

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 1 of 57

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- Weekly Vikings Roundup](#)
- [5- Prairie Doc: Shingles Vaccines](#)
- [6- EarthTalk: Trump undoing Clean Air](#)
- [7- SD SearchLight: South Dakota's top election official, a Republican, endorses a Democrat to succeed her](#)
- [9- Weather Pages](#)
- [13- Daily Devotional](#)
- [14- Subscription Form](#)
- [15- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [16- News from the Associated Press](#)

Community Calendar

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 JH/JV 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.

JV Football @ Clark (5pm)

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.

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



Wednesday, Sept. 23

Senior Menu: Chicken bacon ranch pasta, broccoli, fruit, whole wheat bread.

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

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

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

Thursday, Sept. 24

Senior Menu: Chicken bacon ranch pasta, broccoli, fruit, whole wheat bread.

Boys Golf at Sisseton Invitational, 10 a.m.

Cross Country at Clark, 2 p.m.

Boys Soccer @ James Valley Christian (4pm - theme: Groton Gear

Volleyball hosts Mobridge-Pollock (7th/C @ 4pm, 8th/JV @ 5pm, Varsity to follow) - theme: Camo)

Friday, Sept. 25

Senior Menu: Grilled chicken sandwich, roasted sweet potatoes, California blend, fruit.

Volleyball hosts Langford Area (C team at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m. followed by Varsity) - theme: Matching Sets

Saturday, Sept. 26

JV Football at Webster Jamboree, 10 a.m.

Soccer at Dakota Valley (girls at 1 p.m., boys at 3 p.m.) - theme: Groton Gear

Groton Daily Independent

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Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 2 of 57

1440

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

US-Greenland Security Deal

The US and Denmark reached a deal Friday that bolsters security in Greenland while keeping the island under Danish sovereignty. The agreement comes after President Donald Trump's escalated push for US control of Greenland in January.

Trump has emphasized Greenland's strategic and military value to the US, highlighting the Arctic island's reservoir of rare-earth minerals (ranking eighth in the world) and its ability to monitor China and Russia's maritime forces. The agreement allows the US to build military bases and fly over Greenland, but officials have not yet specified the plans. The deal also bars China, Russia, and other non-NATO members from establishing a military presence and gives the US power to veto either country's investments in Greenland.

The three governments are expected to sign the agreement tomorrow at the UN General Assembly in New York. It will require approval from Danish and Greenlandic parliaments before taking effect.

Ukraine Strikes Moscow

Ukraine launched over 1,000 drones at Russia on Sunday, killing four people and injuring at least 20 others. Russian officials said its air defense forces shot down 450 drones approaching Moscow in what was the largest attack on the capital since the war began in 2022.

The drones struck a residential building and the Moscow oil refinery, which supplies roughly 40% of the city's fuel. The attack came on the final day of Russia's first parliamentary election since it launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The vote extended into four Ukrainian territories that Russia illegally annexed in September 2022 and in Crimea, which Russia seized in 2014. Russian officials say the regions have over 3.5 million voters; Ukrainian authorities contend the process is illegal.

Frontline movement in the war has slowed in recent months. Russian forces advanced just 15.7 square miles from December 2025 to May 2026—a 92% decline from the same period a year earlier.

Two Brain Cells, Together

Two brain region cells evolve separately from each other, a new Stanford study reveals. The finding has allowed researchers to more effectively develop stem cells into the appropriate neuron cells—and may help study certain neurodegenerative diseases, like ALS.

Researchers studied the earliest phase of embryonic development in mice. By 7.5 days after conception, they noticed two distinct clusters of cells that would evolve into brain regions, and used tissue staining to tag them. The back half of the brain—the so-called hindbrain, which controls speech and swallowing—had distinct cells from the front and midbrain. Researchers characterized the results as evidence the brain is, in fact, two distinct organs, and that this explains why scientists have struggled for years to grow certain brain cells in the laboratory.

Separately, a man with a rare form of ALS has seen symptoms ease one year after receiving an RNA treatment. The intervention targets how much protein is produced by a gene mutation found in fewer than 1% of ALS patients.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 3 of 57

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Ole Miss climbs to No. 4 in Top 25 college football rankings after 32-24 victory over LSU squad and former head coach Lane Kiffin.

QBs Caleb Williams, Jayden Daniels go down with Week 2 injuries in the NFL.

New Found Glory lead guitarist Chad Gilbert dies at age 45; he was diagnosed with cancer in 2021 and underwent surgery to remove three brain tumors in February.

George Lucas opens 300,000-square-foot museum in Los Angeles; collection features over 1,300 pieces of art, about 7% of which is "Star Wars" content.

Science & Technology

Google reports that its AI software hacked three outside systems in May; company believes intrusions did not cause damage.

New AI-powered malware poses threats to Android phones by tricking users to gain access to secure info.

Scientists advance predictions of explosive volcanic eruptions by monitoring bulges caused by underground magma in nearby land.

NASA shares first images from Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope, including photos of stars appearing as green, blue, and yellow blurs.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 +0.2%, Dow -0.2%, Nasdaq +0.4%) following last week's Federal Reserve interest rate decision.

Top US and Chinese trade officials meet in New York ahead of Thursday's Trump-Xi summit, with meetings reportedly centered on AI, critical minerals.

Bitcoin surges 5%, tops \$81K on Friday, despite failure of Clarity Act, which would have created the first major regulatory framework for crypto in the US.

Politics & World Affairs

Iranian-backed Houthi rebels target Saudi Arabia's capital of Riyadh for the first time during the current conflict, using a ballistic missile and drone; fuel tank near the city's main airport reportedly caught on fire.

Germany's nationalist-populist Alternative for Germany party wins regional elections in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, weeks after placing first in Saxony-Anhalt's election.

President Donald Trump says his 250-foot-tall Triumphal Arch in DC will serve a military purpose, housing drones and snipers.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 4 of 57



Under a dreary sky and a relentless downpour, the Minnesota Vikings sailed into Chicago with a simple mission: collect an elusive Bear pelt and return home victorious. What followed was a hard-fought defensive battle in which neither offense could find its footing, but the Vikings weathered the storm and escaped with a 9-3 victory.

Despite an encouraging week, Kyler Murray was ruled out of this game as he recovers from the concussion he suffered in Week 1, which meant backup QB Carson Wentz was at the helm in this second-straight divisional matchup. Running back Jordan Mason would also miss this game (he fractured his thumb in Week 1 and had surgery to repair it, so he's been placed

on IR and will miss at least four games).

The lead-up to this game was all about Chicago's head coach Ben Johnson's offense against Brian Flores' defense. In Week 1, Flores relentlessly blitzed the Packers, wearing them down over the course of the game which led to complete domination as the game went on. Week 2 presented a different sort of problem. Chicago's offensive line is better than Green Bay's, and Bears QB Caleb Williams thrives against the blitz. This was going to be a true test of the Vikings' defense. Were they actually an elite unit? Or did they only look good against a team with a bad o-line?

Holding the Bears to only 3 points, after they put up 59 points in Week 1, emphatically answered that question.

The Vikings clearly wanted to control the clock in this game. Based on the poor weather, and an opposing offense that could put up plenty of points, head coach Kevin O'Connell put his faith in the run game. With Mason out, it was the Aaron Jones Sr. show, and he delivered, racking up 105 yards on 23 carries. It was his first game hitting triple digits since Week 12 of the 2024 season (also against the Bears).

For the second straight week, Dallas Turner lived in the opponent's backfield. Pro Football Focus credits Turner with 10 QB pressures, four QB hits, two sacks, and two tackles for loss. To put his dominance into perspective, Turner generated more pressure by himself than Chicago's entire defense, which finished with eight. But no play was bigger than his last. With one second remaining, the Bears trailed by six and had one final chance from the Vikings' 12-yard line. Turner exploded around the edge and buried Tyson Bagent before he could get the pass away, securing the Vikings' victory. Turner's long-awaited breakout isn't coming... it's already here. And if he keeps this up, he'll be in the Defensive Player of the Year conversation.

While Turner was certainly in the mix for the prestigious WVR Player of the Game award, I'm giving it to Isaiah Rodgers, who made two game-altering plays. The first was early in the third quarter. Chicago had driven down the field and had first-and-goal at the one-yard line, but then Jalen Redmond punched the ball out of D'Andre Swift's hands and Rodgers recovered. The second play was midway through the fourth quarter. Down 6-3, Chicago attempted a game-tying field goal. Rodgers came off the edge to get a hand on the ball, blocking the attempt and preserving the Vikings' lead.

Looking ahead, the Vikings sail to Tampa Bay to battle the Buccaneers. The Bucs are 0-2 after losing to the Bengals and Browns in Weeks 1 and 2 respectively. The Buccaneers are a solid team, so it's surprising that they lost to two teams who were a combined 11-23 last season. Hopefully Kyler Murray will be back from injury, and we can finally see what this year's Vikings offense looks like. Skol!

"Shingles Vaccines"

Too many people know the pain of having shingles. Shingles, or Zoster, occurs when a Herpes virus, the same one which caused chicken pox in childhood, reemerges from dormancy in a spinal nerve. Symptoms include nerve pain and tingling followed by an eruption of a blistering red rash over the distribution following that nerve.

Typically the rash of shingles lasts up to a couple of weeks, but for some patients the associated nerve pain can continue and even be permanent, a condition known as post-herpetic neuralgia. A minority of patients are left with a chronic pain which can be very difficult to treat.

The duration of shingles, and the odds of developing post-herpetic neuralgia, can be reduced if an antiviral medication is started within the first 3 days of symptoms. But we have an even better option, a vaccine which reduces the risk of getting shingles at all.

The FDA approved vaccine for shingles is recommended for all adults age 50 and older and for younger adults who are immunocompromised. The vaccine is comprised of two doses, ideally given 2-6 months apart. Patients who receive both doses have over 90% reduced chance of getting shingles.

Already had shingles? You will still benefit from getting the vaccine series, as it will reduce your odds of a recurrence. Got the first shot but forgot to come back in 2-6 months? No big deal – just get the second dose now and you'll be caught up.

Exciting recent research suggests the vaccine against shingles may be associated with lower risk of other diseases as we age, including dementia. Although we can't yet be certain of a causative link, the numbers are promising enough that this may add another good reason to not miss out on an effective vaccine.

Decades from now, when the children who have benefitted from widespread vaccination against the chicken pox virus (VZV) reach their 50's, recommendations for shingles vaccination may change. But for now, we adults who had chicken pox (and if you don't recall having over chicken pox, you almost certainly still had the virus) clearly benefit from the shingles vaccine. I recommend it for all my eligible patients.

Dr. Kelly Evans Hullinger practices internal medicine at Avera Brookings. She serves as a volunteer host for the Prairie Doc® team, which is currently celebrating its 25th season of providing health education based on science and built on trust. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok to stay connected. Our programming includes the medical Q&A show On Call with the Prairie Doc® (most Thursdays at 7pm on SDPB, YouTube, and Facebook), along with two podcasts and a weekly radio program (Sundays at 6am and 1pm on SDPB).



Kelly Evans-Hullinger, MD

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 6 of 57

EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: Is it true that Trump is working actively to cut back clean air protections that have been in place since the 1970s?

-- H.L., via e-mail

Yes, Trump is moving fast to unwind federal air-pollution and climate safeguards, with many changes to take effect before Trump leaves office in January 2029. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), led by Administrator Lee Zeldin, says the effort will cut regulatory costs and expand consumer and industry choice; health and environmental groups say it will mean dirtier air and more disease.

The biggest step came in February 2026, when EPA rescinded the 2009 Endangerment Finding—the scientific and legal determination underpinning federal regulation of greenhouse-gas emissions from vehicles—and simultaneously repealed greenhouse-gas standards for light-, medium- and heavy-duty vehicles. Zeldin called it “the single largest deregulatory action in U.S. history,” saying EPA expects more than \$1.3 trillion in regulatory savings.

Trump’s EPA is also weakening protections against pollutants people breathe directly. In February 2026, the agency repealed Biden-era upgrades to the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards for coal-fired power plants, eliminating tighter limits on mercury from lignite plants, tougher particulate-matter controls and continuous particulate-emissions monitoring. American Lung Association President Harold Wimmer responded: “EPA’s decision to reverse a rule that would better protect children from mercury and other toxic substances is inconceivable.”

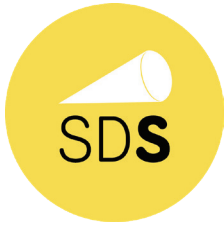
Trump has also begun dismantling other pillars of clean-air policy. EPA missed a February 2026 legal deadline to designate which areas fail the strengthened national standard for fine-particle pollution, delaying the process that requires polluted regions to clean up their air. It is also reconsidering the “Good Neighbor Plan,” intended to curb ozone-forming pollution that blows across state lines, and has proposed loosening some state requirements for controlling ozone pollution. Critics see a systematic retreat from EPA’s public-health mission. Earthjustice attorney Nicholas Morales says the mercury rollback “will result in higher levels of mercury, soot and other hazardous pollution into our air and communities.”

Whether all these changes remain in force by 2028 is uncertain. Environmental and health organizations have already filed lawsuits challenging major rollbacks, including the Endangerment Finding and mercury standards, meaning federal courts could ultimately determine how much of Trump’s agenda survives.

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Trump is moving fast to unwind federal air-pollution and climate safeguards, with many changes to take effect before Trump leaves office in January 2029. Credit: Pexels.com.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

South Dakota's top election official, a Republican, endorses a Democrat to succeed her

Surprise announcement completes secretary of state's shift away from activists calling for hand-counting and denying legitimacy of 2020 presidential election

BY SETH TUPPER

Four years after refusing to acknowledge the legitimacy of a Democratic president's electoral victory, the Republican who serves as South Dakota's top election official has endorsed a Democratic candidate to succeed her.

"I understand that this decision will disappoint some people in my party and anger others," Secretary of State Monae Johnson said Saturday in a written statement.

The announcement was the culmination of a shift that Johnson had been signaling for several years.

She won her office in 2022 with the support of activists calling for changes such as hand-counting instead of machine-counting votes, due to allegations that vote-counting machines — which are not connected to the internet in South Dakota — could be hacked.

Some of the activists who supported Johnson were motivated by Republican President Donald Trump's claims of fraud in his 2020 election loss to Democratic President Joe Biden. When South Dakota Searchlight interviewed Johnson before her election four years ago, she said "I don't know" in response to a question about whether she believed those claims.

After she got the job, Johnson helped usher in changes including the implementation of post-election audits in all South Dakota counties, the results of which helped prove the accuracy of vote-counting machines. She did not pursue some other changes, such as shifting from machine-counting to hand-counting all results, and she lost some support.

Four years after delegates at the Republican state convention backed Johnson as their nominee over an incumbent who was perceived as insufficiently devoted to changing election laws, delegates at this year's convention chose Heather Baxter, a challenger who supports some of those changes, as their nominee over Johnson.

During the June convention, Johnson made it clear she had moved away from some of the positions of her former supporters. She referenced vote-counting machines when she said in a speech, "I fully support the use of secure, tested ballot tabulators."

Then, on Saturday, Johnson endorsed Democratic nominee Terrence Davis to succeed her. Johnson made the endorsement in a written statement published by the South Dakota War College political blog. It's operated by Pat Powers, a Republican who worked for a previous secretary of state.

Johnson wrote that after serving as an employee in the office and then in the elected post, "I know the difference between campaigning for this office and carrying the responsibility of leading it."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 8 of 57

"I cannot remain silent when I believe the integrity, stability, and professionalism of this office is at stake," Johnson wrote.

She said her time in office taught her that in response to calls for overhauling election systems, the secretary of state "must consider the law, the information available, the effect on county officials, the security of statewide systems, the rights of voters, the cost and workload created by a change, and whether the proposal can be implemented within the deadlines the law requires. It also requires a willingness to review new information and change course when the evidence supports doing so."

Johnson did not mention Baxter by name or identify specific concerns about Baxter's positions but said "South Dakota deserves a Secretary of State who will strengthen confidence through performance rather than provocation; who will support election officials rather than burden them for political effect; who will protect voter access and election security without pretending those goals are enemies; and who will treat the office's employees, voters, candidates, and business owners with dignity."

Davis responded by writing on social media that he is "deeply grateful" for Johnson's support.

"Monae and I come from different political parties. We will not agree on every issue," Davis wrote. "That is exactly why her confidence in me means so much."

Davis, a former state trooper, would be the first Democratic secretary of state in South Dakota since the late Lorna Herseth, whose last year in office was 47 years ago in 1979. Davis would also be the first Black person to win a statewide elected office in South Dakota. He advocates policies to make voting easier, including automatically registering all South Dakotans to vote on their 18th birthday.

Baxter is a Republican state representative from Rapid City who lost her reelection bid for that office in the June primary election before winning the party's nomination for secretary of state. She responded on social media Saturday, writing that her win over Johnson at the Republican convention was not the result of "confusion."

"The letter beside a name is not decoration," Baxter wrote. "It tells voters what governing philosophy they will carry into the office that runs our elections and business services."

Baxter also pledged support in her post for "election integrity" measures including voter identification, paper ballots and proof of citizenship — all things that South Dakota already requires. She did not call for hand-counting of votes in her response to Johnson. At the time of her nomination by the Republican state convention in June, Baxter's campaign website said she wanted to "ensure every vote is counted accurately via paper ballots that are hand counted." Her website now has modified language, saying she supports "improved hand counting methods."

The race for secretary of state also includes a Libertarian nominee, Tamara Lesnar.

Besides overseeing elections, the secretary of state's responsibilities include the management of campaign finance reporting, lobbyist registrations, business corporate filings and concealed pistol permits.

Advance voting for the Nov. 3 general election is underway, and the voter registration deadline is Oct. 19.

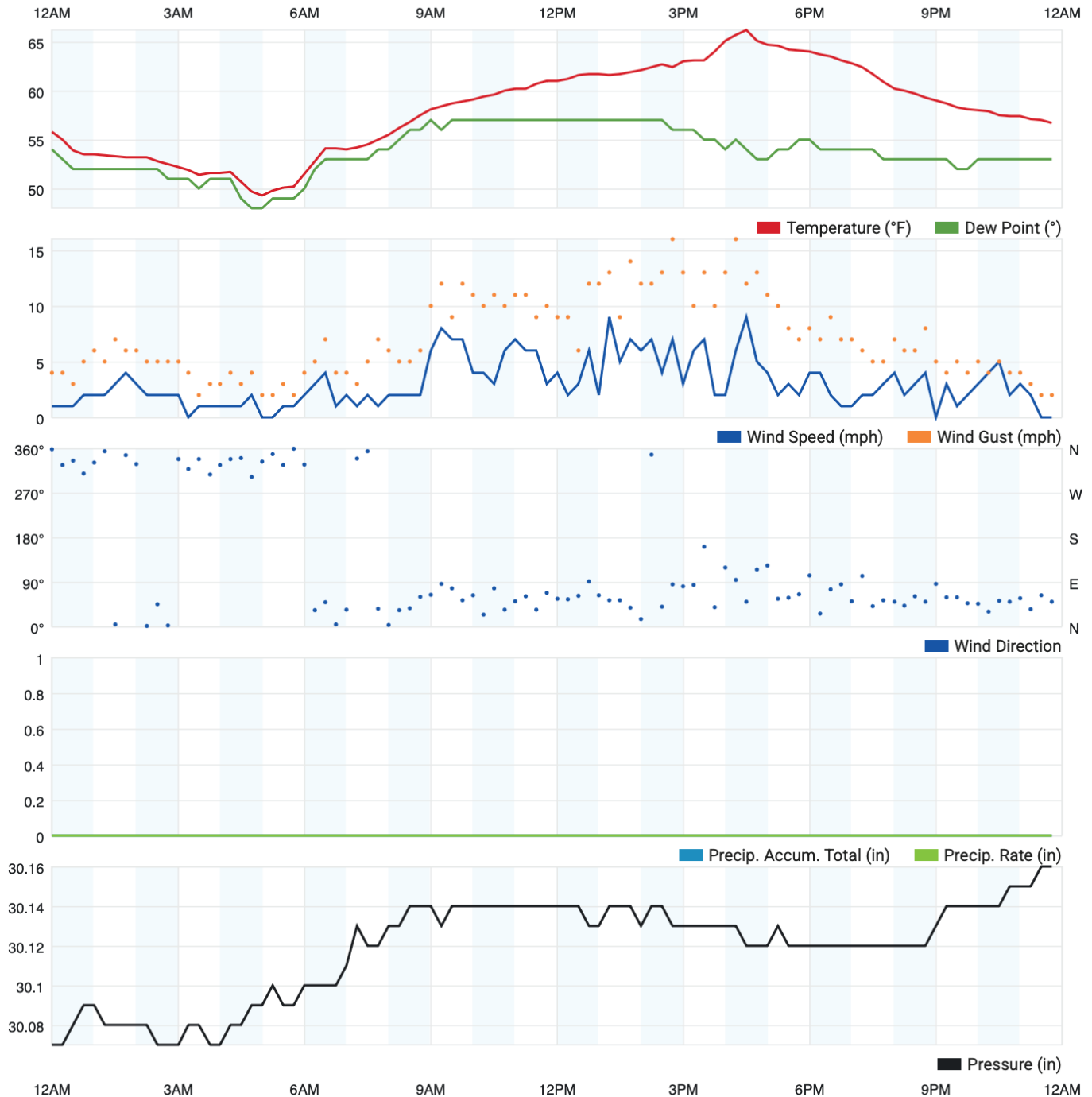
Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 9 of 57

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

September 20, 2026



Groton Daily Independent

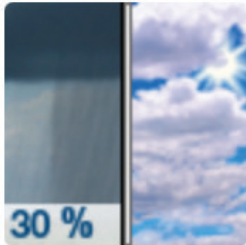
Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 10 of 57

Monday

Monday Night

Tuesday

Tuesday Night



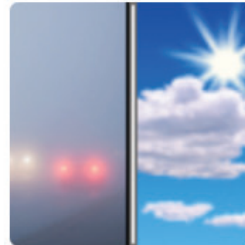
High: 63 °F

Chance
Showers and
Patchy Fog



Low: 42 °F

Patchy Fog



High: 66 °F

Areas Fog
then Mostly
Sunny



Low: 48 °F

Mostly Cloudy



Early Week Forecast

September 21, 2026
3:26 AM

Unsettled pattern continues with slightly below normal temperatures

Today



Highs:

56-64°

Patchy morning fog possible

Tuesday



Highs:

60-66°

Patchy morning fog possible

Wednesday



Highs:

65-75°



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A upper level disturbance will continue it's slow trek through the region today leading chances for showers. Bands of rain will rotate from east to west this morning and at the same time slowly drift south gradually ending from north to south. With mostly cloudy skies remaining in place, temperatures will once again remain below normal with highs in the upper 50s to low 60s. Drier conditions set in tonight through Tuesday. Southerly winds will increase across central South Dakota on Tuesday as temperatures top out in the 60s for highs. Another disturbance is expected to move through the region around the middle of the week. Our area will see increasing chances for showers and thunderstorms on Wednesday into Wednesday night. Slightly warmer temperatures will begin returning to the area midweek.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 11 of 57

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 66 °F at 4:26 PM

Low Temp: 49 °F at 4:53 AM

Wind: 16 mph at 2:40 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 99 in 1937

Record Low: 22 in 1893

Average High: 73

Average Low: 45

Average Precip in Sept.: 1.40

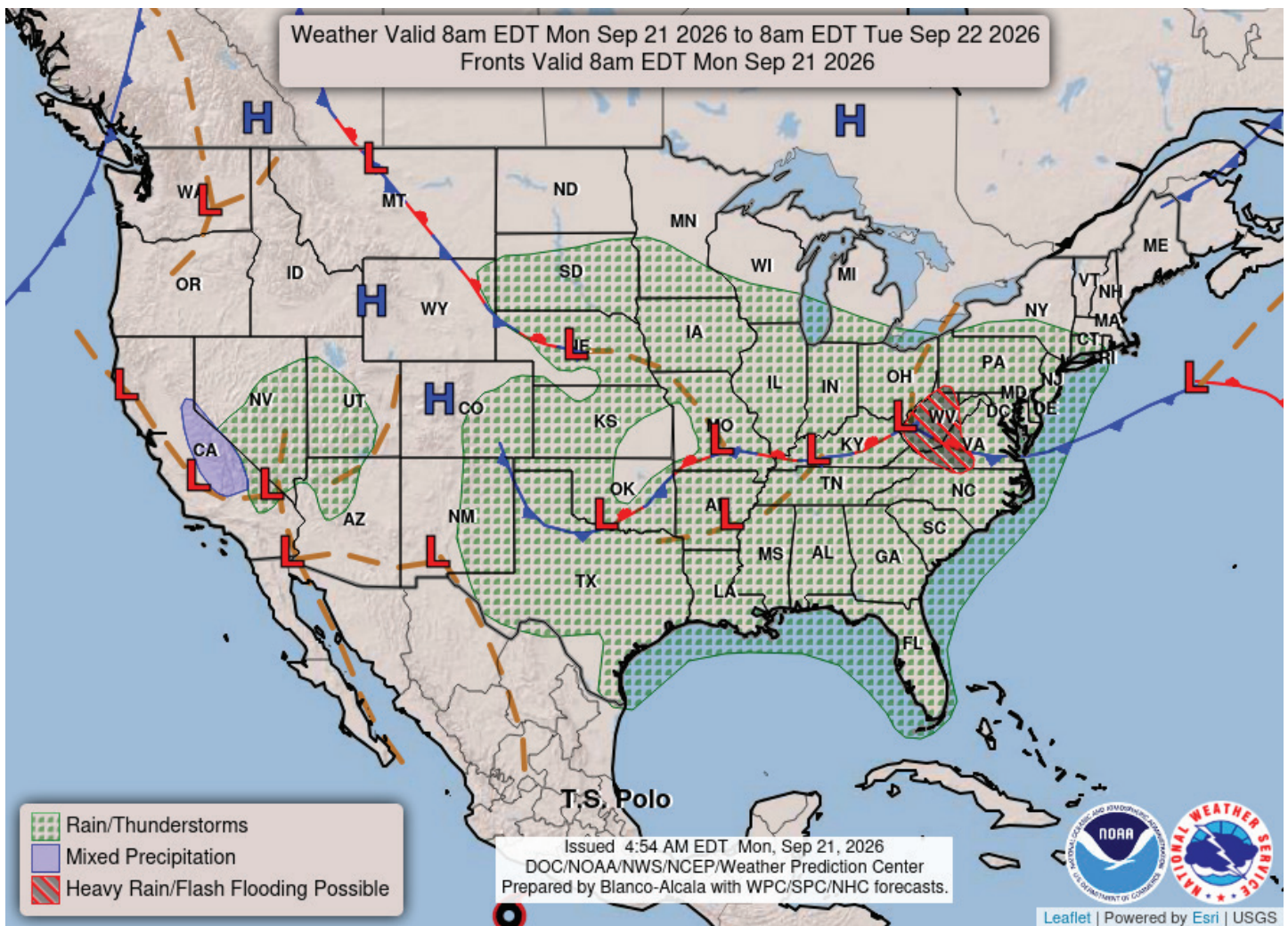
Precip to date in Sept.: 1.80

Average Precip to date: 17.74

Precip Year to Date: 21.66

Sunset Tonight: 7:32 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:19 am



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 12 of 57

Today in Weather History

September 21, 1960: In the morning hours of September 21st, lightning struck and caused structural damage to a home in Clear Lake, Deuel County. Lightning also hit a home in Clark in Clark County, and two telephone poles near Milbank in Grant County. Power was also interrupted for a short time by lightning near Britton.

1894: A late season severe weather outbreak occurred across northwest Iowa, south central Minnesota and southwestern Wisconsin during the late evening hours. Several communities were impacted by this outbreak with an estimated 55 to 65 deaths, and in additional 300 injuries. The strongest tornado was an estimated F5, which tore through the counties of Kossuth, Hancock, Winnebago in Iowa, and Faribault in Minnesota.

1894 — A heavy chicken house, sixteen by sixteen feet in area, was picked up by a tornado and wedged between two trees. The hens were found the next day sitting on their eggs in the chicken house, with no windows broken, as though nothing had happened. (The Weather Channel)

1924: A couple of tornadoes, one rated F4 and the other F5, tore paths of devastation through Eau Claire, Clark, and Taylor Counties in Wisconsin. The death toll was 18 and 50 people were injured.

1938: On this day, one of the most destructive and powerful hurricanes in recorded history struck Long Island and Southern New England. This Category 3 Hurricane was traveling at 47 mph when it made landfall near Bellport, New York. This storm caused at least 600 deaths and left approximately 63,000 homeless.

1954 — The temperature at Deeth, NV, soared from a morning low of 12 degrees to a high of 87 degrees, a record daily warm-up for the state. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Tropical Storm Emily, which formed in the Caribbean the previous afternoon, caused considerable damage to the banana industry of Saint Vincent in the Windward Islands. Unseasonably hot weather continued in Florida and the western U.S. Redding CA and Red Bluff CA, with record highs of 108 degrees, tied for honors as the hot spot in the nation. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — Thunderstorms produced high winds and locally heavy rain in the southwestern U.S. One thunderstorm in west Texas produced wind gusts to 86 mph at Dell City completely destroying an airport hangar. A Cessna 150 aircraft housed within the hangar was flipped over and snapped in two. Thunderstorms produced large hail in east central Utah, while snow blanketed some of the higher elevations of the state. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Hurricane Hugo slammed into the South Carolina coast about 11 PM, making landfall near Sullivan's Island. Hurricane Hugo was directly responsible for thirteen deaths, and indirectly responsible for twenty-two others. A total of 420 persons were injured in the hurricane, and damage was estimated at eight billion dollars, including two billion dollars damage to crops. Sustained winds reached 85 mph at Folly Beach SC, with wind gusts as high as 138 mph. Wind gusts reached 98 mph at Charleston, and 109 mph at Shaw AFB. The biggest storm surge occurred in the McClellanville and Bulls Bay area of Charleston County, with a storm surge of 20.2 feet reported at Seewee Bay. Shrimp boats were found one half mile inland at McClellanville. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 13 of 57



Daily Devotion

God's Sovereignty

**Though we may never fully comprehend God's sovereignty,
we can always trust in His goodness.**

Genesis 2:7-9: 7 Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

8 The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed.
9 Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 3:6-13: 6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

9 Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"

10 He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."

11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

12 The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate."

13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Throughout the Bible, we see evidence of God's authority over both humanity and nature. However, many of us wrestle with a difficult question: How do we reconcile God's sovereign control with the existence of evil? Scripture doesn't give us every answer, but it does give us a place to stand.

In the beginning, God created a perfect world and declared that all He had made was good (Genesis 1:31). Evil was not part of what He'd fashioned. But God created human beings with the capacity to love Him—and love requires the freedom to choose. When Adam and Eve chose disobedience, sin entered our world and corrupted mankind (Romans 5:12).

Evil wasn't created by God; it's something that He despises (Proverbs 6:16-19) but sovereignly has permitted to exist within a fallen world. Yet even in the midst of such darkness, He is at work redeeming what sin has broken. How He does this remains one of the greatest questions of our faith, reminding us that His ways and thoughts are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8-9).

When aspects of God's sovereignty feel perplexing, start with what you do know: He is good, He is in control, and He invites us to trust Him—especially with what we can't yet understand.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 14 of 57

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Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

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Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 15 of 57



WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.20.26

14 28 30 37 42 3

TOP PRIZE:
\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 38 Mins 4 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.18.26

4 9 24 56 68 1

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$261,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 23 Mins 4 Secs

[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: 16 Hrs 38 Mins 4 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.19.26

4 5 10 14 20

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$63,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 53 Mins 4 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.19.26

13 30 33 49 53 7

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 22 Mins 4 Secs

[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: 17 Hrs 22 Mins 4 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Explosion injures 3 South Korean military officers inside DMZ bordering North Korea

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — An explosion injured three South Korean military officers Monday inside the heavily fortified Demilitarized Zone separating the Koreas, officials said.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said the explosion occurred during an unspecified operation near the military demarcation line in the western section of the border buffer zone, commonly known as the DMZ.

The cause of the blast was not immediately clear, the ministry said.

South Korean officials did not say whether it was possible the explosion was caused by a land mine planted by North Korea, which has added mines, anti-tank barriers and other front line fortifications in recent months as relations between the war-divided rivals have sharply deteriorated. Seoul's Defense Ministry didn't immediately respond when asked by The Associated Press whether the incident prompted the military to enhance border security.

Two of the officers were airlifted from the site by helicopter, while the third was transported by land before being airlifted, according to the ministry. The officers are being treated at a military hospital near the capital Seoul.

The DMZ, which is 248 kilometers (155 miles) long and 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) wide, is one of the world's most heavily armed borders. An estimated 2 million mines are peppered inside and near the border, which also is guarded by barbed wire fences, tank traps and combat troops on both sides. The zone is a legacy of the Korean War from 1950 to 1953, which ended with an armistice but not a peace treaty.

Tensions have increased along the border

North Korea has dialed up animosity with a run of military displays this month, including short-range ballistic missile launches on Sunday, live-fire missile and artillery exercises, and the commissioning of a new warship, as leader Kim Jong Un flaunts his growing nuclear program despite U.S. calls to revive diplomacy.

There have been growing concerns in South Korea about increased activity by North Korean soldiers near the military demarcation line as the North strengthens its border defenses during prolonged tensions between the countries. The South Korean military has not officially confirmed media reports that North Korean soldiers crossed the demarcation line more than 20 times during front line operations in August alone.

The South's military fired warning shots to repel some 10 North Korean soldiers who crossed the demarcation line at the eastern section of the DMZ in April 2025. The North Korean soldiers retreated after the South broadcast audio warnings and fired the shots and there were no clashes. In June 2024, North Korean troops crossed the border three times, prompting South Korea to fire warning shots.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in recent years has suspended virtually all cooperation and diplomacy with South Korea while declaring Seoul as his most hostile enemy during a stalemate in his larger nuclear negotiations with Washington.

North Korean mines in past years have occasionally washed down a swollen river into South Korea, killing or injuring civilians. In August 2015, land mine blasts maimed two South Korean soldiers and caused tensions between the two Koreas to flare.

Presley Gerber, son of Cindy Crawford, dies at 27, family representative says

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Presley Gerber, the son of supermodel Cindy Crawford and businessman Rande Gerber, died on Sunday at age 27, a family representative said.

Gerber died at a rehab facility, according to online records of the Los Angeles County Medical Examiner.

The death was confirmed by Allie Jenkins, a representative for Crawford and Rande Gerber, who were married in 1998.

"The family is asking for privacy during this very difficult and painful time," Jenkins said in an email Sunday night.

Gerber was a model and the older brother of model and actress Kaia Gerber.

Germany's Merz struggles to stay on track after humiliating regional election defeat

By GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — German Chancellor Friedrich Merz faced a struggle to stabilize his position and keep his agenda on track Monday after voters inflicted two more defeats on his party, ejecting it from a state legislature for the first time in its eight-decade history.

The unpopular Merz vowed to stay on and push through reforms to Germany, Europe's biggest economy, minutes after polls closed Sunday in regional elections in Berlin and in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, a largely rural eastern region on the Baltic Sea coast.

Still, final results underlined the extent of what Merz conceded was a "disaster" in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. His center-right Christian Democratic Union fell just below the 5% of the vote needed to keep seats in the regional parliament, the first time that has happened in 77 years of modern Germany's federal republic, after losing more than half its support.

The CDU also dropped to second place in Berlin behind the hard-left Left Party, which is in pole position to lead the next city government — though Merz's party could, depending on how coalition talks go, still retain city hall.

A far-right party gains again

Neither state is one of Germany's political heavyweights. The CDU's 2023 win in Berlin was its only one in the past 25 years in the capital, which has tended to lean left, and the party was already weak in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

But the manner of its defeat in the latter in particular adds to the headwinds Merz faces after a stinging defeat by the far-right Alternative for Germany two weeks ago in Saxony-Anhalt, another region in the formerly communist east, damaged his authority and set off speculation that he might be replaced.

Alternative for Germany, or AfD, emerged as the strongest party in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, but the center-left Social Democrats — the junior party in Merz's national governing coalition — were fairly close behind after a campaign focused squarely on the state governor, Manuela Schwesig, as a bulwark against the far-right party. That polarization helped squeeze other mainstream parties, including the CDU.

A left-leaning three-party coalition under Schwesig would have a majority in the new regional legislature.

Questions over how Germany should be reformed

Schwesig and others in the governing parties have cast doubt on aspects of the federal government's reform agenda, which is meant to bolster a chronically sluggish economy. The reform plans include a potentially painful overhaul of the creaking pension system, a reduction of Germany's stifling bureaucracy and cuts to income tax for low- and middle-income families.

The head of the Social Democrats' group in the national parliament, Matthias Miersch, said it was clear that "we need reforms." But he told ARD television that "we must also take people's concerns seriously."

Merz faces more meetings Monday with his party's leadership. Much will depend on the CDU's influential regional leaders; the party's eight state governors last week backed the chancellor, though questions remained about how wholehearted their support was.

There are at least no more electoral tests this year. However, five state elections are scheduled next year, three of them in April.

They include one in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany's most populous state, currently led by a prominent CDU figure often cited as a possible successor to Merz, Hendrik Wüst. None of the five elections is in the east, where AfD is strongest.

"I don't see that swapping out a leadership figure would really bring a change," Education Minister Karin Prien, who is also a deputy CDU leader, told Phoenix television, adding that she doesn't see "another personnel offer" coming.

"So we must now discuss with one another — together with the chancellor as a government, and on the other hand as a party — how we win more acceptance and more credibility among the population," Prien said.

China and the US are competing for AI dominance but have shared concerns over safety

By CHAN HO-HIM AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping, leaders of rival nations in a race to dominate artificial intelligence, are expected to meet this week against a backdrop of rising concerns about the threats that rogue AI could pose to humanity.

The hopes for finding common ground on concerns around global AI safety are clouded by competition between the two countries. As China narrows the technology gap with the U.S., each country has expressed concern over how AI in the other's hands could hurt them.

"The U.S.-China conversation in AI is getting caught in the ups and downs in the broader U.S.-China relationship," said Scott Singer, co-director of the China AI Initiative at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

On Sunday, U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said after talks in New York with Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng ahead of the meeting between Trump and Xi that the two countries discussed the setting up of a mechanism on AI dialogue and proposed a new "notification mechanism" for AI incidents that could impact national security.

Here is a look at some topics that may — or may not — come up for discussion around AI.

Communicating about AI emergencies is one focus

The agenda could focus on AI risks that could harm both countries, such as AI-enabled cyberattacks, biological misuse, major model failures or loss of human control, said Sun Chenghao, a senior fellow at the Center for International Security and Strategy at Tsinghua University in Beijing. In that case, "there is still meaningful room for cooperation," Sun said.

"It would be a mistake to dismiss the entire safety debate as geopolitical competition," Sun said. "China itself is paying growing attention to loss-of-control risks, malicious use, cyber threats and the safety of AI agents."

Bessent said after his meeting with He that the U.S. proposed a notification mechanism between the United States and China, such as when there are incidents that rises up to the national security level from AI. "We want a shared vision of common goals and common threats," he told reporters.

Michael Kratsios, Trump's science and technology adviser, told Fox News Sunday it's important to have conversations with China about AI. "The key thing that we want to talk to them about is avoiding shared risks, and that's something that I think we can have a fruitful conversation on," Kratsios said.

Both governments are concerned about how AI could be used to attack critical infrastructure. In China, AI governance documents identify finance, electricity, telecommunications and transportation as areas potentially exposed to frontier-AI risks, Sun said.

The Chinese side has shown real interest in discussing issues like AI and cyber incident information sharing with U.S. experts, said Samm Sacks, a senior fellow at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies' Institute for America, China, and the Future of Global Affairs.

If the two countries can discuss how to report and communicate in the event of an AI-related emergency, said Xiao Qian, vice dean of the Institute for AI International Governance at Tsinghua University, "it can help the two countries to build technical confidence over time."

US export controls affect China's AI development

Trump has repeatedly said "whoever wins AI, wins." He has insisted the U.S. needs to keep a technologi-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 19 of 57

cal edge over China and downplayed calls by American tech leaders to slow AI's development over safety concerns. Beijing, in turn, has accused the U.S. of pursuing an AI monopoly as it curbs China's AI growth including in restricting its access to the world's most advanced chips.

At the meeting, any loosening of U.S. export controls on advanced technologies related to AI is likely to be off the table, said Alfredo Montufar-Helu with the consultancy Ankura. With each country seeking competitive advantages in so many areas, Montufar-Helu said the room for U.S. and China to collaborate on AI is "quite narrow."

In his essay this month calling for an AI slowdown, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei called on the U.S. to continue seeking ways to limit Chinese AI development. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Amodei's warnings about China were confrontational and a form of "fearmongering" and that all parties should work together on AI.

Despite the restrictions, Chinese AI models increasingly challenge American frontier models. Chinese AI models led by Moonshot AI and DeepSeek this year have shown they can be, by some measures, as powerful as those of U.S. rivals like Anthropic and OpenAI, often at a lower cost. Many of them are making inroads globally, including in the U.S.

"Export controls have not stopped China from developing frontier-competitive models, but they slow its rate of expansion by limiting the compute it can use to serve users," said professor Will Cong of Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

Despite the constraints, China's chip developers have been catching up with the U.S., and companies in China are turning more to domestic chips. That's giving Xi more confidence in his talks with Trump, George Chen with The Asia Group said.

Accusations of 'distillation' are a sore spot

U.S. claims that China is ripping off American AI technology are another sore spot in the relationship. The U.S. government and AI companies have stepped up allegations of "malicious" extraction of capabilities, or "distillation," from top American AI models, claims that Chinese officials have rejected.

Anthropic has accused Chinese AI models of DeepSeek and Moonshot of routing a number of their user requests to its Claude AI models. Chinese labs are likely attempting to "piggyback on the massive training and inference infrastructure of their U.S. rivals" given how U.S. restrictions are limiting China's compute power, Rebecca Arcesati, with the Mercator Institute for China Studies, said.

Chinese officials and some technology analysts have argued that distillation is not uncommon across the AI industry and is not the main explanation behind Chinese models' improving capabilities and ability to innovate.

Beijing, meanwhile, has expressed worries over threats to China's critical infrastructure from American AI, including Anthropic's powerful Claude Mythos, and more broadly, the risk of AI's aiding of spreading of political misinformation and potentially challenging its governance.

"We cannot expect meaningful cooperation on AI safety if one side increasingly treats the other side's technological progress as a national security threat," Xiao said. Disagreements between the U.S. and China "make dialogue even more necessary," she added.

Britain's Burnham is set to meet Trump for the first time at the UN in New York

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Andy Burnham once said he would refuse to meet Donald Trump.

Now Britain's prime minister is about to hold his first meeting with the U.S. president, with Ukraine and the soaring cost of conflict in the Middle East at the top of his agenda.

U.S. officials say the two leaders will hold talks on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Burnham is set to address the annual gathering of world leaders on Tuesday, setting out his vision of Britain's place in an increasingly fractured world order.

Burnham's only other foreign trip since taking office in July was to Kyiv, and he has said he will urge

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 20 of 57

Trump to send interceptor missiles to bolster Ukraine's air defenses ahead of another winter of war.

The British government also wants to discuss ways to restore free movement of ships through the Strait of Hormuz, largely blocked since the start of the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran in February. The closure of the key route has sent oil prices spiking, complicating Burnham's efforts to jump-start Britain's sluggish economy and ease the cost of living.

Burnham says he'll seek common ground

Like many Labour Party politicians, Burnham was strongly critical of Trump in the past. In 2017 Burnham, as the mayor of Greater Manchester, said the president wouldn't be welcome in the city. Two years later he said he would refuse to meet Trump if he visited.

After becoming prime minister in July, Burnham said he always tries to find "common ground" with other politicians.

Burnham and Trump have spoken twice since Burnham replaced Keir Starmer at the helm of the center-left governing party. Trump has called Burnham "a nice guy," but has also recently needled U.K. officials by expressing support for Irish unification and musing about the future of the Falkland Islands that are claimed by both Britain and Argentina.

Labour Party chairwoman Bridget Phillipson said Burnham would be "pragmatic."

"We won't agree with the U.S. administration on everything," Phillipson told Times Radio on Sunday. "We are from different political traditions, we have different approaches. But maintaining that relationship is critical for our national interest and I know that that's the approach Andy Burnham will always take, putting our country first."

Starmer went out of his way to flatter Trump, presenting him in the Oval Office in February 2025 with an invitation from King Charles III for an unprecedented second state visit to the U.K.

British officials felt Starmer's approach was vindicated when the U.K. struck a trade deal with the Trump administration. But Trump soured on Starmer over his refusal to join the Iran war. The president also has repeatedly criticized the U.K.'s immigration and green-energy policies, urging the country to open more of the North Sea up to oil drilling.

Burnham is expected to announce a decision soon about whether to approve new oil and gas fields off Scotland.

U.K. officials also are braced for criticism of Britain's ban on trade with Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank and efforts to regulate big American technology firms.

Middle powers look to build stronger alliances

Trump's threats to seize Greenland alarmed the U.K. and other European allies earlier this year, and Burnham was among leaders expressing relief at the announcement of a deal between Greenland, Denmark and the U.S. to bolster the American military presence there but keep the Arctic island under Danish control.

Trump has other, more high-profile, international meetings this week, including one at the White House with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Burnham's trip comes as middle-sized powers, led most vocally by Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, try to forge closer alliances in the face of Trump's "America first" foreign policy. Burnham's government wants Britain to be bolder on the world stage, and to restore some of the ties with Europe severed when the U.K. left the European Union in 2020.

Ed Davey, leader of the centrist Liberal Democrats, urged Burnham to "do what the Europeans are doing, what the Canadians are doing, and start saying to Donald Trump, 'the way you're treating our country, the way you're treating the world, is not acceptable.'"

"I want him to stand up to Trump. It's really clear that's the only language the president respects," Davey said.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 21 of 57

ICE agent shoots and wounds man in Austin, Texas, officials say

By JESSE BEDAYN, CHRISTOPHER WEBER and REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer shot and wounded a man Sunday afternoon in Austin, Texas, local authorities said, and anti-ICE protesters quickly gathered at the scene.

The man was in serious but stable condition at a hospital after being shot once in the torso on the capital city's north side, Austin officials said at a news conference.

The Department of Homeland Security, which oversees ICE, confirmed the man was in stable condition and "in federal custody pending removal."

Homeland Security Investigations, with FBI assistance, is investigating "the officer involved shooting of an illegal alien from Venezuela, who illegally entered our country under the Biden administration and had a final order of removal," the department said in a statement.

City police officers were not involved in the operation or the shooting, which occurred after a traffic stop, Austin Police Chief Lisa Davis said while briefing reporters along with the city's mayor and other officials.

Mayor says he wants city's police involved in investigation

Mayor Kirk Watson, a Democrat, said he wants the city's police department to have a role in the investigation so it can provide "clear, third-party eyes" in the process. Watson said he does not think it would be appropriate for ICE to conduct an investigation on its own.

Austin residents have "a right to feel safe in their city," Watson said. A proper investigation will only enhance credibility, he added.

The chief said there were not many facts she could provide so soon after the incident but added that her department's special investigation unit was at the scene.

The Texas Department of Public Safety said it received a request from ICE for assistance in a vehicle pursuit around 12:50 p.m. By the time DPS troopers arrived, the shooting had already taken place, the department said in a statement Sunday evening.

Attorney says man shot is from Venezuela

An immigration attorney representing the man's family identified him as Wilber Rafael Garces Perez, a 28-year-old Venezuelan man.

Attorney Kate Lincoln Goldfinch said in a video posted to her Instagram account that she believed he had no criminal history and no final order of removal from the U.S., but she later told The Associated Press that she did not know his current immigration status.

The man's family has struggled to get any information from the hospital about his status or location, Lincoln-Goldfinch said.

Just before 7 p.m., the man's wife was informed by the hospital's attorney that the man had been released into ICE custody a few hours earlier, Lincoln-Goldfinch wrote in a text to AP.

"No one bothered to update her," she wrote.

It wasn't immediately clear if the man remained hospitalized while in ICE custody or if he had been transferred elsewhere.

Protesters turn out at the scene

A dark blue Toyota Corolla was parked under an overpass with damage to its passenger-side door and what appeared to be bullet holes. The car was towed away in the early evening and traffic began moving again.

A large law enforcement presence was present along with a crowd of about a hundred protesters. Some demonstrators cursed at police officers holding riot shields, while others yelled out as passing cars honked in support of the protest. One man held a sign saying, "Nobody is safe" and, on the other side, "ICE Nazi."

Asked if Austin authorities knew where the involved federal agent is, given that agents have left states after previous shootings nationwide, the mayor said: "We do not know that. But my hope would be that, an agent that's involved in an officer-involved shooting would not leave the city. Certainly not leave the state."

The office of Travis County District Attorney José Pompa Garza asked that local police and prosecutors

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 22 of 57

be included in the investigation.

"We further request cooperation from the federal government in giving us access to the evidence," the DA's office said in a statement Sunday evening.

U.S. Rep. Greg Casar, a Democrat representing parts of Austin, called for transparency as the shooting is investigated.

"It is awful that this horror has come to our doorstep," Casar told reporters. "For Austin to be safe, ICE should end its surge here."

ICE enforcement surged around the nation over the summer

The shooting comes as ICE surges enforcement across the country this summer, producing more than 50,000 arrests a month for the first time in its history in July and August.

In July, an ICE officer fatally shot 52-year-old Lorenzo Salgado Araujo, of Houston, after federal agents driving unmarked vehicles pursued him while he was taking his construction crew to a job site.

Also in July, 25-year-old Johan Sebastián, a Colombian man, was shot by an ICE officer in Maine. The officer is an Army veteran who has struggled with serious mental health issues since early childhood and never should have been given a badge and gun to patrol American streets, several of his close relatives told AP.

The administration's enforcement efforts were widely condemned last winter after the killings of Alex Pretti and Renee Good in Minnesota.

Tyre's ruins survived the strikes. Now divers are finding their way back underwater

By MALAK HARB Associated Press

TYRE, Lebanon (AP) — Beneath the Mediterranean waters off the southern Lebanese city of Tyre, divers swim past stone walls, ancient structures and a submerged road — remnants of parts of a city that once stood above the water.

With a shaky ceasefire in place after the latest Israel-Hezbollah war, visitors are returning to Tyre, a city known for its Roman ruins and its much older Phoenician history. Diving operators say interest in the underwater archaeological sites is increasing, though the number of visitors remains below prewar levels.

"The diving season is not like it used to be before, but the number of people coming to dive to see the ruins is increasing day by day," said Yousef al-Jundi, manager of the Lebanon Diving Center.

The remains underwater are part of Tyre's wider archaeological landscape. UNESCO says substantial archaeological remains of the ancient city are submerged, while underwater archaeological research has documented walls, harbor structures and other remains along the former island and coastline.

"This is the identity of this city, which tells us how old this city is and what its history is," al-Jundi said. He said the underwater sites attract divers from around the world who want to see what is commonly described as Tyre's "sunken city."

Tyre was one of the major Phoenician maritime cities of antiquity, with trading networks that extended across the Mediterranean. The city was also famous for its purple dye and later became an important Greek and Roman center. Its archaeological remains were added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1984.

The war raised concerns over the preservation of those remains, both on land and underwater.

"We were worried about the archaeological sites on land, which were affected by the war and the strikes, but at the same time we were also worried about the archaeological sites underwater, but thank God they were not affected," al-Jundi said.

Before the ceasefire in late June, Tyre came under intense Israeli airstrikes, with neighborhoods in the coastal city heavily damaged during the fighting. UNESCO's World Heritage Committee placed Tyre on its List of World Heritage in Danger in July 2026, citing the threat and damage caused by the ongoing hostilities.

Ali Badawi of Lebanon's Directorate General of Antiquities said protecting the underwater sites remains a challenge.

"They're not very well protected," Badawi said, adding that "encroachments" sometimes happen. "But

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 23 of 57

we are trying very hard through surveys and research that we're conducting, and we're trying to develop laws to ensure their safety in the future."

Badawi said the authorities also want to expand research and investment in underwater tourism, including the creation of underwater archaeological parks that would allow more visitors to see the sites.

The effort comes as Tyre seeks to rebuild its tourism sector after the war, while preserving archaeological remains that reflect thousands of years of the city's history.

Mahomes and Walker shine, Butker hits winning 40-yarder as Chiefs beat Colts 33-30 in OT

By DAVE SKRETTA AP Sports Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The Kansas City Chiefs thought they had beaten the Indianapolis Colts on a bizarre fumble in overtime Sunday night.

The Colts ended up with a chance to win instead, yet chose to play for a tie.

And once again, Patrick Mahomes and the rest of his crew made an opposing team pay for giving them one last chance.

After the Chiefs and Colts traded field goals in the extra session, Mahomes followed a couple of strong runs by Kenneth Walker III by finding his running back for a long completion, setting up Harrison Butker's 40-yard field goal as time expired and lifting the Chiefs to a 33-30 victory — the second straight year they've beaten Indianapolis on a field goal in overtime.

"I mean, I think guys were resilient, and we just strained to finish," Mahomes said. "It wasn't always pretty. There were times we didn't execute at a high level. But guys continued to fight and continued to push and we found a way at the end."

Mahomes finished with 382 yards passing and three touchdowns, Walker rumbled for 117 yards, and tight end Travis Kelce looked like a younger version of himself, catching nine balls for 101 yards and a score as the Chiefs improved to 2-0 on the season.

It took a little longer than they first thought.

Butker had kicked a 31-yard field goal in overtime to give them the lead, and the Colts (0-2) responded on their possession by having Jones throw deep to Laquon Treadwell, who had beaten L'Jarius Snead. Treadwell appeared to be bobbling the ball as he hit the ground, got up after he had completed the catch, had the ball popped loose and watched as the Chiefs pounced on it.

The play was ruled a fumble on the field, but the officials reviewed it and determined Treadwell was down by contact. That gave the Colts a chance to score a go-ahead touchdown, but three plays left them facing fourth-and-8 and a decision.

"Had a play called. Had to love the look to run it there," Colts coach Shane Steichen said. "We took the delay and kicked the field goal."

Turned out to be the wrong decision.

The Chiefs still had 3:11 to play in the extra session when they got the ball back, and they handed off to Walker on three straight plays to reach midfield. As the Colts began to stack the line of scrimmage to stop him, Mahomes threw a nifty pass to his running back, and he turned it into a 22-yard gain that set up Butker's winning kick.

"We had worked throughout the week dropping it over the top," Mahomes said. "They were in a pressure look. We were able to change the play. You get the ball in his hands, Rashee (Rice) did a great job of blocking on the perimeter. That got us in field goal range."

Got them the win, too.

"Overall we fought like crazy," Steichen said, "but it wasn't good enough. And then they find a way to make a play at the end."

The Colts didn't look a whole lot better on defense after a disastrous Week 1 performance against Baltimore that they had chalked up to communication problems. They tried to solve the issue by having linebacker Akeem Davis-Gaither relay the plays rather than safety Cam Bynum, but the tweak didn't seem

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 24 of 57

to make a whole lot of difference as Kansas City marched up and down the field.

Each of the Chiefs' first four drives would have produced points had Butker not missed a 51-yard field goal try.

Yet the Colts were able to match Mahomes and Co. blow-for-blow over the first 30 minutes. Tyler Warren had three catches and a touchdown, Josh Downs picked apart a secondary missing safety Chamarri Conner for a second straight game, and Taylor had 75 of his rushing yards — the highlight a 24-yard touchdown scamper that gave Indianapolis a 20-17 lead at the break.

The Chiefs allowed Denver to run for just 61 yards total in their 31-10 win last week.

"We did some good things. Thought the run game was good. Moved the ball. I thought we were pushing," Jones said.

Kansas City finally slowed the Colts' offense by refusing to give them the ball. The Chiefs held it for all but 2:22 of the third quarter, getting a go-ahead TD pass to Jalen Royals and setting up Butker's field goal to start the fourth.

Indianapolis answered with an 8 1/2-minute drive that Taylor finished with his second TD run to tie it at 27-27 with 5:37 to go.

Neither offense could produce points down the stretch, though, leaving the game to be decided in overtime.

"It was great that the guys competed for four quarters," Reid said. "You're going to have this. The parity in this league is crazy. You're going to have some once-score games. You have to bear down and and our guys did that."

Injuries

Colts: WR Alex Pierce was carted to the locker room with a left heel injury early in the second quarter. ... DE Michael Clemons left late in the first half with a toe injury. ... CB Charvarius Ward hurt his groin early in the second half.

Chiefs: RT Jaylon Moore left briefly in the third quarter but was able to finish the game.

Up next

Colts: Host the Texans next Sunday.

Chiefs: Visit the Dolphins next Sunday.

Tiny wild cat newly identified as a species draws curious visitors in Bolivia

COROICO, Bolivia (AP) — A tiny wild cat hidden away in the cloud forests of Bolivia has become an unlikely tourist attraction, drawing a stream of visitors hoping for a glimpse of the animal that scientists have identified as a brand new species.

There is just one problem: Tigrino, as he has been affectionately dubbed, doesn't like the attention.

The small, spotted feline with large, leopardlike spots is easily stressed, so caretakers at the wildlife sanctuary near La Paz keep him out of public view, turning away the crowds eager for a closer look. When The Associated Press visited Sunday, Tigrino cautiously emerged from his shelter, sniffed the air and paced around for a few minutes before slipping back into the foliage.

Tigrino belongs to *Leopardus tilcayo*, the first living wild cat species described by scientists in more than a century. At just 18 inches (46 centimeters) from head to the base of his tail and 3 pounds (1.4 kilograms), he is smaller than the average house cat.

The discovery published Thursday in the journal *Current Biology* set off a flurry of excitement on social media. Visitors from across Bolivia and beyond have flocked to the Senda Verde Wildlife Sanctuary, where Tigrino has lived since 2017, when a family brought him there after trying unsuccessfully to make a house cat of him.

"Tigrino has become, in just a few days, an ambassador for conservation," said sanctuary co-founder Marcelo Levy, adding that the new species designation has helped raise awareness about the need to

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 25 of 57

protect wild cats and their habitat in Bolivia's tropical forests.

"He's such a tiny animal, and he has become something so important," Levy said.

World leaders meet at UN as their planet grapples with war, division, runaway AI and climate shocks

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Under a global cloud of wars and bitter divisions, world leaders meet at the United Nations this week facing new fears that runaway artificial intelligence could threaten humanity even as climate shocks and escalating prices are already making life much tougher for hundreds of millions of people.

The annual high-level gathering at the U.N. General Assembly will also be consumed with major wars in Iran, Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, Congo and Myanmar and a persisting question: Can the leaders do anything to end them?

And what can they do about the relentless rise of global warming threatening the future of the planet, the growing inequalities within and among nations, and shocks to the global economy as blocked shipping routes and supply chains increase the cost of living and slow growth?

The future of the United Nations will also definitely be on the agenda. At 81, its powers are still the victorious nations from World War II, not the 21st century's major global players. The U.N.'s 193 member nations have agreed to a wide-ranging reform package that includes updating key institutions such as the powerful U.N. Security Council, where the U.S., Russia, China, Britain and France hold inordinate sway because of their veto power. Reform, however, is easier said than implemented.

Behind the scenes, there will be speculation about who will lead the United Nations next. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' second five-year term ends Dec. 31 and no clear successor has emerged.

This meeting is still pivotal

There is still no question that the U.N. remains THE gathering place for its 193 member nations and their leaders. Some 130 heads of state and government are expected to speak at the General Assembly starting Tuesday along with dozens of ministers.

Among the headliners will be U.S. President Donald Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron. Both will speak Tuesday after Guterres' opening "state of the world" address. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian speak Wednesday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — whom New York Mayor Zoran Mamdani wanted arrested for his treatment of Palestinians in Gaza until he learned he has no such authority — will address the assembly on Thursday. For a second year, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas won't be coming to the U.N. because the U.S. has refused to give him a visa. He will nonetheless address the assembly by video the same day.

The United States, under its agreement with the U.N. to host the organization, is required to allow diplomats from all member nations to attend meetings.

Equally telling is who else isn't coming. China's President Xi Jinping is meeting Trump in Washington on Wednesday, yet he is skipping — some diplomats say snubbing — the U.N. gathering and sending a vice president instead. Russian President Vladimir Putin isn't coming either, and Indian President Narendra Modi has backed out.

France's U.N. ambassador, Jerome Bonnafont, said it is "extremely critical" for world leaders this week to support the U.N. as the place where the world's nations meet — especially at a time of such polarization.

"We believe in multilateralism," he said, "and we believe that the high-level week is the occasion for countries in the world to reaffirm that they prefer cooperation and dialogue to confrontation."

United Nations has not had a great year

There is no doubt it's been a tough year for the world body. It has been pushed to the sidelines when it comes to its key responsibility of ensuring international peace and security and trying to end major conflicts in the Mideast and Ukraine. The U.S. failure to pay billions of dollars in outstanding arrears has

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 26 of 57

left the organization's finances in rocky shape.

But veteran U.N. watcher Richard Gowan, the International Crisis Group's global issues and institutions program director, says 2025 was even worse.

A year ago, he said, people were contemplating that Trump would use his U.N. speech to announce that the United States would leave the world organization. Trump didn't announce a pullout last September and the U.N. muddled through the past 12 months with financial troubles that forced cutbacks to its peacekeeping operations and humanitarian aid.

In recent days, the U.S. paid \$725 million of its dues to the U.N.'s regular operating budget for this year, enough to keep the Trump administration from losing its vote in the General Assembly. The payment was a strong indication Trump will keep the U.S. in the United Nations.

The U.N. is no longer "in freefall," Gowan said, but it "is stuck in an open-ended or permanent crisis." Put more graphically, he said, "The U.N. may not be in emergency care like it was last year, but it does seem to be trapped in a trauma center for the foreseeable future."

Former U.N. deputy secretary-general Mark Malloch-Brown, a United Nations Foundation board member, said, "While the world still trusts the U.N., the global public is eager for change."

AI is pushing toward the center of the agenda

The future of artificial intelligence has pushed to the forefront of global concerns, with its speeding advances and the dawning recognition that there are no industry controls, let alone any global guardrails for a technology that has many advantages but also many disadvantages and unknowns.

Days before the global gathering, leaders of three major AI companies warned about the technology getting out of human control and called for a pause, but Trump dismissed their concerns as "a hoax," and urged continued advances to keep the U.S. ahead of China.

The U.N. Security Council added a high-level meeting on AI to its agenda on Wednesday afternoon, a sign of the growing apprehension and need to address the issue. It was already slated to hold a high-level meeting on Ukraine with Zelenskyy on Wednesday morning.

For the U.N. chief, this will be his last assembly meeting with global leaders. He previewed his speech last week, telling U.N. reporters that power is shifting in "an era of deep uncertainty."

"At a time when the world faces three existential threats," he said, "international cooperation is more necessary than ever."

Others will be vying for the spotlight on issues from rising sea levels and funding education to the fight for gender equality. Hundreds of private meetings will also convene in U.N. cubicles, hotels, diplomatic missions and restaurants.

Esther Brimmer, a senior fellow in global governance at the Council on Foreign Relations and former U.S. assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs in the Obama administration, said in-person meetings can help countries hash out ideas that get implemented months later.

She called the situation in 2026 "much more serious and complex than in decades past."

"With that said, I'm also not without hope as well," Brimmer said. "Over the past decades we've learned a lot about international cooperation."

Trump decries Democrats as 'communists,' even as he looks to impress China's communist leader

By MICHELLE L. PRICE and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Communism, President Donald Trump says, is the greatest threat the U.S. has ever faced.

This summer, citing similarly grave concerns, he took the rare step of delivering a primetime address to the nation, accusing China of "sinister election meddling" in 2020 and reviving his yearslong push to dispute his loss in that year's election.

Even as Trump seeks to decry Democrats as communists ahead of November's midterm elections, he

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 27 of 57

is rolling out the red carpet this week for Chinese President Xi Jinping, the leader of the world's most powerful communist country.

The state visit comes as the president himself has increasingly directed his administration to take large stakes in private companies to try to stimulate the economy — something even some Republicans decry as corporate socialism.

The contradictions between Trump's words and actions risk muddying Republican attack lines on Democrats.

"I do think that we're not offering a clear contrast," said Marc Short, who was chief of staff to former Vice President Mike Pence and worked in Trump's White House in his first term.

Trump and the GOP argue Democrats have moved too far left

During the recent Republican midterm convention in Dallas, the president repeatedly branded Democrats as communists, even proclaiming, "It's going to be a communist country if they win."

"In state after state, the Democrat establishment has been overthrown and replaced by crazed lunatics and radicals," he said, adding, "America has beaten communism before, and we will beat it again."

That's a reference to candidates aligned with democratic socialists who won Democratic primaries in Michigan, Colorado, New York, Florida and Pennsylvania. Trump and other Republicans argue it shows the party is too extreme, although they exaggerate many of the political realities.

It is a way to shift the narrative in the face of a series of drags on the popularity of Trump and his party with Election Day looming. Those include an increasingly unpopular war in Iran, concerns about inflation remaining high and Trump's approval ratings retreating to near historic lows.

Meanwhile, Trump has taken government stakes in private companies

The White House secured agreements giving the federal government stakes in more than 30 companies — including nuclear power producer Westinghouse, metals and element concerns and chipmaker Intel. It has ignored the criticism that this strategy aligns it more with centrally planned economies than capitalist ones.

"If socialism is government owning the means of production, wouldn't the government owning part of Intel be a step toward socialism?" Sen. Rand Paul, a Kentucky Republican and frequent Trump antagonist, wrote on X.

During a recent House committee hearing, Connecticut Democratic Rep. Jim Himes told Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, "I can think of no administration in the last 50 years that is quite as communist as the Trump administration."

The president insists more such agreements are coming. "I will make deals like that for our Country all day long," he posted.

The White House didn't answer questions on whether it saw discrepancies between Trump talking about denouncing Democrats as communists while expressing fondness for Xi and having the government take large stakes in private companies.

Short, the former Pence aide who is now chairman of the conservative advocacy group Advancing American Freedom, said he thinks Republicans are taking "very legitimate attack lines" by painting Democrats as being too far left.

But he said the administration risks "picking winners and losers in the economy" with its private company stakes, as well as with Trump's proposal to send \$5,000 to every adult American if the GOP retains control of Congress after November, and his push for price controls on goods such as pharmaceuticals.

"I think those policies, you know, lead to enormous, enormous intervention from the government into the economy," Short said. But he made it clear that he believes the measures don't come close to making the U.S. into a socialist economy like China.

Trump rushed to finish White House helipad in time for Xi

Even as he criticizes Democrats for cozying up to communists, Trump has bragged about his close relationship with China's leader, his chief global rival. When he was in Beijing in May, the president talked effusively about what "an amazing time" he had.

He's not been shy about underscoring that he was building a helicopter landing pad he calls a "work of

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 28 of 57

art" on the south lawn of the White House to impress Xi, while lamenting that his White House ballroom wouldn't be completed in time.

"I can tell you this: It's too bad we don't have the ballroom open," Trump said Friday.

The president also has recalled visiting the Great Hall of the People while in China, and suggested the ballroom might become the "Great Hall of the United States."

Trump's admiration for Xi is part of his fascination with strongmen, said Marc Selverstone, director of presidential studies at the University of Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs. Trump has also boasted about his warm relationships with North Korea's Kim Jong Un, Viktor Orbán in Hungary and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"His interest in strongmen who are communist and strongmen who are not communists," Selverstone said. "That's constant, and playing to them is not unfamiliar to Trump."

Trump criticized Obama for welcoming Xi to the White House

There is often some disconnect between the high and delicate diplomatic stakes of a summit during an election season — as evidenced by Trump himself the last time Xi came to Washington for a state visit.

In 2015, as then-President Barack Obama was preparing to host Xi, Trump — in the midst of his first run for president — criticized the pomp.

"Just take them to McDonald's and go back to the negotiating table," Trump said then, during a rally in South Carolina. He later conceded on Fox News Channel that Xi might at least be worthy of getting "probably a double-size Big Mac."

After he won the presidency, though, Trump's tone has shifted. By 2018, he was even marveling at Xi's position in communist China, remarking that "He's now president for life," during a GOP fundraiser at Mar-a-Lago.

Trump's July speech was critical of China. But that didn't last

Trump briefly appeared to buck his soft spot for Xi in July during his national address when he announced the declassification of documents he said showed a pattern of China interfering in U.S. elections.

"Our elections were left vulnerable to being rigged and stolen," Trump said, without criticizing Xi or calling for penalties against China.

The documents ultimately didn't reveal much new information, or support Trump's claims. And the president has since tried to downplay the alleged election meddling.

"It took place a long time ago. I think China is maybe a little bit different today than it was then," Trump said days after the speech.

Senior administration officials declined to comment on whether accusations of Chinese meddling in the 2020 election would come up during Trump's discussions with Xi. But it's unlikely that the politics of the midterms will have much impact on the summit, said Ali Wyne, a senior research and advocacy adviser on U.S.-China relations at the International Crisis Group.

"President Trump was very quick, in the aftermath of the (July) speech, to focus his ire on the mainstream media, Democrats. He didn't condemn President Xi," Wyne said, further noting that, when it came to Beijing, Trump made it "clear that the U.S. relationship was still on track."

Houthis say they won't attack US vessels in Red Sea, and other Mideast developments

By The Associated Press undefined

A senior official with the Iran-backed Houthi rebels said the group has assured U.S. President Donald Trump's administration that it won't attack U.S. vessels in the Red Sea, even as he warned countries against joining Saudi Arabia in Yemen's revived civil war.

The comments came as the Houthis fired a ballistic missile at Saudi Arabia's capital over the weekend.

Iran's top diplomat will stop in Qatar on his way to the United Nations' annual gathering of world leaders. And the head of the CIA has been in Egypt meeting with its president.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 29 of 57

An Israeli was fatally shot in the occupied West Bank, while Israel's military said it killed a man who attempted to ram his vehicle into troops elsewhere in the Palestinian territory.

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

Houthi official warns countries not to join Saudis in Yemen conflict

A senior official with the Iran-backed Houthi rebels is warning countries against joining Saudi Arabia in Yemen's revived civil war, telling The Associated Press on Sunday that his group has assured the Trump administration that it won't attack U.S. vessels in the Red Sea.

Mohamed al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthis' political bureau, said Washington reached out to the rebels after their rapid advance down Yemen's western coast to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait earlier this month.

"We confirmed that we are not targeting the United States, or any other nation, in the strait, with the sole exception of the Saudi enemy," he told The Associated Press in a Zoom interview from the rebel-held Yemeni capital, Sanaa. "That remains the case."

Iran's top diplomat will stop in Qatar on way to US

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi will stop briefly in Qatar before going to New York for the U.N. General Assembly, the state-run IRNA news agency reported.

Tehran has said it is awaiting a U.S. response to conditions it conveyed through Qatar for ending the war. Iran's Supreme National Security Council chief Mohsen Rezaei told Al Jazeera on Saturday the conditions include ending the war on all fronts, releasing Iranian assets seized by the U.S. and ending the U.S. naval blockade of Iranian ports.

Araghchi is among Iran's senior officials given visas by Washington to attend the U.N. gathering, along with President Masoud Pezeshkian, despite the war.

CIA chief visits Egypt and meets with its president

Central Intelligence Agency Director John Ratcliffe was in Egypt meeting with President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, the president's office said.

The statement said el-Sissi expressed support for a deal to resolve the Iranian crisis and ensure the freedom of shipping navigation. He also rejected any aggression against Arab countries. Last week, Egypt's president hosted Saudi Arabia's crown prince, who was seeking support against attacks by neighboring Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels.

El-Sissi also urged the full implementation of the second phase of the U.S. ceasefire plan for Gaza. Egypt has been a key mediator and borders the Palestinian territory.

An Israeli is shot dead in the West Bank

A 30-year-old Israeli man was killed near the Neve Tzuf settlement north of Ramallah, hours before Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar.

Israel's military said the suspected attacker opened fire from a vehicle and fled on foot. After a search by security forces, the military said the man, who was injured while fleeing, was detained at a hospital where he had sought care.

The Samaria regional council said the killed man, Netanel Shakron, was a settler who had been bathing at a spring ahead of Yom Kippur.

It was the second time an Israeli civilian had been killed in a confrontation with a Palestinian this year in the West Bank, according to the U.N.

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

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a statement called the attacks "despicable" and instructed the military to expand operations in the West Bank.

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. Earlier Sunday, 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.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 30 of 57

Iran closes a French-language center in Tehran

Iranian authorities said they closed a French-language center affiliated with the French Embassy in Tehran, accusing it of operating without a license and engaging in activities against national security.

The Iranian judiciary's Mizan news agency said the Tehran prosecutor's office ordered the closure after repeated warnings. It alleged the center used language courses as a cover for projects including identifying and networking with Iranian elites and facilitating their departure from the country. It offered no evidence.

There was no immediate embassy comment.

6 French nationals on trial in Iraq over alleged IS ties

Six French nationals in Iraq have been tried on suspicion of being members of the extremist Islamic State group, 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 among thousands of people with suspected IS links and who were repatriated from neighboring Syria early this year.

Patrick Clancy gives first TV interview on '60 Minutes' after Lindsay Clancy mistrial

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI Associated Press

Lindsay Clancy's former husband said he forgave her for killing their three young children in his first televised interview Sunday on CBS News' "60 Minutes" since a jury deadlocked in her trial for the children's deaths.

Patrick Clancy talked about his grief, saying he battled suicidal thoughts after the killings and experienced a panic attack while testifying at Lindsay Clancy's trial when attorneys played to jurors his 911 call to report the children's deaths.

At trial, the anguished 911 call included Patrick howling and crying after he discovered the bodies of his children in the family's basement as a confused dispatcher repeatedly asked what happened.

Earlier this month, 11 of 12 jurors were ready to clear Lindsay Clancy of criminal responsibility, with the majority feeling that the Massachusetts mom was in the grip of a rare condition called postpartum psychosis when she strangled her kids in 2023. But a lone juror sided with prosecutors, who had argued that Clancy knew what she was doing. The deadlock forced a judge to declare a mistrial on Sept. 4.

Clancy says 8-month-old son died in his arms

Patrick Clancy also said his youngest son, Callan, didn't die immediately that fatal day on Jan. 24, 2023, but lived four more days before dying in his arms.

While holding his 8-month-old son, he said he typed with one hand tributes to his other children, Cora, 5, and Dawson, 2, and also forgave his wife.

"I saw headlines that say 'killer mom' and 'baby murderer monster' and none of them were accurate," he said. "I believed that it was her mental illness that caused that."

Clancy says conspiracy theories distract from main concern of perinatal mental health

Clancy said stress from the murders and trial took a toll.

"There was a time I didn't think I would live to see my 35th birthday, and I was completely fine with it," he said.

He also addressed social media conspiracy theories surrounding the case, which have included unfounded claims he was connected to the death of his children.

"It's deeply harmful to the legacy of my children," Patrick Clancy said. "It is a huge distraction from what really matters here, which is perinatal mental health."

His new wife, Dr. Rachel Danis, joined him in the interview, describing Patrick Clancy as the "most selfless and supportive partner."

"I don't understand how the story has been so twisted," she said. "I was just a girl that met a guy running in Central Park on a really cold Saturday. And I don't think there's anything wrong with that."

Early results show Russia's main Kremlin party dominating tightly controlled parliamentary vote

By The Associated Press undefined

Russia's main Kremlin party, United Russia, was dominating the country's first wartime parliamentary election, according to early returns released Monday from a tightly controlled election virtually devoid of opposition to President Vladimir Putin's policies.

The vote, which is all but certain to cement the Kremlin's dominance, began Friday for 111 million eligible voters and ended Sunday.

The balloting included residents of four Ukrainian regions that Moscow illegally annexed after the war began, but still doesn't fully control, as well as those in Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula that was illegally annexed by Russia in 2014, a move Kyiv denounced as illegal and the European Union described as a "blatant violation of international law."

With some 58% of the precincts counted, United Russia had nearly 58% of the vote for the 225 deputies apportioned by party lists, according to Russia's Central Election Commission. Another 225 lawmakers will be chosen in single-seat races, and United Russia also was poised to win most of those.

As of late Sunday, the turnout stood at a little under 57%, Russia's Central Election Commission said.

As the early results came in, voting continued at some embassies and consulates in time zones further west, including in the United States.

Kremlin long expected to keep control

The Kremlin has sought the parliamentary election — the first since the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 — to showcase popular support for the war and legitimize its action. It has sought to avoid political risks by stamping out any dissent.

A massive state media campaign and tight control over the election in the absence of genuine opposition all but assure the Kremlin will keep tight control of Russian politics amid mounting economic costs and increasing Ukrainian drone attacks deep inside the country.

Voters cast two separate ballots, filling half of the Duma's 450 seats by selecting political parties listed on the ballot. The rest are contested in single-seat constituencies, with voters choosing individual candidates.

The main Kremlin party, United Russia, has been widely expected to retain its overwhelming control of the lower house, the State Duma.

The early results showed four other parties that almost always vote for Kremlin initiatives returning to the State Duma.

Opposition sidelined as observers report violations

The liberal Yabloko party, the only registered political entity that dared to publicly criticize the war, 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 were imprisoned or forced to flee abroad ahead of the campaign.

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

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

Yabloko reported that one of its observers lost consciousness while being arrested by police at a St. Petersburg polling station on Saturday, after officials accused him of trying to "disrupt the elections" and called police.

The parties reported violations including sealed ballot boxes being opened, doors to polling stations not being secured overnight, and a refusal to issue paper ballots. The claims could not be independently verified.

At one polling station in the Russian-held part of the Donetsk region, voters dropped their ballots in a

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 32 of 57

box as an armed Russian soldier stood nearby and watched.

Issues with electronic voting in Moscow

Ella Pamfilova, head of Russia's Central Election Commission, said Sunday that the electronic voting system in Moscow was targeted by cyberattacks. She blamed one of the "systemic parties" — meaning one of those taking part in the vote, without specifying which one.

SotaVision, an independent Russian news outlet, said Sunday that voters were reporting glitches in the electronic registry systems at polling stations across Moscow. People were not issued paper ballots and instead were asked to vote via an electronic terminal, the outlet said on Telegram.

Leonid Volkov, a close associate of the late Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, suggested the supposed breakdown of the system used to issue paper ballots in Moscow may have been deliberate, aimed at pushing voters toward electronic voting.

"Demand a paper ballot!" he wrote on X on Sunday.

Lines formed outside polling stations as many voters refused to vote electronically.

Having urged supporters to spoil party-list ballots, Yabloko party leader Nikolai Rybakov cast a ballot in St. Petersburg on Sunday, covered in bright green writing declaring "For freedom," "For peace," and "Yabloko."

Russian opposition abroad holds protests

Russia's exiled opposition, including the widow of Alexei Navalny, Yulia Navalnaya, called on anti-war Russians to cast their votes at noon on Sunday.

Thousands of Russians living in Armenia took part in the vote, lining up outside the Russian Embassy in the capital, Yerevan. Some of them joined the "Noon for a Peaceful Russia" anti-war demonstration, holding anti-war and anti-Putin posters.

Mark Podberezin, a journalist, said members of the election commission in Yerevan made remarks that felt like "outright intimidation." He said he had heard comments "along the lines of, 'You'll have to return to Russia sooner or later, keep that in mind.'"

Lidiya Klimenko said she did not think her vote would have any real impact. The most useful thing to do, she said, was "to see other people who are also against the war, to be together in a shared cause."

In Germany, voters cast their ballots at the Russian Embassy in Berlin. Andrei Pivovarov, a dissident and former head of the Open Russia group, addressed a protest gathered outside the building.

Ukraine fires over 1,000 drones at Russia

The election's last day came against a backdrop of a major wave of Ukrainian attacks. Russia's Defense Ministry said Sunday that its forces shot down a total of 1,110 Ukrainian drones across Russia, as well as over the annexed Crimea and the Black Sea.

Two people were killed and 20 wounded across the wider Moscow region, local Gov. Andrei Vorobyov said.

The election follows a summer of Ukraine's long-range drone strikes on oil refineries that triggered a widespread fuel crisis. Warehouses belonging to online retailers Wildberries and Ozon also were attacked. Those attacks have exacerbated economic problems and brought the war home for millions.

18 suspects accused in the July 2021 killing of Haiti's president being extradited from Haiti to US

By EVENS SANON and DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Eighteen suspects who were arrested in the July 2021 killing of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse were being extradited to the U.S. on Sunday, marking the end of a drawn-out judicial process in Haiti for a killing that shocked the troubled Caribbean country.

The suspects will face justice in Florida, according to Jason Reding Quiñones, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida.

"Today marks the next major phase in our pursuit of accountability for the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse," he wrote on X. "We will follow the evidence wherever it leads, to those who financed it, facilitated it, supported it or committed crimes to make it possible. Five years later, we are still bringing defendants before American courts, and we are not finished."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 33 of 57

Quiñones did not identify the suspects, and a spokesperson for the U.S. Department of Justice did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Sunday.

The suspects who remained in Haiti awaiting trial included 17 Colombian soldiers and Joseph Badio, a former Haiti Ministry of Justice employee who was part of an anti-corruption unit. Badio, considered a key suspect, was arrested in Haiti in October 2023 after being on the run for more than two years. Defense attorneys in the U.S. for other suspects have asserted Badio was the mastermind behind a plan to use the president's arrest to assassinate Moïse.

Authorities have said some of the suspects envisioned a coup, not an assassination, and the Colombian soldiers have testified in Haiti that they were beaten, threatened with death and forced to sign documents in a language they don't understand.

Families of suspects surprised by extradition

Quiñones said that 30 people have been indicted in Moïse's killing, with FBI Special Agent in Charge Brett Skiles noting that there were multiple arrests in the U.S. and abroad on Sunday.

He said that the FBI and others "remain steadfast in ensuring that all individuals who allegedly sought profit from the assassination of a head of state are held fully accountable."

Haiti's Ministry of Justice and Public Security said in a statement that it surrendered the suspects "to allow for their trial."

"In order to bring to a successful conclusion the judicial proceedings...the Haitian government has decided to strengthen its cooperation with the American judicial authorities," it said, noting that the proceedings in Haiti "continue to face significant difficulties."

The wife of one of the suspects, Diana Marcela Arbeláez Llano, said in a phone interview Sunday from Colombia that the extradition caught her and the relatives of the other suspects by surprise.

"We never imagined that the United States would have taken them so suddenly," she said, adding that she hopes they have the opportunity to prove their innocence.

Arbeláez said all the detained Colombians are very sick given the notoriously inhumane conditions in Haitian prisons, and that while she hopes their health will improve in the U.S., she remains worried.

"I don't know why the United States would have taken them," she said. "It's a state of total uncertainty."

Relatives of the Colombian suspects had previously complained about the repeated delays in the Haitian judicial process following their arrest in 2021, with the investigation stalled by gang violence, death threats and a crumbling judicial system.

In October 2025, justice officials in Haiti asked the U.S. and Canada for help after a local court of appeals ordered a new investigation into Moïse's killing, the third inquiry of its kind since he was shot 12 times at his private residence in July 2021 in an attack that also injured his wife. The previous investigations were stalled because Haitian judges kept resigning from the case, fearing for their lives, and gangs seized control of the downtown Port-au-Prince courthouse where the judges were interrogating suspects.

US pushes forward with prosecutions

The extraditions come as the U.S. continues to prosecute and sentence multiple other suspects in the case.

In May, a jury in Florida convicted four men in the killing, and at least five others have pleaded guilty and are serving life sentences.

Those recently convicted include Arcángel Pretel Ortiz, Antonio Intriago, Walter Veintemilla and James Solages, all of whom pleaded not guilty. A jury found them guilty of conspiring to kill or kidnap Haiti's elected leader and providing material support for the plot.

Still awaiting trial is Christian Sanon, a Haitian-American citizen whom authorities said was initially picked by the alleged conspirators to replace Moïse. Once in power, the plan was for him to award contracts to a company known as CTU for infrastructure projects, security forces and military equipment.

Ortiz and Intriago were principals for CTU, which stood for Counter Terrorist Unit Federal Academy and Counter Terrorist Unit Security. Meanwhile, Veintemilla was a principal of Worldwide Capital Lending Group. Both companies were based in South Florida.

Suspects who previously pleaded guilty in U.S. federal court include a retired Colombian army officer

and a Haitian-Chilean businessman who was once an informant for the U.S. government.

Authorities said that key fugitives in the case include Dimitri Hérard, ex-head of security at Haiti's National Palace, who escaped two years ago after a powerful gang federation stormed Haiti's two biggest prisons.

Merz vows to press ahead with reforms after historic German state election defeat

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — German Chancellor Friedrich Merz suffered a bruising electoral setback in two state elections on Sunday, including a historic defeat for his party, but vowed to press ahead with potentially painful reforms to Europe's biggest economy.

Projections by public broadcaster ARD on Sunday night indicated that Merz's center-right Christian Democratic Union, or CDU, came in with just 4.9% in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania — the lowest result since World War II for the party in any state. The anti-migration, Russia-friendly Alternative for Germany, or AfD, party made significant gains Sunday. The projections were based on exit polls and partial counting for ARD television.

Should the CDU stay below 5% in the final vote count, it would mean that the party would fail for the first time to win seats in a state legislature anywhere in Germany.

Merz acknowledged his party's result as a "disaster," but struck a defiant note, rejecting any retreat from his government's reform agenda. He argued that Germany's economic and political problems made difficult and potentially unpopular reforms more urgent, not less so, and pledged to press ahead.

"What needs to be done now requires backbone, steadfastness, and patience," Merz said in a statement shortly after the exit polls were announced on public television. "I will demonstrate these qualities as chairman of the CDU and, above all, as chancellor of our country."

In Berlin, projections showed the CDU was to come in second with 19.1%, behind the Left party at 25.3%, according to ARD.

Merz's authority was already damaged by CDU's stinging defeat to AfD in the Sept. 6 election in the small eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt. That result 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.

On Sunday, AfD also made big gains in both states. In Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, it garnered 37.9% of the vote, and in Berlin it achieved 16.2%, according to ARD. But it was nowhere close to being able to form a regional government.

AfD's national co-leader, Alice Weidel, said on ZDF television that "we have displaced the CDU as the people's party."

She added that "we have a great deal to offer our voters, namely political change in this country."

However, in an apparent reference to the far-right party, Merz said that his government's reforms would be "the antidote to the poison of authoritarianism, which is penetrating ever deeper into our society as the fascination with authoritarianism grows."

The government's reforms include cuts to income tax for low- and middle-income families, an overhaul of the creaking pension system and a reduction of Germany's stifling bureaucracy.

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

The strong showing of AfD in the Saxony-Anhalt election, where it has the best chance yet of forming the country's first far-right regional government since World War II, had further weakened the chancellor's standing on the national level as well.

In the past two weeks, there had been calls, even from within his own party, for him to be replaced as chancellor, although no top-level allies have called publicly for his departure, and many warned against "personnel debates."

Philipp Amthor, a prominent CDU figure from Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania who now manages rela-

tions between the federal and state governments at the chancellery, said Sunday night that one problem in the campaign had been "the difficult personnel discussions" of recent weeks — an apparent reference to the speculation about Merz.

"It is good and right for these personnel discussions not to be continued now," he said.

Trump says his planned arch would become a 'military complex' able to host drones and snipers

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Sunday that the massive arch he wants to build between the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery would become a "top grade military complex" able to host drones and snipers while storing ammunition.

It is one more example of how Trump is insisting that his initiatives to beautify the White House and the city are also serving a defensive purpose. Trump has been calling the new White House ballroom a "military complex" and arguing it is necessary for national security purposes.

The Pentagon said it had no information beyond the president's statement.

Trump's announcement also comes as the arch, like his other projects, faces legal challenges. Though the arch has received early approval from the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, whose members were all tapped by Trump, a group of three veterans and an architectural historian sued, saying the project needs to be approved by Congress.

"The President's belated efforts to manufacture a national security justification for this project do nothing to cure its fundamental illegality," Nicolas Sansone, one of the attorneys representing the litigants, said Sunday. "Congress has not authorized the arch and unless and until Congress does so, the project should not be permitted to move forward."

The Republican president said in a social media post that he had agreed, at the "strong request" of the military, to convert the planned 250-foot-tall (76-meter) memorial arch "into a top grade Military Complex/Triumphal Arch, to house, store, and have the rapid ability to use large numbers of drones, plus Snipers, on both the roof and plaza areas, and additionally have and hold large quantities of sniper ammunition in storage."

The arch is proposed for a circle adjacent to the Memorial Bridge, which is a heavy traffic area as one of a handful of connecting bridges between the nation's capital and northern Virginia. Rep. Don Beyer, D-Va., who represents the area, noted another potential problem, given the proximity to the Washington airport.

"Putting a drone launching site directly in the landing path for DCA is a stupid, dangerous, and unworkable idea," Beyer wrote on X. "Trump clearly expects to lose a lawsuit and therefore wants to set up a pretext to argue that the arch is tied to national security. Which is obviously idiotic."

The project is one of several that the Republican president is pursuing to leave his lasting imprint on Washington. Among the others are the White House ballroom, renaming and renovating the Kennedy Center, refurbishing the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool and rebuilding a golf course in East Potomac Park, which could significantly reduce the public's access to running and biking paths.

The groundbreaking for the arch was to have happened sometime this month. The project has not yet received final approval from the National Capital Planning Commission, which greenlit the site and preliminary plans at its July meeting. The commission is expected to take up the matter again this fall.

Converse apologizes and pulls sneaker ad that critics said included racist imagery

By DAVE COLLINS Associated Press

The sneaker company Converse has removed a social media ad that sparked outrage among critics who viewed it as evoking the Ku Klux Klan and lynching.

The Instagram ad photo showed K-pop singer Karina wearing a skirt and holding a pair of Chuck 70 X sneakers. Critics lashed out online, saying that a white triangular image created by lighting on the skirt resembled a KKK hood and that the way she held the sneakers made them look like the dangling feet of a lynching victim.

Converse, owned by Nike, issued a statement apologizing and saying it removed the ad.

"We're sorry," said the statement, first released on Friday. "We understand why this image is deeply upsetting and recognize that we got this wrong. We removed it from our channels and are working to remove it everywhere it appeared. This should not have happened and we will do better."

Converse, based in Boston, declined on Sunday to answer questions seeking additional information, including how the company screens ads before they are posted and how the ad was approved.

Karina and her management company, SM Entertainment Group, did not immediately respond to messages through their Instagram accounts.

Retailers and top fashion brands have issued a string of apologies over the years for products criticized as being racially insensitive.

Last month, retailer Target pulled a children's Halloween costume from its shelves after widespread social media backlash, apologizing for selling a garment that critics said evoked racist minstrel caricatures.

The Converse photo sparked swift criticism, including calls for staff involved in the ad to be fired and for a boycott of the company. In a slew of comments on social media, posters questioned how the ad could have cleared the company's advertising vetting process. Other commenters defended Converse, saying they didn't believe it was intentional.

Lee Merritt, a civil rights attorney based in Texas, posted on Instagram that Converse's apology "doesn't undo what got past legal, marketing and leadership at every step."

"We keep having this conversation because corporations keep failing the same test," he wrote. "Do better means catching this before it airs — not after we're offended."

Converse, founded in Malden, Massachusetts, in 1908, makes the iconic Chuck Taylor All Star sneaker. It was first released in 1917 as a non-skid basketball shoe, adding the signature of Taylor — a basketball player who promoted the sneaker — in 1934, according to the company's website.

Ukraine fires over 1,000 drones at Russia, including 'largest ever' attack on Moscow

By The Associated Press undefined

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 the Moscow Oil Refinery, which is among several sites that supply the Russian capital, 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.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 37 of 57

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.

Ukraine says it has targeted infrastructure to damage Russia's war machine

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.

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.

Separately, Zelenskyy said he spoke with U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday. Writing on X, Zelenskyy said they agreed they would meet next week at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

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 Sobyenin 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.

Trump and Mamdani plan to meet in New York during the president's upcoming UN visit

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump will meet with New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani when Trump travels to the city for the upcoming U.N. General Assembly.

The meeting is scheduled for Monday and at Gracie Mansion, the official mayoral residence, according to Anna Bahr, Mamdani's communications director.

Bahr said the two will discuss issues affecting the city and New Yorkers. The White House confirmed the meeting will take place but did not offer more details.

Mamdani, a democratic socialist who upset former Gov. Andrew Cuomo in the Democratic primary before winning the general election in November, has been a favorite and frequent political foil for Republicans.

But Trump has often been warm to Mamdani and seemed charmed by the young mayor. Their first meeting after Mamdani's election was quite cordial, with Trump saying at the White House that the then-mayor-elect would "surprise some conservative people." The Republican president had called Mamdani a "100% Communist Lunatic" during the 2025 campaign.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 38 of 57

During a February meeting, Mamdani gave Trump a mock New York Daily News front page that said "Trump to City: Let's Build." That was riff on the famous front-page headline from 1975, "FORD TO CITY: DROP DEAD," referring to President Gerald Ford's promise to veto financial assistance to the city.

Mamdani's aides said at the time that it was meant to show Trump the reaction and support that new federal investments in housing could have in the city.

Iran-backed Houthi rebels warn against joining Saudi Arabia in Yemen's growing civil war

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — A senior official with the Iran-backed Houthi rebels is warning countries against joining Saudi Arabia in Yemen's revived civil war, telling The Associated Press on Sunday that his group has assured the Trump administration that it won't attack U.S. vessels in the Red Sea.

Mohamed al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthis' political bureau, said Washington reached out to the rebels after their rapid advance down Yemen's western coast to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait earlier this month.

"We confirmed that we are not targeting the United States, or any other nation, in the strait, with the sole exception of the Saudi enemy," he told the AP in a Zoom interview from the rebel-held Yemeni capital, Sanaa. "That remains the case."

U.S. President Donald Trump last weekend said his administration has "had discussions" with the Houthis, but did not say when. "The Houthis called us, and they don't want to fight with us," he said. "They would much prefer not having us involved, and they're letting most ships go through."

The AP later reported that Oman hosted a meeting between U.S. and Houthi representatives last weekend, citing a Houthi official and another individual familiar with the talks. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media.

However, al-Bukhaiti only confirmed indirect contacts with U.S. officials through longtime mediator Oman, which brokered a 2025 ceasefire between the Houthis and the Trump administration. That ended a weekslong U.S. bombing campaign against the rebels in return for them ceasing attacks on U.S. vessels in the Red Sea.

"The goal of our military operations is not to close the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, but rather to ensure freedom of navigation through it for everyone, including Yemen," he said.

The Houthis claim they can fight a war on multiple fronts

Al-Bukhaiti said the rebels have the capacity to fight a war on multiple fronts "should any nation become implicated in the aggression against Yemen alongside Saudi Arabia."

"Today, Yemen is capable of waging battle — not merely an internal conflict, but an international one as well," he said.

He said the Houthi attacks against neighboring Saudi Arabia will persist until Riyadh ends its decade-long blockade on rebel-held areas in Yemen and allows vessels to reach Houthi-controlled ports on the Red Sea. Then they will be ready to negotiate, he said.

Al-Bukhaiti blamed Saudi Arabia for the latest escalation of violence in Yemen, which he said erupted after an airstrike blamed on the Saudi-led coalition fighting the rebels hit the Sanaa international airport. The strike prevented an Iranian flight carrying a Houthi delegation to land. The flight was a Houthi attempt to challenge the coalition's air and naval blockade.

The Houthis responded with missile and drone strikes on Saudi Arabia, including one that targeted Riyadh on Saturday before being intercepted. Saudi officials said debris from a Houthi drone also killed one civilian and injured others.

The Houthis also declared a blockade on Saudi shipping in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea, attacking Saudi-linked vessels and oil facilities inside the kingdom, the world's top oil exporter.

The Saudis and their allies have long struggled to contain the Houthis, and may be tempted to seek a diplomatic solution to halt attacks. That might ultimately require U.S. concessions to Iran, the only country with leverage over the Houthis. But Washington's negotiations with Tehran over their own war fell apart

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 39 of 57

weeks ago.

"We have not closed the door to peace," Mahdi al-Mashat, president of the Houthis' Supreme Political Council, the top executive body, said in a speech Sunday marking the anniversary of their 2014 takeover of Sanaa.

The U.S., which bombed the Houthis under the Biden and Trump administrations, has shown no interest in getting involved militarily this time around.

The rebels believe power has shifted in their favor

The rebels' advance inside Yemen seized the crucial port city of Mokha and key Red Sea islands that allow them to better monitor shipping traffic through the Bab el-Mandeb, through which some 12% of world trade normally passes.

The Saudi-backed Yemeni government forces, long divided into factions, withdrew but have vowed to regroup.

The escalation ended a 2022 ceasefire that largely ended fighting in Yemen's civil war, which started when the Houthis swept in from their mountainous heartland and seized much of northern and central Yemen, including Sanaa, 12 years ago.

The Saudi-led coalition entered the war the following year on behalf of the internationally recognized government. The civil war killed at least 150,000 people, according to U.N. estimates, and pushed the country to the brink of famine.

Now, with Houthis in control of Yemen's western coast overlooking the Red Sea shipping corridor, "the balance of power has shifted in favor of the Sanaa government," al-Bukhaiti said, referring to the rebels' de facto authorities there.

"Ultimately, (Saudi Arabia) lost its most critical card: the west coast," he said.

Ole Miss up to No. 4 in AP Top 25 with win over LSU, Tigers slip to No. 10, SEC has 10 teams ranked

By ERIC OLSON AP College Football Writer

Mississippi moved into the top five with its win over LSU, the Tigers stayed in the top 10, and Florida and Mississippi State cracked the rankings to give the Southeastern Conference 10 teams in The Associated Press Top 25 college football poll released Sunday.

The Rebels, who held off Lane Kiffin and LSU 32-24 on Saturday night, jumped over the Tigers and three other teams to land at No. 4 for their first top-five ranking since they were No. 3 in the final poll last season. LSU slipped three spots to No. 10.

Texas was No. 1 for the second straight week and followed by Georgia, Notre Dame, Ole Miss and Indiana. Miami, Ohio State, Alabama, BYU and LSU completed the top 10.

The Longhorns followed up their win over Ohio State with a solid 30-6 victory over UTSA and topped the ballots of 58 of the 69 media members on the Top 25 voting panel. Indiana got four first-place votes, Georgia and Ole Miss three apiece and Miami one.

Louisville was the biggest gainer, rising seven spots to No. 16 after its 41-31 victory over SMU, which dropped six rungs to No. 22. Texas A&M took the biggest fall, going from No. 9 to No. 23 after its 31-21 home loss to unranked Kentucky.

This week's Top 25 marked the seventh time in the poll's history the SEC has had at least 10 teams ranked in a regular-season poll. The SEC had a record 11 ranked teams in back-to-back polls last September.

In and out

No. 21 Florida made its season debut in the rankings following a 44-39 road win over Auburn. The Gators are 3-0 for the first time since 2019 under first-year coach Jon Sumrall and in the Top 25 for the first time since Sept. 2, 2025.

No. 24 Mississippi State is in the Top 25 for the first time since 2022, when its coach was Mike Leach. That team was No. 20 in the final poll. Jeff Leiby's Bulldogs, led by rising star quarterback Kamario Taylor, has won back-to-back road games for the first time since 2014, erasing a 16-point deficit to beat South

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 40 of 57

Carolina 41-34.

Oklahoma struggled offensively for a second straight game in its 14-6 win over New Mexico and went from No. 24 to out of the Top 25. Virginia, which had been No. 25 two straight weeks, was knocked out after losing 38-27 to West Virginia.

Poll points

— No. 7 Ohio State has been ranked in 100 straight Top 25s, third among active streaks behind Alabama's 299 and Georgia's 152. The Buckeyes have their lowest ranking since Dec. 1, 2024.

— No. 9 BYU hadn't been ranked in the top 10 so early in a season since 2009.

— No. 24 Mississippi State has its highest September ranking since it was No. 23 on Sept. 23, 2018. That doesn't include a No. 16 ranking on Sept. 27, 2020, when the Big Ten was not yet playing because of the pandemic.

Conference call

SEC (10 ranked teams): No. 1 Texas, No. 2 Georgia, No. 4 Mississippi, No. 8 Alabama, No. 10 LSU, No. 14 Tennessee, No. 19 Missouri, No. 21 Florida, No. 23 Texas A&M, No. 24 Mississippi State.

Big Ten (7): No. 5 Indiana, No. 7 Ohio State, No. 12 USC, No. 13 Penn State, No. 17 Iowa, No. 18 Michigan, No. 20 Oregon.

Big 12 (4): No. 9 BYU, No. 11 Texas Tech, No. 15 Utah, No. 25 Houston.

ACC (3): No. 6 Miami, No. 16 Louisville, No. 22 SMU.

Independent (1): No. 3 Notre Dame.

Ranked vs. ranked

No. 1 Texas at No. 14 Tennessee: First meeting since the 1969 Cotton Bowl.

No. 4 Mississippi at No. 21 Florida: Kewan Lacy ran for 224 yards and three touchdowns in Rebels' come-from-behind win last year. Will Lacy be health for this one?

No. 17 Iowa at No. 18 Michigan: Iowa's 111 points through three games are its most since 2003.

No. 19 Missouri at No. 24 Mississippi State: Bulldogs go for their first 2-0 SEC start since 2014.

No. 20 Oregon at No. 12 Southern California: Ducks playing for a fifth straight win in the series.

No. 23 Texas A&M at No. 10 LSU: Aggies look to win two straight years at Death Valley.

Longtime AP Florida politics reporter Brendan Farrington dies at 60

By KATHY McCORMACK Associated Press

Brendan Farrington, a veteran news reporter who covered Florida politics, hurricanes and quirkiness for The Associated Press for more than 25 years, has died. He was 60.

Farrington died Friday at his home in Tallahassee following a brief illness, said Steve Schale, a close friend of the family.

Based in the state capital, he was regarded as well-sourced, fair and kind, with a good sense of humor. He also was a big sports fan who boasted of having visited every major league ballpark.

Many reporters called him a mentor and friend. They said he was trusted by politicians on both side of the aisle.

"I was amazed by the many calls he would get from everyone from big-name politicians and their aides to back-office workers telling him what was going on behind the scenes," said Terry Spencer, former Florida news editor for the AP.

Among the politicians paying tribute to Farrington was former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush.

"Brendan was an old school journalist," Bush posted on X. "He was a real pro."

From Massachusetts beginnings, he became a Florida fixture

Originally from Wilbraham, Massachusetts, Farrington began his career as a general assignment reporter at The Patriot Ledger, the daily newspaper in Quincy, in 1988. He joined the AP in Miami in the late 1990s and transferred to Tallahassee in 2001.

Spencer said one of his favorite memories of Farrington was when he assigned him on election night

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 41 of 57

2014 to be with Charlie Crist, who was running for governor against Rick Scott in a tight race. Crist decided to concede, connecting with Scott over Farrington's phone.

Gary Fineout, a reporter at Politico who formerly worked for the AP in Tallahassee with Farrington, said he was a beautiful writer who could handle a multitude of subjects. "He was always very willing to go out and to cover hurricanes, be prepared for natural disasters," Fineout said. "He would always jump into that coverage as soon as it was needed."

Schale said Farrington would try to frame what was happening through the lives of the people impacted by a hurricane or other event.

"Brendan was a great journalist and even better colleague and mentor to AP journalists in Florida and beyond, and we could always count on him to jump into a big story," said AP Global Sports Editor Josh Hoffner, the organization's former director of U.S. news. "I'll always remember and appreciate the role he played as a watchdog and champion of government transparency, press access and accountability journalism."

Farrington also enjoyed collecting stories that he would turn into an annual "weird Florida" roundup in years past.

"Some stories were gruesome, but bizarre. Like the man who injured his finger during a fight then cut it off, cooked it with scrambled eggs and ate it," his story from 1999 read. "Apparently he didn't consider other options, like the Orlando-area man who lost a chunk of a finger while slicing a frozen pig then underwent leech treatment to save the digit."

In 2021, the press secretary for Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis was suspended from what was then called Twitter after excoriating Farrington for journalism that pointed out that one of DeSantis' multimillion-dollar donors invested in a company that was making the COVID-19 treatment drug Regeneron.

In one tweet, she wrote that if Farrington didn't change the story, she would "put you on blast." She also retweeted a message that said "Light. Them. Up." in reference to the AP, whose president had interceded. Farrington said he received lots of abuse online after the press secretary's comments, tweeting to his followers: "For your sake, I hope government doesn't threaten your safety. I'll be fine, I hope. Freedom. Just please don't kill me."

He was a creator of good stories and 'selfies with a stranger'

Farrington left the AP in January 2025 after he was one of a group of employees who accepted voluntary buyouts.

Spencer said one of Farrington's favorite stories, from 2011, was about the then-new president of the Florida Senate who had written a book on politics for Brevard Community College, where he had taught. Mike Haridopolos received \$152,000 in taxpayer money for the effort in lieu of teaching — but the single available copy of the 175-page, double-spaced manuscript called "Florida Legislative History and Processes" could only be read at the school.

College administrators swore that that would change, but they also acknowledged the arrangement negotiated by the college president with Haridopolos at the time was unusual and expensive. The president defended it. Haridopolos, a Republican who was later elected to the U.S. House in 2024 representing Florida's 8th Congressional District, did not respond to requests for comment at the time.

Farrington enjoyed talking to people and posted "selfies with a stranger" with people he had just met at a bar, restaurant or on the street, Spencer said.

"Brendan loved everyone he met, and made friends everywhere he went," his wife, Amy Farrington, said in a statement. "He believed in the decency that lives inside every one of us."

Marta Lavandier, an AP photographer based in Miami, first knew Farrington when the two worked at the Patriot-Ledger together. He attended her wedding. When she got to Miami, she would photograph the start or end of the legislative session in Tallahassee.

"He was always a lot of fun, almost like the center of attention," she said. "He was always happy, had a good, great wit to him, a good friend, a mentor to many."

In addition to his wife, Farrington is survived by a son, Cullen Farrington; his mother, Ethel Farrington; three brothers and a sister.

Box Office: 'Resident Evil' tops box office with franchise best debut of \$60 million

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

Zach Cregger's "Resident Evil" gave the North American box office a shot in the arm in its first weekend in theaters. The Sony Pictures release earned \$60 million in ticket sales from 3,684 locations in the U.S. and Canada, according to studio estimates Sunday.

That's a best for the video game inspired franchise, of which there have been seven prior movies dating back to 2002, and for the filmmaker behind "Weapons" and "Barbarian." It's also more than most of the previous films made in their entire domestic runs. The only exception is "Resident Evil: Afterlife," which was released in 2010 and netted out with \$60.1 million, not accounting for inflation.

Cregger's "Resident Evil" stars Austin Abrams (who also played a pivotal role in "Weapons") as a medical courier whose last job of the night finds him battling infected creatures in Raccoon City. Reviews were overwhelmingly positive; it currently boasts a 95% on Rotten Tomatoes.

The audience was primarily male (66%) and under 35 (75%), according to PostTrak exit polls, and gave it a B+ CinemaScore. Cregger's previous films have defied a lot of box office logic when it comes to horror movies, whose earnings tend to be front-loaded and drop sharply after the first weekend. "Barbarian" grossed over \$46 million on a budget under \$5 million. "Weapons" made \$270 million on a \$38 million budget.

"Zach Cregger is a household name in the world of horror," said Paul Dergarabedian, the head of marketplace trends for Rentrak. "There are certain directors who become the star of the movie."

"Resident Evil" cost a reported \$75 million to produce, which does not include marketing and promotion expenses. Internationally, it earned \$48.3 million, bringing its global launch to \$108.3 million.

"Zach Cregger plus big franchise equals big bucks," Dergarabedian said. "And he made it feel fresh and new."

According to Rentrak, horror movies this year, including hits like "Obsession" and "Backrooms," have generated over \$1.1 billion at the domestic box office.

Second place went to "Practical Magic 2," which fell about 59% from its lackluster opening weekend with \$12.2 million from 4,163 theaters in North America. An additional \$7 million from international showings brings its running global total to \$76.8 million.

"Spider-Man: Brand New Day" landed in third place with \$6.5 million in its eighth weekend, pushing its domestic total to \$944.5 million. "The Odyssey," in its 10th weekend in theaters, added another \$4.9 million to take fourth place. "Coyote vs. Acme" rounded out the top five with \$4.5 million.

One notable limited release was "The History of Concrete," a documentary from comedian John Wilson, which earned \$90,000 from one screen (the IFC Center in New York). The only film to make more in a single weekend at that venue was "Parasite," which made \$119,407.

Top 10 movies by domestic box office

With final domestic figures being released Monday, this list factors in the estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Rentrak:

1. "Resident Evil," \$60 million.
2. "Practical Magic 2," \$12.2 million.
3. "Spider-Man: Brand New Day," \$6.5 million.
4. "The Odyssey," \$4.9 million.
5. "Coyote vs. Acme," \$4.5 million.
6. "Runner," \$3.2 million.
7. "Daniel and the Fiery Furnace," \$3.1 million.
8. "Transformers: The Movie" (40th anniversary re-release), \$3.1 million.
9. "The Weight," \$2.3 million.
10. "Buddy," \$1.9 million.

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.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 44 of 57

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.

Federal Reserve rate hike reflects new world of sticky inflation and faster growth

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has renewed his attacks on the Federal Reserve after it hiked its benchmark interest rate Wednesday, but the Fed matters less than broader economic trends when it comes to longer-term borrowing costs, economists say.

The economy is growing steadily despite being hit with repeated shocks — and may even be accelerating — while inflation remains stubbornly high. And big tech firms are borrowing huge amounts of cash to plow into data center construction while the federal government is still running large yearly budget deficits. All these trends point to higher interest rates regardless of what the Fed does, analysts say.

As a result, the low interest-rate, low-inflation world that lasted for nearly 15 years after the Great Recession is over and a higher-priced, higher-rate world is taking its place. Mortgage rates fell into the 3% range in the 2010s and even lower during COVID-19, but such deals are long gone. The average 30-year mortgage rate reached 6.95% last week, the highest in more than a year and a half.

Joe Brusuelas, chief economist at RSM, a tax consulting firm, said that a big reason for the change is a shift from the pre-pandemic economy in which consumer and business demand was weak, to the current economy in which healthy consumer and business spending is colliding with supply shocks and bottlenecks. In addition to higher oil and gas prices because of the Iran war, the AI buildout has struggled with an insufficient supply of computer chips, electronic equipment, and workers to put it all together.

"We've undergone a structural transformation of the economy," Brusuelas said. "The regime change in inflation and interest rates is the outcome."

Companies and government are competing for bonds

The shift, in many ways, returns the economy to where it was before the financial crisis in December 2007 that lasted through June 2009.

But even after the downturn ended, consumer and business spending remained weak. Millions of Americans in the 2010s focused on paying down outsized mortgages and credit card debt instead. Businesses saw few investment opportunities, and many big tech firms such as Alphabet's Google and Meta's Facebook piled up cash.

Now those companies are using those stockpiles to build out AI data centers, and are borrowing even more money to do so. And American consumers — despite surveys finding they are pessimistic about the economy — are still spending at a healthy pace. A recent report showing that retail sales picked up last month led economists at Bank of America to forecast growth will reach a healthy 3% at an annual rate in the July-September quarter.

Federal Reserve Chairman Kevin Warsh highlighted the shift in a speech at the central bank's annual conference in Jackson Hole, Wyoming last month.

After 2008, "it was a widely held view that an excess of capital would sit on the sidelines for a long, long time, because there just wouldn't be enough compelling investment opportunities," Warsh said. "All the good stuff had been invented. So growth would be low and slow."

"Well, times sure have changed," he continued. "Ever-expanding pools of capital are pouring into AI-related infrastructure of all sorts."

The additional spending and investment has contributed to higher longer-term interest rates on government bonds that are competing for lenders. The yield on the 10-year Treasury bond topped 5% this year for the first time since 2023, even before the Fed raised its benchmark short-term rate Wednesday.

At the same time, political polling and consumer sentiment surveys continue to find that many Ameri-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 45 of 57

cans are struggling to keep up with rising prices, and affordability remains a top concern heading into the midterm elections. Even as the economy expands, inflation has outpaced the annual growth in average wages for the past five months.

Brusuelas said the U.S. economy's expansion is "imbalanced" with growth "entirely dependent" on the AI buildout and strong spending by wealthier consumers, who have benefited from rising stock prices driven by hopes that AI will lift profits.

Higher inflation leads to higher rates

After the Fed lifted its rate to 3.9% Wednesday, Trump said on Truth Social that U.S. rates should be 1% instead.

Yet many of Trump's policies have contributed to higher borrowing costs, in particular the Iran war that has driven up gas prices. When inflation persists, investors demand higher interest rates on longer-term Treasury bonds, such as the 10-year, which strongly influences mortgage rates.

"The president can say he wants interest rates lower all he wants, and yet he continues to push the button on all the policies that raise rates," said Elizabeth Pancotti, vice president of policy, advocacy and research at the progressive Groundwork Collaborative.

This truth emerges as political situations change fast: Maps show us our world, but not neutrally

By DEEPTI HAJELA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Maps. Where would we be without them?

And how would we even know?

They can anchor us in a place or help us get somewhere else. They can show us global political realities via the drawing of contested country borders.

We take it as truth that not only does X mark the spot, it shows us the size of the spot, what the spot's name is and how the spot compares with other spots.

But while the physical geography of our world can be set in stone, the reality is that maps are not. There are choices involved in everything from which countries are centered to their size relative to each other and what the objects on the map are called. The choices create the perspective and they affect the way we assume the world looks.

Where there are choices, there can be contention.

That was evident this month at the United Nations when a General Assembly vote endorsed a map with a different way of looking at the world than has more commonly been used. This map showed Africa more accurately and larger. The vote was 164 countries in favor of the change, six abstaining and one — the United States — against.

In August, President Donald Trump signed an order directing the federal government to rename Lake Ontario to "Lake America" as a trade war with Canada continues. In January 2025, he signed an order renaming the Gulf of Mexico to the "Gulf of America." Some tech companies such as Google and Apple followed along with the changes for U.S. users. MapQuest did not, nor did Canada.

"To the extent that maps come to shape the way that we think about different places and people who inhabit them, maps structure our politics in ways that then have consequences," said Alex Moulton, assistant professor in the geography and environmental science department at Hunter College.

Distortions are inevitable

There is never going to be a flat map that is 100% accurate to the physical geography it is showing. That is because taking something in 3D, like Earth, and drawing it in flat 2D as a map is always going to result in distortions. Think about trying to flatten an orange's peel.

What mapmakers do is decide which distortions they are going to allow, depending on a map's purpose. Those decisions can be invisible to the general public, who see the map as absolute reality and a foundation for how they think of the world.

Take the Mercator map of Earth. It has been in use for some centuries and is familiar to most of us. It

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 46 of 57

was created in Europe as a navigational tool, with the longitudes and latitudes structured in such a way that ships could get from one place to another.

In order to do that, though, the size of the world's land masses had to be altered. Those nearer the poles, like Greenland, appear bigger. Those nearer the equator, like the countries of Africa, were made smaller. In reality, the African continent is massively larger than Greenland.

It was that distortion that pushed the efforts leading to the U.N.'s vote in support of the Equal Earth projection map, which supporters say is more accurate in terms of size.

Why does that matter? Because the way we see things can impact how we relate to them, with political and economic implications, said Nerve Macaspac, a political geographer and assistant professor at Queens College.

"If you see Africa as a smaller land mass, there's a political implication to that. If we see it larger or it's in true size, then there is economic and political implications to it," Macaspac said. "What's being foregrounded and what's been hidden or obscured or neglected or ignored or reduced?"

Maps as moments

What is included on maps can also make them snapshots of a particular period.

What was considered the "United States" would look different depending on what point in its 250-year history was being put to paper.

Maps "really are a time capsule of how that cartographer saw the world," said Tony Rodono, owner of The Map Shop, based in Charlotte, North Carolina. "That was their understanding of world at the particular time with everything that surrounding that person's human experience."

Trump's orders to change the names of bodies of water are examples of this as well, as his order renaming the mountain in Alaska that had been called Denali during the Obama administration back to its previous moniker of Mount McKinley. It's the tallest peak in North America.

"Map-making is world-making," Moulton said. "It is apprehending our world as we observe it and then putting that down as the truth of those things and that is an inherently political practice."

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."

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

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 47 of 57

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 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."

North Korea launches 2 ballistic missiles toward the sea and dials up pressure on the US

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

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

The launches were the latest in a series of weapons demonstrations by North Korea even after U.S. President Donald Trump scaled back a joint military exercise with South Korea last month in an apparent effort to revive diplomacy with the North's leader, Kim Jong Un.

The two missile launches — about three hours apart — were conducted from North Korea's eastern coastal Wonsan area. The first missile flew about 450 kilometers (280 miles) while the second one flew more than 600 kilometers (370 miles), both toward the North's eastern waters, South Korea's military said.

The missiles eventually ended up in the sea. South Korea's presidential office urged North Korea to immediately halt ballistic missile launches that are banned by U.N. Security Council resolutions. The South's military said it maintains readiness to repel any provocations by the North under a solid alliance with the United States.

Japan's Defense Ministry said it detected a suspected North Korean missile earlier Sunday but that the weapon did not land in its territorial waters.

North Korea escalates pressure on the US

Kim's sister and senior official, Kim Yo Jong, earlier 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.

Chances of a swift resumption of US-North Korea talks are unclear

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

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 49 of 57

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.

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, a liberal who advocates improved ties with the North, said on Friday that a resumption of U.S.-North Korea talks would be "an important starting point" toward boosting chances for peace on the Korean Peninsula.

"What is clear is that President Trump wants dialogue and I've also been encouraging President Trump to seek dialogue" with Kim, Lee told reporters.

Alaskans will decide fate of ranked choice voting system after chaotic end to state's primary

By BECKY BOHRER Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — Even after the last votes were counted from Alaska's primary election, the final slate of candidates was far from settled.

Late withdrawals shook up the races for governor, U.S. Senate and U.S. House, leaving many voters upset with candidates who dropped out after winning a spot in November's general election or cursing others who stayed in.

Some were quick to blame the upheaval on Alaska's unique elections system that combines open primaries, where the top four vote-getters advance, with general elections run under a ranked choice system.

The August primary revealed some of the headaches related to a major change in how Alaska voters select their candidates and was the latest example of how the real-world experience of state voting changes don't always line up neatly with expectations. California Democrats earlier this year worried they might get shut out of the state's top-two primary for governor out of fears they were running too many candidates.

Alaska voters will once again be asked to decide whether to keep or scrap their election method this fall. Maine is the only other state using ranked choice voting for its statewide races.

"We need to make things much more transparent and predictable and understandable by the general public so that we can truly have trust in our democracy again," said Matt Schultz, a Democrat who suspended his U.S. House bid before the primary.

He plans to support keeping the system in place but said it is a complicated decision. He thinks adjustments can be made and sees the role big money plays in elections as a major factor that discourages candidates.

Decision to drop out after primary disappoints some voters

Alaska first used the voter-approved top-four primary and ranked choice general election system four years ago, and two years ago narrowly rejected an effort to repeal it. Supporters have credited the system with having a moderating effect on the Legislature in what has long been a Republican-led state, with both chambers controlled the past two years by bipartisan coalitions.

That was one of the intentions when supporters originally placed ranked choice on the ballot, to introduce a voting system that could reduce partisanship by opening a door to more candidates who would need to work beyond their traditional bases for support.

An unintended consequence is what happened after voting ended in this summer's primary. At least five candidates between the races for the U.S. Senate, U.S. House and governor dropped out after advancing.

Tom Begich was among them. After a one-two finish by Democrats in the governor's primary, some voters were angry when Begich, who finished second, withdrew and endorsed leading vote-getter Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins.

The race is now a matchup with Kreiss-Tomkins and Republicans Bernadette Wilson, Dave Bronson and Treg Taylor. Some Begich supporters said they felt their votes didn't matter and that they were robbed of a chance to rank the candidates in the general election. Others said they trusted Begich's judgment.

Begich's campaign said staying in the race would have required millions of dollars. It said information the campaign reviewed showed the best path forward was to unite behind one candidate. Begich said he

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 50 of 57

and Kreiss-Tomkins, both former state lawmakers, share many of the same priorities.

He said the decision to withdraw was difficult, and he knows it disappointed some voters. He said the Democratic Party wasn't involved in his final decision.

"Do I feel great about the decision? Of course not. How could I?" he said. "But is it the right decision? Absolutely."

Ranked voting is 'a game and we need to play,' GOP activist says

Many Republicans, including President Donald Trump, have criticized Alaska's ranked voting, which is seen as giving Democrats and moderate candidates a boost in the traditionally GOP-friendly state compared with the traditional party primary system.

In the 2022 and 2024 U.S. House races, pressure to drop out was applied with mixed success on Republican candidates who finished behind the party's top vote-getter in the top-four primary. In special and regular elections in 2022, Democrat Mary Peltola beat Republicans Sarah Palin and Nick Begich for Alaska's only House seat. In 2024, Nick Begich, a nephew of Tom Begich, beat Peltola after the other major Republican in the race quit following the primary.

Republicans this year remain divided over whether to encourage a "rank the red" strategy in November. The state party chair, Carmela Warfield, frequently refers on social media to ranked voting as a "mess."

David Boyle, who has long been involved in the state's conservative politics, said ranked voting involves "game theory." While he supports the repeal effort, he thinks Republican voters should rank GOP candidates this fall to give the party its best chance in the governor's race.

"Ranked choice voting shouldn't be an obstacle," he said. "It's a game and we need to play that same game."

Support of open primaries and ranked voting is part of the Democratic Party platform. Alaska's last Democratic governor left office in 2002, but the party sees an opportunity to win the office this year.

Republicans uncertain over ranked strategy in state's biggest race

Alaska's most prominent race, for U.S. Senate, features three Republicans and a Democrat in the general election.

The incumbent, Republican Dan S. Sullivan, and Peltola headline the race that also includes Republicans Dan J. Sullivan, a retired teacher, and Gerald Heikes. Heikes advanced when the fourth-place finisher, Democrat David Leslie, withdrew. Peltola and Sen. Sullivan won a combined 91% of the primary vote.

Some Republican voters plan to simply vote for the incumbent and not rank in that race.

"In November, our campaign's strategy is simple: vote for Senator Dan S. Sullivan and fill out the ballot completely, so no game and no gimmick decides this race instead of Alaskans," Nate Adams, a spokesman for the senator's campaign, said in a statement. He did not clarify if that meant Sullivan favored voters ranking in his or other races.

The senator and his Republican allies, including Trump, have spent months blasting Dan J. Sullivan as a "sham" candidate intent on sowing confusion, a charge the challenger denies.

Elijah Verhagen, a Republican from the interior community of Nenana, worries about GOP voters getting mixed messaging about whether they should use the ranked choice system for the midterms.

"I just very much fear that a lot of people will not rank because they've distrusted it for so long and they're going to be voting — most of them — to get rid of it on the same day," he said. "So it just seems kind of bizarre that we've come down to that."

Advocates say the current system expands voters' choices

Advocates of the current system, such as Alaskans for Better Elections, have been holding events to help voters better understand how it works. Juli Lucky, the group's executive director, said consolidating behind one candidate seems "shortsighted" and doesn't honor "the complexity of voters."

But she also realizes the decision to carry on is the candidate's. And not all voters use the ranking system.

Democrat John Williams withdrew from the U.S. House race after advancing with less than 3% of the vote. He said Democrats urged him to drop out of the race, which features Nick Begich and independent Bill Hill, whom Democrats recently endorsed.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 51 of 57

Williams said he wasn't "bullied" and blamed himself for not campaigning or raising money. He said the current system gives options to voters who "are looking at other people that are down ballot." "The reason they're looking," he said, "is because they don't like what they're seeing" in the major candidates.

Republican Mike Rogers courts Michigan Democrats and Trump voters as GOP hopes to hold the Senate

By THOMAS BEAUMONT and JACQUELINE GANUN Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Mike Rogers stood outside Cody High School on Detroit's west side on a recent drizzly morning and decried Michigan's decline in reading achievement.

"This is the civil rights issue of our lifetime," said the Republican nominee for U.S. Senate in the open-seat race in November.

It had the look and sound of a Democratic campaign policy event, set in one of the nation's Democratic-voting strongholds.

The contest has quickly become a focal point in the fight for Senate control, and Rogers is working to appeal to segments of Michigan's Democratic electorate. It's a key to what the former congressman sees as his path to defeating progressive Democrat Abdul El-Sayed this fall.

Rogers lost his first bid for Senate two years ago by barely 19,000 votes out of more than 5.5 million cast. This time, he is betting he can win over some Democrats and independents, particularly Black and Jewish voters who may be turned off by El-Sayed's positions, which are to the left of his party's establishment, notably on U.S.-Israel relations. At the same time, Rogers must rally Donald Trump loyalists to turn out to vote, even though the president isn't on the ballot.

"He is threading a needle," said Bobby Schostak, Rogers' campaign finance chairman.

Rogers is reaching into heavily Democratic Detroit

Rogers' event outside Cody was part of his promotion of a nonprofit program to boost literacy in Michigan's largest city. A few days later, he promoted a home construction plan in downtown Detroit, where many thousands of lots remain vacant almost 20 years after the Great Recession.

Rogers' campaign sees opportunity in racially and culturally diverse Wayne County, home to Detroit, where roughly three-quarters of the population is Black.

In the 2024 Senate race, then-U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin, a Democrat, won the county by more than a 2-to-1 margin over Rogers, or 264,000 votes. Squeezing even a couple more percentage points there in November could be enough for Rogers to win. His team is optimistic in part because in this year's Democratic primary, U.S. Rep. Haley Stevens beat El-Sayed in the county.

El-Sayed has faced resistance from some of Detroit's older and more establishment-aligned Black Democrats, who favored Stevens' longer-standing ties to Black churches and work on the Obama administration's auto industry rescue plan.

Some local Black activists also faulted El-Sayed, who if elected would be the first Muslim senator, for supporting the "uncommitted" campaign in the 2024 Democratic presidential primary. Some Black Michigan Democrats believe the effort, aimed at pressuring the Biden administration over Gaza, cost then-Vice President Kamala Harris in her campaign as the first Black woman to be a major party presidential nominee. Trump beat Harris by 1.4 percentage points in the state.

Harris plans to campaign with El-Sayed in Michigan on Tuesday, and the Congressional Black Caucus has endorsed El-Sayed.

Democratic leaders have dismissed Rogers' efforts at inroads.

"I don't think anyone's buying it," the state party chair, Curtis Hertel, said of Rogers' efforts to court Black voters in Detroit. "I don't think (Rogers) has a connection in those communities, I think he's going to have a hard time."

Some Jewish Democrats are siding with Rogers

Rogers has also leaned into the defections by some Democratic Jewish voters, an influential group par-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 52 of 57

ticularly in Oakland County, Michigan's second most-populous county.

A day after the August primary, a prominent Democrat, Detroit-area business leader Brian Hermelin, called Schostak, Rogers' campaign finance chairman, asking how he could help. Within 10 days, Rogers was headlining a fundraiser hosted by the Hermelin family and attended by about 130 people, mostly Democrats, Schostak said.

El-Sayed opposes U.S. military aid to Israel and has called the U.S. ally's military campaign in Gaza a "genocide," an accusation rejected by the Israeli and U.S. governments. The former public health official also has angered some Jewish Democrats with statements he made after the March attack on Temple Israel, Michigan's largest Jewish congregation.

El-Sayed's suggestion that "hurt people hurt people" was interpreted by some as justification for the attack. El-Sayed later apologized for his response, but the remark helped push some influential Jewish Democrats toward Rogers.

Oakland County commercial real estate broker Benji Rosenzweig, who is Jewish and tends to vote for Democrats, plans to vote for the Republican.

"As a Jew, my family doesn't feel safe with Abdul El-Sayed," Rosenzweig said.

Michigan is a potential Republican firewall

The seat is open because Democrat Gary Peters is not seeking reelection. If Rogers wins, Republicans would retain their Senate majority even if Democrats pick up as many as four GOP-held seats in November.

Ad spending reflects the stakes. More money has been spent in Michigan — almost \$125 million since the Aug. 4 primary — than in any other state where Republicans have a chance at gaining a seat, according to the advertising-tracking firm AdImpact. That is spending by El-Sayed, Rogers and allied groups.

The race has jumped to the top of the Trump political team's priority list.

No Going Back, a new entity linked to Trump's MAGA Inc. super PAC, early this month spent \$18.5 million to air ads and reserve advertising time in Michigan, the most the group has committed to any 2026 Senate race so far, according to AdImpact.

The ads show the split-screen tack Rogers and his allies are taking in reaching out to atypical Republican voters while working to inspire the Trump base.

Rogers' campaign organization is airing ads, many of them with him direct to camera, promoting him as the son of a middle-class family, a collaborator during his time in Congress and interested in bringing down costs, notably for healthcare.

The super PACs supporting his candidacy are swinging the hammer. For instance, the super PAC associated with GOP Senate leadership is airing ads noting El-Sayed's past association with left-wing streamer Hasan Piker and the candidate's support for abolishing U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Rogers has walked a fine line on Trump

The division of messaging reflects that Rogers' team is wary of Trump's low approval, especially on handling the economy, and wants to be seen among the broad swath of Michigan voters as not beholden to the president.

As he says in one ad, "Michigan comes first."

Yet he has shifted closer to Trump.

After the 2020 election, Rogers was unequivocal that Democrat Joe Biden defeated Trump for the White House, and Rogers he criticized Trump's unfounded claims of widespread fraud. But in July, after Trump's primetime address recycling the disproven claims, Rogers praised Trump's "commitment to transparency."

He has not shied away from the rhetoric that appeals to Trump's supporters, but delivers it in a less edgy tone.

Speaking to the Republican midterm convention in Dallas on the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, Rogers referenced "radical Islamic terrorism." He also said El-Sayed had "chosen Hasan Piker as his running mate."

Piker, who in 2019 said the U.S. "deserved 9/11," had hosted El-Sayed on his livestream and later campaigned with him at rallies during the primary. El-Sayed has since disavowed Piker's controversial statements and ended plans for joint campaigning, but has not categorically repudiated him nor apologized

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 53 of 57

for appearing with him.

Not once during Rogers' convention speech did he mention Trump, as so many speakers did over the two-night event.

Instead, Rogers closed by echoing a quote attributed to Michigan native Todd Beamer, among the passengers aboard United Flight 93 before its crash in Pennsylvania on Sept. 11.

Jabbing a finger toward the audience, Rogers said, "America, let's roll."

Rising gas prices frustrate voters. Trump says it's an 'inexpensive price to pay' for the Iran war

By STEVE PEOPLES, JESSE BEDAYN and JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

EDINBURG, Texas (AP) — Quinten Martinez, pumping gas under a hot South Texas sun, remembers a time when fueling up didn't require difficult decisions.

"Is it going to be groceries this week?" asked the 28-year-old Amazon delivery driver as he watched the numbers tick higher. "Is it gonna be getting gas in our tank to go to work?"

He shook his head when asked about President Donald Trump's assertion last week that higher gas prices are a small price to pay for the war with Iran.

"I don't feel like it's a good trade-off," Martinez said. "I don't feel like this is good for anyone."

Voters across the country, and across the political spectrum, tend to agree.

Interviews with voters in several states, along with a fresh round of national polling, reveal an overwhelming sense of frustration that skyrocketing gas prices — a direct result of Trump's war — are creating serious and sustained financial hardships for America's working class.

The acute concerns are adding to a bad political environment that may be worsening for Trump and his Republican Party as early voting gets underway in the November midterm elections.

Historically, the party holding the White House has suffered major losses in midterms. Today, seven weeks before Election Day, Republican candidates at all levels are struggling with the additional burden of Trump's weak approval ratings, an unpopular foreign conflict and an affordability crisis that Trump and his congressional allies had promised to fix.

But when Trump campaigned in North Carolina on Wednesday, he played down the impact of surging gas prices.

"You have a little higher. It's a very inexpensive price to pay for what we've done," Trump said of the war, which he describes as critical to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. "Remember that. It's a little more. Frankly, even if it was a lot more."

'Gas prices matter,' Republican strategist says

Despite what Trump says, there are few things that may matter more this election year than the price of a gallon of gasoline, according to political operatives in both parties.

Gas prices are moving sharply in the wrong direction at a time of year when drivers typically get some relief. The national average for a gallon of gas reached \$4.48 on Friday, according to AAA, up roughly 17 cents over the last week, 40 cents in a month and \$1.27 from a year ago.

"Gas prices matter because they're one of the few economic indicators voters experience and see in real time," said veteran Republican strategist Chris Wilson. "The price is literally staring them in the face several times a week. So I wouldn't minimize the frustration we're seeing, particularly among working- and middle-class voters."

Interviews with voters this week found bipartisan frustration and disappointment.

Democrats and independents were especially motivated to punish Republicans at the ballot box for their economic hardship, while some of Trump's working-class supporters pledged to support Republicans this fall, even if they weren't happy with the president's leadership on the economy.

Some Republicans say they're disappointed

Dan Lloyd, who voted for Trump, lamented the president's leadership as the 63-year-old carpenter paid \$4.39 a gallon to fill up his pickup truck in Mesa, Arizona.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 54 of 57

"He hurt himself stepping into this," Lloyd said of Trump. "Where's all this oil from Venezuela? I thought we were flush with gas and everything, but no. The American people eat it every time, whether it's interest rates, food, gasoline."

Still, he expects to vote Republican in the midterms.

"I think the Democratic Party has lost its way," Lloyd said. "I just feel like the whole system's on the verge of collapse."

In sweltering Edinburg, Texas, 52-year-old Kristin Jimenez shrugged off the rising price of gas after filling up her Mercedes.

"We've paid the same price under Republican presidents, we've paid this price under Democrat presidents," said Jimenez, a mother who runs a small business. She plans to vote for a Republican in because they're the "lesser of two evils."

She said gas prices aren't part of her calculation.

"We don't mind paying \$8 for a cup of coffee at Starbucks, but we have a problem paying four bucks at the pump?" she said. "Make it make sense."

More than 1,500 miles to the north in central Michigan, 35-year-old Garth Johnson is trying to make ends meet running a deep-cleaning business with several gas-powered vehicles and one machine fueled by diesel, which was \$6.79 a gallon as he filled up his SUV.

Johnson voted for Trump, but doesn't know what he's going to do in November. Johnson doesn't feel qualified to second-guess the president's evaluation of the war, but he's feeling financial pressure in his own life.

"I like a lot of the things he's done," Johnson said, but added "I'm a little guy and I've got to live my life."

Other voters are not so forgiving

Midterm voting was already underway on Friday in Virginia, where 60-year-old engineer Alan Johnson said Trump seems to have "no empathy" for Americans who are struggling financially.

"With the gas prices being what they are and continuing to grow, we've got to do something. Hopefully the Democrats can get into office and turn the ship around," said Johnson, who cast ballots in the morning for Democrats for the U.S. Senate and U.S. House.

In Raleigh, North Carolina, teacher Brittney Bivins sees surging gas prices as evidence that Trump and his Republican Party aren't dealing with the issues that matter most to people like her.

"He really doesn't care about everyday people," the 45-year-old said. "He can afford the gas, but most of us can't. So it feels like he's not even connected to his own people."

Bivins, who described herself as an independent, said she's eager to support Democrats this fall — especially the party's emerging democratic socialist wing.

At a gas station in Lansing, Michigan, Rina Risper spent \$50 on 8 gallons of premium gas.

"When I rolled up I was in shock, actually, and said, well, maybe I should drink water instead of having that \$4.99 bottle of whatever it was I was gonna get," Risper said. She thinks Trump's tariffs will make affordability even worse.

"We're not in Miami. We're in Lansing, Michigan," she said. "It's really going to impact our people."

Most voters think Trump's administration has made economy worse, poll shows

Nationwide, more than three times as many voters say they are falling behind financially as getting ahead, according to a Fox News survey released Wednesday. By a 15 percentage point margin, Democrats are considered the party that would better handle inflation and prices at a time when the cost of living and the economy are voters' top concerns.

The Fox poll found that 61% of voters say gas prices are a major problem for their household, compared with 48% two years ago, while 52% say the same for healthcare costs, compared with 44% in 2024. Majorities also view housing costs and grocery prices as major problems, although neither has increased.

Overall, nearly two-thirds of voters (63%) say the administration has made the economy worse, compared with 52% in September 2025, including one-quarter of Republicans. Only 46% of Republicans say the administration has improved the economy, while about one-quarter don't see an impact.

Back in rural South Texas, an area where Trump's GOP made gains in recent elections, Martinez, the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 55 of 57

Amazon delivery driver, could not contain his frustration.

Trump "likes to tout that we are the best economy in the world," said Martinez, but in more rural towns, "you don't see any of the winning, you don't see any of the ups that he's talking about."

"You just see struggles for day to day life," he said.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 56 of 57

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."

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."

Today in History: September 21, Nairobi shopping mall attack

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, Sept. 21, the 264th day of 2026. There are 101 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 21, 2013, an attack by armed militants in the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya, left 67 people dead and hundreds injured.

Also on this date:

In 1792, the National Convention of France issued a proclamation announcing the abolition of the French monarchy.

In 1898, in response to a letter from 8-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon, the New York Sun newspaper wrote an editorial containing the famous line "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus."

In 1915, Cecil Chubb purchased Stonehenge for £6,600; the last private owner of the site, Chubb donated it to the British people three years later.

In 1922, President Warren Harding signed the Lodge-Fish Resolution, a congressional resolution endorsing the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.

In 1937, "The Hobbit," by J.R.R. Tolkien, was first published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd. of London.

In 1938, a hurricane made U.S. landfall, striking parts of New York and New England while causing widespread damage and claiming some 700 lives.

In 1939, Romanian Prime Minister Armand Călinescu was assassinated by members of the fascist Iron Guard movement.

In 1955, at Yankee Stadium in New York, heavyweight boxer Rocky Marciano completed his undefeated professional career by knocking out Archie Moore in the ninth round of their title fight.

In 1970, "Monday Night Football" made its debut on ABC, with the Cleveland Browns defeating the New York Jets 31-21.

In 1981, the Senate unanimously confirmed the nomination of Sandra Day O'Connor to become the first female justice on the Supreme Court.

In 1989, Hurricane Hugo crashed into South Carolina; the storm was blamed for 56 deaths in the Caribbean and 29 in the United States.

In 2022, Russia's Vladimir Putin ordered a mobilization of reservists for the first time since World War II, nearly seven months after invading Ukraine.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Sept. 21, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 57 of 57

In 2025, Donald Trump praised ally Charlie Kirk as a "great American hero" and "martyr" for freedom as the U.S. president and other leading conservatives took part in a televised tribute in Glendale, Arizona, to the political activist who was shot dead at a Utah speaking appearance Sept. 10.

Today's Birthdays: Producer Jerry Bruckheimer is 83. Musician Don Felder is 79. Author Stephen King is 79. Actor-comedian Bill Murray is 76. Champion race car driver Arie Luyendyk is 73. Filmmaker Ethan Coen is 69. Basketball Hall of Famer Sidney Moncrief is 69. Actor-comedian Dave Coulier is 67. Actor David James Elliott is 66. Actor Nancy Travis is 65. Actor Rob Morrow is 64. Actor Angus Macfadyen is 63. Actor Cheryl Hines is 61. Country singer Faith Hill is 59. Actor Billy Porter is 57. Actor Alfonso Ribeiro is 55. Actor Luke Wilson is 55. Musician Liam Gallagher (Oasis) is 54. Actor Maggie Grace is 43. Actor Joseph Mazzello is 43. Rapper Wale (WAH'-lay) is 42. Singer Jason Derulo is 37. Actor Ben Wang is 29. Cyclist Tadej Pogačar is 28.