

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Community Calendar

### Sunday, Sept. 20

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

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

United Methodist: Rally Sunday: 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.

Dance Team tryouts and first practice, 2 p.m., Arena

Third Grade GBB practice, 4 p.m., GHS Gym

### Monday, Sept. 21

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, green beans, fruit, whole wheat bread.

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

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

Cross Country at Deuel Invitational

Groton Boys Golf Invitational at Olive Grove, 3 p.m.

GT GBB Fall Skills, 6 p.m., Arena

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

### Tuesday, Sept. 22

FIRST DAY OF AUTUMN

Senior Menu: Beef and bean burrito, Spanish rice, corn, fruit, pumpkin bar.

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

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

JH Football at Webster, 4 p.m.

JV Football at Webster, 5 p.m.

Volleyball hosts Warner (7th/C @ 5pm, 8th/JV @ 6pm, Varsity to follow)

**Groton Daily Independent**

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## We the People

The South Dakota Humanities Council is making available a weekly column -- "We the People" -- that focuses on the U.S. Constitution. It is written by David Adler, who is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality, and civic education.



By David Adler

### Constitution Day Reminder: How Checks and Balances Can Constrain the Executive

The historic effort of delegates to the Constitutional Convention to fence in executive power and subordinate the president to the rule of law, is worthy of celebration any day of the week, but certainly on this September 17—Constitution Day—as we applaud action by the U.S. Supreme Court and the House of Representatives to tether President Donald Trump to the moorings of the Constitution, particularly to those provisions that govern elections and warmaking.

Constraining the executive, a fundamental concern among the framers of the Constitution, has become, increasingly, a full-time job for the other two branches during Trump's second term. Americans breathed a sigh of relief this week when the Supreme Court rejected the Trump Administration's plan to restrict mail-in ballot delivery that would have severely disrupted the midterm elections, just 50 days away.

The Court left in place a lower-court ruling that blocked the U.S. Postal Service from implementing the new requirements, developed by the Trump Administration, due to the potential that millions of voters could be disenfranchised by not having their ballots delivered. Most of the Justices that formed the majority did not provide a rationale for their reasoning, since the case was heard on the Court's emergency docket. The majority said simply that the administration's position was unlikely to succeed and that the legal matters that brought the suit center stage did not favor lifting a lower court decision. Justice Brent Kavanaugh's brief concurring opinion said that "state and local election officials do not have sufficient time to reasonably implement the rule before election." Indeed, voting by mail has already begun in various states, including Alabama, North Carolina and Wisconsin, with others just days from starting, including Western states such as Hawaii, Oregon and Washington, in which elections are held primarily or fully with mail ballots.

Under Trump's unconstitutional and meddlesome executive order, issued in May, states would have had to turn over lists of voters' names and addresses and have certain specific barcodes on ballot envelopes to have them delivered by the postal service. A federal district court ruling ruled earlier this month that Trump's ballot requirements were likely illegal because the Postal Service has no authority to control mail-in voting. Of course, the president is given no constitutional role whatever in conducting or supervising elections. Rather the Constitution assigns to the states, in Article 1, section 4, principal authority to govern the time, place and manner of elections, while Congress is granted power to alter the regulations, except for places.

The Supreme Court's rejection of Trump's attempt to usurp authority over elections, offensive to states, advocates of states' rights and powers, and the grant to Congress of sole and exclusive authority to alter some state regulations, was a welcome break from its pattern of supporting Trump's positions in lawsuits. In many ways, the Trump Administration's brazen power grab, like its earlier effort, also rejected by the Court, to rewrite the 14th Amendment to subvert Birthright Citizenship, was too much, even for this compliant Court.

Meanwhile, the House of Representatives, aided by seven Republicans who joined Democrats, to support a largely symbolic measure to halt the Iran War, in what constituted the latest bipartisan effort to stop Trump's usurpation of the war power, signaled a welcome use by conscientious members of the House to defend the congressional power over war and peace. Even though the White House will ignore the

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measure, it is of the utmost importance for Congress to demonstrate its willingness to defend the constitutional enumeration of powers, approved and ratified by the citizenry. A statement of legislative defiance in the face of executive violation of the Constitution, particularly on a matter of such grave importance as Trump's initiation of a war of choice, which is enormously unpopular and which has cost Americans dearly, in lives lost and injuries sustained, the skyrocketing cost of groceries, the obscene price of gasoline and rising inflation, spiked by the hostilities in Iran, states to the public that there are many compelling reasons to support constitutional governance. The price of ignoring constitutional provisions is a harsh reality. We feel it every day.

*David Adler is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality and civic education. This column is made possible with the support of the South Dakota Humanities Council, South Dakota NewsMedia Association and this newspaper.*

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## Kroll scores three as Tigers battle Bobcats to 4-4 tie

The Groton Area boys soccer team battled Freeman/Marion/Parker/Viborg-Hurley to a 4-4 tie Saturday in Groton, with Ethan Kroll figuring in all four Tiger goals.

Groton struck first when Kroll converted a penalty kick with 22:58 remaining in the first half to give the Tigers a 1-0 lead.

The Bobcats answered late in the half as Lester Roca scored with 4:42 remaining to even the match at 1-1. Groton regained the advantage less than a minute later when Kroll converted his second penalty kick of the match with 3:53 left, sending the Tigers into halftime with a 2-1 lead.

Freeman/Marion/Parker/Viborg-Hurley pulled even early in the second half when Elmer Rodolfo scored with 35:24 remaining. Roca followed with his second goal at the 25:42 mark, putting the Bobcats in front, 3-2.

Kroll answered again for Groton. With 22:58 remaining, he drew the goalkeeper away from the net, worked his way behind him and knocked the ball home to complete the hat trick and tie the match at 3-3.

The Bobcats moved back in front when Persie Abila scored with 19:07 remaining, making it 4-3.

Groton had one more answer. With 17:18 left, Kroll sent the ball toward Ryder Schwan, who headed it into the net for the tying goal.

Neither team was able to break through again, leaving the Tigers and Bobcats deadlocked at 4-4.

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## Northern football suffers first loss of 2026 to No. 4 Minnesota State

Mankato, Minn. – The (RV) Northern State University football team's win streak came to an end Saturday on the road at No. 4 Minnesota State. The Wolves scored first in their opening drive, however, were unable to fend off the Mavericks and convert on crucial third downs.

### THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 17, MSU 35

Records: NSU 3-1 (2-1 NSIC), MSU 4-0 (3-0 NSIC)

Attendance: 4118

### HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern tallied seven points in the first, three in the second, and seven in the third in the contest, while Minnesota State notched 28 in the second and seven in the third

Hank Kraft scored first for the Wolves on the opening drive, breaking through the line for a 25-yard rushing touchdown at 10:18

The Mavericks rallied back in the opening minutes of the second, recording back-to-back touchdowns for a 14-7 lead

Jeremy Caruso cut into that lead at 8:21 in the second, knocking a 35-yard field goal through the uprights

The 4-point differential did not last long as MSU tacked on a pair of touchdowns to close out the half and the teams entered the locker room with the Mavericks up 28-10

Minnesota State scored their final touchdown of the contest midway through the third, taking a 35-10 lead, and Northern added their final score on a 2-yard pass from Ty Englehart to Gavin Giesler at 2:25

The Wolves recorded 148 yards rushing, 164 yards passing, and 312 yards of total offense, while the Mavericks notched 193 yards rushing, 203 yards passing, and 396 yards of total offense

Northern threw their first interceptions of the season with three in the afternoon loss and suffered three sacks

The converted on just 3-of-13 third downs and 2-of-5 fourth downs

The NSU defense added one interception and two sacks of their own, holding the Mavericks to conversion rates of 3-of-12 on third down and 2-of-3 on fourth down

Northern led the contest with 124 total return yards, averaging 10.5 yards per punt return and 20.6 yards per kick return

Englehart and Joey Dube-Garrett threw for a combined 164 yards in the game, each suffering an interception with the final interception thrown by Kraft

Kraft marked his eighth rushing touchdown of the season, as well as fourth straight game with 100-plus yards, rushing for 154 total with a 55-yard long

Louie Schwabe led the receivers with 60 yards total, including a 30-yard long

For the second week in a row, Jake Adams recorded 15 tackles for the Wolves, followed by Cooper Logan with ten, including one tackle for a loss

The Wolves' two sacks came via edge Gabe Gutierrez for a total loss of six yards, with one forcing a fumble by Mitchell Thompson

Joshua Brown notched two pass break-ups, while Elijah Jopp recorded the Wolves interception in the fourth; Brown also added 2.0 tackles for a loss of five yards

Cooper Eisenbeisz led the team in returns with 99 total yards, including 88 on kickoffs with a 27-yard long

### NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Hank Kraft: 154 yards rushing, 11.8 yards per carry, 1 touchdown, 32 yards receiving

Jake Adams: 15 tackles, 9 solo tackles

Gabe Gutierrez: 2.0 sacks for a loss of 6 yards, 4 tackles, 1 forced fumble

Joshua Brown: 5 tackles, 2.0 tackles for a loss of 5 yards, 2 pass break-ups

BEYOND THE BOX SCORE: With his 2.0 sacks in the contest, Gabe Gutierrez has tied Bryar Johnson for the career sacks record with 17.0 total

UP NEXT: The Wolves return to the confines of Dacotah Bank Stadium next Saturday for the annual Gypsy Days game. Kick-off is set for 2:30 p.m. against the University of Mary. A full listing of Gypsy Days events can be found below.

## **Butte County Fatal Crash**

What: Single vehicle motorcycle fatal crash  
Where: U.S. 212 at mile marker 26, 11 miles east of Belle Fourche, South Dakota  
When: 7:07 a.m., Saturday, September 19, 2026

Driver 1: 55-year-old male from Newell, South Dakota, fatal injuries  
Vehicle 1: 2007 Harley-Davidson Electra Glide  
Helmet Used: No

Butte County, S.D.- A Newell man died Saturday in a single vehicle motorcycle crash near Belle Fourche, South Dakota.

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

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2007 Harley-Davidson Electra Glide was traveling eastbound on U.S. 212 near mile marker 26. The motorcycle left the roadway, drove through the ditch, and struck a fence. The driver sustained fatal injuries.

The investigation is ongoing. All information released is preliminary.

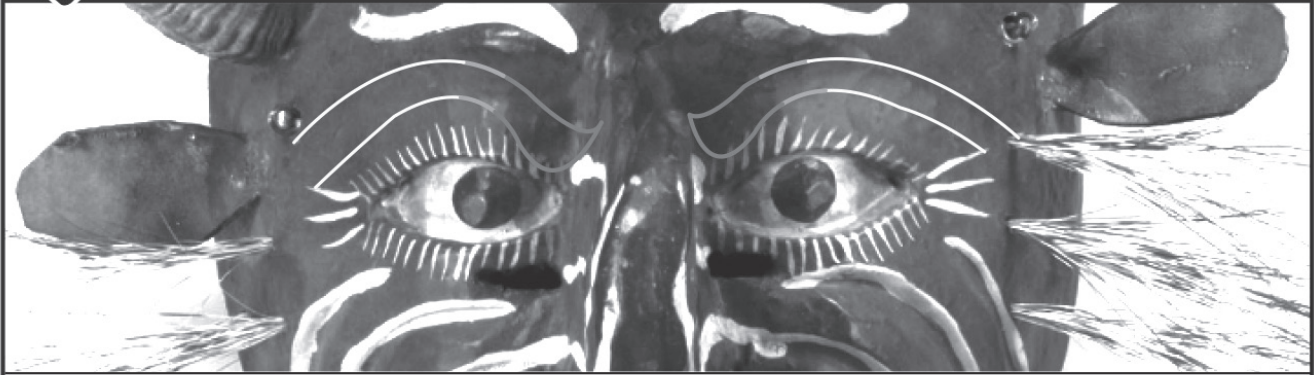
The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

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## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE



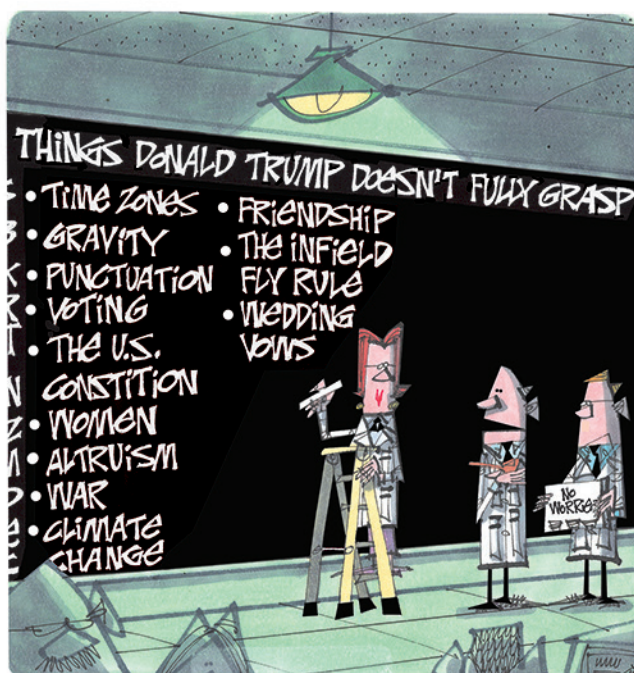
*Detail of Mexican devil mask dated to early 1900s*

But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you  
and guard you from the evil one.

2 THESSALONIANS 3:3



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"PUT IT ON THE LIST."

## BIBLE

## TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Damascus (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. From 2 Samuel 14, who was the best-looking man in Israel during King David's reign? *Joel, Samuel, David, Absalom*

3. After being healed, to whom did Naaman the Syrian speak about his future service in the house of Rimmon? *Saul, Christ, Elisha, Darius*

4. From John 3, who was a pharisee and ruler among the Jews? *Zacchaeus, Nicodemus, Judas, Peter*

5. Who was known as the "Supplanter"? *Aaron, Moses, Jacob, Hosea*

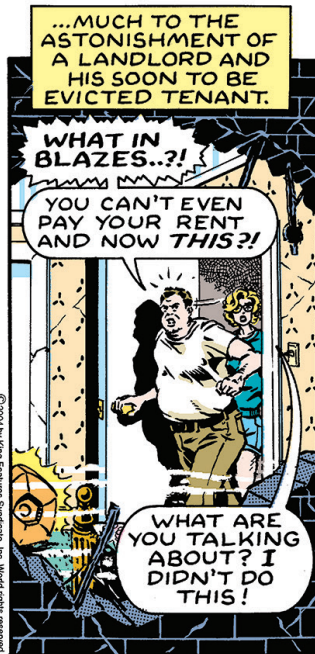
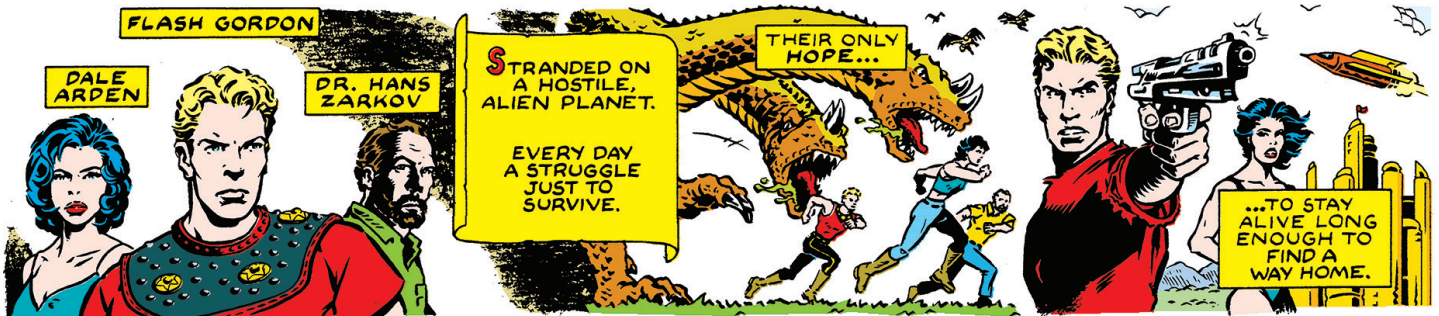
6. What was the name of David's first wife? *Rachel, Priscilla, Michal, Ruth*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Absalom, 3) Elisha, 4) Nicodemus, 5) Jacob, 6) Michal

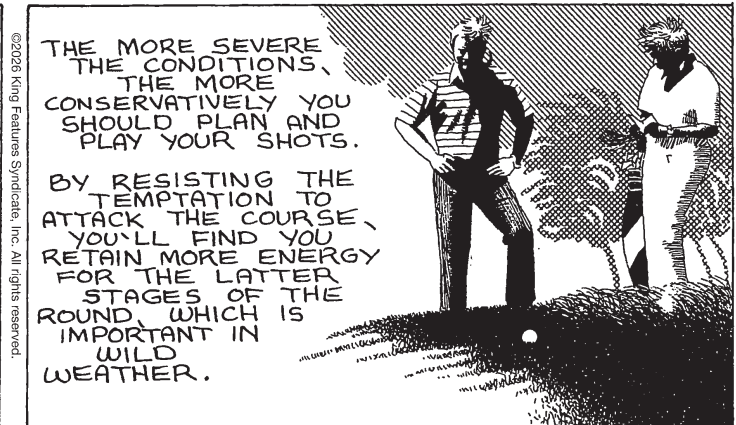
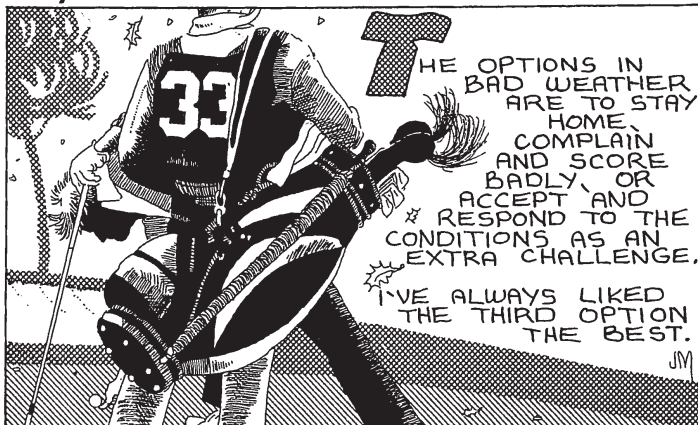
*Find expanded trivia online with Wilson Casey at [www.patreon.com/triviaguy](http://www.patreon.com/triviaguy). FREE TRIAL!*

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## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



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## Starches Should Be a Modest Part of a Mixed Meal

DEAR DR. ROACH: I'm a 77-year-old man who's prediabetic. I was told by a longtime diabetic that sugar (candy, soda, cake, etc.) doesn't need to be avoided -- just carbohydrates such as pasta, potatoes, etc. I was surprised to hear this. Is it really true? -- Anon.

ANSWER: We often use terms like carbohydrates, starches and sugars imprecisely. Strictly speaking, sugars are small molecules (usually 5 or 6 carbon molecules long), like glucose or fructose, which are called monosaccharides. These can also be combined into a single molecule (a disaccharide), which -- in the case of glucose plus fructose -- is called sucrose (table sugar).

Long strands of sugars that are strung together are called polysaccharides.

Starches are very long strands of glucose molecules, with anywhere from hundreds to tens of thousands of them in strings and branches. White rice and processed wheat flour (the primary ingredient in most pastas and many white breads) are largely comprised of starch.

Starch begins turning back into sugar before you even swallow it. An enzyme in saliva (amylase) breaks down the starch structure. White bread that's made from highly refined flour turns into sugar so rapidly that your blood sugar goes up nearly as fast from bread as it would from eating the same amount of sugar.

Starch and sugars are both carbohydrates, as is fiber, but fiber is indigestible to us. Fiber acts to slow down absorption, reducing the "spike" in blood sugar that occurs with refined starch. However, most foods that we eat are combinations of two or three macronutrients (the sources of calories), which are carbohydrates, proteins and fats.

Protein and fat both slow down the absorption of carbohydrates, similarly to fiber. Whole wheat flour contains fiber and protein, which is why it is preferred to processed white flour and doesn't spike the blood sugar as quickly or as high. Most vegetables have lots of fiber, so even though they're mostly carbohydrates (with a little protein), they aren't treated by your body in the same way that starchy foods are.

Partially because of the slower absorption, people tend to feel more full with fewer calories when protein, fat and fiber are included. Even so, proportions matter. A diet of 80% rice, 10% protein and 10% fat isn't going to be optimal for any person, especially one with diabetes.

People with diabetes don't need to completely avoid starches or even simple sugars. They're an important part of the diet, and as long as they form a modest proportion of a person's food intake and are consumed as part of a mixed meal, people shouldn't feel bad about eating them.

Many of my patients with diabetes use a continuous glucose monitor (CGM). By keeping track of what you eat, CGMs can give you immediate feedback on how food affects your blood sugar. Talk to your doctor about whether a CGM is right for you. People on insulin, people who have low blood sugar (especially if they don't notice it), and people who are changing their diet and exercise patterns are among those who might benefit from a CGM.

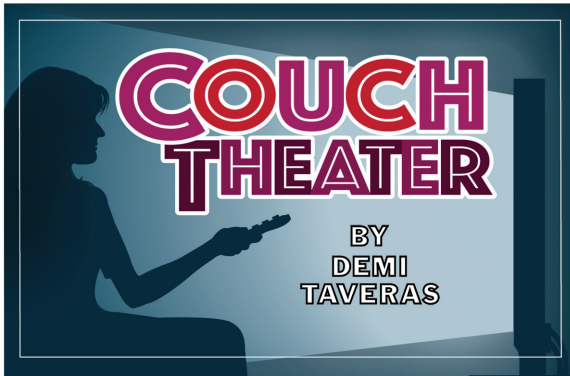
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to [ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu).

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**Lili Reinhart, left, and Tom Bateman star in "The Love Hypothesis."**

(Courtesy of MovieStillsDB)

"Unabomber" (R) -- One young actor who never came to play and is always up for a more mature role than his peers is Jacob Tremblay ("Sovereign"). Tremblay leads this crime drama as Unabomber Ted Kaczynski, opposite none other

than the prolific Russell Crowe ("The Get Out") and recent Emmy winner Shailene Woodley ("Paradise"). The film alternates between two timelines, with the first spanning Kaczynski's time at Harvard University starting in 1958, where he engages in psychological experiments. Meanwhile, the second begins in 1994, catapulting viewers to the FBI's pursuit of him for his crimes as a domestic terrorist. The two timelines work together to show Kaczynski's descent into becoming the Unabomber and to also provide some insight as to his motives. Look out for it on Sept. 25. (Netflix)

"American Horror Story: 13" (TV-MA) -- Thirteen seasons of "American Horror Story"! Can you believe it? It seems like only yesterday that "Murder House" (2011) became a phenomenon within the horror community. Over the years, we've come to love Ryan Murphy's chic and chaotic horror series, as well as its recurring cast of actors -- including the magical Sarah Paulson ("Monster: The Lizzie Borden Story"), Evan Peters ("Tron: Ares"), Billie Lourd ("Love Language"), and the incredible Jessica Lange ("Long Day's Journey into Night"). In this 13th season, Murphy's pulling off what he's described as an "Avengers-style crossover," with characters from his previous 12 seasons recurring to face the ultimate evil tied to the number 13. Make sure to look for characters from "Murder House," "Asylum," "Coven," "Freak Show," "Hotel" and more. The season's three-episode premiere kicks off on Sept. 24. (Hulu)

"Brothers" (TV-MA) -- At the recent Emmy Awards, Matthew McConaughey and Woody Harrelson presented the final award of Best Comedy Series, and they took this opportunity to tease their own upcoming comedy series that has its two-episode premiere coming on Sept. 23. In the series, McConaughey and Harrelson respectively play themselves, but in a fictional version of their lives. They're still the best of friends, much like in real life, and they decide to live together on McConaughey's Texas ranch after some family drama occurs with Harrelson's daughter. While living together at the ranch, a family secret is revealed in which the charming and hilarious duo could actually be biological brothers. The legendary Holland Taylor ("Fantasy Life") co-stars in the eight-episode series, as well as Natalie Martinez ("Bad Monkey"). (Apple TV)

"The Love Hypothesis" (R) -- Based on the best-selling novel by Ali Hazelwood, this rom-com doesn't shy away from the "fake dating" trope we've seen time and time again. But we all know that rom-com fans will eat it up! Starring Tom Bateman ("Hedda") and Lili Reinhart ("Forbidden Fruits"), the film follows two scientists -- professor Dr. Adam Carlsen (Bateman) and Ph.D. student Olive Smith (Reinhart). To prompt her friend to go out with a guy who's interested in her, Olive impulsively decides to make a move on the first random guy she sees, who ends up being Adam. Seeing that they both can benefit from a bit of fake dating, Adam and Olive agree to enter a faux relationship to prove to their friends and peers that their lives are somewhat stable. This ought to end well for all parties involved! Out on Sept. 23. (Amazon Prime Video)

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1. Which group released "Young Girl"?
2. Name the female artist whose nickname was Pearl.
3. Which group had a hit with "Jimmy Mack"?
4. Name the artist who released "Midnight at the Oasis."
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "They let you dream just to watch 'em shatter, You're just a step on the boss man's ladder, But you got dreams he'll never take away."

Answers

1. Gary Puckett & The Union Gap, in 1968. The song topped charts around the globe, including in Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, the U.K. and the U.S. Top 100.

2. Janis Joplin. She was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1995. During her career, she was associated with three bands: Big Brother and the Holding Company, Kozmic Blues Band, and the Full Tilt Boogie Band.

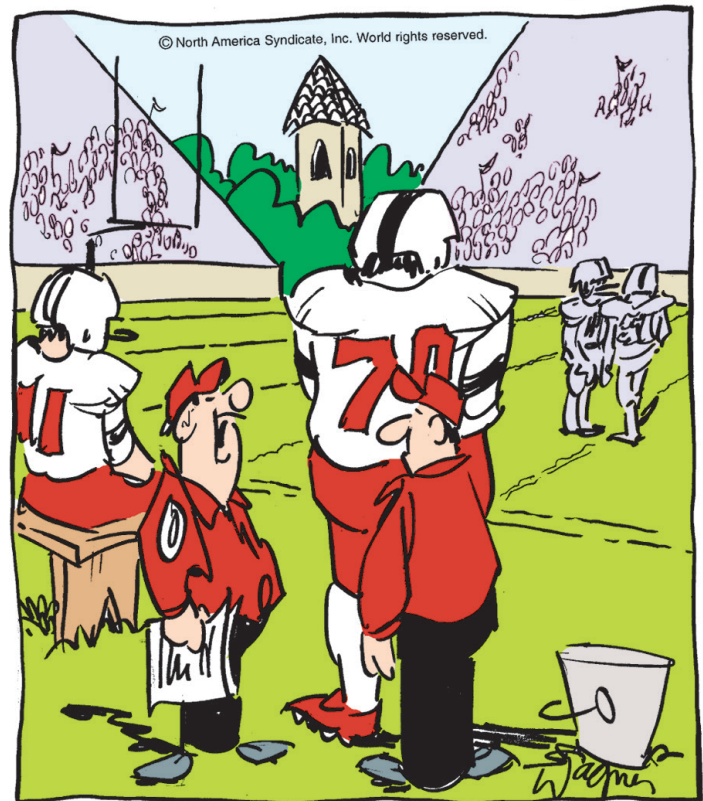
3. Martha and the Vandellas, in 1967. Sheena Easton released a cover in 1986.

4. Maria Muldaur, in 1973 on her debut album.

5. "9 to 5," by Dolly Parton. Written by Parton for the 1980 film of the same name, the song received a Grammy for Best Country Song and Best Country Vocal Performance as well as several other awards. Parton passed away in August 2026.

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**GRIN and BEAR IT** *Wagner*



"I'M not telling him to move. YOU tell him!"

## Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY  
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Menu is shorter. 2. Pad is longer. 3. Finger is moved. 4. Curtain is not as wide. 5. Apron strap is moved. 6. Tie is missing.

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\* Spring bulbs need a few weeks in the ground to get established before the first of the frosts. If you're just getting around to planting your spring bulbs, here is a great garden design tip: Use kebab skewers to figure out the bulbs' placement in the garden.

\* "Place an ice cube (or chips) in carpet divots left behind by furniture legs. This will help the fibers "plump up," and the spot will disappear!" -- A.L. in Utah

\* Felt circles are great for putting under small appliances on the kitchen counter. They shift better, but they don't scratch the countertops. You can find them at the hardware store, or make your own custom ones by cutting out what you need from a piece of felt and attaching it to the bottom of your appliance

with double-stick tape or even a drop of glue!

\* Running a machine that isn't full not only wastes energy and water, it also wastes your money because you are paying to run more washes. Always fill the machine -- but remember not to overload it! This applies to both your dishwasher and your clothes washer.

\* "To help repel the dust on baseboards between cleanings, wipe with a used dryer sheet. To make this even easier, you can put the dryer sheet over a Swiffer-type floor cleaner. This way, you do not even have to bend down." -- M.E. in Alabama

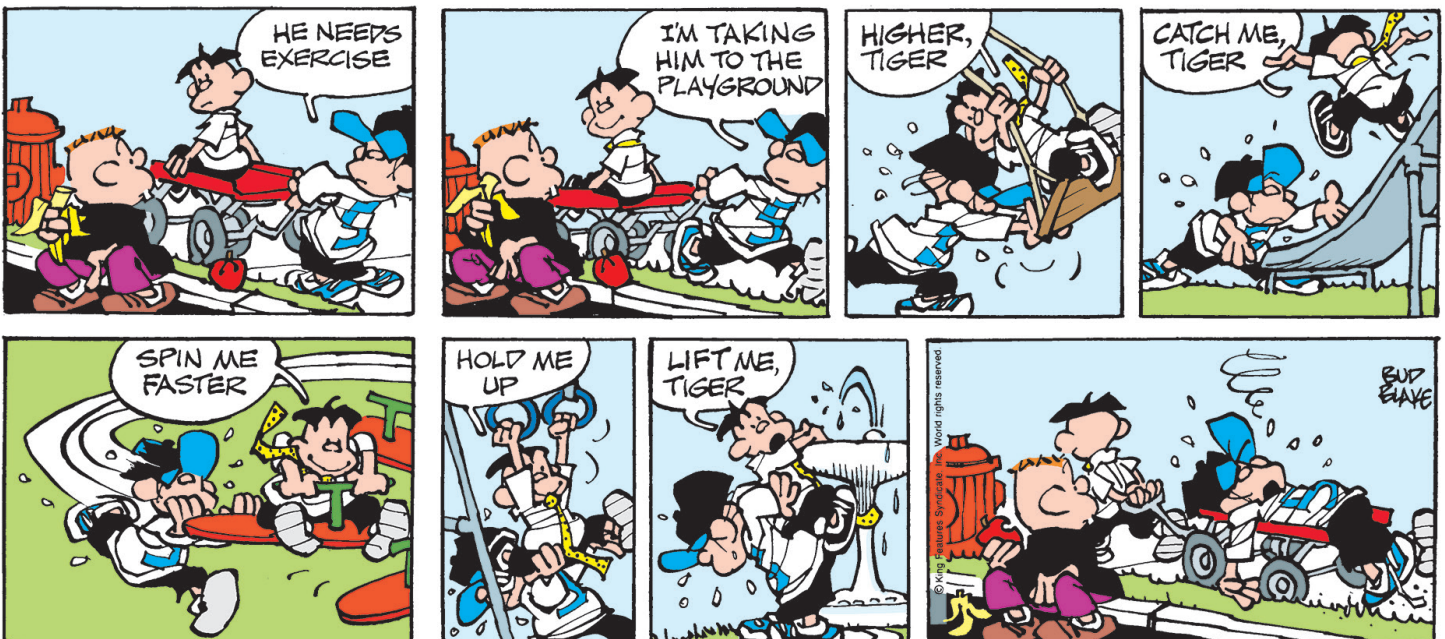
\* "You can use plain alcohol on a paper towel to wipe down your house telephone. I do this a couple of times a week during cold season. Also, purchase a pack of electronics wipes so everyone can keep his or her cellphone screen clean. Think about it: We constantly touch the screen with our fingers, then stick it right up to our faces!" -- W.R. in New York

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 1800 Pembroke Dr., Suite 300, Orlando, FL 32810.

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**TIGER**

by **BUD BLAKE**



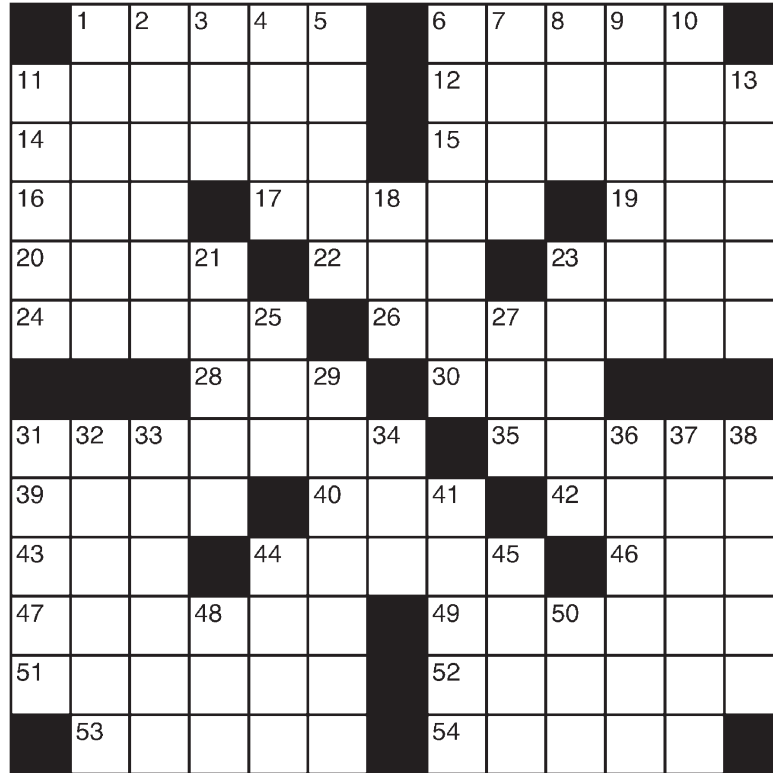
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## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Bath powders  
6 Selected  
11 Patronize, as a bistro  
12 Cuts at an angle  
14 Long-haired cat  
15 Rise in defiance  
16 Montmartre Mrs.  
17 Wide  
19 Big fuss  
20 — ale  
22 Rocker Nugent  
23 Raced  
24 Nosh at midnight  
26 Bishop's district  
28 Free (of)  
30 Spanish gold  
31 Pianist Arrau  
35 Slowpoke  
39 Fireplace shelves  
40 Ump's call  
42 Old U.S. gas brand  
43 Balloon filler  
44 Impetus  
46 Weeding tool  
47 Roma's land  
49 Pub perches



- 51 Pay off  
52 Digital greetings  
53 Lasso  
54 Afternoon hour

### DOWN

- 1 Dorothy's friend  
2 Germany's Merkel  
3 Sign before Virgo  
4 Keto restriction  
5 Kick off  
6 Trucker's device  
7 Obey  
8 Eggs  
9 Mexican shawl  
10 Shakes off  
11 Muffles  
13 Fine china brand  
18 British ref. work  
21 Beige shades  
23 Tea biscuit  
25 Tease  
27 Choice words?

- 29 Museum display  
31 Desk go-with  
32 Hang around  
33 Rub the wrong way  
34 Gigi's "yes"  
36 On the beach  
37 Tristan's love  
38 Windblown soil  
41 Sports bar fixture  
44 Food regimen  
45 Engrave  
48 Meadow  
50 Rowing need

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## King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

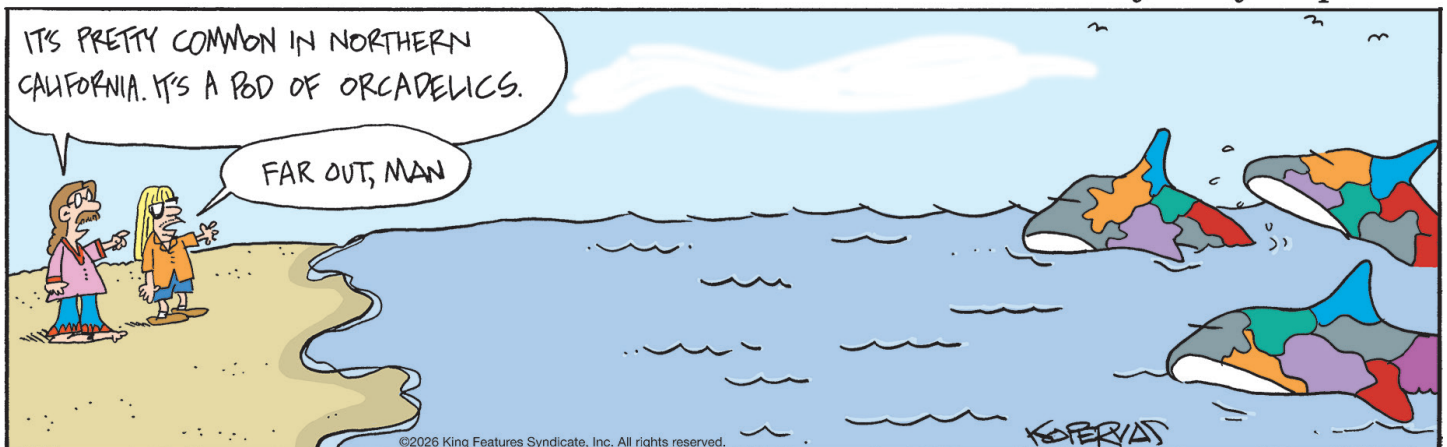
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Olive



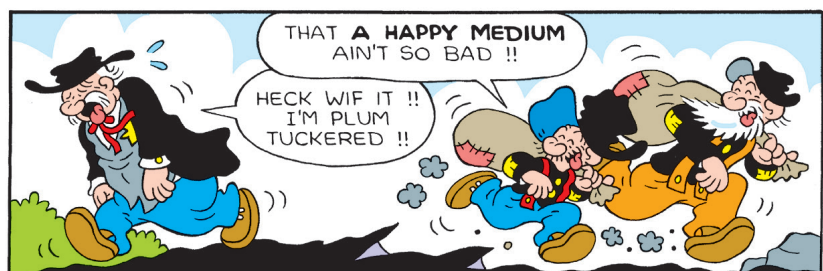
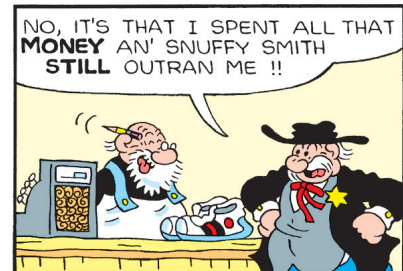
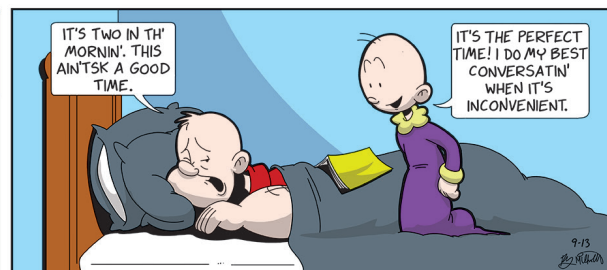
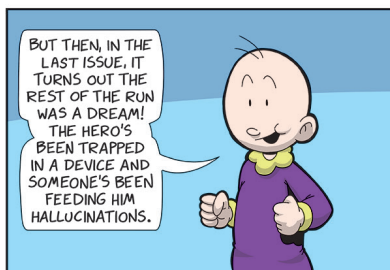
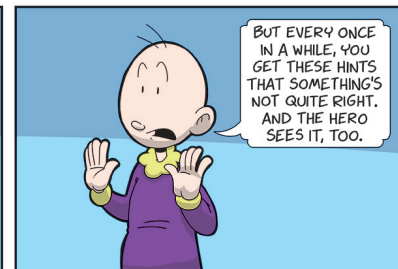
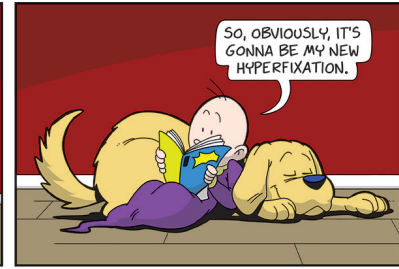
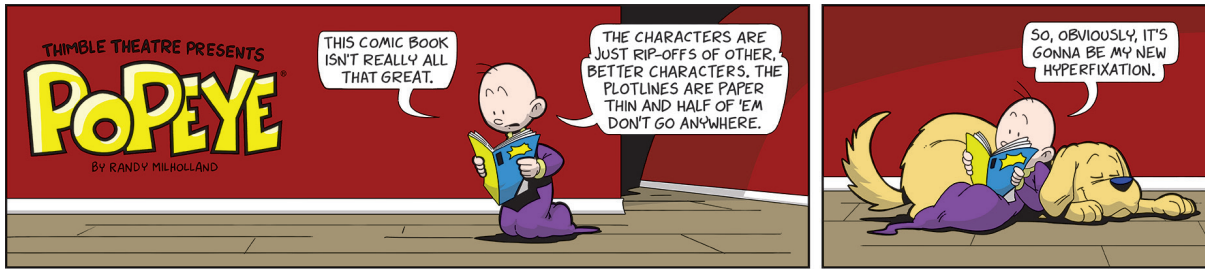
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



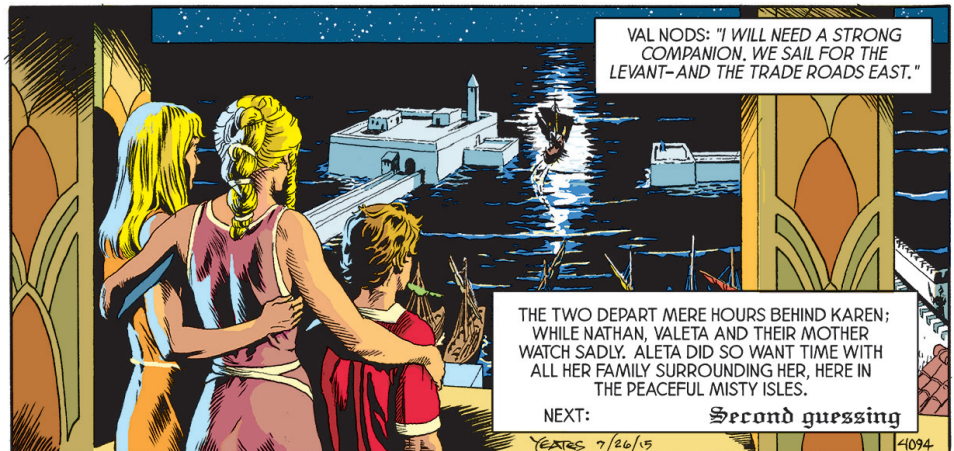
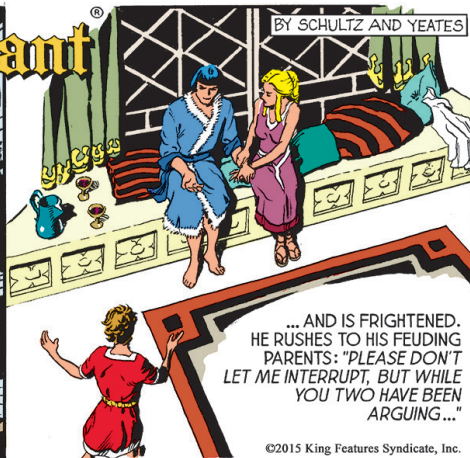
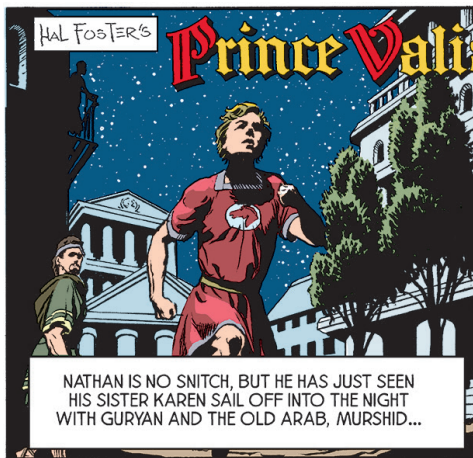
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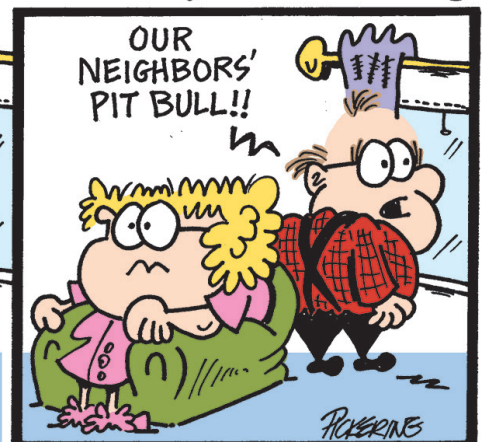
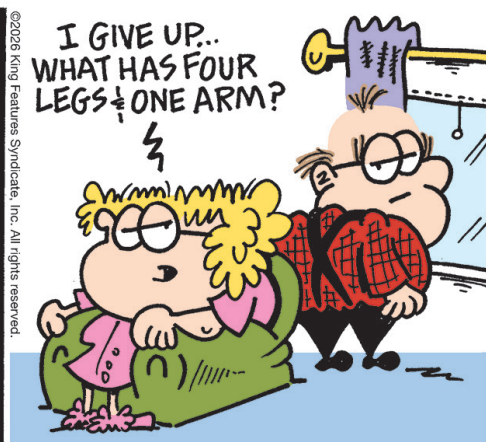
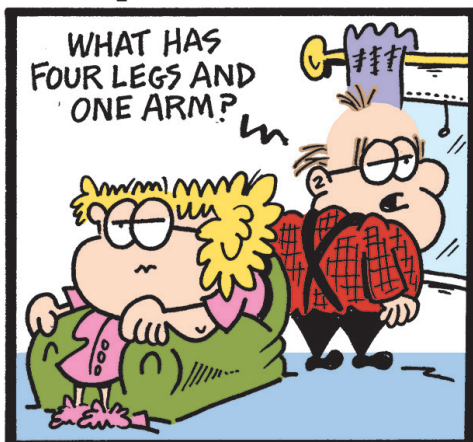
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## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### Sometimes less is better

Researchers studying how the body responds to exercise had some very surprising results recently. While the study document was packed with medical terms and graphs, the end result was clear. In this case, when it came to one particular exercise, it turned out that less was better than more.

One group of participants completed six 30-second exercises called sprint interval training (SIT), working at maximum intense effort on an exercise bike. They rested for four minutes between each exercise. The other group of participants had a fairly leisurely experience on an exercise bike, pedaling at moderate speed for 90 minutes.

Blood samples were taken just before any exercise was started, when the exercise was finished and three hours later.

The results: One-quarter of the proteins in the blood were changed by the sprinter exercises, while the leisurely cyclers barely saw a change of one-quarter of one percent of those proteins. Those proteins are important and affect type 2 diabetes, obesity, blood vessel growth, metabolic disorders and more.

While the results of this research just came out, the idea is apparently not new. Ten years ago the National Institutes of health (NIH) published a document extolling the benefits of sprint interval training as a way to get sedentary individuals to exercise. They looked at several studies, each with different numbers of sprints of varying lengths. They concluded that less is more -- fewer sprints of shorter time -- to improve health markers.

Before you try this on your own, ask your doctor what he or she thinks about high intensity exercise for you. Don't settle for, "Yes, that's fine. Any exercise is good." Insist on specific instruction. Ask: How many sprints; how long for each one?

You might consider a free email subscription to HealthBeat ([www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat](http://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat)), a publication of Harvard Medical School. Each issue contains information on staying healthy through diet and simple exercises, the latest in medical advances and more.

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1. Which golfer recorded two rounds under 60 in his PGA Tour career with a 58 at the 2016 Travelers Championship and a 59 at the 2013 BMW Championship?

2. Name the tennis player who was disqualified for misconduct during the fourth round of the 1990 Australian Open.

3. How many points did the Houston Rockets score during the overtime period in their 113-96 loss to the Portland Trail Blazers on Jan. 22, 1983?

4. Who became the first Black referee in the NFL when he was promoted to the position in 1988?

5. Name the sports equipment and apparel company that was founded by Minoru Yoneyama in Japan in 1946 and is a world leader in producing badminton racquets.

6. Which Basketball Hall of Famer coached the Stanford Cardinal to three NCAA women's national championships during her tenure from 1986 to 2024?

7. How many separate stints did Rickey Henderson have with the Oakland Athletics as a player?



by Ryan A. Berenz

## Answers

1. Jim Furyk.

2. John McEnroe.

3. Zero.

4. Johnny Grier.

5. Yonex.

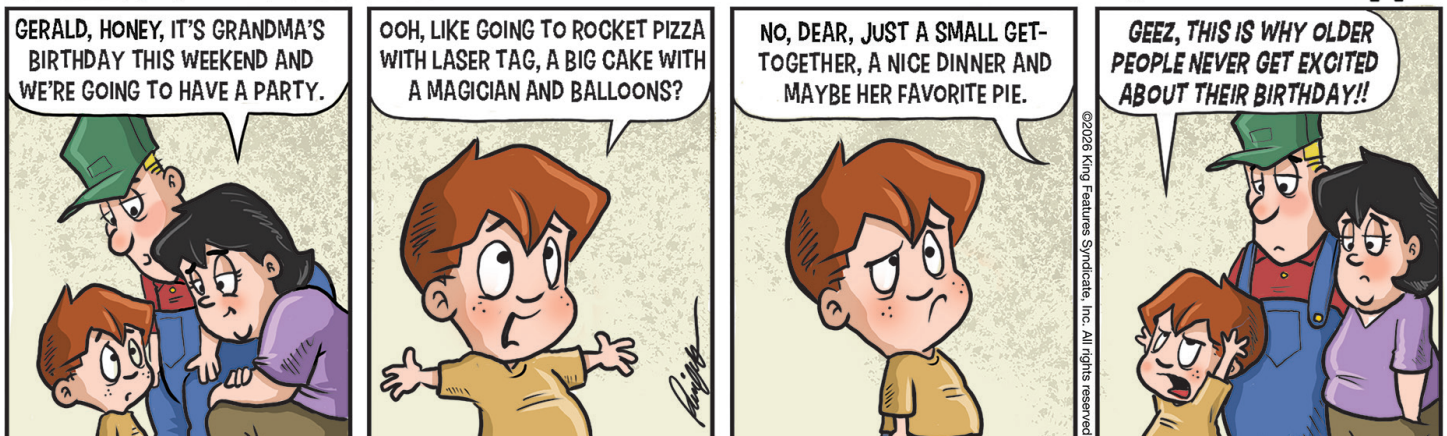
6. Tara VanDerveer.

7. Four (1979-84, 1989-93, 1994-95, 1998).

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



## Safe pest control around pets



DEAR PAW'S CORNER: We recently moved, with our Springer Spaniel "Gabe," into an old New England house. It unfortunately was already inhabited by a few critters! We quickly rehomed the chipmunks, but it's clear from the tiny droppings behind our stove that the mice haven't gotten the message. What pest control can I use that won't harm my dog? -- Gerald & Doug in North Adams, Massachusetts

DEAR GERALD: Old houses are charming and full of surprises -- especially mice, which can squeeze through spaces one-third their size. And this time of year, mice and other rodents are looking for cozy, warm places to hole up for the winter. A house with a warm kitchen and lots of crumbs everywhere is their ideal winter vacation

spot.

Pest control is essential to maintain a healthy (and happy) home. To keep pets safe, avoid using poisoned bait (which can be just as tempting to dogs and cats). Sticky traps are risky as well -- a curious paw can get stuck fast.

Snap traps are a highly effective option, but must be placed out of reach of your pet. Enclosed snap traps are available to prevent painful incidents, but in my experience they don't work as well as the two-dollar specials. If you're squeamish about cleanup, or opposed to killing cute little field mice, a live trap is an option -- you'll need to rehome them several miles away and far from anyone else's house.

If traps or nontoxic pest control don't work, consider calling in a professional pest control service, which can apply deterrents and traps in areas that are not accessible by your dog.

Send your tips, comments or questions to [ask@pawscorner.com](mailto:ask@pawscorner.com).

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## Strange BUT TRUE

\* When women run, their breasts don't just move up and down; they move in a complex figure-eight pattern, with about six inches of motion with each stride.

\* Snakes had back legs for 70 million years before losing them.

\* Early sodas were marketed as cure-alls for impotence, stomach pain, scurvy, alcoholism, opium addictions, nervousness and more.

\* During WWII, the Japanese launched 9,000 paper and

rubberized-silk balloons carrying incendiary and anti-personnel bombs to the U.S. More than 1,000 hit their targets, and reached as far east as Michigan.

\* If the U.S. Army were a city, it would be the 10th largest in the U.S.

\* During the 1986 World Cup quarterfinal against England, Diego Maradona punched the ball into the net without the referee noticing, quipping afterward that it had been scored "a little with the head of Maradona and a little with the hand of God."

\* Before the Civil War, disbelief in the in Bible or profaning the Sabbath were campus crimes at Yale.

\* The United States American Nurses Association ended their policy of racially segregating nurses in response to the urgent need for nurses during WWII.

\* Original Celtic bonfires were more aptly named bone fires, as the Celts threw animal bones into the flames to ward off evil spirits.

\* The word "Nintendo" roughly translates to "leave luck to heaven."

\* Police officers in Hawaii were once allowed to have sex with prostitutes during undercover sting operations.

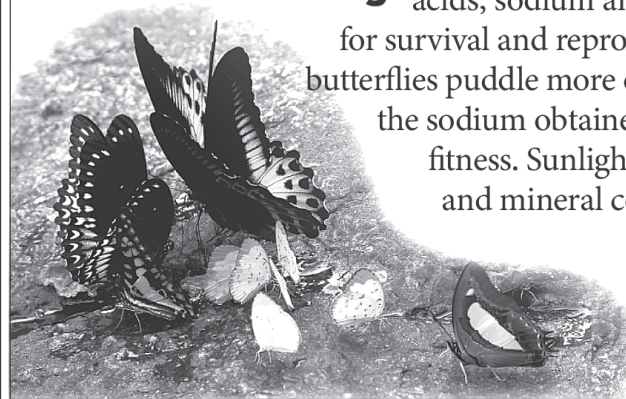
\* The term "Indian" originated with Christopher Columbus, who thought he had landed in the East Indies.

\* According to the Giant Impact theory, a Mars-size planet struck a blow to Earth and splashed off rocks and debris into space, creating a huge ring that later formed the moon.

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "Make failure your teacher, not your undertaker." -- Zig Ziglar

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This behavior, where butterflies and other insects gather to feed at sandy puddles, moist soil, or on dung, carrion or animal secretions, enables them

### Puddling

to supplement their diet with amino acids, sodium and nitrogen necessary for survival and reproductive success. Male butterflies puddle more often than females, as the sodium obtained enhances offspring fitness. Sunlight, moisture, humidity and mineral concentration strongly affect site selection.

– Brenda Weaver

Source:  
Vigyan Varta 6

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by Freddy Groves

## Speeding up the process

An executive order was recently signed that will reduce the time it takes to secure our benefits. The order, signed by President Trump, is titled "Accelerating Access to Veterans' Benefits and Employment Opportunities." It accomplishes this by requiring the Department of Defense and the VA to work together and share records from the first day a veteran joins the military.

In the past there have been delays in accessing benefits -- education, job training, healthcare and all the others -- when a veteran leaves active-duty service, mostly due to antiquated records management.

Now, within 180 days, the order requires the VA and the Department of Defense to update the information technology that will let them share information from day one of a veteran's service.

Also within 180 days they will create digital tools to streamline the process of a veteran applying for benefits and training offered by the Department of Labor.

Within one month they need to be able to share all the health files and records of a veteran immediately when they are discharged from military service.

Within 120 days, working with Health and Human Services (HHS), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and others, the various departments will review any current contracts for information technology to ensure that the contracts include the requirement that any systems with veteran files and health records be compatible with the technology and systems used by the VA and the Department of Defense.

Have you ever known any government activity to move this fast? And that's not all.

Within 180 days every veteran leaving the service will either be hooked up with jobs in their field (if desired), enrolled in career and tech education or training (again, if desired), and connected with a veteran's rep who will help with applications for home loans, job placement, education benefits, disability compensation or healthcare.

One thing not to miss is the Department of Defense's Project Patriot Pipeline ([www.mypatriotcareer.mil](http://www.mypatriotcareer.mil)). This huge website has a wealth of information for veterans, service members and military spouses looking for career development and opportunities.

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## Wishing Well®

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HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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1. GEOGRAPHY: Which South American country has two capitals?
2. AD SLOGANS: Which car company uses the ad slogan "Let's go places"?
3. FOOD & DRINK: What is a johnny cake primarily made of?
4. LITERATURE: In which Harry Potter novel is the portkey (a method of magical transportation) first mentioned?
5. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is the most popular animal used on national flags?
6. MOVIES: What object is Wilson in the movie "Cast Away"?
7. U.S. STATES: Which U.S. state is the only one that has parishes instead of counties?
8. MUSIC: Which 1980s band released the album titled "Synchronicity"?
9. TELEVISION: What is James Kirk's middle name in the "Star Trek" series?
10. MYTHOLOGY: Who is the Greek goddess of wisdom?

### Trivia answers

1. Bolivia, Sucre and La Paz.
2. Toyota.
3. Cornmeal.
4. "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire."
5. The lion.
6. A Wilson-brand volleyball.
7. Louisiana.
8. The Police.
9. Tiberius.
10. Athena.

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South Dakota Governor



**Larry Rhoden**



**South Dakota:** *Under God, the People Rule*

## The Real Cost

Things are pretty good in South Dakota. Our economy remains one of the strongest in the nation. Our unemployment rate has been lowest in America for several years running. And our GDP growth routinely outpaces the rest of the country. But things aren't perfect – there's always ways we can improve. As I travel the state, I hear from South Dakotans who are frustrated by stubbornly high prices in too many aspects of their day-to-day lives, whether that be at the gas pump, the grocery store checkout, or when they receive their medical bill.

When government gets too involved in the economy, it tends to make things a lot more expensive. Businesses waste time, effort, and money trying to comply with regulations. Fortunately, South Dakota doesn't have that problem in the way other states do. We base our regulations in common sense, we cut red tape, and we have the 2nd fewest overall regulations in the nation.

But continued challenges at the national level do impact South Dakotans, and we are doing what we can to address them.

For instance, gas prices have been far too high. Let me be clear: I recognize the need to keep America safe from the threat of a nuclear Iran. But I also want South Dakotans to be able to afford to fill up their tank. So I've been working with the Trump Administration to make ethanol more available, which gives people a more affordable option at the pump. Earlier this year, the Trump Administration granted South Dakota a waiver so that we can provide E-15 year-round. This keeps gas prices down and has the added benefit of giving corn farmers an additional market to sell their crops to!

Healthcare costs also continue to rise year after year. This past year, for the first time in South Dakota history, it cost state taxpayers more to cover Medicaid costs than to pay for K-12 education. Frankly, it should not be that way, but it's a direct result of the federal government kicking more and more of the cost of Medicaid down to the states. And we're working with the Trump Administration to address that, as well.

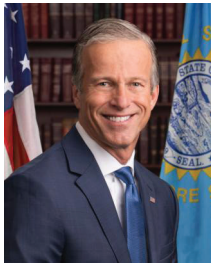
South Dakotans are also frustrated about rising property taxes – in fact, that's the most consistent affordability concern I hear about. I'm proud to say that we delivered the largest property tax cut in South Dakota history this year, and you'll see your taxes drop by a healthy margin next year. In counties where the local option property tax cut is implemented, the cut will be an average of 34%, which is meaningful relief. But even in places that don't opt into Senate Bill 96, the cut will still be around 15% statewide, so every homeowner should see a real impact.

These are the kinds of things that government should focus on. It isn't our job to tell you how to live your life or to tell business owners how they should do their jobs. It's our role to create a level playing field, then get out of the way, so that folks can enjoy their God-given rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And that is the approach I will continue to take.

I will continue to find ways to be part of the solution and help lower costs so that we can make life more affordable for the people of South Dakota. That is how we will keep our state strong, safe, and free.

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**JOHN THUNE**  
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

## Promises Made, Promises Kept

At this time two years ago, with President Biden and Democrats in charge, our country was dealing with an inflation crisis and a historic immigration crisis. Democrats' reckless spending contributed to the worst inflation in 40 years, and their open-border policies led to record-breaking illegal immigration. These were the hallmarks of President Biden and Democrats' stint in power, and it's no surprise that the American people voted for change.

Republicans' top priorities when we came into office two years ago was addressing these crises. That started with preventing a massive tax hike on hardworking Americans – a tax hike that would have cost a typical South Dakota family \$2,500. But because of Republicans' landmark Working Families Tax Cuts, that tax hike never came. In fact, because of Republicans' efforts, 97 percent of tax filers saw a tax cut this year, collectively saving \$82 billion they otherwise would have had to send to the IRS.

Our efforts to help Americans keep more of their money didn't stop with this landmark tax relief though. Republicans have also cut burdensome regulations that would have driven up prices for hardworking Americans. That includes repealing the California electric vehicle mandate, which would have forced Americans into costly electric cars. It also includes regulations that would have driven up the cost of appliances. We passed landmark legislation to keep Americans from being priced out of the housing market. And at the beginning of this year, we took action to drive down costs at the pharmacy counter, ensuring patients get the savings from any discounts or rebates in their health care plans.

Border security has also been a top priority for Republicans. President Trump took swift action to get the situation at our southern border under control, and the drop in illegal immigration has been staggering: a 90 percent decrease compared to the crisis of the Biden era. For 16 consecutive months, zero illegal immigrants were released from the border into the interior. These efforts have been aided by the support Republicans provided for border security in the Working Families Tax Cuts, funding that supports finishing the border wall, hiring more border agents, and deploying technology at the border, and the results speak for themselves.

Republicans have tackled the biggest problems from the Biden era. We've put more money in Americans' pockets, worked to bring down costs, and ended the crisis at the southern border. But our work is not done. We have more on our to-do list, and hardworking Americans will continue to be at the top of Republicans' agenda.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

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## A Flashback to My Grandfather's Pipe

This week, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I went shopping. Normally, I don't go shopping, at least not with her. However, this was a special occasion, and so I tagged along.

I'm not quite sure what she was shopping for, and after 55 years of marital bliss, I don't ask. I have found that if I ask, she'll respond, which is more than I want.

We were in the store for just a few moments, and she had to go down an aisle to get some stuff, so I went the other way. If I tagged along with her, she would say repeatedly, "What do you think of this? You think I should get this?"

Telling her what she needs is so far above my pay grade that I'll never reach it. I have learned to let her make her own decisions, which makes our home a happy place. I like my happy place.

I was going down several aisles when I saw something I hadn't seen in a long time. There, in a glass case, was a large collection of smoking pipes. Looking at them, one flashed my grandfather's face back. I was stunned. Nothing like this had ever happened to me before.

Looking at that one pipe, I realized it was exactly the kind my grandfather had. Since my grandfather died over 50 years ago, I was surprised I remembered what his pipe looked like.

I looked at it and came very close to purchasing it in memory of my grandfather. I'm sure he would've enjoyed that. I don't smoke, and I had no plans to smoke that pipe; I was just looking at it and being reminded of my grandfather. He never went anywhere without that pipe. I'm not sure what that pipe meant to him, but he was really attached to it. Sometimes he had it when he wasn't even smoking.

Many times, I spent an afternoon with my grandfather; as we were chatting, he puffed on his pipe. I never could understand why he did that, but I watched him, and that picture stayed clear in my mind. I never expected to have this kind of experience, and I can't remember the last time I thought about my grandfather.

As I was enjoying my view, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage came up and said, "You're not thinking what I think you're thinking? Are you?"

After all these years of marital bliss, I still can't figure out the latest question she throws my way.

I turned around, looked at her, and said, "What do you think I'm thinking?"

She just stared at me, and finally I said, "See that pipe right there? That is the exact pipe that my grandfather had when I was a young boy."

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She looked at it, smiled very gingerly, and said, "Are you thinking of buying it?"

I looked at her for a moment, then looked back at the pipe and thought for a long time.

"Well, I gave that a little bit of thought because it would be a great reminder to me of my grandfather. That pipe defined him in many regards."

"Where would you like to hang it at the house?" She asked.

Chuckling a little, I looked back at her and said, "I said I gave it a little bit of thought, but as much as I would like to, I am not going to buy a pipe and take it home."

As we were going home in the Sissy Van, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage said, "What is it about that pipe that reminded you so much of your grandfather?"

That's the kind of question you can't answer in a few words. Thinking along those lines, for the first time in many years, I thought about my grandfather and all the good times we had together; he was a Class A prankster in many ways. If anybody could prank you, it was my grandfather.

One prank I remember was when our pastor came to visit him, and when he left, he forgot his hat. That was my grandfather's cue to prank the pastor.

My grandfather took the pastor's hat to a friend who owned a men's clothing store. He had that friend stretch the hat almost twice its original size.

The next Sunday my grandfather came to church and brought the pastor's hat with him. After the service, he went up to the pastor with the hat and said, "Pastor, you left your hat at my place this past week. I thought I'd bring it to you today."

The pastor was happy because he couldn't remember where he left his hat. He took it from my grandfather, put it on his head, and it slid down to his chin. Very slowly, the pastor took his hat off, looked at my grandfather, and tried to smile.

That's just the beginning of the pranks I remember my grandfather playing.

That event brought a Bible verse to mind.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

I often get frustrated when I forget something. As a Christian, I can rely on the Holy Spirit to bring to my mind what I need to know and when I need to know it.

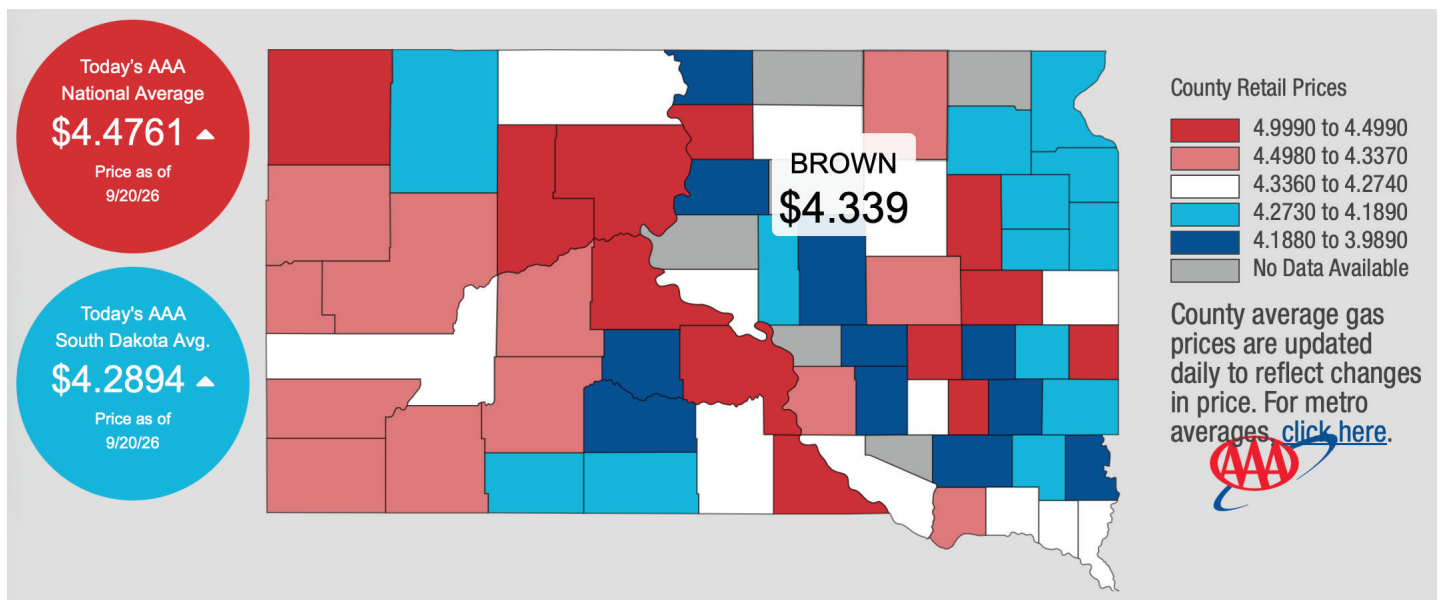
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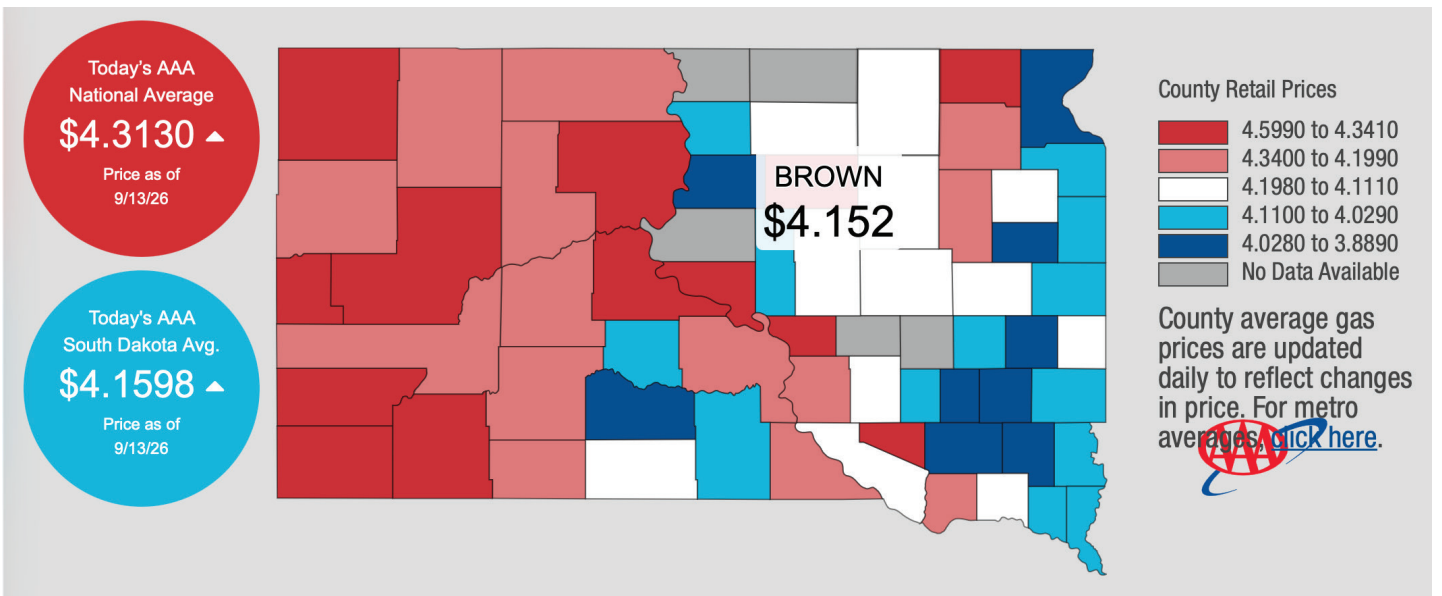
## South Dakota Average Gas Prices

|                | Regular  | Mid-Grade | Premium  | Diesel   |
|----------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Current Avg.   | \$4.2894 | \$4.5081  | \$5.0713 | \$6.2578 |
| Yesterday Avg. | \$4.2872 | \$4.4927  | \$5.0611 | \$6.2349 |
| Week Ago Avg.  | \$4.1598 | \$4.3870  | \$4.9273 | \$5.8577 |
| Month Ago Avg. | \$4.0842 | \$4.3050  | \$4.7825 | \$5.1980 |
| Year Ago Avg.  | \$2.9888 | \$3.1680  | \$3.6293 | \$3.4067 |

### This Week



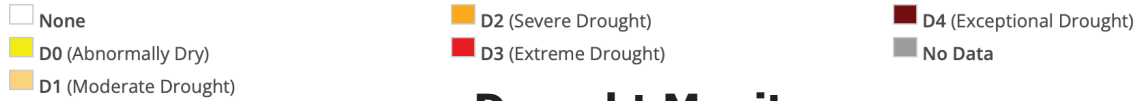
### Last Week



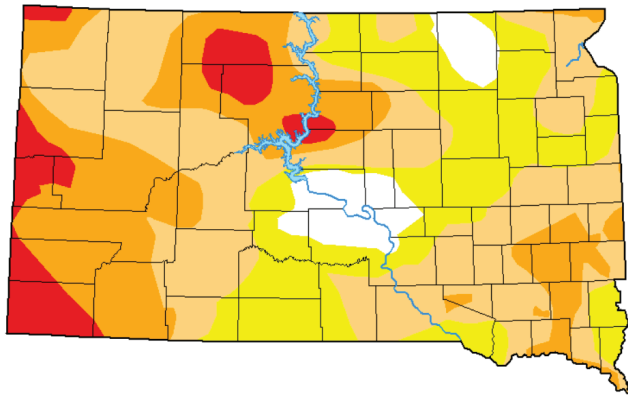
# Groton Daily Independent

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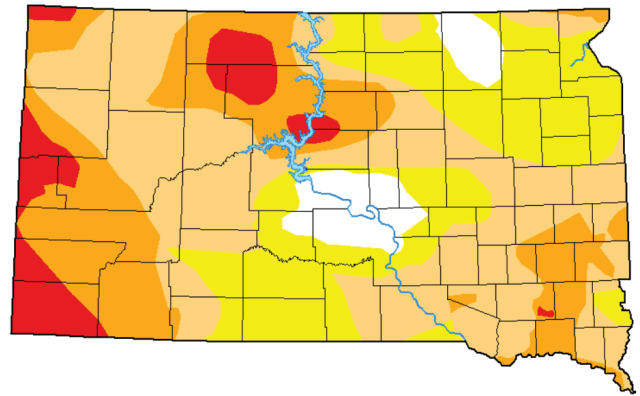
## Drought Classification



## Drought Monitor



Sept. 15



Sept. 8

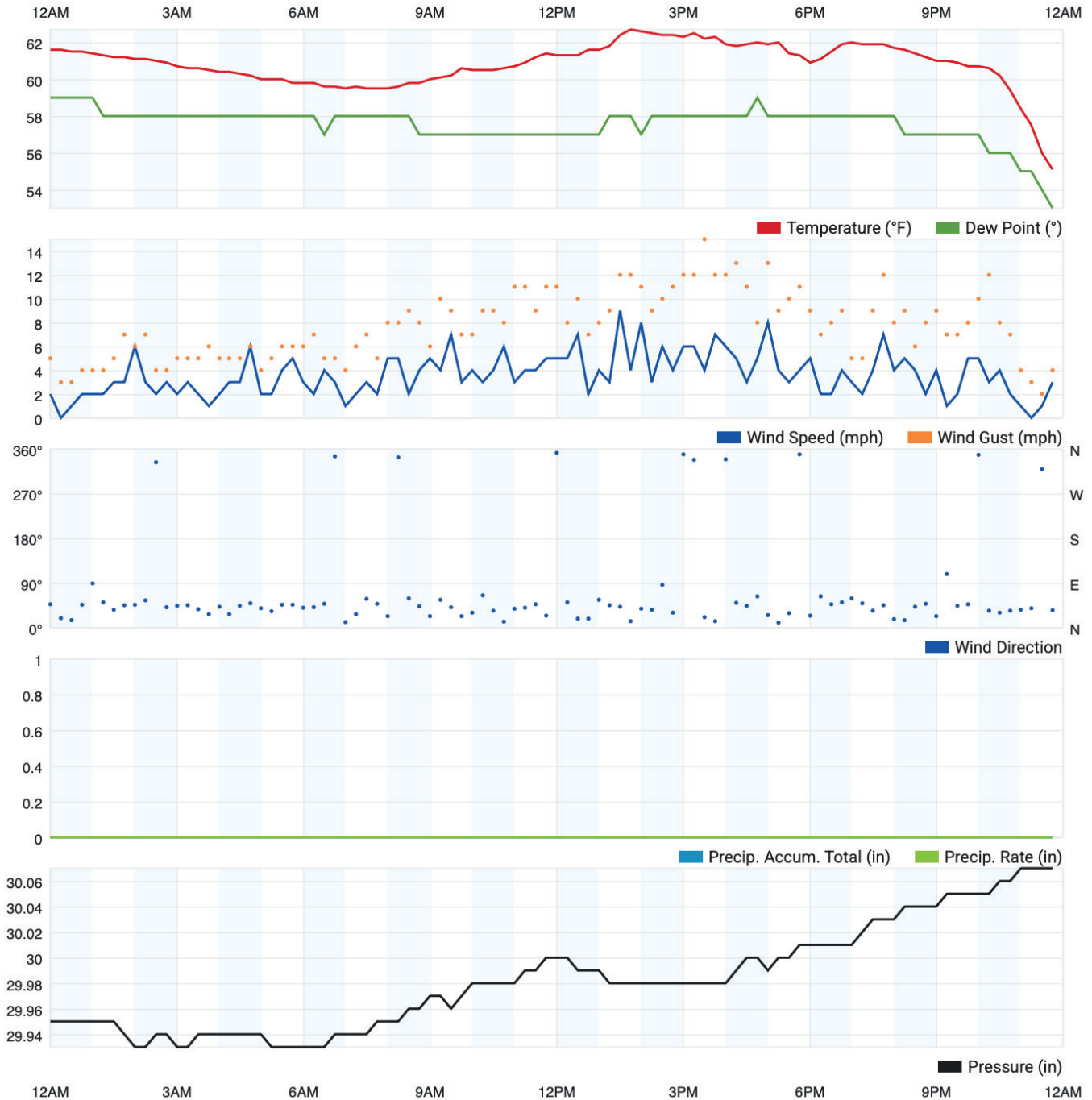
Eastern Kansas had above normal precipitation over the past week; this led to improvement in drought conditions in this area. Eastern Nebraska and eastern South Dakota also had decent rainfall and resulting improvement to drought. Other areas of South Dakota that missed out on the rain had drought degradation. Colorado had drought degradations in the center part of the state, with drought improvements in both the southwest and southeast parts. Extreme drought continues over much of Colorado and Wyoming, western Nebraska and the Dakotas, and in eastern North Dakota. Exceptional drought is observed over much of central Colorado as well as two localized areas in far western Nebraska.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

September 19, 2026



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Sunday

Sunday Night

Monday

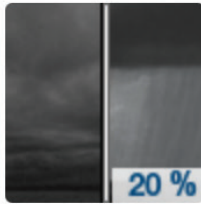
Monday Night

Tuesday



High: 65 °F

Slight Chance  
Drizzle and  
Patchy Fog  
then Cloudy



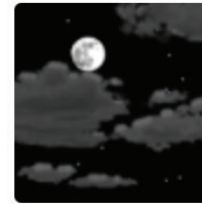
Low: 48 °F

Cloudy then  
Slight Chance  
Showers



High: 65 °F

Decreasing  
Clouds



Low: 41 °F

Partly Cloudy



High: 67 °F

Sunny

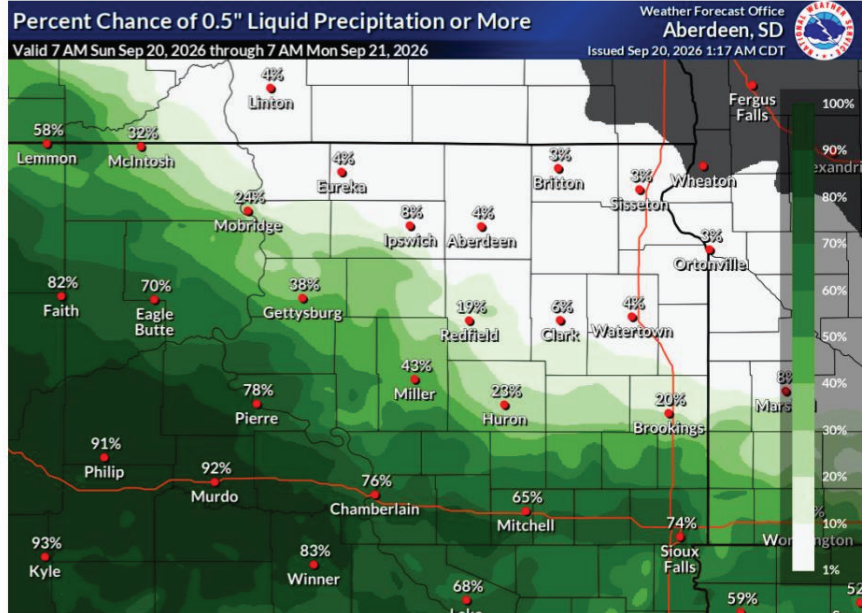


## Another Round of Rain Today Through Monday AM

September 20, 2026  
2:59 AM

### Key Messages

- Rain will spread eastward across central SD today to portions of east central SD by this evening and continuing overnight.
  - Much of northeastern SD and western MN will remain dry.
- Lingering rain across south central SD Monday morning before moving out by late morning.
- **There is a 70-90% chance of rainfall of a half inch or more along and south of a line from Eagle Butte to Chamberlain.**
  - 40-70% chance of 1" or more across south central SD.
- Low clouds will persist into Monday resulting in periods of reduced visibility along higher terrain.



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Rain will spread eastward across central SD today to portions of east central SD by this evening and continuing overnight. There is a 70-90% chance of rainfall of a half inch or more along and south of a line from Eagle Butte to Chamberlain. Last of the rain will move out of south central SD early Monday morning.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 63 °F at 1:38 PM**

**Low Temp: 56 °F at 11:28 PM**

**Wind: 17 mph at 3:20 PM**

**Precip: 0.00**

## Today's Info

Record High: 94 in 1937

Record Low: 20 in 1901

Average High: 73

Average Low: 45

Average Precip in Sept.: 1.33

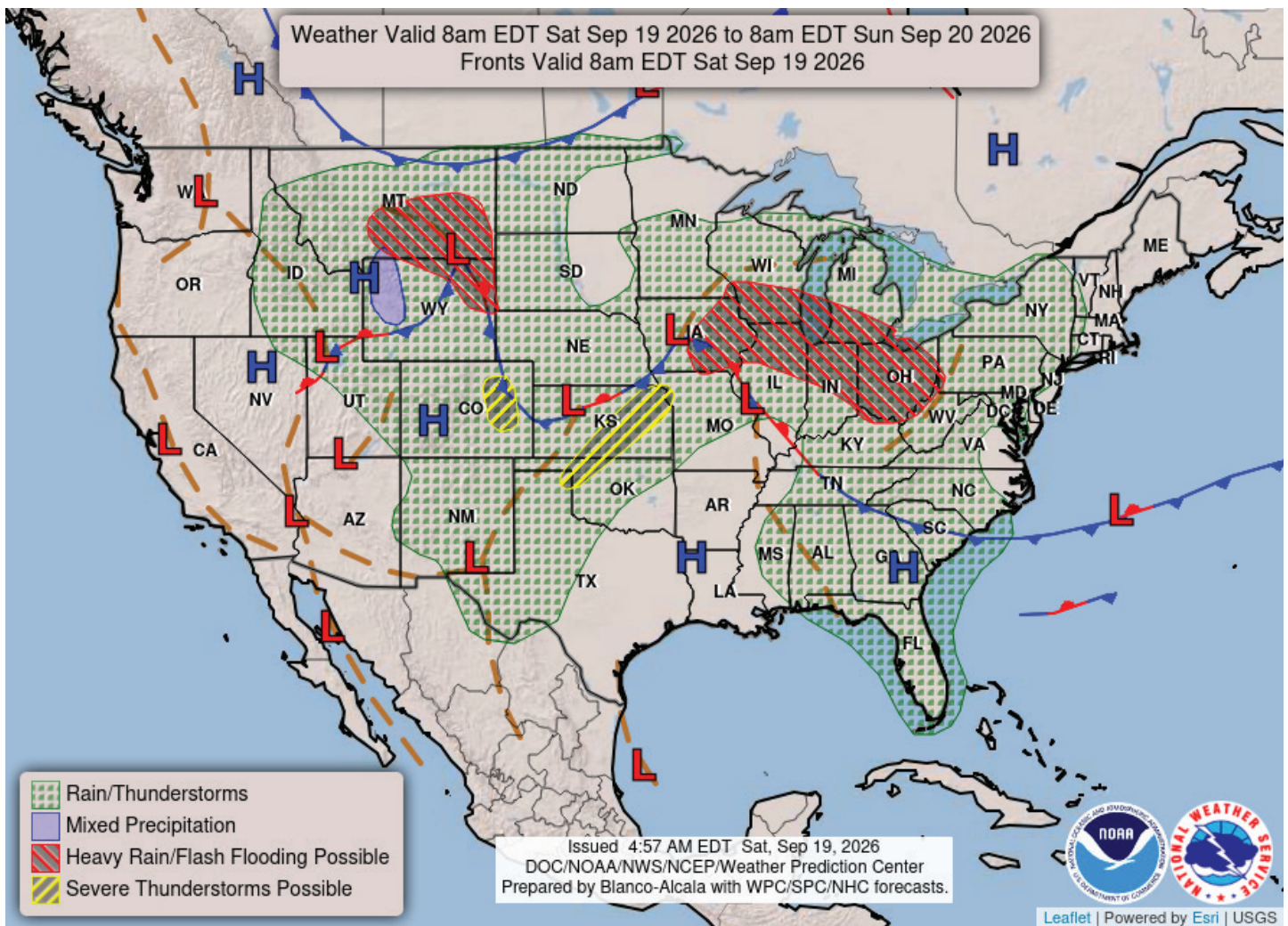
Precip to date in Sept.: 1.80

Average Precip to date: 17.67

Precip Year to Date: 21.66

Sunset Tonight: 7:34 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:18 am



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## Today in Weather History

September 20, 1970: During the late afternoon, golfball hail fell in and around Redfield with a tornado reported just north of Doland. No damage was reported with the hail or the tornado.

September 20, 1972: About 430 pm, in southeast South Dakota, a tornado caused an estimated \$95,000 damage to property and 50,000 damage to crops in Utica and nearby rural areas. Buildings were damaged; trees and power lines were downed.

1845 — A tornado traveled 275 miles across Lake Ontario, New York and Lake Champlain. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1909: A large and deadly Category 3 hurricane made landfall near Grand Isle, Louisiana during the late evening hours. The states of Louisiana and Mississippi showed catastrophic damage resulting in 371 deaths and \$265 million in damage (2010 USD).

1926 — A hurricane which hit Miami, FL, on the 18th, pounded Pensacola with wind gusts to 152 mph. Winds raged in excess of 100 mph for four hours, and above 75 mph for 20 hours. (The Weather Channel)

1961: On September 10th, the Television Infrared Observation Satellite observed an area of thunderstorms west-southwest of the Cape Verde Islands, suggesting a possible tropical cyclone. This storm is the first large tropical cyclone to be discovered on satellite imagery and would eventually become Hurricane Esther. On September 20th, Hurricane Esther, a Category 4 storm off of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina began to slow down as it moved north-northeast well off the Jersey shore. The storm continued to weaken as it made a five-day loop south of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, then moved to Cape Cod and into Maine on the 26th.

1967 — Hurricane Beulah moved into South Texas, and torrential rains from the hurricane turned the rich agricultural areas of South Texas into a large lake. Hurricane Beulah also spawned a record 115 tornadoes. (David Ludlum)

1983 — The temperature at West Yellowstone MT plunged to six degrees below zero, while the temperature at San Francisco CA soared to 94 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in Oklahoma and west Texas. In Oklahoma, a thunderstorm at Seiling produced three inches of rain in one hour, golf ball size hail, and wind gusts to 60 mph which collapsed a tent at the state fair injuring nine persons. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Showers and thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in central Wyoming, and snow in some of the higher elevations. Casper WY reported 1.75 inches of rain in 24 hours, and a thunderstorm north of the Wild Horse Reservoir produced 1.90 inches of rain in just forty minutes.

1989 — Hugo jilted Iris. Hurricane Hugo churned toward the South Atlantic Coast, gradually regaining strength along the way. Tropical Storm Iris got too close to Hugo, and began to weaken. A cold front brought strong and gusty winds to the Great Basin and the Southern Plateau Region, with wind gusts to 44 mph reported at Kingman AZ. (The National Weather Summary)

2002: A glacial avalanche buries the village of Karmadon in Russia, killing more than 100 people.

2005 — Hurricane Rita tracked through the Florida Straits and just south of the Florida Keys. Winds were sustained at tropical storm force at Key West, where peak winds gusted to 76 mph.



## When Light Meets Darkness

**Facing persecution allows us the opportunity to be a witness in a powerful way.**

1 Peter 3:13-18: 13 Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?

14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED,

15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.

17 For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

As Christians, we'd all like to be witnesses for Christ. If we faithfully display His righteousness, love, patience, and joy in our interactions with others, it's natural to expect they'll be drawn to Jesus. Yet while that's true for some, many have an opposite reaction.

Jesus called believers "the light of the world" and said we're to let our light shine so men will see our good deeds and glorify God (Matthew 5:14-16). But He also said, "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed" (John 3:20). Then He warned that if men persecuted Him, they would also persecute His disciples (John 15:20).

History has proven Christ's words to be true. He was hated and crucified, the early church faced intense persecution, and Christians have suffered for their faith throughout the centuries. Yet despite all this, the church presses on, and people continue to be saved. Even today, believers around the world witness powerfully through their response to suffering.

Even in times when we aren't experiencing persecution, our faith can still unsettle those who aren't ready to face the Light. When we encounter slander, mockery, or mistreatment because of our beliefs, let's remember that a godly response may be our most effective witness.

*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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## The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.19.26

4 18 21 45 52 2

TOP PRIZE:

**\$1,000,000/year**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 41 Mins 13 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.18.26

4 9 24 56 68 1

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$261,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.19.26

14 21 24 27 44 7

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$4,920,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.19.26

4 5 10 14 20

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$63,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.19.26

13 30 33 49 53 7

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.19.26

18 30 41 45 68 10

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$313,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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## News from the Associated Press

### PREP VOLLEYBALL

Belle Fourche def. Mahpiya Luta, 25-14, 25-20, 25-21  
Bennett County def. Hill City, 25-10, 25-13, 25-19  
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket def. Oldham-Ramona-Rutland, 25-13, 25-21, 25-12  
Sioux Falls Jefferson def. Riggs, 25-22, 25-11, 25-17  
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Brookings, 25-17, 24-26, 25-15, 25-23  
Sioux Falls Washington def. Rapid City Stevens, 25-14, 14-25, 25-20, 15-8  
West Fargo Horace, N.D. def. Watertown, 22-25, 25-22, 22-25, 25-22, 15-12  
Bridgewater-Emery Volleyball Tournament=  
Bridgewater-Emery def. Ethan, 25-18, 25-21  
Bridgewater-Emery def. Freeman, 25-10, 25-16  
Bridgewater-Emery def. Hanson, 25-13, 25-16  
Bridgewater-Emery def. Menno, 25-17, 25-6  
Bridgewater-Emery def. Sioux Falls Lutheran, 25-13, 25-13  
Centerville def. Canistota, 2-0  
Centerville def. Howard, 2-0  
Centerville def. Sioux Falls Lutheran, 2-1  
Freeman def. Centerville, 25-19, 25-21  
Freeman def. Hanson, 25-21, 16-25, 25-12  
Freeman def. Menno, 25-7, 25-9  
Viborg-Hurley def. Freeman, 25-23, 25-23  
Viborg-Hurley def. Menno, 25-20, 25-12  
Dakota Oyate Challenge=  
Lakota Tech def. Omaha Nation, Neb., 25-14, 25-18  
Marty def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-14, 25-18  
Omaha Nation, Neb. def. Little Wound, 25-19, 25-21  
Omaha Nation, Neb. def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-21, 25-12  
Hamlin Volleyball Invite=  
Hamlin def. Groton, 25-23, 20-25, 25-21  
Lennox def. Hamlin, 25-17, 23-25, 25-17  
Lake Preston Volleyball Invitational=  
Arlington def. Waubay/Summit, 25-16, 25-27, 25-12  
Estelline-Hendricks def. Waubay/Summit, 26-24, 25-23  
Flandreau def. DeSmet, 25-11, 25-19  
Sioux Valley def. Estelline-Hendricks, 25-23, 16-25, 25-15  
Waverly-South Shore def. Iroquois-Lake Preston, 25-19, 27-25

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

### PREP FOOTBALL=

Walthill, Neb. 52, McLaughlin 0

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

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## Riley's 198 yards rushing and 2 late TDs help push Boise State past South Dakota 38-24

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Dylan Riley had 198 yards rushing, and his two touchdown runs in the fourth quarter helped Boise State pull away and beat South Dakota 38-24 on Saturday night.

Bohdie Ing's 43-yard field goal for South Dakota tied the game 24-all with 10:33 remaining. Riley's 2-yard touchdown run capped a nine-play, 75-yard drive to give the Broncos a 31-24 lead with 6:25 left.

Austyn Modrzewski then drove the Coyotes to the Boise State 17 but threw an incomplete pass on fourth-and-9. Riley broke loose for an 83-yard touchdown run on the next play.

Maddux Madsen was 22-of-31 passing for 208 yards with a pair of touchdown passes for Boise State (2-1). Sire Gaines added 102 yards rushing, including a short-yardage scoring run that tied the game 14-14 midway through the second quarter. Rasean Jones had a 9-yard touchdown catch and finished with eight receptions for 95 yards for the Broncos. Cam Bates also had a touchdown catch.

Modrzewski threw for 243 yards with three touchdowns and two interceptions for South Dakota (3-1) of the Football Championship Subdivision, which is ranked 10th in the Stats Perform Top 25. Tannel Bryant made three catches for 104 yards receiving. Tysen Boze also had three receptions, two for scores, for the Coyotes.

Boise State is 53-6 in nonconference home games since 2000.

Up next

South Dakota: At Youngstown State next Saturday.

Boise State: At Western Michigan next Saturday.

## Johnson rushes for 238 yards, 2 TDs in South Dakota State's 27-20 win over Youngstown State

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Josiah Johnson rushed for 238 yards and two touchdowns, Lofton O'Groske had seven catches for 94 yards, and South Dakota State rolled past Youngstown State 27-20 on Saturday.

The Jackrabbits (3-1, 1-0 Missouri Valley Football Conference), second in the Stats Perform poll, took the lead for good just before halftime. The Penguins (2-2, 0-1), ranked ninth, were held to just one score in the second half.

Johnson and the Jackrabbits struck first with a 4-yard rush in the first quarter, but allowed two straight scoring drives by Youngstown to fall behind 10-7.

Quarterback Chase Mason had an 18-yard score on the ground with under a minute to go in the first half, and Joe Ollman had an interception on the next play to let the Jackrabbits kick a field goal just before time expired.

Johnson tacked on his second touchdown of the night, a 16-yard rush, on South Dakota State's first drive of the second half, and they kicked a field goal on their next drive.

Despite a touchdown and a field goal by the Penguins, they could not rally all the way back.

Beau Brungard was 27-for-35 passing for 292 yards, two touchdowns, and an interception. Lynn Wyche-El hauled in seven catches for 114 yards and a score.

Up next

Youngstown State: hosts South Dakota next Saturday.

South Dakota State: hosts Eastern Illinois next Saturday.

## An Israeli fatally shot and troops kill a man in the West Bank, and other Mideast developments

By The Associated Press undefined

An Israeli was fatally shot in an attack in the West Bank, and the Israeli military said Sunday it killed an alleged attacker who attempted to ram his vehicle into troops also in the occupied territory.

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Meanwhile, Egypt, Jordan and Kuwait condemned Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen after they fired a ballistic missile at the Saudi capital on Saturday.

Here is the latest news from the Middle East on Saturday. Full coverage is available here.

An Israeli is killed and troops shot dead an alleged attacker in the West Bank

A 30-year-old man was killed in a shooting attack in the northern West Bank on Sunday morning, hours before the Yom Kippur holiday, which is widely considered the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. The Israeli military said the attacker opened fire from a vehicle and then fled on foot. The man was evacuated to a hospital but died of his wounds, police said.

The military also said it killed a Palestinian man who attempted to carry out a ramming attack on soldiers at an intersection near Jenin, less than an hour later. The military said it was searching for another man who was in the car.

Prior to the attack, Israeli troops carried out a large counterterrorism operation in the northern West Bank town of Al-Mughayyir. Palestinian officials said at least 28 people were detained. Tensions have surged in the West Bank and extremist Israeli settler attacks against Palestinians have increased exponentially, emboldened by right-wing, ultra-nationalist politicians in Israel's government.

Arab and Muslim nations condemn Houthi attack on Riyadh

Egypt, Jordan and Kuwait said the Houthi attack on Riyadh was a threat to regional security and stability and a violation of international law. The nations in separate statements said their governments stand with Saudi Arabia in support of its sovereignty and protection of its civilians.

The Muslim World League also condemned the attack on civilians and civilian infrastructure as a violation of "all religious values as well as international and humanitarian laws and norms."

It was the first time the Saudi capital has been targeted since the escalation in fighting with the Iran-backed rebels opened a new front in the Iran war. Saudi Arabia said the attack was intercepted. Some residents in Riyadh heard an explosion, and later some saw a plume of smoke near the airport. There were no reports of casualties or damage.

6 French accused of being members of the Islamic State stand trial in Iraq

Six French nationals in Iraq suspected of being members of the extremist Islamic State group have stood trial, Iraqi judicial and security officials told The Associated Press.

The officials, who said it could take several proceedings before a verdict is issued, spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak with the media.

The six are among 47 French nationals held in Iraq who were part of thousands of people with suspected links to the IS, and who were repatriated from neighboring Syria early this year.

## **Ukraine fires over 1,000 drones at Russia, including hundreds launched at Moscow**

Ukrainian forces fired more than 1,000 drones at Russia overnight, including hundreds that were launched toward Moscow, officials said Sunday as the Kremlin was wrapping up the third and last day of its parliamentary elections.

Moscow's mayor described the wave of drones as the "largest ever" drone attack on the Russian capital and said there had been damage to a Moscow oil refinery and a residential building.

Across the wider Moscow region, the attack killed two people and wounded 20, local Gov. Andrei Vorobyov said. The dead were a 74-year-old man and a 44-year-old woman, he said.

Writing on social media, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Kyiv had used a range of missiles and drones in the attack — including Ukraine's domestically made Flamingo and Pelican missiles — to hit oil and logistics facilities.

"These are billions of dollars that sustain the war machine," Zelenskyy said, referring to the financial pressure that Kyiv hopes to put on Russia's economy.

Ukraine also continued to fend off Russian attacks, Zelenskyy said. A Russian drone strike hit a monastery in Ukraine's Kherson region Saturday, killing a member of the clergy and wounding four people, he said.

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A Russian attack on the Ukrainian capital also killed two children and their mother on Saturday evening, said Tymur Tkachenko, head of the Kyiv regional state administration. He later said that another child wounded in the same attack had died in hospital on Sunday.

Russia votes in an election devoid of opposition

The attack took place on the final day of Russia's first wartime parliamentary election — balloting that has been virtually devoid of opposition to President Vladimir Putin's policies and is all but certain to cement the Kremlin's dominance.

Russia was also holding the vote in the four Ukrainian regions that Moscow illegally annexed after the war began but still doesn't fully control, and in Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula that was illegally annexed by Russia in 2014. Kyiv has denounced the action as illegal.

In a Russian-occupied area of Ukraine's Kherson region, a Ukrainian attack killed a member of the local electoral committee, Russia's Central Election Commission said in a statement.

Russia's Ministry of Defense said Sunday that its forces shot down a total of 1,110 Ukrainian drones across Russia, as well as over the annexed Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea and the waters of the Black Sea.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said that 450 drones had been destroyed en route to the Russian capital, and that the attack had damaged the Moscow Oil Refinery and a residential building.

He said the "unprecedented attack" on Moscow was an attempt to disrupt the elections. "The enemy failed in this regard," he said.

Since Russia's invasion more than four years ago, Ukraine has become a global leader in military drone technology, deploying domestically produced long-range drones alongside missiles for strikes deep inside Russia. Its drone technology has impressed governments and defense manufacturers around the world.

Kyiv is aiming to make the Russian public feel the war's consequences and pressure Russian President Vladimir Putin into negotiating a peace settlement. Putin has so far shown no signs he intends to stop the invasion.

Instead, Moscow and Kyiv have been drawn into an escalating duel of long-range aerial strikes as fighting along the roughly 1,250-kilometer (780-mile) front line in eastern and southern Ukraine has slowed, restricted by large numbers of drones and ground robots threatening troop movements.

## **Ole Miss set to jump LSU in the AP Top 25 after a 32-24 win**

By ERIC OLSON AP College Football Writer

An adjustment to the top 10 probably is in store for The Associated Press Top 25 college football poll when it is released Sunday.

No. 8 Mississippi is set to move ahead of No. 7 LSU after holding off Lane Kiffin and the Tigers 32-24 on Saturday night, and No. 9 Texas A&M should drop after losing 31-21 at home to Kentucky.

No. 1 Texas, which moved to the top spot last week after beating Ohio State, had no problem getting past UTSA. The rest of the top five — Georgia, Notre Dame, Indiana and Miami — also won, with the closest margin being 13 points.

Three ranked teams besides LSU and Texas A&M took their first losses. No. 16 SMU was beaten 41-31 at No. 23 Louisville, No. 23 Houston lost 28-26 at No. 13 Texas Tech and No. 25 Virginia lost 38-27 to unranked West Virginia in a neutral-site game in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Teams that won somewhat unimpressively included No. 12 USC (42-35 at winless Rutgers) and No. 24 Oklahoma (14-6 at home over New Mexico).

Washington, the team outside the Top 25 with the most votes after dropping out last week, had a solid win over Eastern Washington of the Football Championship Subdivision and could re-enter the rankings. Also in line is Florida, which is 3-0 for the first time since 2019 after beating Auburn on the road.

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## In Chile, even beloved hot dogs feel the economic squeeze

By NAYARA BATSCHE Associated Press

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — It is lunchtime in downtown Santiago, and dozens of businesses around the Plaza de Armas are serving up one of Chile's most democratic specialties: the "completo."

For decades, the country's version of the hot dog has been one of the most affordable foods enjoyed across social classes. But as the cost of living rises and the economy struggles, even the humble snack is feeling the impact.

"Not long ago, I used to pay 2,500 pesos (\$2.60) for a completo," said Antonia Bravo, a 21-year-old student. "Now, they cost 3,500 or 4,000 pesos (\$3.60 or \$4.10)."

Official data released this month confirmed that Chile is on the brink of recession after two consecutive quarters of economic contraction. Unemployment rose to 9.5% — the highest level in five years — while annual inflation accelerated to 4.1% in the past 12 months as food and transportation prices increased.

The weak outlook prompted Chile's Central Bank to cut its 2026 growth forecast — from the previously projected 1%–1.75% range to 0.25%–0.75%.

"We cannot rule out the possibility that the current weakness may prove more persistent than anticipated," Central Bank President Rosanna Costa warned at a news conference last week.

Eating out has become a luxury for many

The completo was born in one of those small shops in downtown Santiago in the early 1930s. Chile's take on the hot dog features a sausage topped with sauerkraut, tomato and homemade potato-based mayonnaise. Avocado and other ingredients were added over time, turning it into a complete meal. Hence its name, "completo."

"Back then, people weren't well-off; they didn't have many resources and would come here for completos," said Guillermo Cid, manager of the restaurant credited with creating the dish. "It is the same today. Instead of sitting down for a full meal, many people just stop by for a completo."

Chile's monthly basic food basket cost just under \$100 in August, up 5% from a year earlier, according to the Ministry of Social Development. The country's monthly minimum wage is about \$580. Chile has also faced rising fuel prices resulting from the U.S.-Iran war.

Together, these pressures "feed into inflation and erode household purchasing power," creating a scenario where "confidence... deteriorates," the Central Bank president said.

As the cost of living rises and household budgets tighten, Chileans are looking for ways to stretch their incomes by cutting spending on key areas, including food.

"The price of basic products just keeps going up and up," said Mauricio Aravena, a 30-year-old teacher. "Eating out has always been somewhat of a luxury, but now even more so."

Even a get-together with friends has become synonymous with extravagance.

"Compared to last year, when my friends and I could plan more outings, these days it's more about staying in and cooking at home," said Tabata Martinich, 31, also a teacher. "You have to watch your spending more closely; everything is way more expensive."

Workers also say wages aren't keeping pace with inflation.

"Bills are more expensive overall, and pay raises aren't keeping up with those costs," Aravena added. "We are lagging about five years behind."

Frustration is on the rise

Since taking office in March, President José Antonio Kast has pursued an economic recovery agenda aimed at boosting investment and employment, as Chile's economy and labor market weaken. His challenge is ensuring that these reforms not only translate into stronger economic indicators but also reach citizens' pockets.

"Expectations are turning into frustration," analyst Guillermo Holzmann said. "Despite progress in approving major projects, the investments have not materialized at the pace needed."

Kast recently acknowledged the situation, saying Chile is "facing higher inflation than expected and lower growth than projected."

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At a meeting Tuesday with ministers and leaders of parties in the ruling coalition, Kast instructed his team to draft a "labor emergency plan" that should be presented in the coming weeks — although he did not provide details. The plan follows several other measures announced recently — including the economic and tax overhaul, which was approved by Congress but has yet to be ratified as the Constitutional Court reviews complaints filed by opposition parties.

The proposed reform includes initiatives such as tax cuts for large corporations, the elimination of double taxation to encourage more private investment, and the implementation of financial compensation for companies whose projects are rejected due to environmental concerns. It also establishes the "right to financial oblivion" for old debts in new credit assessments and bans the charging of interest on interest.

Holzmann said the worsening economic conditions are pushing the Kast administration to race against the clock to translate medium- and long-term initiatives into concrete actions that have a direct impact on citizens' pockets. "Making ends meet is becoming increasingly difficult," he said.

"There is a disconnect between consumers' income levels and the prices of products in stores," he added. "Social frustration is the primary breeding ground for unrest in a country."

## **South Korea says North Korea launched a ballistic missile and another projectile toward the sea**

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea launched a short-range ballistic missile toward the sea on Sunday, South Korea's military said, two days after the North threatened to bolster its nuclear deterrent capabilities and respond to what it called U.S. hostilities.

South Korea's military said the missile flew about 450 kilometers (280 miles) toward the North's eastern waters.

Hours later, it said the North launched another projectile off its eastern coast but gave no further details as to what type of weapon it was. The South Korean military said it has boosted its surveillance posture and was closely exchanging information on the launch with the United States and Japan.

South Korea's presidential office urged North Korea to immediately halt ballistic missile launches that are banned by U.N. Security Council resolutions. It said South Korea held an emergency national security council meeting to discuss the launch.

Japan's Defense Ministry said it noted a suspected North Korean missile earlier Sunday but that the missile did not land in its territorial waters. It did not elaborate on where it landed.

The launches came as North Korea is engaging in a run of weapons tests even after U.S. President Donald Trump scaled back a military exercise with South Korea last month in an apparent effort to revive diplomacy with leader Kim Jong Un.

Kim's sister and senior official, Kim Yo Jong, shrugged off Trump's overture, saying that shortening the drill wouldn't change its "provocative, aggressive nature." North Korea's military later launched about 10 short-range ballistic missiles toward the sea, apparently following through with a previous threat to respond to the U.S.-South Korean drill.

On Friday, Kim's sister slammed another recent U.S.-led multilateral maritime exercise in the region as a "frantic military move" by the Americans meant to prolong their hegemony in the Asia-Pacific area. The "Pacific Vanguard" exercise brought together the U.S., South Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

She claimed that "regular U.S.-led war rehearsals" are the main source of worsening tensions in the Korean Peninsula and the region.

"Our will to defend our sovereignty will be expressed in clearer action and there will be never ever change in the course of intensifying the nuclear war deterrence," she said.

Earlier this month, North Korea conducted what it called a joint live-fire drill involving missiles, artillery and drones, a day after the United States, South Korea and Japan wrapped their five-day trilateral military drill that North Korea described as a provocation. North Korea said its drill included firing different types

of weapons simultaneously, likely aiming at developing the ability to overwhelm South Korean and U.S. air defenses.

Kim Jong Un has been focusing on expanding his nuclear arsenal after his earlier high-stakes diplomacy with Trump collapsed in 2019. When Trump ordered the Pentagon to "substantially reduce" the annual Ulchi Freedom Shield exercise with South Korea, he cited what he called a good relationship with Kim, who has called such drills invasion rehearsals.

Emboldened by his advancing nuclear arsenal and deepening ties with Russia and China, experts say Kim likely thinks he now has greater leverage in possible fresh diplomacy with Trump. Earlier this year, Kim said he could return to talks if the U.S. drops its "hostile policy" against his country and respects what he calls the North's status as a nuclear state.

## **Families of suspected illegal miners who died in Nigerian detention accuse officials of mistreatment**

By DYEPAZAH SHIBAYAN Associated Press

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — Lawan Mohammed is distraught over the death of his 25-year-old son Sulieman who was found dead in the custody of a Nigerian security agency in the north-central region of the country.

He said Sulieman was a motorcycle mechanic in Niger state and was on his way home when he and some friends were arrested by personnel from the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, or NSCDC.

"I went there the following morning to give him food, only to hear that he was dead," Mohammed said.

On Thursday, Sulieman was found dead in a cell of the NSCDC along with 36 other detainees. A total of 67 people suspected of being miners working illegally were held in a cell, and 37 of them probably died of suffocation, Niger state Gov. Umar Bago said Friday. The suspects were arrested between Tuesday and Wednesday.

The security agency on Thursday blamed the deaths on a possible disease outbreak. An investigation is underway to determine what caused the deaths.

On Saturday, the Nigerian government named a 10-member committee drawn from the legal, security, mining and medical professions, and announced the suspension of 20 more NSCDC personnel. The head of the security agency in Niger state had been suspended on Friday.

"Any attempt to destroy or conceal evidence, intimidate witnesses or obstruct the investigation will be treated as a serious offense," interior minister Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo said in a statement.

Mohammed said: "I had a lot of expectations for my son, but now (they have) been shattered completely. I am really hurt. They chose to beat him up, burst his head open. His teeth were even falling out. I want the government to make sure that justice prevails."

Concerns about the treatment of detainees

There have long been concerns about the treatment of suspects in Nigerian detention centers. In 2025, the National Human Rights Commission said it received 371,622 complaints of rights violations, including unlawful arrest and detention, denial of justice and torture.

"It raises serious questions about detention standards, operational planning, accountability and respect for due process," Kehinde Giwa, a security analyst at Lagos-based SBM Intelligence, said about the deaths of the suspects.

"Even when arrests are lawful, suspects must be kept in safe conditions and given timely medical attention."

Parent says his child was maltreated in custody

Saba Usman alleged that his son Usman Whalid, who was a student and did menial work to survive, was mistreated while in custody before he died.

"When I saw him, he was really in a bad shape because he was beaten and was (stepped) on with boots, so I knew they really mistreated him while he was in their custody," he said.

"I even have his videos and pictures on my phone of how he was being stepped on, and how his mouth was also stepped on and his teeth broken," he added.

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Usman said his son and others who were arrested did not commit a crime but "were framed," adding that "I have nothing else to say but to give God thanks because he knows why this really happened."

A survivor recounts his ordeal in detention

Mubarak Dahiru, a survivor who appeared traumatized by his ordeal, said while in detention they were sweating profusely and pleaded with NSCDC officials for water and food, but their requests were ignored.

"They beat us as if we were thieves. They also used their guns and hit us with them," Dahiru said.

Nigerian Bar Association president Oyinkansola Badejo-Okusanya said the death of 37 people while in the custody of a government agency is an "event of the utmost gravity and demands a thorough, independent, transparent and credible investigation."

Illegal mining remains a challenge in Nigeria. Analysts have linked illegal mining activities in Nigeria's north-central and northwest regions to armed gangs involved in kidnappings for ransom, claiming the groups receive funding from the illicit trade.

## **Macron and Carney to hold talks on strengthening Canada-France economic and defense ties**

PARIS (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney are set to meet Sunday to deepen economic and security ties on the remote North Atlantic archipelago of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon.

The meeting comes days after Carney embraced the prospect of Canada becoming the European Union's first associate member, saying closer ties with the continent would ensure no country could control Canada's markets or undermine its sovereignty.

U.S. President Donald Trump's tariffs, demands for economic concessions and repeated talk of making Canada the 51st state have pushed Ottawa to reduce its dependence on its neighbor and pursue deeper economic, security and political relationships with Europe.

"This is an important moment," Macron said upon arriving Saturday in the French territory off the coast of Newfoundland, Canada. Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon is home to about 5,800 people.

Talks "will allow us ... to strengthen our bilateral economic ties and defense relationship," Macron said.

Macron also said Sunday's talks are part of broader efforts to help France secure oil and gas supplies as the war with Iran disrupts global energy markets and raises fears of higher prices for fuel and other essentials.

"Canada is a country with significant resources of critical minerals and rare earths. It is also a major oil and natural gas producer," Macron noted. "What we want to do is conclude agreements to secure more liquefied natural gas that can be shipped to Europe's Atlantic coast."

The leaders will discuss deepening the Canada-France partnership in strategic sectors, including aerospace, energy, critical minerals and advanced technologies such as quantum computing, satellites and supercomputing, Carney's office said in a statement.

Sunday's meeting also follows Trump's announcement of a deal on Greenland that would expand the U.S. military presence there while keeping the island under Danish control. The agreement followed months of threats by Trump to seize the semiautonomous territory of a NATO ally.

Macron welcomed the agreement Saturday. "Danish sovereignty is being respected, international law is being respected," he said. "Anything that helps ease tensions is a good thing."

## **Ed Sheeran says situation in Gaza is 'catastrophic and unjustifiable' as he opens concert**

By TASSANEE VEJPONGSA Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Ed Sheeran opened a concert Saturday with comments about Gaza after controversy swirled around his tour and supporting acts withdrew in solidarity with opener Macklemore, who was dropped after making pro-Palestinian comments onstage.

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Sheeran began the concert alone on stage with no opener, but was joined by other musicians later in the show.

Sheeran said he wants his music and shows to be about unity and humanity, not politics. But he said the attacks in Israel of Oct. 7, 2023, were horrific and what is happening in Gaza "catastrophic and unjustifiable."

"I don't want to disappoint fans, and I've never wanted to be an activist musician, but this has put me in the middle of an important and passionate argument about freedom of speech and the most complex political issue on the planet," Sheeran said during his performance at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia.

The comments before a nearly full stadium came after a tumultuous week that began with rapper Macklemore, Sheeran's original U.S. opener, being dropped in response to exclaiming "Free Palestine" during a Sept. 5 show in New Jersey.

Sheeran has said he was not responsible for the decision, which came at the urging of New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft. His company owns a stadium where Sheeran's tour was scheduled to play on Friday.

Within hours of Sheeran's statement Tuesday, his supporting acts withdrew.

Sheeran has performed many songs solo during his Loop Tour concerts, but was joined for several songs at each stop by the Irish folk band Beoga before they dropped out in support of Macklemore.

Macklemore was replaced by Danish band Lukas Graham and Irish singer Aaron Rowe before they backed out, and Finneas, Billie Eilish's brother and musical collaborator, was due to tour with Sheeran in South America later this year before he too dropped out this week.

Before Saturday's show, a small group of pro-Palestinian demonstrators congregated outside the stadium. Hillary Steinberg, 34, said she got concert tickets a year ago but wound up getting a refund and attended the demonstration instead, disappointed that Sheeran did not take a stand.

"I was, until this week, a big Ed Sheeran fan," Steinberg said. "I think all art is political, and all music is political, and so this choice — even though he was saying that he wasn't complicit — is a political choice."

Diane Savitz, a 53-year-old from Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, got tickets months ago and attended. She said she is a big Sheeran fan, doesn't think he did anything wrong and a concert is not the place for politics.

"A concert should be for people enjoying the music. Music should bring people together," Savitz said. "Everyone has their right to freedom of speech, but not every platform is the place for it."

Macklemore said Wednesday he is donating \$1 million to support Palestinian relief efforts and called on Kraft to match the gift; a spokesperson for Kraft has said the billionaire and Sheeran have each agreed to donate \$2 million but have not specified where the money will be directed. Sheeran's representatives have not responded to multiple requests for comment.

Sheeran was the No. 3 top-earning concert act of the millennium so far, industry magazine Pollstar calculated in late 2025.

Sheeran has said the tour promoter was ultimately responsible for the decision to drop Macklemore.

The Grammy winner was adamant earlier this week that he wouldn't be drawn into discussion of the war in Gaza, arguing that his fans don't come to his shows to hear about these issues.

He also said he "spoke with the venues at length all week to try to build a bridge" before Macklemore was dropped. He insisted he would never willingly let down his fans or abandon the touring crew and others who rely on him to make a living.

While promoters and venues wield great power over concert tours, experts say an artist of Sheeran's magnitude generally has the final say about what happens concerning the shows.

Sheeran told the crowd in Philadelphia that everyone is welcome at his concerts, and they can have opposing points of view while still singing his songs, which are about "love, hope and unity."

He also told fans he worries about venues preapproving performances.

"This happens in so many places that I perform around the world, but it should never happen in the free world," Sheeran said.

## **A state funeral in Hong Kong honors Tung Chee-hwa, the city's first post-colonial leader**

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong held a state funeral on Sunday for its first post-colonial leader, Tung Chee-hwa, who led the city through the initial years of its transition from British rule after it was returned to China in 1997.

Chinese officials from Beijing joined Hong Kong political leaders for the service in what was the third state funeral in the former British colony since the 1997 handover.

Tung, a shipping magnate who was the city's chief executive from 1997 to 2005, died on Sept. 8 at the age of 89. He grappled with the Asian financial crisis, the SARS epidemic and public protests during his nearly eight years in office.

Visiting official Shi Taifeng, a member of the Politburo of the ruling Communist Party, referred to Tung in a eulogy as a close friend of the party and a renowned patriot, according to China's official Xinhua News Agency.

He said that Tung was an outstanding contributor to the one-country, two-systems framework that governs Hong Kong and nearby Macao, a former Portuguese colony returned to China in 1999.

Flower wreaths lined the wall outside the Hong Kong Funeral Home and Tung's casket was draped in a Chinese flag when it was brought out after the service. The media were not allowed inside.

Other visiting officials included Xia Baolong, the director of China's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office. About 200 people were invited to the service, according to Hong Kong's South China Morning Post newspaper. Members of the public paid condolences at three venues set up around the city.

Not long after Tung took office in 1997, Hong Kong's economy was battered by a financial crisis that swept across Asia. In 2003, SARS — or severe acute respiratory syndrome — killed nearly 300 people in the city and dealt another blow to the economy.

The same year, an estimated half a million people took to the streets to protest the government's plan to enact an anti-treason law that was seen as a threat to civil liberties. The government shelved the plan, and Tung resigned in 2005, citing health reasons.

The 2003 protest marked the start of years of pro-democracy protests that came to a head in 2019 and were followed by a crackdown and a Beijing-imposed national security law in 2020.

After stepping down, Tung was elected to the post of vice chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the country's top political advisory body. He was among 42 people who received national medals and honors in 2019 for their contributions to the country.

## **Merz faces key test as 2 German states hold elections with eyes on the far-right AfD**

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Polling stations opened Sunday in two German state elections in which the far-right AfD party is expected to make further gains that could determine whether Chancellor Friedrich Merz can hold on to power and push ahead with reforms in Europe's biggest economy.

The state elections are taking place in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, a largely rural region in the formerly communist and less prosperous east, and in the capital, Berlin.

The vote comes two weeks after the anti-migration, Russia-friendly Alternative for Germany, or AfD, finished just short of a majority in the small eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt, and has its best chance yet of forming the country's first far-right regional government since World War II.

Merz's authority was severely damaged by his party's stinging defeat in the Sept. 6 election by AfD — a result that shocked many Germans who had believed their country had developed an immunity to nationalism and assertions of racial superiority after confronting the horrors of its Nazi past through education and laws to outlaw persecution.

The AfD is expected to make significant gains in Sunday's elections as well, but has no realistic path to

power in Berlin and faces a much stronger challenge from Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania's center-left governor than it did from Merz's party in Saxony-Anhalt.

Prospects for Merz's center-right Christian Democratic Union are bleaker. It could lose the mayor's office in Berlin. If things go very badly, it could fail for the first time to win seats in a state legislature anywhere by falling below 5% of the vote in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, where it was already weak.

Merz, 70, became Germany's leader 16 months ago with promises to turn around an economy that has barely grown in years, but has failed to lift a sullen national mood and has himself become deeply unpopular.

The strong showing of AfD in the Saxony-Anhalt election has further weakened the chancellor's standing on the national level as well, and in the past two weeks there have been calls even from within his own party to replace him as chancellor. No top-level allies have called publicly for his departure, and many have warned against "personnel debates."

Apparently anticipating a tough postelection period, Merz abandoned a planned trip to New York next week to attend the U.N. General Assembly. Despite the strong headwinds, he has repeatedly said that he's determined to stay on and finish his term as chancellor.

## Joey Logano wins NASCAR race at Bristol as Carson Hocevar, Ryan Blaney fight afterward

BRISTOL, Tenn. (AP) — Joey Logano won the Cup Series race Saturday at Bristol Motor Speedway, while the driver he passed for the win stole the show with old-school NASCAR feuding and fisticuffs.

Carson Hocevar, a brash 23-year-old who has earned the ire of veterans with his aggressive driving, traded punches in the pits with Ryan Blaney after they were involved in an incident while racing for second with 41 laps left.

Hocevar stopped his car after finishing third and was greeted by a shove from Blaney.

The 6-foot-4 Hocevar, who stands several inches taller than Blaney, responded with two overhand rights. The first knocked off Blaney's hat, and the second connected with Blaney's left cheek.

Blaney fell to the pavement and then scrambled to his feet and out of a crew member's hold while Hocevar raised his arms and pointed at him. Blaney charged and threw a wild left that knocked off Hocevar's hat. They then were separated by team members as Blaney continued to yell at Hocevar.

"There wasn't a whole lot of talking," Hocevar said. "He just kind of said one thing and then went after me, and I wasn't going to take it. I got ran into a lot for the win. That was for second, and he wants to come fight. They got an old-school Bristol show here."

The contact between the drivers started shortly after Blaney took second with an outside pass of Hocevar, who immediately slid his No. 77 Chevrolet down the track. Blaney moved low to block, and Hocevar stayed in the accelerator to knock the No. 12 Ford into a spin that ended in the inside wall.

"I don't know what I did wrong there," Hocevar said. "I crossed him over and looked like he spun himself, and then he wants to instigate a fight. I was going to finish that, and it seemed like the crowd was pretty pumped up, so I was going to play the audience for a second."

Blaney, who led a race-high 202 laps despite starting 29th, was already frustrated after falling into heavy traffic because of a penalty for a pit lane violation with just over 100 laps remaining. His rally was cut short by the crash that dropped him to sixth in the Chase standings with his second consecutive finish outside the top 30.

In an interview during the race, Blaney said, "I tried to protect the bottom, he crossed and never lifted, and I got crashed."

When asked which driver was at fault, Blaney said, "I don't (expletive) know. Each person is going to say they did nothing wrong."

Kyle Larson finished second to move into the Chase lead by a point over Denny Hamlin. Christopher Bell was fourth, followed by Ty Gibbs, who led 120 laps before finishing fifth.

Gibbs and Hocevar exchanged the lead four times in the final 100 laps. Their battle for first after a restart

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with nine laps remaining opened the door for Logano, who zipped past Hocevar and led the final seven laps. With his 40th career victory and third this season, Logano became the winningest NASCAR driver for Team Penske and moved into third place in the Chase points standings.

But he realized all of those accomplishments would be eclipsed by videos of the Blaney-Hocevar fight that he still had yet to see.

"I'm sure I'll see it all week long," Logano said, pausing to add with a laugh. "They'll probably forget who won the race."

Remembering Kyle Busch

Gibbs was driving a No. 54 Toyota that sported a paint scheme honoring the late Kyle Busch, who had a record 23 wins in NASCAR national series at Bristol. It was among multiple tributes to the Richard Childress Racing driver who died in May.

Fans waved yellow towels on the 18th lap in honor of Busch, who won two Cup Series championships in the No. 18 Toyota. His widow, Samantha, addressed the crowd before the race.

"Bristol was always so special to Kyle," Samantha Busch said. "He loved racing under the lights, the energy of this place, and most of all, the fans. For 20 years, this sport was our life. It's where we raised our babies and made some of our very best memories. I never imagined we'd be standing here without him. But looking out at all of you reminds me that we aren't walking this alone."

Legal battle continues

In its federal lawsuit that accuses Spire Motorsports of cheating by using stolen intellectual property, Joe Gibbs Racing filed a motion Thursday claiming that Spire and chief motorsports officer Chris Gabehart violated a temporary restraining order and should be held in contempt. A federal judge ruled in March that Gabehart can work for Spire but not in the competition director role he was in while with Joe Gibbs Racing last season.

Spire co-owner Jeff Dickerson responded to the motion in a statement Friday night. "JGR does not get to control what other race teams do through court cases," Dickerson said. "JGR does not own tire pressures, JGR does not own the people who work in this industry, and JGR does not own Spire. Spire looks forward to responding to JGR's motion in court. To be clear, months of discovery have shown that Spire Motorsports has done nothing wrong."

Up next

The NASCAR Cup Series will begin a stretch of three consecutive races on 1.5-mile ovals with Kansas Speedway on Sunday, Sept. 27. Tyler Reddick won the April 19 race at the track in Kansas City, Kansas.

## **Van silences doubters in Pantoja rematch as Tsarukyan, Pitbull score dramatic UFC 331 finishes**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Flyweight Champion Joshua Van erased the controversy surrounding his first victory over Alexandre Pantoja by defeating the former champion over five rounds Saturday, then declaring that his UFC flyweight title could no longer be dismissed as the product of an accidental injury.

"A lot of people said that was an accidental win the first time," said Van (18-2). "Now doubt me now."

Van said critics had questioned his legitimacy after Pantoja (30-7) suffered an injury early in their first meeting. The rematch gave the champion the opportunity to prove himself in a complete fight against the division's former standard-bearer.

Van, who had his boxing skills and takedown defense on full display, finished with 140 significant head strikes, to Pantoja's 99.

The champion praised Pantoja's durability and championship-level skill, particularly after the Brazilian escaped a submission attempt Van believed would finish the fight.

"Shoutout to Pantoja," Van said. "Nothing but respect from me."

Van's decisive victory strengthened the legitimacy of his championship reign, while Pantoja's toughness added significance to the performance.

In the co-main event, No. 2-ranked lightweight Arman Tsarukyan (24-3) strengthened his claim to the

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next title shot with a dramatic first-round knockout of No. 7 Mauricio Ruffly (14-3), who was coming off a TKO victory over Michael Chandler at UFC Freedom 250.

Ruffly successfully defended Tsarukyan's early takedown attempts, but the Armenian changed levels late in the round before switching to an elbow that landed flush. With Ruffly badly hurt, Tsarukyan followed with another elbow that knocked the Brazilian unconscious at 4:56, just four seconds before the horn. The victory extended Tsarukyan's winning streak to six.

"Of course, for my next fight, for the title fight, I needed that finish, and I knew that I'm gonna finish him," Tsarukyan said. "It was a little bit difficult in the first round, but I knew I had five rounds, and my time was going to come. So I was patient."

Tsarukyan later joked that he wanted either a lightweight championship fight or a showdown with Meta founder Mark Zuckerberg.

No. 15-ranked featherweight Patricio Pitbull (38-9) reinforced his place in the rankings with the 13th first-round finish of his career — and his first knockout since joining the UFC. The former two-division Bellator champion rocked Dooho Choi (17-5-1) with a crushing right hand, then swarmed "The Korean Superboy" with follow-up punches, forcing referee Mike Beltran to stop the fight at 3:28. Pitbull called the performance his "real debut" in the UFC before challenging Jean Silva.

Sean Sharaf (5-2) produced one of the night's biggest shocks, knocking out heavily favored heavyweight prospect Gable Steveson (4-1) just 12 seconds into their bout. Sharaf connected with a clean 1-2 combination, with the left hook turning Steveson's head and leaving the Olympic gold medalist unconscious on the canvas. Referee Frank Trigg immediately stopped the fight, giving Sharaf his first UFC victory and a finish tied for the third-fastest knockout in UFC heavyweight history.

"I'm not surprised," Sharaf shouted before explaining that he continued believing in himself when few others did. Steveson left the Octagon before the official announcement, drawing criticism from several fighters and social media observers.

No. 14-ranked light heavyweight Alonzo Menifield (19-6-1) overcame a gruesome hand injury and a difficult opening round to hand Iwo Baraniewski (9-1) his first professional defeat. A ringside physician examined Menifield's badly damaged left thumb before the third round, but the Los Angeles native insisted on continuing. Menifield ultimately prevailed by split decision, with two judges scoring the fight 29-28 for him and the third returning a 29-28 card for Baraniewski. The victory was Menifield's second straight. The severity of the injury became apparent during Menifield's post-fight interview, when he revealed that he had broken the thumb in the opening round and displayed what appeared to be bone protruding through the skin.

## **Trump used to slam China. Here's why he's now rolling out the red carpet for Xi**

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When President Donald Trump first ran for office, he called out China as a menace to the U.S. economy, saying it had gutted America's factories and eroded the middle class.

That tough talk helped Trump get to the White House a decade ago, but since then, he increasingly speaks in glowing terms about Chinese President Xi Jinping, the geopolitical rival Trump will fete on Thursday with a state dinner.

"He's a great gentleman; we get along great," Trump said this month. "We have a very good trading relationship and, you know, they're a competitor and all of that, but we have a very good relationship with President Xi."

On issue after issue, the Republican president has given Xi a pass.

Trump shrugged off reports that China had provided Iran with satellite imagery, saying, "I think he's behaved reasonably well." After accusing Beijing of accessing U.S. voter files back in 2020, Trump indicated he was hesitant to retaliate: "I think China is maybe a little bit different today than it was then."

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Trump's magnanimity comes as China and the United States are in a contest for global leadership, with some of America's traditional allies rethinking their strategies. China has expanded its dominance in manufacturing and pushed into new technologies such as artificial intelligence and electric vehicles that create risks for the economies of the U.S., Germany, Italy, France, South Korea and Japan, among others.

Trump tried to confront China with tariffs, but that backfired

Unable to change Chinese behavior, Trump has resorted to hospitality.

He traveled to Beijing in May, and the two leaders could meet again two more times this year at international summits. Trump has readied a helipad on the White House South Lawn before Xi's arrival and has lamented that his ballroom will not be ready to host the Chinese leader.

Trump has insisted that the U.S. is comfortably ahead of China, but his efforts last year to confront China with a mounting set of tariffs backfired. China holds a relative monopoly on the rare earths used in electronics and deployed that to help force a trade armistice with Trump.

"Trump has dramatically shifted his approach to China because his initial attempt to use super-high tariffs and export restrictions was unsuccessful," said Michael Kovrig, a senior adviser at the International Crisis Group. "Xi and Trump got into a contest of leverage, and Xi came out on top."

Meanwhile, Trump has largely undermined the economic and national security alliances that could previously apply pressure on China, said Kovrig, a former Canadian diplomat who was detained by China during Trump's first term.

Trump has mocked French President Emmanuel Macron in speeches. He has run hot and cold on NATO after several of its members did not fully support his choice to start a war with Iran. Trump has launched a potentially brutal trade fight with Canada, a longtime ally he has trolled as becoming the 51st American state.

"He's executing Xi's wedge tactics for him, and along the way, helping Xi to tell a story about China as the more stable and responsible power," Kovrig said. "It's led to a wave of Western leaders visiting Beijing and seeking to stabilize and improve their relations with Xi so they can focus more on dealing with problems Trump is causing them."

Trump's relationship with Xi has led to some symbolic wins

Trump can point to some symbolic wins from having a pleasant relationship with Xi.

While Xi met three times on the sidelines of international summits with Democratic President Joe Biden, Trump will have achieved a pair of reciprocal state visits in a sign that the leaders of the world's two largest economies feel comfortable speaking to each other.

The trade imbalance with China in goods has declined relative to the same period in 2025, according to Census Bureau figures, though the administration has noted that China appears to be routing more goods through other nations such as Vietnam to minimize the tariffs.

Trump's continued tariffs on China have not curbed its manufacturing sector. China has found new markets and boxed out competition from other industrialized countries. China is exporting more of its goods to the rest of the world with a \$1.2 trillion global trade surplus last year as its low-priced EVs undercut the auto sectors in Germany, Japan and South Korea.

It's unclear whether Thursday's visit will have a policy 'deliverable'

Both China and the U.S. are using their trade truce to retrench. China is building up its military and AI capabilities despite limited access to advanced computer chips. The Trump administration has pursued partnerships to develop rare earths.

Trump is also banking on America going full throttle on AI development despite voter resistance to data centers and recent alarming safety warnings from the leading AI companies. He said this week on social media that anyone slowing down AI development was helping China because the technology will be "the Greatest Economic Development Engine in History — Bigger than Oil, Gold, Diamonds, or even the Internet."

But China has also been accused of having its AI companies train on U.S. models, a problem for Trump and the economy if AI is the key to global dominance.

Still, Attorney General Todd Blanche told reporters at the White House last week that it's "unfair to just

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label China as a country" as being a "bad actor" on AI.

Asked if Trump would bring up the issue with Xi, Blanche said, "Those two presidents have a great relationship. ... They get along, they make deals together."

Usually, state visits come with "deliverables" on policy or trade. It's not yet clear what Thursday's visit will bring, and it's possible that the main deliverable will be the relationship itself, rather than clear and measurable goals, said Evan Medeiros, a professor at Georgetown University.

That means the U.S. might not be positioning itself to compete against China as it should be, said Medeiros, a former National Security Council director on China for the Obama White House.

"We have this idiosyncratic president who believes in personal relationships and just wants to get along with Xi Jinping for the optics of getting along with him," Medeiros said. "The problem is that this idiosyncratic approach is coming at precisely the time when we really need to be amping up all dimensions of our competition."

## **Saudi Arabia says Houthis tried to attack its capital, and other Mideast developments**

By The Associated Press undefined

Saudi Arabia on Saturday confirmed that Yemen's Houthi rebels tried to attack its capital with a ballistic missile, the first targeting of Riyadh since the escalation in fighting with the Tehran-backed rebels that has opened a new front in the Iran war..

Meanwhile, the head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council said Tehran has sent Washington its conditions for ending the war via Qatar, a key mediator. Israeli strikes killed three people in Gaza. And Israel's military said it struck Hezbollah targets across several areas in southern Lebanon.

Here is the latest news from the Middle East on Saturday. Full coverage is available [here](#).

**Saudi Arabia says Houthis tried to attack its capital**

Saudi Arabia on Saturday said that Yemen's Houthi rebels tried to attack Riyadh with a ballistic missile, the first time the Saudi capital has been targeted since the escalation in fighting with the Iran-backed rebels opened a new front in the Iran war.

The statement said the attack was intercepted. Some residents in Riyadh heard an explosion, and later some saw a plume of smoke near the airport. There were no reports of casualties or damage.

The statement also said the Houthis tried to attack civilian infrastructure in the Red Sea port city of Yanbu — where a key Saudi pipeline ends — and in Taif, Baysh and Farasan but they were thwarted, giving no further details.

The Houthis earlier claimed, without providing evidence, that they had targeted "sensitive sites" in Riyadh and facilities of Saudi oil giant Aramco in Yanbu, causing "massive fires." Aramco, the world's largest oil company, did not respond to a request for comment.

**Iran sends US conditions for ending the war**

The head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Mohsen Rezaei, told Al Jazeera in an interview that Iran has conveyed its conditions for ending the war to the U.S. via Qatar and it is waiting for President Donald Trump's response.

It was not clear when the conditions were shared. Rezaei said they include ending the war on all fronts, releasing assets seized from Iran and ending the U.S. naval blockade of Iranian ports. Earlier U.S.-Iran negotiations fell apart.

He also said Iran wants the fighting involving Yemen and Saudi Arabia to end.

**US renews blanket Mideast travel alert**

The U.S. State Department on Saturday renewed a blanket travel alert for Americans in or traveling to the Middle East, warning that the conflict with Iran "has the potential to escalate rapidly."

Meanwhile, at least 11 U.S. embassies in the region issued a warning that travel disruptions are possible.

**Iran executes man accused of spying for Israel**

Iran's state TV said a man identified as Hossein Pedram was executed after being convicted on charges

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of spying for Israel's intelligence agency Mossad.

The report said Pedram shared classified information on "sensitive military sites" in Iran's Isfahan province. It didn't say how he accessed the information. He was reportedly arrested after those sites, which included missile bases, were targeted in last year's 12-day air war by the U.S. and Israel.

A recent surge of executions in Iran has prompted an international outcry by rights groups.

US military says oil is flowing through the Strait of Hormuz

The head of U.S. Central Command said the military has supported the transit of 1 billion barrels of oil through the Strait of Hormuz over the past two months and claimed that Iran has "exported zero barrels" because of a U.S. blockade.

Adm. Brad Cooper said the strait's primary transit lanes have been cleared of mines, and the volume of oil, natural gas and cargo transiting over the past two weeks is the highest it has been in six months — or shortly after the war began with U.S. and Israeli strikes.

But monitors say shipping traffic remains well below prewar levels. Iran continues to attack ships as it asserts control over the waterway through which about one-fifth of the world's traded oil and natural gas passed before the war.

Israeli strikes kill 3 men in Gaza

Gaza's Health Ministry and Shifa Hospital officials say three men were killed by Israeli strikes in Gaza City and the nearby Jabaliya refugee camp.

The Israeli military said it struck "military operatives."

The heaviest fighting between Israel and Hamas has subsided since a ceasefire last October, but Israeli fire has killed more than 13,780 Palestinians in Gaza since then, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

Israel's military also said it struck targets in southern Lebanon associated with the Hezbollah militant group after two soldiers were wounded when their vehicle drove over an explosive device in an area occupied by Israeli troops.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported three Israeli airstrikes on the southern town of Nabatiyeh al-Fawqa, adding that the third strike almost hit paramedics heading to the area, but no one was hurt.

Pakistani and Iranian foreign ministers talk shipping safety

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar discussed uninterrupted energy supplies and safe passage for commercial ships during a telephone call with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Dar cited the potential effects of disruptions on developing countries and global supply chains.

Rising energy prices have increased pressure on Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's government. An Islamist party has threatened to march on the capital, Islamabad, unless the government lowers fuel prices.

Iran race managers charged for allowing women to run without headscarves

Iran's state TV said the Tehran prosecutor's office filed charges against race organizers after women participated without covering their hair because "legal and Islamic Sharia" wasn't observed.

The country's ruling theocracy requires women to wear scarves that cover their hair and loose-fitting clothes that hide their bodies.

Footage circulated online shows women running the 10-kilometer (6-mile) race without the hair covering. Habib Sotoudehnejad, head of Tehran's sports department, said about 5% of participants violated race rules. The race was run separately for men and women.

Turkey suggests military support for the Saudis

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan suggested Turkey could provide military support to Saudi Arabia under a recently signed defense pact.

Asked in a TV interview about the possibility of the three-member alliance, which also includes Pakistan, engaging in military action against Yemen's Houthis, Fidan said Turkey would "face no difficulty in meeting" any military needs.

"We observe very serious attacks on Saudi Arabia's territorial integrity and sovereignty," he told broad-

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caster NTV. "We have an alliance agreement in place and we stand by our word."

Kids return to school in war-devastated Gaza

The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees said more than 280,000 children in Gaza are attending school in tents and heavily damaged classrooms.

At one school in Nuseirat, some classrooms have no desks, leaving children to sit on blankets on the floor. Still, some families said a return to school brings back a familiar sense of routine that was upended by war.

UNRWA education program chief Tawfiq al-Hourani said the agency three years ago operated 182 fully equipped schools. He said 95% of them have since been lost.

## **MS NOW, CNN and Politico say their journalists were denied access to White House after Trump ban**

By JOCELYN NOVECK AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Reporters from three major news organizations — CNN, MS NOW and Politico — were denied access to the White House on Saturday, a day after President Donald Trump said he was barring them because of reporting he found to be "fake news."

The actions were a clear escalation of Trump's long-running efforts — in the courts and through administrative action — to restrict news coverage by journalists he finds objectionable, and the latest test of First Amendment protections in the United States. Trump had said Friday he would ban all three outlets because of coverage he disliked.

White House reporters from the two cable networks — Betsy Klein of CNN and Akayla Gardner of MS NOW — both went live to report they'd been turned away, their press badges deactivated, when arriving for their jobs at the White House. Soon after, Politico said its White House reporter Cheyenne Haslett was also denied entry and had her badge confiscated.

All three news outlets hinted at legal action. "We will vigorously defend our First Amendment rights," Politico Editor-in-Chief Jonathan Greenberger said in a statement to the Politico newsroom. A CNN statement said the network "will not be deflected from our duty to hold the government and other public bodies to account."

And MS NOW said it "intends to take any and all steps necessary to defend our First Amendment rights and the essential role of independent journalism in our democracy."

In his second term, Trump and his administration have upped the ante and punished certain media outlets, both in the courtroom and through regulatory action. Trump has also lashed out at individual reporters in person or over social media, sometimes in strikingly personal terms — insulting them in briefings, or in his recent speech at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner.

The WHCA's president, Jacqui Heinrich, called on the administration to immediately restore the three outlets' access. "The implications extend beyond these organizations: a standard used to exclude one news outlet because of its coverage could be applied to any outlet in the future," Heinrich said. "The American people, through a free and independent press, must be able to scrutinize those elected to power, regardless of whether government officials view it favorably."

Three organizations' correspondents are turned away as they arrive

Network correspondents are usually present on the weekends when the president is in Washington or at nearby Camp David. Trump is at the presidential retreat in Maryland this weekend.

MS NOW's Gardner reported that she had walked through two gates successfully, but once she got to where her badge needed to be scanned, an officer told her it was disabled and asked her to hand it over. He said the decision "was above him," she reported. An MS NOW producer was able to get in, but a photographer's badge was also disabled, Gardner said.

Klein, senior White House reporter at CNN, also said her badge had been deactivated. It was confiscated, and she was handed back the clear plastic case. She said she was referred to the White House press office for further information.

Amy Kristin Sanders, a professor at Penn State University and an expert in media law, said it has "be-

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come pretty clear that this administration is not interested in playing by traditional First Amendment rules and norms."

"The second Trump administration's efforts to crack down on press freedom and delegitimize independent journalism far exceed those of any other modern American president," Sanders said. "It is not an exaggeration to say his hostile actions toward news organizations and individual reporters have a chilling effect on freedom of expression around the world."

CNN media analyst Brian Stelter called the move "a direct threat to press freedom in the United States."

"It's so much bigger than CNN," Stelter said. "This is a free speech test in America."

Trump calls these and other outlets 'fake news'

The president wrote on his social media site Friday that effective immediately, "I am banning" CNN, MS NOW and Politico "from the White House as a result of their constant 'reporting' FAKE NEWS!" Minutes later, speaking at an event in the Oval Office, Trump was asked to explain his statement.

"Because they're fake news," he said. "You get so tired of reading and seeing fake news. When you look at CNN, it's just fake. That's why their ratings are no good. When you look at MS NOW ... , it's fake news."

"And when you look at Politico ... the stories they wrote are fake. So there's a lot of news and there may be others to join them, and maybe they can get better," he said. "But our country has to have honest news."

The move follows the president's decision last year to bar Associated Press reporters from the Oval Office, Air Force One and other events in retaliation for the news outlet's decision not to follow his lead in changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico, which lies partially in Mexican and other waters. The AP said that it would note when appropriate that Trump had ordered it renamed the "Gulf of America."

The AP filed suit and the case is ongoing. Since returning to office, Trump has pursued other legal action against a variety of different outlets, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and the BBC. His administration is also involved in a long-simmering confrontation involving ABC over renewal of its broadcast licenses.

The AP said Saturday it supported the news organizations banned this week. In a statement, the news cooperative said: "No news organization — or person — should be retaliated against by the government over the words they use."

## **Congo begins Ebola vaccinations for health workers in the epicenter of the outbreak**

By CONSTANT SAME BAGALWA Associated Press

BUNIA, Congo (AP) — Congo on Saturday began vaccinating healthcare staff against Ebola in Bunia, the epicenter of the fastest-growing outbreak of the disease in history as they are "particularly exposed and deeply involved in the response," the provincial governor said.

Health workers and other front-line workers in the Ebola response are being prioritized to receive the Ervebo vaccine that was effective in past Ebola outbreaks caused by a different, more common type of virus. Clinical trials are ongoing to find a licensed vaccine for the current outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo virus, which has no licensed vaccine or treatment.

The rollout is targeting the Bunia and Mongbwalu zones in Ituri province, health authorities said Saturday. Both areas are among the hardest-hit by the virus.

"Our collective duty is to protect life. Launching this vaccination drive for front-line staff in Ituri is not an arbitrary choice, as these workers are particularly exposed and deeply involved in the response," the military governor of Ituri, Maj. Gen. Gaby Kasongo Mulumba, said Saturday.

The campaign in Ituri and North Kivu is expected to cover 20,000 front-line workers over a period of six to nine months.

As of Saturday, the country had recorded 7,541 confirmed cases, including 3,639 deaths, according to government figures, while 1,823 people have recovered. The outbreak is concentrated in Ituri province and is known to be the deadliest of all past 17 Ebola outbreaks in the country.

The outbreak is spreading under extremely difficult conditions, fueled by insecurity, displacement, a health

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workers' strike and intense population movements. The World Health Organization has said it remains out of control and is on track to surpass the 2014-2016 West Africa Ebola outbreak, the deadliest on record, which killed more than 11,000 people, primarily in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Dr. Jeannot Elua, whom The Associated Press met at a health facility in Bunia, said the vaccine was "beneficial."

"We healthcare workers don't really have a choice: we are going to receive it," he said. "Some people here had already received the previous vaccine. I received it myself, because it was mandatory."

Another front-line health worker, Dr. Jean Paul Uzele, who was vaccinated with Ervebo during the 10th Ebola outbreak, said it was unclear to him whether he should get vaccinated again.

"If it arrives, we will receive it too," he said. "But the question is whether we need to be vaccinated a second time."

Last month, the Ervebo vaccine was rolled out in Kisangani in the Tshopo province. The campaign was expected to cover 14 health zones in Tshopo, Bas-Uele and Haut-Uele provinces.

The use of Ervebo is taking place in a specific scientific context. The vaccine is licensed for use against Ebola virus disease caused by the Zaire strain — a different, more common type of Ebola virus.

The World Health Organization said last month that 70,000 doses of Ervebo were approved for use in Congo.

About 50,000 doses are intended for front-line and health workers, while 20,000 doses will be used in a clinical trial to study whether the vaccine protects against Bundibugyo virus, which is causing the current outbreak and has no licensed vaccine or treatment.

The vaccine is being used under a compassionate-use program, which allows a medical product to be used in a serious disease situation even though it has not been specifically approved for that particular use.

Health authorities said Ervebo could offer some protection against the Bundibugyo virus because the two viruses are related. But whether the vaccine can actually prevent illness in people infected with Bundibugyo Ebola is still being studied.

## **Lawsuit says Anthropic, OpenAI, SpaceXAI and Google made illegal agreement on AI slowdown**

By KAITLYN HUAMANI AP Technology Writer

A new lawsuit claims Anthropic, OpenAI, SpaceXAI and Google made an illegal deal to slow the pace of their respective AI development.

The lawsuit, which was filed Friday in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, argues that the leading AI companies violated antitrust laws when they agreed to coordinate slowdown efforts, and that doing so would reduce the value consumers get for paid AI subscriptions.

The coordination largely took place on Sept. 12, the lawsuit argues, when Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei published an essay urging for industrywide cooperation on decelerating advancements in favor of enhanced safety measures. That same day, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, SpaceXAI CEO Elon Musk and Google DeepMind's co-founder and chair Demis Hassabis each publicly responded to Amodei's proposals in agreement.

But the lawsuit also alleges that the coordination began to take shape months earlier. It points to a statement from July 2026 that high-ranking employees from several of the leading AI labs signed that acknowledged the "intense competitive pressure not to unilaterally slow" development. That statement called on the government to support a global effort to slow automated AI development.

It is clear that an agreement among the chief rivals in AI that their progress "should be slower than competition would otherwise produce has an anticompetitive effect on consumers," the plaintiffs argue.

Lawyers representing four named plaintiffs, who pay for subscriptions to ChatGPT, Claude, Grok or Gemini, are bringing the lawsuit on behalf of a proposed nationwide class of other paid subscribers to those services.

The plaintiffs don't object to the companies individually deciding to slow their own progress in favor of safety. They instead argue in the complaint that antitrust laws forbid them from taking the "shortcut" of

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agreeing to “substitute collective restraint for individual accountability.” A competitive market allows for responsibility and genuine progress, the lawsuit argues.

“AI will quickly spin out of human control and could kill us all if we allow AI safety and protocol ... to be controlled by private self-serving agreements between the world’s most powerful ‘for profit’ technology companies,” said Nick Rowley, the lead attorney for the plaintiffs.

Representatives for Anthropic, OpenAI, Google and SpaceXAI did not immediately respond to a request for comment Saturday.

In his initial essay proposing the slowdown, Amodei acknowledged potential antitrust challenges, writing that it would be helpful for the U.S. government to mediate “or at least enable” these cross-lab discussions. The government wouldn’t need to participate, he wrote, but it would need to “issue a narrow waiver for certain kinds of safety conversations.”

In response, Altman said on social media that OpenAI welcomes the idea of a “federal framework that sets consistent safety requirements,” but said “we do not believe we need to wait for an antitrust exemption or legislation to begin the work of providing this confidence.”

While the recent conversations about pacing development were spurred by increasing concerns about AI evading human control, several leaders in the AI space have long talked about developing a shared set of standards or otherwise coordinating to ensure safety efforts remain paramount.

The plaintiffs in the lawsuit contend they are not against the AI companies asking Congress, the White House or any other agency to develop AI regulation, nor are they against the companies asking for an antitrust exemption.

But achieving that kind of collaboration with the federal government could be an uphill battle.

President Donald Trump rejected the calls for regulation on social media. He has claimed that any efforts to limit the technology are part of a “conspiracy.” He called into question why the industry leaders would be calling for regulation that, he says, “if strongly implemented, will drive them into oblivion and bankruptcy.” Trump said Saturday on social media that he is forming an AI task force and will appoint an “AI czar,” but he provided scant detail.

The Trump administration has been vocal about wanting American AI labs to outpace and excel against Chinese competition. While several Democratic leaders and candidates have called for sweeping action on AI regulation, Republicans have largely mirrored Trump’s position.

Sen. Josh Hawley, a Republican from Missouri, said in a recent Senate hearing that “there is no world” in which he would agree to give “the most powerful companies in the history of the world” an exemption from antitrust laws to collaborate, arguing that they could collude together and stifle competition.

## **Nobel laureate Narges Mohammadi tells the AP that Iranians paying the price for war and repression**

By AMIR-HUSSEIN RADJY Associated Press

Iranians are suffering as economic misery and internal repression leave “no room for people to breathe” after 1½ years of wars, Iran’s most prominent human rights activist has told The Associated Press.

Narges Mohammadi, 54, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2023, was temporarily released from prison for medical reasons earlier this year after falling unconscious and being transferred to a hospital.

Her memoir — titled “A Woman Never Stops Fighting” — was written behind bars, with parts of it smuggled out by fellow inmates. Editions in French, German and nine other languages are being released this month. The English and Farsi editions will be released next year.

In an interview conducted Friday by The Associated Press from outside Iran, Mohammadi said that Iranians are grappling with multiple crises stemming from the ongoing war and deepening economic pressure, and the brutal crackdowns on protests.

“I am sorry to say, but since the outbreak of war, in the past months and last year and a half, we have seen that repression in society has severely increased and now, with these economic pressures and with

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the repression that really has left no room for people to breathe, it's the people who are paying an extremely heavy price," she said.

But she said that many Iranians continue to resist, a change she traces back to the 2022 protests over the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman who died in a hospital after being detained for violating authorities' strict Islamic dress code.

The release of Mohammadi's book this month coincides with Amini's death to honor her memory, her representatives said. The English and Farsi editions will be released in September 2027 for the same reason.

"If you go out into the streets, you see a wave of resistance among the people, a wave of awareness, and their determination to stand up for their rights," Mohammadi said. She said that government repression has intensified, but that many in a new younger generation "know their rights" and were standing firm. "And that gives us reason for hope," she said.

The AP agreed not to ask Mohammadi specific questions about the political situation and leadership in Iran, because of concerns for her safety, though she commented generally about the cost of war.

Mohammadi says her detention was 'life-threatening'

In her interview with the AP, Mohammadi — who has been jailed repeatedly over decades of advocating for human rights and was behind bars when she was awarded the Nobel Prize — described her most recent arrest, detention and health.

She said that she was severely beaten by security forces when detained in December, in the northeastern city of Mashhad. She and a group of activists were attending a memorial ceremony for human rights lawyer Khosrow Alikordi, who was found dead in his office.

She was arrested while giving a public speech. She was sentenced to 7½ years for attending that rally. She is now facing a total of 16 years and more than 100 lashes. She hasn't been flogged, but spent long periods in solitary confinement.

"My detention was really life-threatening," she said. "My head was severely hurt, because most of the hits were to my head, and despite being in that condition, they kept me for two months in solitary confinement during which my condition was really concerning."

She lost consciousness on May 1 and was released on bail nearly 10 days later and transferred to a hospital in Tehran, where she remained for another two weeks.

She smuggled out fragments of her memoir, which she had started writing in 2019 during an earlier stint in Iran's notorious Evin prison in Tehran, where many political prisoners are held. She had lost her handwritten notes that year when they moved her to another site.

This time, "with the help of fellow inmates, we got a few pages out, a few pages at a time," she said. "If it weren't for them, I couldn't have done it."

As for her health, "I am recovering," Mohammadi said.

Mohammadi says other women inspired her

Mohammadi said that she took inspiration from other women's stories growing up, beginning with her own mother.

"I tried to put an image to each of these — how these women really managed to change their world, their society, themselves, the next generation — make them aware, make them resist," she said.

She also recalled "terrifying memories" from her childhood during the 1980s Iran-Iraq war and how she developed "a hatred for war."

"I wasn't more than a child when the Iran-Iraq war happened, but I remember a lot of the repression, repression of many political currents and forces, many executions that happened in the silence and darkness of Evin and prisons around the country," she said.

She risks return to prison

She recalled her concern when she learned that Evin prison had been bombed during the 12-day war between Israel and Iran in 2025, a period when she was out of prison.

"At that moment, I felt that, in this country, we are at the intersection of injustice, discrimination, war, authoritarianism," she said. "All of those are trampling on our people's human rights."

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Mohammadi has been handed down sentences totaling 44 years. She has already spent 10 years in prison, including 161 days in solitary confinement. She has been banned from traveling abroad since 2009, and is unable to join her husband and two children who live in exile in France.

"My sentence is currently suspended, and I must return whenever the judiciary issues the order," Mohammadi later said in a text message shared by her team.

## **Saudi Arabia confirms Yemen's Houthi rebels tried to attack its capital with a ballistic missile**

By TOQA EZZIDIN and CARA ANNA Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Saudi Arabia on Saturday confirmed that Yemen's Houthi rebels tried to attack its capital with a ballistic missile, the first targeting of Riyadh since the escalation in fighting with the Tehran-backed rebels that has opened a new front in the Iran war.

The statement by the Saudi-led coalition fighting the Houthis came long after the dawn attempt, which the coalition said was intercepted. Some residents in Riyadh heard an explosion. Later, some saw a plume of smoke near the airport. There were no reports of casualties or damage.

The statement also said the Houthis tried to attack civilian infrastructure in the Red Sea port city of Yanbu — where a key Saudi pipeline ends — and in Taif, Baysh and Farasan but they were thwarted, giving no further details.

The Houthis earlier claimed, without providing evidence, that they had targeted "sensitive sites" in Riyadh and facilities of Saudi oil giant Aramco in Yanbu, causing "massive fires." Aramco, the world's largest oil company, did not respond to a request for comment.

The growing conflict near another important global shipping corridor has brought new pressures for markets.

Houthi military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree claimed they attacked with cruise and ballistic missiles as well as drones. He said Saudi Arabia had attempted to target the rebel-held city of Sanaa in neighboring Yemen, without giving details. The Associated Press couldn't independently verify the claims.

Recent days have seen one escalation after another. On Thursday, the first civilian casualty was reported as the Saudi civil defense said debris from an intercepted Houthi drone killed a Yemeni resident of Saudi Arabia.

And on Wednesday, Saudi Arabia said the Houthis had tried to attack Mecca, Islam's holiest city, with a drone that it said was intercepted, calling the security of the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad a "red line." The Houthis fiercely denied the accusation.

The United States, a close Saudi ally, has signaled it has no current fight with the Houthis. Regional officials have told The Associated Press that Saudi Arabia is running low on missile interceptors and instead has asked France, Britain, Pakistan and Egypt for air defense support.

Meanwhile, fighting has surged inside Yemen between the Houthis and the Saudi-backed, internationally recognized government. The rebels raced down the country's Red Sea coast over a week ago, seizing the key port city of Mokha and islands on the Bab el-Mandeb Strait at the southern end of the Red Sea.

That has improved their surveillance of passing ships, though the Houthis have said they are only targeting Saudi ones.

The fighting in Yemen also marks a return to a devastating civil war after four years of relative calm.

## **Russia holds parliamentary vote in areas it seized from Ukraine in the war**

By The Associated Press undefined

Russia's parliamentary election for the first time includes residents of regions that Moscow illegally annexed from Ukraine after the start of its full-scale invasion more than 4 1/2 years ago, part of Kremlin efforts to cement its gains.

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Officials in Kyiv vigorously denounced the action as illegal, and a human rights activist described residents there as being coerced to participate in the election.

While the vote across Russia started Friday and lasts until Sunday to help boost turnout, balloting actually has been underway in the annexed parts of Ukraine and some areas on the Russian side of the border since the end of last month. Officials cited security reasons for the extended period.

Russian authorities say the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia territories, often referred to by Moscow officials as the "new regions," have over 3.5 million voters. They were annexed by Russia in September 2022, despite not fully being under Moscow's control. The move has not been recognized internationally.

At one polling station in the Russian-held part of the Donetsk region, voters dropped their ballots in a box as an armed Russian soldier stood nearby and watched.

Putin stressed the importance of voting in the regions

In a speech Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasized the importance of balloting in those regions for the State Duma, the lower house of parliament. Residents there will be voting for the Duma "for the first time since their reunification with Russia."

He noted that Russian soldiers involved in the fighting also will vote.

Voting also is taking place in Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula that was illegally annexed by Moscow in 2014.

The first wartime election to the State Duma is intended to secure the Kremlin's political dominance and showcase public support for the war.

"Your choice and resolve will once again demonstrate that millions of people stand behind our fighters, that we are a united people, bound by shared values, historical memory, and love for the Motherland and that nobody can divide or intimidate us, undermine our statehood and political system," Putin said.

Ukraine urges other countries not to recognize the vote

Authorities in Kyiv called the voting in those territories illegal and urged foreign governments and international organizations not to recognize the election. They warned Ukrainians that taking part in organizing the vote could carry criminal liability.

A coalition of nine Ukrainian human rights groups called on residents of the Russia-held territories to stay away from the polls.

"We urge residents of the temporarily occupied territories, above all, to protect their lives and health and to look after their own safety," the coalition said in a statement. "Holding Russian elections in the temporarily occupied territories is an attempt to use the electoral process to legitimize the Russian occupation and the attempted annexation of Ukrainian territories."

European Commission spokesperson Christian Wigand said the voting in Russian-held regions represented "another blatant violation of international law. The European Union does not, and will never recognize either the holding of these, so-called elections, sham elections, in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine or their results."

Activists describe coercion to vote

Violeta Artemchuk, coordinator of the Donbas SOS human rights group who was among those who signed the statement, said members of local election commissions were going house to house, escorted by Russian troops and security agents, to force people to vote.

Moscow-appointed authorities exert pressure on residents, threatening those who work in the public sector with dismissal if they fail to vote and making pensions and other social payments conditional on participating, Artemchuk said.

"For instance, if a person with a disability or a pensioner relies on social assistance and does not take part in the 'voting,' they could be added to a list of individuals deemed 'disloyal' to the so-called authorities and subsequently deprived of their benefits or humanitarian assistance," she said.

Volodymyr Fesenko, a political analyst with the Kyiv-based Penta Center, emphasized that "elections held at gunpoint are a farce."

"The very fact that voting takes place amid endless shelling and bombing reflects the Kremlin's attitude

toward the people and the electoral process in the occupied territories," Fesenko told The Associated Press. "It's nothing short of a mockery. Any electoral procedures conducted by the Russian occupation authorities have nothing to do with democracy," he said.

## Russian election observer loses consciousness during arrest by police, opposition party says

By The Associated Press undefined

Russia's liberal opposition Yabloko party said that one of its election observers lost consciousness while being arrested by police at a St. Petersburg polling station on Saturday, the second day of a tightly controlled parliamentary election.

The voting to elect members of the State Duma is Russia's first parliamentary election since Moscow launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. The three-day election, which began Friday and ends Sunday, features virtually no opposition and is all but certain to secure the Kremlin's political dominance.

Yabloko said that officials at the polling station accused a party election observer of attempting to "disrupt the elections" and called the police, which "used force" against him.

It was unclear whether he received prompt medical attention after falling unconscious, the party said in a statement on Telegram Saturday, adding that he was taken to a police station and charged with disobeying police orders.

Russian officials didn't immediately comment on the incident.

Yabloko, the only registered political entity that dared to criticize Russia's war with Ukraine, was removed from the ballot last month by Russia's Supreme Court, and only has a few dozen candidates in the single-constituency races. Additionally, some anti-war politicians have been imprisoned or forced to flee abroad before the campaign.

Yabloko and the Communist Party, which has criticized some aspects of government policy but carefully avoided any criticism of Russian President Vladimir Putin, said that many of their election observers were turned away from polling stations.

The parties also reported various violations, including sealed ballot boxes being opened, the refusal to issue paper ballots and provide turnout data for verification, and doors to polling stations not being secured overnight.

On Friday, Yabloko's leader appealed to Ella Pamfilova, head of the Central Election Commission, over what the party said were numerous denials of entry to its observers and pressure on them.

"The scale of what's happening does not allow us to view this as a misunderstanding," Yabloko chairman Nikolai Rybakov said.

Russia didn't invite observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to monitor the election, with the Russian Foreign Ministry accusing the body of "double standards" for its criticism of Russia.

It said that it had invited other international organizations, as well as observers from OSCE member states, in its place.

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Pere Joan Pons said that the decision was a breach of Russia's commitments as a member state of the organization.

"This persistent rejection of independent scrutiny follows a deeply worrying pattern of disregard for the principles of transparency, democratic accountability and the rule of law," he said.

Russia's Central Election Commission said that more than 380,000 electoral observers had been registered before the vote, including representatives from 11 political parties. Of those registered, 97,040 observers were linked to the United Russia party, with the next largest group, 42,743 observers, representing Russia's Communist Party.

It also said that 1,126 international election observers and "electoral experts" have been registered from 133 countries and 13 international organizations.

Russia also tightened restrictions on election observers in the lead-up to the parliamentary vote. Under a new code of ethics, observers are banned from making statements “that could be construed as undermining confidence in the electoral system.”

Russian authorities spread the parliamentary election over the weekend in a bid to boost turnout among the 111 million eligible voters, and they allowed electronic balloting.

For the first time, the parliamentary election includes residents of four Ukrainian regions that Moscow illegally annexed after the war began, but still doesn’t fully control. Voting also is taking place in Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula that was illegally annexed by Russia in 2014.

The Kremlin wants the vote to underline public support for the war in Ukraine and give a veneer of legitimacy to it. It has sought to avoid any political risks by stamping out even the slightest sign of dissent.

The main Kremlin party, United Russia, is all but assured to retain its overwhelming control of the lower house, the State Duma. Several smaller parties of the “systemic opposition” that vote in sync with the government on all key issues also are expected to retain their presence.

## **Telehealth companies keep exposing their customers’ medical data. What should they do?**

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The appeal of telehealth is easy to explain: Instead of calling a doctor, booking an appointment and hoping to eventually get a prescription, you can log onto an app or website and get approved for a new medication within minutes.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, scores of online health services have launched with the promise of quick, convenient access to drugs for ADHD, sexual dysfunction, anxiety, weight loss and more.

Increasingly, though, government regulators are accusing these companies of deceptive, unethical business practices, including disclosing their customers’ health data, signing them up for hard-to-cancel subscriptions and bypassing real-time consultations with doctors.

The Federal Trade Commission’s latest lawsuit alleges that telehealth pioneer Hims & Hers engaged in all of those tactics, running afoul of U.S. consumer protection laws.

Hims has disputed the government’s claims, calling them “an effort to generate headlines at our expense.”

In recent years, FTC officials have filed similar cases against more than a half-dozen telehealth companies, including online therapy provider BetterHelp and pharmacy discount service GoodRx. In both cases, regulators said the companies shared users’ health data with online platforms such as Meta and Google, without getting permission.

Experts say part of the problem is that federal laws that govern the handling of health information generally don’t apply to telehealth companies.

“There’s an entire universe of companies collecting huge amounts of consumer health data every day that aren’t covered by our current health sector-specific laws,” said Andrew Crawford, an attorney with the nonprofit Center for Democracy and Technology.

Here are some things to know before signing up for a telehealth service:

Don’t expect to actually talk to a physician

Nearly all telehealth visits begin with a questionnaire in which users provide details about their medical history and possible medications they’re interested in.

According to the FTC’s lawsuit, Hims customers were automatically enrolled and billed for recurring prescriptions with “virtually no opportunity to review the provider’s recommended treatment.”

Researchers have documented similar practices across the industry, even for injectable weight-loss drugs that typically require a physical exam and other precautions before beginning treatment.

A recent analysis of nearly 50 telehealth companies selling GLP-1 drugs found that less than a third actually required any real-time video or audio consultation with a physician. In some cases, the prescriptions were approved within minutes.

“What we saw overwhelmingly was that it was incredibly easy to get access to the GLP-1s,” said Dr.

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Reshma Ramachandran of Yale University, who led the study. "Most of the time, the prescription was automatically sent, without even an opportunity to stop the dispensing."

The lack of a real-time conversation means many patients aren't getting the type of care recommended by medical societies that prescribe GLP-1s, including discussions about weight-loss goals, past efforts and eating disorders.

Only a little more than half the websites had a question about eating disorders — which GLP-1 drugs can induce or worsen — on their intake questionnaires, the researchers found.

Your data may be shared with advertisers, social media companies and others

Americans often assume that any personal health information they share is protected by HIPAA, the federal privacy law that governs the handling of medical information. But the law generally only applies to specific types of health businesses, including medical offices, hospitals and insurers, not telehealth companies offering prescriptions, counseling, DNA tests and other online services.

Privacy experts say that legal gap is one reason companies continue to disclose sensitive health information to advertisers and search engines.

"There isn't a clear federal law saying: 'Don't do this,'" said Justin Brookman, Consumer Reports' director of technology policy. "There's just a body of soft law and settled cases with the FTC that many companies probably aren't even aware of."

Because HIPAA does not cover every direct-to-consumer health platform, the FTC has generally used its broader authority to take action against "fraudulent, deceptive or unethical business methods." In practice, that means showing that telehealth companies disclosed their customers' health information after initially saying they wouldn't.

Hims told customers that its platform offered a "100% online, private and secure" means of sharing information with the company's medical professionals, according to the FTC complaint. But instead the company shared the data with Meta and other online platforms, the FTC alleges.

Still, experts say the penalties available to regulators are limited. In most cases, companies sign a legal agreement stating that they'll stop the practices cited by regulators.

Lawmakers in California, Connecticut, Maryland and other states have passed new online privacy laws that include special protections for health information. But there's been little enforcement against telehealth companies that break those rules.

Online privacy tools offer a bit of protection

For now, privacy experts recommend using ad blockers and private web browsers — sometimes called "incognito" windows — when logging onto telehealth websites. Those tools can make it harder for companies to track your location, online history and other personal information.

It's also a good idea to read any user agreements to get a sense of how the company plans to use your personal data, said Crawford. Some telehealth sites, for example, explicitly state in their privacy policies that they have the right to sell data about users' sex lives.

The only surefire way to protect your information may simply be to decline the terms of service, usually one of the first steps required before accessing telehealth.

"The system we have now overly burdens consumers to do a ton of work in terms of understanding how each piece of technology collecting their personal data is going to handle it," he said. "But even if you do all that work, you often have little agency."

## **This swing state Republican keeps distancing himself from Trump. It may not save him in the midterms**

By MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

YARDLEY, Pa. (AP) — Mary Ryan may be a registered Republican but she has never voted for President Donald Trump, turned off by his crass style of politics and chaotic approach to governing.

But the 60-year-old medical writer from the Philadelphia suburbs has consistently backed her party's congressman, five-term Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick.

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Until now.

This year, Ryan is so fed up with Trump and his grip on Congress that she is planning to vote in November for Fitzpatrick's Democratic opponent in the 1st Congressional District, Bob Harvie, a twice countywide elected commissioner who is a former social studies teacher.

Even though Fitzpatrick has pitched himself as a voice of reason in Washington, Ryan said that "I don't see it happening."

Defections like this one could sink Fitzpatrick's reelection chances and cost Republicans their narrow U.S. House majority. As one of the few Republicans representing a congressional district won by Democrat Kamala Harris in the presidential race two years ago, Fitzpatrick has done as much as any House Republican to distance himself from Trump: Fitzpatrick voted against Trump's tariffs, his signature tax legislation and his power to wage war against Iran without congressional approval. The lawmaker even skipped Trump's recent midterm convention in Dallas.

But that may not be enough to overcome the collateral damage of the president's sagging approval rating and soaring fuel prices because of the war.

Fitzpatrick, speaking briefly after a Sept. 11 memorial in his district, said he understands this year's political challenges and always considers what is best for his constituents with every vote.

"That's the job," he said. Representatives for Fitzpatrick did not respond to requests for a more complete interview.

Democrats have tried for years to defeat Fitzpatrick

Harvie describes the race and his decision to run in almost existential terms.

"The lack of trust in our government, the lack of trust in each other and seeing each other as enemies based just on, you know, the color of your skin, the religion you practice, who you voted for," he said in an interview this summer. "I worry about just the basic foundations of this nation."

Fitzpatrick has consistently survived challenges in his politically mixed district. He won by 13 percentage points in 2024 when Harris won by less than a single point in the district. In 2022, he won by about 10 points when Democrats were elected to the U.S. Senate and governorship. In 2020, Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden won the district by about 5 points while Fitzpatrick carried it by about 13 points.

"Every two years Democrats in Washington label Congressman Fitzpatrick as vulnerable. Every two years he wins anyway," said Robert Speel, an associate professor of political science at the Penn State campus in Erie. "It's, to some extent, possibly like Charlie Brown trying to kick the football and failing each time."

Harvie pointed to his deep roots in the district as a basis for why he could be different from previous Democrats who ran against Fitzpatrick.

"I'm not somebody who needs to be reintroduced or introduced to people of this district. And that's very, very different than any race he's ever run before," he said.

Jean Dolan, 61, is a Democratic voter from Newtown who has never backed Fitzpatrick and does not plan to this year. She has been frustrated with Trump's immigration crackdown and she worries about how anti-vaccine sentiment in his administration could affect public health. As she sees it, Fitzpatrick is not independent enough from his party's leaders.

"He's a nice guy. I know people like him a lot in the community," she said. But, she added, "you have to serve everyone in your district."

Fitzpatrick has been willing to criticize Trump

Fitzpatrick graduated with an MBA and a law degree and worked as a special agent for the FBI and as an assistant U.S. attorney. He also worked in private practice as a lawyer and accountant before running for the seat previously held by his brother, Mike Fitzpatrick, who died of cancer in 2020.

Jim Rachau, a 45-year-old photographer from Doylestown, is a registered independent who plans to vote for Fitzpatrick again this year. Rachau is not thrilled with the war or the economy, but said Fitzpatrick has earned his support with his prior public service as an FBI agent.

"You would think serving for the public good, he would have their best interest at heart," Rachau said.

In Congress, Fitzpatrick has not shied away from disagreeing with Trump. He criticized the president, for

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example, in April when Trump called Pope Leo XIV “weak,” and captive to the “Radical Left.”

“There’s so many angry voices out there. We all know that’s the case,” Fitzpatrick said in an episode of a podcast launched this year with U.S. Rep. Tom Suozzi, a Democrat who represents a battleground district in New York. “People are sick and tired of the noise. They’re sick and tired of elected officials not being focused on the kitchen table issues that people really care about.”

Fitzpatrick also posts online regularly about meeting with groups across the district. He recently showed up to a picket line with striking sheet metal workers; he dropped by a local Catholic church’s parish picnic; and he stopped at a community college hosting a maternity coalition.

Fitzpatrick spends millions on attack ads against Harvie

Fitzpatrick has also unleashed a wave of spending in the race already, disbursing nearly \$5 million, according to Federal Election Commission records.

Negative attack ads against Harvie have mushroomed. Many claim Harvie is under FBI investigation, which the Democrat denies. He has filed a federal defamation lawsuit against a super PAC running some of the ads.

According to the suit, local media reported in 2020 with few details that the FBI was investigating local government and that Harvie was called to testify as a witness in the case. His attorneys say he has never been charged.

The FBI did not respond to a request for comment.

No debate has been scheduled between Fitzpatrick and Harvie, but the men appeared at the same Sept. 11 memorial, standing on opposite sides of the speaker’s lectern. They did not appear to speak to each other.

Ryan, the medical writer from the Philadelphia suburbs, said she is thinking less about Fitzpatrick and more about how Republicans in Congress and their reluctance to buck the president.

“Incumbents just feel they can’t cross that line. If they do, they’re not going to get reelected,” she said. But she acknowledged that may not matter in the end. “They might not get reelected anyway.”

## **Voting groups sound alarm on funding shortfalls that they say could affect midterm turnout**

By MATT BROWN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Several of the nation’s largest left-leaning voter engagement and racial justice organizations are facing steep funding shortfalls and staffing cutbacks just as voting is getting underway in an election that will determine control of Congress for the final two years of President Donald Trump’s term.

The shortfalls are setting off alarms among Democratic strategists, who are betting on high turnout and robust voter protection efforts to boost the party’s chances this fall. They are worried that many grassroots groups will not be able to mount effective registration and get-out-the-vote efforts, much less protect against the possibility of election interference from the Republican administration.

America Votes, a coordinating hub for more than 400 progressive groups, has fallen “well below” the level of funding it had during the 2022 midterms, Daria Dawson, America Votes’ executive director, said in a statement to The Associated Press. America Votes has acted as a nerve center for the voter mobilization efforts of groups such as the NAACP, Planned Parenthood, the League of Conservation Voters, the AFL-CIO and SEIU labor unions, as well as local groups focused on racial justice, climate and civil liberties.

“There is still time to reach voters and bring them into this election, but we are no longer talking about a future opportunity,” Dawson said. “The window to engage them is open now, and it is narrowing every day.”

‘Surrender, not strategy,’ a Democratic operative says

Wealthy donors and philanthropic groups have reduced their support of many liberal causes since the 2024 presidential election. That pullback has been especially stark for voting groups geared toward engaging communities of color.

While multiple organizers said some funders had expressed an interest in adopting different strategies,

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racial justice organizers have felt that as a betrayal.

A retreat in donor support is "handcuffing our ability to persuade our communities to vote in a year where there is no Voting Rights Act," said Esosa Osa, a veteran Democratic strategist and founder of Onyx Impact, a research group focused on combating misinformation in Black communities.

The Supreme Court this year knocked out one of the last remaining pillars of that landmark 1965 law, essentially gutting it.

"We are watching surrender, not strategy," Osa said.

A July memo circulated among major Democratic fundraisers warned that "the organizations that registered and persuaded millions of voters to participate in the 2018 and 2022 midterms are drastically underfunded. They have raised nearly 40% less than they had at this point in those cycles."

It further warned that funding voter mobilization groups was especially critical "given that the Democratic brand is underperforming on generic ballot tests relative to historical comparisons and the president's approval ratings."

The shortfalls have led organizations focused on engaging and mobilizing key voting groups to scale back operations and staffing over the last year. That has included programs aimed at registering and mobilizing lower-propensity voters, voters of color, and rural and younger voters.

The Democratic National Committee, which has faced its own funding challenges, has consolidated voter engagement efforts this year partly in response to the ecosystem's past shortcomings. The DNC in a statement said it was making "historic investments" in its organizing but did not address the weaknesses among allied groups.

"We are expanding our voter protection infrastructure to defend Americans' sacred right to vote, hold Trump and Republicans accountable in court, and register and mobilize voters across the country," said Angelo Fernández Hernández, a DNC spokesperson.

Shifting donor priorities affect voter turnout groups

The reasons for the troubled funding landscape are varied and at times unclear, according to nearly two dozen fundraisers and organizers who spoke with the AP. Some donors, still disappointed with the Democratic Party and some of its allies following the 2024 presidential election, have closed their pocketbooks to liberal causes entirely.

While a small group of liberal megadonors has continued to bankroll progressive causes, most focus their support on liberal legal organizations that have taken the Trump administration to court, rather than political or voter engagement groups.

Others, including major philanthropic institutions, have pulled back out of fear of retribution that giving to political or racial justice causes could draw the administration's ire. Organizers who have engaged with potential donors said the administration's targeting of political opponents and diversity initiatives seems to have put a chill on fundraising for their causes.

Tameka Ramsey-Brown, founding director of the Michigan Coalition on Black Civic Participation, said multiple donors since the 2024 election had asked whether her group could remove the word "Black" from its name or find financial conduits to mask the source of donations for fear of retribution from the administration.

"Just being Black in this country again has become a bad word, and it has made it that much more difficult just to raise money because funders don't want the added pressure and stress or attacks on them by funding us," she said.

Smaller budgets force shifting strategies

Many of the nonprofit groups that traditionally have conducted the registration, voter education and organizing say they are trying to adapt to their new, leaner reality.

Vamos a Votar, an initiative of the largest civil rights and advocacy groups focused on Latino communities, has had to readjust its ambitions this year due to a lack of investment from funders.

"This is shaping up to be a cycle where investments haven't gone to the Black and brown communities that will ultimately decide this election," said Juan Proaño, CEO of the League of United Latin American

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Citizens, a member of the initiative.

In a September pitch circulated among donors, the coalition said it aimed to invest \$27.5 million in voter engagement and persuasion efforts this year, but still required \$5.4 million from donors to fund voter turnout efforts across 10 states and 17 House districts. Even that investment reflected reduced ambitions from previous pitches to donors early this year.

"It has been extremely disappointing to see that progressive donors are not meeting the moment," said Héctor Sánchez Barba, the CEO of Mi Familia Vota, one of the affiliated organizations. "We are not waiting. We are always on the front lines for our democracy and our communities."

To counter the funding cutbacks, some groups have begun relying more heavily on artificial intelligence to provide voter registration guides, share information in multiple languages and track potential election issues. Some groups have increased their partnerships with ride-sharing companies to provide free rides to polling places instead of bus shuttles.

With fewer in-person organizers, some groups are also focusing on social media and partnering with liberal content creators to boost their messages.

"In my more than 30 years of organizing, it has never been this bad to raise money to support Black causes of any kind," said Melanie Campbell, president and CEO of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, a nonpartisan civil rights group. "We're going to do the work, our state affiliates are doing all that is possible. ... But the bottom line is that those who believe that democracy matters should make sure they fund the work."

## **Today in History: September 20** **Billie Jean King wins 'Battle of the Sexes'**

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, Sept. 20, the 263rd day of 2026. There are 102 days left in the year.

On Sept. 20, 1973, in their so-called "Battle of the Sexes," tennis star Billie Jean King defeated Bobby Riggs in straight sets, 6-4, 6-3, 6-3, in the Houston Astrodome.

In 1519, Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan and his crew set out from Spain on five ships to find a western passage to the Spice Islands. (Magellan was killed en route, but one of his ships completed the first circumnavigation of the globe three years later.)

In 1946, the first Cannes Film Festival, lasting 16 days, opened in France.

In 1962, James Meredith, a Black student, was blocked from enrolling at the University of Mississippi by Democratic Gov. Ross R. Barnett.

In 1964, The Beatles concluded their first full-fledged U.S. tour by performing in a charity concert at the Paramount Theater in New York.

In 1967, the Cunard liner Queen Elizabeth 2 was christened by Britain's Queen Elizabeth II in Clydebank, Scotland.

In 2011, the repeal of the U.S. military's 18-year-old "don't ask, don't tell" compromise took effect, allowing gay and lesbian service members to serve openly.

In 2017, Hurricane Maria struck Puerto Rico, wiping out up to 75% of power distribution lines and causing an island-wide blackout. It was the strongest storm to hit the island in more than 80 years.

In 2019, Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania, the site of the nation's worst commercial nuclear power accident in 1979, was shut down by its owner after producing electricity for 45 years.

In 2024, an Israeli airstrike in Beirut killed at least 14 people and wounded dozens more. It was the first such Israeli attack on the Lebanese capital in months and came shortly after the Shiite Muslim militant and political group Hezbollah pounded northern Israel with 140 rockets.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Sophia Loren is 92. Author George R. R. Martin is 78. Actor Gary Cole is 70. TV news correspondent Deborah Roberts is 66. Actor Maggie Cheung is 62. Actor Kristen Johnston is 59. Rock singers Gunnar and Matthew Nelson are 59. Race car driver Juan Pablo Montoya is 51. Actor Jon Bernthal is 50. Actor Aldis Hodge is 40. Retired mixed martial artist Khabib Nurmagomedov is 38. Singer-songwriter Phillip Phillips is 36. Singer Katrina Stuart is 27.