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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.

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.

Melissa Slams Jamaica

Hurricane Melissa hit Jamaica's southwest coast yesterday with 185 mph winds. The Category 5 storm is among the strongest Atlantic hurricanes and the most powerful to hit Jamaica since record-keeping began 174 years ago.

The storm caused widespread power outages and road closures, making it difficult to immediately ascertain damage and possible casualties. Prime Minister Andrew Holness had warned that Jamaica's infrastructure was not built to withstand the storm, whose winds doubled from 70 to 140 mph over the weekend. Melissa is the fourth of this season's five Atlantic hurricanes to undergo rapid intensification—a speed increase of at least 35 mph in 24 hours. Scientists say warmer waters fuel the phenomenon. The Caribbean waters Melissa traveled over were 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than average for this time of year.

Melissa is forecast to move across southeastern Cuba today and into the Bahamas by this evening, as of this writing. Monitor live tracker [here](#), and see photos of the storm's impact [here](#).

Texas vs. Tylenol

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton filed a lawsuit yesterday against Johnson & Johnson and Kenvue, alleging the companies marketed Tylenol as safe for pregnant women without disclosing possible links between neurodevelopmental disorders and acetaminophen use. The lawsuit claims the companies violated consumer protection laws and cites recent public statements from President Donald Trump and Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

The suit centers on claims that prenatal acetaminophen use may be associated with autism and ADHD, referencing a Harvard and Mount Sinai review that found correlations but did not establish causation. Health experts and leading medical groups have disputed those conclusions, saying current evidence does not support a causal link.

Johnson & Johnson, which transferred its consumer health business to Kenvue in 2023, has said it retains no liability for Tylenol following the divestiture. The lawsuit alleges the move was intended to shield assets unlawfully. Kenvue maintains that Tylenol remains safe for use during pregnancy.

OpenAI for Business

OpenAI announced yesterday it has completed its reorganization—a multibillion-dollar effort allowing it to operate more like a traditional for-profit company. The new structure will enable OpenAI to more easily raise funds and may pave the way for an initial public offering.

Under the new arrangement, the company will operate as a for-profit public benefit corporation—an industry standard adopted by competitors including Anthropic and xAI. The nonprofit arm dedicated to health and AI resilience—called the OpenAI Foundation—will hold a 26% stake in OpenAI Group PBC. Valued at \$130B, the stake makes the OpenAI Foundation the US' most valuable nonprofit, outpacing the Gates Foundation's \$86B. Microsoft will retain a 27% stake in the for-profit with some changes to its current relationship (see details).

The restructuring allowed OpenAI to secure \$40B in promised funding from SoftBank and other investors. It also ends an experimental structure, which saw OpenAI's nonprofit arm controlling business operations.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Toronto Blue Jays defeat Los Angeles Dodgers in Game 4, tying World Series 2-2 ahead of Game 5 to-night at 8 pm ET.

Seven-foundation coalition launches \$50M literary arts fund, citing chronic underfunding of independent publishers and creative writing initiatives.

ABC releases 2026 midseason schedule, revealing "Scrubs" series reboot Feb. 25.

Prunella Scales, British actress who played Sybil Fawlty in 1970s television sitcom "Fawlty Towers," dies at age 93.

Science & Technology

US startup Substrate, backed by investor Peter Thiel, raises over \$100M for technology aimed at revamping microchip production within three years.

New observations of colliding black holes suggest black holes formed in dense regions where they repeatedly merge.

Biologists find nutritional value of marine prey can vary greatly within single species, complicating estimations of predators' daily food requirements.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +0.2%, Dow +0.3%, Nasdaq +0.8%) ahead of the Federal Reserve's interest rate cut decision today.

Nokia shares rise nearly 23% after Nvidia takes \$1B stake in the company.

Amazon lays off 14,000 corporate workers.

UPS regulatory filings show package deliverer cut 48,000 jobs since last year as part of turnaround.

Trump Media partners with Crypto.com to add prediction markets to Truth Social, enabling users to bet on elections, sports games, and other events.

Politics & World Affairs

US military strikes four alleged drug boats in the eastern Pacific Ocean in three separate attacks, killing 14 people with one survivor.

Democratic-led states sue the Agriculture Department, alleging it is obligated to continue food stamp benefits amid the federal government shutdown.

Israeli military strikes Gaza, killing at least seven people, after accusing Hamas of violating the ceasefire agreement and failing to return hostage remains (More)

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Robotics Season Opener Qualifies One Groton Team to Nationals

The Robotics Season Opener was held in Box Elder, SD this past weekend on Saturday, October 25th, 2025. 21 Teams attended the event from South Dakota and Wyoming. Groton had 2 of its 4 teams attend: 9050B Gearheads & 9050F Gladiators. Teams competed in 7 qualifying matches, with 16 teams moving forward after Alliance selection to fight to be in the finals.

The importance of the final matches and being in the Final 4? Not only the chance of winning the tournament, but Teams that achieve one of these 4 spots automatically qualify for 2026 Create US Open Robotics Tournament in Council Bluffs Iowa, also known as Robotics Nationals in March 2026. This contest fills up fast, so unless you achieve a Finals rank early season (prior to Dec), it is unlikely you could even compete. Team 9050F: Gladiators – Team Captain and sole member of his team for the 2025-2026 year, Garrett Schultz (Senior), achieved this recognition.

Also at this event, a high level of sportsmanship was shown across all teams attending. Teams were working together, helping each other with robot and equipment issues, talking through ideas to make their robots better. The camaraderie was evident not only within the students but parents attending as well and made for an uplifting event.

9050F – Gladiators: Garrett Schultz

Qualifier Ranking – 4th out of 21. (6 Wins/1 Loss) Won Quarter Finals, Semi Finals, Lost in the Championship 101 to 60.

9050B – Gearheads: Co-Lead: Logan Clocksene & Kira Clocksene. Emmett Zoellner, Simon Simunek.

Qualifier Ranking – Ranked 12th out of 21. (3 Wins/4 Losses) Loss in Quarter Finals 20 to 122.

Scheduled Future Robotics Tournament Events are listed below. They are held free of charge to the public and we would love to see Groton spectators at these events!

Tiger Nation Tournament – November 22nd – Harrisburg, SD

DSU Vex Qualifier – December 20th – Madison, SD

Tiger Robotics – January 3rd – St. Cloud, MN

Valley City Frozen Classic – January 16th – Valley City, ND

Jacks Carrot Cup – January 18th – Brookings, SD

Spartan Robot Rally – February 7th – Spearfish, SD

South Dakota State Robotics State Championships – February 27th – Madison, SD

Robotics Nationals – March 16th-18th - Council Bluffs, IA



From left to right, 9050B Gearheads: Kira Clocksene, Simon Simunek, Emmett Zoellner, Logan Clocksene. (Courtesy Photo)



9050 F - Gladiators - Garrett Schultz.

(Courtesy Photo)

Tigers Sweep Milbank, Claim Share of Northeast Conference Title; Weber Hits 1,000 Assists

GROTON — The Groton Area Tigers closed out their regular season in commanding fashion Tuesday night, sweeping Milbank 25-17, 25-10, 25-19 to clinch a share of the Northeast Conference championship. The win improves Groton to 24-5 and marks the program's first conference crown since 2019.

"It's exciting for us," Head Coach Chelsea Hanson said. "To go 9-1 in our conference — that was good. I think the last time we won the conference was 2019. We beat Hamlin, Hamlin beat Clark-Willow Lake, and Clark beat us, so it's a three-way tie, and we'll take co-champions. That was exciting for our kids."

Set One

Milbank jumped out to a 9-4 lead in the opening frame, but the Tigers responded with a seven-point surge to take an 11-9 advantage. The Bulldogs continued to battle, tying the set at 14-all, but Groton closed on a dominant 5-0 run to take it 25-17.

Groton's offense came out aggressive with 17 kills and two blocks, earning 19 of their 25 points (76%). Sophomore stand-out Tevan Hanson powered the opening charge with six kills and an assisted block, while Milbank countered with eight kills of their own, including three each from Bailey Koepke and Addison Pauli.

Set Two

The Tigers kept their foot firmly on the gas pedal in the second set, racing to leads of 4-0 and 8-1 before coasting to a 25-10 victory. Groton put down 14 kills in the frame and added a block and two ace serves while earning 17 of 25 points (68%).

Hanson continued her strong night with four kills and a solo block in the set, while Taryn Traphagen, Makenna Krause, and Rylee Dunker each added three kills to fuel a balanced attack. Milbank managed six kills and a block in response, with Kenzie Kooima leading their effort with two kills and a solo block.

"They were doing everything they could to keep the ball alive," Hanson noted. "Their side was chaotic, and it made ours chaotic too. But overall, we're happy to come away with the sweep."

Set Three

Milbank made its strongest push in the third, pulling even at 14-14 before Groton pulled away behind a relentless front-row effort to seal the match 25-19. The Tigers earned 20 of their 25 points (80%) with an explosive hitting performance, highlighted by Jaedyn Penning, who delivered six kills in the final set.

"We had so many kids scoring for us tonight," Hanson said. "In a three-set match, that's big. Everyone stepped up at different times, and that takes pressure off all our hitters. That balance is what's going to take us as far as we go."

Match Leaders

Setter Chesney Weber was brilliant in all phases — going 16-for-16 serving with an ace, adding five kills, and delivering 34 assists, including her 1,000th career assist. The milestone set came early in the third when she placed a ball perfectly for Penning to hammer down, giving Groton a 10-7 lead.

"We knew she needed 27 coming in, and the cool part is she had absolutely no idea," Hanson said. "For



Chesney Weber gets here 1,000 assist here and Jaedyn Penning got the kill. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM video)

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her to get that as a sophomore — it's incredible. We were really hoping she'd get it tonight so we could celebrate her."

Hansen led the Tigers with 14 kills and 10 digs, Dunker and Penning finished with eight kills apiece, Krause added nine, and Traphagen chipped in seven. Defensively, Jerica Locke anchored the back row with 15 digs, while Hanson added 10 and Penning eight.

Milbank Highlights

Pauli led Milbank with six kills, Koepke and Kooima finished with four apiece, and the Schuenemann sisters combined for 19 assists and 16 digs. Milbank totaled nine blocks at the net, including solo stops from Bree Townsend and two-assist efforts from Pauli, Kooima, Zora Heinrich, and Macy Dunnihoo.

Sub-Varsity

Groton also won the JV match in three sets (25-21, 21-25, 15-12) and the C match in straight sets (25-23, 25-17).

Postseason Ahead

Groton now prepares to host the second round of Regional play next Thursday at the Groton Area Arena. "We haven't practiced since last Wednesday because of our schedule," Hanson said. "I'm very excited to get back in the gym, get in the weight room, and prepare. We're excited for postseason volleyball."

Match Livestreamed

The varsity match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Agtegra, Avantara, Bary 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 in Andover.



The Groton Area volleyball team gathers around Chesney Weber as she got her 1,000 set assist Tuesday night at the Milbank game. (Photo Courtesy Samantha Weber)

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Groton Area First Quarter Honor Roll

Seniors

4.0 GPA: Nathan Unzen, Natalia Warrington, Carly Gilbert, Jerica Locke, Karter Moody, Jaedyn Penning, Talli Wright, Karsten Fliehs, Paisley Mitchell, De Eh Tha Say, Raelee Lilly, Gage Sippel, Cali Tollifson

3.99-3.50: Rylee Dunker, Ryder Johnson, Garrett Schultz, Becker Bosma, Breslyn Jeschke, Keegen Tracy, Drake Peterson, Mia Crank, Lincoln Krause, Logan Warrington, Hannah Sandness, Aiden Meyers, Olivia Steigelmeier, London Bahr, Gentry Pigors, Benjamin Hoeft, Jayden Schwan

3.49-3.00: Emma Davis, Charlie Frost, Lucas Carda, Nicolas Groeblichhoff, Keegan Harry, Gavin Englund, Cambria Bonn, Tristin McGannon, Jarrett Erdmann

Juniors

4.0 GPA: Carlee Johnson, Liby Althoff, Teagan Hanten, Ashlynn Warrington, Brody Lord, Kira Clocksene, Taryn Traphagen, Halee Harder, Addison Hoffman Wipf, Emerlee Jones, McKenna Tietz, Kella Tracy, Hailey Pauli, Colt Williamson

3.99-3.50: Leah Jones, Avery Crank, Gavin Kroll, Blake Lord, Claire Schuelke, Aiden Strom, Zander Harry, Dylan Alexander Lopez Marin,

3.49-3.00: Walker Zoellner, Jackson Hopfinger, Brenna Imrie, Dylan McGannon, Hayden Zoellner

Sophomores

4.0 GPA: Elizabeth Cole, Mya Feser, Makenna Krause, Thomas Schuster, Chesney Weber

3.99-3.50: Sydney Locke, Kyleigh Kroll, Ryder Schelle, Layne Johnson, Ethan Kroll, Brayden Barrera, Jace Johnson, Taryn Thompson, Easton Weber, Gracie Pearson, Jeremiah Muller, Rylon Ekern

3.49-3.00: John Bisbee, Addison Hoeft, Rylie Rose, Brysen Sandness, Braeden Fliehs, Kinsley Rowen, Wyatt Wambach, Alex Abeln

Freshmen

4.0 GPA: Neely Althoff, Aspen Beto, Wesley Borg, Abby Fjeldheim, Zachary Fliehs, Tevan Hanson, Asher Johnson, Brooklyn Spanier, Novalea Warrington

3.99-3.50: Kolton Antonsen, Logan Olson, Jordan Schwan, Wesley Morehouse, Lincoln Shilhanek, Sydney Holmes

3.49-3.00: Arianna Dinger, Kaedynce Bonn, Samuel Crank, Connor Kroll, Jose Fernando Nava Remigio, Tenley Frost, Briggs Conn, Adeline Kotzer, Raquel Tracy, Grayson Flores, Anthony Tracy, Aurora Washenberger, Lillian Cowan

Eighth Graders

4.0 GPA: Axel Abeln, Hudson Eichler, Amelia Ewalt, Sophia Fliehs, Gavin Hanten, Liam Johnson, Liam Lord

3.99-3.50: Andi Gauer, Asher Zimmerman, Jameson Penning, Ryder Schwan, Elias Heilman, Trey Tietz, Gavin Younger, Trayce Schelle, Keegan Kucker

3.49-3.00: Dawson Feist, Kyson Kucker, Haden Harder, Jace Hofer, Rowan Patterson, Peyton Padfield, Wyatt Morehouse, Nolan Bahr

Seventh Graders

4.0 GPA: Gracie Borg, Lillian Davis, Libby Johnson, Zoe Olson, Taylynn Traphagen

3.99-3.50: Brynlee Dunker, Andi Iverson, Maycee Moody, Victoria Schuster, Addison Steffes, Ayce Warrington, Amara El Salahy, Kinley Sandness, Hadley Heilman, Rylee Stoltenburg, Rylee Hofer, Charli Jacobsen, Mason Locke, Bella Barrera, Hank Hill, Easton Larson, Brinley Guthmiller, Kendyll Kroll, Mya Moody, Ivan Schwan Parker Zoellner

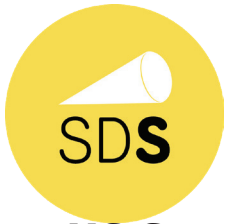
3.49-3.00: Ambrielle Feist, Knox Mulder, Charles Telkamp, Drew Fjeldheim, Grady Rowen, Emmett Zoellner

Sixth Graders

4.0 GPA: Arthur Eichler, Hayden Hubbard, Jernie Weig

3.99-3.50: Devan Locke, Brody Zimmerman, Willow Cowan, Tigh Fliehs, Lennox Locke, Kacie McComsey, Titan Johnson, Gideon Rix, Harley Furman, Blakely Stiegelmeier, Ryan Hanson, Deylon Johnson, Micah Krause, Taylor Fliehs, Shealee Gilchrist, Avery Huber, Boston Kurth, Elise Pharis

3.49-3.00: Jaxson Barrera, Adam Fliehs, Simon Simunek, Taylor Thompson, Hudson McGannon, Rowan Hanson, Avery Roettele, Greyson Warrington, Kayson Hofer, Kaelee Morehouse, Adaline Jangula, Calvin Locken, Tanner Frost, Huntley Overacker, Jack Schuelke, Ruby Dosch



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

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US Supreme Court voting rights case could undermine Native American rights, advocates warn

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR-OCTOBER 28, 2025 4:37 PM

A U.S. Supreme Court case scrutinized for its potential impact on Black voters and congressional redistricting could also have consequences for the voting rights of Native Americans, according to advocates in South Dakota.

The pending case, *Louisiana v. Callais*, is a challenge to the legality of a majority-Black congressional district. The court is using the case to determine whether Section 2 of the federal Voting Rights Act remains constitutional. The section prohibits voting laws or procedures that result in a denial or abridgement of voting rights due to a person's "race or color" or membership in a language minority.

During arguments earlier this month, lawyers for Louisiana and the Trump administration said the consideration of race in the redistricting process violates constitutional requirements to treat all people equally.

Rosebud Sioux Tribe member OJ Semans, co-executive director of the South Dakota-based Four Directions voting rights group, said advocates for Native American voters would not have won any voting rights lawsuits in South Dakota without Section 2. They've used its protections to win better registration services in closer proximity to Native American voters, and to force redrawn county and state voting districts with more equitable representation for Native Americans (Section 2 doesn't impact congressional districts in South Dakota, because its low population means it has only one member of the U.S. House who represents the entire state).

"In the past 10 years, I think Native Americans have filed more civil rights lawsuits on voting than any other organization or race," Semans said. "And they have continually been able to win victories that would provide equality for Natives throughout Indian Country."

Four Directions consultant Bret Healy, a former executive director of the South Dakota Democratic Party, warned that if the court undermines the law, Republican lawmakers could redraw legislative districts in South Dakota to disadvantage Native American voters, who've traditionally leaned Democratic. He said lawmakers "can go back to just making at-large districts where the white vote totally overwhelms by 70 to 30, 80 to 20 margins."

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

COMMENTARY

Farmers, ranchers and conservationists need a functioning government

by TRAVIS ENTENMAN

Political gridlock in Washington has shut down the government and left South Dakota's farmers, ranchers and conservationists stranded. Too many in Washington are ignoring the urgent need for a Farm Bill that improves and funds U.S. Department of Agriculture conservation programs, like the Conservation Reserve Program.

Everyone saw the government shut its doors at midnight on Oct. 1, but few realize the Farm Bill expired

at the same moment, halting the vital programs it supports.

This bureaucratic paralysis now threatens more than 2.6 million acres enrolled in CRP across South Dakota, impacting over 14,000 farms and ranches and jeopardizing \$145 million in conservation payments annually. With CRP unable to enroll new acres or pay landowners, rural livelihoods and our state's hunting economy hang in the balance. Every fall, hunters drive \$680 million into South Dakota's economy, an investment built on strong partnerships between private landowners and USDA programs.

Yes, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act boosted long-term USDA funding, and leaders like Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-South Dakota, deserve thanks for advancing conservation. But these gains mean nothing if Congress fails to act now. This shutdown only compounds what was already a tough year for agriculture: Corn prices have dropped to their lowest level since 2020, and farmers face mounting uncertainty with every day of delay.

Farmers and ranchers need a resolution to the shutdown and a Farm Bill that strengthens voluntary conservation, maintains local input on conservation decisions and rewards stewardship. They also need reinstated contract payments to prevent further economic damage.

Washington could prioritize farmers, ranchers and the future of conservation by:

- Reinstating mandatory CRP and conservation program payments.
- Passing a Farm Bill that funds and improves voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs.
- Ensuring CRP is reauthorized, expanded and enhanced for the benefit of wildlife, rural communities, and agricultural producers statewide.

South Dakota's agricultural producers and sporting tradition cannot afford more empty promises. They need Congress to do its job.

Travis Entenman is the executive director for Friends of the Big Sioux River, executive director of Northern Prairies Land Trust, and sits on the board of supervisors at the Minnehaha Conservation District. He received his bachelor's degree in journalism from South Dakota State University and his master's in environmental law and policy from Vermont Law School.

Native American communities brace for potential loss of food assistance

More than 19,000 people in South Dakota reservation counties use the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

BY: AMELIA SCHAFFER, ICT-OCTOBER 28, 2025 10:25 AM

RAPID CITY – For many tribes, access to food is a treaty right, meaning the potential loss of funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program on Nov. 1 is yet another violation of trust and treaty obligations during the second-longest government shutdown in history.

But Indigenous advocates in cities across the country are taking steps to ensure there are ways for affected families to be fed, whether it's through mutual aid meal trains or education on foraging.

In Rapid City, S.D., right outside of the Black Hills, Lakota activist and community leader Natalie Stites Means and the COUP Council, an Indigenous-led nonprofit, are bringing back COVID-19-era meal programs to help feed at-risk families.

Through the COUP council, a Rapid City-based nonprofit dedicated to empowering Native people in Rapid City, Stites Means and others are organizing a planning session on Oct. 29. Stites Means said the planning session will be an opportunity to identify not just community needs, but what people can bring to the table.

Even if SNAP funding doesn't lapse on Nov. 1, organizers still plan to reignite their 2020-era mutual aid meal-train program.

"We need a plan," Stites Means said. "(Food) is always under attack."

That means bringing back the Wotakuye Mutual Aid Society, a program that delivered food to over 3,000 people in 2020.

"It is a real crisis on the ground, on the front line," Stites Means said. "This is a manufactured crisis. ...

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We have a lot of hunger in this community.”

Wotakuye, which means kinship in the Lakota language, is a mutual aid program – which is a voluntary sharing of resources and services within a community to meet collective needs.

What this looked like in 2020 was a network of volunteers and donors. Maybe someone needed food, but had a working car. In this situation, they’d be provided food while also helping to deliver food to other community members, Stites Means said. Or maybe someone doesn’t know how to cook, but they do have access to produce that they can provide.

“I’m hoping some pressure will be elevated,” Stites Means said. “I’m worried about hunger and what hunger drives.”

Over 75,000 South Dakota residents use SNAP, according to USDA data from August, and that number has been steadily increasing since March. It’s unclear how many of those individuals are American Indian and Alaska Native.

State data indicates that 19,168 people living in reservation counties in South Dakota use SNAP, according to state data, while only 7,295 people in South Dakota used the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, also known as commodities, as of May.

This isn’t exclusive to South Dakota. SNAP is, across the board, more popular with American Indian and Alaska Native families than the Food Distribution Program. Over one million American Indian and Alaska Native people use SNAP, opposed to only 58,119 people using the Food Distribution Program.

And for Native people in cities like Rapid City, the Food Distribution Program isn’t an option. Only reservations and some border towns in South Dakota can use the program. And in Pennington County, where Rapid City is located, roughly 9,990 people, including American Indian and Alaska Native people, use SNAP.

On Oct. 25, federal employees missed their first full paycheck during the ongoing government shutdown. Earlier this month, many received a partial paycheck for time worked prior to the shutdown on Oct. 1.

A significant number of Native people work for the federal government – roughly 30,600 people, or 1.5 percent of the federal workforce, according to 2023 data from the Office of Personnel Management Diversity Equity Inclusion and Accessibility Report.

It’s also uncertain if members of the military will continue to be paid, another factor affecting many Native families as roughly 19 percent of all Native American people have served in the Armed Forces – in comparison to an average of 14 percent of all other ethnicities.

All of this combines into an increased need for mutual aid programs and food assistance, Stites Means said.

Others are working to educate communities on the food that surrounds us and can be accessed through foraging.

Luke Black Elk, Cheyenne River Lakota, grew up on food from the Food Distribution Program. When he was younger, commodities were full of unhealthy and carbohydrate-dense foods, leading his mom to teach him how to forage on the Cheyenne River Reservation in northwestern South Dakota, about two-and-a-half hours north of Rapid City.

“I was probably two or three when I discovered that wild onions grew behind the house that we were living in,” Black Elk said. “I asked my mom what they were, and it was actually something that she had eaten when she was a child too, so she knew what they were.”

While the USDA has taken major steps toward including healthier foods in commodity deliveries, things weren’t always that way. In the 1980s and ’90s, one of the staples was the golden brick of American cheese, a highly processed food, despite the fact that many American Indian and Alaska Native people are lactose intolerant.

“It was very substandard,” Black Elk said. “The canned meat was horrible. The canned potatoes were horrible. There were not a lot of good options there. And it was so sodium and sugar rich that it was really unhealthy for people.”

Over time, Black Elk and his mother would supplement their diets by foraging for traditional foods like thirpsingla, or prairie turnips, and choke cherries.

“Because we were food insecure, we did a lot of having to make our own food,” Black Elk said.

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Now decades later, Black Elk has taken that knowledge and used it to educate others, traveling across the Midwest with his family to host foraging classes. Class participants come back with plants and knowledge of how to use them for medicines or food.

"I think it's very important that people learn how to provide for themselves, you know, especially Indigenous people," Black Elk said. "Our tribal nations are sovereign nations, but in the eyes of the government, we are dependent-sovereign nations, and that dependency is really all about food and resources, right? We've been placed in these very harsh spaces that don't provide a lot and so, so we're unable to really be sovereign in that we're not feeding and we're not housing and clothing ourselves."

A lot of people are scared right now, Black Elk said, but Indigenous people have already faced having their lives flipped upside down time and time again. Traditional food systems were changed almost overnight, and foraging became less and less common.

"It's important for us to get back to those things, especially because we spent countless millennia here in this environment, co-evolving with the plants and animals around us," Black Elk said. "It's actually better for Indigenous people to, say, eat salmon or bison or wild plants from their area, because our bodies know how to take that nutrients up, whereas when we're when we're subsisting on things like glutinous flour made from wheat or highly modified sweet corn, these highly processed sugars, those things aren't right for for Indigenous bodies."

Right now heading toward winter, a lot of plants have already gone dormant, but that doesn't mean there aren't still foraging possibilities, Black Elk said.

The Black Hills, for example, where Black Elk's ancestors lived, is rich with acorns, mustard greens and other edible plants. Golden rod, a large yellow flowering prairie plant, is still producing. A golden rod plant's leaves can be used in dishes and tastes a lot like cilantro, Black Elk said. Additionally, right now is prime mushroom-hunting season.

"There's a lot available, even if it seems like the world is kind of shutting down right now and getting ready for winter," Black Elk said. "But there's still a lot out there."

Overall, working with your community and giving back in whatever way you can is one way to weather the potential storm, Stites Means said, whether that's foraging, canning or donating fresh foods.

"It's about building relationships," she said. "We have lots of interest from people wanting to help."

Wotakuye Mutual Aid will be meeting at 5:30 p.m. Mountain Standard Time on Oct. 29 to identify needs and create a plan. The meeting will be held at the COUP Council office in Rapid City and is open to all.

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

US Senate in bipartisan vote rejects Trump tariffs on Brazil as coffee prices spike

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY-OCTOBER 28, 2025 7:27 PM

WASHINGTON — Five Republican U.S. senators joined Democrats Tuesday to terminate President Donald Trump's national emergency that triggered steep tariffs on goods from Brazil.

The vote came ahead of a major case before the Supreme Court that could decide whether many of the president's tariffs violate the Constitution.

Sens. Mitch McConnell and Rand Paul of Kentucky, along with Alaska's Lisa Murkowski, Maine's Susan Collins and Thom Tillis of North Carolina, supported a joint resolution in a 52-48 vote.

The measure's passage in the Senate marks a shift from a previous effort in April, when Senate Republicans blocked a resolution to terminate Trump's emergency tariffs on Canada. Murkowski, Collins and Paul also supported that measure.

The resolution is not likely to see a vote in the Republican-controlled U.S. House, meaning it is not likely to become law.

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Coffee canister in the Senate

Senate Democrats forced Tuesday's floor vote just days after they filed an amicus brief urging the Supreme Court to find Trump's unprecedented tariffs, triggered under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, unconstitutional. Murkowski was the lone Republican to join the brief.

The bill's sponsor, Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., spoke on the floor ahead of the vote with a canister of Maxwell House coffee beside him.

Kaine said Trump's tariffs on Brazilian goods are an "abuse of presidential power that people are feeling every time they walk down a grocery store aisle to buy coffee for their families, to buy ground beef for their families."

"No president, Democrat or Republican, should be able to declare a national emergency justifying the imposition of 50% tariffs because a friend of theirs is being prosecuted for breaking the law in another country," he said.

Kaine used a decades-old law that allows the minority party to force a vote to terminate a national emergency.

Trump declared a national emergency and imposed a 50% tariff on Brazilian imports on July 30 after accusing Brazil's government of "politically persecuting" its former far-right President Jair Bolsonaro for plotting a coup to remain in power in 2022.

'No taxation without representation'

Sen. Rand Paul, a Kentucky Republican who cosponsored Kaine's bill, said on the floor ahead of the vote Trump is using his emergency powers "to tax us without our consent."

"I, for one, still believe in the principle of no taxation without representation, and will vote to terminate this contrived emergency and end these unconstitutional import taxes," Paul said.

The vote to reverse Trump's tariffs on Brazilian products was the first of three bipartisan resolutions this week protesting the administration's emergency tariffs.

Kentucky's senior senator and former Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said, "Tariffs make both building and buying in America more expensive."

"The economic harms of trade wars are not the exception to history, but the rule. And no cross-eyed reading of Reagan will reveal otherwise. This week, I will vote in favor of resolutions to end emergency tariff authorities," McConnell said, referring to Trump's decision to add another 10% tariff on Canadian goods. That came after the Ontario province ran an anti-tariff ad featuring the words of President Ronald Reagan.

Trump tariffs defended

Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, criticized the joint resolution as "counterproductive to the progress already made by President Trump."

"The president's historic trade negotiations are bearing fruit. President Trump already announced new deals, trade deals with major trading partners, including, most recently, Cambodia and Malaysia. Other such announcements may still be forthcoming. I urge other trading partners to reach similar trading deals," Crapo, chair of the Senate Committee on Finance, said on the floor ahead of the vote.

Both tariffs and climate change are to blame for the recent spike in coffee prices, reports the Los Angeles Times.

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

Trump claims immunity, seeks to erase felon status with appeal in NY court

BY: JACOB FISCHLER-OCTOBER 28, 2025 5:52 PM

President Donald Trump sought to remove his status as the only felon to be elected president by appealing his conviction on 34 New York state charges just before midnight Tuesday, arguing, in part, that the U.S. Supreme Court's 2024 ruling giving the president broad immunity invalidated the conviction.

In a 96-page appeal nearly 18 months after his state court conviction that he falsified business records by disguising hush money payments over an alleged affair with adult film star Stormy Daniels as legitimate legal payments, Trump's attorneys recited a list of complaints over his prosecution.

Among those complaints were that New York District Attorney Alvin Bragg, a Democrat, targeted the then-former president, and that the presiding Democratic judge created at least the appearance of partiality, the appeal said.

"This is the most politically charged prosecution in our Nation's history," the lengthy brief began. "After years of fruitless investigation into decade-old, baseless allegations — and under immense political pressure to criminally charge President Donald J. Trump for something — New York's district attorney manufactured felony charges against a once-former and now-sitting President of the United States."

Bragg's office declined to comment on the appeal Tuesday.

Hush money

The case centered on payments Michael Cohen, Trump's former personal attorney, made to Daniels in the run up to the 2016 election. Trump wanted to keep her from telling the tabloid National Enquirer about a tryst she said she had with the married Trump years earlier.

After Trump won the White House, his private business reimbursed Cohen for the payment to Daniels, according to the 2023 indictment.

Federal prosecutors had explored whether the payment to Daniels could have violated campaign finance laws. Cohen paid Daniels to keep her from publicizing her account during Trump's 2016 race against Hillary Clinton.

They ultimately declined to bring charges.

Trump's appeal this week said New York prosecutors impermissibly depended on campaign finance violations to charge him with felony business record falsification.

To be charged as a felony, the business records must be falsified in service of another crime, but Trump argued Monday those allegations could not have been charged because federal law preempts state law.

The New York law also requires prosecutors to show the defendant had "intent to defraud" to win a conviction for falsifying business records. Bragg and his team did not do that at trial, Trump's attorneys said.

SCOTUS immunity ruling

Trump's attorneys also said the trial court admitted evidence that should have been protected by presidential immunity, citing a U.S. Supreme Court ruling last year that established broad protections for sitting presidents.

The Supreme Court opinion said the president was not only protected from criminal charges based on official actions, but that any official action could not be used as evidence to prove an allegation that centered on an unofficial act.

The prosecution did include some official acts Trump took while in office, his lawyers said.

Prosecutors examined Hope Hicks, a former Trump White House communications director, Trump's statements on social media, communications with former Attorney General Jeff Sessions — which Trump denies took place — and the president's general work habits while in office.

Those examples should all be considered official actions that are immune from being used in a criminal case, Trump's attorneys wrote.

Lack of recusal broached

Trump's attorneys also argued Judge Juan Merchan, who oversaw the trial, should have recused himself.

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Merchan donated a total of \$25 to Joe Biden's 2020 campaign and to a political action committee called "Stop Republicans."

The nominal contributions violated a "clear bar on sitting judges making political contributions," Trump's attorneys wrote.

His daughter also worked for a political organization that opposed Trump in 2020, the brief noted.

Trump had asked Merchan to recuse himself during the trial phase, but the judge declined. Trump's attorneys said Monday that was a "clear ground for reversal" of the conviction.

"In the face of all these undisputed and damaging facts, Justice Merchan's refusal to recuse created, at the very least, 'the appearance of bias,'" they wrote.

Elected felon

Whatever problems arose from Trump's prosecution in New York, it had the political effect of elevating his stagnant comeback campaign.

At the nadir of his popularity following his 2020 election loss and the Jan. 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol, several credible challengers entered the Republican presidential field for the 2024 cycle and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis led in some early polls.

But four criminal prosecutions, of which the New York hush money case was the first, had the effect of galvanizing Republicans and other voters who believed the former president was the victim of a political prosecution, and he easily won the GOP nomination.

The prosecutions played out amid the 2024 campaign, and a New York jury convicted Trump of 34 felony counts on May 30, making him the first former president to be convicted of a felony.

He won that November's election and became the first felon to be elected president.

He successfully delayed sentencing until after the 2024 election. Merchan imposed a sentence of unconditional discharge on Jan. 10, 2025, allowing Trump to avoid prison time.

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

Judge blocks Trump shutdown layoffs, citing political retribution

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT-OCTOBER 28, 2025 4:19 PM

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration cannot carry out layoffs that it announced after the government shutdown began Oct. 1 and is barred from issuing any new layoff notices under a court order issued Tuesday.

U.S. District Judge Susan Illston said at the end of an hour-long hearing in the Northern District of California she granted the preliminary injunction because the reductions in force are unlawful and "intended for the purpose of political retribution."

Illston referenced a social media post by President Donald Trump that said, "I can't believe the radical left Democrats gave me this unprecedented opportunity."

Michael Velchik, a Justice Department attorney representing the government, argued against the judge issuing a preliminary injunction.

Velchik said statements from Trump and other administration officials were an expression of policy differences with Democrats and were not evidence of attempted political retribution.

The hearing was the latest step in a lawsuit filed in late September. In the month since, attorneys for labor unions have contended the Trump administration's actions violate federal law, while lawyers for the government have said it's well within the scope of their authority.

Illston, who was nominated to the bench by President Bill Clinton, granted a temporary restraining order in mid-October that she clarified and expanded days later amid a misunderstanding within the administration about its impact.

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Some layoffs planned pre-shutdown, government says

Illston said during Tuesday's hearing that she's likely to schedule an evidentiary hearing over claims that some layoff notices that have gone out during the shutdown were planned before it began, and shouldn't be subject to any court orders in this lawsuit.

Danielle Leonard, an attorney representing the labor unions that brought the case, said she believed that type of hearing could help all involved "get to the heart of" the disagreement.

Leonard requested the preliminary injunction cover employees at the Interior Department, Commerce Department's patent office and the Education Department's Office of Civil Rights from layoffs until after the judge scheduled that evidentiary hearing.

Illston didn't respond directly to that proposal, but said she planned to release a written version of the preliminary injunction she issued from the bench as soon as Tuesday.

Illston said the injunction didn't apply to employees at the Small Business Administration who received layoff notices in late September, before the shutdown began.

Velchik contended that layoff notices issued since the shutdown began were well within the administration's authority, saying the country does not "have a fossilized executive branch where we cannot reduce the size."

Velchik also told the judge that efforts to lay off federal employees during the shutdown were "the right thing to do, morally. And it's the democratic thing to do."

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.

Democratic AGs, governors sue Trump over SNAP benefits as shutdown hits day 28

BY: JACOB FISCHLER-OCTOBER 28, 2025 1:32 PM

A coalition of Democratic state officials sued the Trump administration Tuesday, asking a federal judge to force the release of food assistance funds for 42 million people that the U.S. Department of Agriculture has said cannot be paid during the ongoing government shutdown.

Attorneys general representing 22 states and the District of Columbia and three governors launched the suit days before benefits are expected to be cut off for low-income Americans enrolled in the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, on Nov. 1.

Despite holding \$6 billion in a reserve fund, USDA said last week it would not process November SNAP benefits without fiscal 2026 funding approved by Congress.

The USDA's refusal to provide November benefits runs contrary to precedent from other recent shutdowns, and even the department's own Sept. 30 contingency plan that said the contingency fund would be used to continue benefits through the shutdown.

The administration has also shuffled some other money to provide funding for certain programs, but not SNAP.

The Democratic officials said those factors made the decision arbitrary and capricious, a violation of federal administrative law, and asked a federal court in Massachusetts to order the USDA's move unlawful and block the administration from putting it in place.

"It is an abuse of discretion for Defendants to decline to use available appropriations, including the SNAP contingency reserve, to fund benefits for the mandatory SNAP entitlement program," they wrote.

SNAP benefits typically cost the federal government about \$9 billion per month, meaning the contingency fund could cover about two-thirds of November's benefits.

The department could cover a full month by dipping into another USDA nutrition assistance program that holds about \$23 billion, the state officials said. Part of that fund was used to cover a shortfall in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children earlier this month.

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The attorneys general of Massachusetts, California, Arizona, Minnesota, Connecticut, Colorado, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington state and Wisconsin brought the suit, along with Democratic Govs. Laura Kelly of Kansas, Andy Beshear of Kentucky and Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania.

Shutdown politics

In an emailed statement, a USDA spokesperson did not address the lawsuit, which came from state officials, and instead blamed the shutdown on U.S. Senate Democrats.

"We are approaching an inflection point for Senate Democrats," the spokesperson wrote. "Continue to hold out for the Far-Left wing of the party or reopen the government so mothers, babies, and the most vulnerable among us can receive timely WIC and SNAP allotments."

SNAP, which the federal government funds and states administer, is one of the high-profile programs affected by the government shutdown that began Oct. 1 when Congress failed to appropriate funds for the fiscal year that began that date.

Congressional Republicans have tried to pass a stopgap measure to reopen the government, but Democrats have successfully blocked that bill as they demand Congress address the expiration of health care premiums for coverage through the Affordable Care Act marketplace.

In a Tuesday afternoon letter, 19 Republican attorneys general called on Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer to support the Republican stopgap to prevent an interruption to SNAP benefits.

The letter, led by Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost, called SNAP "one of the simplest and most effective ways to prevent hunger in America."

"You have the power to prevent a crisis that is entirely avoidable," the letter said. "A clean resolution is not a political concession; it is the responsible thing to do. ... Refusing to do so now is not leadership; it's leverage at the expense of the most vulnerable."

In addition to Yost, the letter was signed by the attorneys general of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Virginia and West Virginia.

Benefits delayed already in some states

Because of processing times required to add money to SNAP recipients' electronic benefit transfer, or EBT, cards, benefits for November may already be delayed in some states.

The suit says California's EBT vendor, the private company contracted to load monthly benefits onto individuals' EBT cards, requires about a week to process those transfers.

"So, in order to ensure recipients received their November 2025 benefits on time, California would have had to send its issuance files to its vendor by October 23, 2025," the suit said. "Each day after October 23 that California does not send its issuance files to its vendor will result in November benefits being delayed another day."

Additionally, because most states use one of two EBT vendors, there's a strong possibility the vendors will be overwhelmed by the workload "from all their client-states at essentially the same time" once benefits are unfrozen, the state officials said.

So even if USDA immediately released funding, there would be a lag before they appeared on EBT cards, they said.

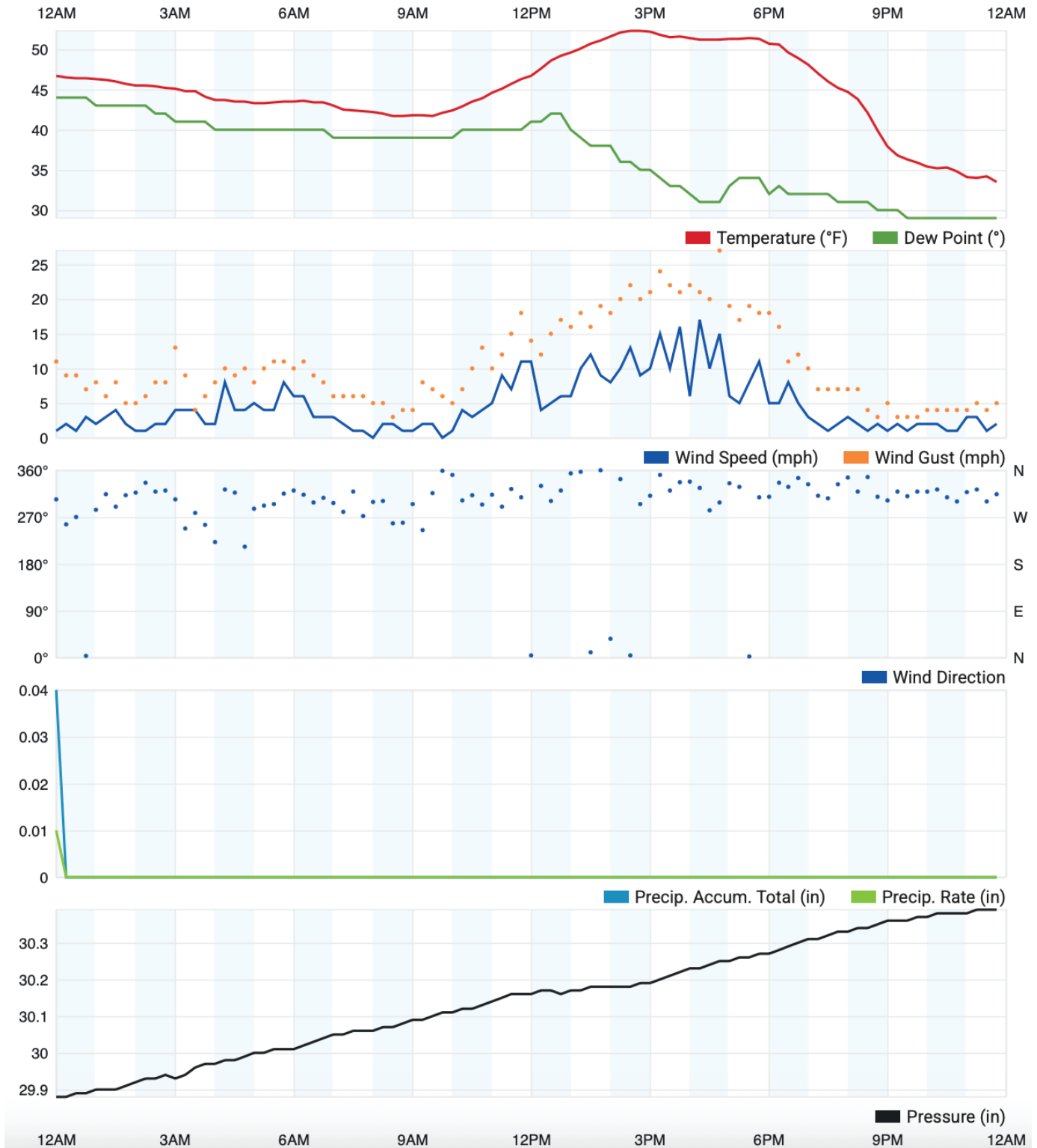
Jacob covers federal policy and helps direct national coverage as deputy Washington bureau chief for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

October 28, 2025



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Today



High: 50 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 29 °F

Increasing
Clouds

Thursday



High: 55 °F

Decreasing
Clouds

Thursday
Night



Low: 32 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Friday



High: 44 °F

Slight Chance
Showers



Looking Ahead to Friday Evening...

October 29, 2025
5:04 AM

Chilly and Blustery Conditions

- Until then... Sunny with light winds today. Highs in the upper 40s to low 50s.
- Thursday: Northwest winds gusting 25-35 mph across central SD bringing **High Fire Danger**.
- Friday: **Chilly and blustery** with highs in the 40s. A 20-30% chance for light rain showers across northeast SD and west central MN. Possibly a few snow showers mixing in Friday morning??

Friday, Oct 31st	Aberdeen					Sisseton					Watertown					Mobridge					Pierre				
Time:	5PM	6PM	7PM	8PM	9PM	5PM	6PM	7PM	8PM	9PM	5PM	6PM	7PM	8PM	9PM	5PM	6PM	7PM	8PM	9PM	5PM	6PM	7PM	8PM	9PM
Weather:																									
Temperature (°F):	43	42	41	39	37	42	41	40	38	37	41	40	40	38	37	41	40	39	38	36	43	42	41	39	37
Wind Chill, °F:	36	36	35	33	32	36	35	34	32	30	34	33	34	32	31	33	32	32	31	29	35	34	34	32	30
Wind Speed (mph):	13	10	9	8	7	12	10	9	9	8	13	10	9	8	7	15	14	12	10	10	17	15	13	12	10
Wind Gust (mph):	21	18	16	15	14	20	17	16	15	14	21	18	17	16	15	24	22	20	17	15	26	24	21	18	16
Wind Direction (°):	330	340	340	340	330	330	330	330	330	330	320	330	330	330	330	330	340	340	340	340	330	330	330	330	330
Wind Direction:																									
Prob. of Precip. (%):	17	17	2	2	2	26	26	4	4	4	25	25	2	2	2	11	11	4	4	4	7	7	2	2	2
Prob. of Thunder (%):	6	6	0	0	0	6	6	2	2	2	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dew Point (°F):	30	31	31	31	31	32	32	32	32	33	32	32	32	32	33	31	32	32	32	32	30	30	30	30	30
RH (%):	60	65	67	73	79	67	70	73	78	87	70	73	74	79	87	67	73	76	80	84	60	62	65	70	76
Sky Cover (%):	80	79	77	78	79	78	77	75	76	77	75	76	76	73	71	73	73	73	72	70	67	63	60	56	51



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Friday looks to be chilly and blustery as northwest winds bring in cool temperatures in the 40s for highs. Winds will diminish during the evening hours. There may be a few light rain showers across northeast SD into west central MN as well, which may mix in with a few snow showers Friday morning. But until then, sunny skies are expected today with highs in the upper 40s to low 50s. Thursday will see highs in the 50s, with windy conditions developing over central SD, bringing high fire danger.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 53 °F at 2:39 PM

Low Temp: 34 °F at 11:05 PM

Wind: 27 mph at 4:38 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 79 in 1937

Record Low: -5 in 1925

Average High: 52

Average Low: 27

Average Precip in Oct.: 2.05

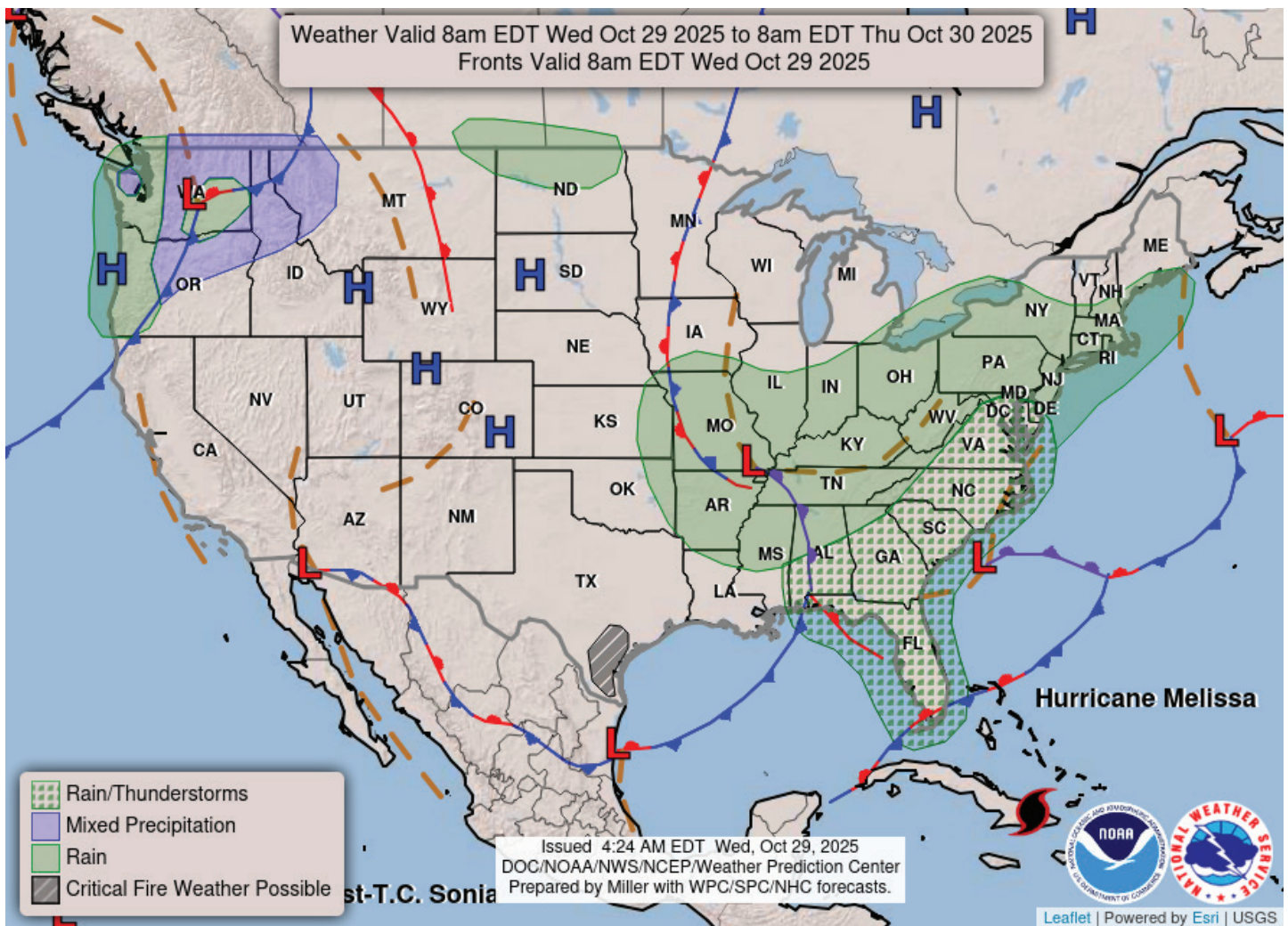
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.52

Average Precip to date: 20.38

Precip Year to Date: 23.44

Sunset Tonight: 6:24 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:09 am



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Today in Weather History

October 29, 1925: Record cold occurred across the area on this date in 1925. The record lows were 9 at Wheaton, Minnesota, 2 degrees below zero at Watertown, 5 degrees below zero at Aberdeen, 7 degrees below zero southeast of McIntosh, and a frigid late October 19 degrees below zero at Kennebec.

1693: From the Royal Society of London: "There happened a most violent storm in Virginia which stopped the course of ancient channels and made some where there never were any." Known as the Accomack Storm, this event likely caused changes to the Delmarva shoreline, and coastal inlets. 1948: An historic smog event occurred in the town of Donora, Pennsylvania. The smog killed 20 people and sickened 7,000 more.

1917 - The temperature at Denver, CO, dipped to zero, and at Soda Butte, WY, the mercury plunged to 33 degrees below zero, a U.S. record for the month of October. (David Ludlum)

1942 - A tornado struck the town of Berryville in northwest Arkansas killing 20 persons and causing half a million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1956 - A violent tornado, or series of tornadoes, moved along a path more than 100 miles in length from south of North Platte NE into Rock County NE. It was an unusually late occurrence so far north and west in the U.S. for such a storm. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Severe thunderstorms in Arizona produced wind gusts to 86 mph at the Glendale Airport near Phoenix, baseball size hail and 70 mph winds at Wickenburg, and up to an inch of rain in fifteen minutes in Yavapai County and northwest Maricopa County. Arizona Public Service alone reported 2.5 million dollars damage from the storms. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Wintry weather prevailed in the Upper Midwest. South Bend, IN, equalled their record for October with a morning low of 23 degrees. International Falls MN reported a record low of 11 degrees in the morning, then dipped down to 8 degrees above zero late in the evening. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced severe weather in Oklahoma and north central Texas during the late afternoon and evening hours. Thunderstorms in Oklahoma produced weak tornadoes near Snyder and Davidson, and produced hail two inches in diameter at Altus. Large hail damaged 60 to 80 percent of the cotton crop in Tillman County OK. Nine cities in the northeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date as readings warmed into the 70s. For Marquette MI it marked their fifth straight day of record warmth. Arctic cold invaded the western U.S. Lows of 7 degrees at Alamosa CO and 9 degrees at Elko NV were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

2011 - New York City received one inch of snow, the earliest they had received that much snow since records began. It was also only the fourth times since the Civil War snow had fallen in New York City in October. The storm also left over three million people without power including 62% of the customers of Connecticut Light and Power.



Characteristics of a Generous Spirit

The choice to be generous has nothing to do with how much money we have.

2 Corinthians 8:1-15

When we hear of a need, it may be that our desire is to give but our bank account convinces us doing so is impossible. Though we know generosity should characterize believers, sometimes it seems the only way to be generous is to be wealthy.

The Christians in Macedonia prove this isn't the case. Using them as a model of openhandedness, Paul motivated the Corinthians to follow through on their original commitment to support the church in Jerusalem. The example of the Macedonians in today's passage helps us identify the characteristics of generosity:

A generous person is sensitive to the needs of others. The Macedonian believers' own troubles didn't prevent them from feeling compassion for the needs of others (v. 2).

A generous spirit sees needs as opportunities. The Macedonian Christians begged Paul to let them help support the saints in Jerusalem (v. 4).

Liberality flows from a life yielded to God. These believers first gave themselves to the Lord in obedience to His will (v. 5).

A generous spirit has nothing to do with how much money we have; rather, it has to do with how much the Lord has of us. When we are fully surrendered to Him, He provides the grace we need in order to share what we have—whether time, treasure, or talent.

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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Password _____

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.28.25

2 19 33 53 61 14

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$754,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 36
DRAW: Mins 39 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 15 Hrs 51 Mins 39
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.28.25

14 15 21 24 45 8

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 6 Mins 39
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.25.25

13 15 22 23 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$63,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 6 Mins 39
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.27.25

16 31 60 63 65 17

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 35 Mins 39
DRAW: 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 16 Hrs 35 Mins 39
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

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Upcoming Groton Events

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

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News from the Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Baltic def. Deubrook, 25-18, 25-23, 25-13
Bon Homme def. Avon, 25-17, 25-21, 25-22
Britton-Hecla def. Wilmot, 25-13, 25-16, 25-21
Brookings def. T F Riggs High School, 25-10, 25-23, 25-12
Castlewood def. Flandreau, 25-21, 25-18, 25-18
Chester def. Bridgewater-Emery, 25-19, 25-17, 25-16
DeSmet def. Arlington, 25-15, 11-25, 25-18, 25-19
Dell Rapids St Mary's def. Colman-Egan, 17-25, 25-20, 17-25, 25-21, 15-12
Dell Rapids def. Beresford, 25-14, 25-14, 25-18
Ethan def. Platte-Geddes, 27-29, 25-19, 25-22, 25-23
Flandreau Indian def. Marty, 25-23, 25-20, 25-20
Freeman def. Alcester-Hudson, 25-23, 25-14, 25-16
Great Plains Lutheran def. Sisseton, 25-15, 25-16, 25-16
Groton def. Milbank, 25-17, 25-10, 25-19
Hamlin def. Clark-Willow Lake, 25-16, 25-15, 25-23
Harrisburg def. Sioux Falls O'Gorman, 25-19, 21-25, 25-15, 25-19
Herreid-Selby def. Aberdeen Roncalli, 25-27, 25-19, 18-25, 25-22, 15-10
Hill City def. Belle Fourche, 25-14, 25-14, 25-8
Hitchcock-Tulare def. Wessington Springs, 25-10, 25-13, 25-17
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Iroquois-Lake Preston def. Oldham-Ramona-Rutland, 19-25, 25-19, 25-14, 25-17
James Valley Christian School def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-11, 25-17, 21-25, 26-24
Jones County def. Stanley County, 25-15, 25-17, 25-14
Kadoka def. Lakota Tech, 25-17, 21-25, 25-8, 25-13
Lemmon High School def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, 25-11, 25-13, 25-11
Leola-Frederick High School def. Gettysburg, 25-19, 18-25, 25-18, 14-25, 15-11
Lower Brule def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 27-25, 25-22, 20-25, 27-29
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Philip def. New Underwood, 25-9, 25-21, 25-19
Rapid City Stevens def. Sturgis Brown High School, 25-19, 25-14, 25-17
Redfield def. Tiospa Zina, 25-12, 25-2, 25-12
Sioux Falls Lincoln def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 25-11, 25-20, 25-12
Sioux Falls Washington def. Sioux Falls Jefferson, 25-13, 25-22, 20-25, 25-17
Sioux Valley def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-16, 22-25, 25-14, 25-20
Spearfish def. Rapid City Central, 25-11, 25-13, 25-20
St Thomas More def. Rapid City Christian, 18-25, 19-25, 25-23, 27-25, 15-8
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Wall def. Timber Lake, 25-12, 25-17, 25-13
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Webster def. Waubay/Summit, 25-21, 25-18, 25-18
Wolsey-Wessington def. Faulkton, 25-15, 25-20, 27-25
Yankton def. Tea, 25-14, 20-25, 25-17, 25-10

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

Trump scores golden gifts but no investment dollars during South Korea visit

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

GYEONGJU, South Korea (AP) — President Donald Trump wanted South Korea to invest \$350 billion in the American economy. So far, he's settling for a gold medal and a crown.

Both were gifts from the country's president, Lee Jae Myung, who dialed up the flattery while Washington and Seoul struggled to finalize details on financial promises during the last stop of Trump's Asia trip.

There was a special lunch menu featuring U.S.-raised beef and a gold-adorned brownie. A band played Trump's campaign anthem of "Y.M.C.A." when he stepped off Air Force One. Lee told him that "you are indeed making America great again."

Trump can be mercurial and demanding, but he has a soft spot for pomp and circumstance. He was particularly impressed by a choreographed display of colorful flags as he walked along the red carpet.

"That was some spectacle, and some beautiful scene," Trump told Lee during their meeting. "It was so perfect, so flawlessly done."

Earlier in the day, Trump even softened his rhetoric on international trade, which he normally describes in predatory terms where someone is always trying to rip off the United States.

"The best deals are deals that work for everybody," he said during a business forum.

Washington and Seoul are working on a trade deal

Trump was visiting while South Korea is hosting the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in the historical city of Gyeongju. He previously stopped in Japan, where he bonded with the new prime minister, and Malaysia, where he attended a summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The Republican president has been trying to tie up trade deals along the way, eager to show that his confrontational approach of tariffs is paying dividends for Americans who are uneasy about the job market and watching a federal government shutdown extend into its fifth week.

However, South Korea has been tough to crack, with the sticking point being Trump's demand for \$350 billion of direct investment in the U.S.

Korean officials say putting up cash could destabilize their own economy, and they'd rather offer loans and loan guarantees instead. The country would also need a swap line to manage the flow of its currency into the U.S.

Trump, after meeting with Lee, said "we made our deal pretty much finalized." He did not provide any details, and the White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Oh Hyunjo, a deputy national security director for South Korea, told reporters earlier in the week that the negotiations have been proceeding "a little bit more slowly" than expected.

"We haven't yet been able to reach an agreement on matters such as the structure of investments, their formats and how the profits will be distributed," she said Monday.

It's a contrast from Trump's experience in Japan, where the government has worked to deliver the \$550 billion in investments it promised as part of an earlier trade agreement. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick announced up to \$490 billion in specific commitments during a dinner with business leaders in Tokyo.

For now, South Korea is stuck with a 25% tariff on automobiles, putting automakers such as Hyundai and Kia at a disadvantage against Japanese and European competitors, which face 15%.

Lee, speaking at the business forum before Trump arrived, warned against trade barriers.

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"At a time when protectionism and nationalism are on the rise and nations focus on their immediate survival, words like 'cooperation,' 'coexistence' and 'inclusive growth' may sound hollow," he said. "Yet, paradoxically, it is in times of crisis like this that APEC's role as a platform for solidarity shines brighter."

Trump and Lee swap praise despite disagreements

Lee took office in June and had a warm meeting with Trump at the White House in August, when he praised Oval Office renovations and suggested building a Trump Tower in North Korea.

He took a similar approach when Trump visited on Wednesday. The gold medal presented to Trump represents the Grand Order of Mugunghwa, the country's highest honor, and Trump is the first U.S. president to receive it.

Trump said "it's as beautiful as it can possibly be" and "I'd like to wear it right now."

Next was a replica of a royal crown from the Silla Kingdom, which existed from 57 B.C. to 935 A.D. The original crown was found in a tomb in Gyeongju, the kingdom's capital.

Besides trade disagreements, there have been other points of tension between Washington and Seoul this year. More than 300 South Koreans were detained during a U.S. immigration raid on a Hyundai plant in Georgia in September, sparking a sense of outrage and betrayal.

Lee said at the time companies would likely hesitate to make future investments unless the visa system was improved.

"If that's not possible, then establishing a local factory in the United States will either come with severe disadvantages or become very difficult for our companies," he said.

Asked Monday about the immigration raid, Trump said, "I was opposed to getting them out," and he said an improved visa system would make it easier for companies to bring in skilled workers.

Trump-Xi meeting is expected Thursday

While in South Korea, Trump is also expected to hold a closely watched meeting on Thursday with Chinese leader Xi Jinping. Washington and Beijing have clashed over trade, but both sides have indicated that they're willing to dial down tensions.

Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One on Wednesday that he expects to lower tariffs targeting China over the flow of fentanyl ingredients.

"They'll be doing what they can do," he said. Trump added that "China is going to be working with me."

Trump sounded resigned to the idea that he wouldn't get to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on this trip. The president previously floated the possibility of extending his stay in South Korea, but on Wednesday said "the schedule was very tight."

North Korea has so far dismissed overtures from Washington and Seoul, saying it won't resume diplomacy with the United States unless Washington drops its demand for the North's denuclearization. North Korea said Wednesday it fired sea-to-surface cruise missiles into its western waters, in the latest display of its growing military capabilities as Trump visits South Korea.

Trump brushed off the weapons test, saying "he's been launching missiles for decades, right?"

The two leaders met during Trump's first term, although their conversations did not produce any agreements about North Korea's nuclear program.

Hurricane Melissa makes landfall in eastern Cuba as a Category 3 storm

SANTIAGO DE CUBA, Cuba (AP) — Hurricane Melissa made landfall in eastern Cuba near the city of Chivirico early Wednesday as a Category 3 storm after pummeling Jamaica as one of the strongest Atlantic hurricanes on record, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said.

Hundreds of thousands of people had been evacuated to shelters in Cuba. A hurricane warning was in effect for the Cuban provinces of Granma, Santiago de Cuba, Guantánamo, Holguin and Las Tunas, as well as the southeastern and central Bahamas.

Early Wednesday, Melissa had top sustained winds of 115 mph (185 kph) and was moving northeast at 12 mph (19 kph) according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami. The hurricane was centered 60 miles

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(97 kilometers) west of Guantánamo, Cuba, and 230 miles (370 kilometers) south of the central Bahamas. The agency warned residents of Cuba to remain sheltered and that preparations for the storm in the Bahamas "should be rushed to completion."

Melissa was forecast to weaken as it crosses Cuba through the morning, and remain a strong hurricane as it moves across the southeastern or central Bahamas later Wednesday. The storm is then expected to make its way late Thursday near or to the west of Bermuda, where a hurricane watch is in effect.

The continuing intense rain could cause life-threatening flooding with numerous landslides, U.S. forecasters said.

Melissa struck Jamaica on Tuesday with top sustained winds of 185 mph (295 kph).

The storm was expected to generate a storm surge of up to 12 feet (3.6 meters) in the region and drop up to 20 inches (51 centimeters) of rain in parts of eastern Cuba.

"Numerous landslides are likely in those areas," said Michael Brennan, director of the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami.

The hurricane could worsen Cuba's severe economic crisis, which already has led to prolonged power blackouts, as well as fuel and food shortages.

"There will be a lot of work to do. We know there will be a lot of damage," Díaz-Canel said in a televised address, in which he assured that "no one is left behind and no resources are spared to protect the lives of the population."

At the same time, he urged the population not to underestimate the power of Melissa, "the strongest ever to hit national territory."

Provinces from Guantánamo — in the far east — to Camagüey, almost in the center of elongated Cuba, had already suspended classes on Monday.

As Cuba prepared for the storm, officials in Jamaica prepared to fan out Wednesday to assess the damage.

Extensive damage was reported in parts of Clarendon in southern Jamaica and in the southwestern parish of St. Elizabeth, which was "under water," said Desmond McKenzie, deputy chairman of Jamaica's Disaster Risk Management Council.

The storm also damaged four hospitals and left one without power, forcing officials to evacuate 75 patients, McKenzie said.

More than half a million customers were without power as of late Tuesday as officials reported that most of the island experienced downed trees, power lines and extensive flooding.

The government said it hopes to reopen all of Jamaica's airports as early as Thursday to ensure the quick distribution of emergency relief supplies.

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.

Dutch vote in a knife-edge election focused on housing and Wilders

By MIKE CORDER and MOLLY QUELL Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Voters and leading contenders cast their ballots across the Netherlands on Wednesday in a close-run snap election called after anti-Islam lawmaker Geert Wilders brought down the last four-party coalition in a dispute over a crackdown on immigration.

The campaign echoed issues that resonate across Europe, focusing on how to rein in migration and tackle chronic shortages of affordable housing.

But in a country where coalition governments are the norm, it's unclear if parties will work with Wilders again, even if his Party for Freedom repeats its stunning victory from two years ago.

Mainstream parties have already ruled that out, arguing that his decision to torpedo the outgoing four-party coalition in June in a dispute over migration underscored that he is an untrustworthy partner.

"It's up to the voters today," Wilders said after voting in the cavernous atrium of The Hague City Hall, surrounded by security guards. "It's a close call ... four or five different parties. I'm confident."

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Frans Timmermans, the former European Commission vice president who now leads the center-left bloc made up of the Labor Party and Green Left, took his black labrador to a polling station in his home city of Maastricht in the southern Netherlands.

"It's going to be so close so let's hope we come out as first, because that is the only guarantee to avoid a right wing government," he told reporters.

Migration has divided the Netherlands

The vote comes against a backdrop of deep polarization in this nation of 18 million, violence at a recent anti-immigration rally in The Hague and protests against new asylum-seeker centers.

Voting was taking place at venues from city halls to schools, but also historic windmills, churches, a zoo, a former prison in Arnhem and the iconic Anne Frank House museum in Amsterdam.

Olga van der Brandt, 32, said she thinks voters may turn their backs on parties that made up the last right-wing government led by Wilders.

Her hope is that "this time there will be a more progressive party who can take the lead."

Christian Democrats leader Henri Bontenbal agreed that a fundamental shift in Dutch politics was at stake.

"What we have seen in the last two years is a political landscape with right-wing populism, and the question is, is it possible to beat populism by decent politics," he said.

Wilders' party poised for a win

Polls suggest that Wilders' party, which is calling for a total halt to asylum-seekers entering the Netherlands, remains on track to win the largest number of seats in the 150-seat House of Representatives. But other more moderate parties are closing the gap and pollsters caution that many people wait until the very last minute to decide who to vote for.

Among those first in line at the ornate former City Hall in the central city of Delft, wearing bathrobes and carrying mugs of coffee, was a group of students who live together and study at the local university.

"It's a house tradition" to vote together, Lucas van Krimpen told The Associated Press.

Polls close at 9 p.m. followed by an initial exit poll.

The Dutch system of proportional representation all but guarantees that no single party can win a majority. Negotiations will likely begin Thursday into the makeup of the next governing coalition.

Rob Jetten, leader of the center-left D66 party that has risen in polls as the campaign wore on, said in a final televised debate that his party wants to rein in migration but also accommodate asylum-seekers fleeing war and violence.

And he told Wilders that voters can "choose again tomorrow to listen to your grumpy hatred for another 20 years, or choose, with positive energy, to simply get to work and tackle this problem and solve it."

Wilders rejects arguments that he had failed to deliver on his 2023 campaign pledges despite being the largest party in parliament, blaming other parties for stymying his plans.

Wilders backed away from becoming prime minister during negotiations after the last election because he did not have the support of potential coalition partners.

Israel's military says ceasefire is back on as death toll from overnight strikes in Gaza reaches 81

By WAFAA SHURAF and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel's military said Wednesday the ceasefire was back on in Gaza after it carried out heavy airstrikes across the Palestinian territory that killed at least 81 people, including women and children, according to local hospitals.

The strikes — the deadliest since the ceasefire was enacted on Oct. 10 — marked the most serious challenge to the tenuous truce to date.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he had ordered the military to conduct "powerful strikes" over Gaza after accusing Hamas of violating the ceasefire. Hamas said in response that it would delay handing over the body of another hostage.

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U.S. President Donald Trump, currently on a trip to Asia, defended the strikes, saying Israel was justified in carrying them out after what he said was an incident in which Hamas killed an Israeli soldier during an exchange of gunfire in Rafah, the southernmost city in Gaza.

Hamas denied any involvement in that deadly shooting and in turn accused Israel of violating the cease-fire deal.

Mounting death toll

Mohammed Abu Selmia, director of Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, said the death toll was likely to rise further as many of the 45 who were being treated at the hospital — including 20 children — were in critical condition.

He said the hospital received 21 bodies, including seven women and six children. That's on top of the at least 60 people who were reported killed earlier.

First, the Aqsa Hospital in Gaza's central city of Deir al-Balah reported at least 10 bodies, among them three women and six children. Their bodies reached the hospital overnight after two Israeli airstrikes there. In southern Gaza, the Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis said it received 20 bodies after five Israeli strikes in the area, of which 13 were children and two were women.

Elsewhere in central Gaza, the Al-Awda Hospital said it received 30 bodies, including 14 children.

According to officials from the four Gaza hospitals who spoke to The Associated Press, the number of children killed in the strikes overnight has reached 39.

Netanyahu's order

Netanyahu's order to launch strikes came after an Israeli official said its forces were fired upon in southern Gaza and after Hamas handed over body parts on Monday that Israel said were the partial remains of a hostage recovered earlier in the war.

The Israeli prime minister called the return of these body parts a "clear violation" of the ceasefire agreement, which requires Hamas to return the remaining hostages in Gaza as soon as possible. Israeli officials also accused Hamas of staging the discovery of these remains on Monday, sharing a 14-minute edited video captured by a military drone in Gaza.

Israel notified the United States before launching the strikes on Tuesday, according to two U.S. officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the subject.

The Israeli military said its forces struck "30 terrorists holding command positions within terrorist organizations" operating inside the Palestinian territory.

Later, it said Israeli forces would continue to uphold the ceasefire agreement but would "respond firmly" to any violation of the deal.

Trump defends Israel

Trump told journalists aboard Air Force One on Wednesday that Israel "should hit back" when its troops come under attack.

But he said he's still confident the ceasefire would withstand the escalation in violence because "Hamas is a very small part of the overall Middle East peace. And they have to behave." If not, they will be "terminated," Trump added.

An Israeli military official said Wednesday that the soldier was killed by "enemy fire" on Tuesday afternoon targeting his vehicle in Rafah. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss confidential military operations.

The official said Israeli troops in the area came under attack numerous times Tuesday as they worked to destroy tunnels and Hamas infrastructure. Israel identified the soldier who was killed as Master Sgt. Yona Efraim Feldbaum, 37.

Hamas insisted it was not involved in the Rafah gunfire and reiterated its commitment to the ceasefire.

"The violent strikes carried out by Israel across the strip is a blatant violation of the ceasefire deal," said the militant group, calling on mediators to pressure Israel to stop.

Gaza hospitals try to cope with casualties

Ambulances and small trucks carrying bodies crowded hospital entrances overnight across Gaza. In Deir Al-Balah, bodies were wheeled in on stretchers, and others carried in on mattresses. One man walked into

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the hospital carrying the body of a young child.

"They struck right next to us, and we saw all the rubble on top of us and our young ones," said a woman standing outside of the hospital.

At dawn, displaced Palestinians at the camp cleared remains of a destroyed tent next to a crater where the strike hit. They found the body of a small child and wrapped it in a blanket.

"What kind of a ceasefire is this?" Amna Qrinawi, a survivor, asked.

Trump says 'it's too bad' he can't run for a third term

By CHRIS MEGERIAN and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

GYEONGJU, South Korea (AP) — President Donald Trump said Wednesday that "it's too bad" he's not allowed to run for a third term, conceding the constitutional reality even as he expressed interest in continuing to serve.

"If you read it, it's pretty clear," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One enroute from Japan to South Korea. "I'm not allowed to run. It's too bad."

The president's comments, which continue his on-again, off-again musings about a third term, came a day after House Speaker Mike Johnson said it would be impossible for Trump to stay in the White House.

"I don't see the path for that," he told reporters at the U.S. Capitol on Tuesday.

Johnson, the Republican leader who has built his career by drawing closer to Trump, said he discussed the issue with the president, and he thinks Trump understands the situation.

"He and I have talked about the constrictions of the Constitution," he said.

The speaker described how the Constitution's 22nd Amendment does not allow for a third presidential term and changing that, with a new amendment, would be a cumbersome, decade-long process winning over states and votes in Congress.

"But I can tell you that we are not going to take our foot off the gas pedal," he said. "We're going to deliver for the American people, and we've got a great run ahead of us — he'll have four strong years."

Trump stopped short of characterizing his conversation with Johnson, and his description of the prohibition on third terms was somewhat less definitive.

"Based on what I read, I guess I'm not allowed to run," he said Wednesday. "So we'll see what happens."

Trump has repeatedly raised the idea of trying to stay in power. Hats saying "Trump 2028" are passed out as souvenir keepsakes to lawmakers and others visiting the White House, and Trump's former 2016 campaign chief-turned-podcaster Stephen Bannon has revived the idea of a third Trump term.

Trump told reporters Monday on Air Force One on his trip to Japan that "I would love to do it."

He went on to say that his Republican Party has great options for the next presidential election — in Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who was traveling with him, and Vice President JD Vance, who visited with senators at the Capitol on Tuesday.

"All I can tell you is that we have a great group of people," Trump said.

Pressed if he was ruling out a third-term bid, Trump demurred. Asked about a strategy where he could run as vice president, which could be allowed under the laws, and then work himself in the presidency, he dismissed the idea as "too cute."

"You'd be allowed to do that, but I wouldn't do that," he said.

The chit chat comes as Trump, in his words and actions, is showing just how far he can push the presidency — and daring anyone to stop him.

He is sending National Guard troops to cities over the objections of several state governors; accepting untold millions in private donations to pay the military and fund the new White House ballroom, picking winners and losers in the government shutdown.

Johnson, the Louisiana Republican who rose swiftly to become House speaker with Trump's blessing, dismissed worries about a potential third term by the president's critics whose "hair is on fire."

"He has a good time with that, trolling the Democrats," Johnson said.

Guerrero homers off Ohtani as Blue Jays even World Series with 6-2 win over Dodgers in Game 4

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Dodger Stadium was still shaking with joy when Monday turned to Tuesday as the Toronto Blue Jays trudged into their clubhouse. Their 18-inning loss in Game 3 felt like a monumental setback that might have already decided the World Series.

That's when Vladimir Guerrero Jr. stepped up and told his team exactly what it needed to hear.

For all its drama, Game 3 was no more important than Game 4.

"I was the last one to go in," Guerrero said. "I saw everybody with his head down. I said, 'Come on, bro. Head up. It's not over yet. It's not over yet. They gotta win four. Four games. You have to win four games to win the World Series. It's not over.'"

The Jays' leader then backed up his message by crushing another timely homer Tuesday night, this one off Shohei Ohtani.

And after nine superb innings played in less than three tidy hours, these profoundly resilient Blue Jays have evened the World Series again.

Guerrero hit a two-run homer off Ohtani in the third inning, Shane Bieber pitched four-hit ball into the sixth, and Toronto got back on track with a 6-2 victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Addison Barger had two hits and an RBI for the AL champion Blue Jays, who coolly rebounded from their heartbreaking, late-night defeat with stellar work at the plate and on the mound.

"Coming off what could be a back-breaking loss last night, it was an absolute pleasure to show up today and see nobody changes," Bieber said. "Nobody ever wavers. Nobody ever hesitates. It's the same group of guys each and every day."

By sending the defending champion Dodgers to just their third loss in 14 games this postseason, the Blue Jays reclaimed homefield advantage and guaranteed the World Series trophy will be won at Rogers Centre.

"I believe in this team, man," said Guerrero, who spurred the Jays with his seventh homer of the postseason. "This team is something special."

Game 5 is Wednesday at Dodger Stadium, with Game 6 in Toronto on Friday.

Ohtani redefined the concept of short rest by taking the World Series mound just over 17 hours after he reached base nine times and smashed four extra-base hits in the Dodgers' stirring victory.

He yielded four runs on six hits while pitching six-plus innings with six strikeouts in Game 4. And after Guerrero hit his majestic homer, the Blue Jays tagged Ohtani for two more while chasing him during their four-run seventh.

Ohtani couldn't make up for it at the plate, going 0 for 3 with a walk and two strikeouts. He was on deck when the game ended.

He didn't have the only poor performance at bat for the powerhouse Dodgers, who mustered just six hits — only one for extra bases.

"We're facing quality arms at this time of year against really good teams," Ohtani said through his interpreter. "We're facing the best of the best, so I think it's not that easy. At the same time, we could do at least the bare minimum and put up some runs."

The Dodgers' two-way superstar was outpitched by Bieber, the Blue Jays newcomer who returned from Tommy John surgery in late August. The 2020 AL Cy Young Award winner gave up just one run over 5 1/3 innings in a resilient World Series debut.

An Orange County native with friends and family roaring for him from the loge level at Dodger Stadium, Bieber issued three walks, but repeatedly got out of trouble. He stranded four runners before Mason Flu-harty relieved him in the sixth and stranded two more — and the Blue Jays took control moments later with their seventh-inning rally.

"I think that we knew it was going to be a great series," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "This team is talented, they're resilient — talking about the Blue Jays — and they came back fighting. Bieber does what he does ... and we really didn't get a whole lot of good swings. Conversely, you see those guys

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grinding and using the whole field and putting some hits together. We just didn't have an answer."

Ohtani took the mound again 11 days after he hit three homers and struck out 10 Milwaukee Brewers in arguably the greatest single-game performance in baseball playoff history to clinch the NL pennant.

Although his fastball velocity was down to 97.6 mph from his season average of 98.5, Ohtani largely stayed out of trouble with effective breaking stuff.

He also drew a six-pitch leadoff walk to reach base for the 11th straight time, extending his World Series record — but he didn't get on base again.

The Dodgers scored first for the fourth consecutive game when Kiké Hernández's sacrifice fly brought home Max Muncy in the second. But the Blue Jays finally got to Ohtani in the third, ending their 13-inning scoring drought with a big swing from their star slugger.

Nathan Lukes hit a one-out single before Guerrero hammered a misplaced breaking ball from Ohtani over the left-center wall. Guerrero has set Toronto postseason records with seven homers and 14 RBIs this month.

"A sweeper is a pitch designed to generate popups, and the swing that Vlad put on it was elite," Toronto manager John Schneider said. "After last night and all the recognition that went into Shohei individually, and he's on the mound today, it's a huge swing from Vlad. It's a huge swing to get us going, and it gives you some momentum."

Ohtani retired 11 of 12 after Guerrero's homer, but the Blue Jays chased him with Daulton Varsho's single and Ernie Clement's double off the wall to start the seventh. Toronto scored on Andrés Giménez's single and Ty France's groundout off Anthony Banda before Bo Bichette and Barger added RBI singles off struggling reliever Blake Treinen.

Toronto played without ALCS hero George Springer, who left Game 3 in the seventh inning after injuring his right side on a swing.

Up next

Dodgers lefty Blake Snell (3-1, 2.42 ERA) faces Blue Jays rookie Trey Yesavage (2-1, 4.26) in the pivotal Game 5. It's a pitching rematch of the Series opener, when Toronto handed Snell his only loss of a previously dominant postseason by chasing him at the start of a nine-run sixth inning in an 11-4 win. Yesavage pitched four innings of two-run ball.

Category 5 Hurricane Melissa brings flooding and catastrophic winds to Jamaica

By DÁNICA COTO and JOHN MYERS JR. Associated Press

KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP) — Heavy floodwaters swept across southwestern Jamaica, winds tore roofs off buildings and boulders tumbled onto roads Tuesday as Hurricane Melissa pummeled the Caribbean island as a catastrophic Category 5 storm, one of the strongest Atlantic hurricanes on record.

Landslides, fallen trees and numerous power outages were reported as Melissa hit with 185 mph (295 kph) winds near New Hope, with officials cautioning that the cleanup and damage assessment could be slow.

"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."

Floodwaters trapped at least three families in their homes in the community of Black River in western Jamaica, and crews were unable to help them because of dangerous conditions, said Desmond McKenzie, deputy chairman of Jamaica's Disaster Risk Management Council.

"Roofs were flying off," he said. "We are hoping and praying that the situation will ease so that some attempt can be made to get to those persons."

He noted that extensive damage was reported in the southwestern parish of St. Elizabeth, which he said "is underwater."

McKenzie stressed that it was too early to talk about the extent of the damage because the hurricane — the strongest to hit the island since recordkeeping began 174 years ago — was still pummeling the country.

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Rohan Brown, with Jamaica's Meteorological Service, warned that as Melissa moves off the coast, its counterclockwise rotation would bring a heavy storm surge to northern Jamaica through the night. The storm was maintaining Category 4 strength as it moved toward Cuba, where it was expected to cross the eastern part of the island overnight.

Nearly 15,000 people were in shelters in Jamaica and some 540,000 customers, or 77%, were without power, officials said.

Jamaican officials had warned against going outside during Hurricane Melissa, but curiosity got the better of a few Jamaican teens who had never experienced the wrath of a Category 5 system.

"When the wind howls, it feels as if the world is falling apart," 15-year-old Gavin Fuller said with a grin. "I wanted to know what it feels like to stand in the eye of something so powerful."

Colin Bogle, a Mercy Corps adviser, said most families were sheltering in place despite the government ordering evacuations in flood-prone communities. He was sheltering with his grandmother in Portmore, where everything went dark after a loud explosion.

"The noise is relentless," he said. "People are anxious and just trying to hold on until the storm passes."

Jamaica prepares for the aftermath of a record storm

On Tuesday night, Melissa had top sustained winds of 130 mph (215 kph) and was moving northeast at 9 mph (15 kph) according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami. The hurricane was centered about 110 miles (175 kilometers) southwest of Guantánamo, Cuba.

Its 185 mph (295 kph) winds and 892 millibars of central pressure tied two records for the strongest Atlantic storm at landfall. The pressure — the key measurement meteorologists use — tied 1935's Labor Day hurricane in Florida. The wind speed tied the 1935 hurricane and 2019's Hurricane Dorian, said hurricane scientists Phil Klotzbach of Colorado State University and Brian McNoldy of the University of Miami.

"It's been a remarkable, just a beast of a storm," Klotzbach told The Associated Press.

With a life-threatening storm surge of up to 13 feet (4 meters) forecast, officials were concerned about hospitals along the coast. McKenzie said four main hospitals were damaged and one of those lost power, forcing officials to evacuate 75 patients.

One man called a radio station seeking urgent help for a woman in labor in western Jamaica as the hurricane neared landfall. The show's host pleaded with listeners to let him know the safest hospital before an obstetrician called in to provide detailed directions on how to deliver a baby, if necessary.

In Kingston, officials warned people to watch out for crocodiles that might be displaced from their habitats by flooding.

McKenzie said the government was prepared for rescues immediately after the storm passes through: "We have boats, helicopters, you name it."

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.

Tuesday evening, officials huddled in meetings to determine how best to clear the debris after the storm and distribute emergency relief supplies to avoid bottlenecks at Jamaica's ports, said Richard Thompson, acting general director for Jamaica's emergency management office.

Officials hope to reopen the island's airports by Thursday.

U.N. agencies and dozens of nonprofits had food, medicine and other essential supplies positioned as they awaited a distribution rush after the storm.

Melissa takes aim at Cuba

Melissa was expected to make landfall in eastern Cuba early Wednesday. Up to 20 inches (51 centimeters) of rain was forecast in areas, along with a significant storm surge along the coast.

In a televised address to the nation Tuesday, Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel urged the population to not underestimate the power of the storm, "the strongest ever to hit national territory."

In the eastern province of Santiago de Cuba, people streamed into the home of 83-year-old Eduviges Figueroa at the foot of the Sierra Maestra mountains to seek shelter after fleeing their homes by bus, truck and even horse-drawn carts.

"We're helping as best we can," she said. "Now I'm cooking for everyone."

People in Santiago de Cuba, the island's second-largest city with more than 1 million people, spent Tuesday frantically preparing. Few people were on the streets, while state television showed Cubans in rural areas rounding up animals and protecting crops.

Diamon Mendoza, 36, did not hide her concern about the unavoidable storm.

"May God have mercy on us, because it's coming with a lot of strength," Mendoza said. "Anything can happen."

Authorities in eastern Holguín province prepared to evacuate more than 200,000 people Tuesday and evacuated a similar number of people earlier from the town of Banes.

Reports on social media and state television showed blue and white buses ferrying evacuees to shelter early Tuesday. Families clutched babies and belongings and elderly people steadied themselves with canes as they disembarked.

Huge Brazilian raid on Rio gang leaves at least 64 people dead and 81 under arrest

By ELÉONORE HUGHES and DIARLEI RODRIGUES Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — About 2,500 Brazilian police and soldiers launched a massive raid on a drug-trafficking gang in Rio de Janeiro on Tuesday, arresting 81 suspects and sparking shootouts that left at least 60 suspects and four police officers dead, officials said.

The operation included officers in helicopters and armored vehicles and targeted the notorious Red Command in the sprawling low-income favelas of Complexo de Alemão and Penha, police said.

The police operation was one of the most violent in Brazil's recent history, with human rights organizations calling for investigations into the deaths.

Rio's state Gov. Claudio Castro said in a video posted on X that 60 criminal suspects were "neutralized" during the massive raid that he called the biggest such operation in the city's history. Some 81 suspects were arrested, while 93 rifles and more than half a ton of drugs were seized, the state government said, adding that those killed "resisted police action."

Rio's civil police said on X that four officers died in Tuesday's operation. "The cowardly attacks by criminals against our agents will not go unpunished," it said.

An unknown number of people were wounded.

The United Nations' human rights body said it was "horrified" by the deadly police operation, called for effective investigations and reminded authorities of their obligations under international human rights law.

César Muñoz, director of Human Rights Watch in Brazil, called Tuesday's events "a huge tragedy" and a "disaster."

"The public prosecutor's office must open its own investigations and clarify the circumstances of each death," Muñoz said in a statement.

Footage on social media showed fire and smoke rising from the two favelas as gunfire rang out. The city's Education Department said 46 schools across the two neighborhoods were closed, and the nearby Federal University of Rio de Janeiro canceled night classes and told people on campus to seek shelter.

Suspected gang members blocked roads in northern and southeastern Rio in response to the raid, local media reported. At least 70 buses were commandeered to be used in the blockades, causing significant damage, the city's bus organization Rio Onibus said.

The operation Tuesday followed a year of investigation into the criminal group, police said.

Gov. Castro, from the conservative opposition Liberal Party, said the federal government should be providing more support to combat crime — a swipe at the administration of leftist President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Gleisi Hoffmann, the Lula administration's liaison with the parliament, agreed that coordinated action was needed but pointed to a recent crackdown on money laundering as an example of the federal government's action on organized crime.

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Vice President Geraldo Alckmin and a number of ministers met in response to the operation on Tuesday afternoon. Chief of Staff Rui Costa requested an emergency meeting in Rio on Wednesday, with him in attendance as well as Justice Minister Ricardo Lewandowski.

Emerging from Rio's prisons, the Red Command criminal gang has expanded its control in favelas in recent years.

Rio has been the scene of lethal police raids for decades. In March 2005, some 29 people were killed in Rio's Baixada Fluminense region, while in May 2021, 28 were killed in the Jacarezinho favela.

While the Tuesday's police operation was similar to previous ones, its scale was unprecedented, said Luis Flavio Saporì, a sociologist and public safety expert at Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais.

"What's different about today's operation is the magnitude of the victims. These are war numbers," he said.

He argued that these kinds of operations are inefficient because they do not tend to catch the masterminds, but rather target underlings who can later be replaced.

"It's not enough to go in, exchange gunfire, and leave. There's a lack of strategy in Rio de Janeiro's public security policy," Saporì said. "Some lower-ranking members of these factions are killed, but those individuals are quickly replaced by others."

The Marielle Franco Institute, a nonprofit founded by the slain councilwoman's family to continue her legacy of fighting for the rights of people living in favelas, also criticized the operation.

"This is not a public safety policy. It's a policy of extermination, that makes the everyday life of Black and poor people a Russian roulette," it said in a statement.

Vice President Vance says troops will be paid as pressure builds on Congress to end the shutdown

By KEVIN FREKING and STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President JD Vance said Tuesday he believes U.S. military members will be paid at the end of the week, though he did not specify how the Trump administration will reconfigure funding as pain from the second-longest shutdown spreads nationwide.

The funding fight in Washington gained new urgency this week as millions of Americans face the prospect of losing food assistance, more federal workers miss their first full paycheck and recurring delays at airports snarl travel plans.

"We do think that we can continue paying the troops, at least for now," Vance told reporters after lunch with Senate Republicans at the Capitol. "We've got food stamp benefits that are set to run out in a week. We're trying to keep as much open as possible. We just need the Democrats to actually help us out."

The vice president reaffirmed Republicans' strategy of trying to pick off a handful of Senate Democrats to vote for stopgap funding to reopen the government. But nearly a month into the shutdown, it hasn't worked. Just before Vance's visit, a Senate vote on legislation to reopen the government failed for the 13th time.

Federal employee union calls for end to shutdown

The strain is building on Democratic lawmakers to end the impasse. That was magnified by the nation's largest federal employee union, which on Monday called on Congress to immediately pass a funding bill and ensure workers receive full pay. Everett Kelley, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, said the two political parties have made their point.

"It's time to pass a clean continuing resolution and end this shutdown today. No half measures, and no gamesmanship," said Kelley, whose union carries considerable political weight with Democratic lawmakers.

Still, Democratic senators, including those representing states with many federal workers, did not appear ready to back down. Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine said he was insisting on commitments from the White House to prevent the administration from mass firing more workers. Democrats also want Congress to extend subsidies for health plans under the Affordable Care Act.

"We've got to get a deal with Donald Trump," Kaine said.

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But shutdowns grow more painful the longer they go. Soon, with closures lasting a fourth full week as of Tuesday, millions of Americans are likely to experience the difficulties firsthand.

"This week, more than any other week, the consequences become impossible to ignore," said Rep. Lisa McClain, chair of the House Republican Conference.

How will Trump administration reconfigure funds?

The nation's 1.3 million active duty service members were at risk of missing a paycheck on Friday. Earlier this month, the Trump administration ensured they were paid by shifting \$8 billion from military research and development funds to make payroll. Vance did not say Tuesday how the Department of Defense will cover troop pay this time.

Larger still, the Trump administration says funding will run out Friday for the food assistance program that is relied upon by 42 million Americans to supplement their grocery bills. The administration has rejected the use of more than \$5 billion in contingency funds to keep benefits flowing into November. And it says states won't be reimbursed if they temporarily cover the cost of benefits next month.

A coalition of 25 states and the District of Columbia filed a lawsuit Tuesday in Massachusetts that aims to keep SNAP benefits flowing by compelling the Agriculture Department to use the SNAP contingency funds.

Vance said that reconfiguring funds for various programs such as SNAP was like "trying to fit a square peg into a round hole with the budget."

The Agriculture Department says the contingency fund is intended to help respond to emergencies such as natural disasters. Democrats say the decision concerning the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, known as SNAP, goes against the department's previous guidance concerning its operations during a shutdown.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York said the administration made an intentional choice not to fund SNAP in November, calling it an "act of cruelty."

Another program endangered by the shutdown is Head Start, with more than 130 preschool programs not getting federal grants on Saturday if the shutdown continues, according to the National Head Start Association. All told, more than 65,000 seats at Head Start programs across the country could be affected.

Judge blocks firings

A federal judge in San Francisco on Tuesday indefinitely barred the Trump administration from firing federal employees during the government shutdown, saying that labor unions were likely to prevail on their claims that the cuts were arbitrary and politically motivated.

U.S. District Judge Susan Illston granted a preliminary injunction that bars the firings while a lawsuit challenging them plays out. She had previously issued a temporary restraining order against the job cuts that was set to expire Wednesday.

Federal agencies are enjoined from issuing layoff notices or acting on notices issued since the government shut down Oct. 1. Illston said that her order does not apply to notices sent before the shutdown.

Will lawmakers find a solution?

At the Capitol, congressional leaders mostly highlighted the challenges many Americans are facing as a result of the shutdown. But there was no movement toward negotiations as they attempted to lay blame on the other side of the political aisle.

"Now government workers and every other American affected by this shutdown have become nothing more than pawns in the Democrats' political games," said Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D.

The House passed a short-term continuing resolution on Sept. 19 to keep federal agencies funded. Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., has kept the House out of legislative session ever since, saying the solution is for Democrats to simply accept that bill.

But the Senate has consistently fallen short of the 60 votes needed to advance that spending measure. Democrats insist that any bill to fund the government also address health care costs, namely the soaring health insurance premiums that millions of Americans will face next year under plans offered through the Affordable Care Act marketplace.

Window-shopping for health plans delayed

When asked about his strategy for ending the shutdown, Schumer said that millions of Americans will begin seeing on Saturday how much their health insurance is going up next year.

"People in more than 30 states are going to be aghast, aghast when they see their bills," Schumer said. "And they are going to cry out, and I believe there will be increased pressure on Republicans to negotiate."

The window for enrolling in ACA health plans begins Saturday. In past years, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has allowed Americans to preview their health coverage options about a week before open enrollment. But, as of Tuesday, Healthcare.gov appeared to show 2025 health insurance plans and estimated prices, instead of next year's options.

Republicans insist they will not entertain negotiations on health care until the government reopens.

"I'm particularly worried about premiums going up for working families," said Sen. David McCormick, R-Pa. "So we're going to have that conversation, but we're not going to have it until the government opens."

A North Carolina man is charged with 4 murder counts after telling authorities he killed his kids

By ALLEN G. BREED, GARY D. ROBERTSON and JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

ZEBULON, N.C. (AP) — A North Carolina man was charged Tuesday with four counts of murder after telling authorities that he had killed his children and after sheriff's deputies found human remains in the trunk of a vehicle in his home's garage.

Wellington Delano Dickens III, 38, was being held without bond in the Johnston County Jail, according to the county's sheriff's office and court records.

Dickens had been charged earlier Tuesday in the death of one of his children, a sheriff's office news release said. Three more murder counts were filed later in the day, records show.

Dickens called 911 on Monday evening and told the operator he had killed his children, the sheriff's statement said.

Johnston County deputies responded, and as Dickens had told them, his 3-year-old son was alive inside the residence on the outskirts of Zebulon, which is about 25 miles (40 kilometers) east of Raleigh.

But Dickens also told deputies four of his other children were deceased inside the trunk of the vehicle inside the garage, the statement said.

The deputies discovered what the release described as "multiple bodies" in the trunk and said what were believed to be human remains inside had been there for a long time, the sheriff's office said. The arrest warrants say authorities believe the victims were killed May 1.

The sheriff's office said investigators believe Dickens killed three of his biological children, ages 6, 9 and 10, as well as his 18-year-old stepchild. Arrest warrants for three of the counts confirm the victims as 9, 10 and 18. The fourth arrest warrant provided no date of birth for the victim.

Court records show Dickens appeared before a judge Tuesday afternoon on the initial murder charge. Records showed he will be appointed an attorney, but a name was not immediately listed.

Dickens' wife, Stephanie, died in April 2024, and Dickens said five children lived in their Zebulon home, according to court records from his wife's estate. Her death came just over a year after Dickens' father died when his car crashed into a box truck in Lee County, North Carolina, according to court records.

Dickens' great uncle Charles Moore told WRAL-TV that Dickens was an Iraq War veteran. Moore said he hadn't seen Dickens in about a year but that he seemed like he was doing fine.

A police cruiser with flashing lights blocked the road leading to Dickens' address on Tuesday afternoon, with tents from the sheriff's office and the State Bureau of Investigation erected in the driveway. The home sits in a recently built subdivision of one- and two-story houses. An old farmhouse sits not far from the subdivision's entrance.

Some neighbors said they barely remembered seeing the family, especially after Dickens' wife died. Miranda Dorta said she just saw the kids walk to and from the school bus, while neighbor Terry Fuller mowed their lawn a few times when the grass got high.

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Although the subdivision's oldest houses are only about 3 years old, it's also a tight-knit neighborhood and many people could have helped if Dickens reached out, Fuller said.

"I've noticed the kids haven't been out playing for quite some time, but hadn't put two and two together. And I woke up to this this morning. It's pretty awful," Fuller said.

Previously known for its tobacco market and a railroad that came through town, Zebulon is quickly turning into a bedroom community of the Raleigh-Durham area.

PayPal and UPS help lead US stocks to more records

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. stock market pushed further into record heights on Tuesday.

The S&P 500 added 0.2%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 161 points, or 0.3%, and the Nasdaq composite climbed 0.8%. All three indexes set all-time highs for a third straight day.

Moves were also relatively modest in the bond market as Wall Street waits for a few events that could shake things up. On Wednesday, the Federal Reserve will announce its latest move on interest rates, while some of the stock market's most influential companies will report how much profit they made during the summer. On Thursday, President Donald Trump will meet China's leader, Xi Jinping, in hopes of smoothing tensions between the world's two largest economies.

Until then, profit reports from overnight and the morning were the main drivers of Tuesday's action.

United Parcel Service rallied 8% after delivering stronger profit and revenue for the latest quarter than analysts expected. UPS also gave a forecast for revenue in the all-important holiday shipping season that was slightly above analysts' expectations.

PayPal climbed 3.9% after saying it made a bigger profit during the summer than analysts expected. It also said it plans to pay its shareholders a dividend every three months, while announcing a deal where internet users will be able to pay for purchases through OpenAI's ChatGPT.

Skyworks Solutions climbed 5.8% after saying it would merge with Qorvo in a cash-and-stock deal where Skyworks shareholders will own roughly 63% of the combined company, valued at \$22 billion. Qorvo's stock rose nearly as much, 5.7%.

Microsoft was one of the strongest forces lifting the market after rising 2%. That sent the company's total value on Wall Street above \$4 trillion.

On the losing end of Wall Street was Royal Caribbean, which lost 8.5% despite reporting a stronger profit than analysts expected. Its revenue for the latest quarter fell short of expectations. The cruise operator also said it's seen a "minimal" hit to its business this quarter because of bad weather, along with the temporary closure of one of its exclusive destinations in Haiti.

Homebuilder D.R. Horton sank 3.2% after reporting a weaker profit for the summer than analysts expected. Executive Chairman David Auld said his company is still dealing with homebuyers finding it challenging to afford a house, along with cautious consumer sentiment. He said D.R. Horton will likely have to keep offering incentives in the upcoming fiscal year to attract buyers.

Amazon, meanwhile, rose 1% after saying it will cut about 14,000 corporate jobs, or about 4% of its corporate workforce, as it ramps up spending on artificial intelligence while cutting costs elsewhere.

A slowing job market is one of the main reasons Wall Street expects the Fed to announce another cut to interest rates on Wednesday. It would be the second time this year that it's lowered the federal funds rate in hopes of helping the job market.

The widespread expectation is that the Fed will also cut rates for a third time at its final meeting of the year. A lot is riding on that, in part because U.S. stock prices have already rallied to records on expectations for it. That means the most important part of Wednesday's announcement for Wall Street will be whether Fed Chair Jerome Powell gives any hints about upcoming moves.

Fed officials have indicated that they're likely to keep cutting interest rates next year, but they may have to change course if inflation accelerates beyond its still-high level. That's because low interest rates can make inflation worse.

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In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury eased to 3.97% from 4.01% late Monday. A report showing confidence among U.S. consumers is a smidgen better than economists expected had little effect on the market.

On Wall Street, the S&P 500 rose 15.73 points to 6,890.89. The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 161.78 to 47,706.37, and the Nasdaq composite gained 190.04 to 23,827.49.

In stock markets abroad, indexes were mixed in Europe following modest losses in Asia.

Japan's Nikkei 225 fell 0.6% from its record high. South Korea's Kospi sank 0.8% for another one of the world's larger moves.

Some of the strongest action in financial markets was again for the price of gold. It's been struggling after an astonishing run this year, setting records and nearly reaching \$4,400 per ounce last week. It's since dropped back below \$4,000 per ounce, and its gain for the year so far has trimmed to roughly 50%.

Gaza ceasefire tested as Israel and Hamas exchange fire and blame

By WAFAA SHURAF and RENATA BRITO Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — The Israeli army launched a barrage of attacks in Gaza on Tuesday as tensions with Hamas grew two weeks into a fragile ceasefire, and the militant group responded by saying it would delay handing over the body of a hostage. At least seven Palestinians were killed, health officials said.

The flare-up of violence presented one of the biggest tests so far for the truce and had international mediators scrambling to prevent it from collapsing. U.S. Vice President JD Vance attempted to play down the fighting, saying he expected "skirmishes" to quickly die down.

The order from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to launch "powerful strikes" came after an Israeli official said its forces were fired upon in southern Gaza and after Hamas handed over body parts on Monday that Israel said were the partial remains of a hostage recovered earlier in the war.

Netanyahu called the return of these body parts a "clear violation" of the ceasefire agreement, which requires Hamas to return the remaining hostages in Gaza as soon as possible. Israeli officials also accused Hamas of staging the discovery of these remains on Monday, sharing a 14-minute edited video captured by a military drone in Gaza.

Israel notified the United States before launching the strikes on Tuesday, according to two U.S. officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

In Gaza City, at least two Palestinians were killed by strikes, according to Rami Mhanna, the managing director of Shifa hospital, where the bodies were taken. In Khan Younis, an Israeli strike on a vehicle killed five Palestinians, including two children, according to Ahmed al-Farra, the head of pediatrics at Nasser hospital, where the bodies were taken.

Earlier in the day, Israeli troops were shot at in the southern city of Rafah and returned fire, according to an Israeli military official who spoke on condition of anonymity because there hasn't been an official announcement yet.

In a statement, Hamas denied involvement in the gunfire in Rafah and reiterated its commitment to the ceasefire. "The violent strikes carried out by Israel across the Strip is a blatant violation of the ceasefire deal," said the group, calling on mediators to pressure Israel to stop.

The U.S. vice president expressed confidence that the ceasefire would hold. "That doesn't mean there aren't going to be little skirmishes here and there," Vance told reporters on Capitol Hill.

Fragile ceasefire holds so far despite tests

The ceasefire that began on Oct. 10 has largely held despite at least two previous flare-ups in violence.

On Oct. 19, Israel said two Israeli soldiers were killed by Hamas fire. Israel responded with a series of strikes that killed over 40 Palestinians, according to local health officials. And over the weekend, Israel carried out an airstrike against what it said were Islamic Jihad militants planning an attack, wounding several people.

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There are still 13 bodies of hostages in Gaza. Hamas said Tuesday it had recovered the body of a hostage, but after Israel announced the plans to strike Gaza, Hamas said in a statement it would delay the handover.

An AP videographer in Khan Younis witnessed Tuesday what appeared to be a white body bag being carried out from a tunnel by several men, including some masked militants, and then transported into an ambulance. It was not immediately clear what was in the bag.

The slow return of hostages' bodies is posing a challenge to implementing the next stages of the ceasefire, which will address even knottier issues, such as the disarmament of Hamas, the deployment of an international security force in Gaza and deciding who will govern the territory.

Hamas has said it is struggling to locate the bodies amid the vast destruction in Gaza, while Israel has accused the militant group of purposely delaying their return.

Over the weekend, Egypt deployed a team of experts and heavy equipment to help search for the bodies of the remaining hostages.

An Arab official involved in negotiating the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas said talks were underway with both sides to try to prevent the truce from collapsing. "Both sides violated the agreement, but there was no significant breach," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

The official said violations included delays in handing over bodies, the limited scaleup of aid delivery, and "minor skirmishes" on the line that separates Israeli troops from the rest of Gaza.

Israel accuses Hamas of staging discovery of hostage body

The remains returned to Israel overnight were identified as belonging to Ofir Tzarfati.

Tzarfati was kidnapped during the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas-led attack on Israel that started the war. The militants killed some 1,200 people that day and took 251 hostages.

Tzarfati was killed in captivity and his body was retrieved by Israeli troops in November 2023. In March 2024, his family received additional remains for burial. This is the third time "we have been forced to open Ofir's grave and rebury our son," the family said in a statement.

The AP analyzed the video Israel released accusing Hamas of staging the discovery of Tzarfati's remains on Monday.

The video shows a white body bag being thrown out of a damaged building into a dug out area. Three masked men are seen burying the body bag before heavy machinery moves it to a nearby area where it is buried for a second time. The men then dig it out before photos are taken of the body bag. People wearing red vests could be seen observing.

AP geolocated the footage and confirmed its location. The AP could not, however, confirm the exact date or time it was filmed or if remains were in fact inside the body bag.

"This footage clearly shows that the Hamas terrorist organization is attempting to create a false impression of efforts to locate the bodies, while in fact holding deceased hostages whose remains it refuses to release as required by the agreement," the Israeli army said in a statement.

Israeli government spokesperson Shosh Bedrosian called the scene a "disgraceful deception" and said the body bag contained the partial remains of Tzarfati.

Hamas did not respond to AP's request for comment but in a statement accused Israel of obstructing their efforts to search for more hostage remains.

The International Committee of the Red Cross confirmed in a statement that a team was present "in good faith" and was unaware of the circumstances leading to the discovery of the remains.

"It is unacceptable that a fake recovery was staged, when so much depends on this agreement being upheld and when so many families are still anxiously awaiting news of their loved ones," said Sarah Davies, a spokesperson for the ICRC.

This is the second time since the ceasefire that remains turned over by Hamas have been problematic. Israel said one of the bodies Hamas released in the first week of the ceasefire belonged to an unidentified Palestinian.

Over 68,500 Palestinians have died in the two-year war in Gaza, according to Gaza's Health Ministry,

which doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count. The ministry maintains detailed casualty records that are seen as generally reliable by U.N. agencies and independent experts. Israel has disputed them without providing its own toll.

Judge orders daily meetings with Border Patrol official Bovino on Chicago immigration crackdown

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — A judge in Chicago took the rare step Tuesday of ordering a senior U.S. Border Patrol official to brief her every night, an unprecedented bid to impose real-time oversight on the government's immigration crackdown in the city after weeks of tense encounters and tear gas thrown by officers.

Greg Bovino, who has become the public face of the Trump administration's city-by-city immigration sweeps, must sit for a daily 6 p.m. briefing to report how his agents are enforcing the law and whether they are staying within constitutional bounds, U.S. District Judge Sara Ellis said.

Ellis also demanded full use-of-force reports from agents involved in a blitz that has netted over 1,800 arrests since September.

"Yes, ma'am," Bovino responded to each request.

Phillip Turner, a former federal prosecutor in Chicago, said the judge's order is extremely unusual.

"I've been a lawyer for almost 50 years, and I've never seen anything like this," Turner told The Associated Press.

Bovino got an earful from Ellis as soon as he settled into the witness chair in his green uniform. The judge quickly expressed concerns about video and other images from the campaign against illegal immigration. The hearing was the latest in a lawsuit by news outlets and protesters who say agents have used too much force, including tear gas, during demonstrations.

"My role is not to tell you that you can or cannot enforce validly passed laws by Congress. ... My role is simply to see that in the enforcement of those laws, the agents are acting in a manner that is consistent with the Constitution," Ellis said.

Bovino is chief of the Border Patrol sector in El Centro, California, one of nine on the Mexican border.

The judge wants him to meet her in person daily "to hear about how the day went."

"I suspect that now knowing where we are and that he understands what I expect, I don't know that we're going to see a whole lot of tear gas deployed in the next week," Ellis said.

Ellis zeroed in on reports that Border Patrol agents disrupted a children's Halloween parade with tear gas on the city's Northwest Side over the weekend. Neighbors had gathered in the street as someone was arrested.

"Those kids were tear-gassed on their way to celebrate Halloween in their local school parking lot," Ellis said. "And I can only imagine how terrified they were. These kids, you can imagine, their sense of safety was shattered on Saturday. And it's going to take a long time for that to come back, if ever."

Ellis ordered Bovino to produce all use-of-force reports since Sept. 2 from agents involved in Operation Midway Blitz. She first demanded them by the end of Tuesday, but Bovino said it would be "physically impossible" because of the "sheer amount."

Lawyers for the government have repeatedly defended the actions of agents, including those from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and told the judge that videos and other portrayals have been one-sided.

Besides his court appearance, Bovino still must sit for a deposition, an interview in private, with lawyers from both sides.

The judge has already ordered agents to wear badges, and she's banned them from using certain riot control techniques against peaceful protesters and journalists. She subsequently required body cameras after the use of tear gas raised concerns that agents were not following her initial order.

Ellis set a Friday deadline for Bovino to get a camera and to complete training.

Attorneys representing a coalition of news outlets and protesters claim he violated the judge's use-of-force

order in Little Village, a Mexican enclave in Chicago, and they filed an image of him allegedly “throwing tear gas into a crowd without justification.”

Over the weekend, masked agents and unmarked SUVs were seen on Chicago’s wealthier, predominantly white North Side, where video showed chemical agents deployed in a street. Agents have been recorded using tear gas several times over the past few weeks.

Bovino also led the immigration operation in Los Angeles in recent months, leading to thousands of arrests. Agents smashed car windows, blew open a door to a house and patrolled MacArthur Park on horseback.

Isolated flight delays may spread as air traffic controllers go without pay during shutdown

By JOSH FUNK AP Transportation Writer

Air traffic controllers missed their paychecks Tuesday because of the ongoing government shutdown, and that has Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy and the head of the controllers’ union concerned that flight delays could multiply as increasingly stressed-out controllers call out sick.

Recent absences have led to a number of isolated delays around the country because the Federal Aviation Administration was already extremely short on controllers prior to the shutdown. The FAA restricts the number of flights landing and taking off at an airport anytime there is a shortage of controllers to ensure safety.

There’s no way to predict when or where delays might happen because even a small number of absences can disrupt operations at times. Sometimes the delays are only 30 minutes, but some airports have reported delays more than two hours long — and some have even had to stop all flights temporarily.

So far, most of the delays have been isolated and temporary. Aviation analytics firm Cirium said that normally about 20% of all flights are delayed more than 15 minutes for a variety of reasons.

The data Cirium tracks shows there has not been a dramatic increase in the total number of delays overall since the shutdown began on Oct. 1. Nearly 80% of the flights at a sample of 14 major airports nationwide have still been on time this month.

Though a two-hour-long staffing-related ground stop at Los Angeles International Airport made national news on Sunday, a major thunderstorm in Dallas that day had a bigger impact on flights when only about 44% of flights were on time. Cirium said 72% of the flights out of LAX were still on time Sunday.

But Duffy and the president of the National Air Traffic Controllers Association Nick Daniels have continued to emphasize the pressure that controllers are feeling. They say the problems are likely to only get worse the longer the shutdown continues.

“Air traffic controllers have to have 100% of focus 100% of the time,” Daniels said Tuesday at a news conference alongside Duffy at LaGuardia Airport in New York. “And I’m watching air traffic controllers going to work. I’m getting the stories. They’re worried about paying for medicine for their daughter. I got a message from a controller that said, ‘I’m running out of money. And if she doesn’t get the medicine she needs, she dies. That’s the end.’”

Controllers gathered outside 20 airports nationwide Tuesday to hand out leaflets urging an end to the shutdown as soon as possible. Worrying about how to pay their bills is driving some to take second jobs to make ends meet.

The number of controllers calling in sick has increased during the shutdown both because of their frustration with the situation and because controllers need the time off to work second jobs instead of continuing to work six days a week like many of them routinely do. Duffy has said that controllers could be fired if they abuse their sick time, but the vast majority of them have continued to show up for work every day.

Air traffic controller Joe Segretto, who works at a regional radar facility that directs planes in and out of airports in the New York area, said morale is suffering as controllers worry more about money.

“The pressure is real,” Segretto said. “We have people trying to keep these airplanes safe. We have trainees — that are trying to learn a new job that is very fast-paced, very stressful, very complex — now having to worry about how they’re going to pay bills.”

Duffy said the shutdown is also making it harder for the government to reduce the longstanding shortage of about 3,000 controllers. He said that some students have dropped out of the air traffic controller academy in Oklahoma City, and younger controllers who are still training to do the job might abandon the career because they can't afford to go without pay.

"This shutdown is making it harder for me to accomplish those goals," Duffy said.

The longer the shutdown continues, pressure will continue to build on Congress to reach an agreement to reopen the government. During the 35-day shutdown in President Donald Trump's first term the disruptions to flights across the country contributed to the end of that disruption. But so far, Democrats and Republicans have shown little sign of reaching a deal to fund the government.

Judge extends order barring the Trump administration from firing federal workers during the shutdown

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A federal judge in San Francisco on Tuesday indefinitely barred the Trump administration from firing federal employees during the government shutdown, saying that labor unions were likely to prevail on their claims that the cuts were arbitrary and politically motivated.

U.S. District Judge Susan Illston granted a preliminary injunction that bars the firings while a lawsuit challenging them plays out. She had previously issued a temporary restraining order against the job cuts that was set to expire Wednesday.

Illston, who was nominated by Democratic President Bill Clinton, has said she believes the evidence will ultimately show the mass firings were illegal and in excess of authority.

Federal agencies are enjoined from issuing layoff notices or acting on notices issued since the government shut down Oct. 1. Illston said that her order does not apply to notices sent before the shutdown.

The Republican administration has slashed jobs in education, health and other areas it says are favored by Democrats. The administration has also said it will not tap roughly \$5 billion in contingency funds to keep benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, commonly referred to as SNAP, flowing into November.

The American Federation of Government Employees and other labor unions have sued to stop the "reductions in force" layoffs, saying the firings were an abuse of power designed to punish workers and pressure Congress.

"President Trump is using the government shutdown as a pretense to illegally fire thousands of federal workers — specifically those employees carrying out programs and policies that the administration finds objectionable," said AFGE National President Everett Kelley, in a statement thanking the court.

The White House referred a request for comment to the Office of Management and Budget, which did not immediately respond.

Lawyers for the government say the district court does not have the authority to hear personnel challenges, and that Trump has broad authority to reduce the federal workforce as he pledged to do during the campaign.

"The president was elected on this specific platform," said Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Velchik. "The American people selected someone known above all else for his eloquence in communicating to employees that you're fired, this is what they voted for."

Trump starred on a long-running reality TV series called "The Apprentice" in which his signature catchphrase was telling candidates they were fired.

About 4,100 layoff notices have gone out since Oct. 10, some sent to work email addresses that furloughed employees are not allowed to check. Some personnel were called back to work, without pay, to issue layoff notices to others.

The lawsuit has expanded to include employees represented by additional labor unions, including the National Treasury Employees Union, the American Federation of Teachers, and the International Federation

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of Professional and Technical Engineers. All Cabinet departments and two dozen independent agencies are included in the lawsuit.

Democratic lawmakers are demanding that any deal to reopen the federal government address expiring health care subsidies that have made health insurance more affordable for millions of Americans. They also want any government funding bill to reverse the Medicaid cuts in Trump's big tax breaks and spending cuts bill passed this summer.

Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson has refused to negotiate with Democrats until they first agree to reopen the government.

This is now the second-longest shutdown in U.S. history.

The longest shutdown occurred during Trump's first term over his demands for funds to build the U.S.-Mexico border wall. That one ended in 2019 after 35 days.

US launches strikes on 4 alleged drug-running boats in the eastern Pacific, killing 14

By KONSTANTIN TOROPIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced Tuesday that the U.S. military has carried out strikes in the eastern Pacific Ocean on four boats accused of carrying drugs, killing 14 people and leaving one survivor in the deadliest single day since the Trump administration began its divisive campaign against drug trafficking in the waters off South America.

It was the first time multiple strikes were announced in a single day as the pace of the attacks has escalated. The nearly two-month campaign and U.S. military buildup have strained ties with allies in the region and opened speculation that the moves are aimed at ousting Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, whom the U.S. has accused of narcoterrorism.

A statement provided by a Pentagon official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to freely discuss the operation, said the strikes were conducted Monday off the coast of Colombia.

Following one attack on a boat, the military spotted a person in the water clinging to some wreckage. The military passed the survivor's precise location to the U.S. Coast Guard and a Mexican military aircraft that was operating in the area, the official said.

However, the Mexican navy says it is searching about 400 miles southwest of the Pacific city of Acapulco, suggesting the possibility that the strike may have taken place far away from Colombia and closer to Mexico's coast. It wasn't immediately clear exactly where the strike took place, and the Pentagon did not give more details.

Mexico is still conducting a search for the survivor and criticizes the strikes

Hegseth said Mexican search and rescue authorities "assumed responsibility for coordinating the rescue" of the sole survivor but didn't say if that person was successfully rescued or would stay in Mexico's custody or be handed over to the U.S.

Mexico's navy still was attempting a search and rescue operation, the military said in a statement Tuesday, a day after the strikes occurred. The American attacks drew renewed criticism from the regional ally.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said during her daily press conference that she asked the foreign affairs secretary and the navy to meet with the U.S. ambassador in Mexico to discuss the issue because "we do not agree with these attacks."

"We want all international treaties to be respected," she said.

The strikes also have strained ties with other historic allies like Colombia, a country whose intelligence is crucial to American anti-narcotics operations in the region. In an escalating clash between the Republican U.S. president and Colombia's first leftist leader, the Trump administration imposed sanctions Friday on Colombian President Gustavo Petro, his family and a member of his government over accusations of involvement in the global drug trade. Petro vehemently denies the allegations.

In a strike earlier this month with two survivors, the U.S. military rescued the pair and repatriated them to Colombia and Ecuador. Authorities released the Ecuadorian man after prosecutors said they had no

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evidence he committed a crime in Ecuador.

Hegseth posted footage of the latest strikes to social media in which two boats can be seen moving through the water in separate clips. One is visibly laden with a large amount of parcels or bundles. Both then suddenly explode and are seen in flames.

The third strike appears to have been conducted on a pair of boats that were stationary in the water alongside each other. They appear to be largely empty, with at least two people seen moving before an explosion engulfs both boats.

Hegseth said "the four vessels were known by our intelligence apparatus, transiting along known narco-trafficking routes, and carrying narcotics."

The Trump administration has shown no evidence to support its claims about the boats, their connection to drug cartels, or even the identity of the people killed in the strikes that began in early September and had been spaced weeks apart.

Fatalities rise as speculation swirls about the US campaign

The death toll from the 13 disclosed strikes has increased to at least 57 people. The Trump administration said several of the strikes have been off the coast of Venezuela or blamed them on the Tren de Aragua gang, which originated in a Venezuelan prison and has been declared a foreign terrorist organization by the U.S.

After the Pentagon announced Friday that it was dispatching an aircraft carrier to join the eight warships and thousands of troops already in the region, Maduro said the U.S. government was "fabricating" a war against him.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio insisted the U.S. is taking part in a counterdrug operation, while also accusing Maduro's government of allowing and participating in the shipment of narcotics.

The U.S. military also flew a pair of supersonic heavy bombers up to the coast of Venezuela.

President Donald Trump has said he has the "legal authority" to carry out the attacks on the alleged drug-carrying boats and suggested similar strikes could be done on land.

In his announcement of the latest strikes, Hegseth continued to draw parallels between the military's actions against drug trafficking and the war on terrorism following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

He claimed that cartels "have killed more Americans than Al-Qaeda, and they will be treated the same."

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

Ex-thief says he warned Louvre of security weaknesses around crown jewels

By THOMAS ADAMSON and JEFFREY SCHAEFFER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Days after thieves took just minutes to steal eight pieces of the French crown jewels from the Louvre, a former bank robber says he warned a museum official of glaring weaknesses — including jewel cases by streetside windows that were "a piece of cake" to attack.

David Desclos talks like what he was: a pro who knew how to make alarms go quiet. In an interview with The Associated Press on Tuesday just outside I.M. Pei's glass pyramid, the reformed burglar said he flagged the gallery's windows and nearby display cases years ago, after the Louvre invited him to the Apollo Gallery to weigh in for its 2020 in-house podcast about a historic 1792 theft.

"Have you seen those windows? They're a piece of cake. You can imagine anything — people in disguise, slipping in through the windows," he said, recounting that he told a senior official involved in the Louvre's podcast production — not the museum director — about the risk. "Through the windows — even from the roofs — there are plenty of ways in."

Then came Sunday's heist. Authorities say two thieves in high-visibility jackets smashed through a window of the Apollo Gallery and used power tools to cut open cases. Eight crown-jewel items — valued in some reports at more than \$100 million — disappeared in minutes. A ninth piece, Empress Eugénie's

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diamond-studded crown, was found on the ground outside the museum, damaged but salvageable. Two suspects have been arrested; others remain at large.

"Exactly what I had predicted," Desclos said. "They came by the windows ... they came, they took, and they left."

Timing, he argues, was part of the trick. "Do it in broad daylight, at opening time — that disables the first alarm layer... You know you've got five to seven minutes before police arrive."

A smash-and-grab is choreography, he says: rehearsal, a stopwatch, muscle memory.

Were display cases a weak spot?

High on his list of weak points is a 2019 overhaul of the Apollo Gallery display cases. Desclos — who has slicked back hair and a larger-than-life personality — says older display cases were designed so that, in an attack, treasures could drop to safety; newer ones without that feature left the artifacts vulnerable.

As he put it: "It's incomprehensible they changed the cases to leave jewels within arm's reach. You're making it easier for burglars."

The Louvre has pushed back on such criticism, saying the newer vitrines are more secure and meet modern standards.

And then there was one glaring soft spot. "When I saw that specific window, I thought: they're crazy."

Desclos says he raised those concerns with the Louvre official after the podcast recording and avoided spelling out vulnerabilities on air.

"I couldn't say on the podcast, 'Go burglarize.' That would have given the idea to many others," he told AP.

The Louvre did not immediately respond to AP's request for comment. AP has listened to the podcast and verified Desclos' presence on it but cannot immediately verify his account of warning a museum official.

An ex-con with a colorful story

If the messenger sounds improbable, so does his résumé. He grew up in Caen, Normandy, started stealing food as a child, moved on to department stores and banks, and specialized in neutralizing alarm systems. In the late 1990s, he says he and accomplices spent months tunneling through city sewers to reach a Société Générale bank vault at Christmas.

Incredibly, Desclos has reinvented himself as a stand-up comedian, performing a show titled 'Hold-Up' drawn from his past.

Desclos stresses that despite his notorious former career, he has no leads on the famous museum breach.

Security reckoning in Paris museums

Scrutiny of the heist is widening. Paris Police Chief Patrice Faure is scheduled to speak at the French Senate on Wednesday in a session on museum security and the broader threats highlighted by the theft.

The Louvre's strains have been visible for months. In June, a spontaneous staff strike — including security personnel — forced the museum to close as workers protested unmanageable crowds, chronic understaffing and what one union representative called "untenable" conditions, leaving thousands of ticketed visitors under Pei's pyramid.

As for the loot's afterlife, Desclos drains the glamour fast. "There is 90—95% chance the jewels will be dismantled and stone by stone put in block," he said.

His prescription is blunt: vault the originals; show replicas. "The real ones should be at the Banque de France," he said. French media report that after the heist, remaining crown-jewel pieces were moved to the central bank's deep vaults, sitting near secure national gold reserves and Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks.

"They should have listened," Desclos said.

Amazon cuts 14,000 corporate jobs as spending on artificial intelligence accelerates

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN AP Business Writer

Amazon will cut about 14,000 corporate jobs as the online retail giant ramps up spending on artificial intelligence while cutting costs elsewhere.

Teams and individuals impacted by the job cuts will be notified on Tuesday. Most workers will be given

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90 days to look for a new position internally, Beth Galetti, Senior Vice President of People Experience and Technology at Amazon, wrote in a letter to employees on Tuesday. Those who can't find a new role at the company or who opt not to look for one will be provided transitional support including severance pay, outplacement services and health insurance benefits.

Amazon has about 350,000 corporate employees and a total workforce of approximately 1.56 million. The cuts announced Tuesday amount to about a 4% reduction in its corporate workforce.

In June CEO Andy Jassy, who has aggressively sought to cut costs since becoming CEO in 2021, said that he anticipated generative AI would reduce Amazon's corporate workforce in the next few years.

Jassy said at the time that Amazon had more than 1,000 generative AI services and applications in progress or built, but that figure was a "small fraction" of what it plans to build.

Amazon has announced plans to invest \$10 billion building a campus in North Carolina to expand its cloud computing and artificial intelligence infrastructure.

Since 2024 started, Amazon has committed to about \$10 billion apiece to data center projects in Mississippi, Indiana, Ohio and North Carolina as it builds up its infrastructure to try to keep up with other tech giants making leaps in AI. Amazon is competing with OpenAI, Google, Microsoft, Meta and others. In a conference call with industry analysts in May, Jassy said that the potential for growth in the company's AWS business is massive.

"If you believe your mission is to make customers' lives easier and better every day, and you believe that every customer experience will be reinvented with AI, you're going to invest very aggressively in AI, and that's what we're doing. You can see that in the 1,000-plus AI applications we're building across Amazon. You can see that with our next generation of Alexa, named Alexa+," he said.

Amazon's workforce doubled during the pandemic as millions stayed home and boosted online spending. In the following years, big tech and retail companies cut thousands of jobs to bring spending back in line.

The cuts announced Tuesday suggests Amazon is still trying to get the size of its workforce right and it may not be over. It was the biggest culling at Amazon since 2023, when the company cut 27,000 jobs. Those cuts came in waves, with 9,000 jobs trimmed in March of that year, and another 18,000 employees two months later. Amazon has not said if more job cuts are on the way.

Yet the jobs market which has for years been a pillar in the U.S. economy, is showing signs of weakening. Layoffs have been limited, but the same can be said for hiring.

Government hiring data is on hold during the government shut down, but earlier this month a survey by payroll company ADP showed a surprising loss of 32,000 jobs losses in the private sector in September.

Many retailers are pulling back on seasonal hiring this year due to uncertainty over the U.S. economy and tariffs. Amazon Inc. said this month, however, that it would hire 250,000 seasonal workers, the same as last year's holiday season.

Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData, said in a statement that the layoffs "represent a deep cleaning of Amazon's corporate workforce."

"Unlike the Target layoffs, Amazon is operating from a position of strength," he said. "The company has been producing good growth, and it still has a lot of headroom for further expansion in both the U.S. and overseas."

But Saunders noted that Amazon is not immune to outside factors, as global markets tighten and underlying costs climb.

"It needs to act if it wants to continue with a good bottom-line performance. This is especially so given the amount of investment the company is making in areas like logistics and AI. In some ways, this is a tipping point away from human capital to technological infrastructure," he said.

Amazon will post quarterly financial results on Thursday. During its most recent quarter, the company reported 17.5% growth for its cloud computing arm Amazon Web Services.

Consumer confidence dips modestly in October with Americans concerned about the future

By MATT OTT AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Consumer confidence weakened slightly in October as Americans remain anxious about their future financial prospects.

The Conference Board said Tuesday that its consumer confidence index fell by 1 point to 94.6 in October from an upwardly revised September reading of 95.6. Economists were expecting the reading to come in unchanged from the previous month. One year ago, the reading was 109.5.

A measure of Americans' short-term expectations for their income, business conditions and the job market dipped by 2.9 points to 71.5, remaining well below 80, the marker that can signal a recession ahead.

However, consumers' assessments of their current economic situation rose 1.8 points to 129.3.

Write-in responses to the survey showed that prices and inflation remained consumers' biggest concern. Mentions of tariffs declined again this month but remain elevated, the Conference Board said.

Last week, government data showed that inflation in the U.S. remained elevated in September as gas prices jumped while the cost of rents cooled, painting a mixed picture for consumers. While the economy is still growing steadily, hiring remains slow and more high-profile companies have recently announced layoffs.

Consumer prices increased 3% in September from a year earlier, the Labor Department said Friday, the highest since January and up from 2.9% in August.

The report on the consumer price index was issued more than a week late because of the Oct. 1 government shutdown.

Federal Reserve officials have signaled that they will cut their key interest rate at their meeting Wednesday. It would be the second time this year even though inflation is above the central bank's 2% target. Fed officials have cited increasing concerns about the U.S. labor market, which, while broadly healthy by historical standards, is showing signs of deterioration this year.

Responses to the Conference Board's latest survey revealed that while respondents were slightly more positive about current job market, they are growing more concerned about their future employment prospects.

The most recent government jobs report showed that U.S. nonfarm employers added a paltry 22,000 jobs in August, following July's disappointing 79,000 job gains. Worse, revisions to the May and June figures shaved 258,000 jobs off previous estimates. The unemployment rate stands at 4.3%, the highest since October 2021.

The government did not issue its September jobs report due to the shutdown.

In addition to the lingering effects of 11 interest rate hikes by the Federal Reserve in 2022 and 2023, economists say the recent hiring slump may also be a result of Trump's policies, including his sweeping and ever-changing tariffs on imports, a crackdown on illegal immigration and purges of the federal workforce.

Many companies have been locked in a "no hire, no fire" position, fearful of expanding payrolls until the effects of Trump's tariffs are more clear. But in the past two weeks, there have been notable exceptions from major U.S. corporations.

On Tuesday, Amazon said it will cut about 14,000 corporate jobs as the online retail giant ramps up spending on artificial intelligence while trimming costs elsewhere. Last week, Target said it would eliminate about 1,800 corporate positions.

Also last week, Meta Platforms said it was cutting roughly 600 positions and in September, Starbucks announced plans to close hundreds of stores while laying off 900 nonretail employees.

Survey respondents who said they intended to buy a new or used car in the near future rose.

While the share of those saying they planned to purchase a home declined slightly this month, the broader six-month trend is still rising, the Conference Board said.

Plans to buy big-ticket items like appliances was little changed from September.

Republicans send Biden autopen report to the Justice Department, urging further investigation

By MATT BROWN and JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans on Tuesday unveiled their long-promised report on former President Joe Biden's use of the autopen, delivering a blistering critique of his time in office and inner circle that largely rehashes public information while making sweeping accusations about the workings of his White House.

The GOP report does not include any concrete evidence that aides conspired to enact policies without Biden's knowledge or that the president was unaware of laws, pardons or executive orders signed in his name. But Republicans said their findings cast doubt on all of the Democrat's actions in office. They sent a letter to Attorney General Pam Bondi urging a full investigation. Republican President Donald Trump ordered a similar inquiry earlier this year.

At its core, the report advances contested claims that Biden's mental state declined to a degree that allowed White House officials to enact policies without his knowledge. It focuses heavily on the pardons he granted in office, including to his son, Hunter Biden, based on depositions with close Biden aides.

"The cost of the scheme to hide the fallout of President Biden's diminished physical and mental acuity was great but will likely never be fully calculated," the report reads. "The cover-up put American national security at risk and the nation's trust in its leaders in jeopardy."

Biden has strenuously denied he was unaware of his administration's actions, calling such claims "ridiculous and false." Democrats on the House Oversight committee denounced the probe as a distraction and a waste of time.

Rep. Robert Garcia, the top Oversight Democrat, said in a statement the GOP report was a "sham investigation" and that testimonies from Biden aides "make it clear the former president authorized every executive order, pardon, and use of the autopen." He added that Democrats were more focused on the government shutdown than debates over the last administration.

Republicans are shifting attention back to Biden at a politically tumultuous time, 10 months into Trump's presidency, with the government shut down and Congress at a standstill over legislation to fund it. House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., has kept the House out of session for nearly a month, with most public-facing committee work grinding to a halt.

Johnson touted the 100-page report at a news conference and said the findings could have "major implications" for the legality of Biden's actions as president, including pardons.

"The president was checked out of his job for quite some time, and everybody knows it," Johnson said.

The report on Biden was largely compiled over several months before the shutdown began. Based on interviews with more than a dozen members of Biden's inner circle, the report offers few new revelations, instead drawing broad conclusions from unanswered questions.

It includes repeated references to polls of Biden's approval rating and perceptions of his public gaffes and apparent aging, much of it publicly known.

It alleges a "cover-up of the president's cognitive decline" orchestrated by Biden's inner circle and takes particular aim at Biden's doctor, Kevin O'Connor, who invoked his Fifth Amendment right against testifying. Republicans also singled out senior aides Anthony Bernal and Annie Tomasini, who similarly pleaded the Fifth. All three "should face further scrutiny" from the Justice Department, Republicans said.

Republicans also sent a letter to the D.C. Board of Medicine urging that O'Connor face "discipline, sanction or revocation of his medical license" and "be barred from the practice of medicine in the District of Columbia."

Lawyers for O'Connor told Oversight Republicans over the summer that doctor-patient confidentiality precluded him from discussing his conversations with Biden or any medical care he may have provided.

While doctor-patient privilege is a legal principle that often protects communications between medical providers and patients, courts and state laws are divided on its scope. Congressional Republicans dismissed O'Connor's use of the principle before he cited his Fifth Amendment rights during testimony.

The report does not include full transcripts of the multiple hours of recorded testimony witnesses delivered before the committee. It repeatedly scolds Biden officials and Democratic allies for defending Biden's mental state.

"The inner-most circle, or cocoon, of the White House senior staff organized one of the largest scandals in American history — hiding a cognitively failing president and refusing any means of confirmation of such demise," the report says.

While the report claims that record-keeping policies in the Biden White House "were so lax that the chain of custody for a given decision is difficult or impossible to establish," Republicans do not offer any concrete instances of the chain of command being violated or a policy being enacted without Biden's knowledge.

Still, Republicans argue that Biden's use of the autopen should be considered invalid unless there is documented proof of him approving a decision.

"Barring evidence of executive actions taken during the Biden presidency showing that President Biden indeed took a particular executive action, the committee deems those actions taken through use of the autopen as void," the report says.

Democrats and legal experts have warned that broad scrutiny of executive actions could pose future legal headaches for the Trump administration and congressional Republicans, who also often enact policies directed by lawmakers through devices like the presidential autopen.

A federal judge in Tennessee warns Trump officials over statements about Kilmar Abrego Garcia

By TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — A federal judge in Tennessee on Monday warned of possible sanctions against top Trump administration officials if they continue to make inflammatory statements about Kilmar Abrego Garcia that could prejudice his coming trial.

U.S. District Judge Waverly Crenshaw filed an order late on Monday instructing local prosecutors in Nashville to provide a copy of his opinion to all Justice Department and Department of Homeland Security employees, including Attorney General Pam Bondi and DHS Secretary Kristi Noem.

"Government employees have made extrajudicial statements that are troubling, especially where many of them are exaggerated if not simply inaccurate," Crenshaw writes.

He lists a number of examples of prohibited statements as outlined in the local rules for the U.S. District Court of Middle Tennessee. They include any statements about the "character, credibility, reputation, or criminal record of a party" and "any opinion as to the accused's guilt or innocence."

"DOJ and DHS employees who fail to comply with the requirement to refrain from making any statement that 'will have a substantial likelihood of materially prejudicing' this criminal prosecution may be subject to sanctions," his order reads.

Earlier this year, Abrego Garcia's mistaken deportation to El Salvador, where he was held in a notoriously brutal prison despite having no criminal record, helped galvanize 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, but only after issuing an arrest warrant on human smuggling charges in Tennessee. Abrego Garcia has pleaded not guilty to those charges and asked Crenshaw to dismiss them.

Meanwhile, Trump administration officials have waged a relentless public relations campaign against Abrego Garcia, repeatedly referring to him as a member of the MS-13 gang and even implicating him in a murder. Crenshaw's opinion cites statements from several top officials, including Bondi and Noem, as potentially damaging to Abrego Garcia's right to a fair trial. He also admonishes Abrego Garcia's defense attorneys for publicly disclosing details of plea agreement negotiations.

Abrego Garcia has an American wife and child and has lived in Maryland for years, but he immigrated to the U.S. illegally from El Salvador as a teenager. In 2019, an immigration judge granted him protection from being deported back to his home country, finding he had a well-founded fear of violence there from a gang that targeted his family.

Since his return to the U.S. in June, Immigration and Customs Enforcement has announced plans to deport him to a series of African countries, most recently Liberia.

US sought to lure Nicolás Maduro's pilot into betraying the Venezuelan leader

By JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The federal agent had a daring pitch for Nicolás Maduro's chief pilot: All he had to do was surreptitiously divert the Venezuelan president's plane to a place where U.S. authorities could nab the strongman.

In exchange, the agent told the pilot in a clandestine meeting, the aviator would be made a very rich man.

The conversation was tense, and the pilot left noncommittal, though he provided the agent, Edwin Lopez, with his cell number — a sign he might be interested in helping the U.S. government.

Over the next 16 months, even after retiring from his government job in July, Lopez kept at it, chatting with the pilot over an encrypted messaging app.

The untold, intrigue-filled saga of how Lopez tried to flip the pilot has all the elements of a Cold War spy thriller — luxury private jets, a secret meeting at an airport hangar, high-stakes diplomacy and the delicate wooing of a key Maduro lieutenant. There was even a final machination aimed at rattling the Venezuelan president about the pilot's true loyalties.

More broadly, the scheme reveals the extent — and often slapdash fashion — to which the U.S. has for years sought to topple Maduro, who it blames for destroying the oil-rich nation's democracy while providing a lifeline to drug traffickers, terrorist groups and communist-run Cuba.

Since returning to the White House, Donald Trump has taken an even harder line. This summer, the president has deployed thousands of troops, attack helicopters and warships to the Caribbean to attack fishing boats suspected of smuggling cocaine out of Venezuela. In 13 strikes, including a few in the eastern Pacific Ocean, the U.S. military has killed at least 57 people.

This month, Trump authorized the CIA to conduct covert actions inside Venezuela, and the U.S. government has also doubled the bounty for Maduro's capture on federal narco-trafficking charges, a move that Lopez sought to leverage in a text message to the pilot.

"I'm still waiting for your answer," Lopez wrote the pilot on Aug. 7, attaching a link to a Justice Department press release announcing the reward had risen to \$50 million.

Details of the ultimately unsuccessful plan were drawn from interviews with three current and former U.S. officials, as well as one of Maduro's opponents. All spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were either not authorized to discuss the effort or feared retribution for disclosing it. The Associated Press also reviewed — and authenticated — text exchanges between Lopez and the pilot.

Attempts to locate the pilot, Venezuelan Gen. Bitner Villegas, were not successful.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the State Department did not comment. The Venezuelan government did not respond to a request for comment.

It started with a tip on Maduro's planes

The plot was hatched when a tipster showed up at the U.S. Embassy in the Dominican Republic on April 24, 2024, when Joe Biden was president. The informant purported to have information about Maduro's planes, according to three of the officials familiar with the matter.

Lopez, 50, was then an attaché at the embassy and agent for Homeland Security Investigations, a part of the Department of Homeland Security.

A wiry former U.S. Army Ranger from Puerto Rico, Lopez was leading the agency's investigations into transnational criminal networks with a presence in the Caribbean, after a storied career taking down drug gangs, money launderers and fraudsters. His work dismantling an illicit money-changing operation in Miami even earned him a public rebuke in 2010 from Hugo Chávez, Maduro's predecessor. The embassy assignment was to be his last before retirement.

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The embassy was closed, although Lopez was still at his desk. He was handed a 3x5 index card with the tipster's name and phone number. When he called, the tipster claimed that two planes used by Maduro were in the Dominican Republic undergoing costly repairs.

Lopez was intrigued: He knew that any maintenance was most likely a criminal violation under U.S. law because it would've involved the purchase of American parts, prohibited by sanctions on Venezuela. The planes were also subject to seizure – for violating those same sanctions.

Locating the aircraft was easy – they were housed in La Isabela executive airport in Santo Domingo. Tracing them to Maduro would take federal investigators months. As they built that case, they learned that the Venezuelan president had dispatched five pilots to the island to retrieve the multimillion-dollar jets – a Dassault Falcon 2000EX and Dassault Falcon 900EX.

A plan comes together

Lopez had an epiphany, according to the current and former officials familiar with the operation: What if he could persuade the pilot to fly Maduro to a place where the U.S. could arrest him?

Maduro had been indicted in 2020 on federal narco-terrorism charges accusing him of flooding the U.S. with cocaine.

The DHS agent secured permission from his superiors and Dominican authorities to question the pilots, overcoming the officials' concerns about creating a diplomatic rift with Venezuela.

At the airport hangar, a short distance from the jet, Lopez and fellow agents asked each pilot to join them individually in a small conference room. There was no agenda, the agents said. They just wanted to talk.

The agents pretended not to know that the pilots spent their time jetting around Maduro and other top officials. They spoke to each airman for about an hour, saving their biggest target for last: Villegas, who the agents had determined was Maduro's regular pilot.

Villegas was a member of the elite presidential honor guard and colonel in the Venezuelan air force. A former Venezuelan official who regularly traveled with the president described him as friendly, reserved and trusted by Maduro. The planes he flew were used to shuttle Maduro across the globe -- often to U.S. adversaries like Iran, Cuba and Russia. In a December 2023 video posted online by Maduro, Villegas can be seen holding up a radio in the cockpit as the president trades patriotic slogans with the pilot of a Russian Sukhoi fighter jet.

Lopez called Villegas into the room, and they bantered for a while about celebrities the pilot had shuttled around, his military service and the types of jets he was licensed to fly, according to two of the people familiar with the operation. After about 15 minutes, the pilot began to grow tense, and his legs started to shake.

The agent drilled in more sharply: Had the pilot ever flown Chávez or Maduro? Villegas at first tried to dodge the questions, but eventually admitted he had been a pilot for both leaders. Villegas showed the agents photos on his phone of him and the two presidents on various trips. He also provided details about Venezuelan military installations he had visited. Unbeknownst to Villegas, one of Lopez's colleagues recorded the conversation on a cell phone.

As the conversation wrapped up, the two people said, Lopez made his pitch: In exchange for secretly ferrying Maduro into America's hands, the pilot would become very rich and beloved by millions of his compatriots. The rendezvous could be of the pilot's choosing: the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico or the U.S. military base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Villegas didn't tip his hand. Yet, before departing, he gave Lopez his cell number.

'Treasure trove of intelligence'

Villegas and the other pilots returned to Venezuela without the aircraft, which they were told lacked the proper clearances.

Meanwhile, the U.S. government was assembling a federal forfeiture case to seize the jets. It seized one, registered in the European microstate of San Marino to a shell company from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, in September 2024.

It seized the other in February during the first overseas trip by Secretary of State Marco Rubio as the

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top U.S. diplomat.

At a press conference at the airport in the Dominican Republic, Lopez briefed the secretary in front of the press. Lopez told Rubio that the plane contained a "treasure trove of intelligence," including the names of Venezuelan air force officers and detailed information about its movements. Lopez affixed a seizure warrant to the jet.

Maduro's government reacted angrily, releasing a statement that accused Rubio of "brazen theft."

Even in retirement, Lopez kept going

As he assembled the forfeiture in concert with other federal agencies, Lopez focused on coaxing Villegas to join his plot.

The task would not be easy. Maduro had made it exceedingly costly for anyone who turns against him. Since taking office in 2013, he has brutally repressed protests, leading to scores of arrests, while jailing even once-powerful allies suspected of disloyalty.

Even so, Lopez plugged away. The pair texted on WhatsApp and Telegram about a dozen times. But the conversations seemed to go nowhere.

In July, Lopez retired. But he couldn't let Villegas go. He sought guidance from the tight-knit community of exiled opposition leaders he got to know as a lawman. One described the former agent as obsessed with bringing Maduro to justice.

"He felt he had an unfinished mission to complete," said an exiled member of Maduro's opposition who spoke on the condition of anonymity over concerns about his safety. That commitment, he added, makes Lopez "more valuable to us than many of Maduro's biggest opponents inside Venezuela."

After the August text about the \$50 million reward, Lopez sent another saying there was "still time left to be Venezuela's hero and be on the right side of history." But he did not hear back.

On Sept. 18, Lopez was watching the news of Trump's buildup in the Caribbean when he saw a post on X by an anonymous plane spotter who had closely tracked the comings and goings of Maduro's jetliners over the years, according to three of the people familiar with the matter. The user, @Arr3ch0, a play on Venezuelan slang for "furious," posted a screenshot of a flight tracking map that showed a presidential Airbus making an odd loop after taking off from Caracas.

"Where are you heading?" wrote Lopez, using a new number.

"Who is this?" responded Villegas, either not recognizing the number or feigning ignorance.

When Lopez pressed about what they discussed in the Dominican Republic, Villegas grew combative, calling Lopez a "coward."

"We Venezuelans are cut from a different cloth," Villegas wrote. "The last thing we are is traitors."

Lopez sent him a photo of them talking to each other on a red leather couch at the airplane hangar the previous year.

"Are you crazy?" Villegas replied.

"A little...," wrote Lopez.

Two hours later, Lopez tried one last time, mentioning Villegas' three children by name and a better future he said awaited them in the U.S.

"The window for a decision is closing," Lopez wrote, shortly before Villegas blocked his number. "Soon it will be too late."

Trying to rattle Maduro

Realizing that Villegas wasn't going to join the plan, Lopez and others in the anti-Maduro movement decided to try to unnerve the Venezuelan leader, according to three of the people familiar with the operation.

The day after the testy WhatsApp exchange between Lopez and Villegas, Marshall Billingslea – a close ally of Venezuela's opposition – took action. A former national security official in Republican administrations, Billingslea had for weeks been trolling Maduro. Now he brought Villegas into his cyberbullying.

"Feliz cumpleaños 'General' Bitner!" he wrote in a mocking birthday wish on X the day Villegas turned 48.

Billingslea included side-by-side photographs that would be sure to raise eyebrows. One was the same one that Lopez had shared with Villegas the day before over WhatsApp, except the agent had been cropped out of it. The other was an official air force photo with a gold star denoting his new rank affixed to the

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shoulder epaulet.

The X post was published at 3:01 p.m. — a minute before another sanctioned Airbus that Maduro has been known to fly took off from Caracas' airport. Twenty minutes later, the plane unexpectedly returned to the airport.

The birthday wish, seen by almost 3 million people, sent shockwaves across Venezuelan social media, as Maduro's opponents speculated the pilot had been ordered to return to face interrogation. Others wondered if he would be jailed. Nobody saw or heard from Villegas for days. Then, on Sept. 24, the pilot resurfaced, in an air force flight suit, on a widely followed TV show hosted by Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello.

Cabello laughed off any suggestion that Venezuela's military could be bought. As he praised Villegas' loyalty, calling him an "unfailing, kick-ass patriot," the pilot stood by silently, raising a clenched fist in a display of his loyalty.

When the government shutdown will affect SNAP, Head Start and military pay

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

With the federal government shutdown nearing the one-month mark, Americans are starting to see the cascading effects of programs shuttered by lapses in federal funding. Some states are scrambling to find ways to account for shortfalls in food and child development assistance, and members of the military are also about to miss their first paychecks.

Some federal workers have already gone without pay for weeks. But nearly a month in, reserves that had kept some programs afloat since the shutdown began are dwindling, meaning new layers of complications as Congress remains unable to reach a new agreement to fund the federal government.

A look at what millions of Americans can expect this week:

Friday

According to the Trump administration, funding will run out for the food assistance program that is relied upon by 42 million Americans to supplement their grocery bills. The administration has rejected using more than \$5 billion in contingency funds to keep the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program flowing into November.

SNAP helps about 1 in 8 Americans buy groceries using debit cards normally loaded each month by the federal government. Some states have pledged to keep the benefits flowing even if the federal program halts payments, but a memo from the U.S. Department of Agriculture — which administers the program — says states would not be reimbursed for temporarily picking up the cost.

Another program that helps more than 6 million low-income mothers, young children and expectant parents purchase nutritious staples, like baby formula, will likely run out of funds the following week. Earlier this month, WIC received a \$300 million infusion from the Trump administration, but those funds are running out, too.

Also on Friday, the nation's 1.3 million active-duty service members are at risk of missing a paycheck. Earlier this month, the Trump administration ensured they were paid by shifting \$8 billion from military research and development funds to make payroll. But it is unclear if the Trump administration is willing — or able — to shift money again.

Last week, the Pentagon confirmed that it had accepted an anonymous \$130 million gift to help pay military members during the shutdown, a bequest that amounted to a small contribution toward the billions needed to cover service member paychecks.

Saturday

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.

Also Saturday, the window opens for enrolling in Affordable Care Act health plans. In past years, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has allowed consumers to preview their health coverage options about a week before open enrollment. But as of this week, Healthcare.gov appeared to show 2025 health insurance plans and estimated prices, instead of next year's options.

Plane crashes while flying tourists to Kenya's Maasai Mara, killing 11 people

By EVELYNE MUSAMBI Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — A plane crash killed 11 people, mostly foreign tourists, in Kenya's coastal region of Kwale early Tuesday while they were en route to the Maasai Mara National Reserve in heavy rain.

The airline, Mombasa Air Safari, said in a statement that eight Hungarian and two German passengers were on board, and the Kenyan pilot was also killed. The plane crashed in a hilly, forested area about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the Diani airstrip, authorities said.

The airline did not confirm what time the aircraft departed Diani, saying the pilot failed to communicate upon departure and that the airport control tower tried to reach him for 30 minutes before the plane was located.

Investigating agencies were looking into the cause of the crash, Kwale County Commissioner Stephen Orinde told The Associated Press. Authorities initially said the crash happened at 5:30 a.m. but the transport minister in a statement gave the time as 8:35 a.m.

The aircraft burst into flames, leaving charred wreckage, officials said.

Witnesses told the AP they heard a loud bang and found unrecognizable human remains at the scene.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said on social media that the foreign ministry had been in contact with Kenyan authorities.

"What a tragedy!" Orbán wrote. "Our sincere condolences to families of the Hungarians who died in the plane crash in Kenya."

Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on social media that the Hungarian victims were two families and an acquaintance, with two children among the dead. He said the Hungarian consul in Kenya was on the way to the scene.

The Kenya Civil Aviation Authority earlier said 12 people were on the Cessna Caravan-type aircraft. It did not give a reason for revising the number to 11.

The Mombasa Air Safari airline operates 13-passenger Cessnas to many tourist destinations.

The Maasai Mara National Reserve, in western Kenya, is a two-hour direct flight from Diani, a popular town on the Indian Ocean. One of Kenya's most visited areas, the reserve features an annual wildebeest migration from the Serengeti in Tanzania.

A Mombasa Air Safari plane crashed in the Maasai Mara in 2012, with four people killed.

According to the most recent safety oversight audit for Kenya posted on the International Civil Aviation Organization site, from 2018, Kenya's performance in the area of accident investigation fell below the global average.

Trump's lawyers ask New York appeals court to toss out his hush money criminal conviction

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump's lawyers have asked a New York state appeals court to toss out his hush money criminal conviction, saying federal law preempts state law and there was no intent to

commit a crime.

The lawyers filed their written arguments with the state's mid-level appeals court just before midnight Monday.

In June, the lawyers asked a federal appeals court to move the case to federal court, where the Republican president can challenge the conviction on presidential immunity grounds. The appeals court has not yet ruled.

Trump was convicted in May 2024 of 34 felony counts of falsifying business records to conceal a hush money payment to adult film actor Stormy Daniels, whose affair allegations threatened to upend his 2016 presidential campaign. Trump denies her claim and said he did nothing wrong. It was the only one of the four criminal cases against him to go to trial.

Trump was sentenced in January to what's known as an unconditional discharge, leaving his conviction on the books but sparing him jail, probation, a fine or other punishment.

Appearing by video at his sentencing, Trump called the case a "political witch hunt," "a weaponization of government" and "an embarrassment to New York."

The Manhattan district attorney's office, which prosecuted the case, will have a chance to respond to the appeals arguments in court papers. A message seeking comment was left with the office on Tuesday.

At trial, prosecutors said Trump mislabeled payments to his then-lawyer Michael Cohen as legal fees to conceal that he was actually reimbursing the \$130,000 that Cohen paid Daniels to keep her quiet in the final weeks of Trump's successful 2016 presidential run.

At the time, Daniels was considering going public with a claim that she and the married Trump had a 2006 sexual encounter that Trump has consistently denied.

In their arguments to the New York state appeals court, Trump's lawyers wrote that the prosecution of Trump was "the most politically charged prosecution in our Nation's history."

They said Trump was the victim of a Democrat district attorney in Manhattan who "concocted a purported felony by stacking time-barred misdemeanors under a convoluted legal theory" during a contentious presidential election in which Trump was the leading Republican candidate.

They wrote that federal law preempts the "misdemeanor-turned-felony charges" because the charges rely on an alleged violation of federal campaign regulations that states cannot and have never enforced.

They said the trial was also spoiled when prosecutors introduced official presidential acts that the Supreme Court has made clear cannot be used as evidence against a U.S. president.

"Beyond these fatal flaws, the evidence was clearly insufficient to convict," the lawyers wrote.

The lawyers also attacked the conviction on the grounds that "pure, evidence-free speculation" was behind the effort by prosecutors to persuade jurors that Trump was thinking about the 2020 election when he allegedly decided to reimburse Cohen.

Trump bonds with Japan's new prime minister and says her nation is delivering on US investments

By JOSH BOAK and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — President Donald Trump treated his time in Japan on Tuesday as a victory lap — befriend-ing the new Japanese prime minister, taking her with him as he spoke to U.S. troops aboard an aircraft carrier and then unveiling several major energy and technology projects in America to be funded by Japan.

Sanae Takaichi, who became the country's first female prime minister only days ago, solidified her relationship with Trump while defending her country's economic interests. She talked baseball, stationed a Ford F-150 truck outside their meeting and greeted Trump with, by his estimation, a firm handshake.

By the end of the day, Trump — by his administration's count — came close to nailing down the goal of \$550 billion in Japanese investment as part of a trade framework. At a dinner for business leaders in Tokyo, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick announced up to \$490 billion in commitments, including \$100 billion each for nuclear projects involving Westinghouse and GE Vernova.

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"You're great business people," Trump told the gathered executives before the dinner. "Our country will not let you down."

It was not immediately clear how the investments would operate and how they compared with previous plans, but Trump declared a win as he capped off a day of bonding with Takaichi.

Trump and Japanese PM swap warm words

The compliments started as soon as the two leaders met on Tuesday morning. "That's a very strong handshake," Trump said to Takaichi.

She talked about watching the third game of the U.S. World Series before the event, and said Japan would give Washington 250 cherry trees and fireworks for July 4 celebrations to honor America's 250th anniversary next year.

Takaichi emphasized her ties to the late Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, her archconservative mentor who had forged a friendship 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, later gifting Trump a putter used by Abe.

Trump told her it was a "big deal" that she is Japan's first woman prime minister, and said the U.S. is committed to Japan. While the president is known for not shying away from publicly scolding 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 laid out a charm offensive, serving American beef and rice mixed with Japanese ingredients during a working lunch, where the two leaders also discussed efforts to end Russia's war in Ukraine. White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters that Takaichi would be nominating Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The two leaders signed black "Japan is Back" baseball caps that resembled Trump's own red "Make America Great Again" caps.

Reporters arriving for the meeting were hustled past a gold-hued Ford F-150 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. But the Japanese government is considering buying a fleet of Ford trucks for road and infrastructure inspection.

They 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, a short affirmation of a framework under which the U.S. will tax goods imported from Japan at 15% while Japan creates a \$550 billion fund of investments in the U.S.

Later, at a dinner at the U.S. embassy in Tokyo packed with CEOs including Apple's Tim Cook, Trump reveled in the deals. Trump and Takaichi also signed an agreement to cooperate on critical minerals and rare earths.

Trump has focused his foreign policy toward Asia around tariffs and trade, but on Tuesday 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 as Japan plans to increase its military spending.

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, meeting the emperor in a ceremonial visit after a brief trip to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, for the annual summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Trump is scheduled to leave Japan on Wednesday for South Korea, which is hosting the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit. Trump plans to meet with South Korean President Lee Jae Myung.

On Thursday, Trump is expected to cap off his Asia trip with a highly anticipated meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping. There were signs that tensions between the U.S. and China were cooling off before the planned meeting in South Korea. 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.

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Today in History: October 29, 'Black Tuesday' signals start of Great Depression

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 29, the 302nd day of 2025. There are 63 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Oct. 29, 1929, 'Black Tuesday' descended on the New York Stock Exchange. Stock prices collapsed amid panicked selling, \$14 billion in value was lost, and thousands of investors were wiped out, triggering America's Great Depression.

Also on this date:

In 1618, Sir Walter Raleigh, the English courtier, military adventurer and poet, was executed in London for allegedly conspiring against King James I.

In 1922, Benito Mussolini, the founder of fascism, is appointed Italian prime minister by King Victor Emmanuel III. (He was dismissed by Emmanuel in 1943 after the Allied invasion of Italy and was executed by partisans in 1945).

In 1940, a blindfolded Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson drew the first number — 158 — from a glass bowl in America's first peacetime military draft.

In 1956, the Suez Crisis began as Israel invaded Egypt to seize control of the vital waterway, backed by France and Britain, after its nationalization by Egypt. (Their forces eventually withdrew after U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower's administration refused to back the effort and threatened sanctions).

In 1960, a chartered plane carrying the California Polytechnic State University football team crashed on takeoff from Toledo, Ohio, killing 22 of 48 people on board.

In 1998, Sen. John Glenn, at age 77, returned to space aboard the shuttle Discovery, retracing the trail he had blazed as the first American to orbit the Earth in the Friendship 7 Mercury space capsule in 1962.

In 2012, Superstorm Sandy slammed ashore in New Jersey and slowly marched inland, devastating coastal communities and causing widespread power outages; the storm and its aftermath were blamed for at least 182 deaths in the U.S.

In 2018, a Boeing 737 MAX operated by the Indonesian airline Lion Air crashed after takeoff from Jakarta, killing all 189 people on board. (Five months later, an Ethiopian Airlines Max crashed after takeoff from Addis Ababa, killing all 157 people on board; the 737 MAX was grounded worldwide, and a flight-control system was implicated in the crashes.)

In 2022, more than 150 people were killed and dozens more were injured in South Korea after being crushed by a large crowd pushing forward on a narrow street during Halloween festivities in Seoul.

In 2024, Hezbollah said it had chosen cleric Naim Kassem to lead the Lebanese militant group after the killing of its longtime leader Hassan Nasrallah in an Israeli airstrike on a Beirut suburb in late September.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Richard Dreyfuss is 78. Actor Kate Jackson is 77. Hockey Hall of Famer Denis Potvin is 72. Actor Dan Castellana (TV: "The Simpsons") is 68. Actor Joely Fisher is 58. Actor Rufus Sewell is 58. Actor Winona Ryder is 54. Actor Tracee Ellis Ross is 53. Actor Gabrielle Union is 53. Olympic gold medal bobsledder Vonetta Flowers is 52. Actor Ben Foster is 45. Olympic gold medal swimmer Amanda Beard is 44.