a chance for the GOP to represent all nine seats.

Among the targets is the 1st District, a Democratic stronghold near Chicago in the state's northwest corner held by third-term Democratic U.S. Rep. Frank Mrvan. He's won reelection twice despite previous GOP efforts to redraw the borders to help Republicans.

"I believe that representation should be earned through ideas and service, not political manipulation," Mrvan said in a statement Monday.

Indiana Senate Democratic Leader Shelli Yoder threatened legal action if the Republicans pass any new maps: "This is not democracy. This is desperation," she said in a statement.

## **The scramble is on to get groceries for millions when SNAP shuts off**

The countdown is on to figure out how to keep food on the table for the nearly 42 million Americans who receive SNAP grocery assistance.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture says that the debit cards that beneficiaries use to buy food won't be replenished in November due to the government shutdown.

About 1 in 8 people in the U.S. receive the aid.

It's not clear whether the pause in the program will shift anything in the negotiations to reopen the government.

It is leaving beneficiaries, states and food banks scrambling for ways to fill the gaps.

## **Indiana Senate leader's spokesperson says the GOP lacks the votes to redistrict**

Indiana's Senate President Pro Tem Rodric Bray was among the state lawmakers who met privately with Trump as the White House pressured them to redraw the state's House districts to give the GOP more of an advantage. But his spokesperson said Monday that the votes are still lacking, casting doubt on whether a special session called by Gov. Braun will be successful.

With only 10 Democrats in the 50-member Senate, that means more than a dozen of the 40 Republicans oppose the idea. Some state Republican lawmakers have warned that midcycle redistricting can be costly and could backfire politically.

Gov. Braun a staunch ally of Trump in a state the president won handily. He previously said he did not want to try mid-decade redistricting unless he was sure lawmakers would back a new map.

But on Monday, he said it was the right thing to do: "I am calling a special legislative session to protect Hoosiers from efforts in other states that seek to diminish their voice in Washington and ensure their representation in Congress is fair," Braun said.

## **Louisiana state rep, Gov. Landry ally, Emerson enters GOP race against Cassidy**

Julie Emerson, a Republican Louisiana state representative, is running to unseat fellow Republican Sen. Bill Cassidy, who is seeking a third term in 2026.

Emerson, 37, chairs the Louisiana House ways and means committee and is an ally of Republican Gov. Jeff Landry. She announced her candidacy in a video posted Monday morning.

Landry had spoken to Trump in May about U.S. Rep. Julia Letlow as a potential primary challenger to Cassidy, who is unpopular with a segment of Louisiana's GOP base. Cassidy voted in January 2021 to convict Trump after his second impeachment. Emerson said in August that she would run if Letlow didn't. She now joins a crowded primary field, which includes state Treasurer John Fleming, state Sen. Blake Miguez and others.

## **Largest federal worker union weighs in on shutdown**

The president of the union that represents more than 800,000 government workers says that both political parties have made their point and it's time to end the shutdown.

Everett Kelley, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, said every worker should be back on the job with full pay. His statement comes as more workers miss their first full paycheck.

"It's time to pass a clean continuing resolution and end this shutdown today," Kelley said. "No half mea-

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tures, and no gamesmanship.”

The AFGE carries considerable political weight in Washington, particularly on the Democratic side. Kelley said there is no winning a government shutdown.

“It’s time for our leaders to start focusing on how to solve problems for the American people, rather than on who is going to get the blame for a shutdown that Americans dislike,” Kelley said in a statement posted on the union’s website.

## **Voting has begun for New York City mayor and New Jersey governor**

New Yorkers are choosing between Democrat Zohran Mamdani, Republican Curtis Sliwa and former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat on the ballot as an independent. The incumbent mayor, Eric Adams, is also on the ballot despite dropping out and supporting Cuomo.

The New Jersey governor’s race features Republican state Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli against Democratic U.S. Rep. Mikie Sherrill.

Mamdani appeared with Sen. Bernie Sanders and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez on Sunday, telling a raucous crowd that his campaign is a “movement of the masses” against billionaires and “oligarchs.” As the crowd chanted his name, Mamdani reiterated plans to hire thousands of new teachers, renegotiate city contracts, freeze rent increases for the city’s 1 million rent-regulated apartments, build more affordable housing and provide universal child care.

Cuomo argued that he’s the real Democrat and that Mamdani’s democratic socialism would send residents and businesses fleeing: “He wins, book airline tickets for Florida now.”

## **USS Nimitz heads home after losing a fighter jet and a helicopter in the South China Sea**

The Navy’s Pacific Fleet said three people went down in the MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopter, quickly followed by the ejection of both aviators in the F/A-18F Super Hornet fighter jet. All five were rescued.

The causes are under investigation, but Trump speculated while en route to Tokyo that “bad fuel” could be to blame for both crashes. The president ruled out foul play and said there was “nothing to hide.”

The Nimitz is returning to Naval Base Kitsap in Washington state after being deployed to Middle East in response to attacks by Yemen’s Houthis rebels on commercial shipping. The aircraft carrier is on its final deployment before decommissioning.

## **Chinese diplomat praises Trump-Xi relations in call with Rubio**

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in a phone call Monday that they both have “world-class leaders.”

Wang said the “long-standing exchange and mutual respect” of presidents Xi and Trump have become the most valuable strategic asset” of the bilateral ties, according to a statement by the Chinese foreign ministry.

U.S. and Chinese trade negotiators said they made progress toward a possible trade deal during talks in Malaysia, ahead of the expected meeting between Trump and Xi on Thursday in South Korea.

## **Ford thanks Trump as Japan floats buying a fleet of F-150 trucks**

The streets in Japan are famously narrow and congested, but no matter: Japan’s government said it may import Ford F-150 trucks for its transport ministry to use while inspecting roads and infrastructure. That would be a win for the Trump administration, which has long complained of American vehicles being shut out of the market that’s home to Toyota, Honda, Nissan, Isuzu, Mitsubishi and Subaru.

“We appreciate President Trump’s advocating for American made products,” Ford spokesperson Dave Tovar said. “We would be excited to introduce America’s best-selling truck to work and government customers in Japan.”

Trump bought into the idea while flying to Asia, saying “That’s a hot truck.”

## **Indiana governor bows to Trump pressure, calls a redistricting session**

Indiana Republican Gov. Mike Braun called Monday for state lawmakers to return to Indianapolis for a special session on Nov. 3 to redraw the state’s congressional boundaries, escalating a national fight over midcycle redistricting.

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Trump has ramped up pressure on Republican governors to give the party an easier path to maintain control of the House. Republicans in Texas and Missouri moved quickly, and California Democrats responded with their own redistricting plan. But Indiana lawmakers have been far more hesitant.

A spokesperson for a state senate leader said last week that the Indiana Senate lacked the votes to pass a new congressional map, but the White House has held multiple meetings with holdout lawmakers, including a return trip to Indianapolis on Oct. 10 by Vice President JD Vance.

**CORRECTION:** Last week's statement that the Senate lacked the votes was incorrectly attributed to a spokesperson for Braun. The statement was made by a spokesperson for state Senate President Pro Tem Rodric Bray.

## **Republicans confronted with voter frustration over rising health care premiums**

Notices of rising health insurance premiums are landing in voters' mailboxes and sending some to town halls to vent their frustration. Republicans have offered few answers, saying they won't negotiate until Democrats end the shutdown.

The moment revives a familiar dynamic in the Republican Party that is united in opposing the Affordable Care Act but since the Obama administration has lacked a clear plan to replace it. The lack of a plan to address rising costs risks political backlash for Republicans in next year's midterms.

Democrats have said tax credits that kept the costs lower should be extended and refused to reopen the government until they are.

## **Private donors gave more than \$125M to keep some foreign aid programs going**

When the Trump administration froze foreign assistance overnight, urgent efforts began to figure out how private donors could support critical aid programs.

Multiple groups launched fundraisers in February, eventually mobilizing more than \$125 million in emergency funding. It wasn't nearly enough, but was more than organizers had imagined possible. And with needs piling up, wealthy donors and private foundations grappled had to determine: Of the thousands of programs the U.S. funded abroad, which ones could have the biggest impact if saved?

Sasha Gallant led a team at the U.S. Agency for International Development that specialized in identifying programs cost-effective and impactful programs. Along with colleagues who had been fired or worked outside of business hours, they identified 80 programs they recommended to private donors, and Project Resource Optimization announced that all had been funded.

## **Biden calls these 'dark days' as he urges Americans to 'get back up'**

Former President Joe Biden called these "dark days" as he urged Americans to stay optimistic and to not check out as Trump attacks free speech and asserts expanded executive powers.

"We're more powerful than any dictator," Biden said after receiving a lifetime achievement award from the Edward M. Kennedy Institute in Boston Sunday night.

America depends on a balance of powers between a presidency with limited power, a functioning Congress and an autonomous judiciary, he said: "Since its founding, America served as a beacon for the most powerful idea ever in government in the history of the world."

Biden, 82, ended his first public speech since a round of radiation therapy for an aggressive form of prostate cancer on an optimistic note, predicting Americans will "find our true compass again" and "emerge as we always have — stronger, wiser and more resilient, more just, so long as we keep the faith."

## **Trump 'might, just might,' actually reach a deal with China**

Chinese markets logged solid gains Monday and Hong Kong's Hang Seng rose 1.1% to 26,434.69, while the Shanghai Composite index added 1.2% to 3,996.94 — reflecting growing hopes that after months of escalating trade disputes, Trump might be right when he said "I think we're going to come away with a deal" with China.

"This isn't just photo-op diplomacy. Behind the showmanship, Washington and Beijing's top trade lieuten-



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ants have quietly mapped out a framework that might, just might, keep the world's two largest economies from tearing up the field again," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping are expected to hold their high-stakes meeting on Thursday, on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in South Korea.

## **U.S. futures jump and world shares are mixed on chances for US-China trade deal**

Asian shares surged Monday while European markets were little changed after Trump said he expected to reach a trade agreement with China.

Germany's DAX gained 0.2% to 24,279.53 and the CAC 40 in Paris slipped 0.1% to 8,218.42. Britain's FTSE 100 also shed 0.1%, to 9,640.12. The future for the S&P 500 jumped 0.9% while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 0.6%.

Work on trade deals that might alleviate friction between the U.S., China and other major trading partners has reassured investors, especially in Asia.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 gained 2.5% to 50,512.32, a new closing high following news that the world's two largest economies had reached an initial consensus for Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping to finalize during a high-stakes meeting later in the week.

## **Trade war opens Chinese market to Brazilian soybean producers**

Brazilian farmers are increasing soybean production as the U.S. and China engage in a trade fight.

The conflict has shut American soybeans out of the Chinese market, leading China to seek more Brazilian supply. China's customs body reported no U.S. soybean imports in September, a first since November 2018.

Brazilian soybeans already accounted for over 70% of China's imports last year. Brazil's Agriculture Ministry expects the next soybean harvest to rise by 3.6%.

Farmers in the U.S. are worried about losing the Chinese market permanently, even if a trade agreement is reached, and are seeking other markets.

## **South Korea trade deal may not be ready during Trump's visit**

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said a potential agreement, which has been the subject of extensive negotiation, could require more time.

"Just a lot of details to work out," he said. "Very complicated deal, and I think we're very close."

A sticking point has been Washington's push for South Korea to invest \$350 billion in the U.S.

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said "Koreans have a great plan to invest in U.S. shipbuilding," an industry that Trump wants to expand.

## **Trade deal with China is coming together**

Bessent says there's "a framework" for Trump and Xi to discuss during a meeting in South Korea later this week.

The details are still unclear, but Bessent said American and Chinese negotiators discussed tariffs, rare earths, fentanyl and "a substantial purchase of U.S. agricultural products." Specifically, Washington wants Beijing to buy soybeans from U.S. farmers.

## **Trump chimed in by saying "we feel good" about working things out with China.**

Even overseas, Trump keeping his eye on pet projects back home

As Air Force One approached Tokyo, Trump posted on social media about renovations at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

He said exterior columns had been "beautifully painted in a luxuriant white enamel color, replacing the fake looking gold paint that was there for years."

There are also "many major improvements" on the way, including "seating, carpeting, wall coverings, ceilings, chandeliers, stages, heating and A/C, etc."

Trump also posted a picture of the renovated Oval Office, which features extensive gold trim and more portraits of presidential predecessors.

"Look how beautiful the Oval Office is, now," he wrote.

## **No reprieve for Canada**

Trump is still upset about Ontario's television advertisements criticizing his tariffs by citing a speech from

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former U.S. President Ronald Reagan.

Trump noted that the advertisement was yanked from the air, "but they did it very late" and "they let it play for another two nights."

Trump said he wouldn't meet with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney in South Korea, where they're attending the same summit.

"I don't want to meet with him," he said. "I'm not going to be meeting with him for a while."

## **Trump is still pushing to remake the Federal Reserve**

The president said he wants the current chairman, Jay Powell, to leave "as soon as possible," and he could pick a replacement by the end of the year.

Powell's term as chair ends in May. Trump has stepped back from threats to fire Powell, although he has tried to push out another board member, Lisa Cook.

Bessent said they're preparing a slate of candidates for Trump to choose from. And Trump reiterated that Bessent is a possibility for the job himself.

## **Lots of questions — but not always answers**

During the gaggle with reporters, Trump boasted about his administration's transparency, pointing to all the top officials taking questions from the media.

"You can ask anything you want. There's never been anything like this," he said.

But Trump still wants to keep some things under wraps. Specifically, he's still unwilling to identify the donor who provided \$130 million to pay U.S. troops during the government shutdown.

Trump said only that "he's an unbelievable patriot."

## **Trump hails Argentina election results**

The political party of Argentine President Javier Milei did well in the country's midterm elections, and Trump called it "a big win."

"He had a lot of help from us," Trump said. "I gave him an endorsement, a very strong endorsement."

The administration has also been extending economic assistance to Argentina, including raising the possibility of buying Argentine beef to bring down prices in the U.S.

The idea has upset American cattle ranchers, but Trump brushed off the issue.

"We're going to get the price of beef down, and I'm going to make sure the cattle ranchers don't get hurt," Trump said.

## **Trump praises Elon Musk**

The president and the tech titan had an explosive falling out when Musk left the administration, where he was spearheading the Department of Government Efficiency. They reconnected at the funeral for conservative activist Charlie Kirk.

Trump suggested their dispute was water under the bridge.

"He had a bad period, a bad moment. It was a stupid moment in his life," Trump said, adding, "I like Elon, and I suspect I'll always like him."

## **A third term for Trump?**

Stephen Bannon, a Trump ally, has repeatedly said the president could serve a third term despite a constitutional prohibition. Trump himself has flirted with the idea.

Asked about it on Air Force One, Trump said, "I haven't really thought about it." He rejected the possibility of running for vice president as a way to get back to the presidency, saying, "I'd be allowed to do it" but wouldn't because "it's too cute."

Trump praised Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Vice President JD Vance as potential future Republican candidates.

"I'm not sure if anybody would run against those two. I think if they ever formed a group, it would be unstoppable," he said.

## **Trump still wants to meet with North Korea's Kim Jong Un**

The president's overtures to reconnect with reclusive North Korean leader Kim Jong Un have gone un-

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answered.

"If he wants to meet, I'll be in South Korea," Trump said.

Trump even said he'd be willing to extend his trip if there was a chance to talk to Kim. Since South Korea is Trump's last stop before returning to the U.S., "it's pretty easy to do," he noted.

## **Trump criticizes Georgia immigration raid on South Korean company**

A source of tension has been a recent immigration raid at a Hyundai plant, which frustrated Korean business leaders who have been encouraged to invest in the United States.

Trump said, "I was opposed to getting them out," and he said they were working on a new visa system that would make it easier for Korean companies to bring in skilled workers.

"We're doing a whole new plan for that," he said.

Trump said, "We want them to bring in experts" and "they'll teach our people how to do it" before returning to Korea.

## **Trump speaks to reporters en route to Tokyo**

Trump came back to the press cabin on Air Force One along with Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Besant and Greer. They took questions for about a half hour.

Trump said he would talk about the "great friendship" between the U.S. and Japan during his visit.

"I hear phenomenal things" about the new Japanese prime minister, Sanae Takaichi, Trump said. He noted her closeness with former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, with whom Trump had a good relationship during his first term.

"It's going to be very good," he said. "That really helps Japan and the United States."

## **Trade has been Trump's focus in Asia**

There's no shortage of security issues in the region, including access to the South China Sea and the future of Taiwan. But Trump's focus has undoubtedly been trade and his desire to realign the international economy in his vision of "America first."

For the most part, that means tariffs, or at least the threat of them. Trump has frequently used taxes on imports — from allies and adversaries alike — in an effort to boost domestic manufacturing or seek more favorable terms.

However, his unilateral power to enact tariffs remains contested. Trump is awaiting a Supreme Court case that could solidify his authority or limit it.

## **Trump's last stop was Malaysia**

The president is flying to Tokyo from Kuala Lumpur, where he attended the annual summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. He participated in a ceremonial signing of an expanded ceasefire between Thailand and Cambodia, which fought earlier this year. Trump helped pressure both countries to stop by threatening to withhold trade agreements.

The summit is not a guaranteed part of any president's itinerary, but it was an opportunity for Trump to reengage with a critical region for the first time since returning to office.

In addition, American and Chinese negotiators used the summit to advance trade talks, with the potential for an agreement that would reduce tensions between the world's two largest economies later this week.

## **Trump congratulates Argentina's Milei on midterms success**

While on his way to Japan, Trump posted on Truth Social that Argentine President Javier Milei was "doing a wonderful job" as his party beat expectations in midterm elections.

"Our confidence in him was justified by the People of Argentina," Trump wrote.

Trump ally Milei essentially received a vote of confidence to pursue his policies to break long-standing inflation and economic problems in Argentina. A libertarian seeking to unlock free-market forces, Milei has endeared himself to Trump's "Make America Great Again" movement with an appearance this year at the Conservative Political Action Conference in the U.S.

The Trump administration provided a \$20 billion credit swap line to bolster Milei ahead of the election and was looking to provide an additional \$20 billion to support the value of Argentina's peso.

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## Japan tightens security ahead of Trump's arrival

Japan's capital saw heightened security ahead of U.S. President Donald Trump's arrival on Monday. Tokyo's metropolitan police set up a special task force and mobilized some 18,000 officers.

At Tokyo's Haneda airport, where Trump will arrive, all lockers and garbage bins were closed or removed. In downtown Tokyo, vehicles were checked and police dogs were stationed near the U.S. Embassy, where riot police were also deployed. One man was arrested for allegedly carrying knives outside the embassy.

## Trump departs Malaysia for Japan

Trump is moving on to the second leg of his Asia tour, boarding Air Force One for Japan after time in Kuala Lumpur for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit.

The U.S. president didn't talk to gathered reporters as he walked the red carpet and watched dancers as he made his way to the airplane.

Still, the president felt his time in Malaysia was productive, calling it a "very vibrant" nation in a post on his social media site. Trump noted the ceasefire agreement signed between Thailand and Cambodia as well as trade frameworks that were part of his time with leaders.

"Now, off to Japan!!!" Trump said on Truth Social.

## Freeman's homer in 18th inning lifts Dodgers over Blue Jays 6-5 in World Series classic

By BETH HARRIS AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Eighteen innings in Game 3 of the World Series at Dodger Stadium again.

And this Hollywood rerun had a similar ending.

Freddie Freeman homered leading off the bottom of the 18th, Shohei Ohtani went deep twice during another record-setting performance and the Los Angeles Dodgers outlasted the Toronto Blue Jays 6-5 in an instant classic Monday night.

The defending champion Dodgers took a 2-1 lead in the best-of-seven matchup and still have a chance to win the title at home — something they haven't done since 1963.

"That could go down as one of the greatest games of all time," manager Dave Roberts said.

Freeman drove left-hander Brendon Little's full-count sinker 406 feet to straightaway center field, finally ending a baseball marathon that lasted 6 hours, 39 minutes, and matched the longest by innings in post-season history.

"Oh gosh, just pure excitement," he said. "That's as good as it gets."

The only other World Series contest to go 18 innings was Game 3 at Dodger Stadium seven years ago. Freeman's current teammate, Max Muncy, won that one for Los Angeles with an 18th-inning homer against the Boston Red Sox in a game that took 7 hours, 20 minutes.

It was Freeman's second World Series walk-off homer in two years. The star first baseman hit the first game-ending grand slam in Series history to win Game 1 in 10 innings last season against the New York Yankees.

"This one took a little longer," Freeman said. "But this game was incredible. Our bullpen was absolutely incredible."

Will Klein, the last reliever left for the Dodgers, got the biggest win of his career. He allowed one hit over four shutout innings and threw 72 pitches — twice as many as his previous high in the majors.

"We weren't losing that game," Klein said, "and so I had to keep going back out there."

Yoshinobu Yamamoto, who threw 105 pitches Saturday at Toronto in his second consecutive complete game, was warming up in the bullpen as Klein worked out of trouble in the top of the 18th.

"I don't know how I kept going, but I just knew every inning that I went out there, it was going to be another zero. If I had to keep going out, there were going to be more zeros," Klein said. "I was sitting at home in Arizona last month, you know? This is crazy."

A total of 19 pitchers — 10 for the Dodgers — combined to throw 609 pitches in a game that ended at



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11:50 p.m. on the West Coast. Three-time Cy Young Award winner Clayton Kershaw came out of the LA bullpen to escape a bases-loaded jam in the 12th, pitching in extra innings for the first time in his illustrious career.

"The Dodgers didn't win a World Series today," Blue Jays manager John Schneider cautioned. "They won a game."

As the hours crept by, Vladimir Guerrero Jr. munched on an apple at the dugout railing. A staffer brought a fruit tray onto the bench and the Toronto slugger helped himself to another piece.

"We tried. We did everything we could. They did the same thing," Guerrero said. "But in the end, they came away with the victory."

Most fans in a crowd of 52,654 who stuck around were on their feet throughout, including 89-year-old Hall of Famer Sandy Koufax, and only sat down between innings.

Will Smith flied out to the left-center fence leading off the bottom of the 14th. Long drives by Freeman and teammate Teoscar Hernández also died on the warning track in extra innings, with the temperature dropping in Chavez Ravine as the night grew late.

Ohtani's second solo homer tied it 5-all in the seventh. The two-way superstar, scheduled to start Game 4 on the mound Tuesday, also doubled twice and became the second player with four extra-base hits in a World Series game. Frank Isbell had four doubles for the Chicago White Sox in Game 5 against the Chicago Cubs in 1906.

After getting four hits in the first seven innings, Ohtani drew five consecutive walks — four intentional. That made him the first major leaguer in 83 years to reach base safely nine times in a game. Nobody else has done it even seven times in a postseason game.

"What matters the most is we won," Ohtani said through a translator. "What matters the most is we flip the page and play the next game. ... I want to go to sleep as soon as possible so I can get ready."

Dodgers rookie Roki Sasaki induced consecutive groundouts with two runners aboard to end the eighth. He stranded two runners in the ninth, too, after second baseman Tommy Edman made a terrific defensive play for the second out of the inning.

Edman also threw out a runner at home plate to end the 10th on a perfect relay from Hernández in right field, as pinch-runner Davis Schneider tried to score from first on a double by Nathan Lukes.

"Crazy, crazy, crazy, crazy game," Blue Jays starter Max Scherzer said.

With two outs in the Toronto seventh, Guerrero singled off reliever Blake Treinen and scored from first on Bo Bichette's sharp single down the right-field line for a 5-4 lead.

The ball appeared to deflect off a television sound man along the low retaining wall in foul territory before caroming into shallow right field. Hernández's throw home was wide, and Guerrero narrowly beat Smith's tag by slapping the plate with his hand for a 5-4 lead.

Scherzer went 4 1/3 innings and became the first pitcher to appear in the World Series with four teams. His first Fall Classic came in 2012 with Detroit.

"We came out on the wrong side of this and it stings and it burns," Scherzer said. "You want to win that game, but so proud of everybody's effort."

Home runs by Hernández in the second and Ohtani in the third staked the Dodgers to a 2-0 lead.

Toronto rallied with four runs — two unearned because of Edman's error — to take a 4-2 lead in the fourth.

Alejandro Kirk hit a three-run homer off Dodgers starter Tyler Glasnow and dashed excitedly through the Blue Jays dugout holding their home run jacket. Andrés Giménez added a sacrifice fly before Glasnow completed a 29-pitch inning.

Los Angeles tied it at 4 in the fifth.

Kiké Hernández singled leading off against Scherzer and scored on Ohtani's double to left-center off reliever Mason Fluharty. Ohtani came around on Freeman's single down the right-field line.

Up next

Toronto RHP Shane Bieber makes his first World Series start and fourth of this postseason in Game 4 on Tuesday.

Ohtani hit three homers and struck out 10 batters over six-plus scoreless innings in Game 4 of the National League Championship Series against Milwaukee.

## Hurricane Melissa bears down on Jamaica as its strongest storm in recorded history

By JOHN MYERS JR. and DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP) — Hurricane Melissa was set to pummel Jamaica on Tuesday as a catastrophic Category 5 storm, the strongest to lash the island since recordkeeping began 174 years ago.

The storm was expected to make landfall early Tuesday and slice diagonally across the island, entering near St. Elizabeth parish in the south and exiting around St. Ann parish in the north, forecasters said. Shortly after, it is expected to hit Cuba.

Hours before the storm, the Jamaican government said it had done all it could to prepare as it warned of catastrophic damage.

"There is no infrastructure in the region that can withstand a Category 5," Prime Minister Andrew Holness said. "The question now is the speed of recovery. That's the challenge."

Landslides, fallen trees and numerous power outages were reported ahead of the storm, with officials in Jamaica cautioning that the cleanup and damage assessment would be slow.

A life-threatening storm surge of up to 13 feet (4 meters) is expected across southern Jamaica, with officials concerned about the impact on some hospitals along the coastline. Health Minister Christopher Tufton said some patients were relocated from the ground floor to the second floor, "and (we) hope that will suffice for any surge that will take place."

The storm already was blamed for seven deaths in the Caribbean, including three in Jamaica, three in Haiti and one in the Dominican Republic, where another person remains missing.

Jamaica braces for catastrophic damage

Early Tuesday, Melissa was centered about 115 miles (180 kilometers) west-southwest of Kingston and about 290 miles (465 kilometers) southwest of Guantánamo, Cuba. The system had maximum sustained winds of 175 mph (280 kph) and was moving north-northeast at 5 mph (8 kph), according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami.

"We will get through it together," said Evan Thompson, principal director at Jamaica's meteorological service.

Colin Bogle, a Mercy Corps advisor based near Kingston, said most families are sheltering in place despite the government ordering evacuations in flood-prone communities.

"Many have never experienced anything like this before, and the uncertainty is frightening," he said. "There is profound fear of losing homes and livelihoods, of injury, and of displacement."

Matthew Samuda, Jamaica's water and environment minister, said he had more than 50 generators available to deploy after the storm, but warned people to set aside clean water and use it sparingly.

"Every drop will count," he said.

Melissa takes aim at Cuba

Melissa also was expected to make landfall in eastern Cuba late Tuesday as a powerful hurricane.

A hurricane warning was in effect for Granma, Santiago de Cuba, Guantánamo and Holguin provinces, while a tropical storm warning was in effect for Las Tunas. Up to 20 inches (51 centimeters) of rain were forecast for parts of Cuba, along with a significant storm surge along the coast.

Cuban officials said Monday that they were evacuating more than 600,000 people from the region, including Santiago, the island's second-largest city.

Melissa also has drenched the southern regions of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, with a tropical storm warning still in effect for Haiti.

The hurricane was forecast to turn northeast after Cuba and strike the southeast Bahamas by Wednesday evening.

A hurricane warning was in effect for the southeastern and central Bahamas, and a tropical storm warning was issued for the Turks and Caicos Islands.

## Trump praises Japan's new prime minister, saying US is an 'ally at the strongest level'

By JOSH BOAK and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — President Donald Trump began one of his busiest days of his Asia trip on Tuesday by warmly greeting the new Japanese prime minister, and taking her with him as he spoke to U.S. troops aboard an aircraft carrier.

Although Trump is visiting one of America's most steadfast allies in Asia, there's no shortage of uncertainty while he's there. Sanae Takaichi, who became the country's first female prime minister only days ago, must solidify her relationship with Trump while defending her country's economic interests. Trump is trying to nail down \$550 billion in Japanese investment as part of a trade agreement.

Trump and Takaichi swap warm words

As Trump and Takaichi met on Tuesday, they shook hands and he paid her a compliment: "That's a very strong handshake."

In return, Takaichi talked about watching the third game of the U.S. World Series before the event. She added that Japan would give Washington 250 cherry trees next year to honor America's 250th anniversary, as well as fireworks from Akita Prefecture for July 4 celebrations.

She used her early remarks to mention former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, her archconservative mentor who forged a strong bond with Trump during his first term through their shared interest of golf.

"As a matter of fact, Prime Minister Abe often told me about your dynamic diplomacy," she said.

Trump called her role as Japan's first woman prime minister as a "big deal," putting an emphasis on the U.S. commitment to Japan. While the president in the past has publicly scolded his foreign counterparts, he had nothing but praise for Takaichi.

"Anything I can do to help Japan, we will be there," Trump said. "We are an ally at the strongest level."

Takaichi is primed for a charm offensive, including a potential purchase of Ford F-150 trucks. Reporters arriving for the event were hustled past a gold-hued Ford F-150 as well as what appeared to be white American-made Toyota vehicles parked outside the Akasaka Palace, which is Tokyo's guest house for visiting foreign leaders.

Trump has often complained that Japan doesn't buy American vehicles, which are often too wide to be practical on narrow Japanese streets.

The Japanese delegation also made the strategic choice to serve American beef and rice during a working lunch that was mixed with Japanese ingredients, at which the two leaders also discussed efforts to end Russia's war in Ukraine.

Takaichi also gave Trump a putter used by Abe, the former prime minister, and a golf bag signed by the professional golfer Hideki Matsuyama, according to a post on X by White House aide Margo Martin. They signed black "Japan is Back" baseball caps that resembled Trump's own red "Make America Great Again" caps.

Agreements vow a 'golden age' for alliance and cooperation on critical minerals

Both leaders signed the implementation of an agreement for the "golden age" of their nations' alliance. When the document was held up after signing, it ran to less than one page and reaffirmed the earlier framework by which the U.S. would tax goods imported from Japan at 15% and the creation of a \$550 billion fund for Japan to invest in the U.S.

Trump and Takaichi then signed a second agreement, this one laying out a U.S.-Japan framework for securing the supply of critical minerals and rare earths. That agreement suggested that some of the investment dollars would go to the development of rare earths needed for advanced technologies.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters that Takaichi would be nominating Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize. The two leaders also met with people whose family members were abducted by North Korea.

Trump talks to troops on US aircraft carrier

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Although Trump has focused his foreign policy toward Asia around tariffs and trade, he also spoke aboard the USS George Washington, an aircraft carrier docked at an American naval base near Tokyo. The president brought Takaichi with him and she also spoke.

The president talked about individual units on the aircraft carrier, his political opponents, national security and the U.S. economy, saying that Takaichi had told him that Toyota would be investing \$10 billion in auto plants in America.

Trump arrived in Tokyo on Monday, when he met with the emperor in a ceremonial visit. He was previously in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where he participated in the annual summit of the Association of South-east Asian Nations.

The gathering was an opportunity for Trump to celebrate an expanded ceasefire agreement between Thailand and Cambodia, which skirmished along their disputed border earlier this year. Trump had pressured them to stop fighting by threatening to withhold trade agreements.

There were also signs that tensions between the U.S. and China were cooling off ahead of a planned meeting between Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping, which is expected to take place in South Korea later this week. Top negotiators from each country said a trade deal was coming together, which could prevent a potentially damaging confrontation between the world's two largest economies.

Details were scarce, and it was unclear how much any agreement would resolve long-standing issues, or if it would return the relationship to the status quo before recent confrontations. China has restructured the export of rare earth elements that are critical for high-tech manufacturing, and Trump responded by threatening tariffs that even he admits would be unsustainable.

Trump is scheduled to leave Wednesday for South Korea, which is hosting the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit.

## **Asian shares mostly fall as region watches for outcome from Trump's visits**

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares were mostly lower on Tuesday as investors watched to see what might come of a planned meeting between President Donald Trump and China's top leader.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng dropped 0.6% to 26,276.18, reversing earlier gains, and the Shanghai Composite index lost 0.2% to 3,988.68 after briefly topping 4,000, its highest level in a decade.

Trump has suggested he expects to forge another trade agreement with Chinese President Xi Jinping when they meet on the sidelines of a Pacific Rim summit in South Korea later this week. That could alleviate trade tensions that have roiled world markets and disrupted business since Trump's return to the White House.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 lost 0.6% to finish at 50,219.18, falling back after hitting record highs since Sanae Takaichi became prime minister pledging to increase economic stimulus and boost defense spending.

On Tuesday, Trump is meeting with Takaichi, visiting a U.S. military base and then meeting with business leaders in Tokyo. Both sides are reaffirming their security alliance and Japan is promising to abide by Trump's demands for more investments, and bigger role in its own defense and increased imports from the U.S.

"So Asia opens not with fireworks, but with an uneasy calm — a market breath half held. Traders aren't chasing the rumor this time; they're watching, weighing, waiting for something real to sign," said Stephen Innes, managing partner at SPI Asset Management.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 fell 0.5% to 9,012.50. South Korea's Kospi shed 0.8% to 4,010.41 after the government reported relatively strong quarterly economic growth thanks to strong consumption, investments and exports.

On Wall Street, stocks climbed to more records on Monday ahead of a week packed with potentially market-moving events. The S&P 500 rose 1.2% to 6,875.16. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 0.7% to 47,544.59, and the Nasdaq composite jumped 1.9% to 23,637.46.

The U.S. stock market has been on a record-breaking rally. The S&P 500 has shot up a stunning 38%



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since hitting a low in April, when worries about Trump's tariffs on China and other countries were at their peak. Besides hopes for easing trade tensions, the rally has also been built on expectations for several more things to happen.

One is that the Federal Reserve will keep cutting interest rates in order to give the slowing job market a boost. The Fed's next announcement on interest rates is due on Wednesday, and the nearly unanimous expectation among traders is that it will cut the federal funds rate by a quarter of a percentage point at a second straight meeting.

It's not a certainty though, because the Fed has also warned it may have to change course if inflation accelerates beyond its still-high level. That's because low interest rates can make inflation worse.

Besides lower interest rates, another expectation that's propped up stock prices is the forecast that U.S. companies will continue to deliver solid growth in profits. Some of Wall Street's most influential stocks are set to report their results this week, including Alphabet, Meta Platforms and Microsoft on Wednesday, and Amazon and Apple on Thursday.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury eased to 3.99% from 4.02% late Friday.

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude slipped 14 cents to \$61.17 a barrel. Brent crude fell 18 cents to \$64.72 a barrel.

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar dropped to 152.22 Japanese yen from 152.88 yen. The euro cost \$1.1654, up from \$1.1645.

## **In AP interview, East Timor's Ramos-Horta says personal diplomacy could bring Myanmar ceasefire**

By DAVID RISING Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — The president of East Timor told The Associated Press on Monday that he would be willing to intercede personally to try and break the impasse in the region's most challenging problem — Myanmar's raging civil war, one day after his country was granted membership in the influential Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

In a wide-ranging interview in the Malaysian capital, where ASEAN was holding its annual summit, President José Ramos-Horta said that while his country may be the region's youngest and one of its poorest nations, its people and leaders were long on diplomatic experience.

"In the midst of so many problems in the region, in the world, ASEAN doesn't need another headache," he said. "But at the same time, we do have some experience in reconciliation, ending conflicts, and healing wounds of communities, of society."

That background, he said, has served his government well in balancing East Timor's close relationship with China and its ties to the United States, Australia and other Western nations, and in maintaining stability at home as it works to tackle complicated problems like widespread poverty, malnutrition and youth unemployment.

"My advice is to reach out to the people, do not fear them," he said. "A government that is very connected to the people, that is reachable, is already a long way toward creating conditions of peace."

A history forged in conflict

East Timor, also known as Timor Leste, sits between Indonesia and Australia and was a Portuguese colony for more than four centuries before it declared independence in 1975.

Indonesia invaded nine days later, beginning a brutal 24-year occupation that claimed tens of thousands of lives through conflict, famine and disease. A U.N.-supervised referendum in 1999 paved the way for independence.

Both Ramos-Horta and his Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao are heroes of East Timor's independence struggle, which led to its establishment as a free, democratic country in 2002.

Ramos-Horta won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996 for his efforts toward a "just and peaceful solution to the conflict."

Myanmar's war has confounded the region

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The 75-year-old has been outspokenly critical of the seizure of power by Myanmar's military, known as the Tatmadaw, from the democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in 2021.

That sparked widespread public protests, whose violent suppression by security forces triggered an armed resistance that has spiraled into a civil war with ethnic minority militias and pro-democracy groups. Thousands have been killed and millions displaced.

Myanmar, an ASEAN member, has largely ignored the bloc's 2021 Five-Point Consensus, which calls, among other things, for an immediate cessation of hostilities. Its refusal to comply has meant its political leaders are barred from ASEAN summits, though it does send bureaucrats to take part.

For Ramos-Horta, ASEAN's peace plan is "a very good paper" but too aspirational and thus difficult to achieve.

With people fighting and dying daily, there is a need to reach out to all sides — in one place, in person and including the Tatmadaw — to try and find an immediate agreement on a ceasefire with no preconditions, such as insisting that the military give up power, he said.

"Then explore a road map towards stabilization, a new political agreement between everyone," Ramos-Horta said.

"That doesn't have to be perfect — don't expect a perfectionist democracy, it doesn't exist. Maybe in your eyes there is perfect democracy; the only problem with that horizon is you walk, walk towards the horizon and it never hits you."

Ramos-Horta's criticism of Myanmar and his willingness to engage with the opposition National Unity Government group prompted its military leadership to threaten to block East Timor's membership bid for ASEAN. East Timor overcame that hurdle, and was named the bloc's 11th member on Sunday.

Still, while acknowledging Myanmar's military leaders may reject him as an envoy, he said he would be willing to personally travel there to engage them if ASEAN agreed as a group on the approach.

"I will go to Myanmar to talk with the military because, well, they hold significant power," he said. "Power to do harm and power to stop doing harm, so you have to talk with them."

## Problems at home

East Timor has its own problems at home, with high youth unemployment and widespread poverty.

Its accession to ASEAN gives East Timor, which has just 1.4 million people and gross domestic product of around \$2 billion, better access to an economic community of nations with some 680 million people and a \$3.8 trillion economy.

The bloc has already given East Timor's people greater access to education, which Ramos-Horta called his "number one priority."

"There are many areas of potential benefit to Timor-Leste coming from ASEAN countries," he said. "One, that is already happening anyway, (is) more scholarships, opportunities for young Timorese to study across Southeast Asia."

The government is seeking to diversify the economy from a reliance on oil and gas revenues, which are running out, but that will take time.

Meantime, it has a healthy \$18 billion sovereign wealth fund, but experts believe it might not last much more than a decade unless new sources of fossil fuels are tapped.

Talks with Australia over the development of Greater Sunrise fields, which contain an estimated \$50 billion in gas that lies beneath the seabed that separates the two countries have been long stalled.

Ramos-Horta said he is hopeful a breakthrough soon, but indicated he would not back down from his country's demand that gas be piped to East Timor for processing rather than Australia.

"That would transform our economy, our lives, but also completely transform the relationship, Timor Leste and Australia," he said. "Timor Leste would be ... one of Australia's closest, closest friends, closest partners."

## Trump 'knows how to use his power'

He downplayed concerns from some in the U.S. and elsewhere of East Timor's strong economic ties with China, which is actively working to increase its influence in the Indo-Pacific region, saying that his country

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has no Chinese debt that could be used as political pressure.

He also said that he was more than willing to work with the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump, who, he said "makes international relations very entertaining."

"He managed to whip all these European sycophants into line, he knows how to use his power," he said laughingly. "And knowing how to work with his administration, with the U.S. Congress, is when you can get things done."

He added that he had not, however, nominated Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize.

## **Big win in midterm vote for Argentina's President Milei boosts markets and vindicates Trump**

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Markets in Argentina rallied, the peso surged and government bonds jumped on Monday as President Javier Milei hailed his party's resounding victory in midterm congressional elections as a mandate to press ahead with radical free-market reforms of Argentina's long-troubled economy.

Investors regained confidence in the chronically depreciating peso they had been dumping in droves just last week to hedge against a Milei defeat. The currency surged more than 10% on Monday after markets opened, closing 3% higher at 1,460 pesos per dollar.

Argentina's local Merval stock index finished with a 21% gain at closing and the country's dollar-denominated bonds set to expire in 2035 rose as much as 14 cents during trading hours.

The price movements following Milei's party more than doubling its representation appeared to validate the Trump administration's bet on its close ideological ally in South America.

"He had a lot of help from us," U.S. President Donald Trump told reporters Monday on Air Force One, referring to his administration's \$40 billion in pledged support for Milei and threats to rescind the money if Milei lost the vote to Argentina's left-leaning populists.

"He's working against 100 years of bad policies, and he's going to break them, thanks to support from the United States."

Perhaps never in history has a limited Argentine legislative election generated so much interest abroad, both in Washington and on Wall Street. Congratulations poured in from Milei's right-wing allies further afield, too, from Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"We have a saying in our brave military: Who dares — wins," Netanyahu said, addressing Milei. "You dared, you won."

Markets exuberant, Argentine voters apathetic

Since coming to power on a pledge to take a chain saw to state spending two years ago, Milei has cut government red tape, slashed the public payroll and deregulated the economy.

His brutal cost-cutting measures have inflicted painful job losses and eroded purchasing power for millions of Argentines. But the program has also tamed runaway inflation.

Before Sunday, Milei found himself on uncertain ground as Argentine markets floundered and the country headed toward a cash crunch after a landslide local election win for the opposition raised fears that Argentines were losing patience with Milei's harsh austerity.

Alarmed that Argentina could return to the budget-busting populism of its long-dominant Peronist opposition, investors rushed to pull their money as analysts predicted a tough path for Milei in the midterms. The Argentine peso plunged to a record low of over 1,500 against the dollar last week.

But in the end, Milei's La Libertad Avanza party emerged with nearly 41% of Sunday's national vote for the lower house, triumphing over the Peronist coalition that won 32%.

Even Milei admitted on Monday that the outcome exceeded his expectations. "I'm surprised by the result, honestly," he told a local TV channel.

Yet political analysts cautioned that, with turnout in Sunday's election among the lowest since Argentina's 1983 transition to democracy, Milei's thumping win revealed voters' hostility toward Peronism more than

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it did their support for government cutbacks.

"What we saw was a rejection of Peronism by a significant portion of the electorate," said former Economy Minister Martín Guzmán. "This doesn't mean that Argentine society is enchanted with the economic policy of the government."

Concerns build over US rescue of Argentina

Domestic political backlash against Trump's huge U.S. rescue package for Argentina has been mounting for weeks.

Democrats on Capitol Hill have seized on the assistance to attack Trump, accusing the president of showering money on a political ally at a time when federal workers aren't getting paid amid the government shutdown.

American cattle ranchers have chafed at Trump's promises to buy Argentine beef to bring down U.S. prices. Farmers squeezed by the Trump administration's trade war with China have voiced anger over the U.S. backing a rival agricultural exporter. Even core Trump supporters have expressed concern over the aid being at odds with the president's "America First" doctrine.

Experts say that the Trump administration has created a worrying precedent by tapping the Treasury's Exchange Stabilization Fund to bail out a friendly foreign government.

"The fund is not supposed to be a slush fund for influencing elections or for foreign policy purposes," said Rohit Chopra, the former head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. "U.S. involvement will continue to put American taxpayers at risk without authorization."

Trump and U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent have brushed off criticism, insisting that the U.S. has a strategic stake in Argentina's economic stability.

Although the brief burst of market optimism had no direct effect on ordinary Americans or Argentines, Trump suggested that it offered a windfall to U.S. investors and fund managers.

"The bonds have gone up, their whole debt rating has gone up," Trump said. "That election made a lot of money for the United States."

Milei's tiny party grows, though still short of a majority

It was mathematically impossible for La Libertad Avanza to win a majority in Sunday's elections, which renewed nearly half the seats in the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of Congress, and a third of those in the Senate.

Having picked up more than a third of seats in both houses, Milei no longer faces the prospect of opposition lawmakers overturning his vetoes and jeopardizing his prized fiscal balance — as repeatedly happened in the last month.

But whether Milei can see through long-term reforms and solve structural problems like Argentina's shortage of dollars depends on the irascible president showing new willingness to build coalitions in Congress, analysts warned.

"Milei has enough support now to overturn attempts to derail his agenda but this doesn't get him out of the woods in any way, shape or form," said Monica de Bolle, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

"In the short term they'll be OK, they have all this money being thrown in their direction now, but there will come a point where we'll see the same sort of turmoil that we saw a month ago and the question will be, what will the U.S. do?"

When asked that question on Monday, Trump said the U.S. "could consider" extending more financial aid to Argentina.

## **Judge seeks assurances that Abrego Garcia won't be deported to Liberia in violation of court order**

GREENBELT, Md. (AP) — A federal judge in Maryland on Monday sought assurances that the government will not deport Kilmar Abrego Garcia before she has lifted an injunction barring his removal from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement filed a notice late last week of their plan to deport him to the



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West African nation of Liberia as early as Friday. It's the latest in a series of African countries the agency has designated as possible destinations for the Salvadoran national.

Abrego Garcia has an American wife and child and has lived in Maryland for years, but he immigrated to the U.S. illegally as a teenager. In 2019, an immigration judge granted him protection from being deported back to El Salvador, where he faces a "well-founded fear" of violence from a gang that targeted his family. Earlier this year, his mistaken deportation to El Salvador, where he was held in a notoriously brutal prison despite having no criminal record, galvanized opposition to President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown. Facing mounting public pressure and a court order, the Trump administration brought him back to the U.S. in June.

During a status conference on Monday, U.S. District Judge Paula Xinis questioned why the government does not simply deport Abrego Garcia to Costa Rica — a country he has said he is willing to go to because the government has promised he would be welcomed as a legal immigrant and not re-deported to El Salvador.

"Any insight you can shed on why we're continuing this hearing when you could deport him to a third country tomorrow?" Xinis asked government attorneys. She noted that both the government and Abrego Garcia were "about to burn significant resources" in fighting over whether he can legally be deported to Liberia.

Government attorneys, including Deputy Assistant Attorney General Drew C. Ensign and Deputy Assistant Attorney General Jonathan Guynn, didn't immediately have an answer but suggested it could be part of an upcoming court filing.

In the meantime, the attorneys said ICE is preparing to interview Abrego Garcia after he filed an official notice expressing fear of deportation to Liberia. His attorney, Simon Sandoval-Moshenberg, told the judge they have received some confidential documents pertaining to assurances from the Liberian government about how Abrego Garcia would be treated there. However, they are not satisfied by what they have received. He hinted that the Liberian government has only agreed to take Abrego Garcia for a limited time.

The administration's deportation agreements with so-called third countries have been contested in court by advocacy groups, who have argued that they violate due process rights and that immigrants are being sent to countries with long histories of human rights violations. But in June, a divided Supreme Court allowed the swift removal of immigrants to countries other than their homelands and with minimal notice.

When Abrego Garcia was returned to the U.S. in June, he was charged in Tennessee with human smuggling. He has pleaded not guilty and asked the judge to dismiss that case. A hearing on the motion to dismiss is set for next week, and Xinis noted the fact that the government seems ready to deport him just prior to that, saying his removal would be the end of the criminal case.

"It doesn't pass the sniff test that there hasn't been some coordination" Xinis said, noting that the hearing in the criminal case was "common knowledge."

"If I don't lift the injunction, you are abiding by it, and he's not going to be removed? Is that right?" she asked the government attorneys. They agreed.

In a separate action in immigration court, Abrego Garcia has applied for asylum in the United States.

## Suspect in Charlie Kirk killing can wear street clothes in court amid 'extraordinary' attention

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — The 22-year-old Utah man charged with killing Charlie Kirk can appear in court wearing street clothes but must be physically restrained due to security concerns, a judge ruled Monday.

Attorneys for Tyler Robinson argued images of him shackled and in jail clothing would spread widely in a case with extensive press coverage and public interest, which they said could prejudice future jurors.

Judge Tony Graf agreed to make some allowances to protect Robinson's presumption of innocence before a trial, agreeing that the case has drawn "extraordinary" public and media attention.

"Mr. Robinson shall be dressed as one who is presumed innocent," Graf said during a virtual court hearing.

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Utah prosecutors have charged Robinson with aggravated murder in the Sept. 10 shooting of the conservative activist on a Utah college campus. They plan to seek the death penalty.

While Robinson has no prior criminal history, Graf said the charges he faces are extremely serious and present safety concerns in the courtroom. It's the court's highest priority to protect the attorneys, court staff and Robinson himself during what could be emotional hearings, Graf said before denying Robinson's request to appear without restraints. He did, however, prohibit members of the media from photographing or filming Robinson's restraints.

Robinson is accused of shooting Kirk — an ally of President Donald Trump who worked to steer young voters toward conservatism — from a rooftop overlooking a crowded courtyard at Utah Valley University in Orem.

Robinson was arrested the following night when he showed up with his parents to turn himself in at his hometown sheriff's office in southwest Utah, more than a three-hour drive from Orem.

As law enforcement agencies were scouring the state for the shooter, Washington County Sheriff Nate Brooksby said he received a phone call from a retired deputy saying he knew who killed Kirk. Robinson's family had reached out to the retired deputy, who they knew through their involvement with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and worked with him to help negotiate a peaceful surrender.

"Part of the negotiation of getting him to bring himself in was that, that we would treat it as delicate and as soft as possible to make him feel comfortable to where he would show up at my office," Brooksby said just after the arrest.

Prosecutors have since revealed incriminating text messages and DNA evidence that they say connect Robinson to the killing.

Robinson reportedly texted his romantic partner that he targeted Kirk because he "had enough of his hatred."

Graf ordered Robinson to appear on Jan. 16 and Jan. 30 for his first in-person public hearings. He appeared Monday from jail on a blacked out screen and spoke only to confirm he was present.

## **Hurricane Melissa bears down on Jamaica and threatens to be the island's strongest recorded storm**

By JOHN MYERS JR. and DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP) — Hurricane Melissa intensified into a Category 5 storm Monday as it drew closer to Jamaica, where forecasters expected it to unleash catastrophic flooding, landslides and widespread damage. At that strength, it would be the strongest hurricane to hit the island since record-keeping began in 1851.

Blamed for seven deaths in the northern Caribbean as it headed toward the island, Melissa was on track to make landfall Tuesday in Jamaica before coming ashore in Cuba later in the day and then heading toward the Bahamas. It was not expected to affect the United States.

Anticipating the hardship in store for his country, Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness said, "I have been on my knees in prayer."

Hanna Mcleod, a 23-year-old hotel receptionist in the Jamaican capital of Kingston, said she boarded up the windows at her home, where her husband and brother are staying. She stocked up on canned corned beef and mackerel and left candles and flashlights throughout the house.

"I just told them to keep the door closed," she said. "I am definitely worried. This is actually the first time I'll be experiencing this type of hurricane."

Category 5 is the top of the Saffir-Simpson hurricane scale, with sustained winds exceeding 157 mph (250 kph). Melissa would be the strongest hurricane in recorded history to hit the small Caribbean nation directly, said Jonathan Porter, chief meteorologist at AccuWeather.

A storm surge of up to 13 feet (4 meters) was expected along coastal Kingston, which Porter said is home to critical infrastructure such as Jamaica's main international airport and power plants.

"This can become a true humanitarian crisis very quickly, and there is likely going to be the need for a

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lot of international support," Porter said in a phone interview.

System has winds of 175 mph

On Monday night, Melissa was centered about 155 miles (245 kilometers) southwest of Kingston and about 335 miles (535 kilometers) southwest of Guantánamo, Cuba. The system had maximum sustained winds of 175 mph (280 kph) and was moving northwest at 2 mph (4 kph), according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami.

Parts of eastern Jamaica could see up to 30 inches (76 centimeters) of rain while western Haiti could get 16 inches (40 centimeters), the hurricane center said, citing the likelihood of "catastrophic flash flooding and numerous landslides."

Mandatory evacuations were ordered in flood-prone communities in Jamaica, with buses ferrying people to safe shelter.

But some insisted on staying.

"I hear what they say, but I am not leaving," said Noel Francis, a 64-year-old fisherman who lives on the beach in the southern town of Old Harbor Bay, where he was born and grew up. "I can manage myself." His neighbor, Bruce Dawkins, said he also had no plans to leave his home.

"I am not going anywhere," Dawkins said, wearing a raincoat and holding a beer. The fisherman said he had already secured his vessel and planned to ride out the storm with his friend.

Several towns along Jamaica's southern coast already reported power outages as winds picked up throughout the night.

"My only concern is flooding, because we live near the sea," said Hyacinth White, 49, who said she had no plans to evacuate to a shelter.

Officials said the biggest storm surge was expected in the Black River community in western Jamaica, where Sandra Walker was the sole street vendor working just hours ahead of the hurricane.

"I have no choice but to be here," she said as she sorted potatoes, green bananas, tomatoes and scalion stalks in her stall.

Walker, a single mother of two, is still struggling to recover after Hurricane Beryl destroyed her business and home last year. She lives by the ocean but does not plan to go to a shelter because she had a "terrible" shelter experience during Hurricane Ivan, when the facility offered only a handful of tins of corned beef to share.

Jamaican government officials said they were worried that fewer than 1,000 people were in the more than 130 shelters open across the island.

"It's way, way below what is required for a Category 5 hurricane," said Daryl Vaz, Jamaica's transport minister, who urged people "to be smart ... If you are not, unfortunately, you will pay the consequences."

Storm could be most powerful to hit Jamaica in 174 years

The slow-moving storm has killed at least three people in Haiti and a fourth person in the Dominican Republic, where another person remains missing. Two people died in Jamaica over the weekend as they cut trees ahead of the storm, and a third one died after being electrocuted.

"It's nothing to play with," said Water and Environment Minister Matthew Samuda. "The time for preparation is all but over."

More than 50,000 customers were without power. Landslides, fallen trees and downed power lines were reported ahead of the storm.

In eastern Cuba, a hurricane warning was in effect for the Granma, Santiago de Cuba, Guantánamo and Holguin provinces, while a tropical storm warning was in effect for Las Tunas. Up to 20 inches (51 centimeters) of rain was forecast for parts of Cuba, along with a significant storm surge along the coast.

Cuban officials said they would evacuate more than 600,000 people from the region, including Santiago, the island's second-largest city. Long bus lines formed in some areas.

Later, Melissa was forecast to barrel through the southeastern and central Bahamas, which were under a hurricane warning. A tropical storm warning was issued for the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Evan Thompson, principal director at Jamaica's meteorological service, warned that cleanup and dam-

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age assessment would be severely delayed because of anticipated landslides, flooding and blocked roads.

A storm of Category 4 or higher has not made landfall in Jamaica in 174 years of record-keeping. Hurricane Gilbert was a Category 3 storm when it hit the island in 1988. Hurricanes Ivan and Beryl were both Category 4, but they did not make landfall, Thompson said.

Drenching rain in the Dominican Republic and Haiti

The storm already has drenched the Dominican Republic, where schools and government offices were ordered to remain closed on Monday in four of nine provinces still under the most serious form of weather alert.

Melissa damaged more than 750 homes across the country and displaced more than 3,760 people. Floodwaters also have cut access to at least 48 communities, officials said.

In neighboring Haiti, the storm destroyed crops in three regions, including 15 hectares (37 acres) of maize at a time when at least 5.7 million people, more than half of the country's population, are experiencing crisis levels of hunger.

Melissa is the 13th named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to Nov. 30.

## **NBA starts review of policies after gambling-related arrests of Rozier, Billups**

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

The NBA, in reaction to the arrests of Miami guard Terry Rozier and Portland coach Chauncey Billups last week for their alleged role in gambling schemes, has started a review of how the league can protect not just the integrity of the game but its players and coaches as well.

The league made those revelations in a memo sent to all 30 teams, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press.

"Given the spread of legal betting to the majority of U.S. states, the recurrence of integrity issues across sports, and the emergence of novel betting formats and markets, this is an opportune time to carefully reassess how sports betting should be regulated and how sports leagues can best protect themselves, their players, and their fans," read the memo, sent by the NBA's legal department.

Meanwhile, the quest for answers has reached lawmakers in Washington with the Senate on Monday following a request from a House committee last week in asking the NBA for information.

Sen. Ted Cruz, the Republican chairman of the Commerce Committee, and Sen. Maria Cantwell, the top Democrat on that panel, want information "about how the NBA investigated and handled these allegations as well as what steps the Association is taking to maintain the public's trust."

Their specific questions revolve around why the league's probe of Rozier and the events surrounding a March 23, 2023 game when he was with the Charlotte Hornets.

"This Committee needs to understand the specifics of the NBA's investigation and why Rozier was cleared to continue playing basketball," Cruz and Cantwell wrote. "This is a matter of Congressional concern. The integrity of NBA games must be trustworthy and free from the influence of organized crime or gambling-related activity. Sports betting scandals like this one may lead the American public to assume that all sports are corrupt."

They asked Commissioner Adam Silver to provide answers by Nov. 10.

Two indictments were unsealed last week and nearly three dozen people — most notably, Billups and Rozier — were arrested by federal officials.

Rozier was arrested because federal officials allege he conspired with associates to help them win bets based on his statistical performance in that March 2023 game. The charges are similar to what former Toronto player Jontay Porter faced before he was banned from the league by Silver in 2024.

Sportsbooks detected unusual patterns of wagers on the Charlotte game in question — prop bets involving Rozier were flagged and immediately brought to the NBA's attention — and the league probed the matter but did not find enough evidence to conclude that Rozier broke any rules.

"While the unusual betting on Terry Rozier's 'unders' in the March 2023 game was detected in real time



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because the bets were placed legally, we believe there is more that can be done from a legal/regulatory perspective to protect the integrity of the NBA and our affiliated leagues," the league told its teams. "In particular, proposition bets on individual player performance involve heightened integrity concerns and require additional scrutiny."

Monday's moves comes on the heels of several developments last week, including the NFL reminding players of its gambling policy, MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred saying that baseball is moving "as fast as we can" on a probe of two players in that sport, and a Congressional committee asking Silver for a briefing by the end of this week to discuss topics including how "gaps, if any, in existing regulations that allow illegal betting schemes to occur." Silver has said many times he would prefer federal regulation on sports betting instead of the current state-by-state approach.

It was not clear Monday if Silver would appear before the Committee on Energy and Commerce, which requested the briefing in a letter signed by six members of Congress.

Among the things the league said Monday it will take a look at: injury reports. The league publishes an injury report every hour, and teams are required to disclose statuses of players within certain windows of time before their next game. The NBA added the injury report several years ago in the interest of transparency.

The injury statuses can be used by bettors to decide which wagers to make — and if gamblers get that information before the rest of the public, it's tantamount to insider trading. Former NBA player Damon Jones now faces charges because officials said he tipped off bettors about the health status of two Los Angeles Lakers players. The details in that indictment clearly show that Jones was discussing the availability of LeBron James and former Lakers center Anthony Davis with bettors before their statuses for certain games was known publicly. There is no indication that James or Davis had any knowledge of what Jones was alleged to be doing.

There were other examples of such tipping with other clubs, federal officials said.

"With sports betting now occupying such a significant part of the current sports landscape, every effort must be made to ensure that players, coaches, and other NBA personnel are fully aware of the dire risks that gambling can impose upon their careers and livelihoods; that our injury disclosure rules are appropriate; and that players are protected from harassment from bettors," the memo said.

The league also said it is seeking input from teams, if they have any ideas on how to best proceed going forward.

## **Indiana governor calls a special session to redraw US House maps as redistricting battle spreads**

By ISABELLA VOLMERT Associated Press

The Republican governor of Indiana said Monday he's scheduling a special session to redraw congressional boundaries after weeks of pressure to back President Donald Trump's bid to add more winnable seats with midcycle redistricting.

Trump has pressed Republicans to draw new maps that give the party an easier path to maintain control of the House in the midterms. But Democrats have pushed back in some states, including Virginia, where a special session Monday marked a first step toward redistricting.

While Republicans in Texas, Missouri and North Carolina already have enacted new congressional districts, Indiana lawmakers have been hesitant. Indiana Gov. Mike Braun called for the General Assembly to convene Nov. 3 for the special session. It's unclear whether enough of the GOP-majority Senate will back new maps.

Democrats only need to gain three seats to flip control of the U.S. House. Trump hopes redistricting can help avert historical trends, in which the president's party typically loses seats in midterm elections.

Federal pressure on Indiana

Vice President JD Vance and Trump have met separately with Indiana Republicans, including Senate President Pro Tem Rodric Bray, in recent months. Braun is a staunch Trump ally in a state the president

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won by 19 percentage points in 2024, but said previously he did not want to call a special session until he was certain lawmakers would back a new map.

Indiana Republicans hold a supermajority in both chambers.

"I am calling a special legislative session to protect Hoosiers from efforts in other states that seek to diminish their voice in Washington and ensure their representation in Congress is fair," Braun said in a statement Monday.

Typically, states redraw boundaries of congressional districts every 10 years after the census has concluded. Opponents are expected to challenge any new maps in court.

Some Indiana senators remain reluctant

When Indiana Republicans adopted the existing boundaries four years ago, Bray said they would "serve Hoosiers well for the next decade."

A Bray spokesperson said last week that the Indiana Senate lacked the votes to pass a new congressional map, and on Monday said votes are still lacking, casting doubt on whether a special session can achieve Braun's goals.

With just 10 Democrats in the 50-member Senate, that means more than a dozen of the 40 Republicans oppose the idea. Some Republican state lawmakers have warned that midcycle redistricting can be costly and could backfire politically.

Republicans who vote against redistricting could be forced out of office if their colleagues back primary opponents as punishment.

GOP could target districts near Chicago and Indianapolis

Republicans outnumber Democrats in Indiana's congressional delegation 7-2, limiting possibilities of squeezing out another seat. However, many in the GOP see redistricting as a chance for the party to represent all nine seats.

The GOP would likely target Indiana's 1st Congressional District, a longtime Democratic stronghold encompassing Gary and other cities near Chicago in the state's northwest corner.

"I believe that representation should be earned through ideas and service, not political manipulation," third-term Democratic U.S. Rep. Frank Mrvan, who holds the seat, said in a statement Monday.

Republicans could also zero in on Indiana's 7th Congressional District, comprised of Marion County and the Democratic stronghold of Indianapolis. But that option would be more controversial, potentially slicing up the state's largest city and diluting Black voters' influence.

Virginia Democrats take a step toward redistricting

Changing Virginia's congressional districts requires more steps than in Indiana. The state is currently represented by six Democrats and five Republicans who ran in districts established by a court in 2021 after a bipartisan commission failed to agree on a map.

Because Virginia's redistricting commission was created by a voter-approved constitutional amendment, voters must sign off on any changes to the redistricting process. A proposed constitutional amendment would have to pass the General Assembly in two separate sessions and then be placed on the statewide ballot. Democrats are scrambling to hold that first legislative vote this year, so that they can take a second vote after a new legislative session begins Jan. 14.

On Monday, the House amended its agenda to allow a redistricting amendment to be put forward, with details to come later.

Democratic state Sen. Schuyler VanValkenburg said he still supports the concept of a bipartisan redistricting commission, "but I'm also not going to let Donald Trump go around to states that have the majorities that he likes and try to make it so that he can't lose."

Democrats also are hoping for gains in California. Voters there are deciding Nov. 4 whether to scrap districts drawn by an independent citizens commission in favor of ones drafted by the Democratic-led Legislature that could help Democrats win up to five additional seats in next year's election. Democrats already hold 43 of the 52 seats.

Redistricting could spread to more states

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U.S. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries was in Illinois Monday to meet with Democratic state lawmakers about the possibility of redrawing the state's congressional districts to favor Democrats even more heavily. Democrats already hold 14 of the 17 seats.

The Democratic-led Illinois General Assembly was scheduled to be in session this week.

In Kansas, meanwhile, Republicans moved a step closer to calling themselves into a special session on redistricting through a legislative petition. Senate President Ty Masterson said Monday he has the necessary two-thirds in the Senate, but House Republicans have at least a few holdouts. 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.

## **Israel's top diplomat says Turkish troops will have no role in Gaza force**

By JUSTIN SPIKE and RENATA BRITO Associated Press

BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP) — Israel will not allow Turkish troops to take part in an international force the United States has proposed to oversee the ceasefire agreement in the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, Israel's top diplomat said Monday.

The 20-point deal brokered by U.S. President Donald Trump earlier this month calls for a force to monitor the ceasefire but does not mention which countries would provide troops.

It says the U.S. would "work with Arab and international partners to develop a temporary International Stabilization Force" to deploy in Gaza. The force would train and provide support to "vetted Palestinian police forces" and will "consult with Jordan and Egypt, who have extensive experience in this field."

The first phase of the ceasefire agreement is still being carried out, and focuses on the release of the remaining dead hostages in Gaza, in exchange for Palestinian bodies held by Israel.

Late Monday, the Israeli military said the remains of another hostage had been returned to Israel.

Since the ceasefire began on Oct. 10, the remains of 16 hostages have been returned to Israel. Another 12 bodies still need to be recovered in Gaza and handed over.

Questions about the force

Countries that are considering taking part in the international force in Gaza also want more clarity on its mandate. Officials from some Arab and Muslim nations have said the focus must be on peacekeeping in Gaza, not acting as an enforcer of peace between Israel and Hamas.

"What is the mandate of security forces inside of Gaza? And we hope that it is peacekeeping, because if it's peace enforcing, nobody will want to touch that," King Abdullah II of Jordan said in an interview with the BBC.

Speaking to journalists during a visit to Hungary, Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said Israel opposes the participation of Turkish troops in Gaza because of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's longstanding hostility to Israel. Saar said Israel has communicated its stance to U.S. officials.

"Countries that want or are ready to send armed forces should be at least fair to Israel," Saar said. He did not elaborate.

U.S. officials have said there would be no American boots on the ground in Gaza. Around 200 U.S. troops are now in Israel working alongside its military and other countries' delegations at a coordination center, planning Gaza's stabilization and reconstruction.

During visits to Israel last week, U.S. Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio said multiple countries would be interested in joining the international force for Gaza.

The U.S. was working to secure a U.N. mandate or other international authorization for it, Rubio said.

The ceasefire agreement calls for Israeli troops to gradually withdraw from more areas of Gaza as the international force "establishes control and stability" and as Hamas militants disarm.

Exchange of Gaza hostages and Palestinian bodies in Israel continues

In exchange for the returned dead hostages, Israel has so far handed back to Gaza 195 Palestinian bodies, fewer than half of which have been identified.

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On Monday, 41 unidentified bodies were buried in the Gaza city of Deir al-Balah and a funeral was held in Israel for the slain hostage Yossi Sharabi, whose remains were returned earlier this month.

Over the weekend, Egypt deployed a team of experts and heavy equipment to help search for the bodies of hostages still in Gaza. That work continued Monday in Khan Younis.

The last 20 living hostages were returned to Israel when the ceasefire began, and in exchange Israel freed roughly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners.

Most of those freed were seized in Gaza by Israeli troops during the two-year war and have been held without charge. Also among those released were 250 Palestinians sentenced to prison terms, most of them convicted for deadly attacks on Israelis dating back decades, according to Israel's Justice Ministry.

Turkish interest

At a summit in Egypt two weeks ago, Erdogan was one of four leaders to sign a document outlining Trump's vision for Gaza and regional peace. The others were Trump, Qatari Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi.

Erdogan last week said Turkey was "ready to provide all kinds of support to Gaza." Officials from Turkey's Defense Ministry, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with regulations, said the country was preparing for whatever role it might be asked to play, whether it's peacekeeping or humanitarian assistance.

Turkey also has close ties with Hamas. Turkey once had strong diplomatic relations with Israel, though they have been at an all-time low over the war in Gaza, sparked by the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas-led attack on Israel.

Erdogan has criticized Israel, and particularly Netanyahu, since the start of the war, which has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians. He has accused Israel of genocide — which Israel strongly denies — and has compared Netanyahu to Adolf Hitler.

Hamas political officials regularly visit Turkey, and Israel previously accused Turkey of allowing Hamas to plan attacks from its territory, which Turkey has denied, as well as carry out recruitment and fundraising. Turkey doesn't consider Hamas to be a terror organization and frames its relations with the group as part of its broader support for the Palestinians.

"Israel will determine which forces are unacceptable to us," Netanyahu said Sunday during a government meeting. "This is, of course, acceptable to the United States as well, as its most senior representatives have expressed in recent days."

## **British political commentator Sami Hamdi detained by federal authorities at California airport**

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER, MATTHEW LEE and REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Sami Hamdi, a British political commentator, was being held Monday by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement after he was detained by ICE officers at San Francisco International Airport, according to federal officials. One senior U.S. official said the detention was related to comments he has made about the Middle East.

Hamdi, who is Muslim, was on a speaking tour in the U.S. and on Saturday had addressed the annual gala for the Sacramento, California, chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, or CAIR.

"Earlier this morning, ICE agents abducted British Muslim journalist and political commentator Sami Hamdi at San Francisco Airport, apparently in response to his vocal criticism of the Israeli government during his ongoing speaking tour," the group said in a Sunday social media post.

The detention is the latest in the Trump administration's ramped up efforts to identify and potentially expel thousands of foreigners in the United States who it says have either fomented or participated in unrest or publicly supported protests against Israel's military operations in Gaza. The administration has also denied visas to applicants whose social media histories have been critical of its policies.

Those actions have been criticized by civil rights groups as violations of constitutional protections for freedom of speech, which apply to anyone in the United States and not just to American citizens.

It was not immediately clear what specific comments triggered Hamdi's detention.



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Group calls for Hamdi's immediate release

CAIR, the nation's largest Muslim advocacy organization, called for Hamdi's immediate release. The group said Hamdi, 35, has not been deported and remains in U.S. custody.

After being alerted to his past and current statements related to the Middle East, a decision to revoke Hamdi's visa was made on Friday, according to the senior U.S. official. The official did not specify what comments.

The official also said Hamdi was traveling in the United States on a visitor visa and not under the Visa Waiver Program, which he may have been eligible for as a British citizen.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations, could not speak to why it had taken several days to locate and detain him.

Hamdi, a political commentator who often speaks out against Israel and the war in Gaza, is described on his LinkedIn profile as managing director of The International Interest, a risk and intelligence consulting group. It did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Department of Homeland Security spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin indicated on social media Sunday that Hamdi's "visa was revoked and he is in ICE custody pending removal." ICE said in a statement that Hamdi entered the U.S. on Oct. 19 on a visitor visa.

"The State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs revoked Hamdi's visa Oct. 24, 2025, effective immediately. ICE detained Hamdi, as he was illegally in the country, and he will be placed in immigration proceedings," ICE said.

A lawyer for Hamdi could not immediately be reached for comment.

Hamdi was scheduled to speak at another event before being detained.

In response to questions Monday about his case, Homeland Security sent a link to a State Department post on X Sunday thanking Homeland Security for its efforts to remove Hamdi.

The State Department statement did not specifically say what Hamdi had said or done that initiated the revocation but said: "The United States has no obligation to host foreigners" whom the administration deems to "support terrorism and actively undermine the safety of Americans. We continue to revoke the visas of persons engaged in such activity."

Critics accuse Hamdi of praising Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023 attacks in comments he made in a video posted online shortly after the war in Gaza erupted. He has denied that, saying he wasn't celebrating violence.

"No one is saying Oct. 7 was right. People are saying Oct. 7 was a natural consequence of the oppression that is being put on the Palestinians," he said in a February 2024 speech hosted by the Canadian Muslim Public Affairs Council.

Britain's Foreign Office said it was "in contact with the family of a British man detained in the U.S.A. and are in touch with the local authorities."

Hamdi was scheduled to speak at a CAIR event in Florida on Sunday.

As part of its intensifying enforcement efforts, the administration has expelled South Africa's ambassador to the United States for comments critical of President Donald Trump, revoked a visa for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to attend the U.N. General Assembly and yanked the visas for British punk-rap duo Bob Vylan. It said it is reviewing the status of the more than 55 million current U.S. visa holders for potential violations of its standards.

## **Federal food benefits and preschool aid to run dry starting Saturday if shutdown continues**

By JONATHAN MATTISE Associated Press

Federal funds could begin running dry Saturday that help tens of millions of Americans to buy food for their families and send their toddlers to preschool if Congress doesn't reach a deal by then to end the U.S. government shutdown.

Funding for another program that helps mothers care for their newborns could run out the following week. Barring a resolution to the shutdown, the U.S. will have a gaping hole in its safety net, particularly for

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the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which helps about one in eight Americans buy groceries. Benefits under the program known as SNAP run dry starting Saturday.

Funding for a group of Head Start preschool programs and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, known as WIC, also could run out soon.

Here's a look at what would happen to each program.

SNAP benefits could leave millions without money for food

Lower-income families who qualify for SNAP receive debit cards loaded each month by the federal government used only for buying groceries at participating stores and farmers markets. The debit cards are recharged in slightly different ways in each state. Not everyone receives their benefits on the first day of the month, though many beneficiaries get them early in the month.

The average monthly benefit is \$187 per person. Most beneficiaries have incomes at or below the poverty level.

There's also uncertainty about whether benefits left on cards on Nov. 1 can be used. Arkansas officials suggest people who have balances on their cards should use the funds this month on shelf-stable foods. Missouri and Pennsylvania officials expect previous benefits will remain accessible and are telling beneficiaries to save for November if they can.

President Donald Trump's administration has rejected the idea of using some \$5 billion in contingency money to keep providing the federal cash for food, saying that reserve is limited to expenses such as help after disasters.

That decision contrasts with a report late last month by the U.S. Department of Agriculture that said a contingency fund could cover SNAP benefits if government funding lapsed.

Democratic lawmakers and advocacy groups have urged the Trump administration to tap into that fund to provide partial benefits into November.

Some states seeking to fill void of SNAP benefit cuts

Officials in Louisiana, Vermont and Virginia have pledged to backfill food aid for recipients even while the shutdown stalls the federal program, though state-level details haven't been announced.

In Republican-led Louisiana, the House has voted unanimously for a resolution urging the state's health department to use \$150 million in its budget to avoid an interruption in SNAP benefits to nearly 800,000 residents. The measure awaits Senate action, and Republican Gov. Jeff Landry has said it's a top priority.

More funding for food banks and pantries is planned in states including New Hampshire, Minnesota, California, New Mexico, Connecticut and New York, where Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul said on Monday that she is "fast tracking" \$30 million in emergency food assistance funds to help keep food pantries stocked.

Officials from some other states have said they looked into backfilling SNAP benefits with state funds but found they couldn't because states have no way to load funds onto recipients' cards.

Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom of California deployed the National Guard to help his state's food banks, though some have declined to use the troops. He is also quickly making \$80 million available for food banks.

The USDA advised Friday that states won't be reimbursed for funding the benefits.

The Trump administration is blaming Democrats, who say they will not agree to reopen the government until Republicans negotiate with them on extending expiring subsidies under the Affordable Care Act. Republicans say Democrats must first agree to reopen the government before negotiation.

Early childhood education

More than 130 Head Start preschool programs won't receive their annual federal grants on Nov. 1 if the government remains shut down, according to the National Head Start Association.

Centers are scrambling to assess how long they can stay open, since nearly all their funding comes from federal taxpayers. Head Start provides education and child care for the nation's neediest preschoolers. When a center is closed, families may have to miss work or school.

With new grants on hold, a half-dozen Head Start programs have already missed federal disbursements they were expecting Oct. 1 but have stayed open with fast-dwindling reserves or with help from local governments. All told, more than 65,000 seats at Head Start programs across the country could be affected.

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Food aid for mothers and young children

Another food aid program supporting millions of low-income mothers and young children already received an infusion to keep the program open through the end of October, but even that money is set to run out early next month.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children helps more than 6 million low-income mothers, young children and expectant parents purchase nutritious staples such as fruits and vegetables, low-fat milk and infant formula.

The program, known as WIC, was at risk of running out of money in October because of the government shutdown, which occurred right before it was scheduled to receive its annual appropriation. The Trump administration reassigned \$300 million in unspent tariff proceeds from the Department of Agriculture to keep the program afloat. But it was only enough money for a few weeks.

Now, states say they could run out of WIC money as early as Nov. 8.

## **What to know about the Louvre heist investigation**

By NICOLAS VAUX-MONTAGNY and SAM METZ Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — More than 100 investigators are racing to piece together how thieves pulled off the brazen heist at the Louvre Museum in Paris, working to recover the stolen gems and bring those responsible to justice.

The daytime theft of centuries-old jewels from the world's most-visited museum, thought to be of significant cultural and monetary value, has captured the world's attention for its audacity and movie plot-like details.

Two suspects are in custody, but thus far, little has been revealed about how the investigation is unfolding, a source of frustration for those accustomed to the 24-hour flow of information in American true crime or British tabloids.

Suspects, like the jewels themselves, have remained out of sight, the case file cloaked in mystery and French authorities characteristically discreet.

Paris prosecutor Laure Beccau said that more details would come once the suspects' custody period ends, expected midweek.

But here's what we know so far about the case:

What investigators want to know

Authorities said it took mere minutes for thieves to ride a lift up the side of the museum, smash display cases and steal eight objects worth an estimated 88 million euros (\$102 million) on Oct. 19. The haul included a sapphire diadem, necklace and an earring from a set linked to 19th-century queens Marie-Amélie and Hortense.

Beccau said an investigation was opened into potential charges of criminal conspiracy and organized theft, which can carry hefty fines and yearslong prison sentences.

How France handles arrests

Beccau said investigators made arrests Saturday evening but didn't name them or say how many. One suspect, she added, was stopped at a Paris airport while trying to leave the country.

In France, where privacy laws are strict, images of criminal suspects are not made public as they often are elsewhere. Suspects aren't paraded before cameras upon arrest or shown in mug shots.

James Whitman, a Yale Law School professor of comparative and foreign law, said the French are often startled by how openly criminal suspects are treated in the United States. Both countries technically protect the presumption of innocence but France takes the principle further.

"In France, naming suspects in the press is regarded as a violation of the presumption of innocence," Whitman said.

Such was the case in 2011 when media outlets photographed Dominique Strauss-Kahn, then head of the International Monetary Fund and a contender for France's presidency, on a "perp walk" to a New York jail after he was indicted on charges he sexually assaulted a hotel maid. The charges were eventually dismissed.

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Information about investigations is meant to be secret under French law, to avoid compromising police work and to ensure victims' right to privacy, a policy known as "secret d'instruction." Only the prosecutor can speak publicly about developments, and violators can be prosecuted.

Police and investigators are not supposed to divulge information about arrests or suspects without the prosecutor's approval, though in high-profile cases, police union officials have leaked partial details. Beccau on Saturday rued the leak of information about the ongoing investigation.

A police official, who spoke anonymously as he was not authorized to speak publicly about the ongoing case, told The Associated Press that two men in their 30s, both known to police, were taken into custody. He said one suspect was arrested as he attempted to board a plane bound for Algeria.

Prosecutors said last week that the two thieves who entered the museum were assisted by two others, who waited outside before fleeing along the Seine, adding that additional arrests may follow as the investigation continues.

## Inside the investigation

The more than 100 investigators that Beccau said are assigned to the case are combing through 150 DNA samples, surveillance footage and evidence left behind in the thieves' wake.

Those assigned include the Brigade for the Repression of Banditry — the special police unit in charge of armed robberies, serious burglaries and art thefts — and the Central Office for the Fight Against Trafficking in Cultural Goods.

Recovering the jewels could be among the most difficult parts of investigators' work. French authorities have added the jewels to Interpol's Stolen Works of Art Database, a global repository of about 57,000 missing cultural items.

Interpol, the world's largest international police network, does not issue arrest warrants. But if authorities worry a suspect may flee, Interpol can circulate the information using a color-coded notice system.

The French investigators can also work with European authorities if required. They can turn to the European Union's judicial cooperation agency, Eurojust, or its law enforcement agency, Europol. Eurojust works through judicial cooperation between prosecutors and magistrates, while Europol works with police agencies.

Both can help facilitate investigations and arrests throughout the 27-member bloc. Requests for help must come from the national authorities, and neither organization can initiate an investigation.

## What happens next?

Beccau said more details would be released once the suspects' time in custody expires. Suspects investigated for criminal conspiracy can be held for up to 96 hours before charges are filed.

But don't expect a flood of updates. Indictments and verdicts are not routinely made public in France. French trials are not televised, and journalists are not allowed to film or photograph anything inside the courtroom during a trial.

## World's oldest president, Paul Biya, wins Cameroon election at 92

By NALOVA AKUA and NGALA KILLIAN CHINTOM Associated Press

YAOUNDE, Cameroon (AP) — The world's oldest president, Cameroon's 92-year-old Paul Biya, has won election again, the country's top court said Monday, after days of protesters' clashes with security forces left at least four people dead as opposition supporters demanded credible results.

Biya has led the central African nation since 1982, ruling longer than most citizens have been alive. Over 70% of the population of almost 30 million is below 35. The Oct. 12 election has displayed growing tensions between Africa's youth and its many aging leaders.

The Constitutional Council said Biya received 53.66% of votes while former ally Issa Tchiroma Bakary got 35.19%. The turnout was 57.7%.

In a social media post after the announcement, Tchiroma asserted that security forces had shot at civilians, killing two in his hometown of Garoua.

"Shooting point-blank at your own brothers — I can't help but wonder if you're mercenaries," he posted.



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"Kill me if you want, but I will liberate this country by any means necessary. What blatant impunity."

Tchiroma had claimed victory days ago, citing results he said were collated by his party. Biya's party members dismissed the claim.

Biya in a statement on Monday said his "first thoughts are with all those who have unnecessarily lost their lives, as well with their families, as a result of the post-election violence."

'Nothing will change'

Biya's decision to seek another term angered youth and the opposition, which has accused him of having a hand in the disqualification of his strongest rival and using "state machinery" to manipulate the election.

The four protesters were shot dead Sunday in Douala, the economic capital, as hundreds of people stormed streets in several cities. Videos online showed clashes with security forces, who fired tear gas and tried to disperse people barricading roads in Douala and other cities, including Garoua and Maroua in the north.

Samuel Dieudonne Ivaha Diboua, governor of the Littoral Region that includes Douala, said several members of the security forces were injured by protesters, and at least 105 protesters were arrested.

Dozens of opposition supporters, activists and leaders had been arrested in recent days, including several that Paul Atanga Nji, minister of territorial administration, asserted had been plotting violent attacks.

"I am ready to stake my life to defend my vote. I voted for Tchiroma because I want change," said one protester, Oumarou Bouba, a 27-year-old trader in Maroua.

Following the announcement of election results, Sani Aladji, a 28-year-old hotel worker in Maroua, said: "Nothing will change. I expected that Issa Tchiroma would bring change, which is why I voted for him. There's rampant corruption under Biya's regime. We are tired of that."

But one Biya supporter, Flicia Feh, said she believes that he remains the man for the job.

"Our president campaigned on hope," she said. "He started so many projects, like the Yaoundé-Douala motorway, and it's just normal that he is given more time to complete what he started."

Cameroon's government said over 5,000 national and international election observers were accredited to monitor the election. A group of eight local civil society groups noted several irregularities including the presence of deceased voters on electoral lists, unequal distribution of ballot papers and attempts at ballot box-stuffing.

The African Union mission said the vote was "conducted largely in accordance with regional, continental and international standards."

President since 1982

Biya first came to power in 1982 following the resignation of Cameroon's first president and has ruled since then, later benefiting from a constitutional amendment that abolished term limits.

His health has been a topic of speculation as he spends most of his time in Europe, leaving governance to key party officials and family members.

While Cameroon is an oil-producing country with modest economic growth, young people say the benefits have not trickled down beyond the elites. According to World Bank data, the unemployment rate stands at 3.5%, but 57% of the labor force aged 18 to 35 works in informal employment.

"Many young people across the country and in the diaspora had hoped for change, but that their hopes have been dashed. It feels like a missed opportunity," said Emile Sunjo, a senior lecturer in international relations at the University of Buea. "Cameroon could potentially slide into anarchy."

Critics also accuse Biya of leading Cameroon from a period of relative stability into one of conflict. The country in recent years has faced attacks by Boko Haram militants in the north and a secessionist insurgency in the English-speaking North West and South West regions. That crisis, triggered by government attempts to impose French in schools and courts, has killed nearly 7,000 people, displaced more than one million and sent thousands fleeing to neighboring Nigeria.

Christopher Fomunyoh, regional director at the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, said Cameroon's Constitutional Council "boxed themselves into a corner" and was left with no choice than to declare Biya the winner.

All those who were involved should "brace themselves for the inevitable consequences and backlash," he said.

## Republicans grapple with voter frustration over rising health care premiums

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI and ALI SWENSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The first caller on a telephone town hall with Maryland Rep. Andy Harris, leader of the House's conservative Freedom Caucus, came ready with a question about the Affordable Care Act. Her cousin's disabled son is at risk of losing the insurance he gained under that law, the caller said.

"Now she's looking at two or three times the premium that she's been paying for the insurance," said the woman, identified as Lisa from Harford County, Maryland. "I'd love for you to elucidate what the Republicans' plan is for health insurance?"

Harris, a seven-term Republican, didn't have a clear answer. "We think the solution is to try to do something to make sure all the premiums go down," he said, predicting Congress would "probably negotiate some off-ramp" later.

His uncertainty reflected a familiar Republican dilemma: Fifteen years after the Affordable Care Act was enacted, the party remains united in criticizing the law but divided on how to move forward. That tension has come into sharp focus during the government shutdown as Democrats seize on rising premiums to pressure Republicans into extending expiring subsidies for the law, often referred to as Obamacare.

President Donald Trump and GOP leaders say they'll consider extending the enhanced tax credits that otherwise expire at year's end — but only after Democrats vote to reopen the government. In the meantime, people enrolled in the plans are already being notified of hefty premium increases for 2026.

As town halls fill with frustrated voters and no clear Republican plan emerges, the issue appears to be gaining political strength heading into next year's midterm elections.

"Premiums are going up whether it gets extended or not," said GOP Sen. Rick Scott. "Premiums are going up because health care costs are going up. Because Obamacare is a disaster."

'Concepts of a plan'

At the center of the shutdown — now in its fourth week with no end in sight — is a Democratic demand that Affordable Care Act subsidies passed in 2021 be extended.

Trump has long promised an alternative. "The cost of Obamacare is out of control, plus, it's not good Healthcare," he wrote on Truth Social in November 2023. "I'm seriously looking at alternatives."

Pressed on health care during a September 2024 presidential debate, Trump said he had "concepts of a plan."

But nearly 10 months into his presidency, that plan has yet to come. Dr. Mehmet Oz, administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, told NBC on Wednesday, "I fully believe the president has a plan," but didn't go into details.

Republicans say they want a broader overhaul of the health care system, though such a plan would be difficult to advance before next year. Party leaders have not outlined how they'll handle the expiring tax credits, insisting they won't negotiate on the issue until Democrats agree to end the shutdown.

A September analysis from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated that permanently extending the tax credits would increase the deficit by \$350 billion from 2026 to 2035. The number of people with health insurance would rise by 3.8 million in 2035 if the credits are kept, CBO projected.

House Speaker Mike Johnson told a press conference Monday that the tax credits are "subsidizing bad policy." Republicans "have a long list of ideas" to address health care costs, he said, and are "grabbing the best ideas that we've had for years to put it on paper and make it work."

"We believe in the private sector and the free market and individual providers," he added.

A growing political issue

With notices of premium spikes landing in mailboxes now and the open enrollment period for Affordable

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Care Act health plans beginning Nov. 1, the political pressure has been evident in Republican town halls.

In Idaho, Rep. Russ Fulcher told concerned callers that "government provided health care is the wrong path" and that "private health care is the right path." In Texas, freshman Rep. Brandon Gill responded to a caller facing a sharp premium increase by saying Republicans are focused on cutting waste, fraud and abuse.

Harris echoed a message shared by many in his party during his Maryland town hall, saying costs are "just going back to what it was like before COVID."

But the number of people who rely on Affordable Care Act health insurance has increased markedly since before the pandemic. More than 24 million people were enrolled in the marketplace plans in 2025, up from about 11 million in 2020, according to an analysis from the health care research nonprofit KFF.

Sara from Middleville, Michigan, told Rep. John Moolenaar during his town hall that if health insurance premiums go up by as much as 75%, most people will probably go without health care. "So how do you address that?" she asked.

Moolenaar, who represents a district he handily won last year, responded: "We have time to negotiate, figure out a plan going forward and I think that's something that could occur."

Some Republicans have shown urgent concern. In a letter sent to Johnson, a group of 13 battleground House Republicans wrote that the party must "immediately turn our focus to the growing crisis of health care affordability" once the shutdown ends.

"While we did not create this crisis, we now have both the responsibility and the opportunity to address it," the lawmakers wrote.

Some Republicans dismiss projections that ACA premiums will more than double without the subsidies, calling them exaggerated and arguing the law has fueled fraud and abuse that must be curbed.

Many Democrats credited their ability to flip the House in 2018 during Trump's first term to the GOP's attempt at repealing Obamacare, and they're forecasting a similar outcome this time.

About 4 in 10 U.S. adults say they trust the Democrats to do a better job handling health care, compared with about one-quarter who trust the Republicans more, a recent AP-NORC poll found. About one-quarter trust neither party, and about 1 in 10 trust both equally, according to the poll.

## A looming internal GOP fight

Even as GOP leaders pledge to discuss ending the subsidies when the government opens, it's clear that many Republican lawmakers are adamantly opposed to an extension.

"At least among Republicans, there's a growing sense that just maintaining the status quo is very destructive," said Brian Blase, the president of Paragon Health Institute and a former health policy adviser to Trump during his first term.

Michael Cannon, director of health policy studies at the libertarian Cato Institute, said he's working with multiple congressional offices on alternatives that would let the subsidies end. For example, he wants to expand the Affordable Care Act exemption given to U.S. territories to all 50 states and reintroduce a first-term Trump policy that gave Americans access to short-term health insurance plans outside the Affordable Care Act marketplace.

Cannon declined to name the lawmakers he's working with, but said he hopes they act on his ideas "sooner than later."

David McIntosh, president of the influential conservative group Club For Growth, told reporters Thursday that the group has "urged the Republicans not to extend those COVID-era subsidies."

"We have a big spending problem," McIntosh said.

"I think most people are going to say, OK, I had a great deal during COVID," he said. "But now it's back to business as usual, and I should be paying for health care."

## Putin brandishes a new nuclear-powered missile as he digs in over Russia's demands on Ukraine

By The Associated Press undefined

By holding nuclear drills and boasting about a successful test of a pioneering atomic-powered cruise missile, Russian President Vladimir Putin is sending a message to President Donald Trump: Moscow won't be cowed into making concessions on Ukraine.

Facing Trump's call for a quick ceasefire and bruising, new U.S. sanctions on Russia's oil industry, Putin is again reminding the U.S. and other Western allies of Kyiv about his nuclear arsenal to back his long-standing, maximalist demands.

He has said Ukraine must pull back its forces from the four regions that Russia has annexed illegally but never fully captured, as well as abandon its bid to join NATO — demands rejected by Kyiv and its Western allies.

Here is a look at Russia's new missile and its role in Putin's nuclear messaging:

Russia responds to a US missile shield

The Burevestnik, which means "storm petrel" in Russian, is the world's first nuclear-powered missile. That propulsion gives it virtually unlimited range, allowing it to loiter for days, circling the enemy's air defenses and attacking from an unexpected direction.

Putin first announced the missile in a 2018 state-of-the-nation address, along with several other prospective weapons, declaring it would be able to dodge air defenses.

The development of the Burevestnik, which has been code-named "Skyfall" by NATO, has continued despite reported launch failures. On Sunday, Russia's chief military officer, Gen. Valery Gerasimov, reported to Putin that an Oct. 21 test of the Burevestnik was a complete success that proved its capabilities.

The missile covered 14,000 kilometers (8,680 miles) during a 15-hour flight using nuclear fuel and conducted maneuvers "demonstrating its high capabilities in evading missile and air defense systems," Gerasimov said.

"The technical characteristics of the Burevestnik missile effectively allow it to be used with guaranteed accuracy against highly protected targets at any distance," he added.

While Russian officials have revealed no details about the weapon, Russian media reports indicated it could cruise at altitudes as low as 50 meters (about 160 feet) to avoid enemy radar.

Putin ordered Gerasimov to prepare the necessary facilities for deploying the Burevestnik and working out its modes of operation.

The Russian leader has described the weapon as a response to the U.S. missile shield that Washington has developed after its 2001 withdrawal from a Cold War-era U.S.-Soviet pact that limited missile defenses.

Russian military planners have feared that a missile shield could tempt Washington to launch a first strike that would knock out most of Moscow's nuclear arsenal in hopes of intercepting a small number of surviving missiles fired in retaliation.

The Burevestnik, as well as the prospective Poseidon nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed drone with an intercontinental range that was also announced by Putin, were presented as means of guaranteed retaliation to a first strike.

Technological challenges and lingering risks

Unlike a conventional cruise missile powered by jet engines with a range limited by the fuel it can carry, a nuclear-powered cruise missile has a practically unlimited range and can loiter for days over the ocean before streaking to a target from a direction unprotected by missile defenses.

These unique capabilities involve massive technological challenges and potential radiation risks — factors that prompted the U.S. to abandon a nuclear-powered missile project in the 1950s after viewing it as too unsafe for its own military personnel and allies.

Many Western experts have been highly skeptical about Russia's ability to build such a missile, with some describing it as a "flying Chernobyl" due to radiation hazards.

A 2019 accident killed at least five nuclear engineers and injured several others in an explosion that the



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U.S. believed occurred when Russian experts tried to recover a Burevestnik prototype that had crashed into the White Sea during an earlier test. The local administration in a city near the site of explosion reported a brief rise in radiation levels.

Putin and Gerasimov didn't say where the missile was tested Oct. 21, but on that day Russia closed off a large area around the Arctic Novaya Zemlya archipelago where previous tests of the Burevestnik had occurred, deploying vessels and aircraft linked to the program in the area.

The Norwegian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority said no radiation spikes have been reported so far at any of its monitoring stations, the Barents Observer reported, an indication the Burevestnik designers could have managed to develop a design avoiding radioactive contamination.

Putin spoke about the missile with pride in televised comments. "When we announced that we were developing such a weapon, even highly qualified experts told me that it was a good and worthy goal, but undoable in the near future," he said. "And now the decisive tests have been completed."

Putin's nuclear messaging and Trump's response

Putin repeatedly has brandished Russia's nuclear might since he launched the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, declaring that Moscow was prepared to use "all means" to protect its security interests. He again turned to nuclear messaging now as Trump has put a planned summit in Budapest with Putin on hold and declared his first major sanctions against Russia.

Hours after Trump's announcement, Putin presided over the drills that involved all parts of Russia's nuclear triad and featured practice launches of ground- and submarine-launched nuclear capable intercontinental ballistic missiles, as well as cruise missiles being fired by strategic bombers.

The televised images of Putin directing the nuclear exercise followed similar action by him throughout the nearly 4-year-old war. He repeatedly warned against Kyiv striking deeper into Russia with Western supplied weapons or deploying Western troops to Ukraine.

On Monday, Putin also endorsed the Kremlin-controlled parliament's decision to withdraw from a 2000 agreement with the U.S. on disposing of vast Cold War-era stockpiles of weapons-grade plutonium over what lawmakers described as "new anti-Russian steps that radically change the strategic balance."

While declaring his readiness to keep talking to Trump about a prospective Ukrainian settlement, Putin also described the new U.S. sanctions against Russia's top oil companies as an "unfriendly act" that would damage relations. He warned that Russia wouldn't be intimidated.

"It's an attempt to exert pressure on Russia, but no self-respecting country and self-respecting people make any decisions under pressure," he said.

Putin also warned that any attempt by Ukraine to strike deep inside Russia with longer-range weapons supplied by the West will trigger a "very serious, if not to say stunning," response from Moscow. Three days later, he donned military fatigues to receive a report on the Burevestnik's successful test launch.

Trump responded Monday with irritation when asked about the test. "You've got to get the war ended, a war that should have taken one week is now in its soon fourth year. That's what you ought to do, instead of testing missiles," he said.

He added that "we have a nuclear submarine, the greatest in the world, right off their shores," and so "we don't need to go 8,000 miles."

## **When a hurricane threatens, these tips can help you prepare**

By JUAN A. LOZANO Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Hurricane season can be stressful for anyone near the potential path of a storm, as powerful winds and heavy rain can cause widespread damage, cut power for days or weeks and otherwise upend people's lives.

Smart preparation ahead of time can reduce that stress and keep you safer. Emergency management officials say good practices include looking around your home for potential hazards, considering how you might handle evacuation, and putting together a kit of essential supplies.

How to prepare a home for a storm

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Anything in the backyard that isn't tied down, such as furniture and barbecue grills, should be secured or brought inside so it doesn't become a projectile that can come through a window, said Shawn Schulze, regional CEO for the American Red Cross Texas Gulf Coast Region.

If possible, board up windows and place important documents such as passports and birth certificates in a waterproof case or even a Ziploc bag, Schulze said. That will prevent damage and make documents easier to locate in a quick evacuation.

Some preparation needs to happen well before a storm is imminent. That includes trimming or removing dead or weakened tree limbs and shrubs that hang over homes to lessen potential damage from high winds, said Mistie Hinote, a spokeswoman for the Texas Department of Insurance.

Hinote also urged people to review what type of insurance coverage they have and to make a home inventory of their possessions by taking photos of them in case an insurance claim needs to be made after a storm.

Brian Mason, director of Houston's Office of Emergency Management, recommends that homeowners get their roofs inspected before each hurricane season and know how to turn off their utilities in case of damage.

Have an emergency kit

Every family should have an emergency kit with supplies to meet its basic needs.

For people who stay, a kit should include at least 1 gallon (3.8 liters) of water per day per person, with enough for up to seven days, Mason said. One way to have enough water is to fill a bathtub.

People should also have enough nonperishable food for up to seven days, as well as flashlights, batteries, candles, medications, portable power banks or other power sources, and a radio that runs on batteries.

Pets should be included in preparations, including bringing them inside ahead of a storm, and having enough food, water and necessary medications for up to seven days, Mason said.

Parents should also include something to entertain their kids, such as games or coloring books, because likely power outages after a hurricane mean there won't be internet and cellular service, and "nothing's more challenging for a family than kids that are bouncing off the walls because they're bored," Mason said.

"If you decide to stay, you need to make sure that you can be self-sufficient for days to weeks, depending on how long it takes for power to be restored," Mason said.

Have an evacuation plan

If people decide to leave ahead of a storm, they should also prepare an emergency kit with enough supplies to get to their destination, officials said.

Before a storm arrives, people should know their evacuation routes are and have backup routes in case roads get congested, Mason said.

Officials recommend fueling vehicles if a storm is approaching. People with electric vehicles should make sure their routes have charging stations along the way, he said.

Schulze said it's natural for people to be afraid when a hurricane is coming, but having a plan in place and letting loved ones know you're prepared will go a long way to easing fears.

"Think about what the worst could be and prepare for that and you'll always be ready for what comes your way," Schulze said.

## **Milei triumphs in Argentine midterm elections closely watched by Washington**

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Argentina's libertarian President Javier Milei won decisive victories in key districts in midterm elections Sunday, clinching a crucial vote of confidence that strengthens his ability to carry out his radical free-market experiment with billions of dollars in backing from the Trump administration.

In the election widely seen as a referendum on Milei's past two years in office, his upstart La Libertad Avanza party scored over 40% of votes compared with 31% for the left-leaning populist opposition move-

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ment, known as Peronism, exceeding analysts' projections.

Milei, a key ideological ally of U.S. President Donald Trump, said his party and allied blocs picked up 14 seats in the Senate and 64 in the lower house of Congress on Sunday, bolstering the government's support in the legislature enough to uphold presidential vetoes and block impeachment efforts.

At La Libertad Avanza headquarters late Sunday in downtown Buenos Aires, a beaming Milei hailed the election sweep as a mandate to press forward with his spending cuts and introduce ambitious tax and labor reforms. The results also automatically position him as a candidate for reelection in 2027.

"The Argentine people have decided to leave behind 100 years of decadence," Milei exulted as his supporters cheered, referring to a succession of Peronist governments that brought Argentina infamy for its inflationary spirals and sovereign debt defaults.

"Today we have passed the turning point. Today we begin the construction of a great Argentina."

High stakes include \$40 billion from the U.S.

Perhaps never has an Argentine legislative election generated so much interest in Washington and Wall Street.

Trump appeared to condition a \$20 billion currency swap deal with Argentina's central bank and an additional \$20 billion loan from private banks on a good showing for Milei in national midterms, threatening to rescind the assistance for the cash-strapped country in the event of a Peronist victory.

"If he wins we're staying with him, and if he doesn't win, we're gone," Trump said after welcoming Milei to the White House earlier this month.

Those contentious comments added to mounting pressure on Milei, who has scrambled to avert a currency crisis since the Peronist opposition won a landslide victory in Buenos Aires provincial polls last month. Argentina's bonds and currency nosedived as markets sensed that the public was losing patience with Milei's reforms and that the midterm race would be tight.

To stem the run on the peso, Milei burned through billions of dollars in foreign exchange reserves to shore up the peso. In an extraordinary move, the U.S. Treasury then came to the rescue, selling dollars to help meet soaring demand for greenbacks and finalizing the credit line.

In the end, the Peronist alliance performed poorly, underscoring how weak the once-dominant movement has become in the Milei era, largely as a result of internal divisions. Markets were widely expected to rally on Monday.

"For foreign investors, this outcome is a relief because it shows that the Milei program can be sustainable," said Marcelo J. García, the America's director for the geopolitical risk consultancy Horizon Engage.

"It leaves the opposition weakened and fragmented, just as it was when Milei won the presidency in December 2023," Garcia added.

The Peronist coalition has struggled to channel rising public anger with Milei's painful austerity measures into a new political strategy after delivering the economic shambles that the chain saw-wielding outsider inherited in late 2023.

Trump, while on his way to Japan on Monday, posted on Truth Social that Milei was "doing a wonderful job" after his party beat expectations in midterm elections.

"Our confidence in him was justified by the People of Argentina," Trump wrote.

Milei responded to Trump's post, calling him "a great friend" of Argentina and thanking him for "trusting the Argentine people."

A changed electoral map

The results showed Milei's young libertarian party gaining support across the country — including in some surprising corners that have long been under the sway of Peronism.

In the closely watched Buenos Aires province, a Peronist stronghold home to nearly 40% of the electorate, La Libertad Avanza eked out a razor-thin victory Sunday. Just last month, the Peronists beat Milei's party there by a whopping 14 percentage points.

Axel Kicillof, governor of Buenos Aires province and the most influential elected official in the Peronist opposition, criticized Trump for putting his thumb on the scale.

He warned that the billions of dollars in financial aid from the U.S. Treasury and investment banks would

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do nothing to help ordinary Argentines squeezed by Milei's cuts to subsidies or forced out of business by a contracting economy.

"I want to make it clear that neither the U.S. government nor JP Morgan are charitable societies," he said. "If they come to Argentina, it is for nothing other than to take a profit."

With Milei's efforts to deregulate the economy and scrap tariffs winning over Argentina's powerful agriculture sector, La Libertad Avanza also swept Santa Fe, which dominates soybean production and processing, and Córdoba, another powerhouse farming province.

Risks remain for Milei as austerity hits hard

Despite Milei's new momentum, experts caution that the irascible president still needs to court political allies to see through his agenda. Given the limited number of seats up for grabs in this election, it was mathematically impossible for Milei to secure a majority in either house.

"This victory is necessary, but not sufficient to maintain control of Congress," said political consultant Sergio Berensztein. "The government must build a broad and effective coalition with like-minded forces."

Seeking to capitalize quickly on Sunday's results, Milei said he called the country's powerful provincial governors to accelerate agreements on long-term economic reform.

Sunday's outcome will also test public patience for Milei's cost-cutting measures in the coming months. Although Milei's budget cuts have significantly driven down inflation — from an annual high of 289% in April 2024 to 32% last month — the price increases still outpace salaries and pensions.

The electorate appears increasingly polarized between beneficiaries of Milei's reforms and those who say they're struggling to make ends meet like never before.

In the financial district of Puerto Madero, luxury car dealerships report sales surging since Milei scrapped import restrictions. Streets bustle with bankers who praise the president for ending a yearslong ban on selling dollars online. Fine restaurants serve Argentine oil executives who gush about his efforts to draw foreign investment.

But at a soup kitchen on the other side of Argentina's Riachuelo River, Epifanía Contreras, 64, said she feels like she's bearing the brunt of the cutbacks.

"You can't live on 290,000 pesos a month with today's inflation," she said, describing how her \$200 monthly pension has shriveled in value since Milei cut cost-of-living increases. "The situation is getting worse and worse."

Reflecting widespread public resignation, electoral authorities reported a turnout rate of just under 68% Sunday, among the lowest recorded since the nation's 1983 return to democracy. Voting is compulsory in Argentina.

"I vote out of obligation, nothing more," said Matías Paredes, 50, a real estate broker whose foreign clientele vanished with Milei's strong exchange rate. "None of these figures inspire optimism. We're just choosing the lesser evil."

## **As the Atlantic Ocean warms, climate change is fueling Hurricane Melissa's ferocity**

By SIBI ARASU Associated Press

The warming of the world's oceans caused by climate change helped double Hurricane Melissa's wind speed in less than 24 hours over the weekend, climate scientists said Monday.

Melissa is currently a Category 5 storm, the highest category, with sustained wind speeds of over 157 mph (252 kph). Melissa is forecast to make landfall in Jamaica on Tuesday before crossing Cuba and the Bahamas through Wednesday.

Scientists said this is the fourth storm in the Atlantic this year to undergo rapid intensification of its wind speed and power.

"That part of the Atlantic is extremely warm right now — around 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit), which is 2 to 3 degrees Celsius above normal," said Akshay Deoras, a meteorologist at the University of Reading, in the United Kingdom. "And it's not just the surface. The deeper layers of the ocean are also



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unusually warm, providing a vast reservoir of energy for the storm."

Deoras, who has tracked the impact of climate change on weather phenomena for decades, said scientists are seeing storms intensify quickly.

"Climate change is fundamentally changing our weather. It does not mean that every single tropical cyclone is going to go through rapid or super-rapid intensification. However, in our warmer world, it will continue to increase the likelihood of storms going through rapid and super-rapid intensification," said Bernadette Woods Placky, chief meteorologist at Climate Central, an independent group of scientists and communicators.

Storms more likely to intensify

A 2023 study had found that Atlantic hurricanes are now more than twice as likely as before to intensify rapidly from minor storms to powerful and catastrophic events. The study looked at 830 Atlantic tropical cyclones since 1971. It found that in the last 20 years, 8.1% of storms powered from a Category 1 minor storm to a major hurricane in just 24 hours. That happened only 3.2% of the time from 1971 to 1990, according to a study in the journal Scientific Reports.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center has warned of "catastrophic flash flooding and numerous landslides" from Melissa in Jamaica, where some areas could receive up to 40 inches (1 meter) of rain. The storm has already killed at least four people in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Climate scientists have long warned that warming oceans — driven by greenhouse gas emissions — are making such explosive storm development more common. "We're living in a warmer world, and that means hurricanes are more likely to intensify quickly, especially near coastlines," Deoras said.

Storms intensifying faster near land poses greater risks to lives and infrastructure, said Deoras. "If a hurricane forms deep in the ocean and just dissipates over the ocean, it's fine. It's not going to affect anyone. But if it forms close to the coast, and if it just crosses the coast, as we are going to see in the case of Jamaica and other regions, it's a big problem," he said.

Deoras added that while hurricanes are natural phenomena, climate change is amplifying their impact. "We can't stop hurricanes, but we can reduce the risk by cutting emissions and improving coastal defenses," he said. Investment is needed in early warning systems, sea walls and other infrastructure to make communities, especially in island countries, more resilient to climate impacts, he said.

The world has warmed too much to prevent phenomena like rapid intensification, he said. Various global weather agencies found that last year was the hottest year on record.

Islands at risk

The impact of climate change is putting lives at risk on islands and in coastal areas, Placky said. "With 90% of our extra heat going into our oceans, we're seeing these oceans warm and they're rising. And that plays out with sea level rise. So even outside of any storm, the water levels are getting higher. They're creeping away at our coastlines and they're going farther inland," she said.

A storm like Melissa only compounds these impacts, according to Placky. "These storms are really ripping away at the coastal infrastructure of these islands," she said.

The NOAA predicted a busier-than-usual Atlantic hurricane season this year, with 13 to 18 named storms, five to nine hurricanes and two to five major hurricanes. After a slow start, that's been largely accurate, with 13 storms and four major hurricanes and roughly another month left in the season.

The impact of such storms increases the urgency for global action to reduce the amount of planet-heating gases released into the atmosphere according to policymakers in small island countries.

At least six people have already died as a result of Melissa in the northern Caribbean and the storm has damaged nearly 200 homes in the Dominican Republic. When the hurricane makes landfall in Jamaica, it'll likely be the strongest storm to hit the island since record-keeping began in 1851.

"All of our small island developing states know all too well the fear and dread those in the hurricane's path are feeling. This trauma should not be anyone's norm," said Anne Rasmussen, lead negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island States at the United Nations climate talks, the next session of which is scheduled to be held in Brazil next month.

Rasmussen said extreme weather events like Hurricane Melissa only make it more urgent for countries

to begin acting more decisively on climate change. "We need urgent action that gets us back on track with a 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) warming limit increase, so we can avoid even worse impacts to come," she said.

## Kremlin says its test of a nuclear-powered missile reflects security concerns

By The Associated Press undefined

Russia's test of a nuclear-powered missile that it claims can't be stopped by air defenses reflects Moscow's determination to look out for its security interests, a Kremlin official said Monday, after the United States and European countries increased pressure on President Vladimir Putin to negotiate an end to the invasion of Ukraine.

U.S. President Donald Trump said Putin should focus on making a peace deal, not testing missiles.

Little is known about Russia's Burevestnik missile, which the NATO military alliance has code-named Skyfall. Putin appeared Sunday in an official video, wearing camouflage fatigues, to hear Russia's chief of general staff report that the missile had covered 14,000 kilometers (8,700 miles) in a test.

The news came after a week that saw tough new U.S. sanctions prepared for Russia's key oil and gas sector and new European commitments of military aid to Ukraine.

"Russia is consistently working to ensure its own security," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said when asked whether the missile announcement was a response to the sanctions and a signal to the West.

"Ensuring security is a vital issue for Russia, especially against the backdrop of the militaristic sentiment that we are currently hearing, primarily from the Europeans," Peskov told reporters.

Trump, speaking to reporters on an official trip from Kuala Lumpur to Tokyo, said Putin's talk about missiles was not "appropriate."

"You've got to get the war ended. A war that should have taken one week is now in its soon fourth year," Trump said. "That's what you ought to do, instead of testing missiles."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Monday criticized the Trump administration for changing its approach. After talks with Putin in Alaska in August, Trump said he wanted an agreement on long-term peace and didn't insist on a prior ceasefire, but now he's changed his mind, Lavrov told Hungary's Ultra-hang YouTube channel.

"Now all they're talking about is an immediate ceasefire ... this is a radical change," Lavrov said.

Trump's sanctions decision, with the punitive measures possibly coming into effect by Nov. 21, has raised the stakes in efforts to stop the fighting. As Russia and Ukraine assessed next steps, they also sought out allies.

Lavrov was hosting his North Korean counterpart, Choe Son Hui, for talks in Moscow. Pyongyang has sent thousands of troops, as well as artillery and missiles, to support Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said late Sunday that France is providing additional Mirage fighter jets and air defense missiles, while the United Kingdom will supply more missiles and help produce interceptor drones.

Ukraine's short-handed forces are straining to hold back the bigger Russian army on the front line in eastern and southern parts of the country.

Heavy fighting is taking place in Pokrovsk, where Russian units have pushed into several neighborhoods but have failed to take control of the eastern Ukrainian city, Ukraine's 7th Rapid Reaction Corps wrote on social media Monday.

Over the past two days, troops from the corps repelled 42 enemy attacks, the statement said, after reinforcing Ukraine's defensive positions with assault troops, artillery and drone units.

Meanwhile, the Russian Defense Ministry said Monday its air defenses intercepted and destroyed 193 Ukrainian drones over Russian regions, including 34 drones it said were heading toward Moscow. No damage or casualties were reported in the Russian capital.

Two Moscow airports, Domodedovo and Zhukovsky, briefly closed overnight because of the attack. Air-

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ports in other Russian regions also faced restrictions.

Ukraine's air force said Russia fired 100 Shahed and decoy drones overnight, with 26 reaching their targets. There was no immediate report of deaths or damage.

Ukraine's private energy company, DTEK, announced emergency outages in Kyiv, its surrounding region and the Dnipropetrovsk region.

## **For Japan's new leader, the key to connecting with Trump could be a Ford F-150 truck**

By JOSH BOAK and MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — President Donald Trump opened his visit to Japan on Monday with greetings from the emperor a day before he meets new Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, who is banking on building a friendly personal relationship with the U.S. leader to ease trade tensions.

One key to this strategy might lie in an idea floated by Japan's government to buy a fleet of Ford F-150 trucks, a meaningful gesture that may also be impractical given the narrow streets in Tokyo and other Japanese cities.

It's an early diplomatic test for Takaichi, the first woman to lead Japan. She took office only last week, and has a tenuous coalition backing her.

Trump instantly bought into the idea of Ford trucks as he flew to Asia aboard Air Force One.

"She has good taste," Trump told reporters. "That's a hot truck."

Japanese Emperor Naruhito welcome Trump at the Imperial Palace after the president's arrival and the two spoke for about 30 minutes. Trump straightened his jacket as he stood next to Naruhito for photos before sat across a round table, with flowers in the middle, for their talks.

"A great man!" he said twice while pointing to the emperor. Trump last saw the emperor in 2019, soon after Naruhito ascended the Chrysanthemum Throne, becoming the first foreign dignitary invited to the palace.

Trump and Takaichi spoke over the phone while the president was mid-flight on Saturday. Takaichi stressed her status as a protege of the late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, a favorite of Trump's from his first term, and said she praised him for brokering the Gaza ceasefire that led to the return of hostages held by Hamas.

"I thought (Trump) is a very cheerful and fun person," she said. "He well recognizes me and said he remembers me as a politician whom (former) Prime Minister Abe really cared about," she said. "And I told the president that I extremely look forward to welcoming him in Tokyo."

Trump spent Sunday in Malaysia, where he participated in a regional summit, and departed Monday morning for Japan. While on Air Force One on Monday, he said he planned to talk in Tokyo about the "great friendship" between the U.S. and Japan.

Resetting the trade relationship

Beneath the hospitality is the search for a strategy to navigate the increasingly complex trade relationship that Trump shook up earlier this year with tariffs.

Trump wants allies to buy more American goods and also make financial commitments to build factories and energy infrastructure in the U.S.

The meetings in Japan come before Trump's sit-down with Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Thursday in South Korea.

Both the U.S. and Japan have sought to limit China's manufacturing ambitions, as the emergence of Chinese electric vehicles, artificial intelligence and advanced computer chips could undermine the American and Japanese economies.

"In light of the planned meeting between Trump and Xi Jinping shortly afterward, Trump may also be considering how he might strengthen his hand by demonstrating the robustness of the U.S.-Japan relationship," said Kristi Govella, Japan chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank.

Japan's previous administration agreed in September to invest \$550 billion in the U.S., which led Trump

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to trim a threatened 25% tariff on Japanese goods to 15%. But Japan wants the investments to favor Japanese vendors and contractors.

Japan's economy and trade minister, Ryosei Akazawa, has said his ministry is compiling a list of projects in computer chips and energy to try to meet the investment target.

"As far as I know, I'm hearing that there are a number of Japanese companies that are showing interest," he told reporters Friday, though he did not give further details.

Ford trucks in Tokyo would be a powerful symbol

Japanese officials are looking at the possibility of buying more American soybeans, liquefied natural gas and autos. The U.S.-China trade conflict has shut American soybeans out of the Chinese market, leading China to seek more Brazilian supply. China reported no U.S. soybean imports in September, a first since November 2018.

For Trump, the prospect of Ford trucks in the skyscrapered streets of Tokyo would be a win. The administration has long complained that American vehicles were being shut out of a market that is the home of Toyota, Honda, Nissan, Isuzu, Mitsubishi and Subaru. In a September interview on CNBC, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said Japan wouldn't buy U.S.-branded vehicles because "Chevys" were popular with Japanese gangsters.

Takaichi may arrange for Ford F-150 trucks to be showcased in a place Trump gets to see them, Japan's Nikkei newspaper reported. The government is considering importing the trucks for its transport ministry to use for inspecting roads and infrastructure, though there are concerns that the F-150 could cause congestion on narrow Japanese streets.

"We appreciate President Trump's advocating for American made products," Ford spokesperson Dave Tovar said. "We would be excited to introduce America's best-selling truck to work and government customers in Japan."

Japanese media have reported that Toyota Motor Corp. Chairman Akio Toyoda could announce plans to import his company's American-made cars back to Japan during a dinner with Trump and other business leaders on Wednesday.

The gestures — combined with Takaichi's connection to Abe — should help her deal with Trump, who seems predisposed to like her.

"I think she's going to be great," Trump said aboard Air Force One. "She's a great friend of Mr. Abe, who was a great man."

In 2016, Abe gave Trump a high-end golf club to celebrate his first election, and the leaders bonded over their love of golf. Trump often expresses sadness about Abe's 2022 assassination.

But there are risks for Takaichi in emphasizing her ties to Abe, said Rintaro Nishimura, who specializes in Japan at the advisory firm The Asia Group.

"Because it's Takaichi's first diplomatic engagement I think she wants to start with sort of a bang," Nishimura said. "Succeeding the Abe-line rhetoric is definitely going to be part of this engagement, although some also suggest that leaning too heavily on the Abe line might not exactly be good for her for creating her own kind of portfolio, her status as Japan's leader."

Following his meeting with Takaichi on Tuesday, Trump will give a speech aboard the USS George Washington aircraft carrier anchored in Japan, then hold a dinner with business leaders. Trump plans to leave for South Korea on Wednesday.

But aboard Air Force One on Monday, he told reporters that he was also ready to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, should that be an option.

"If he wants to meet, I'll be in South Korea," Trump said.

## Mali is squeezed as militants enforce an unusual blockade on fuel

BAMAKO, Mali (AP) — The landlocked West African nation of Mali is being squeezed by a blockade on fuel imports imposed by jihadi militants, an unusual strategy as the insurgent threat grows across the region.

Education Minister Amadou Sy Savane announced late Sunday that schools nationwide will be shut for



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two weeks because the scarcity of fuel makes it difficult for staff to get to work, as is the case with most other workers.

For a country that relies on fuel imports from neighboring Senegal and Ivory Coast, the blockade has been a major setback for Mali's military junta.

Militants imposed the blockade to fight back against the military

Mali, a country of 25 million people, has battled jihadi militants for several decades, alongside neighboring Burkina Faso and Niger.

Militants from the al-Qaida-backed Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin group announced a ban on fuel imports from neighboring countries into Mali in early September, after authorities said early this year they were cutting down fuel supplies to remote areas as a measure to squeeze the jihadis in their hideouts.

The blockade has squeezed Mali's fragile economy and left hundreds of fuel trucks stranded at the border.

Militants show strength

JNIM is the most potent armed group in the Sahe l, a vast strip of semi-arid desert stretching from North Africa to West Africa. Observers say the militants are using the fuel blockade as a show of force despite Malian military strikes against them.

The militants have targeted transport companies along major roads, forcing some of them to stop fuel operations.

According to Beverly Ochieng, an analyst at the Control Risks Group consulting firm, the blockade is used as a tool to pressure commercial operators and residents to distance themselves from the military authorities, therefore undermining the legitimacy and authority of Mali's military government.

Mali's junta has struggled to end the security crisis that brought it to power

Military leaders in Mali staged a coup in 2020, saying it was necessary to end decades of security crises.

Following similar coups in Niger and Burkina Faso, the three neighbors expelled French forces and turned to Russia's mercenary units to help them fight jihadis. However, despite Russia's support and a security partnership between the three nations, analysts and conflict data suggest the crisis has worsened.

Some of the attacks in Mali this year have been the deadliest in more than three years, according to an assessment by the U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, pointing to trends of attacks that often targeted security forces.

JNIM, in particular, is deliberately trying to destabilize the governments in the three Sahel countries, the group said in a report.

The blockade is worsening hardship

Despite being one of Africa's top gold producers, Mali is ranked the sixth least developed nation in the world, with nearly half its population living below the national poverty line.

The fuel blockade has hiked commodity prices, worsening living condition for millions.

In Mali's capital, Bamako, endless queues have stretched in front of gas stations with some residents spending nights waiting.

Mali's military has attempted to escort fuel trucks from border areas to Bamako while also targeting JNIM locations with airstrikes. Some trucks have made it to the capital but others have been attacked by militants.

The military is hampered by the lack of air power, said Oluwale Ojewale with the Institute for Security Studies.

## **Today in History: October 28** **Statue of Liberty dedicated in New York**

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, Oct. 28, the 301st day of 2025. There are 64 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Oct. 28, 1886, the Statue of Liberty, a gift from the people of France, was dedicated in New York Harbor by President Grover Cleveland.

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Also on this date:

In 1636, the General Court of Massachusetts passed a legislative act establishing Harvard College.

In 1858, Rowland Hussey Macy opened his first New York store at Sixth Avenue and 14th Street in Manhattan.

In 1919, Congress passed the Volstead Act, which provided the means for enforcement of a Prohibition era ban on alcohol, over President Woodrow Wilson's veto.

In 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt rededicated the Statue of Liberty on its 50th anniversary.

In 1962, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev informed the United States that he had ordered the dismantling of missile bases in Cuba; in return, the U.S. secretly agreed to remove nuclear missiles from U.S. installations in Turkey as the two superpowers defused tensions of the Cuban missile crisis.

In 1991, what became known as "The Perfect Storm" began forming hundreds of miles east of Nova Scotia; lost at sea during the storm were the six crew members of the Andrea Gail, a fishing boat from Gloucester, Massachusetts.

In 2001, the families of people killed in the Sept. 11 terrorist attack in New York gathered at ground zero in lower Manhattan for a memorial service filled with prayer and song.

In 2012, the San Francisco Giants won their second World Series title in three years, beating the Detroit Tigers to complete a four-game sweep.

In 2018, The Boston Red Sox beat the Los Angeles Dodgers to win the World Series in five games.

In 2021, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said his company was rebranding itself as Meta, an effort to encompass its virtual-reality vision for the future, while keeping the Facebook name for the social network itself.

In 2022, Tesla CEO Elon Musk took control of Twitter for \$44 billion after a protracted legal battle and months of uncertainty. He subsequently rebranded the social media platform as X in 2023.

In 2022, Paul Pelosi, the 82-year-old husband of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, was severely beaten by a hammer-wielding assailant who broke into their San Francisco home. Less than three weeks later, Nancy Pelosi announced she would remain in the House but step down as speaker in the next Congress.

In 2024, the Pentagon disclosed that North Korea had sent about 10,000 troops to Russia to train and likely fight against Ukraine, a move seen as piling more pressure on Ukraine's overstretched army and stoking geopolitical tensions in the Indo-Pacific region.

Today's Birthdays: Basketball Hall of Famer Lenny Wilkens is 88. Actor Jane Alexander is 86. Actor Dennis Franz is 81. Actor-singer Telma Hopkins is 77. TV personality and Olympic gold medal decathlete Caitlyn Jenner is 76. Actor Annie Potts is 73. Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates is 70. Actor Daphne Zuniga (ZOO'-nih-guh) is 63. Actor Lauren Holly is 62. Talk show host-comedian Sheryl Underwood is 62. Football Hall of Famer Steve Atwater is 59. Actor-comedian Andy Richter is 59. Actor Julia Roberts is 58. Singer Ben Harper is 56. Football Hall of Famer Terrell Davis is 53. Country singer Brad Paisley is 53. Actor Joaquin Phoenix is 51. Actor Gwendoline Christie is 47. Actor Matt Smith is 43. Actor Troian Bellisario is 40. Singer-songwriter Frank Ocean is 38. Tennis player Taylor Fritz is 28. Actor Nolan Gould is 27.