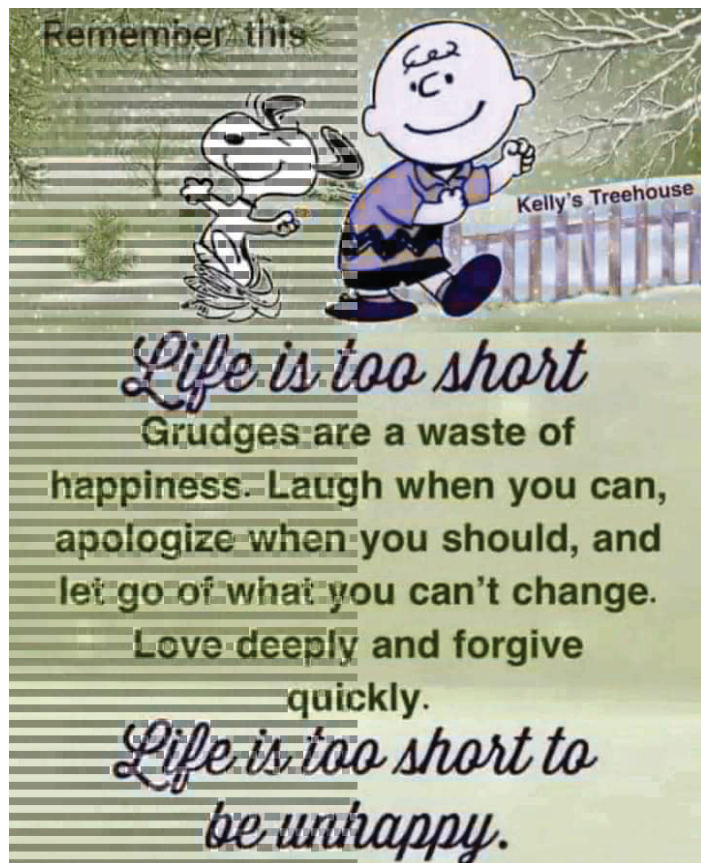


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Wednesday, Nov. 26

Senior Menu: Chili with beans, tossed salad, peaches, corn bread/muffin.

NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving break

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

Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

Thursday, Nov. 27

No Senior Meal

NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving break

Friday, Nov. 28

No senior meal.

NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving break

Sunday, Nov. 30

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

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

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m. (3rd graders receiving Bibles); at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.; No Sunday School.

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

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

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

Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m.

4th grade GBB practice, 2 p.m.

1st grade GBB practice, 3:30 p.m.

2nd grade GBB practice, 4 p.m.

Dance Team practice, 5 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.

Thanksgiving by the Numbers

Nearly 82 million Americans are expected to travel 50 miles or more over Thanksgiving weekend this year. About 73 million plan to hit the road by car, while close to 6 million will fly.

Thanksgiving became a regularly observed national holiday after President Abraham Lincoln's 1863 proclamation establishing a day of thanks. Today, about 94% of Americans say they plan to celebrate, with around 87% serving turkey alongside classic sides like stuffing, mashed potatoes, and rolls. The average cost of a traditional Thanksgiving dinner for 10 is \$55.18, or roughly \$5.50 per person, marking the third consecutive year of price declines. Meat thermometers, cake pans, and measuring cups topped the list of last-minute buys in 2024. For dessert, pumpkin pie reigns as the nation's top pick.

Millions are expected to tune in to the 99th Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade (8:30 am ET, NBC).

The Brain's Five Phases

For the first time, scientists have identified four ages at which the average human brain rewires: ages 9, 32, 66, and 83. The resulting transitions provide five distinct stages of human brain development, according to a new study released yesterday.

Researchers studied roughly 3,800 people, from babies to individuals age 90, using MRI diffusion scans to examine how water molecules move through the brain. They saw that from birth to age 9 (childhood), gray and white matter rapidly increase, and extra synapses are pruned. From age 9 to age 32 (adolescence), white matter continues to grow, and cognitive performance improves. From 32 to 66 (adulthood), brain architecture stabilizes, leaving personality and intelligence mostly unchanged. Early aging begins at age 66, when neural activity is largely concentrated in subnetworks, and late aging begins at age 83, when connectivity decreases further.

The findings suggest cognition doesn't simply increase until a certain age and then decline.

Missing-Child Case Retrial

New York prosecutors plan to retry—for the third time—now 64-year-old Pedro Hernandez for the 1979 disappearance and presumed death of 6-year-old Etan Patz, one of the nation's most infamous missing-child cases.

The decision follows a federal appeals court ruling this summer that overturned Hernandez's 2017 murder conviction. The court found jurors had received flawed instructions on how to weigh his 2012 video confession, in which the former bodega stock clerk admitted to strangling Patz after offering him a soda. No physical evidence links Hernandez to the boy. Hernandez's lawyers argue his confession was coerced, citing his mental health issues, low IQ, and lengthy unrecorded interrogation. His first trial in 2015 ended in a hung jury.

Patz went missing May 25, 1979, while walking alone to his school bus for the first time. His body was never found. The case became a watershed moment for missing children, with Patz's image among the first to appear on milk cartons.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

FIFA unveils 2026 World Cup bracket that prevents a face-off between the top four seeded countries until the semifinals, a first in the tournament's history.

Paramount is reviving "Rush Hour" film franchise, reportedly at President Donald Trump's request.

Netflix announces Dec. 2 release for Sean "Diddy" Combs docuseries executive produced by rival rapper Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson

Historian Rick Atkinson's Revolutionary War trilogy to be adapted into graphic novels; first edition slated for June 2026, ahead of the US' 250th anniversary.

Science & Technology

Neuroimmunologists discover a neural process designed to encourage social withdrawal during sickness, suggesting the urge to stay in bed when ill is an evolutionary trait to curb disease spread—not just a byproduct of symptoms.

Researchers find Atlantic gray seal milk to be more chemically complex than human breast milk; additional sugars in seal milk could boost human immune and gastrointestinal health.

President Donald Trump signs executive order directing government, tech firms, and universities to pair AI with federal data to accelerate scientific advances.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +0.9%, Dow +1.4%, Nasdaq +0.7%) as investors grow optimistic about December interest rate cuts.

Klarna to launch US dollar-backed stablecoin, marking the European fintech firm's entrance into the crypto market.

US consumer confidence in November falls to lowest reading since April; write-in responses cited inflation, tariffs, and federal government shutdown.

Politics & World Affairs

FBI opens investigation into six congressional Democrats who called on military members to defy any illegal orders.

Former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro begins 27-year prison sentence on charges of attempting to lead a coup following his electoral loss in 2022.

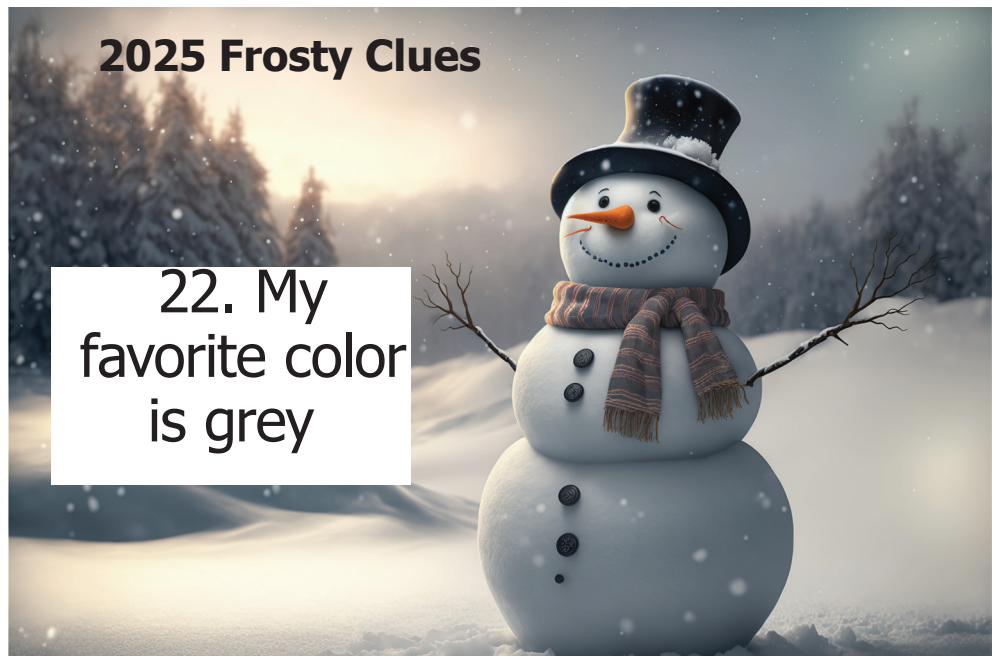
French authorities arrest four more people, two men and two women, in connection with last month's Louvre heist.

Frosty is Back!!!

Please check the Groton Daily Independent for daily clues as to who the Groton Area Mystery Frosty is. The unveiling of Frosty will take place at the Groton Area Snow Queen Contest on Sunday, November 30th, at 4:00 pm.

2025 Frosty Clues

22. My favorite color is grey



Hand County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash
Where: N Broadway Avenue and 7th Street, Miller, SD
When: 11:38 a.m., Tuesday, November 25, 2025

Driver 1: 82-year-old male from Miller, SD, fatal injuries
Vehicle 1: 2022 Ford Edge
Seat belt Used: Under investigation

Driver 2: 48-year-old male from Hetland, SD, no injuries
Vehicle 2: 2007 Peterbilt Conventional 379
Seat belt Used: Under investigation

Hand County, S.D.- A Miller, SD man died in a two vehicle crash this morning in Miller, SD. The names of the persons involved have not been released pending notification of family members. Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2022 Ford Edge was traveling westbound on 7th Street and failed to come to a complete stop at the stop sign at the intersection of North Broadway Avenue. The Ford collided with a southbound semi in the intersection. The driver of the Ford sustained fatal injuries. The driver of the semi was not injured.

Roberts County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash
Where: 105th Street and 456th Avenue, one mile east of Claire City, SD
When: 10:48 p.m., Sunday, November 23, 2025

Driver 1: 27-year-old male from Lidgerwood, ND, fatal injuries
Vehicle 1: 1992 GMC Sierra
Seat belt Used: Under investigation
Passenger 1: 28-year-old male from Claire City, SD, serious, non-life-threatening injuries
Seat belt Used: Under investigation

Roberts County, S.D.- One man died and another was seriously injured Sunday evening in a single vehicle crash one mile east of Claire City, SD. The names of the persons involved have not been released pending notification of family members. Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 1992 GMC Sierra was traveling eastbound on 105th Street near 456th Avenue and lost control of the vehicle, entered the ditch and rolled. The driver sustained fatal injuries. A passenger in the vehicle received serious, non-life-threatening injuries.

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

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

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Power outages yesterday

Some areas to the north of Groton and Aberdeen experienced power outages yesterday with the winter storm hoovering over the area. The town of Pierpont was also without power. As of this morning, power was fully restored. In Brown County, 1,528 out of 15,496 tracked meters (9.86%) were without power yesterday. The outages did cause a few blinks in Groton.

FINALISTS SET FOR 2025 BIG Idea Final Competition

(November 24, 2025, Aberdeen, SD) Eight high school finalists have advanced to the 2025 BIG Idea Final Competition. This high school business idea competition encourages students to consider new ideas and opportunities for creating a business in their own region. All students who submitted entries are invited to the Final Competition and Awards Ceremony held December 10, 2025. The day will feature student pitches, educational booths, and campus tours. The Award Ceremony will feature young entrepreneurs Noah Felderman, Caleb Hubert, and Samantha Wipf who will share their experiences of starting and growing a business, and of course, the awards!

In-state and out-of-state finalists will be judged in two separate competitions, with prizes awarded separately to each competition. The eight out-of-state finalists will be judged virtually on Tuesday, December 9, and the eight in-state finalists will compete in-person on Wednesday, December 10, at Northern State University.

There were 325 applications submitted from 66 different schools. First round judges include 310 volunteers and along with college business students. During the BIG Idea Final Competition, finalists will have six minutes to present their idea to a panel of judges and compete for over \$53,000 in cash prizes and scholarships.

Zander Harry of Groton Area won the EV Evolution in the Big Idea Makers Division. His advisor is Eric Swenson.

Prizes includes cash awards ranging from \$100 to \$1,000 along with scholarships to Northern State University, Dakota State University and University of South Dakota. For more information about the competition, see www.BIGIdeaSD.com.

Students from the following high schools submitted entries: Aberdeen Central High School, Aberdeen Roncalli High School, Arlington High School, Bridgewater-Emery High School, Centerville High School, Custer High School, Dakota Valley High School, Eureka High School, Florence High School, Frederick High School, Freeman High School, Groton High School, Highmore Harrold High School, Hot Springs High School, Hoven High School, Huron High School, Ipswich High School, Leola High School, McCook Central High School, McIntosh High School, Mobridge High School, Northwestern High School, Pierre T.F. Riggs High School, Redfield High School, Sanborn Central High School, Tri-Valley High School, Warner High School, Watertown High School, Webster High School and Wessington Springs High School.

We also had 36 out-of-state schools from 17 states participate.

The competition is organized BIG Idea, Inc. and the Small Business Development Center and supported by a broad-based committee of economic development organizations, educational institutions, and private businesses. Primary sponsor Northern State University provides significant support including scholarship opportunities and hosting the Awards Ceremony. New sponsors for 2025 include the Knight Foundation of the SD Community Foundation, First Interstate Bank and ICAN Network. Returning sponsors include East River Electric, REED Fund, Dacotah Bank, First Bank and Trust, Plains Commerce Bank, Agtegra, South Dakota Retailers Association, South Dakota Agriculture Foundation, Blackout Industries. Missouri River Energy Services, Independent Health Solutions, Dakota Plains Commercial Real Estate, McQuillen Creative Group, Aberdeen Development Corporation, Angelhaus, Northwestern Energy, 3M, Tom and Danielle Aman Foundation, GROW SD, and Midco.

Scholarships are provided by Northern State University, Dakota State University and University of South Dakota.

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December 2025 Groton Community Calendar

Mon., Dec. 1

Senior Menu: Hot beef combination, mashed potatoes, carrots, fruit
School Breakfast: Eggs.
School Lunch: Hot dogs, chips.
4th Grade GBB, 4 p.m.
JV/MS Boys BB at Faulkton Invite, 5:30 p.m.
5th Grade BNBB, 6 p.m.
MS GBB hosts Clark/Willow Lake, 6:15 p.m.
Wrestling Kick-off Fundraiser, 6:30 p.m.

Tues., Dec. 2

Senior Menu: Roast pork, baked potato, Normandy blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Scones
School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, fries.
St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML Christmas Party, noon.
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.
5th Grade GBB, 4:15 p.m.
7th Grade BBB, 6 p.m.
MS GBB at Redfield, 7th at 6:30 p.m., 8th at 7:30 p.m.
Youth wrestling sign up, 6:30 p.m.
Council meeting, 7 p.m.

Wed., Dec. 3

Senior Menu: Hamburger cabbage soup, chicken salad sandwich, fruit, oatmeal raisin cookie.
School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.
School Lunch: Pizza crunchers, green beans.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.; Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; DFC Supper, 6 p.m.; Advent Service, 7 p.m.
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.
Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.
Groton Chamber Meeting, noon, at city hall.
6th Grade GBB Practice, 6 p.m.
5th Grade BBB Practice, 6 p.m.
6th Grade BBB Practice, 7:30 p.m.

Thurs. Dec. 4

Senior Menu: Goulash, green peas, fruit, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast; Cereal.

School Lunch: Chicken patty, mashed potatoes.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.
3rd Grade GBB Practice, 5 p.m.
3-5 GBB hosts Langford, 6 p.m.
4th Grade BBB Practice, 6 p.m.

Fri., Dec. 5

Senior Menu: Parmesan chicken, creamy noodles, California blend, fruit.
School Breakfast: Egg wraps.
School Lunch: French bread pizza, cooked carrots.
Girls Wrestling at Watertown, 4 p.m.
Tour of Tress at City Hall, 3:30 p.m.

Sat., Dec. 6

Boys Wrestling at Clark/Willow Lake, 9 a.m.
Girls Top of the Rock Wrestling at Dell Rapids, 9 a.m.
HOSA Remembrance Dinner, 2 p.m.
Olive Grove Holiday Party, 6 p.m.

Sun., Dec. 7

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.
United Methodist: Worship with communion at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.
First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.
Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.
FFA State LDE @ Rapid City
7th Grade Soccer, 1 p.m.
4th grade boys basketball Triangular, 1 p.m.
6th Grade GBB Practice, 2 p.m.
4th Grade BB Practice, 2 p.m.
4th Grade boys basketball Triangular, 3:30 p.m.
5th Grade Girls Basketball, 4 p.m.
Dance Team Practice, 5 p.m.
6th Grade Boys Basketball, 6 p.m.
7th Grade Boys BB. 6 p.m.

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Mon., Dec. 8

Senior Menu: Chicken alfredo with broccoli, fruit, breadstick.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Pork chop, rice.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Groton Senior Citizens meet at Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

GBB at Florence: 7th grade @ 4pm, 8th grade @ 5pm

4th Grade Practice, 4 p.m.

JH WR @ Sisseton, 5 p.m.

5th Grade BBB, 6 p.m.

Tues. Dec. 9

Senior Menu: Turkey and Swiss sandwich, baked beans, potato chips, tomato spoon salad, fruit.

School Breakfast: Breakfast sliders.

School Lunch: Chicken breast sandwich, tiny whole potatoes.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Church Council, 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Pierre Middle School Wrestling Invite (boys and girls), 4 p.m.

5th Grade Girls Basketball, 4:15 p.m.

GBB at Northwestern: MS at 5 p.m.; JV at 6 p.m.; Varsity to follow

Wed., Dec. 10

Senior Menu: Ham with pineapple, sweet potatoes, cheesy green beans, fruit, dinner roll.

School Breakfast: Omelets.

School Lunch: Cheese Quesadilla, refried beans.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; DFC Supper, 6 p.m.; Advent Service, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

6th Grade GBB Practice, 6 p.m.

5th Grade BBB, 6 p.m.

6th Grade Boys Basketball, 7:30 p.m.

Thurs. Dec. 11

Senior Men: Baked lemon chicken, creamy noodles, tossed salad, fruit, dinner roll.

School Breakfast: Biscuits.

School Lunch: Lasagna bake, corn.

Groton Lions Club Meeting at 104 N main, 6 p.m.

4th Grade Girls' Basketball, 4 p.m.

3rd GBB Practice, 5 p.m.

4th Grade BB, 6 p.m.

MS/HS Christmas Concert, 7 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 12

Senior Menu: Beef stew, Waldorf salad, buttermilk biscuits.

School Breakfast: Doughnuts.

School Lunch: Chicken Fajitas, black beans.

Girls Wrestling @ Webster

Boys and Girls Wrestling at Rapid City Invitational, 11 a.m.

Basketball hosts Hamlin: (GJV at 4 p.m.; BJV at 5 p.m.; Girls Varsity at 6:15 p.m.; Boys Varsity at 7:30 p.m.)

Saturday, Dec. 13

Boys and Girls Wrestling at Rapid City Invitational, 8 a.m.

Northwestern Middle School Girls Basketball

Sunday, Dec. 14

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with Sunday School Program, 10:30 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.

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

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

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

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

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.; Christmas program at 5 p.m. with supper to follow.

7th Grade Soccer, 1 p.m.

4th Grade BB Practice, 2 p.m.

5th Grade Girls Basketball, 4 p.m.

Dance Team Practice, 5 p.m.

6th Grade Boys Basketball, 6 p.m.

7th Grade Boys BB, 6 p.m.

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Monday, Dec. 15

Senior Menu: Cowboy/Calico casserole, fruit, dinner roll.

School Breakfast: Egg bake.

School Lunch: Chef salad.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Christian Literature Circle, 7:30 p.m.

Groton Senior Citizens meet at Community Center with potluck at noon.

Webster JH wrestling, 4:30 p.m.

1st Grade Boys Basketball Practice, 4:30 p.m.

Madison JV/MS Boys and Girls Wrestling Jambo-ree, 5 p.m.

5th Grade BBB, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 16

Senior Menu: Roast beef, mashed potatoes with gravy, peas and carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Pasta with meat sauce, corn.

St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.

Basketball at Sisseton (GBB: 7th grade @ 4pm, 8th grade @ 5pm (in aux gym); GJV, BJV, G Varsity, B Varsity).

5th Grade Girls Basketball, 4:15 p.m.

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 17

Senior Menu: Baked hot ham and cheese, broccolo potato soup, fruit, poke cake.

School Breakfast: Oatmeal.

School Lunch: Soup, sandwich.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; DFC Supper, 6 p.m.; Advent Service, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

6th Grade GBB Practice, 6 p.m.

5th Grade BBB, 6 p.m.

6th Grade Boys Basketball, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 18

Senior Menu: Beef and potatoes, antigua blend, fruit, breadstick.

School Breakfast: Maple baked French toast.

School Lunch: Turkey gravy over mashed pota-

toes, stuffing, cranberries.

Northeast Conference Wrestling Tournament at Clark, 4 p.m.

1st Grade Boys Basketball Practice, 4:30 p.m.

Middle School Girls Basketball hosts Waubay-Summit: (7th grade @ 6pm, 8th grade @ 7pm)

4th Grade BB, 6 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 19

Senior Menu: Chicken pot pie casserole, roasted potatoes, fruit, biscuits.

School Breakfast: Breakfast boats.

School Lunch: Garlic cheese bread, green beans.

End of Second Quarter

Elementary Christmas Concert, 1 p.m.

Basketball DH at West Central (Girls C at 4 p.m. at Becker Center; Boys C at 4 p.m. at Colosseum; Girls JV at Becker Center, 5 p.m.; Boys JV at Colosseum, 5 p.m.; Girls Varsity at Colosseum, 6:30 p.m., Boys Varsity at Colosseum, 8 p.m.)

Cossack Avalanche Girls Wrestling Tournament, 4:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 20

G Wrestling @ Border Brawl (Ashley, ND), 9 a.m.
MVP Titan Invite Boys Wrestling at Plankington, 9 a.m.

Boys Wrestling @ Sioux Valley Cossack, 10 a.m.

Santa Day at 111 N Main, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Sunday, Dec. 21

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

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

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

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

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

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

7th Grade Soccer, 1 p.m.

4th Grade BB Practice, 2 p.m.

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Dance Team Practice, 5 p.m.
6th Grade Boys Basketball, 6 p.m.
7th Grade Boys BB, 6 p.m.

Mon., Dec. 22

Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes with ham, green beans, fruit, whole wheat bread.
No School
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
Basketball Double Header at Redfield: (GJV-1, BJV-2:15, GV-3:30, BV-5:00)
MS/JV WR @ Salem (MCM). Boys Wrestling, 3 p.m.
5th/6th Volleyball Practice, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 23

Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, catalina blend, fruit, garlic toast.
No School

Wednesday, Dec. 24

Senior Menu: Hot pork sandwich, coleslaw, baked beans, fruit.
No School
Emmanuel Lutheran: Christmas Eve Service, 7 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Christmas Eve Program, 4 p.m.
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Britton service at 10 a.m.; Groton service at 5 p.m.; Conde service at 7 p.m.
Groton CM&A: Service, 5 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 25

No School
St. John's Lutheran: Christmas Day Service at Zion, 9 a.m.

Fri., Dec. 26

Senior Menu: Hamburger cabbage roll hot dish, mixed vegetables, fruit, cornmeal muffin.
No School

Sat., Dec. 27

Sun., Dec. 28

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; No Sunday School.
St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.
United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.

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

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

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

4th Grade BB Practice, 2 p.m.

6th Grade Boys Basketball, 6 p.m.

Mon, Dec. 29

Senior Menu: Sweet and sour pork, steamed rice, carrot and broccoli medley, corn, fruit.

No School

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Floyd Farrand Tournament Girls Wrestling at SF Lincoln, 9 a.m.

5th/6th Volleyball Practice, 6 p.m.

Tues., Dec. 30

Senior Menu: Meat loaf, baked potato, mixed vegetables, fruit, whole wheat bread.

No School

GBB NSU Showcase, Groton vs. Lemmon, 3 p.m.

Boys BB hosts Webster (JV at 6 p.m., Varsity to follow)

7th Grade Girls Soccer Practice, 6 p.m.

Wed., Dec. 31

Senior Menu: Oven fried chicken, sweet potatoes, green beans, fruit, whole wheat bread.

No School

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

3rd/4th Volleyball Practice, 6 p.m.

6th Grade Boys Basketball, 7:30 p.m.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Searching for Savannah: Eight months and no answers since woman's disappearance

Missing person case on Rosebud Reservation sparks frustration for family members

BY: JOHN HULT AND AMELIA SCHAFFER, ICT

There are rumors.

About what's known and who knows it. About why what's known has never moved out of the realm of rumor and into the investigatory record.

Savannah Standing Bear's family and friends have plenty of rumors, but not many answers. It's been eight months since she disappeared from the Parmelee community on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota, and the only thing that feels certain, they say, is the feeling that someone knows something.

There's also a nagging suspicion that something either won't be shared with authorities, or won't bring resolution if and when it's reported.

"The feeling around here is you can murder a Native woman and get away with it," said Hollis Flowers, a family friend who's helped lead the push to keep Savannah's story in the public eye as temperatures drop and another season of uncertainty begins.

There's still hope, though, that an answer will emerge — especially after a celebration last week in Parmelee meant to mark Savannah's 23rd birthday and keep her name on the tip of the community's tongue.

About a week before the event, Savannah's mother, Gayla Smith, said the eldest of her two daughters has a heart for those who suffer. It's a personality trait that's been evident for as long as Smith can remember.

"She'd see people on the street, like when we would go to Rapid City," Smith said, referring to the homeless population. "She'd see people like that, she would always want to go and help them."

It's Smith who's suffered since March 24. That was the last day she heard from Savannah, setting off a police investigation and a series of searches that's continued into the fall.

60% of missing South Dakotans are Native Americans

Savannah is one of an unclear number of Native Americans who've gone missing or been killed in the state of South Dakota. Nationally and internationally, the movement to draw attention to Indigenous people who disappear or die under violent circumstances is commonly called Missing and Murdered Indigenous People.

South Dakota has taken some steps to track the cases in recent years. The South Dakota Missing Persons Clearinghouse, which launched in 2020, lists the names of those whose disappearances have been reported to law enforcement locally and passed along to the South Dakota Attorney General's Office. On any given day, the list has at least 100 missing people, though the names shift in real time as people are found or go missing.

On Tuesday morning, Native Americans made up 60% of the 112 listed names. Of 59 missing females, 66% were Native American. The percentages, as compiled periodically by South Dakota Searchlight, typically fall in or near that range.

Around 8.5% of South Dakotans are Native American, according to census data.

Ten of the cases in the state missing persons clearinghouse as of Tuesday morning — Savannah's among them — came from the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Police Department. That's approximately 9% of current missing persons cases. Residents of the Rosebud Reservation represent less than 3% of South Dakota's

total population.

A mother's warning

The last time she saw her daughter, Smith remembers warning her to stay at home and stay out of trouble.

"But when I got up, she wasn't in her room," Smith said.

In the days following, Smith said she heard different things from different family members. Some said that Savannah had ended up in the tribal jail and would be out later, but when Smith looked into it, her daughter hadn't been in jail.

So Smith went to check in with other relatives around the Rosebud Reservation. One relative in Parmelee said Savannah had "walked off" with a friend, Smith said, but it wasn't a friend she recognized.

'Truly a homebody'

Smith and Standing Bear are close. They've always been.

One of Savannah's distinguishing features, noted on the missing persons posters hung up around the Rosebud Reservation and posted to social media, is a tattoo of her mother's first name under her right eye.

It's now been eight months since Smith last heard from her daughter, since Savannah played with her nephew and since Savannah logged into the social media accounts where she loved to chat.

"She has a really big heart," Smith said. "She's my baby."

She loves to listen to music, take photos and just hang out, Smith said. Her absence has left a void for her family.

"She loved the sunset, taking pictures of it," Smith said. "It's really hard for me to see the sun go down without her."

Tips don't yield results

Tips have yet to aid in the search for Savannah, the family said.

Early this year, reports that Savannah was sighted at a Maverik gas station on the north side of Rapid City — two and a half hours from where she was last seen — led investigators to switch gears and focus on the Black Hills city.

Police spent days combing over footage from the gas station, only to find the "sighting" was a different Native American woman, tribal officials said.

"There's no proof she ever left," Flowers, the family friend, said in May.

More frightening tips have emerged, as well.

Once, the family heard that a body was found on the reservation. Family members jumped in to respond alongside law enforcement, but it turned out to be animal remains that had previously been reported and documented, according to officials with Rosebud Sioux Tribe Emergency Services.

Frustration grows

That all-for-naught excursion over animal bones was just one entry on a long list of disappointing searches for Savannah's father, Severt Standing Bear, who was among those to accompany police when the alleged human remains were discovered. He told South Dakota Searchlight this month that he's lost track of how many trips he's made through the areas he thinks Savannah might be. It's been that way since March.

"When I first heard it, my thought was, 'Let's go. We'll go find her,'" he said.

He's also passed along more tips than he can remember to the Rosebud Tribal Police and the detective assigned to Savannah's case.

"I can't say that I call them every day, but I bug the s— out of them," Severt said. "To no avail."

Rosebud Police Chief Waycee His Holy Horse did not reply to South Dakota Searchlight requests for an interview on Savannah's case this month.

Having spent as much time searching as he has, Severt said, he's come to understand the frustration felt

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by other families that go months, years or longer without knowing what happened to a missing loved one. "These officials are always coming up and saying, 'We're doing these things,'" he said. "But I've learned and lived it now, and watched these other people that are missing their precious ones, too. They're having the same darn problem."

Communication, collaboration

Dolores "Totes" Waln, a Rosebud Sioux Tribal Council member, said her experience helping the family has exposed gaps in communication between emergency managers, police and the volunteers who've pitched in.

"When they were going to drain the dam, nobody knew about it until we heard it live on the air from the tribal president," Waln said of a summer search effort from the tribe around a stock dam about 6 miles east of Parmelee, which was discussed on the radio. "And we're all like, 'What?'"

Shelby Lorenzo Homer, of the 4Corners K9 Search And Rescue nonprofit, said collaboration and communication has been a struggle for months. Recently, however, she worked with agents from the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs on a search in October.

"That's when we really started seeing some communication and some collaboration," Homer said.

In a statement, a BIA spokesperson said the agency is working closely with the FBI and Rosebud Sioux Department of Public Safety on Savannah's case, coordinating search operations, offering a \$5,000 reward through its Missing and Murdered Unit and "actively supporting Savannah's family during this difficult time."

After Savannah's birthday celebration and candlelight vigil in Parmelee over the weekend, the hope is that extra attention can be combined with improved collaboration to yield results.

The hope goes all the way to the top in Rosebud. Tips sometimes land in the inbox of Rosebud Sioux Tribal President Kathleen Wooden Knife. When that happens, the president said, she passes them along to police.

Then, like everyone else, she waits.

"And my hope is that 'OK, this time will be the time we're going to find her,'" Wooden Knife said. "It hasn't happened yet."

The BIA's \$5,000 reward is open to anyone with information that can lead authorities to Savannah. The BIA can be reached at (833) 560-2065, by email at OJS_MMU@bia.gov, or by texting keyword BIAMMU and a tip to 847411.

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

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.

Uncertainty pushes 18-year federal science communicator to leave profession

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER

Thom Adamson had been through uncertainty in his job before, including government shutdowns. But earlier this year, it felt different.

Adamson worked as a science communicator at the U.S. Geological Survey's Earth Resources Observation and Science Center for 18 years before walking away in July.

He was responsible for translating scientific research and accomplishments for the EROS website, producing and leading a podcast showcasing EROS work, and leading several tours a week through the facility.

EROS, located northeast of Sioux Falls, archives satellite images to monitor land use and changes — including helping with emergency disaster responses, such as wildfires, or analyzing the impact of drought,

disease and flooding across the world.

Amid widespread federal workforce and spending reductions by the Trump administration, Adamson and his team of a dozen people were instructed that they'd be laid off in July. But their funding was restored a week or so before the date arrived.

By the time Adamson's job was no longer in jeopardy, the 55-year-old was convinced it was time for a change. It felt too fragile to trust.

"Even without being political, just being objective about it, the uncertainty feels different now," Adamson said. "It's a lot more extreme."

About 154,000 federal employees took buyouts — officially known as deferred resignations — offered by the Trump administration earlier this year as a way to reduce the size of the federal government. Office of Personnel Management Director Scott Kupor said recently that he expects the total decrease in the federal workforce to reach more than 300,000 eventually.

Adamson is not included in that number, because he was a contracted employee. He joined EROS when he and his wife moved to Sioux Falls in 2007. He enjoyed scientific writing, found it rewarding to work with scientists and was fascinated by the work accomplished at the site.

Now, Adamson teaches English in the Sioux Falls School District. He was an educator before joining EROS. During the recent federal government shutdown, he vacillated between empathy for his former coworkers — recalling the stress thrust upon him in prior shutdowns and leading up to potential shutdowns — and relief at not enduring shutdowns anymore.

Adamson is worried that the Trump administration's propensity to cut government spending could jeopardize the EROS mission.

"If they don't understand the value of the work at EROS, they might see it as a great place to cut costs," Adamson said. "There's a lot of cost to cutting science, and there's a lot of science going on at EROS."

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

Democrats threatened by Trump over video say they're now being investigated by FBI

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — Democratic members of Congress who released a video in mid-November telling members of the military that they are not required to follow illegal orders announced Tuesday the Federal Bureau of Investigation has asked to speak with them about the matter.

Four House members, Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly and Michigan Sen. Elissa Slotkin wrote the inquiry will not deter them from publicly stating their concerns about the Trump administration.

"Last night, the FBI's Counterterrorism Division appeared to open an inquiry into me in response to a video President Trump did not like," Slotkin wrote in a statement published on social media.

"The President directing the FBI to target us is exactly why we made this video in the first place," Slotkin added. "He believes in weaponizing the federal government against his perceived enemies and does not believe laws apply to him or his Cabinet. He uses legal harassment as an intimidation tactic to scare people out of speaking up."

Kelly's office said it had "received this inquiry via the Sergeant at Arms." The House members said the FBI has contacted the House Sergeant at Arms office requesting interviews.

"Senator Kelly won't be silenced by President Trump and Secretary Hegseth's attempt to intimidate him and keep him from doing his job as a U.S. Senator," the spokesperson said.

Reps. Jason Crow of Colorado, Chris Deluzio and Chrissy Houlahan of Pennsylvania and Maggie Goodlander of New Hampshire separately issued a joint statement alleging that "Trump is using the FBI as a

tool to intimidate and harass Members of Congress.”

“No amount of intimidation or harassment will ever stop us from doing our jobs and honoring our Constitution,” they wrote. “We swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. That oath lasts a lifetime, and we intend to keep it. We will not be bullied. We will never give up the ship.”

President Donald Trump after learning of the video posted on social media that he believed the statement from six Democratic lawmakers represented “SEDITIONOUS BEHAVIOR, punishable by DEATH.”

The FBI declined to comment.

Illegal orders

Those six lawmakers posted a video on social media on Nov. 18 telling members of the military and intelligence community that they “can” and “must refuse illegal orders.”

“No one has to carry out orders that violate the law or our Constitution. We know this is hard and that it’s a difficult time to be a public servant,” they said. “But whether you’re serving in the CIA, in the Army, or Navy, or the Air Force, your vigilance is critical.”

The Defense Department announced Monday that it was looking into “serious allegations of misconduct” against Kelly, a former Navy captain and NASA astronaut, for his participation in the video.

The statement said defense officials may recall Kelly “to active duty for court-martial proceedings or administrative measures.”

Kelly wrote in a statement responding to the investigation that he had “given too much to this country to be silenced by bullies who care more about their own power than protecting the Constitution.”

“If this is meant to intimidate me and other members of Congress from doing our jobs and holding this administration accountable, it won’t work,” Kelly wrote.

Hegseth asks for briefing

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth posted on social media Tuesday that he wants the Secretary of the Navy to brief him “on the outcome of your review by no later than December 10, 2025.”

Members of Congress’ official actions are generally protected under the speech and debate clause of the Constitution.

A report from the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service states the judiciary’s “immunity principle protects Members from ‘intimidation by the executive’ or a ‘hostile judiciary’ by prohibiting both the executive and judicial powers from being used to improperly influence or harass legislators.”

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

Trump shedding support among Latino voters, survey finds

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — A majority of U.S. Latinos have grown pessimistic since the 2024 presidential election and increasingly disapprove of the immigration and economic policies of the second Trump administration, according to a new report from the Pew Research Center.

About 70% of Latinos in the U.S. disapprove of President Donald Trump’s record, with 65% disapproving of his handling of immigration and 61% saying his policies have worsened the economy, according to the report.

The report found Latinos’ views are still divided by how they voted in the last presidential election, though even Trump voters’ opinions of the president have declined.

“Those who voted for Trump express strong support for the president and his policies, while those who voted for Kamala Harris hold deeply negative views,” according to the report.

Latinos were among the groups with the largest shifts toward Trump. In his first campaign in 2016, 28% backed him. In 2020, about 36% of Latinos voted for Trump and that support again grew in 2024, when

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nearly 48% supported him. Latinos are among the fastest growing demographic groups in the U.S., and are the second largest racial group in the country.

The Nov. 24 Pew Research Center report analyzed survey responses from more than 5,500 Hispanic adults conducted from Sept. 22-28 and Oct. 6-16. The study used the terms Latino and Hispanic people interchangeably.

Disapproval on immigration

Federal agents block people protesting an ICE immigration raid at a nearby licensed cannabis farm on July 10, 2025 near Camarillo, California. Protestors stood off with federal agents for hours outside the farm in the farmworker community in Ventura County. A Los Angeles federal judge is set to rule Friday on a temporary restraining order which would restrict area immigration enforcement operations. (Photo by Mario Tama/Getty Images).jpeg

Federal agents block people protesting an immigration raid near Camarillo, California. (Photo by Mario Tama/Getty Images)

The study found deep disapproval of the Trump administration's immigration policies, amid aggressive immigration enforcement operations in areas with large Latino immigrant populations.

More than half of Latino adults reported that they worry that they, a family member or a close friend could be deported. Almost 59% of Latinos said they have seen or heard of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids or arrests in their community in the past six months.

"About seven-in-ten (71%) say (the Trump administration) is doing too much when it comes to deporting immigrants living in the country illegally, up from 56% in March," according to the study.

In his 2024 campaign, Trump promised to conduct mass deportations and end temporary legal status given to newly arrived migrants under the Biden administration.

Economic outlook worrying

Two-thirds of Latinos said their overall situation has worsened since last year.

"This is the first time that most Hispanics say their situation has worsened in nearly two decades of Pew Research Center Hispanic surveys," according to the report.

Inflation and the economy were major policy concerns for Latinos, like most voters, in the 2024 presidential election.

The Pew Research Center study found that in the last year, 1 in 3 Latinos struggled to pay for groceries, medical care and rent or a mortgage.

"Many Latinos also have a negative outlook on the economy's future," according to the study. "About half (49%) say the nation's economy will worsen over the next year, up substantially from 2024. Another 23% say economic conditions will be about the same as now."

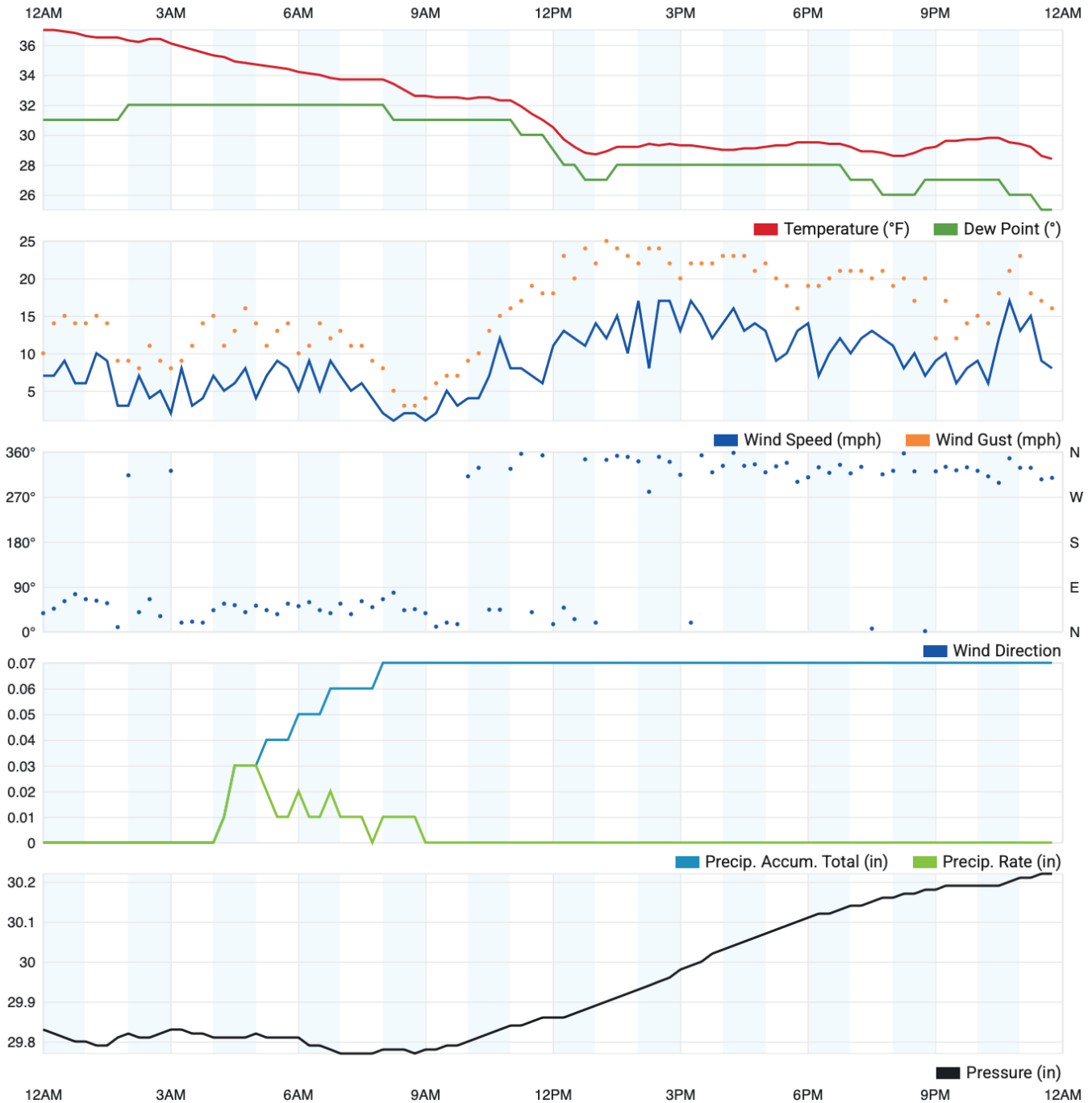
Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include immigration, congressional policy and legal challenges with a focus on how those policies impact the lives of immigrants and migrants coming to the U.S.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

November 25, 2025



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Today



High: 25 °F

Partly Sunny

Tonight



Low: 6 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Thanksgiving Day



High: 20 °F

Mostly Sunny

Thursday Night



Low: 7 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Friday



20 % → 60 %

High: 22 °F

Slight Chance
Snow then
Snow Likely



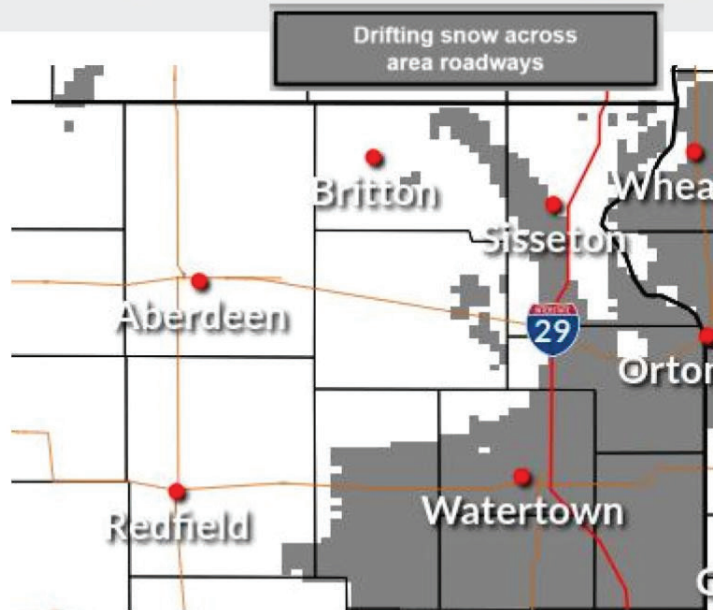
Drifting Snow this Morning

November 26, 2025
3:57 AM

Drifting Snow ending by early afternoon over far northeastern South Dakota & west central Minnesota as gusts diminish to 25 mph or less

Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)

	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm
Aberdeen	30	21	21	18	12
Miller	25	23	22	18	9
Mobridge	18	16	15	13	8
Murdo	15	14	14	10	8
Ortonville	32	30	29	26	20
Pierre	16	14	15	13	7
Sisseton	30	26	25	24	18
Watertown	36	30	28	26	20



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Drifting Snow over portions of northeastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota will be ending by early afternoon as our northwesterly wind gusts diminish to 25 mph or less.

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Snow Friday into Saturday AM

November 26, 2025
5:14 AM

Travel disruptions possible Friday into Saturday morning!



Snow is expected Friday into Saturday morning, with **most of the snow falling Friday afternoon through daybreak Saturday.**

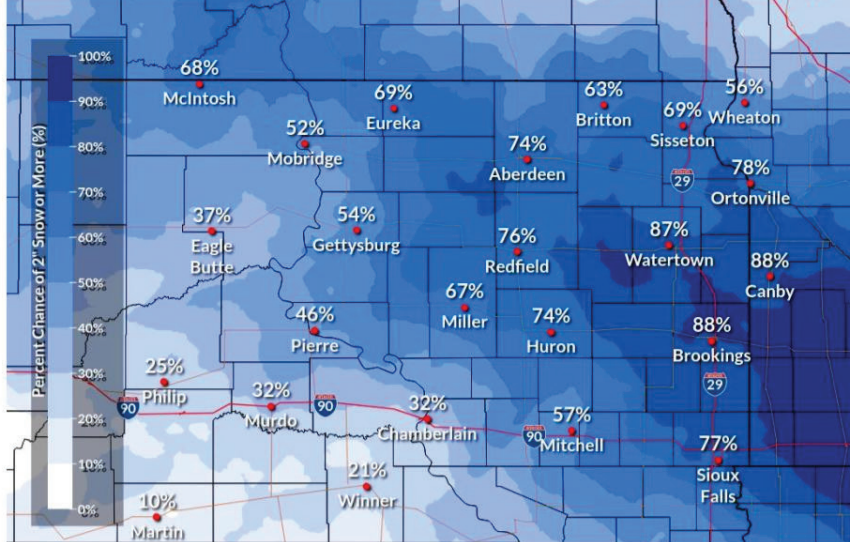
60 to 80+% chance of 2" or more snow over northeastern South Dakota.

If you have travel plans, now is the time to start monitoring the latest forecasts. Prepare the winter emergency kit.

Percent Chance of 2" of Snow or More

For the 48 hours ending on Sat Nov 29, 2025 at 6:00PM CST

Weather Forecast Office
Aberdeen, SD
Issued Nov 26, 2025 2:51 AM CST



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Snow is expected Friday into Saturday morning, with most of the snow falling Friday afternoon through daybreak Saturday. Travel disruptions are possible Friday into Saturday morning! 60 to 80+% chance of 2" or more snow over northeastern South Dakota. If you have travel plans, now is the time to start monitoring the latest forecasts. Prepare the winter emergency kit.



Wear or Pack the Cold Weather Gear!

November 26, 2025
5:20 AM

Cold air to remain in place through at least next week

Maximum Temperature Forecast (°F)

	11/26	11/27	11/28	11/29	11/30	12/1	12/2	12/3
	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
Aberdeen	26	21	23	20	11	10	16	16
Britton	24	19	22	20	11	11	14	15
Clark	27	18	21	18	8	9	15	14
Clear Lake	25	22	21	20	10	11	15	15
Frederick	25	20	21	20	11	11	15	15
Milbank	26	22	21	22	12	12	15	15
Redfield	28	24	25	21	13	14	18	18
Sisseton	26	21	20	21	11	12	16	15
Watertown	24	20	22	20	10	12	15	15
Webster	27	17	20	19	8	10	13	14
Wheaton	26	20	20	22	11	9	13	15



High temperatures will be in the teens to 20s through Saturday, then in the single digits to teens Sunday through at least early next week. Low temperatures and wind chills will be much colder.

Don't forget the cold weather gear if you have any travel plans! It's that time of year again - - coats, hats, gloves, winter boots and snow pants are needed.



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 37 °F at 12:00 AM

Low Temp: 28 °F at 8:07 PM

Wind: 27 mph at 12:49 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 63 in 1914

Record Low: -24 in 1996

Average High: 37

Average Low: 15

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.66

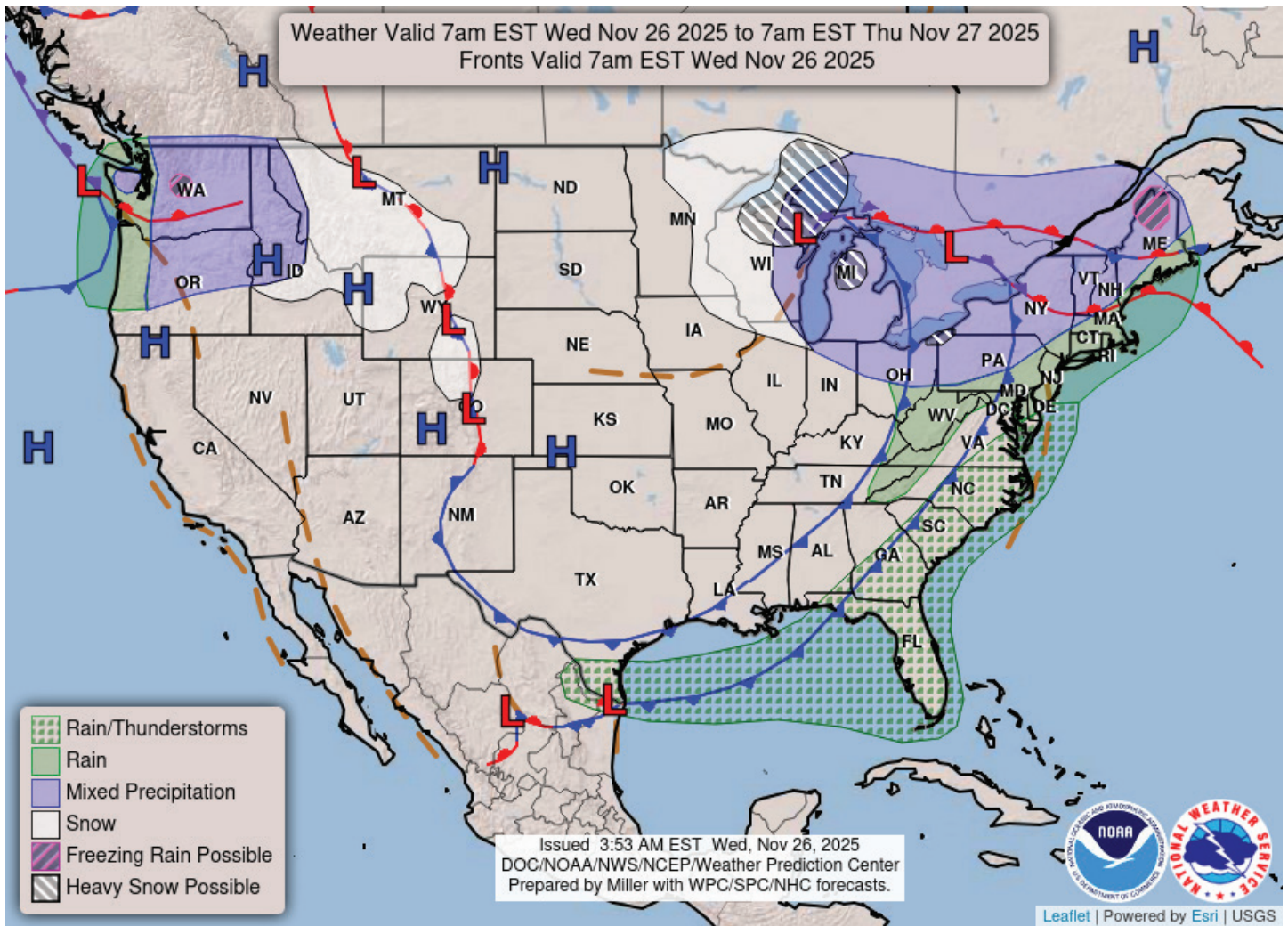
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.13

Precip Year to Date: 23.51

Sunset Tonight: 4:53 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:47 am



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Today in Weather History

November 26, 1989: Snow began falling in western South Dakota during the early evening of the 26th and swept across the state and into west central Minnesota that night and through much of the 27th. Almost two feet of snow fell in parts of the Black Hills, while one to two inches fell in the southeast part of South Dakota. Icy roads caused by rain that preceded the snow in central and eastern parts of the state combined with strong northerly winds on the 27th to make for dangerous traveling conditions. Numerous accidents were reported, and many cars went into ditches. Some of the heavier snow amount in central, north central, and northeast South Dakota were reported at Leola with 6 inches; Mellette and Onida with 5 inches; and Eureka, Faulkton, and Aberdeen with 4 inches.

November 26, 2001: Heavy snow of 6 to 12 inches, along with strong north winds of 20 to 40 mph, caused near-blizzard conditions and challenging travel conditions across most of central and northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota. Snowfall amounts were 6 to 12 inches in South Dakota and 10 to 14 inches in west central Minnesota. Most schools were closed or started late on both the 26th and 27th and some businesses were also closed. Many flights were also delayed or canceled. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Eagle Butte, Fort Thompson and Webster; 7 inches at Eureka, Onida, Doland, and Watertown; 8 inches at Highmore, Miller, Onaka, Castlewood, and Selby; 9 inches at Sisseton and Peever; 10 inches at Ortonville, Faulkton, Blunt, Murdo, Kennebec, and Stephan; 11 inches at Victor and Gettysburg; 12 inches at Milbank, White Rock, and Clear Lake; 13 inches at Wheaton; and 14 inches at Browns Valley.

1888 - A late season hurricane brushed the East Coast with heavy rain and gale force winds. The hurricane passed inside Nantucket and over Cape Cod, then crossed Nova Scotia. (David Ludlum)

1896 - Snow and high winds hit the Northern Plains and the Upper Mississippi Valley, with a Thanksgiving Day blizzard across North Dakota. The storm was followed by a severe cold wave in the Upper Midwest. The temperature at Pokegama Dam MI plunged to 45 degrees below zero. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A Thanksgiving Day storm in the northeastern U.S. produced heavy snow in northern New England and upstate New York. Snowfall totals in Maine ranged up to twenty inches at Flagstaff Lake. Totals in New Hampshire ranged up to 18 inches at Errol. Gales lashed the coast of Maine and New Hampshire. A second storm, over the Southern and Central Rockies, produced nine inches of snow at Kanosh UT, and 13 inches at Divide CO, with five inches reported at Denver CO. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather over the Central Gulf Coast States during the late morning and afternoon hours. Five tornadoes were reported in Mississippi, with the tornadoes causing a million dollars damage at Ruleville, and in Warren County. In Utah, the town of Alta was blanketed with 15 inches of snow overnight, and during the day was buried under another 16.5 inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A massive storm over the western U.S. produced heavy snow in Utah, Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. The storm produced more than two feet of snow in the higher elevations of northern and central Utah, bringing more than sixty inches of snow to the Alta Ski Resort in the Wasatch Mountains. Winds in Utah gusted to 60 mph at Bullfrog. The storm brought much needed snow to the ski resorts of Colorado, with 19 inches reported at Beaver Creek. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

November 26, 2007: Lightning and heavy rain delay the start of the Monday Night Football game at Pittsburgh's Heinz Field between the Miami Dolphins and the Pittsburgh Steelers by 25 minutes. The muddy field conditions contribute to one of the lowest scoring NFL games won by the Steelers, 3-0. The teams combined 375 yards, and the winning field goal occurred with 17 seconds left in the game.

The Power of a Discerning Spirit

To distinguish good from best, we need to develop discernment.

Hebrews 5:11-14: Warning Against Falling Away

11 We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. 12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! 13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

In a world filled with endless sources of information and opinions, Christians need to develop a discerning spirit. Otherwise, how will we know what is true?

The only way believers can guard against deception is by becoming grounded in God's Word. The more time we spend filling our mind with the Lord's thoughts, the more discerning we will be. However, just knowing biblical truth isn't enough. We must put what we learn into practice so it becomes more than head knowledge.

The goal is to let God's Word become such an integral part of our thinking that it guides our decisions. Even if the situation we're facing isn't specifically addressed in the Bible, scriptural principles provide the needed wisdom for every choice. And we don't have to figure it out alone. The Holy Spirit is given to every believer; He is a Helper who guides us into truth (John 14:26; John 16:13). But for that to be effective, we have the responsibility of storing Scripture through memorization so God's Spirit can bring it to our remembrance.

What are you allowing into your mind? Is the Word high on your list of priorities? If not, ask the Lord to give you a renewed passion for Him and His amazing revelations.

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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Upcoming Groton Events

- 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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- 9 Months \$42.60
- 12 Months \$53.25

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State, Zip Code _____
Phone Number _____
The following will be used for your log-in information.
E-mail _____
Password _____



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.25.25

11 15 31 32 59 18

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$80,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 27

DRAW: Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.24.25

1 5 8 19 50 6

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$7,900,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 42 Mins 52

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.25.25

7 11 32 37 44 14

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 15 Hrs 57 Mins 52

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.22.25

3 6 16 22 24

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$97,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 57 Mins 53

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.24.25

4 7 48 65 68 24

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 26 Mins 53

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.24.25

8 16 26 30 58 14

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$681,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 26 Mins 53

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Americans eye Thanksgiving travel weather after Texas tornadoes, snow and rain elsewhere

By JUAN A. LOZANO Associated Press

CYPRESS, Texas (AP) — Kenny Beck surveyed the damage Tuesday to his family's two-story home after at least two tornadoes tore through the Houston area, damaging over 100 homes at the start of a busy Thanksgiving travel week that has Americans closely eyeing the weather.

"Half my roof on the back is gone," Beck, 46, said as workers cleared large tree branches and other debris from around nearby houses in the suburb of Cypress. "We've lost a lot of ceiling because of the rain. Our garage door got sucked in."

No injuries were reported from Monday's storm but it uprooted trees, downed power lines and scattered debris throughout some neighborhoods northwest of Houston. The National Weather Service on Tuesday had confirmed at least two tornadoes, one in Cypress with winds up to 105 mph (168 kph) and another around the community of Klein with winds up to 115 mph (185 kph).

Beck said that while repairs are being made, his family will have to move out of the home where they've lived and shared many moments and memories with family and friends over the past 20 years.

"I'm just hoping that here in a couple of months, we can get back in and we can start making more of those memories," Beck said.

Meanwhile, multiple rounds of storms and showers were expected in Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia. The storm system was expected to move to the Northeast by Tuesday night, with another one in the forecast in the Pacific Northwest.

Even though the official start of winter is nearly a month away, a wintry storm was developing in the northern part of the country, with snow falling in North Dakota.

"That's impacting North Dakota, Minnesota, including Minneapolis, and then portions of the northern Great Lakes," said weather service meteorologist Marc Chenard in College Park, Maryland. He said snowfall was expected into Wednesday.

As much as 8 inches (20 centimeters) of snow had fallen by late Tuesday afternoon in parts of North Dakota and South Dakota, according to the National Weather Service. In North Dakota, officials closed parts of Interstate 94 and Interstate 29 due to ice, low visibility and multiple accidents.

The holiday itself was shaping up to be dry, cold and breezy for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade on Thursday in New York. But parts of western New York and northern Michigan are expected to see lake-effect snow Wednesday through Friday.

"It's pretty narrow bands, but they'll be some significant snowfall accumulations," Chenard said. More winter weather could arrive in the central and northern parts of the country over the weekend.

In Texas, some people hunkered down in their homes and hid in closets during the storm earlier in the week. More than 20,000 customers were without power at one point Monday.

Beck said his 13-year-old son was home alone when the severe weather hit. He said his son hid in the closet and wasn't hurt but was still shaken up on Tuesday. The boy told his father he could feel the house shake and hear the wind howl as things fell and broke.

"I think he's still kind of processing it," said Beck, who works as a teacher. "I think he understands the fact that him being safe was the most important thing and that he knows what to do in the moment, which is what makes me proud as a parent."

In the Houston suburb of Spring, where severe weather damaged multiple homes, workers could be seen in one subdivision on Tuesday afternoon repairing roofs and cutting down damaged trees.

Sam Parker, owner of Texas Advantage Roofing, said he was working in the subdivision on Monday when he saw a tornado.

"I waited for it to pass," he said. "I saw a lot of debris flying around."

Parker said many homes had roof damage while others had more severe structural damage. "It's very catastrophic for these homeowners out here," Parker said.

Leonhardt, Hendricks score 16 apiece as Utah Valley knocks off South Dakota State 75-52

By The Associated Press undefined

CANCUN, Mexico (AP) — Trevan Leonhardt and Tyler Hendricks scored 16 points each as Utah Valley beat South Dakota State 75-52 on Tuesday.

Leonhardt added five rebounds and three steals for the Wolverines (4-2). Hendricks shot 6 for 14, including 4 for 10 from beyond the arc. Braden Housley shot 4 of 9 from the field and went 6 for 6 from the line to finish with 15 points.

The Jackrabbits (4-3) were led in scoring by Matthew Mors, who finished with 10 points and three blocks. Joe Saylor added nine points for South Dakota State. Damon Wilkinson finished with eight points and seven rebounds.

Fire rages through bamboo scaffolding at Hong Kong high-rise residential complex, killing 4

HONG KONG (AP) — A fire spread across multiple high-rise apartment buildings in a Hong Kong housing complex on Wednesday, killing four people and leaving others trapped inside, authorities said.

Video from the scene showed at least five buildings close to each other ablaze, with bright flames and smoke shooting out of many of the apartments' windows as night fell. Firefighters were aiming water at the intense flames from high up on ladder trucks.

The raging fire sent up a column of flames and thick smoke as it spread on bamboo scaffolding and construction netting that had been set up around the exterior of the complex in the city's Tai Po district. Records show the housing complex consisted of eight blocks housing almost 2,000 apartments.

The Hong Kong government reported four deaths and said five other people were hospitalized. Three of the injured were in critical condition, one in serious condition and the other person was stable, a brief statement said.

The dead included one firefighter and another was being treated for heat exhaustion, Fire Services Department Director Andy Yeung told reporters.

Police said they had received multiple reports of people trapped in the affected buildings, but did not provide details.

The blaze was reported mid afternoon, and after nightfall authorities upgraded it to a level 5 alarm, the highest level of severity, the Fire Services Department said.

District officials in Tai Po have opened temporary shelters for people left homeless by the fire.

Tai Po is a suburban area in the New Territories, in the northern part of Hong Kong and near the border with the mainland Chinese city of Shenzhen.

Bamboo scaffolding is a common sight in Hong Kong at building construction and renovation projects, though the government said earlier this year that it would start phasing it out for public projects because of safety concerns.

Israel has handed over 15 more Palestinian bodies, hospital officials in Gaza say

By WAFAA SHURAF, JULIA FRANKEL and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — Hospital officials in Gaza said Wednesday that Israel handed over 15 more Palestinian bodies, completing the latest swap of the ceasefire as the first phase of the agreement nears a conclusion and officials convened to discuss moving to the second.

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It came a day after Palestinian militants returned the remains of Israeli hostage Dror Or, who the Israeli military says was killed by the militants in their Oct. 7, 2023 attack. Israel has agreed to return 15 Palestinian bodies for each hostage returned.

With the latest swap, Israel has sent back to Gaza a total of 345 Palestinian bodies since the exchanges started last month, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. Two hostages — one Israeli and one Thai national — remain in Gaza. Hamas said Wednesday it was determined to uphold its side of the agreement and return them both.

Turkish, Qatari and Egyptian officials met Wednesday in Cairo to discuss the second phase of the ceasefire, which began in October and has held despite accusations by both sides of violations. The next phases of the agreement include deploying an international stabilization force and developing an international body to govern Gaza and oversee reconstruction.

An armed international stabilization force will be tasked with keeping security and ensuring the disarmament of Hamas, a key demand of Israel. Indonesian officials have said they plan to deploy 20,000 peacekeepers to the force.

Major questions hang over nearly every part of the plan and the timeframe for implementation. In the meantime, nearly all Palestinians remain displaced and dependent on humanitarian aid, Hamas retains significant control over nearly half of Gaza and the rebuilding of the territory has barely begun.

Palestinian bodies returned and hostage remains identified

Gaza's Health Ministry said only 99 bodies out of the 345 Israel has returned have been identified. They say identifying the remains is complicated by a lack of DNA testing kits in Gaza.

Meanwhile, Israel mourned the latest hostage to be returned by the Palestinian militants, Dror Or. Israel's military said Or and his wife, Yonat Or, were killed by militants who overran their community of Kibbutz Beeri on Oct. 7, 2023.

Before they were killed by the militants, the couple evacuated two of their children from their burning house through the window, said the Hostages Families Forum. The decision ultimately saved the children's lives — Alma and Noam were abducted by the militants and released in a hostage deal in November 2023.

The Forum remembered Or as a devoted father and talented cheesemaker who spent years working at the Be'eri dairy, eventually managing it. The group said Or was also a chef and yoga teacher.

In total, Palestinian militants killed some 1,200 people across southern Israel and abducted 251 to Gaza in their Oct. 7, 2023 attack that kickstarted the war in Gaza.

With the return of Or's remains, almost all of the hostages or their remains are out of Gaza.

Hazem Qassem, the spokesperson for Hamas, said Wednesday that the militant group was committed to handing over the remaining two hostages and wrapping up the exchange. Writing on his Telegram channel, he called for mediators to pressure Israel to stop its "violations" of the ceasefire.

Israeli troops shoot Palestinian man in Gaza, health officials say

A Palestinian man was killed when Israeli troops opened fire Wednesday on a group of people in central Gaza, a hospital said.

At least two others were wounded in the attack that took place east of the Maghazi refugee camp, according to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital which received the casualties.

They were the latest casualties among Palestinians since a ceasefire deal brought the war to a halt in Gaza last month. Israel's military did not immediately respond to request for comment on the report.

Also Wednesday, the military said its troops struck a group of six militants in the southern city of Rafah, killing one. The military statement said that the militants had "most likely emerged from the underground terror infrastructure in the area."

Since the ceasefire took effect on Oct. 11, the Gaza Health Ministry said, 345 Palestinians were killed and 889 were wounded in the strip as of Tuesday.

It said at least 69,775 Palestinians have been killed and 170,863 injured in Israel's offensive in Gaza. It does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its figures, but has said women and children make up a majority of those killed. The ministry is staffed by medical professionals and maintains detailed

records viewed as generally reliable by independent experts.

Turkish, Qatari and Egyptian officials meet on ceasefire

Turkey's intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalin met in Cairo on Tuesday with Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani and Egypt's intelligence chief Hasan Reshat to discuss advancing to the second phase of the Gaza ceasefire agreement, a Turkish security official said.

The talks also centered on intensifying joint efforts with the United States to strengthen the truce, according to the official who requested anonymity in line with Turkish regulations.

The three also agreed to deepen cooperation with the Civil-Military Coordination Center (CMCC) to remove obstacles and prevent violations, ensuring the ceasefire is upheld without interruption, the official added.

Indonesia prepares troops for Gaza stabilization force

Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority nation with a long experience in U.N. peacekeeping missions, is among the countries the U.S. has discussed the ISF plan with, in addition to Azerbaijan, Egypt and Qatar.

"We are now in the selection phase for the peacekeeping force," Gen. Agus Subianto, Chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces or TNI, told reporters Tuesday after a hearing with lawmakers in the capital, Jakarta. "Later, it's planned that the mission will be led by a three-star general."

He said the contingent will form a composite brigade consisting of health, engineering and mechanized support battalions. TNI is also preparing supporting assets for the mission in Gaza, including three hospital warships, the C-130 Hercules military transport aircraft and a helicopter.

Defense Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin added that the final deployment awaits an official order from President Prabowo Subianto but "troops are already undergoing mission-specific training."

Prabowo has repeatedly declared that his country was ready to deploy 20,000 peacekeepers to Gaza at any time.

The U.N. reported that Indonesia had been the fifth-largest uniformed personnel contributor, deploying 2,731 individuals on peacekeeping operations as of September.

Taiwan puts \$40 billion toward building a defense dome and buying US weapons

TAIJING WU and HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te on Wednesday announced a special \$40 billion budget for arms purchases, including to build a Taiwan Dome, an air defense system with high-level detection and interception capabilities, as the U.S. pressures the island to increase its defense spending.

The budget will be allocated over eight years, from 2026 to 2033, and comes after Lai already pledged to raise defense spending to 5% of the island's GDP, as part of his strategy amid China's threats of invasion.

"China's threats to Taiwan and the Indo-Pacific region are escalating," Lai said Wednesday. "Recently, various types of military intrusions, maritime gray zones and disinformation campaigns have been occurring in Japan, the Philippines and around the Taiwan Strait, causing deep unease and distress to all parties in the region."

"Taiwan, as the most important and most critical part of the first island chain, must demonstrate our determination and take on a greater responsibility in self-defense," he said, referring to the string of islands stretching from Japan's East China Sea islands through the Philippines in the Pacific Ocean.

Currently, Taiwan has set an increase in its defense budget to 3.3% of its GDP for 2026, allocating \$949.5 billion Taiwan dollars (\$31.18 billion). U.S. President Donald Trump has demanded Taiwan raise its defense spending to as much as 10% of GDP, a proportion well above what the U.S. or any of its major allies spend.

Taiwan, a self-ruled island, is claimed by China. In recent years, China has deployed warplanes, navy ships and drones toward the island on a daily basis in military exercises as part of its efforts to exert pressure.

Lai had previewed the announcement in an op-ed for The Washington Post on Wednesday, saying the special budget would be used to purchase arms from the U.S. He told reporters Wednesday, however, that the budget has nothing to do with the government's tariff negotiations with the U.S.

Wellington Koo, Taiwan's defense minister, said Wednesday the \$40 billion is an upper limit for the special budget and that it will be used to buy precision-strike missiles and toward the joint development and procurement between Taiwan and the U.S. of equipment and systems.

Lai also said his government would focus on finding ways to increase its defense against Beijing's "psychological warfare" as China attempts to "weaken our unity." He said the government will monitor and increase public awareness of China's interference attempts during major events and elections.

Lai also commented on an escalating feud between China and Japan, which started after Japan's conservative leader said the country might get involved militarily if China makes a move against Taiwan. The remarks incensed Beijing. Lai said Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's comments appeared to be focused largely on the stability of the region.

"We hope China can understand that each country in the Indo-Pacific region has a responsibility to its peace and stability, and that we especially hope China, as a major power in the region, would also demonstrate the responsibilities of a major power," Lai said. "Instead, it has continued to raise threats and attacks toward neighboring countries. This is not the way a responsible major power acts."

China's pressure on Japan is a familiar tactic that could last for some time

By KEN MORITSUGU and AYAKA MCGILL Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Just days after China issued an advisory against traveling to Japan, the cancellations started.

About 3,000 Chinese visit Rie Takeda's tearoom in an alley in Tokyo's historic Asakusa district every year. Some 200 have already canceled bookings for her tea ceremony class, as far ahead as January.

"I just hope the Chinese tourists return by Chinese New Year," she said, referring to the major holiday period in February. Past experience suggests it may take longer than that.

China's government is turning to a well-used playbook to express its displeasure with Japan for refusing to retract a statement by its new prime minister on the hot-button issue of Taiwan.

As with its tariffs on Australian wines in 2020, and restrictions on Philippine banana imports in 2012, Beijing is using its economic clout to pressure Tokyo while also hurling a torrent of invective at its government. The only question is how far China will go and how long the measures will last.

"China's countermeasures are all kept secret and will be rolled out one by one," said Liu Jianguo, an international relations professor at Tsinghua University in Beijing. "Everything is possible, because this involves the core of the nation's core interests."

Disputes can drag on for more than a year

China was angered by a statement of Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi earlier this month that its military could get involved if China were to take action against Taiwan, the self-governing island that Beijing says must come under its rule.

Japan is trying to keep the feud from escalating but has shown no sign of backing down. That dovetails with how some other governments have reacted to China's pressure: Stick to their positions and endure the pain, allowing the disputes to fester for a year or more.

"The diplomatic challenge for both sides is that they have their own domestic audiences and so they don't want to be perceived as backing down," said Sheila A. Smith, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and author of "Intimate Rivals," a book on Japan-China relations.

With several countries, the disputes persisted until a political change brought in a new leader unencumbered by the baggage of past statements.

Australia's trade with China has gradually returned to normal since Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's election in 2022 — the last step was the reopening of the lobster market. Canada is the latest country to start repairing relations under new Prime Minister Mark Carney.

The travel advisory starts to bite

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It's not the first time Japan has faced China's economic wrath. In 2012, protesters attacked Japanese businesses in China and boycotted their goods after a dispute erupted over a group of uninhabited islands that both countries claim. Group tours to Japan were canceled.

Based on what happened then, when Chinese visitors fell by one-fourth, Nomura Research Institute economist Takahide Kiuchi has estimated the current travel advisory could cost Japan 1.8 trillion yen (\$11.5 billion), knocking 0.3 percentage points off its already low annual economic growth.

Many group tours have been canceled again, hitting businesses that rely on them. Gamagori Hotel in central Japan's Aichi prefecture said it had lost more than 2,000 guests. Nichu Syomu, a Japan-based tour company focusing on Chinese tourists, said 300 bookings have been canceled, describing the loss as comparable to 2012.

China had been on track this year to displace South Korea and return to its pre-pandemic position as the top source of tourists to Japan. More than 8 million Chinese visited in the first 10 months of this year, or 23% of the total, according to the Japan National Tourism Organization.

"It's a shame," Nichu Syomu tour operator Nana Enomoto said, noting Chinese tourism was just recovering.

Some Chinese tourists cancel. Others don't

Kyren Zhu, who had never been to Japan, agonized over the decision. Her parents warned her against going. In the end, the accountant canceled a trip with a friend to see the fall foliage. Her friend went ahead and told her nothing unusual had happened.

"If I'd known, I probably would have just gone," she said. "But it's hard to say. The situation is really beyond our control."

Beijing resident Livia Du, who opened a ski lodge last year in northern Japan, received two cancellations — but they were quickly filled by other Chinese.

One customer told her that since China had taken a clear stance, he had to align with it. Another works at a government-owned company and said that staff had been instructed not to visit Japan in the near term.

Guests appear to be in wait-and-see mode, said Du, who quit her job and invested more than 2 million yuan (\$280,000) with her husband to build the lodge in Hokkaido. She was worried the situation could get worse.

China warns it may take further steps

The pressure appeared to extend into other sectors last week. The Chinese release of two Japanese movies was suddenly postponed — the comedy "Cells at Work!" and the animated feature "Crayon Shin-chan the Movie: Super Hot! The Spicy Kasukabe Dancers."

A comedy festival in Shanghai canceled shows by a Japanese entertainment company, while a book publishing editor said her boss had told her to suspend a project to import a Japanese comic book.

The prospects for seafood exports to China remained unclear, even after Tokyo denied news reports that Beijing had said it was reversing its decision to end a 2-year-old ban on Japanese seafood.

Japan has failed to provide the technical documentation needed to resume the exports, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said when asked about the reports.

China could also target its export of rare earths, which are vital to car production and other industries. Beijing found that the minerals were an American weak point when it restricted their export earlier this year.

"Japan should first retract its erroneous remarks and take concrete actions to maintain the political foundation of China-Japan relations," Mao said last week. "Otherwise, China will have to take further measures."

DACA recipients are being arrested despite deportation protection

By VALERIE GONZALEZ Associated Press

McALLEN, Texas (AP) — Yaakub Vijandre was preparing to go to work as a mechanic when six vehicles appeared outside his Dallas-area home. Federal agents jumped out, one pointed a weapon at him, and they took him into custody.

Vijandre is a recipient of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, the Obama-era program that has shielded hundreds of thousands of people from deportation since 2012 if they were brought to the United States

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as children and generally stayed out of trouble. The Trump administration said it targeted Vijandre over social media posts. The freelance videographer and pro-Palestinian activist described his early October arrest to his attorneys, who relayed the information to reporters.

His arrest and several others this year signal a change in how the U.S. is handling DACA recipients as President Donald Trump's administration reshapes immigration policy more broadly. The change comes as immigrants have face increased vetting, including of their social media, when they apply for visas, green cards, citizenship, or to request the release of their children from federal custody. The administration also has sought to deport foreign students for participating in pro-Palestinian activism.

DACA was created to shield recipients, commonly referred to as "Dreamers," from immigration arrests and deportation. It also allows them to legally work in the U.S. Recipients reapply every two years. Previously if their status was in jeopardy, they would receive a warning and would still have a chance to fight it before immigration officers detained them and began efforts to deport them.

In response to questions about any changes, Homeland Security Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin issued a statement saying that people "who claim to be recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) are not automatically protected from deportations. DACA does not confer any form of legal status in this country." DACA recipients can lose status "for a number of reasons, including if they've committed a crime," she said.

McLaughlin also claimed in a statement that Vijandre made social media posts "glorifying terrorism," including one she said celebrated Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al-Qaida's leader in Iraq who was killed in a U.S. strike in 2006.

An attorney for Vijandre, Chris Godshall-Bennett, said Vijandre's social media activity is "clearly" protected speech. He also said the government has not provided details about the specific posts in court documents.

Vijandre is among about 20 DACA recipients who have been arrested or detained by immigration authorities since Trump took office in January, according to Home is Here, a campaign created by pro-DACA advocacy groups. The administration is seeking to end his DACA status, which could result in him being deported to the Philippines, a home he has not visited since his family came to the U.S. in 2001, when he was 14.

DACA has faced legal challenges

DACA survived the first Trump administration's attempt to rescind the program when the Supreme Court ruled in 2020 that the administration did not take the proper steps to end it.

There have been other attempts to end the program or place restrictions on recipients.

This year, the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals issued a ruling that would deny work permits for DACA recipients who live in Texas. The Trump administration recently presented its plans to a federal judge who is determining how it will work.

The administration also has issued new restrictions on commercial driver's licenses that would prevent DACA recipients and some other immigrants from getting them. Last year, 19 Republican states stripped DACA recipients' access to health insurance under the Affordable Care Act. And the number of states where immigrant students can qualify for in-state tuition has dwindled since the Justice Department began suing states this year.

"This administration might not be trying to end DACA altogether the way that they did the first time around, but they are chipping away at it," said Juliana Macedo do Nascimento, spokesperson for United We Dream, which is part of Home is Here, the coalition keeping track of public cases of DACA recipients who have been detained.

Detained DACA recipients question their arrests

Catalina "Xóchitl" Santiago Santiago, a 28-year-old activist from El Paso, Texas, was arrested in August despite showing immigration officers a valid work permit obtained through DACA.

Days later, federal officers arrested Paulo Cesar Gamez Lira as the 28-year-old father was arriving at his El Paso home with his children following a doctor's appointment. Agents dislocated his shoulder, according to his attorneys.

Both Santiago and Gamez Lira were held for over a month while their attorneys petitioned for their release. Marisa Ong, an attorney for Santiago and Gamez Lira, said the government failed to notify either of her clients of any intention to terminate their DACA status.

"DACA recipients have a constitutionally protected interest in their continued liberty," Ong said, adding that "the government cannot take away that liberty without providing some valid reason."

DACA recipients can lose their status if they are convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanors like those involving harming others, driving under the influence or drug distribution, or three or more misdemeanors. They can also lose their status if they pose a threat to national security or public safety.

DHS claimed in a statement that Santiago was previously charged with trespassing, possession of narcotics and drug paraphernalia and that Gamez Lira was previously arrested for marijuana possession.

Ong said that when attorneys sought their release "the government presented no evidence of any past misconduct by either individual."

Vijandre, the Dallas-area man who was arrested in October, remains in a Georgia detention facility. His attorneys say he received notice two weeks before his arrest that the government planned to terminate his DACA status but that he wasn't given a chance to fight it.

"I think that the administration has drawn a very clear line and at least for right now, between citizen and noncitizens, and their goal is to remove as many noncitizens from the country as possible and to make it as difficult as possible for noncitizens to enter the country," Godshall-Bennett, Vijandre's attorney, said.

Trump spares turkeys — but not his political opponents — at annual pardoning ceremony

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump didn't bring much holiday cheer Tuesday when bestowing ceremonial pardons on two Thanksgiving turkeys, dispensing more insults than goodwill at the traditional White House ritual.

He joked about sending the turkeys to an infamous prison in El Salvador that has been used to house migrants deported from the United States. He said the birds should be named Chuck and Nancy — after Democratic stalwarts Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi — but "I would never pardon those people."

Trump claimed that last year's turkey pardons, issued by President Joe Biden, were invalid because he used an autopen. "Where's Hunter?" he said, suggesting that his predecessor's son could once again face legal jeopardy.

And all of that was before Trump turned his attention to Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker, a Democrat who has resisted the White House's plans to deploy the National Guard in Chicago.

Trump said he had a joke prepared about Pritzker, but "I refuse to talk about the fact that he's a fat slob. I don't mention it."

Scattered laughter rippled through the audience, which sat under cloudy skies and an intermittent drizzle on the Rose Garden patio.

Trump eventually got around to the business at hand, which was pardoning the turkeys Gobble and Waddle. Both were spared the dinner table, but only one got the spotlight.

"Gobble, I just want to tell you this — very important — you are hereby unconditionally pardoned," Trump said. He reached over to run his hand over the feathers, saying, "Who would want to harm this beautiful bird?"

Waddle had previously been spotted in the White House briefing room.

"Waddle, want to give us a gobble?" White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt asked.

The turkey obliged.

"Very on message!" Leavitt said.

Trump used part of his ceremonial remarks to insist that the price of Thanksgiving meals was dropping under his leadership, although his numbers are misleading. Some research indicates that holiday dinners could cost more this year, a reminder of persistent frustration with inflation.

The president plans to fly south to his private Florida resort later Tuesday, a holiday interlude during what has been a turbulent and uncertain chapter of his second term.

Trump is struggling to advance a plan to end the Russian invasion of Ukraine after an earlier version faced swift criticism from European allies and even some Republicans. The U.S. military is also poised to target Venezuela with military strikes, part of an anti-drug operation that could ultimately destabilize the country's leadership.

In Washington, Trump faces the possibility of a splintering Republican coalition ahead of next year's midterm elections, which will determine control of Congress. Some members of his party already took the rare step of crossing the president by successfully pushing legislation to force the Justice Department to release more documents about the Jeffrey Epstein case.

Trump faced a setback in court this week when a federal judge tossed cases against James Comey and Letitia James, two targets of the president's retribution campaign.

Comey, a former FBI director whom Trump fired during his first term, was charged with making a false statement and obstructing Congress. James, the New York attorney general who investigated the president between his two terms, was charged with mortgage fraud.

Both pleaded not guilty and said the prosecutions were politically motivated, pointing to Trump's public demands for the Justice Department to punish his enemies.

The judge said the interim U.S. attorney, a former member of Trump's personal legal team, who obtained the indictments was illegally appointed. However, the decision was made without prejudice, so the Justice Department could try again to charge Comey and James.

The White House plans to be open for holiday tours. However, despite the arrival of a Christmas tree via horse-drawn carriage on Monday, the presidential residence will be much different this year.

Trump's decision to demolish the building's East Wing to make room for a new ballroom has turned part of the White House grounds into a construction site.

FBI seeks interviews with Democrats who urged US troops to defy illegal orders

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI and MIKE HOUSEHOLDER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic lawmakers who appeared in a social media video urging U.S. troops to defy "illegal orders" say the FBI has contacted them to begin scheduling interviews, signaling a possible inquiry into the matter.

It would mark the second investigation tied to the video, coming a day after the Pentagon said it was reviewing Democratic Sen. Mark Kelly of Arizona over potential violations of military law. The FBI and Pentagon actions come after President Donald Trump accused the lawmakers of sedition and said it is "punishable by DEATH" in a social media post.

Together, the inquiries mark an extraordinary escalation for federal law enforcement and military institutions that traditionally steer clear of partisan clashes. They also underscore the administration's willingness to push legal limits against its critics, even when they are sitting members of Congress. Lawmakers in the video urge troops to reject any illegal orders from their superiors, something they are already duty-bound to do.

"President Trump is using the FBI as a tool to intimidate and harass Members of Congress," a group of four Democratic House members said in a statement Tuesday. "Yesterday, the FBI contacted the House and Senate Sergeants at Arms requesting interviews."

Democrats call inquiry a 'scare tactic'

Michigan Sen. Elissa Slotkin, one of the six Democratic lawmakers in the video, told reporters Tuesday that "last night the counterterrorism division at the FBI sent a note to the members of Congress, saying they are opening what appears to be an inquiry against the six of us." Slotkin called it a "scare tactic by" Trump.

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"Whether you agree with the video or don't agree with the video, the question to me is: is this the appropriate response for a president of the United States to go after and seek to weaponize the federal government against those he disagrees with?" said Slotkin.

The group of four Democratic House members said in their statement that "no amount of intimidation or harassment will ever stop us from doing our jobs and honoring our Constitution."

All six of the Democratic lawmakers in the video have served in the military or intelligence community. Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska criticized both inquiries on social media, saying that accusing the lawmakers "of treason and sedition for rightfully pointing out that servicemembers can refuse illegal orders is reckless and flat-out wrong."

"The Department of Defense and FBI surely have more important priorities than this frivolous investigation," wrote Murkowski.

FBI provides no insight into interview requests

The FBI went through the top security officials for the House and Senate to request interviews with each of the six lawmakers. The lawmakers said they had no further information and the FBI has not made clear on what basis they were seeking the interviews.

The FBI declined to comment Tuesday, but Director Kash Patel, in an interview with journalist Catherine Herridge, described it as an "ongoing matter" in explaining why he could not discuss details.

Asked for his reaction to the video, Patel said, "What goes through my head is the same thing that goes through my head in any case: is there a lawful predicate to open up an inquiry and investigation, or is there not? And that decision will be made by the career agents and analysts here at the FBI."

The video at the heart of the inquiries

In the video, lawmakers said they needed troops to "stand up for our laws ... our Constitution." Kelly, who was a fighter pilot before becoming an astronaut and then retiring at the rank of captain, told troops that "you can refuse illegal orders."

After the Pentagon announced the investigation into Kelly on Monday, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth referred it to the Navy on Tuesday and requested a briefing by Dec. 10.

The lawmakers didn't mention specific circumstances in the video. But at an event Tuesday in Michigan, Slotkin pointed to the Trump administration ordering the military to blow up small boats in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean accused of ferrying drugs and continued attempts at deploying National Guard troops into U.S. cities despite some legal setbacks.

"It wasn't that there was any one incident, it was the sheer number of people coming to us and saying, 'I'm worried. I am being sent to Washington or I'm being sent to LA or Chicago, North Carolina now, and I'm concerned I'm going to be asked to do something that I don't know if I should do,'" said Slotkin. "So that's where it came from."

Troops, especially uniformed commanders, do have specific obligations to reject orders that are unlawful, if they make that determination.

Broad legal precedence also holds that just following orders — colloquially known as the "Nuremberg defense," as it was used unsuccessfully by senior Nazi officials to justify their actions under Adolf Hitler — doesn't absolve troops.

National Parks to raise fees for millions of international tourists to popular US parks

By HALLIE GOLDEN and MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The National Park Service said Tuesday it is going to start charging the millions of international tourists who visit U.S. parks each year an extra \$100 to enter some of the most popular sites, while leaving them out of fee-free days that will be reserved for American residents.

The announcement declaring "America-first entry fee policies" comes as national parks deal with the strain of a major staff reduction and severe budget cuts, along with recovering from damage during the recent government shutdown and significant lost revenue due to fees not being collected during that time.

The fee change will impact 11 national parks, including the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone and Yosemite, according to the U.S. Department of the Interior.

As part of the changes, which are set to take effect Jan. 1, foreign tourists will also see their annual parks pass price jump to \$250, while U.S. residents will continue to be charged \$80, according to the department's statement.

Interior Secretary Doug Burgum said in a post on the social platform X that the changes make sure U.S. taxpayers who support the park service "continue to enjoy affordable access, while international visitors contribute their fair share to maintaining and improving our parks for future generations!"

A White House post on X laying out the increased fees ended with the phrase, "AMERICANS FIRST."

The announcement follows a July executive order in which President Donald Trump directed the parks to increase entry fees for foreign tourists.

"There's a lot to unpack in this announcement, including many questions on its implementation – all which NPCA will raise with the Department of Interior," Kati Schmidt, a spokesperson for National Parks Conservation Association, said in an email.

The U.S. Travel Association estimated that in 2018, national parks and monuments saw more than 14 million international visitors. Yellowstone reported that in 2024, nearly 15% of its visitors were from outside the country, which was down from 30% in 2018.

The money made off the new fees will help support the national parks, including with upgrading facilities for visitors and maintenance, according to the statement.

The "resident-only patriotic fee-free days" next year include Veterans Day, which was one of the parks' eight free days open to everyone in 2025. The Department of the Interior had announced those days by saying they wanted to ensure that "everyone, no matter their zip code, can access and enjoy the benefits of green spaces and our public lands."

Trump says he's sending his envoys to see Putin and Ukrainians after fine-tuning plan to end war

By AAMER MADHANI, ISOBEL KOSHIW and KONSTANTIN TOROPIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Tuesday his plan to end the war in Ukraine has been "fine-tuned" and he's sending envoy Steve Witkoff to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Army Secretary Dan Driscoll to meet with Ukrainian officials.

Trump suggested he could eventually meet with Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, but not until further progress has been made in negotiations. Speaking to reporters on Tuesday evening aboard Air Force One, Trump said resolving the war was difficult, and described what had been a 28-point plan as a work in progress. "That was not a plan — it was a concept," Trump said.

Trump's plan for ending the nearly four-year war emerged last week. It heavily favored Russia, prompting Zelenskyy to quickly engage with American negotiators. European leaders, fearing for their own future facing Russian aggression but apparently sidelined by Trump in drawing up the proposal, scrambled to steer the negotiations toward accommodating their concerns.

Trump said he believed Witkoff would be meeting with Putin next week in Moscow, with his son-in-law Jared Kushner potentially joining the meeting. "People are starting to realize it's a good deal for both parties," Trump said.

The president played down the element of his plan that would require Ukraine to cede territory to Russia, suggesting that Russian forces were already likely to seize the land they're seeking.

"The way it's going, if you look, it's just moving in one direction," Trump said. "So eventually that's land that over the next couple of months might be gotten by Russia anyway."

At the center of Trump's plan is the call on Ukraine to concede the entirety of its eastern Donbas region, even though a vast swath of that land remains in Ukrainian control. Analysts at the independent Institute for the Study of War have estimated it would take several years for the Russian military to completely

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seize the territory, based on its current rate of advances.

Trump downplays transcript of Witkoff talks with Russian counterpart

Trump made his comments after Driscoll held talks late Monday and throughout Tuesday with Russian officials in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, to discuss the emerging proposal.

"The talks are going well and we remain optimistic," Lt. Col. Jeff Tolbert, spokesman for the Army secretary, said in a statement. Witkoff, a real estate developer turned diplomat, has been Trump's chief interlocutor with Putin, while Driscoll, who is close to Vance, has stepped up his involvement in the administration's peace push in recent days.

As the talks were taking place, Russia launched a wave of overnight attacks on Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, with at least seven people killed in strikes that hit city buildings and energy infrastructure. A Ukrainian attack on southern Russia killed three people and damaged homes, authorities said.

Trump spoke to reporters after Bloomberg News published a transcript of an Oct. 14 call between Witkoff and Putin's foreign policy adviser Yuri Ushakov where Witkoff coached his counterpart on how Putin should handle a call with Trump.

Trump downplayed Witkoff's reported approach as "a very standard form of negotiation."

But U.S. Rep. Don Bacon, a Nebraska Republican who has been critical of Trump's approach to Ukraine, said the transcript showed Witkoff favors the Russians. "He cannot be trusted to lead these negotiations. Would a Russian paid agent do less than he? He should be fired," Bacon said on social media.

Bloomberg said it reviewed a recording of the call, but did not say how it obtained access to the recording. The Associated Press has not independently verified the transcript.

Latest phase of the talks

French President Emmanuel Macron said Tuesday that peace efforts are gathering momentum and "are clearly at a crucial juncture."

He spoke after senior U.S. and Ukrainian officials met in Geneva on Sunday and a virtual "coalition of the willing" meeting of Ukraine's European allies took place on Tuesday. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio took part in both gatherings.

"Negotiations are getting a new impetus. And we should seize this momentum," he said during the video conference meeting of countries, led by France and the U.K., that could help police any ceasefire with Russia.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said of the talks: "I do think we are moving in a positive direction and indications today that in large part the majority of the text, (Zelenskyy) is indicating, can be accepted."

Oleksandr Bezv, one of the Ukrainian delegates at the Geneva talks, however, cautioned that it was "very premature to say that something is agreed upon."

In an interview with The Associated Press in Kyiv late Tuesday, he declined to discuss the specifics of any amendments to Trump's plan, but said the U.S. was aware that the strength of security guarantees for Ukraine would "define the sustainability of the deal" and was "the part making this deal real and enforceable."

Bezv earlier told the AP that the number of points in the proposed settlement was reduced, but he denied reports that the 28-point U.S. peace plan now consisted of 19 points.

"(The document) is going to continue to change. We can confirm that it was reduced to take out points not relating to Ukraine, to exclude duplicates and for editing purposes," Bezv said, adding that some points relating solely to relations between Russia and the U.S. were excluded.

Long road to peace

Zelenskyy said late Monday that "the list of necessary steps to end the war can become workable." He said he planned to discuss "sensitive" outstanding issues with Trump.

Rustem Umerov, a senior adviser to Zelenskyy, posted on X on Tuesday that Zelenskyy hoped to finalize a deal with Trump "at the earliest suitable date in November."

Russian officials have been reserved in their comments on the peace plan. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Tuesday that Moscow is in touch with U.S. officials about peace efforts.

"We expect them to provide us with a version they consider an interim one in terms of completing the phase of coordinating this text with the Europeans and the Ukrainians," Lavrov said.

European leaders have cautioned that the road to peace will be long.

'Glass rained down'

Russia fired 22 missiles of various types and more than 460 drones at Ukraine overnight, Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram. The strikes knocked out water, electricity and heat in parts of Kyiv. Images showed a large fire spreading in a nine-story residential building in Kyiv's eastern Dniproviskiy district.

Mayor Vitalii Klitschko said 20 people were wounded in Kyiv. The Russian Defense Ministry said it targeted military-industrial facilities and energy assets. The strikes were a response to Ukrainian attacks on civilian objects in Russia, the ministry said.

Liubov Petrivna, a 90-year-old resident of a damaged building in the Dniproviskiy district, told the AP that "absolutely everything" in her apartment was shattered by the strike and "glass rained down" on her.

Petrivna said that she didn't believe in the peace plan now under discussion.

"No one will ever do anything about it," she said. Russian President Vladimir Putin "won't stop until he finishes us off."

Large Ukrainian drone attack

The overnight Ukrainian drone attack on Russia's southern region of Krasnodar was "one of the longest and most massive" and wounded six people, Gov. Veniamin Kondratyev said.

Russian air defenses destroyed 249 Ukrainian drones overnight above various Russian regions and the occupied Crimean Peninsula, the Russian Defense Ministry said Tuesday.

Ukraine said that its drones and missiles struck an aviation repair plant and a drone production facility, as well as an oil refinery and an oil terminal.

It was the fourth-largest Ukrainian drone attack on Russia since the start of the war on Feb. 24, 2022, according to an AP tally.

DC Mayor Bowser announces she won't seek fourth term, as Trump's federal intervention continues

By GARY FIELDS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Muriel Bowser, the mayor of Washington, D.C., announced on Tuesday that she will not be seeking re-election next year, a decision that came as she has had to confront a federal law enforcement intervention into her city launched by President Donald Trump.

Bowser announced her decision in a video posted to social media, where she did not mention Trump or directly address his steps against the city. She applauded the cooperation with residents to make the city a better place to live and called on them to "summon our collective strength to stand tall against bullies who threaten our very autonomy while preserving Home Rule. That is our North Star."

Bowser has served three terms since being first elected in 2014, none more tumultuous than the last year, when she found herself walking a fine line between staying in Trump's good graces and responding to the concerns of constituents who said she should have pushed back more on actions taken by the president.

She was at the helm of a city that has long been reliant on the federal government. The district is granted autonomy through a limited home rule agreement passed in 1973, but federal political leaders retain significant control over local affairs, including the approval of the budget and laws passed by the D.C. Council.

The federal government's involvement in local affairs hit another level in August when, after Trump issued an emergency order targeting the city. This federalized D.C.'s police force and sent hundreds of National Guard troops there for what the administration called a crime-fighting mission. Although the emergency period has lapsed, the federal law enforcement presence is still in the city, along with National Guard members from the district and several states, despite legal action against the military deployment.

Bowser struck a balancing act between Trump and her constituents

Bowser in many ways cooperated with the administration's efforts, including having city workers clear homeless encampments and work more closely with federal immigration agents. She acknowledged that the intervention had helped reduce crime in the city, which was already on the decline, but also criticized

the deployment of the D.C. National Guard, saying those resources would be better spent on other matters. She also said the city would not cooperate with immigration enforcement operations in the city.

She faced criticism from constituents and some in her council for not standing up stronger to the Trump, who has lauded the D.C. mission as a resounding success.

Asked about Bowser's decision not to run for reelection Tuesday evening, Trump said, "I got along with her very well." Trump said that his federal intervention made the city "better."

The district, led by its attorney general, currently has a lawsuit against the administration, charging that the deployment of the National Guard is illegal. A federal judge sided with the city Nov. 20 and ordered that the deployment end. The administration filed a notice of appeal Tuesday to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Another set of plaintiffs is challenging the federal surge and the roundups being conducted by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Bowser sparred with Congress but notched achievements

The mayor, a former city council member, also spent a large part of the year trying to get the House to release about \$1 billion of the city's funding that was frozen during battles over the federal budget. In addition, the city also bore the brunt of significant cuts to the federal workforce by the Department of Government Efficiency.

"For ten years, you and I have worked together on an ambitious agenda to restore faith in our government and ensure that every D.C. resident gets the fair shot they deserve," she said in her announcement. Among her accomplishments were her role in bringing the NFL franchise back into the city, along with plans for a new stadium, as well as her part in keeping the district's NBA and NHL teams.

Bowser came under fire early this year when she announced that the "Black Lives Matter" plaza painted on the street one block from the White House would be removed in response to pressure from Republicans in Congress.

Bowser's decision opens the door for a number of possible candidates, although at least two of them, D.C. Council members Robert White Jr. and Brooke Pinto, have already announced they are running for the district's U.S. House delegate seat. Fellow council member Janeese Lewis George remains a potential candidate.

Matthew Dallek, a historian and professor of political management at George Washington University, said this past year has been one of the most intrusive and "heavy handed" in terms of the federal government's involvement "in the day to day of the city's politics and the city's life. None of it is to make an excuse for Bowser" but the city's lack of control over its own affairs has been clearly evident. Dallek called the moment "a pretty precarious time for the city."

City council member Kenyan R. McDuffie thanked Bowser in a statement and praised her efforts in housing, education, public safety and economic development.

"As we look ahead to the upcoming year for the District, I have no doubt that Mayor Bowser will continue to be a tireless partner in improving the quality of life for all residents across the city," McDuffie said.

Brazil's former President Jair Bolsonaro begins 27-year prison sentence for coup attempt

By MAURICIO SAVARESE Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — Former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro on Tuesday started his 27-year prison sentence for leading a coup attempt, to the surprise of many in the South American nation who doubted he would ever end up behind bars.

Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who has overseen the case, ruled Bolsonaro will remain in custody after being preemptively arrested on Saturday.

Supporters and detractors of the embattled leader gathered outside the federal police headquarters after the order was issued, some calling for Bolsonaro's release and others toasting to his imprisonment.

The far-right leader had been under house arrest since August and was taken in on Saturday after try-

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ing to break his ankle monitor. Bolsonaro blamed "hallucinations", a claim that de Moraes dismissed in his preemptive arrest order.

Bolsonaro will not have any contact with the few other inmates at the federal police headquarters. His 12-square-meter room has a bed, a private bathroom, air conditioning, a TV set and a desk, according to federal police. He will have free access to his doctors and lawyers, but others will have to get their access approved by the Supreme Court.

Exhausted appeals

De Moraes determined on Tuesday that Bolsonaro's defense had exhausted all appeals of his conviction. His lawyers disagree and promise to keep filing requests for house arrest due to the former leader's poor health. The Supreme Court justice has already ruled against it, but that decision could be revised if circumstances change.

"There is no legal possibility of any other appeal," de Moraes said in his decision.

Brazil's criminal law also could have allowed the 70-year-old to be transferred to a local penitentiary or to a prison room in a military facility in the capital Brasilia.

The former president and several of his allies were convicted by a panel of Supreme Court justices for attempting to overthrow Brazil's democracy following his 2022 election defeat.

The plot included plans to kill President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Vice President Geraldo Alckmin and Justice de Moraes. The plan also involved encouraging an insurrection in early 2023.

The former president was also found guilty of charges including leading an armed criminal organization and attempting the violent abolition of the democratic rule of law.

Bolsonaro has always denied wrongdoing.

Champagne and tears

Outside the federal police building, about a dozen Bolsonaro supporters dressed in yellow and green of the Brazilian flag cried foul and asked Congress to pass a bill to give the former president and his allies some kind of amnesty. Some chose to insult de Moraes, the media and Lula supporters. A few still pleaded for help from U.S. President Donald Trump against Brazil's left.

"I am outraged. This is the best president of my life, my friend. This is a great injustice," said Elaine Leandro, 61, a hard core Bolsonaro supporter who says she will come to the federal police headquarters every day until he is released. "I hate you, Alexandre de Moraes. You deserve hell."

Sao Paulo city councilor Keit Lima, 34, had very different feelings. She brought champagne and shared it with other Black women who had come from a march in Brasilia to celebrate Bolsonaro's imprisonment.

"Today we can breath and continue fighting for our democracy," Lima said. "Our democracy is young, but we want it to live long."

In other Brazilian cities, supporters prayed for the former president while detractors celebrated.

Other convictions

Two others convicted, Augusto Heleno and Paulo Sérgio Nogueira, both Army generals, were sent to a military facility in Brasilia to start serving their sentences. Former Justice Minister Anderson Torres is now imprisoned at the Papuda penitentiary, also in Brazil's capital.

Adm. Almir Garnier will serve his term at Navy facilities in Brasilia.

Bolsonaro's running mate and former Defense Minister Walter Braga Netto, another army general, will remain in prison at a military facility in Rio de Janeiro.

De Moraes also confirmed that lawmaker and former head of Brazil's intelligence agency Alexandre Ramagem is on the loose in the United States.

The judge also ordered lower house Speaker Hugo Motta to strip Ramagem of his seat.

Motta has the power to put a possible amnesty for Bolsonaro to a vote, though party leaders have said in recent months that it is very unlikely because it would be struck down later by the Supreme Court if approved.

Bolsonaro remains a key figure in Brazilian politics, despite being ineligible to run for office until at least until 2030 after a separate ruling by Brazil's top electoral court. The first day of his prison sentence should mark an extension of that deadline to 2033.

Polls show he would be a competitive candidate in next year's vote if allowed to run.

US tensions

The former president is an ally of Trump, who has called the trial of the former Brazilian leader a "witch hunt." Bolsonaro was mentioned in a July order by the U.S. administration to raise tariffs on several Brazilian exports by 50%.

Relations between the two countries have improved since, with Lula and Trump meeting in Malaysia at the ASEAN summit in October. Most of those higher tariffs have been dropped.

The U.S. also imposed sanctions on de Moraes and other Brazilian officials.

The measures in support of Bolsonaro did not have their desired effect and the trial proceeded nevertheless. Lula's popularity was boosted by the perception that he was defending Brazilian sovereignty.

Bolsonaro is not the first former president to spend time behind bars. His predecessor Michel Temer (2016-2018) and his successor Lula have also been to prison. Fernando Collor de Mello, who governed between 1990 and 1992, is currently under house arrest due to a corruption conviction.

Bolsonaro is the first to be convicted of attempting a coup.

Health care plan circulated by the White House runs into familiar GOP divisions

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A health care proposal circulated by the White House in recent days is running into the reality of Republican divisions on the issue — a familiar struggle for a party that has been trying to scrap or overhaul the Affordable Care Act for the past 15 years.

The tentative proposal from President Donald Trump would extend expiring ACA subsidies for two years while adjusting eligibility requirements for recipients. The plan has so far been met with a stony silence on Capitol Hill as Republicans debate among themselves whether to overhaul the law, tweak it or simply let the subsidies expire.

It's unclear now when the White House plan might be released, or if it will be released at all.

The Republican indecision comes as the COVID-era tax credits are set to expire Jan. 1, creating sharp premium increases for millions of Americans. Democrats who shut down the government for six weeks over the issue are demanding a straight extension with no changes, though some indicated they could support a plan similar to the one circulated by the White House.

But support may be harder to find in the GOP conference, where many lawmakers say costs are still too high and have been eager to make another run at repealing the ACA. The last effort in 2017 failed when Republicans couldn't decide on how to provide coverage to millions of Americans who depend on government-run marketplaces for their health care. It's a dilemma that persists for the party after record numbers signed up for coverage this year.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., promised a group of moderate Democrats a vote on the ACA tax credits by mid-December in exchange for their votes to end the government shutdown. But it's unclear, so far, whether that arrangement will lead to a solution.

Bipartisan compromise?

Health care has long been one of the most politically fraught topics on Capitol Hill, so a bipartisan compromise seems unlikely. But the coming price spikes have motivated some lawmakers to look for points of agreement.

Republican Sen. Thom Tillis of North Carolina said last week that he hopes the subsidies are extended.

"I'm sure some of my colleagues will be mad at me for saying this — if we don't address the subsidies issue in December, I don't think it's going to get addressed next year," Tillis said, adding that Democratic campaigns will be "just churning up all the very sympathetic stories" if it isn't fixed.

The draft White House proposal would put new income limits on the tax credits — at 700 percent of the federal poverty level, according to two people with knowledge of the proposal who requested anonymity to discuss it. The White House would also require those on Obamacare, regardless of the type of coverage,

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to pay some sort of premium for their plans. That would effectively end zero-premium plans for those with lower incomes, addressing a concern from Republicans who say the program has enabled fraud.

Some Democrats have suggested they are open to those ideas as a part of broader negotiations. "I'm glad the president is reportedly considering a serious proposal," said New Hampshire Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, one of the Democrats who voted to end the shutdown.

Some Republicans have signaled support as well. Nebraska Rep. Mike Flood, the chairman of the business-oriented Republican Main Street Caucus, said in a statement that the group supports "President Trump's ongoing efforts to address the ACA tax credit cliff with an extension."

Several bipartisan bills in the House would extend the ACA credits for two years, with changes such as income limits for the enhanced credit. "I think two years is really the sweet spot where everybody is OK," said Pennsylvania Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, a co-chair of the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus.

Premium spikes on Jan. 1

Still, House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., has declined to say whether he will allow a vote on a health care bill. Many other members of his GOP conference want to see the subsidies eliminated or the underlying law overhauled. In addition, Thune and other Republicans have said they want new language on abortion restrictions if they pass an extension — a dealbreaker for Democrats.

If Congress doesn't act, the enhanced premium tax credits that have helped many Americans pay for Affordable Care Act health insurance plans will disappear. And premiums could more than double for subsidized enrollees, according to an analysis by the health care research nonprofit KFF.

Signups for next year's insurance began on Nov. 1, meaning that many Americans are already planning for the higher costs. Democrats who forced the shutdown at the beginning of October had hoped to negotiate an extension before open enrollment began.

"When people's monthly payments spike next year, they will know it was Republicans that made it happen," Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said last week.

Republicans could go at it alone

As Democrats elevated the health care issue during the shutdown, some Republicans saw an opportunity to renew their efforts to overhaul the law. GOP lawmakers in the House and Senate have been meeting to find consensus, though they haven't found it yet.

Among the GOP ideas are separate proposals from Florida Sen. Rick Scott and Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy to use savings accounts to either shop for insurance or defray out-of-pocket costs. Scott's legislation would create what he called "Trump Health Freedom Accounts" and make some changes to the health care law, including by allowing consumers to shop across state lines. Cassidy's narrower bill would create new savings accounts just to replace the enhanced subsidies that are expiring.

The draft of the White House plan, meanwhile, would allow those in lower-tier plans, such as the bronze-level or catastrophic plans, to put money into health savings accounts.

Those proposals are unlikely to win over Democrats. Schumer said last week that the savings accounts "will go nowhere in the Senate."

Skeptical that the two parties will ever agree, some Republicans have suggested that they try to pass a health care package using budget maneuvers similar to Trump's "Big Beautiful Bill" of tax and spending cuts. If it worked, they could pass the legislation with zero Democratic votes — a politically risky strategy that could take months, well into the midterm election year.

It all depends on Trump

Some Republicans may be waiting for clear direction from Trump, who has been sending mixed signals about what he wants.

For several weeks, Trump appeared to be backing the savings accounts on social media, posting as recently as Nov. 18 that "THE ONLY HEALTHCARE I WILL SUPPORT OR APPROVE IS SENDING THE MONEY DIRECTLY BACK TO THE PEOPLE, WITH NOTHING GOING TO THE BIG, FAT, RICH INSURANCE COMPANIES, WHO HAVE MADE \$TRILLIONS, AND RIPPED OFF AMERICA LONG ENOUGH."

He added: "Congress, do not waste your time and energy on anything else."

Trump reiterated that message Tuesday evening. "Don't give the money to the insurance companies," he told reporters Tuesday evening. "You give the money to the people."

Some families are 'adopting' turkeys for Thanksgiving instead of eating them

By HALLIE GOLDEN and THOMAS PEIPERT Associated Press

ERIE, Colo. (AP) — "Gus" the turkey has been spending Thanksgiving week much differently than millions of other unlucky gobblers across the U.S.

As he trots in a sprawling animal sanctuary on the Colorado plains, he is stopped every few steps by staff who pet him, hug him or even give him a peck on his red face. Gus has been there since 2023 after being pardoned by the governor.

"What do you think? Do you want to do snuggles today?" Lanette Cook, education and engagement manager at the Luvin Arms Animal Sanctuary in Erie, says to Gus.

Gus is among a growing number of turkeys that are being "adopted" instead of being covered in gravy and eaten at Thanksgiving dinner tables.

An increasing number of farm animal sanctuaries across the country have started promoting this alternative version of Thanksgiving in which families "adopt" turkeys and donate money to their lifelong care. In return, they receive photos, certificates and sometimes even one-on-one visits with the birds.

The goal: Spare a few of the tens of millions of turkeys slaughtered this time of year, many of which are raised in what animal rights advocates say are inhumane conditions in factory farms.

At Luvin Arms, a \$25 donation comes with a certificate, photo and either a virtual or in-person visit, explained Kelly Nix, its executive director. Since launching the program in 2022, the sanctuary, located about 25 miles (40 kilometers) north of Denver, has seen the number of sponsorships double every year. And this year they're on track to reach their goal of \$18,000, she said.

Luvin Arms' website features Gus and a gaggle of turkeys along with their personality traits (Gus is very talkative!) as part of its sponsor-a-turkey program. It encourages the public to donate for the birds for Thanksgiving and maybe even rethink their holiday traditions.

The funds have helped pay for extending the turkeys' outdoor pasture area, along with feeding and rescuing more turkeys. They've helped with veterinary bills, which can sometimes cost thousands of dollars because of the medical complications that arise for turkeys that come from factory farms, which breed them to grow very big in a short period of time, said Nix. In the wild, turkeys tend to live an average of three or four years, according to the National Wild Turkey Federation.

But the sanctuary says the program is about more than just the turkeys or money. There's also an important educational factor, including the conditions in factory farms and that turkeys are more than just centerpieces.

"Even if it makes you stop and double think what it is you're about to do," said Nix. "Or that you're like, 'wow this is a life of a sentient being,' for us that's a conversation starter."

Farm Sanctuary, which is located in New York and California, is believed to be the first to launch this type of turkey adoption program, starting in 1986. Gene Baur, its president and co-founder, said initially the public was confused about the program and the concept of rescuing farm animals altogether.

In the nearly four decades since, the sanctuary has rescued thousands of turkeys. And the public has not only caught on to the concept but in some years has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars, Baur said.

"We grow up with certain traditions. But just because something is a tradition doesn't mean that it needs to remain as a tradition," said Baur.

Lizzie Parra's family has been adopting a turkey from the organization since 2021, ever since they visited a sanctuary in Pittsburgh and a turkey followed them around, seemingly desperate to be a part of their tour group.

She, her husband and 11-year-old son are vegan and so always leave turkey off their Thanksgiving table.

But Parra said the adoption program gives them a chance to help save turkeys while raising awareness. "This is just an opportunity for us to tell people that they can, at least for one meal, kind of make the same compassionate choice," she said.

Barn Sanctuary has had a similar program since 2023 in Chelsea, Michigan. Chase DeBack, its advocacy, education and engagement coordinator, said it's about shining a more positive light on the birds and their distinct personalities.

He rattles off some of the organization's residents like they're close friends: Lewis isn't much of a people person. Sabrina and Hilda are always interested in what people are bringing into the coop.

"We really wanted to shine a light on the unique personalities that turkeys have and how loving and caring they are for humans and for each other," said DeBack.

Israel says it has received another set of human remains from militants in Gaza

By WAFAA SHURAF, MEGAN JANETSKY and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel on Tuesday said it received human remains turned over by Palestinian militants and forensic experts were trying to determine if they belonged to one of the three remaining hostages held in Gaza.

The handover was the latest under a fragile ceasefire that began in October and has held despite accusations by both sides of violations.

The Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad said it found the remains earlier this week in Nuseirat, a refugee camp in central Gaza.

The ceasefire requires Hamas to release all hostages, and Palestinian militants have returned 25 hostage bodies so far. The remaining hostages are two Israelis and a man from Thailand. In return, Israel has released the bodies of 330 Palestinians to Gaza. Most remain unidentified.

Israel has accused Hamas of stalling and threatened to resume military operations or withhold humanitarian aid if all remains are not returned. Hamas says it has not been able to reach all the remains of hostages because they are buried under rubble from Israel's two-year offensive.

Netanyahu's office asserted that the delay amounted to a ceasefire violation.

A rising death toll in Gaza

While daily fighting has stopped, the death toll has gone up as Israel strikes parts of Gaza in response to what it says are ceasefire violations by Hamas.

Gaza's health ministry on Tuesday said Israeli forces killed three people east of Khan Younis in the south. It said the bodies were brought to hospitals along with 14 others recovered from the rubble over the past 24 hours. Those brought the death toll to 345 Palestinians since the ceasefire took effect, the ministry said.

On Tuesday night, Israel's military said it killed five militants emerging from a tunnel in Rafah in southern Gaza and another who crossed into an Israeli-held part of northern Gaza and approached troops.

The war began with the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, that killed some 1,200 people and took over 250 hostages. Almost all of the hostages or their remains have been returned in ceasefires or other deals.

Gaza's Health Ministry says 69,775 Palestinians have been killed and 170,863 injured in Israel's retaliatory offensive. It does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its figures, but has said women and children make up a majority of those killed. The ministry is staffed by medical professionals and maintains detailed records viewed as generally reliable by independent experts.

Meanwhile, families in Gaza confronted heavy winter rains that worsened dire humanitarian conditions for many of the 2 million people displaced by the war.

Planning for Gaza stabilization force

Planning was underway for an international stabilization force mandated by the U.N. last week during the approval of Washington's 20-point blueprint to secure and govern Gaza.

Indonesia said Tuesday it was preparing troops. Officials said the final deployment would await an of-

ficial order from Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, who has said his country was ready to deploy 20,000 peacekeepers to Gaza at any time.

Gen. Agus Subianto, chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces, told reporters the contingent would be a brigade consisting of health, engineering and mechanized support battalions, and that the military was preparing other support, including three hospital warships, a C-130 Hercules military transport aircraft and a helicopter.

The U.S. plan also includes a transitional authority to be overseen by President Donald Trump and envisions a possible future path to an independent Palestinian state.

Seeking visits for detained Palestinians

Israeli human rights organizations HaMoked, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel filed a petition on Tuesday to Israel's high court calling on authorities to resume family visits for Palestinian prisoners suspected of being militants.

Family visits were suspended at the beginning of the war in Gaza. Since then, the number of Palestinians dying in Israeli custody has surged, and prison populations have doubled. Rights groups allege systematic violence and denial of medical care as key causes of deaths.

HaMoked attorney Daniel Shenhar said "Israel has almost completely cut off Palestinian prisoners and detainees from the outside world."

A popemobile for Gaza

The Catholic charity Caritas on Tuesday unveiled the late Pope Francis' so-called popemobile in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Per Francis' request, it has been transformed into a mobile health clinic and is supposed to be sent to Gaza to help care for children.

"This vehicle stands as a testament. The world has not forgotten the children of Gaza," said Cardinal Anders Arborelius, the bishop of Stockholm, Sweden.

Judge gives Justice Department a day to detail Ghislaine Maxwell trial materials to be released

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and LARRY NEUMEISTER undefined

NEW YORK (AP) — A federal judge in Manhattan is demanding more information from the Justice Department as he weighs its request to unseal records from the sex trafficking case against Jeffrey Epstein's longtime confidante Ghislaine Maxwell.

Judge Paul A. Engelmayer on Tuesday ordered the Justice Department to tell him what materials it plans to publicly release that were subject to secrecy orders in the British socialite's case.

The deadline: Noon on Wednesday.

Engelmayer's order came after the Justice Department on Monday asked for his permission to release grand jury records, exhibits and discovery materials in the Maxwell case.

Engelmayer said government lawyers must file a letter on the case docket describing materials it wants to release "in sufficient detail to meaningfully inform victims" what it plans to make public.

Maxwell was convicted in 2021 by a federal jury of sex trafficking for helping recruit some of Epstein's underage victims. She is serving a 20-year prison sentence.

Epstein, a millionaire money manager known for socializing with celebrities, politicians, billionaires and the academic elite, killed himself in jail a month after his 2019 arrest.

Engelmayer had already notified victims and Maxwell that they can respond next month to Justice Department's request to release materials before he decides whether to grant it.

The Justice Department said it was seeking the court's approval to release materials to comply with the Epstein Files Transparency Act, passed by Congress and signed into law last week by President Donald Trump. It calls for the release of grand jury and discovery materials in the case.

The request, along with an identical one for grand jury transcripts from Epstein's case, was among the first public indications that the Justice Department was trying to comply with the transparency act, which

requires it to release Epstein-related files in a searchable format by Dec. 19.

Engelmayer did not preside over the trial, but was assigned to the case after the trial judge, Alison J. Nathan, was elevated to the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Discovery materials subject to secrecy orders are likely to include victim interviews and other materials that previously would have been only viewed by lawyers or Maxwell prior to her trial.

Engelmayer said in an order Monday that Maxwell and victims of Maxwell and Epstein can respond by Dec. 3 to the government's request to make materials public. The government must respond to their filings by Dec. 10. The judge said he will rule "promptly thereafter."

Lawyers for victims did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment. A spokesperson for federal prosecutors declined to comment.

Judge Richard M. Berman, who presided over the Epstein case before his death, issued an order on Tuesday allowing victims and Epstein's estate to respond to the Justice Department's unsealing request by Dec. 3. He said the government can respond to any submissions by Dec. 8.

Berman said he would make his "best efforts to resolve this motion promptly."

Prosecutors will retry man in death of Etan Patz, whose 1979 disappearance spotlighted missing kids

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A notorious 1979 missing-child case is headed to trial a third time after New York prosecutors vowed Tuesday to retry the man whose murder conviction was recently overturned in the disappearance of 6-year-old Etan Patz.

In a case that has long been gnarled by time and uncertainty, a new set of prosecutors now will need to bring back witnesses, elicit memories and try to persuade another jury that Pedro Hernandez lured and killed the boy as he walked to his school bus stop in New York City.

"After thorough review, the district attorney has determined that the available, admissible evidence supports prosecuting" Hernandez on murder and kidnapping charges, Manhattan Assistant District Attorney Sarah Marquez wrote, adding that prosecutors "are prepared to proceed."

Hernandez's lawyers said they were deeply disappointed by prosecutors' decision.

"We remain convinced that Mr. Hernandez is an innocent man. But we will be prepared for trial and will present an even stronger defense," attorneys Harvey Fishbein and Alice Fontier said in a statement.

Hernandez is due in court Monday for a discussion of next steps. Under federal court rulings, jury selection for his retrial must begin by June 1, or he must be released from prison.

Etan's father, Stan Patz, declined to comment when reached by phone Tuesday. He had hailed Hernandez' now-overturned conviction as "some measure of justice for our wonderful little boy, Etan."

Hernandez, now 64, worked at a nearby corner store when Etan disappeared on May 25, 1979. It was the first day his mother let him make the roughly block-long trip to the bus stop by himself. The first-grader's body was never found, but he was legally declared dead in 2001, at his family's request.

His case fueled a national focus on child disappearances and abductions. Etan was one of the first to appear on milk cartons, and his parents helped successfully advocate for a national hotline and other steps to help report and rescue vanished youngsters. The anniversary of Etan's disappearance became National Missing Children's Day.

The case affected parenting, as well as policing, contributing to a cultural shift toward tighter supervision of American kids.

Hernandez didn't become a suspect until decades later, when authorities learned that he had made various, somewhat inconsistent statements to confidants over the years about having killed a child or person in New York.

Hernandez then told police in 2012 he had strangled Etan after offering him a soda and enticing him into the store basement. "Something just took over me," Hernandez told authorities on video.

With no physical evidence, the confession was crucial. His lawyers said it was delusional, false and made

under pressure from police bent on closing a decades-old case.

Hernandez had been diagnosed with a mental disorder, has a very low IQ and was on antipsychotic medication. Police questioned him for about seven hours without reading him his rights or recording the interaction — those steps were taken only after, according to police, he implicated himself for the first time.

Hernandez's first trial ended in a hung jury, because of one member's misgivings about the defendant's mental health and hourslong police questioning. Hernandez was convicted at a 2017 retrial and was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison.

A federal appeals court ruled in July that his conviction was tainted by a judge's "clearly wrong" response to a 2017 jury question about Hernandez's confessions.

The question was whether jurors had to disregard Hernandez's recorded confessions if they concluded the first, unrecorded admissions were coerced. The jury was told the answer was simply "no."

It should have been "maybe," with an explanation of options and legal principles for assessing such situations, the appeals judges said. They ordered his release unless his retrial begins "within a reasonable period," leaving a lower court judge to specify how long. She then set the deadline at June 1.

Death of Florida teenager on Carnival cruise ship ruled a homicide

By KATE PAYNE and JEFF MARTIN Associated Press

The death of a Florida teenager on a Carnival cruise ship earlier this month has been ruled a homicide, the latest development in a case that has drawn international attention and sparked intense speculation on social media.

Anna Kepner's cause of death was "mechanical asphyxia," according to a copy of her death certificate obtained by ABC News, which said the 18-year-old "was mechanically asphyxiated by other person(s)."

Mechanical asphyxia is when an object or physical force stops someone from breathing, according to Stephen Nelson, a chief medical examiner in Central Florida who is not involved in the case.

"In some way, shape or form, your airway has been cut off," said Nelson, a former chair of Florida's Medical Examiners Commission.

A family vacation that ended in tragedy

A high school cheerleader from Florida's Space Coast who was set to graduate next year, Kepner had been traveling on the Carnival Horizon ship with her father, stepmother, her stepmother's two children and her grandparents.

The night before she was found dead, Kepner had spent time with her grandparents in the ship's casino, her grandmother Barbara Kepner told ABC News.

"She said, 'Meemaw, I love you guys. I'll see you. ... I'll see you later,'" Barbara Kepner recalled. "We never saw her again after that."

The next morning, a medical alert blared out over the ship's broadcast system, directing first responders to the room Kepner was sharing with two other teens, including a younger stepbrother.

A room attendant found Kepner's body "concealed under the bed," according to her grandmother.

"I just screamed. I couldn't stop screaming," Barbara Kepner said.

Teenager's stepbrother identified as a suspect

Kepner's death aboard the ship that sailed from Miami has remained shrouded in mystery with the FBI and medical examiner's office in South Florida refusing to disclose any information about the case for weeks.

The teen's 16-year-old stepbrother has been identified as a suspect in her death, according to court documents filed by his parents.

The disclosures — contained in motions filed in an ongoing custody dispute — offer the clearest public indication that federal investigators are scrutinizing a member of the victim's own blended family.

As of Tuesday, a final autopsy report had not been released and the Miami-Dade County Medical Examiner's Office has not responded to recent messages left by the AP.

Kepner's time of death was 11:17 a.m. on Nov. 7, according to the medical examiner's office, and the ship returned to PortMiami on Nov. 8 as scheduled.

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Carnival Horizon cruises the Western Caribbean with stops in Cozumel, Grand Cayman, Montego Bay and Ocho Rios, according to itineraries posted on the company's website.

Lawyers who practice maritime law say they're not surprised that nearly three weeks have passed with no charges filed in the case.

"When I've had international marine deaths — deaths on a vessel in international waters in the high seas — it can take quite some time to get the final autopsy reports," said Houston attorney Marcus Spagnoletti. "It's not unusual."

A 'highly suspicious' death

Nelson, the medical examiner, said he considers Kepner's death "highly, highly suspicious" and said the reports that her body was concealed support the homicide finding.

"The concealment part alone is very troubling," Nelson said.

Kepner's family has been told that preliminary information indicates there were no signs of sexual assault and that there did not appear to be drugs or alcohol in Anna's system, ABC News reported.

Nelson, who has not been briefed on the case, said there are a range of deaths that can be defined as asphyxia, including drowning, strangulation and hanging.

The language stating that Kepner "was mechanically asphyxiated by other person(s)" is fairly standard language, Nelson said, and an acknowledgment that Kepner had been sharing a room with other people.

"It would be up to law enforcement to narrow down what role, if any, each of those other people in the room played," Nelson said.

The challenges of a floating crime scene

Determining who has the authority over a criminal investigation can be complicated since cruise ships are registered in one country but often travel through many others, all while carrying thousands of passengers and crew members from around the world, according to the FBI.

On the open ocean where U.S. law, international law and the laws of other nations might be involved, cooperation is critical to any investigation.

The nature of a floating crime scene can also make investigations challenging because it can leave a small window of time to investigate before the ship departs on its next voyage.

"You have a short amount of time to do the best you can to solve this case or collect all the evidence you need to solve this case and then your crime scene leaves," FBI Special Agent Matt Parker said in the FBI document.

Preserving the integrity of the crime scene can also be a challenge, "given that law enforcement wouldn't even have had access to the crime scene until they were in port," said David Edelstein, a South Florida lawyer.

"They don't have the same safeguards that they do when law enforcement is in charge of the crime scene," he said. "It's really imperative that the scene be secured, otherwise the evidence could be contaminated."

Crimes on cruise ships

A federal law, the Cruise Vessel Security and Safety Act, requires that most cruise ships operating out of U.S. ports report certain types of serious crime to the FBI.

In 2023, the FBI received 180 reports of alleged criminal activity on cruises, ranging from thefts to sexual and physical assaults to missing persons cases, the agency said. No suspicious deaths were reported during the period, according to data from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

"They're almost like small cities, so anything that could occur in a small city could conceivably happen onboard one of these boats, including violent crimes," Edelstein said. ____

Martin reported from Atlanta. Payne, who reported from Tallahassee, Florida, is a corps member for The Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

Stocks climb on hopes for lower interest rates as Dow rallies 660 points

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. stock market climbed again Tuesday on hopes for a coming cut to interest rates.

The S&P 500 rose 0.9% after breaking out of a morning lull and is back within 1.8% of its all-time high. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rallied 664 points, or 1.4%, and the Nasdaq composite gained 0.7%.

Stocks got a boost from easing yields in the bond market. Lower interest rates can cover up many sins in financial markets, including prices going too high, and hopes are strong that the Federal Reserve will cut its main interest rate at its next meeting to juice the economy further.

A raft of mixed economic data on Tuesday left traders betting on a nearly 83% probability that the Fed will cut in December, according to data from CME Group. That's roughly the same as a day before and up sharply from the coin flip's chance that they saw just a week ago.

One of Tuesday's reports said that shoppers bought less at U.S. retailers in September than economists expected. Another said confidence among U.S. consumers worsened by more in November than expected, a second signal that the economy could potentially use the help of lower interest rates.

Easier rates can boost the economy by encouraging households and companies to borrow more and investors to pay higher prices for investments than they would otherwise.

A third report, meanwhile, said inflation at the wholesale level was a touch worse in September than economists expected, but a closely tracked underlying trend was slightly better. That's important because lower interest rates can make inflation worse, and high inflation is the main deterrent that could keep the Fed from cutting rates.

After taking all the data together, economists suggested the Fed and its chair, Jerome Powell, could be leaning toward cutting rates on Dec. 10. The Fed has already cut rates twice this year in hopes of shoring up the slowing job market.

"Taking a pause on rate cuts would probably do more damage to sentiment than a cut would help," according to Brian Jacobsen, chief economist at Annex Wealth Management, who also said "Powell doesn't need to be the Grinch that stole Christmas."

Easier interest rates can give particularly big boosts to smaller companies, because many of them need to borrow to grow. The Russell 2000 index of the smallest U.S. stocks jumped 2.1% to lead the market.

Elsewhere on Wall Street, several retailers leaped after delivering stronger profits for the summer than analysts expected.

Abercrombie & Fitch soared 37.5% after the apparel seller reported a better profit than expected. It also raised the bottom end of its forecasted range for revenue and profit over the full year.

Kohl's surged 42.5% after reporting a profit for the latest quarter, when analysts were expecting a loss. Best Buy rose 5.3% after boosting its profit forecast for the full year following a better-than-expected third quarter, citing strength across computing, gaming and mobile phones.

Dick's Sporting Goods erased an early drop of 4% to add 0.2%. It raised its forecast for results at its Dick's stores, though its purchase of Foot Locker is requiring some work. Executive Chairman Ed Stack said the company is "cleaning out the garage" at Foot Locker by clearing inventory, closing poorly performing stores and making other moves.

Swings also continued in the artificial-intelligence industry, which has battled concerns that too many dollars are pouring into data centers and may not produce the revolution of bigger profits and productivity that proponents are predicting.

Alphabet rose another 1.5%, continuing a strong run on excitement about its recently released Gemini AI model. Chinese giant Alibaba, meanwhile, saw its stock that trades in the United States fall 2.3% after losing an early gain. It reported stronger revenue than analysts expected for the latest quarter thanks in part to the AI boom, but its overall profit fell short of forecasts.

Some chip companies dropped sharply following a report from The Information that Meta Platforms

is in talks to spend billions of dollars on AI chips from Alphabet instead of them. Nvidia sank 2.6% and Advanced Micro Devices dropped 4.1%.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 60.76 points to 6,765.88. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rallied 664.18 to 47,112.45, and the Nasdaq composite gained 153.59 to 23,025.59.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury eased to 4.00% from 4.04% late Monday.

In stock markets abroad, indexes rose across Europe and Asia. Germany's DAX returned 1%, and stocks in Shanghai climbed 0.9% for two of the world's bigger moves.

24 schoolgirls abducted from Kebbi in Nigeria have been rescued, president says

By TUNDE OMOLEHIN, OPE ADETAYO and MARK BANCHEREAU Associated Press

SOKOTO, Nigeria (AP) — All 24 schoolgirls held by assailants following a mass abduction last week from a school in northwestern Nigeria have been rescued, the country's president announced Tuesday.

A total of 25 girls were abducted Nov. 17 from the Government Girls Comprehensive Secondary School in Kebbi state's Maga town, but one of them was able to escape the same day, the school's principal said. The remaining 24 were all rescued, according to a statement from President Bola Tinubu, though no details were released about the rescue.

"I am relieved that all the 24 girls have been accounted for. Now, we must put as a matter of urgency more boots on the ground in the vulnerable areas to avert further incidents of kidnapping," the statement quoted Tinubu as saying.

The attack in Kebbi was among a spate of recent mass abductions in Nigeria, including a raid Friday on the Saint Mary's School in north-central Niger state in which more than 300 students and staff from the Catholic school were abducted. Fifty students escaped over the weekend.

Musa Rabi Magaji, principal of the primarily Muslim school in Kebbi, told The Associated Press that all of the girls had been released but that they were still in the custody of authorities. He had no immediate details of their condition.

Abdulkarim Abdullahi, whose two daughters aged 12 and 13 were among those abducted, said authorities told him the girls were being taken to the state capital of Birnin Kebbi.

"I am excited to receive the news of their freedom, the past few days have been difficult for me and my family, especially their mother," Abdullahi said in a telephone interview. "I will wait to see from the government about their wellbeing, but I can't wait to see them in good health."

On Tuesday, police said gunmen abducted 10 people in a community in central Nigeria's Kwara state. The state's police spokesperson Adetoun Ejire-Adeyemi said the attack took place in the village of Isapa, which is only 19 kilometers (12 miles) from Eruku, where 38 worshippers were kidnapped during a deadly church attack last week. The 38 have since been freed, Kwara Gov. AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq said in a statement on Sunday.

No group has claimed responsibility for the recent abductions, but analysts and locals say gangs of bandits often target schools, travelers and remote villagers in kidnappings for ransoms. The gangs have used kidnapping for ransom as one way of dominating remote communities with little government and security presence.

Authorities say the bandits are mostly former herders who have taken up arms against farming communities after clashes between them over strained resources.

School kidnappings have come to define insecurity in Africa's most populous nation, and armed gangs often see schools as "strategic" targets to draw more attention. At least 1,500 students have been seized in Nigeria since the famous kidnapping of the Chibok schoolgirls more than a decade ago, and many of the children were released only after ransoms were paid.

The kidnappings are happening as U.S. President Donald Trump has claimed that Christians are being persecuted in Nigeria, although attacks have affected both Christians and Muslims.

Arrests are rare and ransom payments are common in many of the hot spots in northern Nigeria.

Slender Man attacker won't fight extradition to Wisconsin after fleeing group home

By TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — The Wisconsin woman who won release from a mental institution after almost killing her sixth grade classmate in the name of horror villain Slender Man only to flee the state weeks later won't fight extradition from Illinois.

Morgan Geysler agreed not to contest her transfer from jail in Cook County, Illinois, to Wisconsin during a hearing Tuesday, a court spokesperson said. Wisconsin authorities now have 30 days to pick her up.

Wisconsin health officials could revoke Geysler's conditional release and send her back to the facility where she spent most of the past eight years. She also could face new charges in connection with her escape.

Escape to Illinois

According to police, Geysler cut off her GPS monitoring bracelet on Saturday evening and fled her Madison group home with a 43-year-old companion. Police found them Sunday evening sleeping on a sidewalk outside a truck stop in Posen, Illinois, a village of 5,300 people about 25 miles (40 kilometers) south of Chicago, and arrested them.

Police have identified Geysler's friend as male, but Geysler can be heard on officers' body camera footage during their arrests saying that the individual is transgender and refers to the person as "she."

Her friend has been charged with trespassing and obstruction, but The Associated Press isn't naming the companion because the person hasn't been charged with aiding Geysler's escape. The AP's attempts to contact that person have been unsuccessful.

The companion did call WKOW-TV on Monday, however, saying the two became friends at church and had seen each other daily for the past month. Geysler decided to flee because she was afraid her group home would no longer allow them to see each other, the person said.

"She ran because of me," the friend told the television station.

'You're not wanted for murder, right?'

Geysler and her companion took a bus overnight into Illinois, the friend said. The Posen officers' body camera footage shows Geysler and her friend shivering in the cold outside the truck stop as officers try to ascertain their names and where they're from. Geysler does most of the talking while her friend gathers their belongings and places them in a backpack, saying only "south" when asked where they're from and giving officers a fake name. Her companion initially refused to give a name.

As officers threaten to arrest them, Geysler clutches a stuffed dog toy and clings to her companion's arm. When officers separate them, she insists that her friend doesn't know Geysler's name or what she's done.

When Geysler refuses to give her real name, an officer asks her: "You're not wanted for murder, right?"

Geysler repeatedly begs the officers to let her companion go. Pressed by officers, Geysler says: "I did something really wrong."

Geysler finally writes her real name on an officer's notepad. As they're running her for warrants, she tries to go to her friend, but an officer pushes her back.

"Let me say goodbye, please," Geysler says. "I'll never see her again."

After they're led into squad cars, one of the officers remarks: "I hope she didn't commit a homicide. The way she's talking, she's saying it's really, really bad."

The footage shows another officer discovering a notebook in the couple's bags entitled "Homeless Couples Guidebook."

Companion: Geysler trying to move beyond Slender Man attack

Geysler's friend told WKOW that they understand each other and communicate in a "really good, healthy way" and she had explained her past.

"I was like, 'I don't hate you. I think you're clearly not that person anymore. You're trying very hard to move away from it. That much is obvious,'" the companion said, adding later that Geysler was going to flee the group home with or without the friend and the person chose to go with her because Geysler wasn't

going to make it on her own.

Stabbing meant to please horror character

Geyser and her friend, Anissa Weier, lured one of their classmates, Payton Leutner, to a Waukesha park in 2014. Geyser stabbed Leutner 19 times, narrowly missing her heart, while Weier cheered her on. All three girls were 12 years old at the time. Leutner barely survived.

Geyser and Weier later told investigators they attacked Leutner in hopes of impressing Slender Man and becoming his servants. They said they were afraid Slender Man would hurt their families if they didn't carry out the attack.

Slender Man was created online by Eric Knudson in 2009 as a mysterious figure photo-edited into everyday images of children at play. He grew into a popular boogeyman, appearing in video games, online stories and a 2018 movie.

Both Geyser and Weier were ultimately committed to a state mental institution — Geyser for 40 years and Weier for 25. Wisconsin law allows people committed to state institutions to petition for release. Weier earned conditional release in 2021. Geyser, now 23, won conditional release this past September after four requests and was placed in the group home.

Dismissal of Comey, James cases won't be the final word. Here's what the path ahead may look like

By ERIC TUCKER and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge's dismissal of criminal cases against former FBI Director James Comey and New York Attorney Letitia James, two political foes of President Donald Trump, won't be the final word on the matter.

The Justice Department says it plans to immediately appeal a pair of rulings that held that Lindsey Halligan was illegally appointed interim U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia. It also has the ability to try to refile the cases, though whether it can successfully secure fresh indictments through a different prosecutor is unclear, as is whether any new indictments could survive the crush of legal challenges that would invariably follow.

A look at the possible next steps:

What exactly did the rulings say?

At issue is the slapdash way the Trump administration raced to put Halligan in charge of one of the Justice Department's most elite offices. A White House aide with no prior experience as a federal prosecutor, Halligan was named interim U.S. attorney in September after the veteran prosecutor who held the job, Erik Siebert, was effectively forced out amid Trump administration pressure to charge Comey and James.

U.S. attorneys, top federal prosecutors who oversee regional Justice Department outposts across the country, are typically nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate, though attorneys general do have the authority to directly appoint interim U.S. attorneys who can serve in the job for 120 days.

But lawyers for Comey and James argued that the law empowers only one such temporary appointment and that, after that, federal judges in the district have say over who fills the vacancy until a Senate-confirmed U.S. attorney can be installed.

Since Halligan replaced an interim U.S. attorney who had already served for more than 120 days, the lawyers said, her appointment was invalid and the indictments she secured must be dismissed as a result.

U.S. District Judge Cameron McGowan Currie overwhelmingly agreed. Currie, an appointee of President Bill Clinton who was assigned to hear the dispute despite serving in South Carolina, not only dismissed the cases but also concluded that Halligan had been serving illegally in her position since the day she was sworn in.

Could the Justice Department appeal?

Yes, and Attorney General Pam Bondi indicated that the department would do exactly that.

Any appeal would first be considered by the Richmond, Virginia-based 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, but theoretically could go all the way up to the Supreme Court and present a fresh constitutional test about

the Justice Department's appointment authority.

Interestingly, Currie implied that her interpretation of the law might be well-received by at least one current conservative member of the Supreme Court.

In a footnote, she cited a 1986 legal memo from Samuel Alito, then a deputy assistant attorney general in the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, that concluded that the Justice Department could not make another temporary appointment after a first 120-day period expired.

Can the cases be filed again?

Since the cases were dismissed "without prejudice," the Justice Department is clearly able to seek a new indictment against James using a different prosecutor with lawful authority to present to the grand jury.

The question, however, is much trickier in Comey's case. It's complicated by the fact that the five-year statute of limitations — or the limited time in which charges can be filed — expired at the end of the September, just days after Halligan raced to present to the grand jury.

Federal law allows prosecutors to return a new indictment within six months of dismissal even after the statute of limitations has passed. But Comey's lawyers said they will argue the judge's ruling makes the indictment "void," and therefore "the statute of limitations has run and there can be no further indictment."

The judge noted in her ruling that the deadline had passed and suggested that the statute of limitations is not tolled — or paused — in the case of an "invalid indictment." Quoting from an earlier ruling, the judge wrote that "if the earlier indictment is void, there is no legitimate peg on which" to extend the deadline.

Regardless, the Justice Department in either case would have to convince a new grand jury to return new indictments, and that may be harder given the intense publicity around the cases. Widespread media coverage of the allegations and the defense claims of improper conduct by prosecutors could make it more difficult to find grand jurors who can view the cases impartially.

What happens to the other challenges to the indictments?

For now, those arguments are all moot as the Justice Department labors to salvage the indictments.

But in the event prosecutors do succeed in getting new indictments, they'll likely have to fend off some of the same challenges that Comey and James had already raised and that remain pending as of Monday's rulings.

Comey is charged with lying to Congress about whether he authorized an associate to serve as an anonymous source for the news media. James was charged with bank fraud and making false statements to a financial institution in connection with a home purchase in Norfolk, Virginia, in 2020.

Both have pleaded not guilty and had urged judges to throw out their indictments on grounds that the prosecutions were illegally vindictive and emblematic of a Justice Department that's been weaponized to pursue the president's adversaries. Those arguments would presumably be revived in the event of any new indictments.

Comey, for his part, has challenged a series of irregularities in Halligan's presentation to the grand jury after a different judge who reviewed a record of the proceedings said he had identified a series of flaws — including the fact that the prosecutor apparently suggested to the panel that Comey did not have a Fifth Amendment right to not testify at trial.

He has also said that the testimony he gave to the Senate Judiciary Committee that underpins his criminal case was truthful and that, in any event, the question he was responding to was so vague and ambiguous as to make a false statement prosecution a legal impossibility.

Consumer confidence slides as Americans grow wary of high costs and sluggish job gains

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. consumers were much less confident in the economy in November in the aftermath of the government shutdown, weak hiring and stubborn inflation.

The Conference Board said Tuesday that its consumer confidence index dropped to 88.7 in November from an upwardly revised October reading of 95.5, the lowest reading since April, when President Donald

Trump announced sweeping tariffs that caused the stock market to plunge.

The figures suggest that Americans are increasingly wary of high costs and sluggish job gains, with perceptions of the labor market worsening, the survey found. Declining confidence could pose political problems for Trump and Republicans in Congress, as the dimmer views of the economy were seen among all political affiliations and were particularly sharp among independents, the Conference Board said.

Earlier Tuesday, a government report showed that retail sales slowed in September after healthy readings over the summer. While economists forecast healthy growth for the July-September quarter, many expect a much weaker showing in the final three months of the year, largely because of the shutdown.

Less-confident consumers may spend less, though the connection isn't always clear. In recent years, consumer spending has held up even when the available data suggests they've grown more anxious.

"We do not think that consumer spending is about to hit a cliff, as spending has decoupled from confidence, but risks to the downside are increasing," Thomas Simons, chief U.S. economist at Jefferies, an investment bank, said.

The proportion of consumers that said jobs are "plentiful" dropped to 27.6% in November, down from 28.6% in the previous month. It is down sharply from 37% in December.

At the same time, 17.9% said jobs are "hard to get," slightly below the 18.3% who said so in October. That figure is up from 15.2% in September. The figures on job availability are seen by economists as reliable predictors of hiring and the unemployment rate.

Americans continue to worry about elevated costs, fueling the "affordability" concerns that were a key issue in elections earlier this month.

"Consumers' write-in responses pertaining to factors affecting the economy continued to be led by references to prices and inflation, tariffs and trade, and politics, with increased mentions of the federal government shutdown," said Dana Peterson, chief economist at the Conference Board. The shutdown ended Nov. 12.

The economy likely grew at a solid annual rate of about 3% in the July-September quarter, economists estimate. But growth is likely to slow in the final three months of the year, largely because of the shutdown, which cut off pay for federal workers, disrupted contracts, and interrupted air travel.

The Conference Board survey ran through Nov. 18, about five days after the shutdown ended.

Pakistan denies Afghanistan's claims of airstrikes killing 10 people, mostly children

By ABDUL QA HAR AFGHAN and MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Afghanistan's Taliban government on Tuesday accused Pakistan of launching deadly overnight strikes in three eastern provinces, but Pakistan's military dismissed the claim and said no such strikes were carried out.

The Pakistani denial came hours after Zabihullah Mujahid, the chief spokesperson for the Afghan government, said on X that Pakistan "bombed" the home of a civilian in Khost province, killing nine children and a woman. He also claimed additional strikes were carried out in the Afghan provinces of Kunar and Paktika, injuring four people.

Mujahid described the attacks as "atrocities" and said the strikes were "a violation of Afghan territory." Afghanistan "considers the use of its airspace and territory and defense of its people to be its legitimate right, and at the appropriate time, it will give the necessary response," he said.

Tensions escalate

Afghanistan's report of new strikes came more than a month after cross-border clashes erupted when the Afghan government claimed Pakistani drone strikes hit Kabul.

Pakistan military spokesperson Ahmad Sharif Chaudhry denied the Afghan government's claim Tuesday, saying Pakistan does not target and kill civilians. He added that strikes carried out in October targeted the hideouts of Pakistani Taliban who were behind the surge of violence in the country.

"We announce and acknowledge whenever we carry out such strikes," he said during a news briefing

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in the garrison city of Rawalpindi.

The ceasefire brokered by Qatar and Turkey between the two sides in October still held Tuesday despite the reported strikes. There was no immediate comment from Qatar and Turkey.

Iran has recently offered to play a role in defusing tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Ali Larijani, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said Tuesday on X that he met with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in Islamabad, a day after arriving on a previously scheduled visit. Dar's office was also expected to release a statement about the meeting.

In Khost, residents combed through the rubble of the destroyed home, retrieving belongings.

"You see the cruelty with your own eyes, that young children, a woman and nine children, were martyred," said Muhammad Iqbal, who said the dead were his cousin's family.

Local tribal leader Mer Adam Khan said the attack was carried out by a drone that was flying over the area at around midnight. "It is not known where it came from and by whom," he said, adding that the home that was destroyed was that of a local man, whom he identified as Shariat Khan.

"He has not interfered with any government. He lives a poor life here," the tribal leader said.

Recent attacks target Pakistan

The latest escalation follows a deadly attack a day earlier in Pakistan's northwestern city of Peshawar, where two suicide bombers and a gunman stormed the headquarters of the Federal Constabulary. Three officers were killed and 11 others were wounded in the Monday morning attack.

No group claimed responsibility for the Peshawar attack, but suspicion quickly fell on the Pakistani Taliban, or Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan.

The army spokesperson, Chaudhry, said the three militants who carried out the attack were Afghan nationals who sneaked into the country from the Tirah border region in the northwest.

TTP is a separate group but closely allied with the Afghan Taliban and many of its leaders are believed to be hiding in Afghanistan. Kabul in 2022 brokered a brief ceasefire between the TTP and Pakistan. The militant group then ended the truce after accusing Pakistan of violating it.

Pakistan has intensified intelligence-based operations against militants in recent weeks. Since January, Pakistan has killed 1,873 militants in thousands of operations, Chaudhry said.

On Tuesday, the military said security forces killed 22 militants during a raid on what it described as a hideout of "Indian-backed" fighters in Bannu, a district in Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province near the Afghan border.

In a statement, the army referred to the killed insurgents as Khawarij, a term the government and the military use for militants they allege are supported by Afghanistan and India. Kabul and New Delhi deny providing any support to such groups.

The statement said Pakistan "will continue at full pace to wipe out the menace of foreign-sponsored and supported terrorism from the country."

Pakistan has repeatedly urged Afghanistan's Taliban rulers to prevent TTP militants from using Afghan territory to launch attacks. Kabul denies the accusation, but relations further deteriorated after Afghanistan blamed Pakistan for the Oct. 9 drone strikes on its capital and threatened retaliation.

The clashes that followed killed dozens of soldiers, civilians and militants before the sides agreed to the Oct. 19 ceasefire.

Peace talks failed to end the dispute

Two subsequent rounds of talks in Istanbul failed to resolve the dispute, when Pakistan said Afghanistan had refused to provide a written guarantee that TTP fighters would not operate from Afghan soil.

The Afghan government insists it does not allow anyone to use its soil for attacks against any country, including Pakistan.

The lingering tensions have stalled bilateral trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan, with all border crossings between the two neighbors remaining shut since last month. It has also affected movement of people, as residents from both sides have been unable to travel to meet with relatives and friends since early October.

US retail sales rose slightly in September, adding to months of big gains

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sales at U.S. retailers and restaurants increased modestly in September as resilient consumers moderated their spending after splurging over the summer.

Sales rose 0.2% in September from the previous month, the Commerce Department said Tuesday, in a report delayed more than a month because of the government shutdown. Sales jumped 0.6% in July and August and 1% in June. Numerous reports on inflation, employment, spending, and growth remain delayed and the government won't likely be caught up until late December.

The retail sales figures, which aren't adjusted for inflation, suggest that Americans pulled back on spending in September as many households struggled with high prices for groceries, rent, and many imported goods hit by tariffs. The retail sales report covers about one-third of consumer spending, with the rest going to services such as travel, haircuts, and entertainment. Still, higher spending should lift the economy's growth to a solid 3% annual rate in the July-September quarter, economists forecast, after a sluggish 1.6% expansion in the first half of the year.

Much of the spending, however, was driven by rising prices at gas stations and grocery stores. Still, sales rose 0.7% in September at restaurants and bars, a healthy gain in discretionary spending. Sales at clothing, electronics, and sporting goods stores fell.

Consumer spending could slow in the final three months of the year, economists warned. The government shutdown, weak hiring, and elevated inflation will likely cause more Americans to cut back.

"The moribund labor market and ongoing drag on real incomes from tariff-induced price increases suggest that this slowdown is likely to be maintained," Oliver Allen, an economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, a consulting firm, said.

Also on Tuesday, payroll processor ADP released its weekly measure of hiring, which found that companies cut an average of 13,500 jobs a week in the four weeks ending Nov. 8. The report is a sign hiring may have slowed since September, when the government said a solid 119,000 jobs were added.

The disparity found in economic data shows how the economy remains in an uncertain state despite the solid growth in the third quarter. Hiring has generally been weak and the unemployment rate has ticked higher, which could drag down consumer spending and the broader economy if it worsens. Unemployment rose to 4.4% in September, the highest in nearly four years, from 4.3%, according to the delayed monthly jobs report released last week.

Higher-income Americans are driving much of the gains, according to data from Bank of America and reports from retailers such as Walmart, as lower-income shoppers seek bargains and are more likely to spend more on necessities.

Still, some retailers issued positive reports Tuesday, including electronics chain Best Buy and Dick's Sporting Goods. Best Buy lifted its sales and profit forecasts for the year.

Tuesday's report comes before the crucial winter holiday season kicks off this weekend, when retailers earn as much as a fifth of their revenues. The National Retail Federation and other forecasters expect modest sales gains this year, compared with last year's holiday, with the NRF projecting that sales will top \$1 trillion for the first time.

Separate figures from the Labor Department suggest that inflation remains elevated but isn't accelerating, which could make it more likely that a closely-divided Federal Reserve cuts rates next month.

Wholesale prices rose 0.3% in September from August, the Labor Department said Tuesday, and 2.7% compared with a year ago. The monthly gain in the producer price index was pushed higher by a sharp increase in gasoline costs. The yearly figure was unchanged from the previous month.

Core prices, which exclude the volatile food and energy prices, rose just 0.1% in September and 2.6% from a year earlier. Those figures are less than expected and suggest inflation pressures are cooling, economists said.

The retail sales figures land as many economic data are coming in mixed. Wage growth has slowed

this year and is just modestly above inflation, a trend that is likely driving Americans' concerns around affordability.

Wages, on average, rose 3.8% in September from a year ago, the government said last week. That is only modestly above September's annual inflation rate of 3%.

But for many Americans, particularly those earning lower incomes or for older workers, wages are rising more slowly and are clearly trailing inflation.

The Bank of America Institute estimates that for the poorest one-third of households, pay grew just 1% in October from a year earlier, while the highest one-third saw their wages rise 3.7%. The gap between higher- and lower-income households matches an August figure as the widest in nearly a decade, the bank said. Bank of America uses anonymous data from its customers to calculate the figures.

And a separate report from JPMorganChase Institute showed that incomes for a typical household have retreated to levels last seen in the early 2010s, after the harsh 2008-2009 recession.

"Households are going into the end of the year with weak income growth and bank balances that remain flat, after adjusting for inflation," the report said.

4 more arrested in \$102M Louvre jewel heist, Paris prosecutor says

By JOHN LEICESTER and SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The Paris prosecutor announced four more arrests Tuesday in connection with the stunning heist at the Louvre Museum in October by a gang that made off with \$102 million worth of jewels.

The two men and two women taken into custody are from the Paris region and range in age from 31 to 40, said the prosecutor, Laure Beccuau, whose office is heading the investigation.

Her statement didn't say what role they're suspected of having played in the Oct. 19 theft. Police can hold them for questioning for 96 hours.

French media report that one of those arrested, a 39-year-old already known to police services, is believed to be the fourth member of the team thought to have carried out the daring daylight robbery and is from Aubervilliers, a suburb north of Paris other suspects have connections with.

The other three alleged members of the so-called "commando" team have been previously arrested and face preliminary charges of theft by an organized gang and criminal conspiracy. Their DNA has been found on the scene or on items linked to the robbery.

A woman arrested in October is accused of complicity.

The loot hasn't been recovered. It includes a diamond-and-emerald necklace Napoleon gave to Empress Marie-Louise, jewels tied to 19th-century Queens Marie-Amélie and Hortense, and Empress Eugénie's pearl-and-diamond tiara.

The robbery has focused attention on security at the Louvre, the world's most-visited museum.

The thieves took less than eight minutes to force their way into the museum and leave, using a freight lift to reach the building's window. Footage from museum cameras showed two broke into the ornate Apollo Gallery, cutting into the jewelry display cases with disc cutters and making off with the trove, while two riders on scooters whisked them away.

The emerald-set imperial crown of Napoleon III's wife, Empress Eugénie, containing more than 1,300 diamonds, was later found outside the museum.

ByHeart baby formula from all lots may be contaminated with botulism bacteria, tests show

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

Tests of ByHeart infant formula tied to a botulism outbreak that has sickened dozens of babies showed that all of the company's products may have been contaminated.

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Laboratory tests of 36 samples of formula from three different lots showed that five samples contained the type of bacteria that can lead to the rare and potentially deadly illness, the company said Monday on its website.

"Based on these results, we cannot rule out the risk that all ByHeart formula across all product lots may have been contaminated," the company wrote.

At least 31 babies in 15 states who consumed ByHeart formula have been sickened in the outbreak that began in August, according to federal and state health officials. In addition, other infants who drank ByHeart formula were treated for botulism in earlier months, as far back as November 2024, although they are not counted in the outbreak, officials said.

Clostridium botulinum type A, the type of bacteria detected, can be unevenly distributed in powdered formula. Not all babies who ingest it will become ill, though all infants under age 1 are at risk, medical experts said.

ByHeart recalled all of its formula nationwide on Nov. 11. However, some product has remained on store shelves despite the recall, according to state officials and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Parents and caregivers should stop feeding the formula to babies immediately and monitor the children for symptoms, which can take up to 30 days to appear.

Infant botulism occurs when babies ingest spores that germinate in their intestine and produce a toxin. Symptoms include constipation, difficulty sucking or feeding, drooping eyelids, flat facial expression and weakness in the arms, legs and head. The illness is a medical emergency and requires immediate treatment.

At least 107 babies nationwide have been treated for botulism with an IV medication known as BabyBIG since Aug. 1, health officials said. In a typical year, less than 200 infants are treated for the illness.

To report an illness tied to the outbreak, contact an FDA consumer complaint coordinator or fill out an online MedWatch form.

Consumers who bought ByHeart on the company's website on or after Aug. 1 can receive a full refund, an expansion of its previous policy, the company said.

U.S. Sen. Jim Justice of West Virginia agrees to pay nearly \$5.2M in overdue personal taxes

By JOHN RABY Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — U.S. Sen. Jim Justice of West Virginia has agreed to pay nearly \$5.2 million in overdue personal taxes, the latest saga for the former billionaire who has been followed by a trail of financial challenges going back well over a decade.

An attorney for Justice and his wife, Cathy, entered into a joint motion for consent judgment with the federal government Monday, the same day that the government filed a lawsuit saying that the couple "have neglected or refused to make full payment" for the income taxes dating to 2009. An attorney for the U.S. Justice Department's tax division signed off on the agreement.

Justice had a fortune estimated at \$1.9 billion last decade by Forbes magazine, which stripped his billionaire title in 2021, when Justice's worth had dwindled to an estimated \$513 million. Earlier this year, Forbes estimated that Justice's net worth had disintegrated to "less than zero" due to liabilities that far exceeded assets.

A spokesperson for Justice's office didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment Tuesday.

During a briefing with local media in October, Justice asserted that his companies "are complicated and complex" and that his children "are doing a magnificent job" running them. He then repeated past assertions that collection efforts against him were politically motivated, before concluding: "At the end of the day, I'd say just let it be and see how it all plays out."

Justice, a former two-term Republican governor who owns dozens of businesses that include coal and agricultural operations, was elected last November to the Senate. He took over the seat vacated by the retiring Joe Manchin, a Democrat who became an independent in 2024 near the end of his second full term.

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Justice still has other financial challenges to work out.

The Internal Revenue Service last month filed liens totaling more than \$8 million against Justice and his wife on unpaid personal taxes. In September, state tax officials filed \$1.4 million in liens against the Justice family's historic hotel, The Greenbrier, and the resort's Greenbrier Sporting Club, over unpaid sales taxes.

Last month, a foreclosure auction on several hundred lots owned by the Justice family at a resort community near Beckley was paused. The auction centered on a dispute between the Glade Springs Village Property Owners Association and Justice Holdings over unpaid fees. The state Supreme Court plans to review the case more closely.

In 2021, the IRS filed liens over \$1.1 million in unpaid taxes on the Greenbrier Hotel and an additional \$80,000 on the resort's medical clinic. Those debts were paid off later that year.

Justice's family settled debts last year in a separate case to avoid the Greenbrier Hotel's foreclosure. The 710-room hotel, which has hosted U.S. presidents, royalty and congressional retreats, had come under threat of being auctioned off on the steps of a Lewisburg courthouse. That was after JPMorgan Chase sold a longstanding loan taken out by Justice to a credit collection company, Beltway Capital, which declared it to be in default.

The state Democratic Party has said efforts to seize the hotel from Justice were "a direct consequence of his own financial incompetence."

Last year, a union official at the Greenbrier said that Justice's family was at least \$2.4 million behind in payments to an employees' health insurance fund, putting workers' coverage at risk. In 2023, dozens of properties owned by the Justice family in three counties were auctioned as payment for delinquent real estate taxes. Others have sought to recoup millions in fines for environmental issues and unsafe working conditions at his company's coal mines.

Justice bought The Greenbrier resort out of bankruptcy in 2009 for \$20.1 million. The sporting club is a private equity club and residential community on the property that opened in 2000.

The resort in White Sulphur Springs that dates to 1778 also has a casino, spa and dozens of amenities and employs around 2,000 workers. The resort held a PGA Tour golf tournament from 2010 until 2019 and has welcomed NFL teams for training camp and practices. A once-secret 112,000-square-foot (10,080-square-meter) underground bunker built for Congress at the Greenbrier in case of nuclear attack during the Cold War now hosts tours.

They relied on marijuana to get through the day. But then days felt impossible without it

By LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

BROOKLINE, Mass. (AP) — For the past several years, 75-year-old Miguel Laboy has smoked a joint with his coffee every morning. He tells himself he won't start tomorrow the same way, but he usually does.

"You know what bothers me? To have cannabis on my mind the first thing in the morning," he said, sparking a blunt in his Brookline, Massachusetts, apartment. "I'd like to get up one day and not smoke. But you see how that's going."

Since legalization and commercialization, daily cannabis use has become a defining — and often invisible — part of many people's lives. High-potency vapes and concentrates now dominate the market, and doctors say they can blur the line between relief and dependence over time so that users don't notice the shift. Across the country, people who turned to cannabis for help are finding it harder to put down.

Overall, alcohol remains more widely used than cannabis. But starting in 2022, the number of daily cannabis users in the U.S. surpassed that of daily drinkers — a major shift in American habits.

Researchers say the rise has unfolded alongside products that contain far more THC than the marijuana of past decades, including vape oils and concentrates that can reach 80% to 95% THC. Massachusetts, like most states, sets no limit on how strong these products can be.

Doctors warn that daily, high-potency use can cloud memory, disturb sleep, intensify anxiety or depression and trigger addiction in ways earlier generations didn't encounter. Many who develop cannabis use

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disorder say it's hard to recognize the signs because of the widespread belief that marijuana isn't addictive. Because the consequences tend to creep in gradually — brain fog, irritability, dependence — users often miss when therapeutic use shifts into compulsion.

How a habit becomes an addiction

Laboy, a retired chef, began seeing a substance-use counselor after telling his doctor he felt depressed, unmotivated and increasingly isolated as his drinking and cannabis use escalated.

Naltrexone helped him quit alcohol, but he hasn't found a way to quit marijuana. Unlike alcohol and opioids, there is no FDA-approved medication to treat cannabis addiction, though research is underway.

Laboy, who first smoked at 18, said marijuana has long soothed symptoms tied to undiagnosed ADHD, childhood trauma and painful experiences — including cancer treatment and his son's death. Through decades in restaurant kitchens, he considered himself a "functional pothead."

Lately, though, his use has become compulsive. After retiring, he began vaping 85% THC cartridges.

"These days, I carry two things in my hands: my vape and my cellular — that's it," he said. "I'm not proud of it, but it's the reality."

Cannabis eases his anxiety and "settles his spirit," but he's noticed it affects his concentration. He hopes to learn to read music, but sustaining focus at the piano has grown difficult.

He's seen an addiction psychiatrist for six months, but he hasn't been able to cut back. The medical system doesn't seem equipped to help, he said.

"They're not ready yet," Laboy said. "I go to them for help, but all they say is, 'Try to smoke less.' I already know that — that's why I'm there."

Younger users describe a similar slide — one that begins with relief and ends somewhere harder to define.

Brain fog becomes 'your new normal'

Kyle, a 20-year-old Boston University student, says cannabis helps him manage panic attacks he's had since high school. He spoke on the condition that only his first name be used because he buys cannabis illegally.

In the Allston apartment he shares with fraternity brothers, they have a communal bong.

When he's high, Kyle feels calm — and able to process anxious thoughts and feel a sense of gratitude. But that clarity has become harder to reach when he's sober.

"I think I was able to do that better a year ago," he said. "Now I can only do it when I'm high, which is scary."

He said the brain fog and feeling of detachment develop so gradually they become "your new normal." Some mornings, he wakes up feeling like an observer in his own life, struggling to recall the day before. "It can be tough to wake up and go, 'Oh my God, who am I?'" he said.

Still, he doesn't plan to stop anytime soon.

Kyle says cannabis helps him function — more than seeking professional treatment would. Doctors say that ambivalence is common: many people feel cannabis is both the problem and the solution.

A dream turns into a nightmare

Anne Hassel spent a month in jail and a year on probation for growing cannabis in the 1980s. She cried when Massachusetts' first dispensaries opened — and left her physical therapy career to get a job at one.

Within a year, though, "my dream job turned into a nightmare," she said.

Hassel, 58, said some consultants pushed staff to promote high-potency concentrates as "more medicinal," downplaying their risks. After trying her first dab — a nearly instantaneous, "stupefying" high — she began using 90% THC concentrate several times a day.

Her use quickly became debilitating, she said. She lost interest in things she once loved, like mountain biking. One autumn day, she drove to the woods and turned back without getting out. "I just wanted to go to my friend's house and dab," she said. "I hated myself."

She didn't seek formal treatment but recovered with the help of a friend. Riding her green motorcycle — once named "Sativa" after her favorite strain — has helped her reconnect to her body and spirit.

"People don't want to acknowledge what's going on because legalization was tied to social justice," she

said. "You get swept up in it and don't recognize the harm until it's too late."

Community for those who want to leave

Online, that realization unfolds daily on r/leaves, a Reddit community of more than 380,000 people trying to cut back or quit.

Users describe a similar push-pull — craving the calm cannabis brings, then feeling trapped by the fog. Some write about isolation and regret, saying years of smoking dulled their ambition and presence in relationships. Others post pleas for help from work or doctors' offices.

Together, they paint a portrait of dependence that is quiet and routine — and difficult to escape.

"When people talk about legalizing a drug, they're really talking about commercializing it," said Dave Bushnell, who founded the Reddit group. "We've built an industry optimized to sell as much as possible."

What doctors want people to know

Dr. Jordan Tishler, a former emergency physician who now treats medical cannabis patients in Massachusetts, said low doses of THC paired with high doses of CBD can help some patients with anxiety. Many products have high levels of THC, which can worsen symptoms, he said.

"It's a medicine," he said. "It can be useful, but it can also be dangerous — and access without guidance is dangerous."

Dr. Kevin Hill, an addiction director at Boston's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center who specializes in cannabis use disorder, said the biggest gap is education, among both consumers and clinicians.

"I think adults should be allowed to do what they want as long as it doesn't hurt anybody else," but many users don't understand the risks, Hill said.

He said the conversation shouldn't be about prohibition but about balance and informed decision-making. "For most people, the risks outweigh the benefits."

More people are addicted to marijuana, but fewer of them are seeking help, experts say

By LAURA UNGAR AP Science Writer

Megan Feller smoked pot several times a day and couldn't eat, sleep or function without it. But at the time, she didn't see the need to reach out for help.

"I didn't think cannabis was a big deal," the 24-year-old said. "It was really socially accepted."

This attitude is common. As more states legalize marijuana, use has become more normalized and products have become more potent. But fewer of those who are addicted seek help for it.

Pot use among young adults reached historic levels in recent years, according to a federally supported survey. Daily use even outpaced daily drinking, with nearly 18 million Americans reporting in 2022 that they use marijuana every day or nearly every day, up from less than 1 million three decades earlier.

Studies show a corresponding increase in cannabis use disorder — when people crave marijuana and spend lots of time using it even though it causes problems at home, school, work or in relationships. It's a condition that researchers estimate affects about 3 in 10 pot users and can be mild, moderate or severe.

And it's an addiction — despite the common misconception that that's not possible with marijuana, said Dr. Smita Das, an addiction psychiatrist at Stanford University.

Meanwhile, the drug's widespread acceptance has fueled a stigma about seeking treatment, said Dr. Jennifer Exo of the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation in Minnesota.

"There's this pervasive belief that you can't become addicted, it can't actually be a problem," she said. "It has to do with this myth that cannabis is safe, natural and benign."

Stronger weed, bigger problems

While pot isn't as harmful as harder drugs, frequent or heavy use has been linked to problems with learning, memory and attention as well as chronic nausea, vomiting and lung problems among those who smoke it. Some evidence has also linked it to earlier onset of psychosis in people with genetic risk factors for psychotic disorders like schizophrenia.

And today's pot is not the same as that of the past.

Many people recall older relatives who “smoked a few doobies and ate some food and fell asleep,” Exo said. “But it’s absolutely different.”

In the 1960s, most pot that people smoked contained less than 5% THC, the ingredient that causes a high. Today, the THC potency in cannabis flower and concentrates sold in dispensaries can reach 40% or more, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Teens are often vaping potent marijuana concentrates, Exo said, rather than eating brownies made with cannabis flower or taking a hit from a bong.

More access to marijuana, rising ER visits

Pot is also increasingly available. Though it’s still a federal crime to possess it, 24 states allow recreational use by adults and 40 allow medical use as of late June, the National Conference of State Legislatures said. Dispensaries abound and more people are able to keep pot at home.

Research links the legalization of recreational marijuana with rising emergency room visits for “acute cannabis intoxication,” in which patients may experience a rapid heartbeat or feel dizzy, confused or paranoid.

A study last year focused on Michigan found that legalization was associated with an immediate increase in the rate of ER visits for this condition among people of all ages, especially middle-aged adults.

Das said increased access to cannabis, along with a growing number of cannabis products and with higher potency all contribute to rising ER visits. Edibles such as gummies can pose a particular problem because they take a little while to kick in so people may keep taking more because they don’t yet feel the drug’s effects.

“Then, suddenly, they’re suffering from cannabis toxicity,” she said.

Why treatment is often overlooked

Feller first tried pot at 16 and quickly went from smoking the plant to using vape cartridges that were easy to hide in her pocket. Soon, she could barely get by without it.

“I would wake up every morning for years, and until I smoked weed, I would throw up,” she said. Instead of trying to get high, she used it “to make these other symptoms go away.”

Feller was also drinking a lot and her parents sent her to a treatment center when she was around 18. It didn’t help because she wasn’t ready to get well. After her mother died, her substance use worsened.

At 22, Feller entered Hazelden on her own — but only to get sober from alcohol, which she did.

She kept using pot on and off, then finally sought treatment for cannabis use disorder and has been sober from marijuana for almost a year.

“I’m so much happier now,” she said. “I don’t feel, like, shackled to a substance.”

Such treatment is often overlooked, said Brian Graves, a researcher at Florida Atlantic University.

He and his colleagues published a study this year showing that the share of people who got treatment for cannabis use disorder from their nationally representative sample dropped from 19% in 2003 to 13% in 2019. An earlier study also found a marked decline and pointed to reasons that include “expanding cannabis legalization and more tolerant attitudes.”

Experts said people need to be educated that pot, like alcohol, can be misused and can cause real harm.

“Another important piece is helping people understand the risk before they start,” Exo said, “and then to feel safe enough to say, ‘Hey, I need help managing this.’”

Many people wait until their marijuana use causes problems in multiple parts of their lives before they seek treatment — if they ever do.

“If you’re changing your life because of weed, there might be an issue,” Feller added. “There are resources to get help and you are not alone.”

Thai woman found alive in coffin after being brought in for cremation

BANGKOK (AP) — A woman in Thailand shocked temple staff when she started moving in her coffin after being brought in for cremation.

Wat Rat Prakhong Tham, a Buddhist temple in the province of Nonthaburi on the outskirts of Bangkok,

posted a video on its Facebook page, showing a woman lying in a white coffin in the back of a pickup truck, slightly moving her arms and head, leaving temple staff bewildered.

Pairat Soodthoop, the temple's general and financial affairs manager, told The Associated Press on Monday that the 65-year-old woman's brother drove her from the province of Phitsanulok to be cremated.

He said they heard a faint knock coming from the coffin.

"I was a bit surprised, so I asked them to open the coffin, and everyone was startled," he said. "I saw her opening her eyes slightly and knocking on the side of the coffin. She must have been knocking for quite some time."

According to Pairat, the brother said his sister had been bedridden for about two years, when her health deteriorated and she became unresponsive, appearing to stop breathing two days ago. The brother then placed her in a coffin and made the 500-kilometer (300-mile) journey to a hospital in Bangkok, to which the woman had previously expressed a wish to donate her organs.

The hospital refused to accept the brother's offer as he didn't have an official death certificate, Pairat said. His temple offers a free cremation service, which is why the brother approached them on Sunday, but was also refused due to the missing document.

The temple manager said that while he was explaining how to get a death certificate when they heard the knocking. They then assessed her and sent her to a nearby hospital.

The abbot said the temple would cover her medical expenses, according to Pairat.

Airport chapels stay on the radar of workers and travelers even as role of faith in public shifts

By GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — With peak holiday travel starting just after the government shutdown's flight restrictions, hope for a moment of peace at an airport can feel like a wing and a prayer.

But quiet and worship are just what airport chapels have provided for decades to travelers and to the airport workers that many were originally designed for.

"I love seeing travel bags and workers' outfits. It gives hope that you're ministering to a need," said the Rev. Brian Daley, one of the priests at Our Lady of the Airways at Boston's Logan International Airport.

Built in the 1950s so that airport employees could attend Mass right in their sprawling workplace, it's widely considered the first airport chapel in the United States. It's also among the last to still function as a Catholic church instead of an interfaith space — though Muslim prayer rugs discreetly placed on the rear pews show it welcomes a variety of believers.

Midday on a Friday, a man rolling a carry-on suitcase prayed for a few minutes on a rug in the back of the brick-faced chapel on the cavernous ground floor of Terminal C. Donning reflective vests, a sprinkling of airline employees also darted in, knelt in the pews and hurried back to work after making the sign of the cross with blessed water.

"I come here almost every day to pray for a few minutes," said Brian Babcock, a Southwest Airlines baggage handler who stopped by Boston's chapel in his orange vest at the beginning of his shift. "It's awesome that I have a chapel within walking distance of where I work."

Workers' chapels open at airports

The mid-20th-century impetus behind constructing Our Lady of the Airways — as well as the two other Catholic chapels that followed at what's now New York's JFK and Chicago's O'Hare airports — stemmed from the church's desire to reach the faithful at their workplaces.

Earlier, Pope Leo XIII had published the document *Rerum Novarum*, which was an inspiration for the current, first U.S. pope to adopt the name Leo XIV and focused on social doctrine and workers' rights. Inspired by it, church leaders such as Boston's Cardinal Richard Cushing started building chapels at train stations, on fishing docks, in downtown commercial hubs, and at airports that were expanding into commercial aviation.

"He really had a program for establishing chapels for working people," said James O'Toole, professor

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emeritus of history at Boston College. "Boston's Catholicism was overwhelmingly a working-class phenomenon."

Thousands of people worked at Logan, often on 12-hour shifts that could fall on Sundays or holy days when Catholics have an obligation to attend Mass, so Our Lady of the Airways was built to accommodate them.

Even when offering six weekend Masses, it became so popular it quickly outgrew its first space, so the current, larger chapel was built in 1965. Up front is the original metal statue of the Virgin Mary, her feet resting on a globe as three airplanes fly around it.

"You couldn't get in there," recalled John Cappucci, who started attending the packed Mass as a child. More than 70 years later, he's now among a few dozen weekly Mass-goers because he likes the streamlined worship style.

"It's quiet and peaceful," he said.

Among nationwide declining religiosity and a shortage of priests, only one Mass is now celebrated at Our Lady — on Sundays, by the pastors responsible for a nearby parish that covers two churches and another Marian shrine too, but who still want to preserve the airport outreach.

"They need to be reached in the secular world where they are," Daley said of the travelers and workers, Catholic and not, he ministers to at the airport.

From chapels to interreligious meditation spaces

Protestant and Jewish faith leaders also established chapels at U.S. airports in the 1970s and 1980s, offering quiet space for individual prayer rather than organized services like their Catholic counterparts.

Over the past 30 years, most U.S. airport chapels have turned interfaith, with removable symbols of different religions — or none in the newer "meditation spaces" that have been created, said Wendy Cadge, president and professor of sociology at Bryn Mawr College.

"I'm not aware of any that have been built recently that are anything other than kind of warm waiting rooms," Cadge added.

Tucked behind baggage claims or above food courts, chapels are idiosyncratic, influenced by the local history and demographics, as well as sometimes tensely negotiated arrangements between local faith leaders and municipal and airport authorities. These range from rent, which is often nominal, to whether worship services can be announced over the PA system.

While it's unclear how many people use the spaces across the country, much of the more religiously observant demand recently has come from Muslims, Cadge said.

Interfaith worship among taxiing planes

Printouts of the Muslim prayer timetable and the 2025 Catholic and Protestant Christmas season Mass and worship service schedule are tacked by the door of the chapel at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, where about 50,000 people work and 80 million annually fly in or out.

Chaplaincy at O'Hare started in 1960 when Catholic workers asked a nearby parish priest to come celebrate Mass. The first "chapel" was a United Airlines training room, then the faithful gathered in a basement space they called Community of Our Lady of Loreto, with makeshift furniture from airport concessionaires and up to eight Masses each weekend, according to diocesan histories.

In the 1990s, a few years after the current chapel was established on the mezzanine above the check-in counters at Terminal 2, it became an interfaith space. Its glass walls open to a view of taxiing planes, a compass rose on the ceiling shows the direction to Mecca, and a small light stands by the tall tabernacle where the consecrated host is kept for daily Catholic Mass.

"Everybody is grateful to have a quiet place to pray," said the Rev. Michael Zaniolo, the Catholic priest who is administrator of the Interfaith Airport Chapels of Chicago. "Our first customer is the airport worker. The traveler is the frosting on the cake."

He said the airport badge he wears on his clergy apparel is an "instant conversation starter" for those he encounters at the terminal. He hears confessions almost daily, even as Mass attendance has shrunk in the 25 years he's been at O'Hare.

Zaniolo hopes the chapel won't turn into a generic meditation space, both to honor the Catholic roots

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of what's now the pope's hometown and to serve the faithful of different religions.

Back in Boston, two Catholic JetBlue gate workers shared the hope that Our Lady of the Airways can stay open for the blend of nervous flyers and employees of different faiths they see daily among the pews.

"We come every day to pray before our shift starts, to get some guidance," said Manuel Tejada Pimentel. "It's a little escape."

Today in History: November 26 Mumbai terror attacks of 2008 begin

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, Nov. 26, the 330th day of 2025. There are 35 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Nov. 26, 2008, teams of heavily armed militants from the terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba stormed luxury hotels, a popular restaurant and a crowded train station in Mumbai, India, leaving at least 175 people dead (including nine of the attackers) in a rampage spanning four days.

Also on this date:

In 1791, President George Washington held his first full cabinet meeting; in attendance were Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of War Henry Knox and Attorney General Edmund Randolph.

In 1864, English mathematician Charles Dodgson presented the illustrated manuscript "Alice's Adventures Under Ground" to his friend Alice Pleasance Liddell, 12, a book later published under the pen name Lewis Carroll as "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland."

In 1917, the National Hockey League was founded in Montreal, succeeding the National Hockey Association.

In 1941, U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull delivered a note to Japan's ambassador to the United States, Kichisaburo Nomura, setting forth U.S. demands for "lasting and extensive peace throughout the Pacific area." The same day, a Japanese naval task force of six aircraft carriers left the Kuril Islands, bound for Hawaii, days before the attack on Pearl Harbor.

In 1942, the film "Casablanca," starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman, premiered at the Hollywood Theater in New York City.

In 1973, President Richard Nixon's personal secretary, Rose Mary Woods, told a federal court she'd accidentally caused part of the 18 1/2-minute erasure of a key Watergate tape. The gap was in a 1972 recording of a conversation between Nixon and his chief of staff.

In 1998, two trains collided in the northern town of Khanna, India, killing 210 people in one of that country's deadliest rail disasters.

In 2000, Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris certified Republican George W. Bush the winner over Democrat Al Gore in the state's presidential balloting by a 537-vote margin. The U.S. Supreme Court ultimately stopped recounts of the vote, and Bush won Florida's 25 electoral votes and the presidential election.

In 2011, a rocket carrying NASA's Mars Science Laboratory Curiosity rover lifted off from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

In 2019, a 6.4-magnitude earthquake struck Albania, killing at least 49 people, injuring some 2,000 others and leaving at least 4,000 homeless.

Today's Birthdays: Impressionist Rich Little is 87. Football Hall of Famer Jan Stenerud is 83. Author Marilynne Robinson is 82. Bass guitarist John McVie (Fleetwood Mac) is 80. Football Hall of Famer Art Shell is 79. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., is 72. Football Hall of Famer Harry Carson is 72. NASCAR Hall of Famer Dale Jarrett is 69. Country singer Linda Davis is 63. Actor-TV personality Garcelle Beauvais is 59. Actor Peter Facinelli is 52. DJ-music producer DJ Khaled (KAL'-ehd) is 50. Country musician Joe Nichols is 49. Pop singer Natasha Bedingfield is 44. Actor-singer-TV personality Rita Ora is 35.