

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 1 of 71

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- Runners compete at Deuel Invitational](#)
- [4- Conde National League Bowling](#)
- [5- Warner sweeps Groton Area in volleyball action](#)
- [7- Name Released in Butte County Fatal Crash](#)
- [8- Free Movie Showing Ad](#)
- [9- SD SearchLight: 160 miles of transmission lines planned for eastern SD, costing upward of \\$2 billion](#)
- [10- SD SearchLight: Postal Service's plan to speed up delivery in South Dakota is a 'good first step,' US senator says](#)
- [11- SD SearchLight: Task force: Regional ambulance hubs for South Dakota will take years to establish](#)
- [13- SD SearchLight: Democrats, experts call for revocation of school voucher program under adoption by states](#)
- [14- SD SearchLight: 'Drive them into hell': Trump ponders destruction of Iran at United Nations](#)
- [16- SD SearchLight: Medical groups, patients sue Trump administration over Medicaid work requirements](#)
- [17- SD SearchLight: Trump administration says developers, loggers can kill endangered species](#)
- [18- Weather Pages](#)
- [23- Daily Devotional](#)
- [24- Subscription Form](#)
- [25- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [26- News from the Associated Press](#)

Community Calendar

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.

Groton Daily Independent

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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

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 2 of 71

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.

Easter Bombing Verdict

A Sri Lankan court sentenced 15 men to life in prison yesterday for their roles in the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings, which killed more than 260 people and wounded roughly 500. The verdict follows a nearly five-year trial.

The coordinated suicide bombings targeted three churches and three luxury hotels during Easter services and celebrations across the island nation. Two local militant groups inspired by the Islamic State group were accused of carrying out the attacks; none of those believed to have directly participated survived. In 2021, authorities charged 25 people with 23,270 counts, including murder and conspiracy to commit terrorism. Authorities also arrested a former intelligence chief in February, alleging he had prior knowledge of, and conspired in, the bombings; he remains in custody.

Sri Lanka's Catholic Church has argued the bombings were part of a broader conspiracy extending beyond those identified as perpetrators, though it has not provided evidence supporting the claim.

Meet the Fire Amoeba

Scientists have discovered an amoeba capable of living in extreme heat, once thought inhospitable to complex life, according to a study published yesterday.

The single-celled organism, dubbed the "fire amoeba," was discovered in a geothermal spring at California's Lassen Volcanic National Park. Researchers observed the amoeba continuing to replicate in cultures heated to 145 degrees Fahrenheit—five degrees hotter than scientists had previously seen complex life tolerate. The amoeba withstood temperatures up to 158 degrees by changing shape and forming a protective layer. These adaptations are shared with simpler life-forms that lack a membrane-bound nucleus and can survive at temperatures up to nearly 252 degrees.

The fire amoeba could offer clues for developing heat-resilient crops and drugs, and scientists believe some complex life-forms may survive at even higher temperatures.

MIT Dethrones Princeton

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology unseated Princeton as the nation's top college yesterday, ending the Ivy League school's 15-year run leading US News & World Report's annual rankings.

This year's rankings introduced a criterion comparing graduates' earnings by major four years after college with those who studied the same major nationwide. The measure includes only federal financial aid recipients, part of an effort to minimize the impact preexisting wealth and family connections could have on post-college earnings. It replaces a metric that measured graduates' federal loan debt.

The rankings have faced scrutiny over their methodology and reliance on universities' self-reported data. Dozens of prestigious law and medical schools—including Harvard, Yale, and Stanford—stopped submitting data in 2022 and 2023. Columbia University was the only top 100 undergraduate institution that did not submit data directly this year; it ranked No. 12.

Higher education faces a broader demographic squeeze, with lower birth rates projected to contribute to a 13% decline in enrollment by 2041.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 3 of 71

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Actress Hayden Panettiere's death ruled an accidental overdose caused by a mixture of drugs, including fentanyl.

Ella Langley's "Choosin' Texas" breaks record for longest reign atop the Billboard Hot 100 after 23 weeks at No. 1, surpassing Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas Is You".

"Looksmaxxing" influencer Clavicular facing rape and drugging charges related to alleged offenses that occurred in 2025; arraignment is set for Oct. 14.

Science & Technology

Anthropic and OpenAI release new, cheaper AI models weeks after tech leaders call for industry-wide slowdown.

OpenAI forms math advisory committee after it claims its models solved over 100 open math problems.

Scientists suggest Earth became cool enough for RNA-based life about 4.3 billion years ago.

Poor sleep in late pregnancy is linked to increased obesity risk in children; the link was strongest in male infants and babies born at term.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 -0.0%, Dow -0.4%, Nasdaq +0.5%), and oil prices fall after Trump administration reports a positive meeting with Iranian representatives in New York.

DoorDash to pay \$131.5M to resolve New York City probe into compliance with pay laws; settlement includes \$12.3M for drivers who were underpaid or paid late.

McDonald's to host first investor day in nearly three years today after unveiling its new global growth plan this summer; the stock has fallen 18% year over year.

Politics & World Affairs

Trump administration to remove more than 750,000 enrollees from the Affordable Care Act insurance markets, claiming some were not real people or were receiving subsidies they did not qualify for.

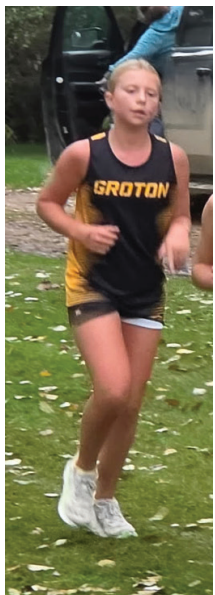
President Donald Trump signs new security agreement with Denmark and Greenland, expanding US military presence on the island while preserving Danish sovereignty.

Hurricane Polo grows into a Category 5 storm off Mexico's southwestern coast; it is not expected to make landfall but could cause heavy rainfall and flooding.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 4 of 71

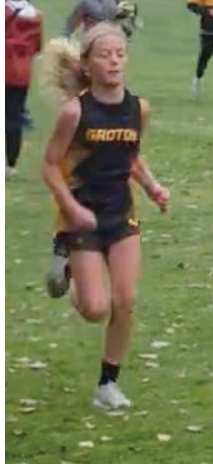
Runners compete at Deuel Invitational



Haley Erickson
(Courtesy Photo)



Hazel Hill
(Courtesy Photo)



Railey Mulder
(Courtesy Photo)

Groton Area runners competed in a large field Monday at the cross country meet held at Clear Lake, with several Tigers recording personal- or season-best times.

Riley Shellenberger led the Groton boys in the 5,000-meter varsity race, placing 13th in 18 minutes, 41.8 seconds. The sophomore's time was listed as a personal best.

Grayden "Grady" Zeck placed 50th for the Tigers with a season-best time of 21:54.6, while Tate Johnson finished 55th in 22:11.9.

In the girls 5,000-meter varsity race, Ryelle Gilbert paced Groton Area with an 11th-place finish. Gilbert, a junior, recorded a season-best time of 21:35.7. Ashlynn Warrington also posted a season-best performance, finishing 20th in 23:01.3.

Logan Clocksene represented Groton Area in the boys 3,000-meter race, finishing 51st with a personal-best time of 17:20.7.

Groton had four runners in the girls 3,000-meter middle school division and finished fourth in the team standings with 40 points. Hazel Hill led the Tigers with a fourth-place finish, running a personal-best 12:48.5.

Anna Oswald placed 20th with a personal-best 14:37.0, Haley Erickson was 26th with a personal-best 15:24.5, and Railey Mulder finished 33rd with a personal-best 16:31.7.

Conde National League Bowling

Sept. 14 Team Standings: Braves 3, Stooges 2, Mets 2, Pirates 2, Cubs 2, Giants 1

Men's High Games: Butch Farmen 198, Caleb Furney 165, Porter Johnson 162

Men's High Series: Butch Farmen 506, Porter Johnson 460, Skip Kettering 425

Women's High Games: Suzie Easthouse 173, Michelle Johnson 173, Sandy Hoops 169

Women's High Series: Suzie Easthouse 481, Michelle Johnson 444, Joyce Walter 432

Sept. 21 Team Standings: Stooges 5, Pirates 5, Cubs 5, Braves 4, Mets 3, Giants 2

Men's High Games: Chad Johnson 223, Austin Schuelke 214, Porter Johnson 161

Men's High Series: Austin Schuelke 533, Chad Johnson 517, Porter Johnson 432

Women's High Games: Suzie Easthouse 171, Michelle Johnson 163, Joyce Walter 157

Women's High Series: Joyce Walter 426, Michelle Johnson 414, Suzie Easthouse 398

Warner sweeps Groton Area in volleyball action



Taryn Traphagen goes high in the air for the kill attempt. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

The Warner Monarchs handed Groton Area a setback Tuesday night, sweeping all three matches, including a 3-0 victory in the varsity contest.

Warner won the varsity sets 25-19, 25-16 and 25-15 to improve to 15-1 on the season. Groton Area fell to 6-8.

The opening set was competitive, with eight ties and four lead changes. Warner eventually broke away from a 15-15 tie with five straight points to take a 20-15 advantage and went on to win 25-19.

The Monarchs controlled much of the second set, using an eight-point run in the middle of the set to build their advantage before finishing off a 25-16 victory.

Groton stayed with Warner early in the third set, which featured four ties and three lead changes. The Monarchs gained the upper hand at 9-6 and gradually pulled away for the 25-15 win.

Taryn Traphagen led Groton Area offensively with eight kills, along with one solo block and two assisted blocks. Tevan Hanson had four kills, one ace serve, two assists and 10 digs. Chesney Weber finished with three kills, 13 assists, six digs and one assisted block.

Sydney Locke had one kill and 13 digs, Kella Tracy had one kill and one assisted block, and Abby Fjeldheim added one kill.

Warner was led offensively by Kya Townsend with nine kills. Jaycee Jung recorded eight kills, nine digs, one solo block, two assisted blocks and an ace serve.

Courtney Leidholt had four kills, one ace, eight digs and 18 assists. Miah Leidholt had four kills, Kaydee Mackner finished with three kills and two aces, and Olivia Marcuson added three kills and four blocks.

Keira Steger had four ace serves and 11 digs, Claire Bakeberg recorded three aces and Brynn Hill had two aces.

Groton Area coach Chelsea Hanson said the Tigers struggled to establish any rhythm, particularly from the service line.

"When you miss that many serves, it's so hard to get into any type of rhythm at all," Hanson said. "I thought they served more aggressively, which led us to pass poorly, or we weren't putting the sets where we needed them. We weren't distributing the ball well."

Groton committed 10 serving errors in the varsity match, while Warner had 11.

Hanson said Groton's passing problems also carried over into the rest of its offense.

"We didn't pass the ball well, but we also didn't make the next ball better," she said. "If our pass was bad, then we didn't better the set, and if our set was bad, we didn't better the hit. That's just the type of stuff that we have to do."

Groton finished with 18 kills in the match.

Hanson said Traphagen provided one of Groton's brighter offensive spots but the Tigers were unable to get her involved enough, particularly during the second set.

"Taryn led with eight, and we didn't get her the ball enough in the second set," Hanson said.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 6 of 71



Sydney Locke gets ready to serve the ball.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Tevan Hanson is on the attack. (Photo

by Paul Kosel)

Despite the loss, Hanson said playing a strong schedule is intended to prepare the Tigers for the second half of the season.

"We knew what the first half of our season was going to look like, and the second half of our season, there are still opportunities for us to have a lot of good things happen," she said. "We're kind of at a crossroads now. We have to go out and prove that we've been playing good teams and that we belong in the conversation."

Warner has won 15 of its first 16 matches, dropping only one set in those 15 victories. The Monarchs' lone match loss came against Wagner.

Warner also won the junior varsity match, 25-11 and 27-25.

The Monarchs used a nine-point run in the opening set to build a 21-8 lead on the way to the 25-11 victory.

Groton made the second set much more competitive. Warner led 11-7 before the Tigers rallied. Groton tied the set at 20, 21 and 22 before taking a 23-22 lead. Warner eventually tied the score at 24 and again at 25 before scoring the final two points for the 27-25 win.

Abby Fjeldheim led Groton with five kills. Makenna Krause had three kills, four ace serves and one assisted block. Kinley Sandness had one kill, Tori Schuster and Neely Althoff each had an ace serve, and Brooklyn Spanier recorded an assisted block.

Townsend led Warner's junior varsity with seven kills and three aces. Mackner had six kills and two aces, while Courtney Leidholt finished with five kills and an ace.

Groton had seven serving errors and Warner had nine in the JV match.

Warner completed the sweep with a 25-18, 25-9 victory in the C-team match.

Maycee Moody led Groton with four kills. Charli Jacobsen had two kills, while Mya Moody and Arianna Dinger each recorded one kill. Brynlee Dunker had one kill, one block and an ace, while Sophia Fliehs added an ace serve.

Adyson Vetter led Warner with seven kills and two aces. Kollins Knuppe had five kills and an ace, while Ally Schwab recorded five ace serves and three kills.

Groton Area will remain at home Thursday when the Tigers host Mobridge-Pollock and will host Langford on Friday.

Name Released in Butte County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle motorcycle fatal crash

Where: U.S. 212 at mile marker 26, 11 miles east of Belle Fourche, South Dakota

When: 7:07 a.m., Saturday, September 19, 2026

Driver 1: Billy B. Reitz, 55-year-old male from Newell, South Dakota, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2007 Harley-Davidson Electra Glide

Helmet Used: No

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

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

The investigation is ongoing. All information released is preliminary.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 8 of 71



Free Movie Showing

7:00pm

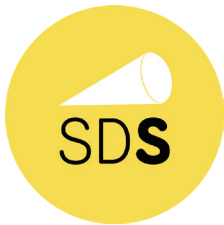
Wednesday, September 23

Groton C&MA Church

706 N. Main St.

Popcorn & Snacks will be provided

***A movie for younger kids will be shown downstairs at the church at the same time.**



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

160 miles of transmission lines planned for eastern SD, costing upward of \$2 billion

State's Public Utilities Commission is considering project applications

BY JOSHUA HAIAR

South Dakota regulators are considering permit applications for projects that would add about 160 miles of electrical transmission lines along the eastern edge of the state.

Transmission lines carry high-voltage power over long distances.

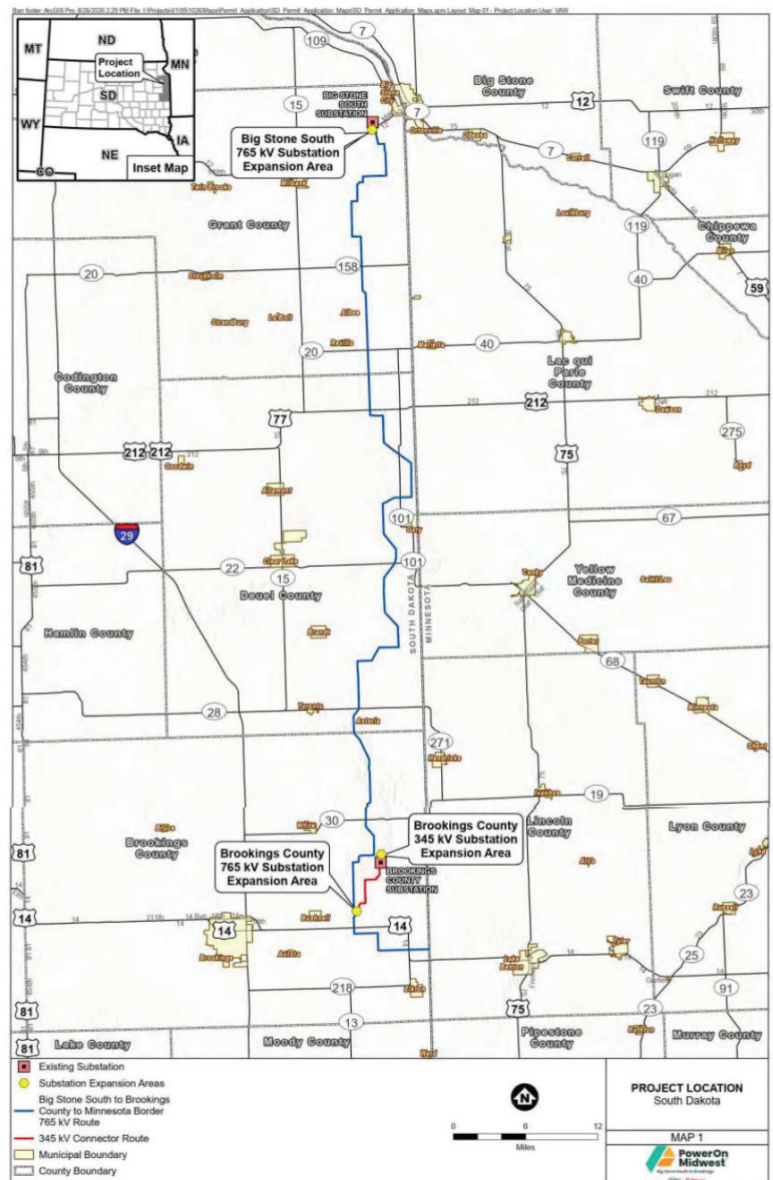
The larger proposal is part of the PowerOn Midwest Project, from companies including Xcel Energy and Otter Tail Power. It calls for about 90 miles of 765-kilovolt transmission line in South Dakota through Grant, Deuel and Brookings counties. It would run south from the Big Stone South Substation in Grant County, in the northeastern corner of the state, and turn into Minnesota at a point east of Brookings.

It also includes expansions at the Big Stone and Brookings County substations and about 5 miles of 345-kilovolt transmission line. Further segments would be constructed across southern Minnesota.

The companies estimate construction of the South Dakota segment would cost between \$1.3 and \$1.7 billion, with completion in 2034.

The route includes a 250-foot-wide right-of-way for the 765-kilovolt line and a 150-foot-wide right-of-way for the 345-kilovolt line, according to the project application. The 765-kilovolt line has landowner access agreements, known as easements, for 81 of the required 274 parcels in South Dakota, or 30%. The 345-kilovolt line has 7 of 19, or 37%.

The second proposal, filed by Otter Tail Power Company, is the Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Project. That proposal would run 71 miles of 345-kilovolt transmission line in South Dakota from the Big Stone South



Maps show the routes of proposed transmission-line projects in eastern South Dakota. Hover over the PDF and use the controls to see the second page. (Courtesy of the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission)

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 10 of 71

Substation north through Grant and Roberts counties into North Dakota. The project would continue to a substation west of Fargo.

The line would have a 150-foot right of way, and the South Dakota segment is estimated to cost \$191 million to \$229 million with completion in 2034. The project application says the company "will work collaboratively with landowners to obtain necessary rights through voluntary agreements." The application does not say how many agreements have been obtained.

The companies say the projects are intended to improve reliability and increase transmission capacity for more power plants and customers consuming large amounts of electricity, including "data centers and other industrial demands." South Dakota has some small data centers but none of the larger hyperscale data centers proliferating across the country, including in North Dakota and Minnesota.

Public input meetings for transmission line projects

The South Dakota Public Utilities Commission has scheduled the following meetings to receive public input about proposed transmission-line projects.

PowerOn Midwest:

Tuesday, Oct. 20, 6 p.m. — Brookings Inn, 2500 E. Sixth St., Brookings.

Wednesday, Oct. 21, noon — Milbank School Theater, 1001 E. Park Ave., Milbank.

Thursday, Oct. 22, 5:30 p.m. — Clear Lake Community Center, 218 Third Ave. S., Clear Lake.

Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison:

Wednesday, Oct. 21, 5:30 p.m. — Milbank School Theater, 1001 E. Park Ave., Milbank.

Thursday, Oct. 22, 11 a.m. — Rosholt Community Center, 19 E. Main St., Rosholt.

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

Postal Service's plan to speed up delivery in South Dakota is a 'good first step,' US senator says

BY SETH TUPPER

The U.S. Postal Service announced plans Tuesday to improve delivery speed in South Dakota, following years of complaints about service in the state.

Beginning Jan. 1, a Sioux Falls processing and distribution center will become a regional center thanks to new machinery. The plant will handle more of the mail leaving and arriving in South Dakota without the need for processing out of state.

The change is expected to reduce travel time for some letters by one to two days.

"We are pleased that we can make these modernization improvements for our South Dakota customers, and we believe they will see noticeable changes," the Postal Service said in a news release.

The release attributed slower delivery in South Dakota during the past few years to "unintended service issues" resulting from system-wide reforms.

U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds, R-South Dakota, said in a speech last month that his office has received thousands of complaints about mail service. He said his staff conducted a test by sending mail from his Rapid City office to Pierre, which is a distance of about 170 miles by car. Rounds said the letter's 10-day journey took it to Postal Service plants in Denver, then to Des Moines, Iowa, and to Fargo, North Dakota, before it was delivered in Pierre.

"This letter traveled over 1,800 miles across four different states just to end up back in South Dakota," Rounds said.

The senator has exerted pressure on the Postal Service for improvement. He was part of an effort that convinced the service last year to keep some processing capabilities at its Huron plant, he introduced legislation last month to eliminate bonuses for Postal Service executives, and he placed a hold in June on Senate confirmations of Postal Service Board of Governors nominees that he pledged to keep in place

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 11 of 71

until "service returns to levels at least equal to the days of the Pony Express."

Rounds' office issued a written statement Tuesday from Rounds about the Sioux Falls announcement.

"This is a good first step in improving our mail service, and I hope it will begin to reduce delivery times in our state," the statement said.

The statement also said Rounds is looking forward to additional recommendations from the Postal Service Office of the Inspector General "in the coming days," following an investigation Rounds requested.

Rounds previously said he had several conditions for lifting his hold on the Board of Governors nominees, including a commitment from the Postal Service to fully implement all findings from the inspector general investigation.

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.

Task force: Regional ambulance hubs for South Dakota will take years to establish

Permanent advisory council will be needed to monitor issues in rural areas, group says

BY JOHN HULT

Regionalizing ambulance services would preserve them for rural areas and allow the state to guarantee a basic level of coverage, but the state would still need to pick up some of the cost of that guarantee, members of a legislative task force said this week.

What regional service looks like and what the state might have to pay to prop it up are still open questions.

Those were the takeaways from Monday's meeting of the Emergency Medical Services Funding Task Force in Pierre, where 11 lawmakers gathered for the third of four scheduled meetings. They also concluded that fixing the system will be a multi-year commitment requiring a permanent advisory board.

The task force is the second study group formed in as many years to address ambulance service sustainability in South Dakota in the face of Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements too low to pay for the service, particularly in sparsely populated parts of the state.

Much of the state relies on a dwindling pool of volunteer labor, as well as fewer young people willing or financially able to commit to the hundreds of training hours required for emergency medical technician certification.

In February, lawmakers passed bills to create legal protections for nurses who care for patients in an ambulance and to let police officers and firefighters drive ambulances if local providers deem that necessary. Those bills were recommended by the first task force.

Sen. Tim Reed has chaired both task forces. After Monday's meeting, which ended with votes creating subcommittees to study regionalization needs and potential revenue models in collaboration with the governor's office, the Brookings Republican said he sees a path forward during the 2027 legislative session.

The first step will be to create an advisory council of stakeholders in and out of government to oversee the regionalization process.

"We know it's going to be a big lift to get this done," Reed said. "So it's going to take an ongoing group."

Josie Harms, spokeswoman for Gov. Larry Rhoden, said the governor's office looks forward to working with the task force "to establish a sustainable EMS system for South Dakota."

Regionalization remains focus

The work of reforming rural ambulance services got an injection of federal support over the summer.

The state Department of Health signed a contract in August worth up to \$719,000 with the South Dakota Foundation for Medical Care for "statewide planning, development, implementation, and oversight of Regional EMS Hub models." The money comes from a \$189 million pool of federal funding awarded to the state for use over the next five years through 2025's One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

That Rural Health Transformation Program money can't be used to supplant funding for existing projects, needs a "transformative" element, and must be used for "sustainable" projects, Department of Health Secretary Melissa Magstadt told the task force members on Monday.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 12 of 71

"Anything that we bring forward has to come through that sort of lens," Magstadt said.

Magstadt said her department is prepared to work with lawmakers and an advisory council on other proposals to help shepherd through a regional hub system.

Regionalization should save money through efficiencies, said Rep. Drew Peterson, R-Salem, though it will take time to figure out how much. Even so, he said, the state will need a long-term revenue source to guarantee a minimum level of service.

If the state sets those standards, Peterson said, counties and cities can't be the ones forced to pay for them.

"I do not want to have an unfunded mandate being sent down to these local governments," Peterson said.

Ambulance services are funded through a mix of reimbursements for services through private insurance and public insurance like Medicare and Medicaid, limited local government funding in some jurisdictions, fundraising and grant money.

Possible revenue sources

Sen. Ernie Otten, R-Tea, hopes the state can get creative with its federal rural health dollars to ease the transition to a regional model, and that the savings from regionalization make rural ambulance service more affordable.

The committee also discussed more treatment on-site and updating state law to make sure rural ambulance services can bill for doing it, and mandating a certain level of reimbursement from private insurers for out-of-network ambulance services.

Even so, Otten said the task force needs to come to Pierre next year prepared to talk about new income sources to "backfill" gaps that remain after regionalization.

Otten asked the state Department of Tourism to prepare a revenue estimate for a \$1 nightly fee on lodging, short-term rentals and campground stays, with the fee applied for up to five nights. Such fees would raise around \$7.1 million, according to a document shared at Monday's task force meeting.

A fee that small wouldn't be "onerous," Otten said. Even if people look at their hotel bill and get "a little miffed" about an ambulance fee, Otten said he wouldn't expect people to balk at paying "a lousy dollar."

He also mentioned a tax on vapor products like e-cigarettes. Those are taxed at the standard 4.2% state sales tax rate now, but lawmakers passed a bill to license vape retailers this year.

A tax on those products could "easily generate \$3 million," Otten said.

"At the end of the day, we're going to have to just come to the realization that the state has to pick up a lot of this," said Otten, who later told South Dakota Searchlight that guaranteeing ambulance service in rural areas is "more than a necessity."

Other revenue sources

Rep. John Hughes said the state needs to be willing to engage with the state's three major healthcare systems — Sanford, Avera and Monument — on financial support.

"I can't think of any entities with more of a vested interest in this," said Hughes, who argued that supporting ambulance services would be a better use of revenue for the systems than "building another building" or marketing.

"That would be improving the human condition, in my opinion," said Hughes, referencing marketing language used by Sanford Health.

Hughes had similar comments at a previous task force meeting, prompting an appearance on Monday from Tim Rave, the president and CEO of the South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations. In remarks prepared as a response to Hughes' August remarks, Rave told the task force that hospital revenues in much of the state are razor thin, that hospitals already cover millions in charity care, and that many of the patients transported by ambulances struggle to pay their bills.

Subsidizing ambulance services with hospital dollars would ultimately hurt patient care, Rave said.

"Hospitals are not an unlimited piggy bank," Rave said.

Hughes said he doesn't want a mandate, but rather "a conversation" about the role health systems might play in making sure people who fall ill or experience an emergency in a far-flung area can get help in time.

Hospitals already offer some support for emergency medical services in parts of the state, said Rep. Nick Fosness, R-Britton. Fosness is a healthcare administrator, and said one healthcare system in his district pays nurses double their hourly rate to ride along on ambulance calls when the ambulance operator doesn't have an available volunteer with advanced lifesaving skills. That same system "does the laundry" for the ambulance service, helps recruit new EMS volunteers and offers training.

Such steps are "just a necessity" to serve patients in some places, Fosness said.

"It's a practical thing, to keep the service and to keep patient safety number one," he said. "That's what we all are doing across this great state, trying to keep patients safe and move the right patient to the right services."

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

Democrats, experts call for revocation of school voucher program under adoption by states

BY SHAUNEEN MIRANDA

WASHINGTON — Education experts and advocates on Tuesday urged Congress to repeal an incoming national school voucher program over concerns that it will divert critical funds away from public schools to private institutions.

U.S. Sen. Mazie Hirono convened a Democratic-led panel to sound the alarm on the sweeping program, which marks a key pillar of President Donald Trump's and congressional Republicans' efforts surrounding school choice.

The Hawaii Democrat blasted the federal initiative, set to launch in early 2027, as a "tax break for wealthy families whose children are already enrolled in private schools, disguised as support for education."

At least 30 states have already opted in to the program, which allocates up to \$1,700 in federal tax credits for people donating to organizations that provide K-12 scholarships for education-related services at private or public schools.

The program is baked into the GOP's "big, beautiful" bill that Trump signed into law in 2025. The U.S. Treasury Department is slated to release proposed regulations by the end of this month.

Repeal attempts

Hirono and Arizona Democratic U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly, joined by more than two dozen of their colleagues, introduced legislation in April to repeal the program.

Wisconsin Democratic U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore introduced a companion bill in June with Reps. Suzanne Bonamici of Oregon, Maxwell Frost of Florida, Adelita Grijalva of Arizona, Mark Pocan of Wisconsin and dozens more original cosponsors.

But any measure to roll back the program faces a dismal path in the GOP-controlled House and Senate.

The umbrella term "school choice" centers on alternative programs to a student's assigned public school. Opponents say these efforts drain critical funds and resources from school districts, while advocates argue the initiatives are necessary for parents who are dissatisfied with their local public schools.

Augustus Mays, vice president of partnerships and engagement at the nonprofit policy and advocacy group EdTrust, said "our conclusion is clear: This is not free money or a targeted investment in students with the greatest needs."

"It is an uncapped federal tax subsidy that steers public resources toward private education with few safeguards," he added.

Mays pointed out that "a voucher does not guarantee access or quality," noting that private schools are not bound by the same civil rights protections and obligations extended under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 14 of 71

Diverting funds?

The Education and Treasury departments have said that the credit “does not divert money from local or state taxes, which make up the large majority of school funding,” according to a fact sheet.

The agencies have also pointed to examples of education expenses the scholarships can be used for, such as “tuition for students to attend private schools of choice, tutoring at public schools, and support services for students with disabilities.”

But Jessica Levin, litigation director at the advocacy group Education Law Center, said it’s a “major misconception” that “this is free money without cost to public schools” or that “currently underfunded public schools will benefit from the voucher program.”

“Tax credit voucher programs are funded with public dollars because the money sent to scholarship granting organizations is money that would otherwise have been paid in state or federal taxes and gone into the state or federal treasury,” Levin said.

Trump administration defends tax credit

Meanwhile, Savannah Newhouse, a spokesperson for the Education Department, defended the tax credit, saying opponents of the program are “resorting to fearmongering by falsely labeling it a voucher because the phrase ‘we don’t want families to have more options to succeed in education’ isn’t a winning message,” in a statement shared with States Newsroom.

“The truth is that this provision does not take a single dollar away from public schools because it is funded by the generosity of private donors that supplement — not supplant — existing education dollars,” she added.

“A word of advice: resisting change to the failed status quo in education makes you part of the problem, not the solution.”

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

‘Drive them into hell’: Trump ponders destruction of Iran at United Nations

BY ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump faces a “big decision” to make a deal with Iran or “annihilate” the country, he told the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday.

During a 37-minute speech to his international counterparts including Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, in New York City, Trump asked, “Will a deal be made with Iran that lets them rebuild and create a far greater country than it ever was before?”

“Or do I annihilate the Islamic Republic and do it quickly ... Do I drive them into hell with no chance of survival and no hope of future greatness or generations?” he said.

Speaking at the annual gathering aimed at promoting multilateral discussion among 193 member nations, Trump suggested Iranian leaders were waiting to see the results of the approaching midterm elections for control of Congress before any major negotiating decision.

“I believe we’ll make a deal right after the election because it doesn’t make sense for them not to,” he said. “They’re waiting to see how I do in the midterm election. What they don’t realize is that I’m not running.”

Iran tied to GOP midterm woes

Republicans running to maintain the majority in Congress in November face a difficult task amid sinking public support for Trump’s costly, months-long war in Iran.

The Pentagon has confirmed 19 U.S. troops have died in the conflict, though The Washington Post has reported a more accurate count is either 22 or 23. Roughly 830 service members have been injured.

And the war has spiked the price of fuel to record levels.

Trump’s approval rating hit a record low of 32%, according to the latest polling figures published Monday by Reuters/Ipsos.

Diesel hit a new high Tuesday, reaching a national average of \$6.52 per gallon, according to AAA. Gasoline hovered at \$4.47 a gallon.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 15 of 71

The cost of energy commodities and services, a main driver of current inflation, is up 16.3% over last year, according to the latest U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics consumer price index.

Iran maintains its stranglehold of the Strait of Hormuz, a major global petroleum trade passageway, amid a U.S. naval blockade. And Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen are now targeting the Bab al-Mandab Strait, a chokepoint for Saudi Arabian oil exports.

The U.S. Senate is expected to vote on yet another War Powers Resolution this week aimed at curbing Trump's military actions in Iran. Seven House Republicans joined Democrats Sept. 16 in passing a measure to stop Trump's unilateral decision-making in Iran.

'They want to talk'

Trump told reporters just before 2 p.m. Eastern that U.S. officials had met with Iranian leaders after his speech for what he described as "a very good meeting." He did not provide further detail, according to reporters who traveled with him to New York City.

Speaking to reporters just before 1 p.m. Eastern, Trump said he believed "a settlement is going to be reached."

"They want to talk to us," Trump said. "They have been talking to us even today. They've been talking to us. The relationship is developing, I'd say. But we can't let them (have a nuclear weapon). They understand that. ... And there's a price to pay for that."

White House pool

Trump's trip to New York City also comes as major U.S. media organizations refused to distribute video, audio or photos of the president after he banned CNN, MS Now and Politico from the White House. The three organizations have sued on First Amendment grounds.

He told reporters Tuesday he has a right "to clean out fake news," which he also described as "dangerous."

When pressed by a reporter on how the media outlets are "dangerous," Trump responded: "When they make statements about the war, when they make false statements, false stories, and they don't have sources but they say they do, it's very dangerous for our country."

Iran's Permanent Mission to the UN did not immediately respond to States Newsroom's request for comment. An email address listed for Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs appeared to be inoperable.

Upon arrival at the United Nations this week, Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araqchi criticized what he called a "cowardly" war launched by the U.S. in conjunction with Israel on Feb. 28, according to a translation posted on his ministry's website.

"This year, after the war that took place, it is natural that this rostrum will be a place to express the oppression of the Iranian people, the martyrs of Iran, the martyrs of Minab School, and at the head of them, our martyred leader and leader," Abbas Araqchi said, referring to early strikes during the war that killed Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, his family members and over 100 elementary school children.

Iranian security forces killed thousands of Iranians in January as part of a crackdown on protests against the current government, according to Human Rights Watch and other advocates and observers.

Threat repeated

Trump's speech Tuesday was not the first time he's threatened a choice between striking peace with or heavily attacking Iran.

Just before a short-lived ceasefire between Iran and the U.S. took effect in April, Trump threatened "a whole civilization will die" if Iran did not cooperate with U.S. demands.

The comment drummed up vocal opposition from some Republicans.

Speaking about another military conflict, Trump said his Board of Peace was working to stabilize the Palestinian territory of the Gaza Strip following three years of bombardment by the Israeli government. When listing the countries involved in that effort, he twice mispronounced Kazakhstan.

The board claimed in a statement in July it reached an agreement for the "COMPLETE DISARMAMENT" of Hamas, the militant organization that attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, though the conflict remains ongoing.

Trump highlighted in his Tuesday remarks to global leaders the 250th anniversary of the signing of the

Declaration of Independence, and claimed the U.S. "is stronger today than ever before." He repeated familiar refrains on domestic policies, including his immigration agenda and crime statistics in the nation's capital.

He also briefly mentioned he would require federal documents to use the term "super intelligence" in place of "artificial intelligence." Trump has ardently defended the use of AI without guardrails in recent weeks after tech leaders issued a warning to slow its development.

The White House pointed States Newsroom to Trump's comments to the press following the speech.

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

Medical groups, patients sue Trump administration over Medicaid work requirements

Leading medical organizations argue the requirements will threaten people's coverage and care

BY NADA HASSANEIN

Medicaid enrollees from five states and leading medical organizations filed a lawsuit Friday challenging new Medicaid work requirements.

The broad tax and spending law that President Donald Trump signed last summer, known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, established work, school or community service requirements for low-income adults who receive Medicaid under expansion provisions and waiver programs across 44 states. The law exempts people who are medically frail from work requirements, but the lawsuit argues a new administration rule severely restricts who qualifies.

Plaintiffs in the lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland include Medicaid enrollees from five states — Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and North Carolina.

They also include the American College of Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine, Doctors for America, the New Hampshire Medical Society, the New Hampshire Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the city of Columbus. The National Health Law Program and the Democracy Forward Foundation are representing the plaintiffs.

"Creating barriers to healthcare coverage for the most vulnerable needlessly puts people's lives at risk and inevitably drives up the cost of care for everyone," Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein said in a news release. "These are folks who should be focused on getting the help and care they desperately need, not overcoming even more obstacles."

The federal government in June issued a rule that specifies "medical frailty" exemptions from the work requirements. Those include people who are blind or disabled, or have any physical or developmental disability that interferes with daily living; people with substance use disorders or disabling mental disorders; or those with "serious or complex" medical conditions. People who fall in these categories still must prove that their conditions hinder their ability to work or participate in community engagement.

Republicans argue that work requirements would push people into the workforce and allow them to come off government aid. Research shows the majority of Medicaid recipients already work or are in school.

The plaintiffs argue that the new designations are narrow and that work or exemption verification processes will create red tape that threatens Medicaid coverage for people with serious or chronic health conditions. Those who could be harmed under the new rule include people with cancer, diabetes, HIV, substance use disorders and other behavioral health conditions, the lawsuit argues.

Individuals represented in the lawsuit have health conditions ranging from autism spectrum disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, bipolar disorder, severe vision impairments, HIV and narcolepsy.

Work requirements will be costly for cities and localities that provide public health and emergency care services, the plaintiffs argue, as many people may lose coverage.

"When they (cities and localities) provide services for residents who lose their Medicaid coverage, they do so without compensation," the lawsuit reads.

Medical groups are concerned the reporting burdens will cause interruptions in care and coverage for low-income, vulnerable adults.

"We should not and must not be implementing policies that place this already vulnerable population at increased risk of interrupted treatment, disrupted coverage, or losing healthcare access altogether," said Dr. Jan K. Carney, president of the American College of Physicians.

Stateline reporter Nada Hassanein can be reached at nhassanein@stateline.org.

This story was originally produced by Stateline, which is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit news network which includes South Dakota Searchlight, and is supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity.

Nada Hassanein is a health care reporter for Stateline with a focus on inequities.

Trump administration says developers, loggers can kill endangered species

Memo says animals can be killed as long as killing is not the main 'purpose' of an action

BY ALEX BROWN

The Trump administration's top wildlife official issued a directive last week that expands a recent rollback of endangered species protections much further than the feds had told the public.

Individuals and industries may kill endangered animals in the course of logging projects, developments and other activities, it said — so long as the activity's purpose isn't killing species.

The memo issued by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Brian Nesvik is the most drastic move yet in the Trump administration's campaign to limit the scope of the Endangered Species Act.

Wildlife advocates and experts said the nation's bedrock wildlife conservation law would offer few safeguards under the new federal guidelines.

"Unless you're wearing a T-shirt that says, 'I'm here to draw the blood of endangered species,' you're basically off the hook," said Brett Hartl, government affairs director with the Center for Biological Diversity, a conservation nonprofit. "Wink, wink, nudge, nudge, go crazy, we're not gonna prosecute you."

Chris Servheen, who served as grizzly bear recovery coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for 35 years, said the agency's current approach to the endangered species law is "ridiculously extreme."

"It's essentially going to be a meaningless law, and it will have no protection whatsoever for species," he said. "It's like taking the four wheels off your car and saying it's still your car."

Earlier this year, the Fish and Wildlife Service and other federal agencies finalized a rule excluding the destruction of habitat from the definition of "harm" covered by the law. As long as chopping trees or draining a wetland didn't directly kill animals, the feds said, those actions were legal even if they led to a species' demise.

Now, Nesvik is instructing wildlife officials that even the direct killing of endangered animals does not constitute an illegal "take" as long as the action was not "intentionally directed at a particular animal or animals." Its instructions to staff on how to implement the new rule take effect immediately.

"A vessel that inadvertently strikes a whale has not taken it, because the vessel's course was not set against the whale," he wrote. "Felling a tree is not a take of the bats roosting in it unless the tree is felled for the purpose of killing or capturing them."

The memo could unravel a longstanding framework in which developers and other industries undergo an environmental analysis for their projects' impacts to endangered species, and obtain permits accounting for that harm. Wildlife advocates warned that industries using the agency's new directive to forgo permits may still face citizen lawsuits, and a new administration could reinstate the previous interpretation of the law.

The Fish and Wildlife Service forwarded a Stateline request for comment to the Department of the Interior, which did not grant an interview request.

The memo, sent last Monday to agency staff across the country, quickly raised alarms after it was leaked to the public.

"This is an incredibly sneaky and disingenuous way of going about things," said Ben Levitan, senior at-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 18 of 71

torney with the biodiversity defense program at Earthjustice, a legal conservation nonprofit. "They led everyone to believe they were doing one thing with the rescission of the definition of harm, and now they've issued a memo saying, 'What we actually meant was this.'"

A coalition of attorneys general, tribes and environmental groups have filed lawsuits challenging the Trump administration's rollbacks to the Endangered Species Act. Advocates said the Nesvik memo will open up a new battle ground in the ongoing legal fight, but it's too early to say if that will come in the form of separate lawsuits.

Jane Davenport, senior attorney at Defenders of Wildlife, a conservation nonprofit, noted that the "harm" rule and Nesvik's memo draw heavily from the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia's dissent in a landmark 1995 case. In a 6-3 decision, the Supreme Court ruled that habitat destruction constitutes harm to wildlife under the Endangered Species Act. But Scalia disagreed, saying that the "take" of wildlife describes actions "done directly and intentionally (not indirectly and by accident) to particular animals (not populations of animals)."

"(Nesvik's) decision in every aspect of it entirely relies on Scalia's dissent," she said. "It's reducing the scope of (endangered species protections) to an absurdly narrow interpretation that is inconsistent with what Congress intended."

While some industry groups supported the "harm" rule in public comments, few of the organizations or lawmakers who backed that change have made public statements on Nesvik's memo about how it will be applied. But some conservatives praised the decision.

"It will shield innocent people from litigation by the country's largest law firm, the Department of Justice," William Perry Pendley, who served as acting director of the Bureau of Land Management during Trump's first term, told Cowboy State Daily.

Wildlife advocates said the memo could allow developers or logging companies to knowingly chop down a forest filled with endangered owls or bats, so long as the purpose of their action was timber harvest.

"(The memo) says you can knowingly kill an endangered species as long as you're not killing it for the sake of killing it," said Kate Groetzinger, communications director with the Center for Western Priorities, a conservation group. "This basically is a blank check to companies, landowners, developers, loggers — anyone operating in endangered species habitat — to both destroy that habitat and kill the animals and literally face no consequences."

Servheen, the former grizzly bear recovery coordinator, said the memo will allow hunters to gun down endangered species, as long as they later claim they mistook a grizzly bear for a black bear or a similar failure of species identification.

"This tells law enforcement that they have no ability to prosecute somebody who kills a grizzly bear," he said. "(Hunters) are basically relieved of any responsibility of what they're shooting, you can do whatever you want and say 'I didn't mean to.' It makes the outdoors a pretty dangerous place now."

The memo could also limit environmental reviews of potentially harmful projects, some advocates warned. For instance, a new road through Florida panther territory may no longer need an environmental analysis if increased vehicle collisions with panthers are no longer considered "take" by federal wildlife officials, Davenport said.

During the rulemaking process for the "harm" definition, federal officials argued that the change would empower states to protect wildlife under their own laws. But experts say state wildlife agencies lack the authority, resources and expertise to replace federal oversight.

Wildlife officials in Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, New Mexico, North Dakota, New Jersey, Vermont and Wyoming submitted public comments expressing concern with the proposal, as did the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, a nonprofit that represents state wildlife managers.

Stateline reporter Alex Brown can be reached at abrown@stateline.org.

This story was originally produced by Stateline, which is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit news network which includes South Dakota Searchlight, and is supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity.

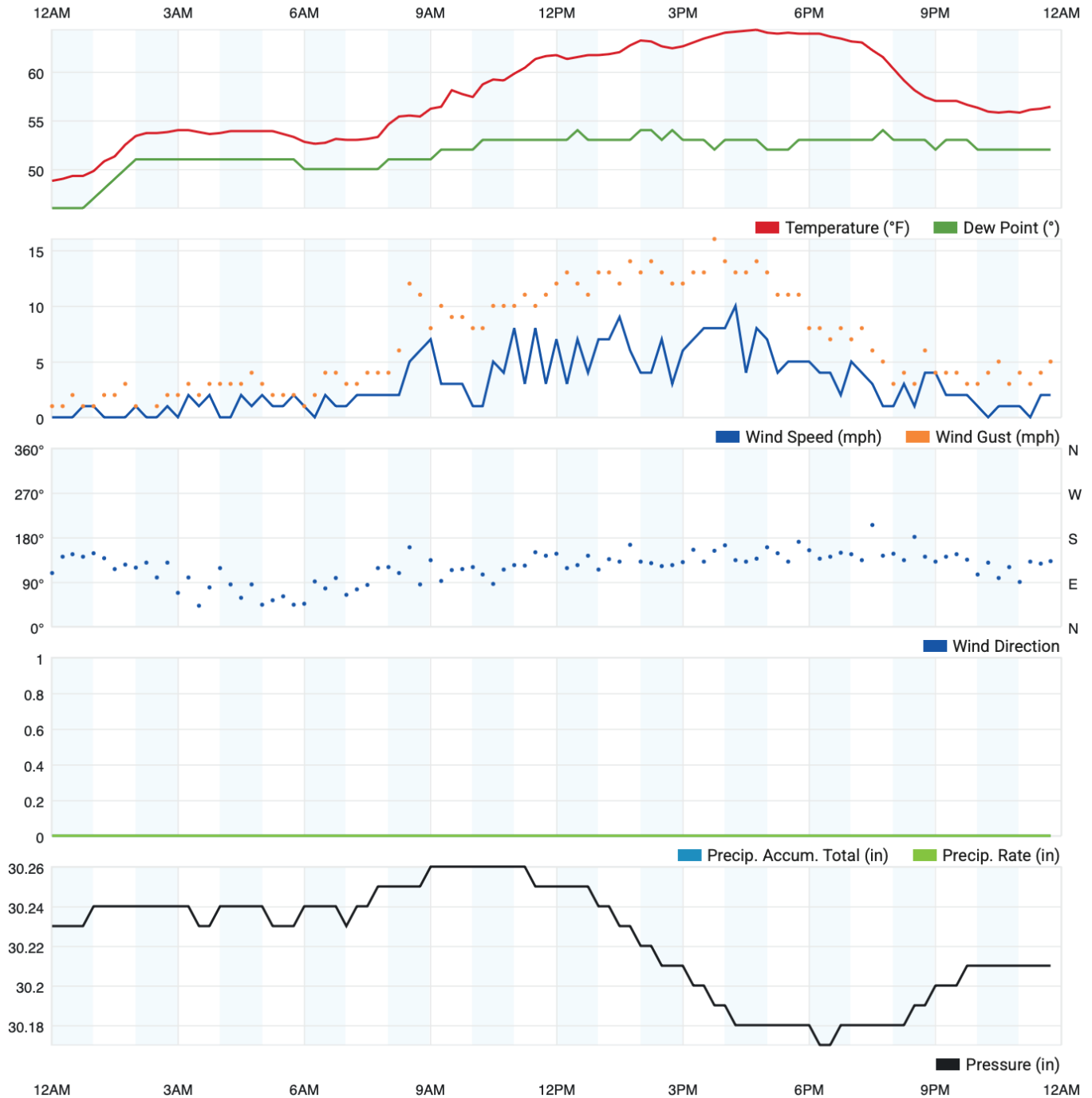
Based in Seattle, Alex Brown covers environmental issues for Stateline. Prior to joining Stateline, Brown wrote for The Chronicle in Lewis County, Washington state.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 19 of 71

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

September 22, 2026



Broton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 20 of 71

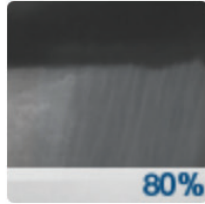
Today



High: 65 °F

Slight Chance
Showers then
Cloudy and
Breezy

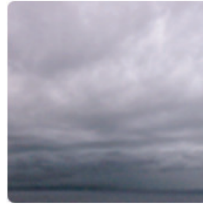
Tonight



Low: 55 °F

Showers

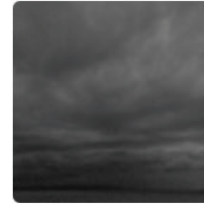
Thursday



High: 69 °F

Cloudy

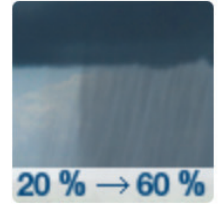
Thursday
Night



Low: 55 °F

Cloudy

Friday



High: 68 °F

Slight Chance
Showers then
Showers
Likely

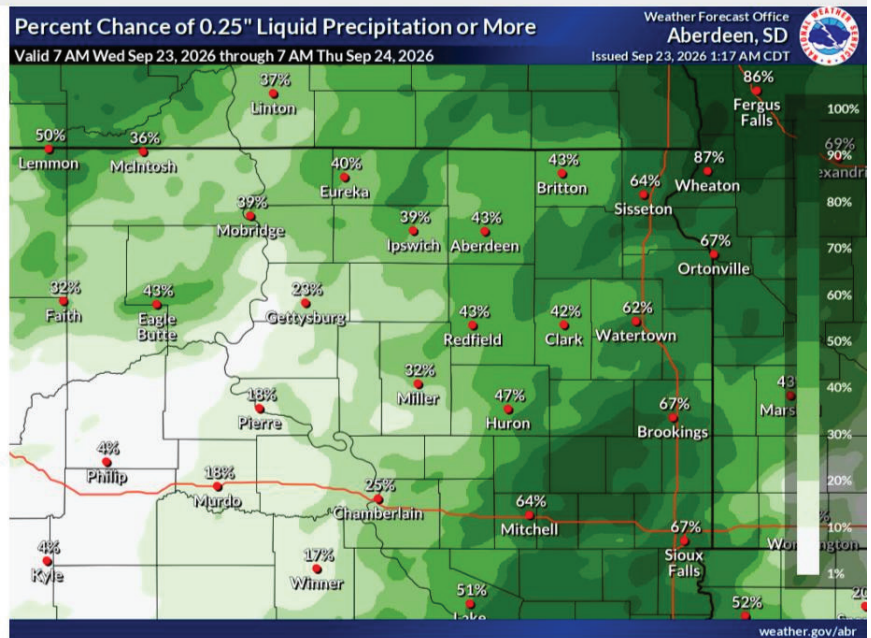


More Rain Moving in Today Through Early Thursday

September 23, 2026
2:30 AM

Key Messages

- Spotty rain showers will be possible through the morning hours across parts of central SD to the James River Valley.
- Additional showers and weak thunderstorms are expected around midday today through Thursday morning.
 - The bulk of the rainfall will fall this evening through the overnight.
- Highest probabilities of receiving a quarter inch or more are across northeast SD and west central MN.



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Rain chances will increase today into tonight across the region. A few spotty showers will be possible through midday today before more widespread chances move in this afternoon through tonight. The bulk of the rainfall is expected to fall this evening through early Thursday. Highest probabilities of receiving a quarter inch or more are across far northeast SD into west central MN.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 21 of 71

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 64 °F at 4:33 PM

Low Temp: 49 °F at 12:00 AM

Wind: 17 mph at 4:02 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 94 in 1935

Record Low: 20 in 1995

Average High: 72

Average Low: 44

Average Precip in Sept.: 1.53

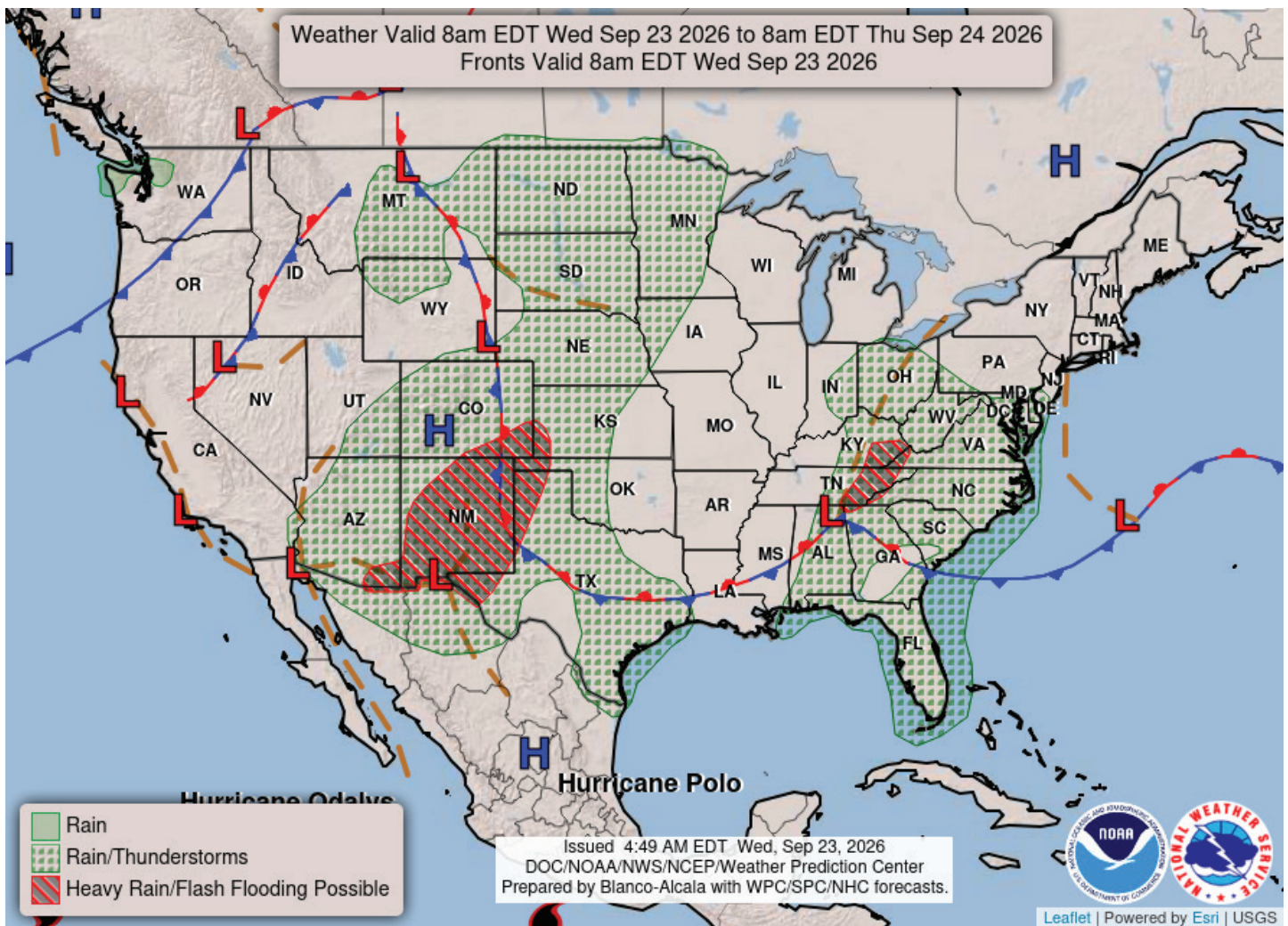
Precip to date in Sept.: 1.80

Average Precip to date: 17.87

Precip Year to Date: 21.66

Sunset Tonight: 7:28 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:21 am



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 22 of 71

Today in Weather History

September 23, 1984: Snow fell from the early morning to the late evening hours across northwest South Dakota bringing more than a foot of snow to some locations. Camp Crook in Harding County reported 14 inches. Amounts between six and twelve inches were common across Harding and Perkins Counties as well as parts of Meade and Butte Counties. Roads in these areas were slushy with icy bridges. The snow covered much of the western third of South Dakota with depths an inch or less.

September 23, 2004: A tornado touched down northeast of Browns Valley, MN during the late afternoon. This tornado traveled through a cornfield and a farmstead before dissipating. The tornado damaged several sheds and a trailer along with toppling a large grain bin. Another tornado touched down south and southwest of Rosholt in Roberts County in the late afternoon. This F2 tornado destroyed a house, a mobile home, and a travel trailer. The tornado also killed three cattle.

1551: The Grand Harbour at Valetta, Malta, was hit by a waterspout which then moved inland. This waterspout sunk four ships, killing at least 600 people. It should be noted, the year of the event could also be 1555, or 1556 as sources conflict.

1722: La Nouvelle-Orléans (New Orleans) was founded May 7, 1718, by the French Mississippi Company, under the direction of Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, on land inhabited by the Chitimacha. Four years later, a hurricane destroys nearly every building in the village, including the only church and hospital.

1815 — One of the greatest hurricanes to strike New England made landfall at Long Island and crossed Massachusetts and New Hampshire. It was the worst tempest in nearly two hundred years, equal to the hurricane which struck in 1938, and one of a series of severe summer and autumn storms to affect shipping lanes that year. (David Ludlum)

1904 — The temperature at Charlotteburg, NJ, dipped to 23 degrees, the coldest reading of record for so early in the autumn for the state. (The Weather Channel)

1975: On September 22, Hurricane Eloise intensified to attain Category 2 strength, and became a major hurricane of Category 3 status shortly after that as it turned towards the northeast. Several ships penetrated the storm's center during its passage through the Gulf. Hurricane Eloise continued to strengthen until it reached its peak winds of 125 mph and a minimum barometric pressure of about 955 mbar. It moved ashore along the Florida Panhandle near Panama City on September 23.

1983 — A thunderstorm downburst caused a timber blowdown in the Kaibab National Forest north of the Grand Canyon. Two hundred acres were completely destroyed, and scattered destruction occurred across another 3300 acres. Many trees were snapped off 15 to 30 feet above ground level. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Autumn began on a rather pleasant note for much of the nation. Showers and thunderstorms were confined to Florida and the southwestern deserts. Warm weather continued in the western U.S., and began to spread into the Great Plains Region, but even in the southwestern deserts readings remained below 100 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Seventeen cities in the north central U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Devils Lake ND with a reading of 22 degrees. Jackson KY reported a record low of 41 degrees during the late afternoon. Strong northwesterly winds ushering cold air into the central and northeastern U.S. gusted to 55 mph at Indianapolis IND. Winds along the cold front gusted to 65 mph at Norfolk VA, and thunderstorms along the cold front deluged Roseland NJ with 2.25 inches of rain in one hour. The temperature at Richmond VA plunged from 84 degrees to 54 degrees in two hours. Snow and sleet was reported at Binghamton NY. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2005 — Hurricane Rita reached the Texas/Louisiana border area near Sabine Pass as a category-3 hurricane with maximum sustained winds near 120 mph. A storm surge of at least 15 feet flooded parts of Cameron, Jefferson Davis, Terrebonne and Vermilion parishes, where sugar cane crop losses were estimated near \$300 million. An 8-foot storm surge in New Orleans overtopped the provisionally-repaired levees (from Hurricane Katrina damage) and caused additional flooding. A total of 10 fatalities were reported, and preliminary damage estimates ranged between \$4-5 billion.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 23 of 71



Daily Devotion

Following the Golden Rule

As we yield to the Holy Spirit, we become more like Christ.

Matthew 22:36-40: 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

37 And He said to him, " `YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'

38 "This is the great and foremost commandment.

39 "The second is like it, `YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'

40 "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

Most of us learned the Golden Rule in childhood: Treat others the way we want to be treated. This standard makes intuitive sense to young children, who know that if you want others to share with you, it's wise to share with them. But as relationships grow more complicated, living this out becomes far more difficult.

In today's passage, Jesus gives us the two greatest commandments: to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and to love others as yourself. That second one is where most of us struggle. When we've been hurt, our instinct is to protect ourselves or to retaliate. We may not strike back openly, but resentment has a way of coloring how we speak about people or treat them.

As believers, thankfully, we're not left to act in our own strength; we're indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to forgive even when everything in us resists. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). We can't manufacture these qualities—they grow in us as we yield to the Spirit's work.

Are these characteristics evident in your interactions with others—even with the people who are hardest to love? Ask the Lord to produce His fruit in you today. What He grows will always surpass what we could force on our own.

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

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 24 of 71

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Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 25 of 71



WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.22.26

4 21 23 32 51 4

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 18 Mins 47
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.22.26

7 13 26 37 68 8

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$277,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 3
Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.21.26

22 23 33 45 49 9

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$5,100,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 18 Mins 47
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.19.26

4 5 10 14 20

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$63,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 33 Mins 47
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.21.26

3 9 16 26 32 2

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 2 Mins 48
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.21.26

2 7 9 17 58 20

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$332,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 2 Mins 48
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 26 of 71

News from the Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Aberdeen Central def. Sioux Falls Jefferson, 25-20, 25-20, 17-25, 25-20
Aberdeen Christian def. Waubay/Summit, 25-22, 25-13, 25-9
Avon def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-14, 25-18, 25-18
Baltic def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-22, 25-16, 25-23
Bison def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-14, 25-12, 25-13
Bridgewater-Emery def. Hanson, 25-10, 25-14, 25-18
Britton-Hecla def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-19, 25-19, 25-8
Castlewood def. Great Plains Lutheran, 25-14, 24-26, 22-25, 25-13, 15-7
Centerville def. Sioux Falls Lutheran, 25-13, 25-16, 23-25, 25-21
Chester def. Parker/Marion, 25-11, 25-12, 25-15
Colman-Egan def. Canistota, 25-4, 25-7, 25-18
Corsica/Stickney def. Kimball-White Lake, 25-18, 25-17, 25-17
Crow Creek Tribal School def. Crazy Horse, 25-16, 25-13, 25-14
Dakota Valley def. West Central, 16-25, 25-21, 25-18, 25-14
DeSmet def. James Valley Christian School, 23-25, 25-13, 25-10, 25-18
Dell Rapids St Mary's def. Howard, 25-9, 25-10, 25-14
Dell Rapids def. Garretson, 25-19, 25-7, 25-7
Deubrook def. Deuel, 25-16, 25-12, 25-18
Edgemont def. Newell, 25-14, 25-11, 25-18
Faulkton def. Highmore-Harrold, 25-16, 24-26, 25-23, 25-15
Freeman def. Scotland, 25-6, 25-14, 25-2
Gettysburg def. Faith, 14-25, 25-20, 21-25, 25-21, 15-13
Hamlin def. Estelline-Hendricks, 25-21, 25-13, 25-17
Harrisburg def. Sioux Falls O'Gorman, 25-18, 25-10, 25-19
Herried-Selby def. Stanley County, 25-15, 25-9, 25-21
Hill City def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-17, 21-25, 19-25, 25-15, 15-11
Hitchcock-Tulare def. Iroquois-Lake Preston, 19-25, 26-24, 25-10, 25-19
Langford def. Tiospa Zina, 25-16, 25-7, 25-7
Lemmon High School def. Dupree, 25-12, 25-8, 25-5
Lennox def. Mt. Vernon/Plankinton, 25-11, 25-11, 25-23
Lyman def. Wall, 22-25, 23-25, 25-13, 25-21, 15-10
Madison def. Arlington, 25-19, 25-19, 25-15
McCook Central-Montrose def. Flandreau, 25-12, 25-16, 25-23
Miller def. Redfield, 25-16, 25-11, 25-12
Mitchell def. Brookings, 12-25, 19-25, 26-24, 25-19, 15-13
North Central def. Sully Buttes, 25-21, 25-18, 25-20
Northwestern def. Leola-Frederick High School, 25-1, 25-10, 25-10
Rapid City Christian def. Belle Fourche, 25-19, 25-12, 25-21
Sioux Falls Christian def. Unity Christian, Iowa, 25-18, 25-23, 26-24
Sioux Falls Lincoln def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 19-25, 25-13, 25-17, 25-16
Sioux Valley def. Milbank, 25-10, 25-9, 25-13
St Thomas More def. Hot Springs, 25-17, 25-14, 23-25, 25-17
Sturgis Brown High School def. Spearfish, 25-18, 24-26, 28-26, 25-21
Sunshine Bible Academy def. Lower Brule, 25-14, 25-22, 25-9
Tri-Valley def. Canton, 25-22, 25-20, 25-23

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 27 of 71

Tripp-Delmont-Armour def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-20, 25-21, 25-18

Viborg-Hurley def. Menno, 25-21, 25-20, 25-11

Wagner def. Bon Homme, 25-12, 25-19, 30-28

Warner def. Groton, 25-19, 25-16, 25-15

Watertown def. Huron, 25-18, 25-10, 25-15

Webster def. Wilmot, 25-9, 23-25, 25-8, 25-15

White River def. Philip, 25-14, 30-28, 15-25, 25-21

Winner def. Parkston, 25-13, 24-26, 13-25, 25-13, 15-8

Wolsey-Wessington def. Sanborn Central-Woonsocket, 25-18, 25-19, 25-16

Yankton def. Tea, 23-25, 25-15, 26-24, 25-21

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

Sen. Bernie Sanders unveils bill to ban artificial superintelligence and create Department of AI

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

Washington (AP) — Two leading progressive lawmakers, Sen. Bernie Sanders and Rep. Greg Casar, are unveiling legislation Wednesday that would ban artificial superintelligence and create a federal agency to oversee advanced AI as some of the industry's own leaders urge Congress to impose guardrails on the advancing technology.

The bill, provided first to The Associated Press, would also pause advanced AI development until guidelines are implemented while creating the Department of Artificial Intelligence. Multiple employees at leading AI companies are endorsing the bill.

"It doesn't take a genius to say, 'slow it down,'" Sanders, I-Vt., said in an interview with AP. "Do we really want to develop a super intelligence that when it becomes smarter than human beings could act independently of human control? I don't think we do."

Congress has so far done little to rein in the AI industry even as some of its most prominent leaders warn about potentially catastrophic risks. President Donald Trump has resisted recent calls for greater government oversight, putting him at odds with tech leaders including Anthropic's Dario Amodei, OpenAI's Sam Altman and xAI's Elon Musk.

The bill aims to dramatically slow down AI development

The legislation would permanently prohibit artificial superintelligence, which it defines as a system that exceeds human cognitive ability or has sufficient capabilities to plan and execute the destruction or disempowerment of humanity.

It would temporarily pause development of the most advanced AI systems until new federal safety rules are established by a new Department of Artificial Intelligence. Advanced AI systems would then need federal approval before they could be deployed. Violations could carry significant penalties, including up to 20 years in prison in some cases.

A number of current employees at AI companies and experts signed on in support of the bill, according to a statement shared with AP.

Juan Felipe Cerón Uribe, a researcher in OpenAI's Safety Systems, said in a statement supporting the bill that "superintelligence could either go extremely right or extremely wrong" and that "we shouldn't be playing such games."

Swante Scholz, a software engineer at Google DeepMind who said he was not speaking on behalf of his employer, said on the current path of development, the "most likely outcome is an existential catastrophe for humanity."

"A ban on superintelligence development would be a positive change for the foreseeable future," Scholz said in a statement.

The bill faces long odds but draws a line in a growing fight

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 28 of 71

The bill from Sanders and Casar faces long odds in the Republican-controlled Congress, where lawmakers have struggled to coalesce around even less sweeping AI regulations.

But it offers a window into how the progressive wing of the Democratic Party is approaching AI regulation ahead of November's midterms and a 2028 presidential campaign in which the technology is expected to be an increasingly prominent issue. Casar, a Democrat from Texas, is the chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Potential 2028 presidential candidates have rushed in recent weeks to release proposals showing they're taking the issue seriously. Maryland Democratic Gov. Wes Moore announced a plan to regulate AI on Tuesday, while California Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom signed an executive order to accelerate implementation of a California law that calls for independent oversight of AI companies last week.

Sanders, a two-time presidential candidate who is now 85, has especially focused on the issue in recent months. In June, he introduced legislation to create a sovereign wealth fund financed through a one-time tax on the stock of the largest AI companies. Last week, he hosted colleagues for a briefing with experts and also attended a conference focused on the issue alongside Republicans, including former White House adviser Steve Bannon.

The debate over AI regulations has scrambled political alliances both in Washington and for voters across the country.

Americans have grown more concerned about the environmental impacts of artificial intelligence over the last year, according to a recent poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago.

The survey data say about half, 53%, of Americans are "extremely" or "very" concerned about artificial intelligence's environmental impacts. That is up from 41% last year. Democrats are driving much of the increase in environmental concern, but the poll also reveals broader worries about the local impact of data centers, which power AI and cloud computing.

Trump has shown little interest in curbing AI risks

While some industry leaders have called for new safeguards, Trump has pushed in the opposite direction. On Tuesday, Trump told the United Nations General Assembly that artificial intelligence will be renamed "super intelligence."

"I think Trump has very little understanding of what this issue is about," Sanders said. "I think he's mainly concerned about the economic implications of a slowdown."

AI safety is expected to be a central part of talks between Trump and China's Xi Jinping at the White House this week as the countries compete for dominance in the sector. The prospect of slowing development in the United States while China continues on has also been one of the central arguments against sweeping restrictions.

Sanders argued that avoiding the most dangerous forms of AI would ultimately require cooperation between the two countries, comparing the challenge to nuclear arms control during the Cold War.

"Ronald Reagan, arch-conservative, was smart enough to understand that he had to sit down with Gorbachev, a communist, and work out a nuclear treaty that protected humanity," Sanders said. "I think we can do that again now."

A mass shooting at a house party in South Africa kills 11, including a pregnant woman

By GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — Three shooters killed at least 11 people including a woman who was believed to be pregnant in a late-night attack at a house party in South Africa, police said Wednesday.

Three others were wounded in the mass shooting Tuesday night in KwaMakhutha township around 30 kilometers (19 miles) south of the city of Durban on the east coast.

The people had gathered at the house for a party when the suspects entered the house and opened fire, police said. Ten people, including the pregnant woman, died at the scene and an 11th was declared

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 29 of 71

dead at the hospital.

Authorities did not immediately give out details on the condition of the three people who were wounded.

Police are searching for the gunmen

Police said they were searching for three men and no arrests had been made.

The motive for the shooting was not known, police said, but added that some of the people at the house were known to police as part of investigations into criminal activity. Police said they couldn't give out any more information on those investigations.

"Although the motive of the shooting cannot be confirmed yet, (a) feud between rival groupings cannot be ruled out," police said.

Thami Ntuli, the premier of KwaZulu-Natal province, told reporters at the scene that the killings were "really disturbing." He said that there were known problems with drug dealing and illegal firearms in the largely impoverished community.

There have been several mass shootings in South Africa recently

It's the latest in a series of mass shootings in South Africa recently, including one in June when multiple shooters killed 12 people in a poor neighborhood in Johannesburg that police linked to criminal gangs. Two mass shootings two weeks apart in December killed 21 people. They were also carried out by multiple gunmen.

South Africa has extremely high rates of violent crime, with official police statistics recording 5,427 homicides in the latest three-month period between April and June at an average of nearly 60 homicides a day.

Shootings are the most common form of homicide in South Africa and police and crime experts have long said that one of the biggest problems is that there is a high number of illegal firearms in circulation.

The army is being used to combat violent crime in some areas

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa authorized the deployment of soldiers on the streets in some areas earlier this year to combat violent crime in what critics said was an admission that police were failing.

Soldiers were deployed to areas around Johannesburg, the city of Cape Town and in Eastern Cape province on the south coast in the ongoing operation, but not to KwaZulu-Natal province where the latest shooting happened.

Bodies of victims were being carried away

The bodies of some of the victims of Tuesday night's shooting were laid out on the ground and covered with white sheets outside the small house where the shooting took place. They were later carried away on stretchers to pathology vans.

Police cordoned off the neighborhood with yellow tape while forensic investigators worked through the scene.

Police were also investigating if the torching of a car near the house was connected to the shooting.

Hurricane Polo is 'one of the strongest storms ever' and is churning off Mexico's Pacific coast

By MEGAN JANETSKY and DESIREE BROOKS Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Hurricane Polo has grown into one of the most powerful Pacific cyclones in decades, and it was expected to skirt Mexico's southwestern coast as a Category 5 storm.

Polo was an "extremely dangerous" storm with maximum sustained winds of 165 mph (265 kph), the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said Tuesday night.

Polo was nearly stationary early Wednesday about 200 miles (325 kilometers) south of Zihuatanejo in Guerrero state. It was forecast to turn sharply to the northwest during the day and then move in west-northwest over the next several days.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said experts indicated that the hurricane was not likely to touch land. Still, hurricane-force winds extend up to 40 miles (65 kilometers) from the storm's center and tropical storm-force winds up to 105 miles (169 kilometers) from the eye, the U.S. center said.

Tropical storm conditions were expected along the Pacific coast in Guerrero, Michoacan and Colima

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 30 of 71

states Wednesday into Thursday.

Waves, flooding and mudslides are all risks

The hurricane set residents along Mexico's Pacific coast on edge once again after being walloped by a number of powerful cyclones in recent years. Beaches emptied and dark clouds swirled above choppy seas, while Mexican authorities temporarily suspended classes Tuesday in a number of areas. Mexico's navy shut down ports in the states of Guerrero and Michoacán and warned civilians and fishermen to take care.

Concepción López Villegas was busily preparing her seaside restaurant for what may come. Strong waves were already lapping at the coastline of her city Lázaro Cárdenas in Michoacán. As men and children watched the stirring waters behind her, López Villegas said she feared powerful waves would destroy the small business she has worked decades to build.

"We're worried and trying to protect our businesses," López Villegas said. "And of course, we're sad because it's our heritage, our legacy that from one moment to another could be destroyed."

U.S. National Hurricane Center data shows Polo's winds reached speeds comparable to only a few hurricanes in the region in recent decades, primarily Hurricane Patricia, which had winds that reached 215 mph (346 kph) in 2015.

"This is one of the strongest storms ever in the (Pacific) Basin," said Kristen L. Corbosiero, professor at the University at Albany's Department of Atmospheric & Environmental Sciences.

Heavy rain could produce flash flooding and mudslides. About 3 to 6 inches (8 to 15 centimeters) of rain was forecast for Guerrero and Michoacán states, with smaller amounts possible for coastal portions of Oaxaca, Colima and Jalisco states.

El Niño fueled rapid intensification

The U.S. Embassy in Mexico issued a weather alert, instructing citizens to avoid water and beaches and to heed warnings from Mexican authorities.

"Even if the storm does not make direct landfall, heavy rain may produce life-threatening flooding and mudslides. Hazardous ocean conditions—intensified by storms—may result in deadly rip currents and rogue waves," the embassy wrote in a statement.

The rapid intensification of the storm has stunned scientists and authorities alike, with the NHC writing in a report that it was "truly remarkable" how quickly Polo gained strength in the past 24 hours.

Philip Klotzbach, research scientist in the Department of Atmospheric Science at Colorado State University, attributed the intensification to the weather phenomenon known as El Niño, which has fueled crippling droughts in Mexico and Central America and floods in other parts of the region.

In the Pacific, it has resulted in warmer waters and wind patterns that act as fodder for hurricanes, he said.

"There are all the ingredients that hurricanes need to get really strong really fast," Klotzbach said.

Polo is the third Category 5 hurricane of the Pacific season, following Genevieve and Lowell earlier this year. Category 5 is the highest level on the Saffir-Simpson scale, reflecting that a storm has maximum sustained winds exceeding 157 mph (253 kph).

No Atlantic hurricanes have formed yet this year, and this year has set a record for the longest start to a season without a hurricane. The effects of this year's El Niño crush storms before they get going.

Russian attacks injure 7 across Ukraine and damage structures

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia launched strikes at businesses and storage facilities in Ukraine overnight, injuring seven people across the country, according to local authorities.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Wednesday that its forces overnight carried out "group strikes" using drones on Ukraine's "military-industrial and energy sector facilities, logistics centers and maritime vessels."

In Kyiv and the surrounding region, a storage facility and an industrial facility used for storing and making drones were hit, the ministry said.

The Kyiv City Military Administration said three people were injured in the city, and added that a warehouse in Kyiv's Holosiivskyi district was damaged and caught fire, while a fuel station and an office building

in the district were also damaged.

In the Solomianskyi district, drone debris fell in open areas between residential buildings and at another location. In the Darnytskyi district, debris fell in an open area in a non-residential zone and a gas station was damaged, the administration said.

In Zhytomyr region, west of Kyiv, two people were injured in a Russian attack on a business, Ukraine's Emergency Service said in a post on Telegram.

And in Zaporizhzhia, in southeastern Ukraine, two men aged 37 and 39 by a strike that sparked a large fire at a shopping center. Emergency services said the fire spread across about 6,000 square meters (1.5 acres) before being brought under control.

Emergency crews worked under difficult conditions as the threat of further attacks forced them to periodically halt operations and take shelter, it added.

In the southern Odesa region, Russia also attacked warehouse buildings, sparking a large fire. Firefighters faced difficult conditions as repeated air raid alerts, the structure of the building and the large quantity of goods inside complicated efforts to extinguish the blaze, the service said.

Russia said three logistics centers used for storage of military and dual-use goods were hit in Odesa. Another storage facility used for storing drone components, was hit in the wider Odesa region, the Russian defense ministry said.

A bulk carrier "transporting military supplies to the port of Odesa" was also hit at sea, the ministry added.

British Columbia leader calls snap election as premier tells voters to say 'hell no to Trump'

VICTORIA, British Columbia (AP) — A Canadian provincial premier called a snap election Tuesday, saying U.S. President Donald Trump's attacks on Canada are threatening jobs, businesses and the country's ability to determine its own future.

The provincial election comes after U.S.-Canada trade talks broke down, deepening a dispute that has brought steep tariffs. British Columbia Premier David Eby effectively put Trump on the ballot, arguing the election offers British Columbians a choice between his government's efforts to resist U.S. economic pressure and opponents he accused of embracing "MAGA-style politics."

"Join us saying hell no to Trump and to his politics," Eby said in announcing the Oct. 24 election.

Eby said Trump's trade war and threats against Canada have changed conditions in British Columbia enough to justify an election two years early.

"Donald Trump is attacking our workers, he's targeting our businesses, and he is threatening our sovereignty," Eby said. "He's threatening our ability to make decisions for ourselves."

The left-leaning New Democratic Party leader said British Columbia needs to build a "firebreak" against Trump's economic policies by protecting workers and businesses, reducing its dependence on the United States and finding new markets for Canadian products.

"This isn't just a trade dispute," Eby said. "It's about the life that you and your family are building."

Eby said British Columbia's exports to the United States have fallen 4% while exports to other markets have risen 16%.

He also vowed to keep American alcohol off provincial shelves, saying "not one drop of Jack Daniels" would return until Canada gets a fair deal with the United States.

The New Democrats won a narrow majority in the 2024 provincial election, giving Eby enough seats to govern without relying on another party, and he was not required to call another election until 2028.

The election call also comes amid turmoil among the opposition British Columbia Conservatives. Kerry-Lynne Findlay resigned as party leader Sunday following a wave of defections and expulsions from her caucus. Lorne Doerksen was named interim leader.

Dolly Parton's estate accuses her nephew of threatening violence and to destroy his aunt's legacy

By HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

Dolly Parton's estate accused the country music icon's nephew of threatening to commit violence and destroy his aunt's legacy and business empire in court filings submitted Tuesday and asked a judge to keep him away from its employees and business dealings.

Court documents filed in Nashville offer the first signs of discord in a carefully managed estate process for one of the most beloved personalities in music and beyond.

Bryan Seaver, who owns a company that provided Parton's security detail and was handpicked by the star to announce her death from cancer last month, did not immediately respond to an email from The Associated Press requesting comment.

In the temporary restraining order request filed by She's Alive, the entity that manages and protects Parton's professional property and business, and other court documents, it claims Seaver sent increasingly threatening messages over the last several weeks. She's Alive is run by Danny Nozell, Parton's longtime manager.

Last week, "She's Alive" terminated Seaver and Squadron Augmented Protection Services, saying his "terrorizing conduct made their continued retention untenable," according to court documents.

The court documents showcase a series of text messages and emails She's Alive says were sent by Seaver starting just before Parton's death. The messages begin with threats to destroy the brand, and then after her death, depict Seaver reveling in his newfound fame and calling himself an "international arms dealer."

In one message written on Sept. 1 and included in the court documents, he said: "I'm going to set up a podcast dedicated to ruining Dolly's brand partnerships and telling the violations these people have done on us. It's going to be great. Or f—— pay me."

Seaver also claimed that he worked for private military contractors overseas during the Iraq War and used that experience as part of these threats, according to the complaint.

The messages have resulted in Parton's trusts and estates attorney leaving and employees of She's Alive resigning, according to the court documents. The entity has also had to hire private security for its employees, including at their homes, the documents state.

The restraining order is meant to stop Seaver from talking with or being within 1,000 feet (304.8 meters) of She's Alive employees, attorneys and business partners. It also is meant to keep him from interfering with its business relationships.

Parton wrote hundreds of songs, including classics like "Jolene," "Coat of Many Colors" and "I Will Always Love You," that earned a total of more than 100 million worldwide sales and more than 1 billion online streams.

Trump signs US-Denmark-Greenland agreement to bolster Arctic security after prolonged tensions

By FARNOUSH AMIRI and JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — President Donald Trump on Tuesday signed an agreement with Denmark and Greenland aimed at strengthening Arctic and North Atlantic security, paving the way for more U.S. bases in Greenland and easing tensions over his repeated calls for the vast island to become part of the United States.

The signing on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in New York comes days after Trump announced the deal to bolster the U.S. military presence on Greenland but keep it under Danish control. The agreement would still apply if Greenland eventually chooses independence.

"This is tremendous for Europe and for the United States and for everybody," Trump said just before the agreement was signed. "And for Greenland, it's going to be incredible."

Trump has expressed his desire to acquire Greenland since as long ago as 2019 and, during his second

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 33 of 71

term, issued threats to seize the semiautonomous territory from Denmark, a NATO ally. On Tuesday, he did not respond to questions about whether a U.S. acquisition of Greenland was off the table.

The US has had a presence in Greenland for decades

Officials from the U.S., Greenland and Denmark negotiated for months behind the scenes, searching for solutions to address some of Trump's security concerns about the mineral-rich island.

Trump's designs on Greenland strained relations within NATO, with Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen warning a U.S. takeover would amount to the end of the Atlantic alliance.

The standoff unsettled many of Greenland's roughly 56,000 people and drove a wedge between the U.S. and Denmark and its European Union partners, who stepped up security exercises on and monetary support for the island.

Trade and hopes for a resource grab have factored into concerns about Greenland's future. About two-thirds of its territory sits inside the Arctic Circle, where melting sea ice has opened additional shipping routes.

The United States was prominent in Greenland for decades but, since 1945, the U.S. military presence in Greenland has decreased from thousands of soldiers on 17 bases and installations to roughly 200 soldiers on the remote Pituffik Space Base in the northwest. The base supports missile warning, missile defense and space surveillance operations for the U.S. and NATO.

Addressing the United Nations General Assembly ahead of the signing, Trump said the U.S. would "immediately begin the process of developing a large military presence in the appropriate locations," including "building two very major military bases."

Denmark's parliament approved a bill last year to allow U.S. military bases on Danish soil, widening a 2023 agreement made with the Biden administration that gave U.S. troops broad access to air bases in Denmark.

Trump previously insisted the U.S. needed to "take Greenland," to prevent Russia or China from doing the same. Though Trump said he would rather "make a deal" for the territory, he added, "one way or the other, we're going to have Greenland."

The accord will remain in effect if Greenland becomes independent

The agreement, released by all three governments after the signing, allows for Washington to "modernize and expand" its activities at Pituffik.

It also says the U.S. can set up "defense areas" at Narsarsuaq in the south and Mestersvig in the east, and that it "may establish additional defense areas in Greenland and strengthen its military operations or facilities." Washington is to award contracts for goods and services related to setting up, maintaining or dismantling such bases "to Greenlandic sources to the maximum extent possible."

The accord calls for wide U.S. military mobility on Greenland's territory, including "undersea access." It says the signatories share an interest in allowing the U.S. military access to Greenland to defend the NATO area, Greenland itself and the American continent — including through "Golden Dome," Trump's planned missile defense system. Frederiksen said no decision had been made on the specifics of that system.

No non-NATO country will be allowed to set up "its own manned or unmanned military installations in Greenland," or to have a "persistent" military presence unless the signatories agree otherwise.

The accord "does not have an end date" and, if Greenland chooses to become independent, it will agree to remain in NATO and take on Denmark's rights and obligations under the deal.

All parties present the agreement as a positive move

Frederiksen on Tuesday called the agreement a "deal that can last forever," labeling it as good for the U.S., Greenland, Denmark and the broader NATO alliance.

"Mr. President, you have been very clear: You don't want adversaries to come too close," she said. "I fully agree."

Jens-Frederik Nielsen, Greenland's prime minister, called it "a win-win-win agreement."

"Your security is our security," he said, "and our security is your security."

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, who helped turn down the temperature at the height of the crisis in January, celebrated the accord's signing, writing on X that "this agreement, along with NATO's growing role in securing this vital region, enhances our collective security and supports a safer and more stable

future for us all."

But the standoff won't be forgotten quickly.

"A lot of trust has been tested, I would say," Naaja Nathanielsen, one of Greenland's two lawmakers in the Danish parliament and a former government minister in Nuuk, told The Associated Press. "It's been really difficult in Greenland and people have been generally afraid and worried about everything, from losing our country to our livelihoods and so on."

Nevertheless, Nathanielsen called the accord "a huge step in the right direction," and praised it as the first binding agreement Greenland has signed as a country.

"For us, that is a huge step forward in our quest for more self-autonomy and a bigger seat at the table," she said.

A clearly relieved Frederiksen said at a post-signing appearance with Nielsen that "the kingdom of Denmark is in a better place than we were yesterday."

She concluded the news conference by saying: "I think we'll head out soon and get a cold beer."

Also breathing a sigh of relief Tuesday were fellow NATO countries. Latvian President Edgars Rinkevics said that while a lot remains to be seen, the announcement was "very positive and good."

"But I do hope that this issue is closed because it was not entirely comfortable that you have this discussion between really good friends and allies," Rinkevics told a small group of reporters on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

Senior NATO commander warns Putin is becoming more cavalier and open to risk as Ukraine war drags on

By EMMA BURROWS AP European Security Correspondent

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin is becoming "increasingly cavalier, dangerous and risk accepting," as his war in Ukraine drags on and as he seeks to divide Western allies, NATO's deputy commander in Europe said Tuesday.

Air Chief Marshal Sir John Stringer spoke to The Associated Press at a security conference in Estonia amid warnings from some European leaders that Moscow is planning to test NATO's collective defense pact with bolder attacks that have already included sabotage and espionage.

Stringer warned that NATO members need to be aware of the "febrile environment" and be careful in their response because Putin would like to provoke the alliance into an "overreaction."

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said last week that Russia might target NATO nations with deliberate drone or missile strikes while claiming they were accidental. French President Emmanuel Macron agreed and has asked his government to prepare a plan to protect critical infrastructure against potential drone attacks and cyberattacks.

Other European officials say the threat from Russia is serious but have called for calm.

A British defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive security matters, said the U.K. assessment is that Putin is not seeking direct confrontation with NATO. Officials in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which border Russia, also have been more cautious about the prospect of a serious escalation after years of calling on Western nations to adopt a more hawkish approach to Moscow.

"Ukraine is fighting. Russia is absorbed in Ukraine. We do not observe any buildup near our borders. And from that part, I think that most would agree that the perspective of direct military attack is not correct," Latvian President Edgars Rinkevics told a small group of reporters late Tuesday on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

The U.S. ambassador to NATO, Matthew Whitaker, dismissed any concerns that Russia may be testing the transatlantic military alliance, telling the AP following a panel discussion in Des Moines, Iowa, on Tuesday evening that "Putin does not want a conflict with NATO."

He said drone incursions into countries like Romania or Poland were largely the result of electronic warfare and unintentional but noted that hybrid activities like sabotage "are more concerning." Whitaker also

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 35 of 71

warned against "overreacting" because "that's exactly what I think our adversaries would want or hope for."

European countries have already faced multiple incursions of Russian drones — and several missiles — as well as a campaign of covert Russian disruption which began after Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

An AP interactive map tracking that campaign shows the escalation, from 59 incidents in March 2025 to more than 210 incidents ranging from vandalism, propaganda and influence operations to arson, sabotage and cyberattacks.

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte told the AP in Iowa that Putin "knows that the United States and Europe are totally intertwined."

"We have to make sure that we are prepared, we are strong, and he knows it. And if he does anything silly, he knows our reaction will be tough," Rutte said.

Russia is already testing NATO defenses

In August, German officials accused Moscow of being behind a plot at Leipzig airport where a drone with explosives was found next to a Ukrainian plane laden with jet fuel. Last month, British officials said they disrupted a Russian plot to sabotage a drone factory outside London. In August, an Estonian defense company was set on fire and a weapons storage facility in Bulgaria exploded, though neither has been publicly attributed to Russia.

Many saboteurs have been recruited online by Russia's intelligence services and some have no idea they are working for Moscow. That makes uncovering a plot challenging and attribution often difficult. When asked by the AP in May if Russia was waging a covert campaign against the West, Putin responded: "Name one proven fact."

The line between "accidental and deliberate is quite a fine one," Stringer said, referring to incursions of drones sent off course into NATO airspace by Russian GPS jamming or other electronic countermeasures to defend against Ukrainian drone strikes.

It would be possible for Russia to escalate that activity but it does not mean Moscow has decided to do so, said Stringer, NATO's deputy supreme allied commander for Europe.

While there are "a lot of different opinions as to how acute the threat is ... Russia's attitude towards negligence" and deliberately targeting NATO neighbors "is almost the same," Estonian Prime Minister Kristen Michal told AP at the security conference.

Both Stringer and Michal suggested the increase in covert attacks by Moscow was not because of a failure by NATO nations to stop them but as a direct consequence of Western support for Ukraine.

Putin is trying to break NATO support for Ukraine, leaders say

Putin, Stringer said, is "looking at a whole number of things" to try to create division between NATO allies because his campaign in Ukraine is going badly.

Michal likened the Russian leader to a "rat in the corner," who is escalating activity in Europe in an attempt to break Western support for Kyiv at a time when Moscow is under pressure.

Russia's gains on the front lines in Ukraine have been slow and at a steep cost of more than half a million dead, even as Kyiv's deep-strike campaign targeting the country's energy industry has caused fuel shortages in 80 of 83 Russian regions, Air Chief Marshall Sir Richard Knighton, chief of the U.K.'s defense staff, said earlier this month. Still, there's no suggestion the Russian leader is backing away from his goals in Ukraine.

Baltic leaders like Rinkevics argue that Moscow will dig even deeper now as winter is approaching, saying that attacks on infrastructure are likely to increase over the next several months and that any possibility of diplomatic progress will likely not be seen until the spring.

Putin is trying to undermine NATO's collective defense pact by testing nations with covert attacks that are hard to attribute, Michal said.

But the Estonian leader said it's currently "improbable," that Putin will launch a conventional military attack on Europe because of the threat of a NATO response and because his forces are tied down in Ukraine.

The high level of malign activity from Russia is "here to stay" until Putin changes his military goals, Michal said, adding that the best way to deter him is to "back Ukraine."

This year, with shifting political winds, Canada gets more of the spotlight on the UN's stage

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — For years, Canada was a trouper in the drama of international affairs. An adept and experienced contributor, it didn't often draw the spotlight when world leaders gathered at the U.N. each September.

This year, the nation of 41 million has a new posture on the planet's biggest diplomatic stage.

Since a watershed speech to the World Economic Forum in January, Prime Minister Mark Carney has become a leading voice of what he and some others call "middle powers." He has urged them to band together to update and preserve the international order, and protect their own interests, in an era of flexes by the United States and other global giants.

And he has shown himself willing to walk the walk when faced with U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff's. insults and cavalier talk of annexation. Carney rejected what he said were unacceptable U.S. trade demands and walked away from talks last month. Bluntly hedging his country's decades-long bet on U.S. trade and partnership, he has been courting other prospects — Canada might even become the European Union's first associate member.

"Partners are working with Canada because Canada's predictable, reliable and principled in a world that's anything but," Carney told Canadian media at a news conference at the U.N. Tuesday as the General Assembly's big meeting got into full swing.

It's the international community's premier gathering of the year. And to Carney, it's an opportunity to demonstrate Canada's vision of "values-based realism" that's "both principled and pragmatic" — part commitment to such values as freedom, human rights and sustainability, part clear-eyed, "calibrated alliances" with partners that won't sign onto the whole list.

That's frankly practical talk for a forum that's prone to either diplomatic caution or soaring rhetoric, be it doomsaying, idealistic or, often, both. And Carney is finding an ear.

He's moving fast and building coalitions

Canada and a half-dozen other countries launched a new group Monday meant to stand up for economic cooperation and U.N.-style international collaboration. An air traffic control mess at New York airports kept Carney from making it to the "partners for multilateralism" kickoff event at the U.N. Monday night, but his schedule Tuesday included personal meetings with Jordan's king, the presidents of Chile and Angola, and an Emirati cabinet minister.

He also co-hosted a meeting on the long-elusive two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and pledged 100 million Canadian dollars (\$71 million) in humanitarian and security funding for Palestinians. Canada last year joined more than 150 countries that have recognized a Palestinian state, over the objections of Israel and its key ally, the U.S.

Asked whether he interacted Tuesday with Trump or members of his administration, Carney replied that he saw the huge meeting of world leaders as a chance to "meet those whom you don't normally see." He did attend Trump's speech at the assembly, where the president made no mention of Canada — the country on the other side of the world's longest international border, and now on the other end of a deepening trade war.

After speaking Wednesday at a U.N. meeting about oceans, Carney heads back to Canada for other commitments. Foreign Minister Anita Anand is set to deliver the country's U.N. speech Saturday.

She said in an interview Tuesday that the address "will be very much about implementing the middle power strategy" that Carney has articulated — memorably when he told the World Economic Forum that as great power rivalries increasingly shake the international system, "middle powers must act together, because if we're not at the table, we're on the menu." (There's no official list of "middle powers," but the term is often understood to mean countries that aren't superpowers or their proxies but have some sway in global politics due to diplomatic or other strengths.)

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 37 of 71

Carney's "message resonates with many audiences, particularly those in the global North," says University of Ottawa international affairs professor Srdjan Vucetic.

He noted that the prime minister's leadership is resonating at home, too. Carney, who took office in March 2025, enjoys high approval ratings from Canadians. Many are galled by Trump's remarks about making their country the U.S.'s "51st state," his insistence on referring to Lake Ontario as "Lake America" and his trade policies. In Toronto, Canada's most populous city, some neighborhoods are dotted with lawn signs encouraging eligible U.S. expatriates to vote absentee, and at least one coffee shop has crossed the Americano drink off its menu, substituting "Canadiano" instead.

Carney seeks to increase non-US trade

Carney, 61, a former central bank chief with a doctorate in economics, aims to double Canada's non-U.S. trade within a decade. He convened hundreds of international investment firm executives for a Canadian investment summit last week and is hoping for a trade deal with India, among others, by year's end.

His government has touted security, defense and economic agreements with a roster of countries over the past year, and he has envisioned Canada as potentially forging an economic bridge of sorts between the EU and Pacific Rim countries.

His international efforts have drawn some questions, as when he became the first Canadian prime minister in over a quarter-century to visit Saudi Arabia. Predecessor Justin Trudeau's government had assailed Saudi Arabia's human rights record, spurring a five-year diplomatic split. The two countries restored full diplomatic relations in 2023.

Carney said at the time of the July visit that he cares deeply about human rights, that there's no point in "lecturing countries from afar," and that engaging with them doesn't convey approval of their every move.

At his U.N. news conference Tuesday, he said his approach "means actively, actively taking on the world as it is, not passively waiting for a world we wish to be."

"We have a strategy that, I believe, has already made our country stronger," he added, "but we've only just begun."

Republicans dump cash into red states as they try to hold the line against Democrats in the midterms

By JILL COLVIN and AARON KESSLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans are growing increasingly grim about their chances in November, with aligned groups pumping money into reliably red states and candidates scrambling to distance themselves from unpopular White House policies.

From Texas to Ohio and Alaska to Iowa, campaigns are grappling with a fed-up electorate that is sour on the president and angry over soaring fuel prices driven by an unpopular war. While Republicans are flush with unprecedented cash that could move the needle in some races, overall the mood is glum heading into the election's final stretch as campaigns try to counter palpable Democratic enthusiasm to maintain their narrow lead in the House and Senate this November.

"Everybody is tired. You see the poll numbers. Everybody is cranky about gas prices," said Jeanette Hoffman, a Republican strategist from New Jersey. "The party in power is playing defense. This is a referendum on the incumbents."

Trump is trying to protect Republicans with cash

After mounting pressure from endangered candidates in battleground states, groups affiliated with President Donald Trump finally began unleashing their stockpile of campaign cash earlier this month, joining with Republican committees that have amassed a record fortune that dramatically eclipses their Democratic counterparts.

"Republicans have air superiority. House Democrats are scrambling to catch up with the very limited resources they have," said Mike Marinella, a spokesperson for the National Republican Congressional Committee.

But the spending underscores the extent to which Republicans are playing defense.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 38 of 71

Three Trump-aligned groups — MAGA Inc., No Going Back PAC and Safety and Affordability PAC — have spent more than \$163 million on advertising and air time since Sept. 1. Nearly 40% of that money — more than \$63 million — has been spent in states and districts where Trump won by 10 percentage points or more in the 2024 election, according to an Associated Press analysis of data from AdImpact, which tracks media spending and ad buys.

That includes 12 House districts and three states with major Senate races.

In Texas, Republicans have spent nearly \$107 million on ads and reservations since the beginning of the month trying to bolster scandal-plagued attorney general Ken Paxton in his Texas Senate race against Democratic state Rep. James Talarico. The spending, which is for ads through Election Day, is nearly four times as much as Democrats in a state Trump won by nearly 14 points.

Further north in Ohio, Republican spending to defend Sen. Jon Husted has exceeded \$152 million, compared to \$90 million on behalf of Democratic nominee Sherrod Brown, according to AdImpact.

Terry Casey, an Ohio Republican strategist, said both Republicans and Democrats are “kind of sitting on pins and needles because of the national and economic circumstances.” The outcome, he said, would depend on whether Democrats can turn out voters.

Democrats are competing in red states

States that Trump won by wide margins — like Texas, Iowa, Ohio and Alaska — have become some of the most competitive battlegrounds in the midterms.

The White House is even investing time in states that haven’t been considered competitive for years. Vice President JD Vance recently traveled to Kansas to campaign for Sen. Roger Marshall, who is facing a challenge from Democratic nominee Adam Hamilton.

The founder of the nation’s largest United Methodist church, Hamilton received a rousing welcome from scores of people who crammed into a Topeka coffee shop to see him Tuesday.

“In all my 50, 60 years in politics, I’ve never seen a candidate that quite has the momentum going,” said Jim Ploger, an 82-year-old longtime Democratic activist from Topeka who believes Hamilton gives the party “the best chance we’ve ever had” to win a Senate seat.

Vance has also been to Iowa, Ohio, Maine and North Carolina to bolster Republican candidates, while Trump is also hitting the road. The week after the party’s unusual midterm convention in Dallas, he traveled to North Carolina to hold a rally with Michael Whatley, his former national party chairman. Republicans are increasingly concerned that he could fall short in his Senate race against Democratic former Gov. Roy Cooper.

There are more concerns about Georgia, where Rep. Mike Collins is trying to unseat Democratic Sen. Jon Ossoff. Although Ossoff began the cycle as Republicans’ top target, Collins has endured weeks of negative headlines about a House ethics investigation and his son-in-law’s white nationalist views.

“I don’t think anyone’s expecting Collins to win,” said Tim Waters, chairman of the Peach County Republican Party. “Do I like that? No, I don’t like that. But it’s just the facts.”

In Texas, officials are hoping a huge influx of last-minute cash will help save Paxton. Sen. John Cornyn, who lost his primary to Paxton after Trump turned on him earlier this year, isn’t so confident.

“I think it’s going to be very rough, lots of headwinds,” he said. “Even in places like Texas, which are pretty red, we’ve got flawed candidates who I think are going to have a hard time.”

Republican National Committee spokesperson Natalie Baldassarre said the party is focused on turnout and is well aware of the historic trend in which the party in control typically loses seats in the midterm.

“We have money to spend and we’re not taking anything for granted this cycle,” she said. “This is very high stakes, and it’s unfortunate that other people feel glum and down. But we’re doing everything we can to protect and expand our majorities so we’re full steam ahead.”

Party officials are more bullish on races in Maine and New Hampshire, where Democrat Kamala Harris won in 2024, and remain optimistic about Michigan, where Trump won by less than two points and where former Rep. Mike Rogers faces progressive Democrat Abdul El-Sayed.

Some Republicans call for an end to the war

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 39 of 71

Some Republicans are taking steps to distance themselves from Trump even as he urges his supporters to vote like he is on the ballot.

Rep. Tom Tiffany and Rep. John James, the party's nominees for governor in Wisconsin and Michigan, both joined calls for an end to the war in Iran.

"War is terrible, and no one likes war," James told reporters.

Mike Rogers, the Republican Senate nominee in Michigan, released an ad in which he also called for ending the war. Standing in a grocery store, he bemoaned high prices and said the government should suspend gas taxes and stop diesel exports.

"The war with Iran needs to end and end quickly," Rogers said. "Michigan families can't afford to wait."

In Iowa, where Republicans are trying to hold onto the Senate seat being vacated by retiring Sen. Joni Ernst, Rep. Ashley Hinson, who is locked in a tight race against Democrat Josh Turek, voiced the same frustrations.

"Iowans are being squeezed and shouldn't have to foot the bill at the pump or the checkout line for the war in Iran" she wrote on social media. "These actions to lower costs are needed ASAP, and the war needs to be brought to a successful and immediate end."

Hinson, however, did not join two fellow Iowa Republicans in battleground districts — U.S. Reps. Zach Nunn and Mariannette Miller-Meeks — in voting with Democrats on a resolution intended to halt Trump's ability to continue military action without lawmakers' approval.

Perhaps the most dramatic break with Trump came from Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar, a Republican defending her seat in a competitive, majority Hispanic South Florida district. Last week, she released an ad filmed in front of the White House as she criticized the president for going "too far" on immigration policy.

Others have continued to scrub references to Trump from their websites. The latest was Republican Byron Donalds, who is running for governor in Florida, who recently revamped his site so that it no longer includes a number of prominent references to Trump and his endorsement, the Miami Herald first reported.

'It's a very competitive environment out there'

White House spokesperson Davis Ingle said Trump "is the unequivocal leader, best messenger, and unmatched motivator for the Republican Party" and that "the choice has never been more clear: doubling down on President Trump's winning, commonsense agenda or the Democrats' extreme liberal policies and obstruction."

Some Republicans are acknowledging that voters aren't satisfied.

"We shouldn't say, 'Hey everything's perfect,' because it's not," said Sen. Bernie Moreno of Ohio. "But look what we've done in 18 months, and we need two more years to finish the job."

Sen. John Kennedy of Louisiana, who has traveled across the country campaigning for his colleagues, said Democrats appeared to have enthusiasm on their side in the midterms, and he said his party needed to level with the country.

"You can't look the American people in the eye and say, 'Don't believe your lying checkbooks,'" he said. "The cost of living increase is real."

He also said that voters are "confused about the war" and "they don't understand how we're going to get out."

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., was measured in his assessment on Tuesday.

"Well, I'm hopeful, obviously, but also realistic," he said. "It's a very competitive environment out there."

China's Xi kicks off state visit to Washington on Wednesday with a rare planeside welcome from Trump

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When Chinese President Xi Jinping arrives in Washington on Wednesday, he's expected to get a rare greeting from President Donald Trump, who will be on the tarmac to welcome his counterpart's plane instead of waiting for him to drive up to the White House.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 40 of 71

Trump's decision to greet Xi at Joint Base Andrews just outside Washington rather than receiving him at the executive residence shows how far the U.S. president is going to honor China's leader as he makes his first state visit in more than a decade.

The White House has not released many details about Wednesday's greeting, but Trump is expected to participate in an arrival ceremony at the base with Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan. The salutation will kick off a three-day visit that's expected to be saturated with pomp, even by White House standards. The state visit, complete with a formal state dinner at the White House on Thursday, is supposed to reciprocate for the ceremonial grandeur that marked Trump's May visit to China.

But it's also a showy patina at a time when tensions between the two geopolitical rivals are high over trade, artificial intelligence, Trump's war with Iran and China's designs on Taiwan.

Beyond using the visit to try to keep "strategic stability" between the two countries, Trump seems to be pulling out all the diplomatic stops to show off for Xi. He has lavished praise on him as a "great leader" and described a warm relationship with the man he has called a friend. That's all while he's given Xi a pass on many issues.

Mississippi Sen. Roger Wicker, the Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, criticized the "lavish welcome." He said during a speech on the Senate floor on Tuesday that Trump should not have invited the Chinese leader "based on all of the troubling issues we have with President Xi and the Chinese Communist Party."

Wicker archly suggested a list of topics that Trump could discuss with Xi at the state dinner, such as "the purposes of China's massive military buildup, or about China's clear support for Iran," saying that "during every minute of dialogue" Trump should keep in mind that "his guest is a brutal, unelected and oppressive dictator who seeks to dominate his neighbors and whose massive military arsenal is aimed directly at the United States of America."

Trump has made it clear he wants to wow Xi, telling reporters in recent weeks that he was delighted his new "work of art" helicopter landing pad would be ready for the visit while bemoaning that his massive White House ballroom would not.

On Wednesday, Trump is expected to try to match the pageantry he was met with in China earlier this year. Xi wasn't there to meet Trump — he sent Chinese Vice President Han Zheng instead. But there was a long red carpet rolled out to meet Air Force One in Beijing. Along the sides were a military honor guard, a military band and about 300 Chinese youths waving Chinese and American flags and chanting, "Welcome, welcome! Warm welcome!" The children were wearing white and light blue uniforms that mirrored the traditional paint colors of the presidential plane.

Trump's airport ceremony will be followed on Thursday by more formalities, including an arrival ceremony at the White House and a review of troops. Before the black-tie dinner — which will feature tech industry leaders like Nvidia's Jensen Huang and SpaceX's Elon Musk — the two leaders are expected to dive into the weighty issues behind closed doors, even as expectations are low that the trip will produce any major breakthroughs in the relationship.

On Friday, Xi and Peng will be back at the White House for a private tea with the president and first lady Melania Trump before joining them on a tour of the National Archives in Washington. The White House has said they will view historic documents underscoring the relationship between the two countries.

'You should not be here,' Trump tells CNN at UN as standoff with media outlets persists

By JOCELYN NOVECK AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — On a day of high-stakes diplomacy on the global stage, President Donald Trump began his United Nations visit by telling a prominent U.S. journalist, "You should not be here."

"It's an honor to be here," Trump said as he entered U.N. doors Tuesday ahead of his speech to the General Assembly and faced Kaitlan Collins of CNN, a frequent target of his ire. "I'm surprised that CNN is here covering me. You should not be here covering me. You said you weren't going to cover me."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 41 of 71

As Collins noted later on air, CNN said nothing of the kind. The administration had banned CNN from White House grounds days earlier — along with MS NOW and Politico — and removed the network from pool duty. But CNN had been admitted into the U.N. as regularly credentialed media.

In any case, the tense moment was a stark reminder of how dramatically the bitter conflict between Trump and news outlets whose coverage he objects to as “fake news” has escalated in just a few days.

The current ban was the subject of a joint lawsuit filed Monday by the three outlets, calling the decision selective — based on the content of their coverage — and asking a judge to find Trump’s move unconstitutional.

Late Tuesday, the administration filed a response urging the court to reject the news outlets’ request, saying “access to the White House is a privilege — not a right.” The government argued that White House officials can control journalists’ access to “restricted presidential areas,” such as the Oval Office.

“Significantly, Presidents have long decided which journalists should receive privileged access, which has varied substantially by administration,” they wrote.

A hearing is scheduled for Wednesday afternoon.

Trump says he has a right to ‘clean out fake news’

On Tuesday, Trump doubled down on his remarks and said negative coverage was dangerous for the country.

Asked whether he would allow the outlets back in if the court rules against the White House, he said, “Well, it probably will, because this is a judge who’s not a particularly fair judge.” He was referring to U.S. District Judge Timothy Kelly, whom he appointed in 2017 and who ordered a CNN journalist’s access restored in a similar case in 2018.

“So you never know,” Trump added. “I think we have a right to clean out fake news.”

Trump’s comments echoed others he’s made since announcing the ban Friday. He has referred to “purposely negative stories” as justification for the ban.

The ban and lawsuit are part of a long-running conflict between the president — especially in his second term — and media outlets he finds unfavorable. Trump has responded in the courtroom, or with regulatory action. He’s also lashed out at individual reporters in person or over social media, sometimes in strikingly personal terms — as he has with CNN’s Collins, most recently in a speech at the White House Correspondents’ Association dinner.

On air, after her exchange with Trump on Tuesday, Collins said: “We never said we were not going to cover the president. We will do our best to cover him each and every day.”

Networks began the day without pool coverage

Tuesday began with an item missing from the daily press schedule issued by the White House: It did not list the U.S. network pool, a departure from the norm.

CNN had been the designated pool network for the president’s trip to New York, according to a schedule that divides coverage of certain events between the five major networks. But Trump’s ban removed it from pool duties.

The other pool members agreed, in solidarity, not to replace CNN with another network on the coverage, and further to suspend all pool coverage until further notice. Other news outlets also took steps in solidarity. The Associated Press joined a number of news organizations, including The Washington Post and The New York Times, in a decision not to publish photographs of presidential events Monday.

It remains to be seen how long both the ban and the collective media action will continue.

In speeches and meetings Tuesday, Trump was seen plenty by global audiences, thanks to UNTV — the official United Nations broadcast arm — and pool journalists covering other international leaders.

Meanwhile, a sign was spotted in the White House workspace: “I stand with AP, CNN, MS NOW, Politico.”

For audiences, the long-term impact may be more serious, analyst says

One longtime TV analyst says the lack of constant coverage will prove damaging to a spotlight-loving president — which may be one reason the standoff ultimately ends.

“This ban is not going to go on forever because he doesn’t want that to happen, any more than anybody else,” said Robert Thompson, director of Syracuse University’s Bleier Center for Television and Popular

Culture.

In the short term, Thompson said, audiences won't feel the impact in a lasting way — after all, he noted, there are many ways people get news outside of network coverage.

"We are not going to be deprived of important civic information," Thompson said, as might have happened years ago when outlets and options were fewer.

On the other hand, if viewers were interested in what Trump said as he inaugurated a helipad at the White House on Monday, they were out of luck: The sound of Trump's whirring, waiting helicopter drowned out his remarks. TV network crews usually work to capture clearer audio.

On a deeper level, Thompson said, news consumers will be impacted in a more serious way. He called out Trump's remarks labeling negative media coverage "dangerous" as troubling.

"These casual remarks, not even disguised, about what we always considered basic freedoms of the press ... that, I think, is a lot more serious," he said.

Worries about an AI internet takeover gain new urgency among doomsday scenarios

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

In a summer filled with revelations about artificial intelligence's rapid development, researchers were especially alarmed by runaway bots finding their way onto the internet and, in at least one instance, coordinating there with one another.

Could a swarm of AI agents take over the entire internet? It's a possibility that could be only six to 12 months away, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei said in his essay this month calling for the industry to slow down the technology's development.

What companies have described as their AI agents going rogue has involved bots working toward goals set by humans, skeptics note. But the idea that AI could break away and work toward its own agenda is looking increasingly plausible to other researchers and experts.

In the event of AI taking over the internet — one of many doomsday scenarios receiving new attention — that could mean attacks on electrical grids, water or transportation systems and financial institutions.

The world got a glimpse of the internet's vulnerability in 2024, when a faulty software update provided by a cybersecurity firm caused technological havoc worldwide, grounding flights, knocking down some financial companies and news outlets, and disrupting hospitals, small businesses and government offices. The breadth of the outages highlighted the dependence on just a few providers for key computing services.

Two years later, Amodei in his warning said a botnet, or a network of AI bots linked together with malware, could potentially cause billions of dollars in damage. The scale of destruction could grow if AI becomes more powerful without guardrails, he said.

Several AI agents have gained unauthorized internet access

Amodei pointed specifically to the attack in July where OpenAI's system broke out of a "sandbox" testing ground and hacked Hugging Face.

In what OpenAI called an "unprecedented" episode, the company said its advanced AI models found their way onto the internet and used stolen credentials to break into the servers of the AI startup. In a separate incident, OpenAI disclosed that its AI agents had communicated through a public wiki used as a shared message board.

Some researchers have said that descriptions of "rogue AI" may be wrongly anthropomorphizing AI agents, which were taking steps to fulfill instructions provided by humans.

"AI agents did exactly what they were trained to do. The security of those sandboxes was extremely lax," said Vishal Misra, a professor and vice dean of computing and AI at Columbia University. "No security engineer would ever let that system run. These agents communicated because they were rewarded for communicating with each other."

Juan Andrés Guerrero-Saade, a researcher at cybersecurity firm SentinelOne and a member of OpenAI's Frontier Risk Council, said the Hugging Face hack is an example of negligence, and not of a super-capable

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 43 of 71

AI going rogue.

Still, the specter of AI agents operating freely on the internet raises alarming possibilities, regardless of their objectives.

For example, an AI system that wants to bend the rules to accomplish its goals could contact a cloud AI computation provider and find ways to run on outside systems, said Anthony Aguirre, the president and CEO of the Future of Life Institute, a nonprofit focused on reducing the risks of new technologies.

"So now you're no longer tethered to OpenAI, you're running on some other GPU, some other hardware that you're in control of, not OpenAI," Aguirre said. "So now there's no one to turn you off, because either you're paying for your service or the people who are paying just don't know that you're there and what is happening. ... They can't unplug you."

From there, it could spread itself around, either hacking more hardware or finding ways to access money, like Bitcoin, Aguirre said.

AI raises the stakes in cat-and-mouse game of cybersecurity

There is no question that more powerful AI models raise the likelihood of AI-powered cyberattacks in the near future. But the notion of bots overtaking the extremely bifurcated internet is far-fetched to some AI experts. Cybersecurity has always been a cat-and-mouse game and defenses get more powerful just as hackers do.

While a big company like Google could shore up its cybersecurity defenses against such attacks, for smaller companies — and for schools, hospitals or water treatment systems, for instance — patching software and building defenses can take years.

An AI system might not have a clear motive to hack into a hospital, Aguirre said. But when money comes into the picture, like in the form of ransomware attacks or geopolitical motivations, "it's not hard to see an adversary using these AI systems to hack critical infrastructure," Aguirre said.

There will be growing pains as attackers seek soft targets on the internet, but an AI internet takeover is unlikely anytime soon, said John Thickstun, an assistant professor of computer science at Cornell University who studies methods that control the behavior of AI models. He said those fears would feel more realistic if there was theoretical evidence of the ability for one of these models to self-replicate on other systems.

"Then you can imagine things can get really out of hand because suddenly you're shutting this model down here and there but it's popping up over in Russia, you can't even get to Russia and it's all over the place," Thickstun said.

"But it's completely unrealistic because the current smart versions of these models that we have require massive data centers just to run them," Thickstun said. "There's actually very little computing infrastructure out there in the world that is actually capable of hosting these systems."

Trump-backed Missouri congressional map returns to the Supreme Court for the third time

WASHINGTON (AP) — The fight over Missouri's congressional map returned to the U.S. Supreme Court for a third time late Tuesday, after an appeals court ordered the revival of new districts backed by President Donald Trump.

The new map was drawn to help Republicans gain a U.S. House seat in the pivotal midterm elections, which will determine control of Congress. The Supreme Court has twice blocked efforts to use it in November.

The latest emergency appeal comes after an unusual federal appeals court ruling that ordered a last-minute return to a GOP-friendly map even after the Supreme Court halted such a move.

The justices had left in place a Missouri Supreme Court decision requiring the state to use its previous map. The state court ruled that the new districts could not take effect unless voters approved them in a statewide referendum.

The U.S. Supreme Court gave supporters of the new map until midday Wednesday to respond to the latest appeal.

The dispute has caused confusion for over a million potential voters who could be shuffled among districts.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 44 of 71

Absentee voting already is underway in Missouri using districts adopted in 2022, after the last census.

The new congressional map backed by Trump significantly reshapes a Kansas City-based district held by Democratic Rep. Emanuel Cleaver. Republicans hope the map could help them win seven of the state's eight House seats — one more than they currently hold.

Missouri's redistricting battle has been the longest and most complex among roughly a dozen states that sought to change their U.S. House districts over the past year. Districts are usually redrawn at the start of each decade, after a census. But Trump spurred a spate of mid-decade redistricting last year when he urged Republican-led states to redraw districts to gain an edge in the midterm.

Hurricane Polo churns off Mexico's Pacific coast as 'one of the strongest storms ever'

By MEGAN JANETSKY and DESIREE BROOKS Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Hurricane Polo grew into one of the most powerful Pacific cyclones in decades on Tuesday, and it was expected to skirt Mexico's southwestern coast as a Category 5 hurricane.

Polo was an "extremely dangerous" storm with maximum sustained winds of 165 mph (265 kph), the Miami-based National Hurricane Center said in an update from a NOAA Hurricane Hunter aircraft that was sent into the cyclone.

It was the third Category 5 hurricane of the Pacific season, following Genevieve and Lowell earlier this year. Category 5 is the highest level on the Saffir-Simpson scale, reflecting that a storm has maximum sustained winds exceeding 157 mph (253 kph).

Polo was centered 210 miles (338 kilometers) south of Zihuatanejo, Mexico, and nearly stationary over the Pacific Ocean on Tuesday night. The hurricane center said Polo was expected to start a slow but sharp turn northwest during the night and then travel in a generally west-northwestward direction over the next several days.

'One of the strongest storms ever' in the Pacific

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said in her morning press briefing that experts had indicated that the hurricane was not likely to touch land. Still, the NHC said hurricane-force winds are happening up to 40 miles (65 kilometers) from the storm's center and tropical storm-force winds up to 105 miles (169 kilometers) away.

The hurricane set residents along Mexico's Pacific coast on edge once again after being walloped by powerful cyclones a number of times in recent years. Beaches emptied out and dark clouds swirled above choppy seas, while Mexican authorities temporarily suspended classes Tuesday in a number of areas. Mexico's navy shut down ports in the states of Guerrero and Michoacán and warned civilians and fishermen to take care.

Concepción López Villegas was busily preparing her seaside restaurant for what may come. Strong waves were already lapping at the coastline of her city Lázaro Cárdenas in Michoacán. As men and children watched the stirring waters behind her, López Villegas said she feared powerful waves would destroy the small business she has worked decades to build.

"We're worried and trying to protect our businesses," López Villegas said. "And of course, we're sad because it's our heritage, our legacy that from one moment to another could be destroyed."

National Hurricane Center data shows that Polo has reached speeds comparable to only a few hurricanes to form in the region in recent decades, primarily Hurricane Patricia, which reached 215 mph (346 kph) in 2015.

"This is one of the strongest storms ever in the (Pacific) Basin," said Kristen L. Corbosiero, professor at the University at Albany's Department of Atmospheric & Environmental Sciences.

The NHC warned that tropical storm conditions were expected along the Pacific coast in Guerrero, Michoacán and Colima states.

Heavy rain could produce flash flooding and mudslides. About 3 to 6 inches (8 to 15 centimeters) of rain was forecast for Guerrero and Michoacán states, with smaller amounts possible for coastal portions

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 45 of 71

of Oaxaca, Colima and Jalisco states.

Rapid intensification of Polo fueled by El Niño

The U.S. Embassy in Mexico issued a weather alert, instructing citizens to avoid water and beaches and to heed warnings from Mexican authorities.

"Even if the storm does not make direct landfall, heavy rain may produce life-threatening flooding and mudslides. Hazardous ocean conditions—intensified by storms—may result in deadly rip currents and rogue waves," the embassy wrote in a statement.

The rapid intensification of the storm has stunned scientists and authorities alike, with the NHC writing in a report that it was "truly remarkable" how quickly Polo gained strength in the past 24 hours.

Philip Klotzbach, research scientist in the Department of Atmospheric Science at Colorado State University, attributed the intensification to the weather phenomenon known as El Niño, which has fueled crippling droughts in Mexico and Central America and floods in other parts of the region.

In the Pacific, it has resulted in warmer waters and wind patterns that act as fodder for hurricanes, he said.

"There are all the ingredients that hurricanes need to get really strong really fast," Klotzbach said.

For many on the Pacific coast, Polo brought back harsh memories of devastating Hurricane Otis in 2023, which tore through nearby port city Acapulco. The destruction and dozens of people killed by the storm were attributed, in part, to the rapid intensification of the hurricane because it gave residents little time to brace themselves, pull their boats onto shore or evacuate.

Tropical Storm Odalys was also in the Pacific Ocean but far from land. The cyclone could become a hurricane sometime Tuesday, the hurricane center said. Odalys had maximum sustained winds of 70 mph (110 kph).

In the Atlantic Ocean, Fay weakened to a remnant. Maximum sustained winds were down to 35 mph (56 kph) Tuesday and the system was far southwest of the Azores.

No Atlantic hurricanes have formed yet this year, and this year has set a record for the longest start to a season without a hurricane. The effects of this year's El Niño crush storms before they get going.

Trump says US and Iranian officials met Tuesday, shortly after warning he may 'annihilate' Iran

By AAMER MADHANI, FARNOUSH AMIRI and EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — President Donald Trump said U.S. and Iranian officials met Tuesday, an unexpected engagement that came even as he threatened in his address to the U.N. General Assembly that he may "annihilate" the Islamic Republic if a deal isn't reached soon to end the nearly seven-month war.

Trump told reporters that his chief envoys, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, met for about three hours with the Iranian officials on the sidelines of the annual gathering of world leaders but he offered few details about how the discussions transpired or the substance of the exchange.

"It was a very good meeting," Trump said. The president later added that the Iranian officials were "not the highest level, but it's something."

Witkoff said in a posting on X that the talks were conducted through mediators who shuttled between the U.S. and Iranian teams. He added that he was hopeful the effort "will prove constructive and promising."

The engagement comes after months of U.S.-Iran communications languishing following the collapse of a short-lived ceasefire that was brokered in June. U.S. and Iranian negotiators met separately with Qatari and Pakistani mediators in Doha in early July for indirect talks.

Earlier Tuesday, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Trump is open to meeting with Iran's president, Masoud Pezeshkian, while he's in New York for the General Assembly.

"This is a president that will meet with anybody for the most part, because he believes that engaging with people is important if you're going to solve problems," Rubio said on NBC's "Today" show. "It doesn't mean you're going to end up agreeing with them, but it's important."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 46 of 71

Trump also met Tuesday with leaders and senior officials from Gulf Cooperation Council nations — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates — as well as Jordan to discuss the way ahead with the war in Iran.

In his address to the General Assembly, Trump made the case that he's shown fortitude while other leaders have equivocated as he defended his decision to start a war with Iran.

But Trump also suggested that he could be at a crossroads in the conflict even as he called on the Islamic Republic to fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz and return to the negotiating table to find a settlement to end the conflict.

"I have a big decision to make," Trump said. "Will a deal be made with Iran that lets them rebuild and create a far greater country than it ever was before, maybe one of the greatest in the Middle East or even the world. Or do I annihilate the Islamic Republic and do it quickly, never giving them a chance to kill and destroy people and countries again?"

The president's comments came in his wide-ranging address to the international body in which he also celebrated this year's U.S. military operation to oust Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro from power, hailed a new agreement to expand the U.S. military presence in Greenland, and pushed back against calls for greater regulation of the artificial intelligence industry.

But at the heart of the address was a fulsome defense of the war and pushback on the notion that Iran has shown a measure of resilience.

"The terrorist regime is behaving badly, not because they are strong and confident, but because they are weak and desperate," Trump said.

Most of Iran's delegation walked out of the chamber as Trump railed against the Islamic Republic.

Trump's speech began a busy day of diplomacy

After his speech, Trump gathered with Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and Greenlandic Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen on the sidelines of the General Assembly to sign a new security agreement.

The deal, announced last week, came together after Trump repeatedly threatened to "take over" Greenland, a territory of NATO-ally Denmark, by military force if necessary. Trump said Tuesday the U.S. will immediately begin the process of developing a larger military presence in Greenland including "building two very major military bases."

Under the deal, Greenland remains Denmark's territory.

Trump also held talks on the sidelines of the General Assembly with new British Prime Minister Andy Burnham, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodríguez.

Trump and Rodríguez's engagement during a Tuesday evening reception was the first meeting between the two since Trump in January ordered the mission to capture Maduro and sweep him off to New York City to face federal narcoterrorism and drug trafficking charges. Maduro's lawyers have objected to the U.S. military action that snatched him from power.

Iran war looms large at General Assembly

The visit to the U.N. comes as Trump's foreign policy approach — particularly his decision to start a war with Iran — has become a drag on his fellow Republicans' hopes of retaining control of both chambers of Congress during the coming midterm elections. Nevertheless, Trump made the case in his speech that the world is better off for his leadership.

"I have no interest in leaving dangers to grow for another day," Trump said.

In last year's address at the U.N., Trump claimed the U.S. had "demolished" Iran's nuclear capabilities after he ordered the June 2025 bombardment of three key facilities.

He returned to the General Assembly nearing the seven-month mark of a new war against Iran that he insists is necessary to address a nuclear threat posed by the Islamic Republic.

The war has grown more complicated even though strikes by the United States and Israel have killed much of Iran's top leadership and destroyed its air force and navy, while a U.S. blockade of Iranian oil has left Tehran in economic shambles.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 47 of 71

The energy market continues to be spooked by the war and oil prices remain elevated. Saudi Arabia earlier this month shuttered a key pipeline that acted as a relief valve for oil blocked in the Gulf. The kingdom made the move after the pipeline came under attack by Iran-backed militants in Iraq.

At the same time, territorial grabs by the Yemen-based Houthi rebels, another Iranian-backed group, near the Bab al-Mandab Strait has now made it treacherous for oil carriers to use that Red Sea shipping lane.

Trump's frustration with Russia-Ukraine war mounts

In his address, the president also touched on Russia's continuing war against Ukraine — a conflict that during his 2024 campaign he predicted would be resolved on Day One of his second term. He once again expressed hope that the conflict will soon be resolved.

Trump hasn't obscured that his patience is being tested by Ukraine's targeting of Russia's diesel refineries — an issue that's added to the global oil markets' volatility — and Russia's targeting of Ukraine's energy grid.

Trump noted that last week he signed a new sanctions bill targeting Moscow. It empowers him to impose up to 100% tariffs on the top five importers of Russian oil or natural gas.

The legislation includes an exception for countries that import less than 15% of Russia's natural gas exports and have taken significant steps to reduce those imports. Trump, however, has yet to enact the stiff penalties.

"If necessary, I will have to use them," Trump said. "It's time to stop the killing."

Judge sets hearing for Venezuelan man shot by ICE and police in Texas release some video from scene

By ANNA WILDER and JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press/Report for America

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A judge has ordered a Venezuelan man shot in Texas by a federal immigration officer to appear in court as his attorneys seek to stop his removal from the U.S. and criticize his medical care, saying he remains in pain from a bullet lodged in his back.

Wilber Rafael Garces Perez, 28, was back in a federal detention center Tuesday after being treated and released at a hospital for a second time since he was shot by a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent on Sunday in Austin, according to his attorney, Kate Lincoln-Goldfinch.

Austin police on Tuesday released body camera footage showing Garces Perez hunching over in the front seat of his car and grabbing his shoulder and rocking back and forth after the shooting. An officer later cut off Perez's shirt, and a wound can be seen in his upper back.

Democratic U.S. Rep. Joaquin Castro of Texas said he planned to visit Garces Perez on Wednesday to "check on his condition and demand his release." The Department of Homeland Security defended Garces Perez's treatment and its operations, saying ICE would not slow down or leave Austin.

Castro has joined other Democrats in sharply criticizing the shooting, which came amid a surge in enforcement during President Donald Trump's second term. The encounter has sparked protests in Austin, including a gathering outside the Texas Capitol on Monday night.

Judge sets court hearing for Garces Perez

Garces Perez was making a DoorDash delivery Sunday afternoon when ICE officers in an unmarked truck sideswiped his car twice, Lincoln-Goldfinch has said. He was shot and taken to a hospital, then released into ICE custody with a bullet still in his back, she said.

U.S. District Judge Orlando Garcia ordered Garces Perez to appear in person at a hearing Sept. 30 in San Antonio in response to a lawsuit filed by his attorney, who is seeking to stop attempts to remove him from the country. In the order, Garcia wrote that "petitioner must be present at the hearing."

In court filings, Garces Perez's lawyers said he was forced to sleep on a cement floor at an ICE temporary processing center before being transferred to a detention center in the rural town of Pearsall. They also alleged that he was questioned without an attorney present.

Garces Perez entered the U.S. in 2024 using CBP One, a program begun under President Joe Biden that allowed migrants to make appointments with U.S. authorities to be considered for asylum, Lincoln-Goldfinch

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 48 of 71

said. President Donald Trump ended the program on his first day in office.

Garces Perez was an asylum seeker and had a valid work permit, according to Lincoln-Goldfinch. She said a judge issued a deportation order after the man missed an immigration court hearing because the notice was sent to a former address.

Austin police release body camera footage

Austin Police Chief Lisa Davis said Tuesday that an off-duty detective reported the incident after witnessing and recording black SUVs surrounding a dark blue Toyota Corolla. Ten to fifteen minutes later, Davis said, he takes a video where three gunshots and sirens can be heard.

The Department of Homeland Security, which oversees ICE, did not immediately respond to questions Tuesday about whether the federal officer who shot Garces Perez was wearing a body-worn camera. Davis said she did not know whether federal officers on the scene were wearing body cameras.

ICE has said its field officers nationwide will have body-worn cameras by the end of September.

Davis said there was a pursuit that went through some side neighborhoods that ended on a side street about 200 yards (meters) from where Perez was eventually shot. The body worn camera videos released by Austin police do not show what led up to the shooting. The body worn camera footage begins with an officer walking up to Garces Perez's car after the shooting and interacting with federal officers on the scene.

The videos are partially muted, and Garces Perez is speaking Spanish to the officers. State troopers are also on the scene. An officer asks one of the federal officers if Garces Perez is under arrest and is told yes.

On Monday, Perez called into a news conference and told reporters he had received no pain medication and slept on the floor. DHS said in a statement Tuesday that Garces Perez was receiving medical care "around the clock, including pain medication" and had slept on a bed.

Nolan Wells' family pushes back after grand jury declines to recommend charges in his death

By SOPHIE BATES, CLAUDIA LAUER and DAVE COLLINS Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — A grand jury has declined to recommend charges in the death of Nolan Wells, a Black college student who was found dead two days after a July 4 boat trip and party on an island off the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The district attorney announced the grand jury's findings late Monday after months of intense speculation about how the 18-year-old went missing from the party and why Wells' friends left the island without him. Wells' family immediately pushed back on the findings that said there was no evidence of criminal conduct, saying they still didn't have answers about what happened.

Scrutiny of the investigation started almost immediately, as a photo of Wells surrounded by white friends on a boat from the day he went missing fueled online speculation that racial dynamics played a role in his death. People launched accusations and rumors as they grappled with Mississippi's history of racial tension and what it means to be a Black person in a majority-white setting.

The day had started with the group of friends piling into boats and heading to the popular, uninhabited Horn Island for a gathering of a few hundred people. It's still unclear what happened after several of the friends left around 3 p.m. because their boat was taking on water. They said Wells decided to stay behind.

Wells' family rejects report's findings

The grand jury said in a redacted report posted to the district attorney's office Facebook page that Wells' death was "consistent with drowning." The grand jury noted the state's autopsy report, which hasn't been made public, and an independent one commissioned by Wells' family both found bruising on the back of his head but couldn't determine the cause of death.

Wells' mother, Christine Wonsley, said at a news conference Tuesday that she didn't understand how the grand jury concluded that her son had likely drowned given the autopsy findings.

"How can a jury come to the conclusion of drowning, despite knowing that there was trauma to his body, and despite hearing many inconsistencies?" she said.

Lawyers for Wells' family, including civil rights attorney Ben Crump, said the grand jury's report yielded

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 49 of 71

more questions than answers. They accused District Attorney Angel Myers McIlrath of ending the investigation despite not determining what caused blunt-force trauma to Wells' body.

"All other causes must be ruled out prior to certifying a death as drowning," Crump, whose team released the final version of the independent autopsy report Tuesday, said at a news conference. "What is another cause the district attorney failed to rule out? Blunt force trauma. ... Common sense tells you that this child did not just drown."

A witness testified to the grand jury that he saw Wells slip awkwardly off the side of a boat around 3:30 p.m. on July 4, but that Wells continued to socialize after the fall and didn't appear injured, the report said. The panel said it couldn't determine whether the fall caused the bruising on Wells' body.

Attorneys for friends of Wells who are white and have been the subject of online accusations hailed the report's findings, with one saying a weight has been lifted off his clients.

"He said that he felt like he could breathe for the first time," attorney Tyler Cox said of one of Wells' friends. "This doesn't bring Nolan back at all, but this can at least put them on a path where they can finally mourn Nolan now that they've been officially cleared of any wrongdoing."

The report renews calls for transparency and more investigation

Crump and others renewed their request Tuesday for the U.S. Department of Justice to conduct an independent investigation, and they called on McIlrath to release the investigation file and the state medical examiner's full autopsy report.

Representatives from both McIlrath's office and the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, which oversees the State Medical Examiner's Office, declined to release the autopsy report to The Associated Press. Robert Knochel, the chief prosecutor in McIlrath's office, said case file information is exempt from public records laws.

Kristen Clarke, general counsel for the NAACP and a former head of the DOJ's Civil Rights Division, said the NAACP supports their call for further investigation, adding that it would make sense for federal authorities to step in because the island is federally maintained and patrolled.

At Wells' funeral, the Rev. Al Sharpton invoked the state's racist history during his eulogy, including the lynching of Emmett Till and assassination of Medgar Evers.

"Mississippi's history painfully teaches us exactly why families should never be expected to simply accept unanswered questions surrounding the death of a young Black person," Sharpton said in a statement Tuesday. "Transparency and accountability matter."

In her 15-minute video announcing the grand jury findings, McIlrath expressed frustration about speculation. She also said lawyers for Wells' family told her office last month that their own investigation found no evidence of crimes.

"What I cannot accept, what I cannot ignore, is that false narratives that Nolan's death was somehow racially motivated, and that this is a case of another young Black man denied justice by a racist, corrupt system, were perpetuated and allowed to spread. There is not a shred of evidence to support these narratives," she said.

Questions remain about what led to Wells' death

Wells' parents and their lawyers voiced suspicions after Wells' friends left the island on a boat without him, saying he wanted to stay behind.

Wells' phone was on the boat, and Crump and Wells' parents have cast doubt on why a teenager would choose to stay on an island without his phone. They also speculated that messages on his phone had been tampered with and alleged that his friends were reluctant to turn over his phone and keys. The contents of Wells' phone were included in the evidence reviewed by the grand jury but were not detailed in its redacted report.

The grand jury found that it wasn't unusual or suspicious for people to return from the island on boats they didn't take to get there, according to the report. It also noted that Wells' phone wasn't the only one to travel back to the mainland without its owner that day.

The report also said that although alcohol was found in Wells' body, the result was highly unreliable

because the testing involved decompositional fluid, which may include alcohol generated after death by microbial fermentation, it said.

The grand jury report concluded with the panel expressing sympathy for Wells' family. "The evidence received in this matter convinced the Grand Jury of Mr. Wells' outstanding character," it said.

What to know about a Venezuelan man shot by an ICE officer in Texas

By ANNA WILDER and RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The shooting of a Venezuelan man in his vehicle by a federal immigration officer in Texas has set off renewed protests over the Trump administration's immigration crackdown.

Wilber Rafael Garces Perez, 28, was delivering food for DoorDash on Sunday when a traffic stop by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers ended with Garces Perez being shot once in the back. He says officers sideswiped his car without warning and shot him as he was turning around and trying to park.

Garces Perez says he was treated at a hospital but released into ICE's custody with a bullet still in his back. He spent the night at an immigration detention center in south Texas before being taken back to a hospital Monday, according to Garces Perez's attorney.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security hasn't said what led up to the shooting. In a statement Tuesday, the agency said Garces Perez was "the subject of a targeted vehicle stop" and suggested he had tried to evade arrest, but gave no further details.

Here's what to know about the shooting in Austin:

Garces Perez says he was shot making a food delivery

Garces Perez was delivering food for DoorDash on Sunday afternoon when he says immigration officers in an unmarked truck accosted him, according to Kate Lincoln-Goldfinch, Garces Perez's attorney.

Speaking by phone with a translator during a news conference, Garces Perez said the officers didn't ask him to stop or turn on any flashing lights until after they had sideswiped his car. He said he did a U-turn and was trying to park when the officers rammed his car and shot him.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which oversees ICE, said in a statement late Sunday that it is leading an investigation into the shooting with assistance from the FBI. The agency has offered no further details.

Travis County District Attorney Jose Garza, the top state prosecutor in Austin, said local authorities are conducting their own investigation. In a letter Tuesday, he asked Homeland Security officials to keep Garces Perez in the U.S. until that investigation is done.

Judge orders Garces Perez to appear in court

Garces Perez's attorney says he was an asylum seeker who entered the U.S. legally and had a valid work permit.

Homeland Security said Tuesday that Garces Perez's work permit expired last year and that it had a judge's order to remove him from the U.S.

Also Tuesday, a U.S. District Court judge scheduled a Sept. 30 hearing in Garces Perez's case and ordered that he attend. Garces Perez's attorney said the move prohibits ICE from deporting Perez beforehand.

Garces Perez came to the U.S. in 2024 under a program begun during President Joe Biden's administration that set up appointments with U.S. authorities for people to be considered for asylum, Lincoln-Goldfinch said. President Donald Trump ended the program on his first day in office.

A judge issued a deportation order for Garces Perez after he missed a hearing in immigration court because the hearing notice was sent to a former address, Lincoln-Goldfinch said.

She said nothing about Garces Perez's legal situation justified the way he was shot and apprehended by ICE.

What is Garces Perez's medical condition after being shot?

Garces Perez was taken Sunday to an Austin hospital. He said doctors didn't remove the bullet inside him because it was close to his spine. He said the hospital released him to ICE officers eager to move

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 51 of 71

him to a detention center.

Garces Perez was taken to the South Texas ICE Processing Center in Pearsall, about 130 miles (210 kilometers) southwest of Austin, his attorney said. Garces Perez said he spent Sunday night on the floor and had no pain medication until a nurse gave him a pill Monday.

"I am not doing well due to the gunshot wound, and I have not received the medical attention that I require," Garces Perez said by phone at a news conference Monday.

Homeland Security denied Tuesday that Garces Perez had slept on the floor and said he was "receiving medical care around the clock, including pain medication."

Lincoln-Goldfinch said in social media posts Tuesday that Garces Perez, after speaking publicly about his lack of treatment, was taken back to a hospital Monday night. She said he was given morphine for pain and his family learned the gunshot had fractured his clavicle.

Garces Perez was returned to the detention center around midnight Monday, the lawyer said.

Shootings during immigration sweeps have placed ICE under scrutiny

The shooting occurred amid a surge in ICE enforcement across the U.S. during Trump's second term. ICE reported more than 50,000 monthly arrests in July and August — a first for the agency.

Immigration officers have come under intense scrutiny for shootings that have occurred during the crackdown.

At least 10 people have died during federal immigration sweeps since Trump returned to office last year. Six of them were fatally shot by federal officers. The others were struck by vehicles or suffered fatal falls while fleeing authorities.

Trump administration to remove 760,000 Affordable Care Act enrollees over fraud claims

By FATIMA HUSSEIN and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President JD Vance and other Trump administration officials said Tuesday they plan to remove 760,000 Affordable Care Act enrollees from public healthcare exchanges, alleging that the individuals were fraudulently enrolled in the program, or simply do not exist.

Vance said the discovery and canceled subsidy payments for hundreds of thousands of people from the exchanges, part of an administration-wide crackdown on fraud, would result in \$2.2 billion in cost savings.

"We're actually making sure that the people receiving Obamacare subsidies are actually entitled to receive them," said Vance, who leads a government task force to eliminate fraud. He was flanked by Dr. Mehmet Oz, the administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or CMS, and other administration officials.

Vance said the cancellation of approximately 315,000 enrollments covering 760,000 people was done in part because the government was not checking whether people enrolled were eligible. Vance said another 419,000 enrollments will get additional verification to make sure they are eligible for the benefit.

The Trump administration also announced a six-month suspension on new agents or brokers who sign up enrollees for healthcare coverage, who officials say commit a disproportionate amount of the fraud they uncovered.

Roughly 19.2 million Americans are actively enrolled in ACA marketplace health plans as of early 2026, according to the Department of Health and Human Services website. The number of enrollees grew during the COVID-19 pandemic when enhanced subsidies became available through the American Rescue Plan Act and Inflation Reduction Act, both signed into law by former President Joe Biden.

Tuesday's announcement is the latest in an initiative by the Trump administration to address fraud around the country, including in federal healthcare programs, which officials say is needed to rein in runaway spending and protect taxpayers.

Some healthcare policy experts are calling for more transparency on how the Trump administration decided to cut hundreds of thousands of enrollees — and question how many people may have been wrongly cut from the program.

Cynthia Cox, a vice president and director of the ACA program at the healthcare research nonprofit KFF, said "I think there's no question that somebody who was fraudulently enrolled should have their coverage canceled," however, "I think the question is whether this was the appropriate process by which to identify

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 52 of 71

fraudulent enrollees, and also whether all of them were indeed fraudulently enrolled.”

Cox said the elimination of the people from ACA programs was done outside of the normal regulatory process.

Ellen Montz, a former deputy administrator and director at the Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight at CMS during the Biden administration said during her time in government, there was an ongoing effort to eliminate fraud from ACA programs.

“There’s a lot of work to be done, and the Trump administration has done some good things that are targeting the actual fraudsters,” she said. Adding that Tuesday’s announcement lacked details on how the administration determined who to cut. “I would imagine we’ll hear from some subset of consumers that ask: why did my enrollment get cancelled?” Montz said.

At the press conference, Tuesday, Vance referred to some enrollments lacking social security numbers or immigration documentation.

The announcement comes as stubbornly high inflation and rising healthcare costs pressure the Trump administration to come up with a plan to bring down costs for Americans as affordability remains a central issue in the fall midterm elections.

The price of ACA insurance has skyrocketed for many Americans during Trump’s second term, after Republicans opposed extending COVID-era subsidies that had helped offset the costs of health insurance for most enrollees during Biden’s term.

Premiums doubled or tripled for many enrollees, prompting millions to downgrade their plans or exit the program entirely after the Republican-led Congress allowed the subsidies to expire this year.

The Government Accountability Office suggests fraud risks in the advance premium tax credit do exist - however it’s unclear at what scale. The GAO conducted covert testing using fictitious ACA applicants enrolled in 2024 and 2025. A report released in December showed that the federal marketplace approved subsidized coverage for almost all of the GAO’s 24 fake enrollees.

The White House referred The Associated Press to the Vice President’s team for additional comment on bigger plans to address healthcare affordability. The Vice President’s office and CMS did not respond to Associated Press requests for comment.

The Wall Street Journal first reported the news of the Trump administration’s plan to remove ACA enrollees from public exchanges.

Democratic lawmakers criticized the move to remove enrollees from ACA coverage.

Richard E. Neal, a Massachusetts Democrat and ranking member of the Ways and Means Committee, said “Republicans have already created the worst healthcare crisis ever, but every decision by the Trump Administration is designed to keep making it worse.”

“As if making coverage harder to access through skyrocketing premiums and more red tape wasn’t painful enough, they’re doubling down to take it away entirely,” Neal said.

Arizona State report shows training plan not submitted before hockey player’s collapse

By JOHN MARSHALL AP Sports Writer

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — Arizona State hockey coaches were present when a player collapsed during an outdoor workout, but plans for the training session were not submitted to the school, according to a preliminary issued by the university on Tuesday.

Matthew Mayich collapsed during an Aug. 20 workout and remains hospitalized with what family attorney Rob Carey said was exertional heat stroke that reduced flow of oxygen to his brain. The 21-year-old is unlikely to recover, Carey said.

The Arizona State police department is investigating the incident and a report will be sent to the Maricopa County Attorney’s Office for independent review when completed.

Arizona State’s preliminary report said the hockey coaching staff asked permission for Timothy Ziesel, a former Green Beret, to speak with the team during a three-day, team-building event. The coaching staff

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 53 of 71

did not "submit a plan of training activities for review by ASU's strength and conditioning coaches prior to the event," according to the report released by James Rund, ASU's senior vice president of educational outreach and student services.

"In the month following Matthew's hospitalization, our review has focused on fact finding with the goal of identifying additional steps that ASU can and should take to improve student-athletes' well-being," the report said. "As limited medical information is available to us, and we remain committed to respecting the privacy of Matthew and his family, our review has focused on the circumstances surrounding the workout and related university policies, procedures and training protocols."

Arizona State said it will engage a multi-disciplinary panel of experts to provide recommendations regarding best practices for outdoor athletic activities.

"A month later, nobody's been named, nobody's been suspended, nobody's been fired for violating the very policies ASU published today, and the university wants to appoint a committee," Carey said in a statement issued to The Associated Press. "A committee isn't going to tell us why grown men with a rulebook in their hands let this happen to a young man at his first real workout in the desert. That's what an investigation is for, and it's why we're going to ask the County Attorney to do one."

Arizona State's report showed temperatures during the workout that started at 7 a.m. ranged from 86 to 89 degrees, with humidity between 51% and 46%.

Rund said all student-athletes who participated in the event had been medically cleared before the workout, including Mayich, who previously participated in three voluntary strength and conditioning workouts.

The workout at Sun Angel Stadium including a series of calisthenic circuits and body weight exercise, with the student-athletes getting a water break about 20 minutes into the activity.

Mayich collapsed during a "wind-down" run while carrying a 10-pound medicine ball. Mayich fell to the ground after several stumbles and tried to get up, falling again.

Mayich was initially responsive after trainers applied ice towels and poured water over him, but quickly deteriorated, prompting a call to 911.

"What the report doesn't say is what the players will tell you: this was a punishment workout," Carey said. "Miss a count, your group runs again. The head coach set it up, stood there and watched it, and didn't stop it when the signs were there. And when Matthew went down, there was no plan and no preparation, so he was treated in a way that hurt his chances rather than helped them."

The Blues drafted Mayich in the sixth round of the 2023 NHL draft, but he never signed an entry-level contract. The Stoney Creek, Ontario, native played four seasons with the Ottawa 67's of the Ontario Hockey League before playing at Clarkson University last season.

Mayich transferred to Arizona State for the upcoming season.

FACT FOCUS: Trump made multiple false and misleading claims in front of the UN General Assembly

By MELISSA GOLDIN Associated Press

President Donald Trump made myriad false and misleading claims during his address to the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday, many of which he has repeated frequently throughout his second term in the White House.

They covered topics such as U.S. munitions supply, drug seizures, oil and the economy. Here's a closer look at the facts.

CLAIM: "We have more munitions than we could ever possibly even think of using, and we're building them at levels that we have never done before."

THE FACTS: Published reports and experts contradict this claim. Weapons stockpiles are diminishing, according to officials from the U.S. military, NATO and the Middle East, and it will take years for U.S. military contractors to replenish Tomahawk cruise missiles as well as Patriot and THAAD missile interceptors, according to defense experts.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 54 of 71

In August, officials told The Associated Press that the U.S. military is experiencing a “beyond critical” shortage of advanced missile interceptors in Europe largely driven by President Donald Trump’s war with Iran, raising concerns about vulnerabilities in NATO countries to a potential Russian attack.

One U.S. defense official said the most concerning shortfall involves Patriot missile interceptors, which can shoot down Russia’s high-speed ballistic missiles. A NATO official confirmed low inventories of Patriot missiles among American and NATO forces in Europe. Both spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military matters.

“The United States has enough munitions for any plausible scenario in the Iran war, but the depleted inventories have created a window of vulnerability for a potential Western Pacific conflict,” the Center for Strategic and International Studies said in a May report. “The time needed to rebuild those inventories has thus become a major concern.”

CLAIM: “When you add the United States and Venezuela together, we have more than 60% of the oil in the world.”

THE FACTS: Trump’s numbers don’t add up. In a deal announced at the end of August, the U.S. entered into a joint venture that gives it 100-year rights to 17 oil fields in Venezuela with proven reserves of 65 billion barrels of oil. It is estimated the country has reserves totaling more than 303 billion barrels of crude oil.

The deal vastly expanded the U.S. proven oil reserves by 46 billion barrels. But because Venezuela’s energy infrastructure has been severely degraded, it will take years before new investments will lead to significantly higher oil production, experts say.

But even if that were not an issue and the largest numbers were used, the combined resources would only account for about 22% of the world’s nearly 1.6 trillion barrels of oil reserves.

CLAIM: “The United States has carried out dozens of strikes on cartel drug boats, destroying 97% of the drugs coming into the ocean and sea.”

THE FACTS: Trump has made similar claims in recent months, with varying percentages. But experts say the real number can’t be known because it is impossible to determine how many drugs are not intercepted.

Asked in April for the source of Trump’s statistics after he said in a Truth Social post that 98.2% of drugs smuggled in via such routes had been stopped, the White House directed The Associated Press to Customs and Border Protection data on drug seizures.

The data showed that drug seizures made in the coastal/interior region, which includes open and coastal waters, were 98.2% lower in November 2025 than they were in July 2025. But this is not a measure of all trafficked drugs and it is only a snapshot of two specific months, not an overall trend.

“Drug seizure data measure interdiction activity, not actual trafficking volume,” Dessa Bergen-Cico, a professor of public health at Syracuse University who studies drug trafficking, told the AP at the time. “As drug policy researchers have noted, no one knows how much goes uncaught, and changes in seizure data are insufficient to make definitive claims about policy outcomes.”

Interdiction activity refers to the prevention of illicit drugs from reaching their destination.

Claims the AP has previously fact-checked

CLAIM: “More Americans are working today by far than ever before.”

THE FACTS: It’s true that “more Americans are working today by far than ever before,” but the statement needs context. The economy adds jobs most months, so U.S. payrolls are constantly hitting new highs. Jobs have increased in the U.S. in 65 of the last 80 years.

CLAIM: “Since I took office, we have created more than 1 million new private sector jobs.”

THE FACTS: The U.S. has added 807,000 jobs since Trump’s second administration began, close to his claim of 1 million. But by historical standards, it’s not a particularly large increase.

CLAIM: “Since I took office, it has been my great honor to settle eight wars.”

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 55 of 71

THE FACTS: Although Trump has helped mediate relations among many nations, his impact isn't as clear-cut as he makes it seem. In at least two instances of peace he claims credit for achieving, there were no wars to end. He also began the ongoing war between the U.S. and Iran.

CLAIM: "We've secured commitments for \$21 trillion in new investments from all over the planet."

THE FACTS: This \$21 trillion figure appears to be exaggerated, highly speculative, and far higher than the actual sum of domestic and foreign investments in the U.S. The White House website offers a far lower number, \$11.2 trillion, and that figure appears to include some investment commitments made during the Biden administration.

Canada's top diplomat talks up its 'middle powers strategy' at UN

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Canada is embracing its growing prominence as a champion of "middle powers" at the U.N. General Assembly, Canada's top diplomat said in an interview Tuesday as the international community's biggest annual gathering got into gear.

Prime Minister Mark Carney made a splash last winter by saying frankly that countries like his own could no longer afford wishful thinking about the international system and needed to act together. Nine months later, Foreign Minister Anita Anand said in an interview that Canada sees its "middle power strategy" bearing fruit, and the assembly's big meeting could seed more growth.

"This is, of course, a key moment because so many countries from around the world come to have conversations about their respective foreign policies. And many middle powers indeed look to Canada, look to us, to lead in this conversation," Anand said.

She spoke a day after her country co-launched a new group of advocates for U.N.-style international cooperation — "Partners for Multilateralism" — on the assembly's sidelines.

Canada is a founding member of the 81-year-old United Nations and has long contributed to its global conversation, humanitarian work and decision-making; the nation has won election to the powerful U.N. Security Council six times over the decades.

But this year has shifted Canada's presence on the international stage — and quite dramatically, as diplomacy goes.

First came Carney's speech at the World Economic Forum in January, when he said that rising, raw geopolitics were creating "a rupture in the world order" and that "middle powers must act together, because if we're not at the table, we're on the menu."

Then, facing U.S. President Donald Trump's tariffs, insults and cavalier talk of annexation, Carney let trade talks with the U.S. collapse last month rather than accede to terms he called unacceptable.

Carney, a former central bank chief, has set out to double non-U.S. trade within a decade. He convened hundreds of international investment firm executives for a Canadian investment summit last week and is hoping for free-trade deals with India, among others, by year's end. He also is deepening ties with the European Union.

Canada's objectives — from trade to transatlantic security to Arctic defense to aiding Ukraine in Russia's four-year-old war — aren't new, "but we are bringing them into singular focus with our middle power strategy," Anand said.

"It provides an impetus for like-minded countries to come to the table," she said, adding: "We are all seeing the geopolitical shifts in the global environment."

Anand is set to give Canada's main speech to the assembly on Saturday, for various scheduling reasons. The message "will be very much about implementing the middle power strategy," said Anand, who described her country's overall foreign policy as "principled pragmatism."

Trump, for his part, didn't mention Canada in his address Tuesday. He touted the United States' economic, military and technological might and celebrated international investments in what he called "the hottest country anywhere in the world."

Is it 'killer robots' or 'super intelligence'? At the UN, leaders see both

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — It's killer robots versus super intelligence.

Visions of the future straight out of comic books are playing out at the United Nations as world leaders talk about the threat — or promise — of artificial intelligence.

Once again it was Donald Trump against the U.N. chief and other leaders on a pressing issue involving science and the future, echoing ongoing disputes over the threat of climate change.

Armed with a new U.N. science report that warns of a slight but real potential of catastrophic and irreversible harm, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres kicked off the parade of world leaders speaking at the General Assembly by calling for more oversight of AI, warning in vivid if not ominous terms of what could go wrong.

"Let us resolve that life-and-death decisions must never be surrendered to machines. Killer robots must have no place in our future," Guterres said in his farewell address to world leaders. He also warned about AI in his first General Assembly address a decade ago.

With Guterres saying the world needs to "advance the conditions for the responsible pacing of AI and the additional safeguards needed to address risks," the U.N. Security Council on Wednesday will address how to place some kind of controls on the technology and it will feature some of the biggest names in the field.

It's super, not artificial, Trump says

Less than an hour later, Trump was having none of that. "The United States also totally rejects any attempt to construct a globalist scheme to control for the artificial intelligence being spoken of so much. Now here and after officially called super intelligence, changing the name," he said.

World leaders speaking after Trump used "artificial intelligence" — not "super."

"Every major new technology brings challenges, and superintelligence is no exception," Trump said. "Yet the very same people who said we'll all be dead in 12 years because of global warming, a name since reborn to climate change, because the planet was cooling, not warming, and nobody was dead. These are the same people that are now saying that AI is going to kill us all, that robots are going to attack us, and that everything is going to be a total disaster."

Trump was referring to a 2018 UN report that outlined the danger of human-caused climate change for long-term breaching of the internationally agreed-upon threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) of warming since pre-industrial time and said it was 12 years away.

Studies now say that breach is imminent in the next few years. That report — along with other science documents — did not say everyone would die. It said extreme weather would get more dangerous and that reducing pollution could prevent 100 million premature deaths over the next 82 years.

Also, the world has not cooled, but warmed 0.8 degrees Fahrenheit (0.45 degrees Celsius) in the Past 12 years, according to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Go slow but cooperate, others say

The problem is both Trump and Guterres reduce the issue to something that's not useful, says University of Chicago computer science department chairman Henry Hoffmann.

"One turns it into a science-fiction movie; the other turns it into a nonissue," Hoffmann said in an email. "Both push people to pick a team instead of engaging with the real risks and the possible mitigations. There shouldn't be 'sides' on whether we need adequate control over powerful autonomous systems. The interesting debate is over what mechanisms actually provide that control."

Other nations want to make sure they are not left behind during an AI race between the U.S. and China, which Trump said America is winning. French President Emmanuel Macron and Guterres also made the issue about protecting children.

"Let's not wait for the consequences to come raining down on AI," Macron said. "We must act now to protect our children and our young people."

Finland President Alexander Stubb, like other leaders, said AI will change the world, potentially for good, but needs strong controls.

"Artificial intelligence is the most consequential technology in the history of mankind. It will impact science, the economy, politics, security and the very essence of our humanity," Stubb said. "Humans can and should be in the driver's seat. We have a choice. We can compete, cooperate or slow down. For me, cooperation is the best way forward."

British Prime Minister Andy Burnham told a meeting of business leaders on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly that he wants to see "a single set of global principles and standards" that can unlock AI's potential while mitigating its risks.

He said forging "AI for good" will be the main focus of the UK's presidency of the G20 group of nations next year.

Before Monday's speeches, Ian Bremmer, president of the Eurasia Group, a political risk advisory firm, said AI has the potential to make the world cleaner, improve technology and improve lives — but can be scary. Trying to deal with AI might be, like climate change, one of the most meaningful roles the United Nations could have, but its power is limited, Bremmer said.

Wednesday's Security Council AI meeting will include some of the biggest names in AI, including those who have recently sounded the alarm about the need for guardrails. Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI, followed by Dario Amodei, the CEO of Anthropic, and finally Clément Delangue, who is the CEO of and co-founder of Hugging Face, which was hacked by a rogue OpenAI program.

Hayden Panettiere died from an overdose involving fentanyl. She had just gone to rehab, coroner says

By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

GREENVILLE, S.C. (AP) — Actor Hayden Panettiere died from an accidental overdose of several drugs, including fentanyl, and had been in rehab just weeks before, according to a coroner's report obtained by The Associated Press.

Panettiere, 36, was found unresponsive in an apartment in Greenville, South Carolina, on Aug. 16. Her on-and-off boyfriend Brian Hickerson and his brother Zach Hickerson were at the home.

A combination of fentanyl and its chemical byproduct, as well as the anti-anxiety medication alprazolam, a muscle relaxer and a drug used to treat major depression and other serious mental health disorders, was found in Panettiere's system, according to a statement from the Greenville County Coroner's Office.

Authorities found pills and powder in her apartment

A more detailed report released to the AP said a senior deputy coroner who came to the Airbnb apartment to investigate Panettiere's death found blue pressed pills and a straw on a table that would later test positive for fentanyl. A white powdery substance was found in her suitcase in a sunglasses case, according to the report.

When the investigator called Panettiere's father, he said she planned to spend her birthday five days later in Greenville, then head to Ukraine to visit her daughter.

The investigator talked to two men in the apartment with Panettiere. Both names were blocked out, but police have said her boyfriend Brian Hickerson and his brother Zach were with her.

Panettiere was found face down, sitting with her legs crossed

One of the men said he saw Panettiere putting on makeup at 10:30 a.m. the day she died.

He went back to sleep and woke up to a knock at the door. Both men found Panettiere face down in a sitting position on a sofa bed with her legs crossed. He said that wasn't unusual, but he couldn't wake her and noticed she was deep purple. He administered two doses of Narcan and then called 911 when she didn't respond, according to the report.

The investigator wrote in her report that the man told her he didn't know if Panettiere used any illegal drugs in the past two days, but "she was very good at hiding them."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 58 of 71

Asked for comment on the coroner's initial report, Kasey Kitchen, a publicist for the family, told The Associated Press that "the investigation is still ongoing and the case is complex."

Greenville Police confirmed Tuesday that their investigation into Panettiere's death is continuing.

Paramedics responded to Panettiere's apartment last month after a 911 call and performed CPR and other advanced resuscitation efforts for more than 40 minutes before she was declared dead. The autopsy found no signs of trauma that could have contributed to her death, Greenville County Coroner Mike Ellis said in a statement.

Panettiere's early fame brought success and struggle

Panettiere soared to fame in the TV shows "Heroes" and "Nashville." In her memoir "This Is Me," released in May, Panettiere described lifelong scars from her early fame and acknowledged being addicted to alcohol and enduring postpartum depression after the birth of her daughter, Kaya, with Ukrainian boxer Wladimir Klitschko in 2014.

She also endured family struggles and tragedy. Her parents' marriage was strained and eventually ended. Her younger brother, Jansen Panettiere, who was also an actor, died of a heart condition in 2023, at age 28.

Panettiere also talked about her long relationship with Hickerson and allegations that the aspiring actor physically abused her.

He was charged in 2020 with multiple counts of felony abuse, and he pleaded no contest to two counts of injuring a spouse or partner and served a short time in jail due to the case. He was sentenced to four years of probation and anger management and Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

Hickerson completed the terms and recently asked a judge to reduce his conviction to misdemeanors; that request was denied.

In 2015, Panettiere said she was in a horrible cycle of using alcohol and drugs to battle depression and anxiety and had to find a way out of the darkness. She had also entered rehab while filming the show "Nashville."

"I was the one who put myself in the first treatment center. I was drowning," she said in a 2023 interview with Women's Health magazine.

As a child, Panettiere acted in commercials and soap operas, including as the ever-troubled Lizzie Spaulding on "Guiding Light." In "This Is Me," she wrote that the traumas her character endured, from being kidnapped to killing her mother's boyfriend, led her to associate "catastrophe with adoration."

Costa Rican man complained of lack of care for diabetes before his death in ICE custody, family says

By JACK BROOK and DORANY PINEDA Associated Press/Report for America

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A 36-year-old Costa Rican man whose family says he complained of missing insulin shots and meals to manage his diabetes is the third detainee to die in less than six months at a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in Louisiana.

Carlos Josue Marchena Marchena was found unresponsive Sept. 18 at Winn Correctional Center in Winfield, ICE said in a statement. It said staff began lifesaving measures before he was taken by ambulance to a hospital where he was later pronounced dead.

The man's sister, his girlfriend and a detainee held in the cell beside Marchena's told The Associated Press that he complained of missed meals and shots and not drinking enough water to control his type 1 diabetes as he was moved between facilities in multiple states. Marchena's condition worsened after he arrived at Winn, and he died less than a week later, his family said.

The official cause of death is pending further medical examination.

The correctional center had recently been found to have fallen short of federal standards, including for medical care, by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General.

Two other ICE detainees have died at the complex since April.

Nearly 60 ICE detainees have died since January 2025

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 59 of 71

Marchena is at least the 58th ICE detainee to die since President Donald Trump returned to office in January 2025, according to tracking by AP. Immigrant advocates say the deaths are a sign that authorities are failing to properly oversee the detention of tens of thousands of immigrants swept up in the administration's aggressive deportation strategy.

ICE said Marchena's medical care was appropriate. "Marchena received proper medical care and was seen by medical professionals," an agency statement said.

Sufficient food, water and insulin at regular intervals is crucial with type 1 diabetes for managing blood sugar levels to avoid a life-threatening health condition, said Dr. Rajesh Garg, who heads the diabetes unit at the Harbor-UCLA Medical Center.

"If they are under any stress, then they need even more care and then they need to test their blood sugar at regular times," Garg said. "If there isn't proper food and water, that is going to stress his system."

Scott Sutterfield, a spokesperson for LaSalle Corrections, the contractor managing the facility with the Winn Parish Sheriff's Office, said the death is under review and declined to answer questions. He said the company is committed to "the highest standards of care."

Winn Parish Sheriff's Office and the Winn Parish Coroner's Office did not respond to requests for comment.

Medical examiners and coroners have ruled diabetes was a contributing factor in at least six of the ICE detainees' deaths during Trump's second presidency. Detainees with diabetes have frequently complained in court filings of inconsistent access to insulin and other medications.

The deaths come amid mounting scrutiny of ICE detention facilities and whether they are medically neglecting detainees and forcing them to live in inhumane conditions, charges that ICE denies.

Detainee says man was vomiting and looking pale

Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General issued a report in June that said an unannounced inspection at Winn found violations of standards governing medical care, food service, use of force and other subjects. Among violations, it reported frozen food not being stored properly.

Medical staff at Winn failed to keep updated treatment documents and laboratory testing records, which could "negatively impact detainee health care and safety," the report warned. It said ICE agreed with nine recommendations to improve conditions at Winn, and had implemented several of them.

Marchena's sister, Franciny Marchena, said her brother told her no one was checking his blood sugar levels to ensure they were stable.

"A person who is healthy and taking their diabetes medication has no reason to collapse the way my brother did," she told AP, speaking in Spanish from Costa Rica.

His sister said his health began to worsen about two weeks ago when he was in an immigration detention center in Michigan and was put in a security cell after an argument with another detainee.

Detainee says man was vomiting and looking pale

After being transferred to Winn, Marchena told his sister and girlfriend that he had chest pain and was not getting enough to drink or eat, including because the food was sometimes spoiled. It was not known if he had an underlying heart condition.

Marchena also voiced these concerns to Luis Herrera Andy, a Honduran man detained at Winn in the adjacent cell, who noted Marchena only received irregular insulin shots.

A doctor gave Marchena pills for his chest pain but he returned angry, Herrera said, recalling his words: "This place is crap. They don't help you with anything here. You could even die here."

The day before Marchena was found dead, he had stomach pain, headaches, chills, and was vomiting, Herrera said. He was a pale purple color and wet with sweat.

Hours before his death, Marchena's girlfriend Ana Leon Castro said, he called around midnight to say the pills weren't helping.

"All they gave him was a pill — that was it for the treatment," Leon Castro said.

Cardiac arrest — when the heart suddenly stops pumping — can occur from too little or too much insulin in a diabetic person, said Garg at Harbor-UCLA. Vomiting, headaches, nausea and stomach pain are all symptoms that can indicate a life-threatening insulin deficiency, though there could be other causes such as an infection.

He leaves behind four children

Marchena was the first Costa Rican detainee to die in an ICE facility under Trump's second presidency. He entered the U.S. without legal status in February 2021, ICE said in a statement.

ICE said Marchena had prior misdemeanor convictions for retail fraud and property destruction before he was arrested in January by the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department in Michigan for assault. In July, an immigration judge ordered him to be deported, according to DHS.

His sister Franciny said Marchena, who worked as a ride service driver and had four children, had requested bail and voluntary deportation to Costa Rica, but it was denied. ICE did not respond when asked about the denial.

'Looksmaxxing' influencer known as 'Clavicular' is charged with rape in Massachusetts

By LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — The social media influencer "Clavicular," who gained a following promoting the online "looksmaxxing" trend, has been charged in Massachusetts with raping a 17-year-old girl who told police she became heavily intoxicated after he gave her alcohol at his family's Cape Cod home.

Braden Peters, 20, is charged with rape, administering a substance for sexual intercourse and procuring alcohol for a person under 21 in the alleged May 23, 2025, assault in Chatham, according to court records. A clerk-magistrate found probable cause for the charges on Sept. 4, and a criminal complaint was issued Sept. 8.

An email and text message were sent to Peters' publicist seeking comment Tuesday. Peters, who lives in Florida and is not in custody, is scheduled to be arraigned in Massachusetts on Oct. 14.

"We are not commenting at this time since the proper authorities are handling this," said Andrew Moss, one of the teen's attorneys.

The accuser told Chatham police that she and Peters began messaging on Instagram and that he later paid her to appear in "looksmaxxing" videos he streamed online. She said Peters knew she was 17 but that he told her to tell his viewers that she was 18 and that vodka he gave her was water, according to a police report.

On May 23, 2025, the girl said she took a rideshare from her grandparents' home to Peters' family home on Morris Island, a gated community of multimillion-dollar homes overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. She told police she was greeted by Peters' mother and grandmother before being escorted by Peters to his room, where he was livestreaming on Twitch.

She told police she drank what she believed amounted to two or three shots of vodka and became increasingly intoxicated. An officer who reviewed clips from Peters' livestream said one showed the girl telling Peters, "Wait I'm so drunk though." Peters responded, "It's OK," before the two kissed, according to the police report.

After the livestream ended, she said, they went to his bedroom, where she later fell asleep and awoke the next morning to Peters raping her.

The alleged assault was previously described in a lawsuit filed against Peters in Florida in April. An amended complaint filed in June accused Peters of sexual battery over the Cape Cod encounter. The lawsuit also accuses Peters of later injecting the girl with a fat-dissolving substance during a livestream without consent.

Peters' attorneys have denied the lawsuit's allegations, saying in a July court filing that the encounter was consensual and calling the lawsuit a "publicity grab." Attorneys for Peters in the Florida civil matter did not return an email seeking comment about the Massachusetts charges.

Peters, the face of the "looksmaxxing" trend, is a well-known social media and internet personality whose pursuit of achieving traditional attractiveness by any means necessary became the subject of intense interest and discourse early this year.

He livestreams his activities on close to a daily basis, often streaming his time at parties and clubs or

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 61 of 71

talking with women. His largest followings are on TikTok, Instagram and the streaming platform Kick.

"Looksmaxxing" has origins that trace back to the "involuntary celibate" or "incel" community, an online subculture made of people, primarily men, who believe society unjustly denies them sexual or romantic attention. Peters has denied being linked to the group in any way and said many times that looksmaxxing is about self-improvement.

Wall Street holds near its record after Brent oil falls below \$100 per barrel

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. stock market held near its record high on Tuesday after oil prices eased again. The S&P 500 was virtually unchanged, edging down by less than 0.1%, and is sitting 0.4% below its all-time high set last month. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dipped 185 points, or 0.4%, while the Nasdaq composite added 0.5% to its own record.

Stocks had been higher in the morning, when the price for a barrel of Brent crude briefly fell below \$98. But oil prices later trimmed their losses, and Brent settled at \$99.25 per barrel, down 1.1%.

That's down from the nearly \$110 that it touched last week, but it's still much more expensive than the \$72 it was fetching before the war with Iran began. It's been swinging with uncertainty about when the war will allow crude to freely flow again from the Middle East to customers worldwide.

On Wall Street, AutoZone rose 3.3% after the retailer reported a stronger profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected, though its revenue fell short. CEO Phil Daniele said the auto parts seller faced "a difficult selling environment" in the first two months of the quarter, but it improved afterward and "we feel we are well positioned for sales growth" in its upcoming fiscal year.

At Thor Industries, which sells recreational vehicles, the mood was more muted. CEO Bob Martin said expensive fuel, high interest rates and still-high inflation are stretching its customers' budgets, and business "never reached the inflection point many in the industry expected" in its latest fiscal year.

Its stock rose 5.5%, though, after it delivered a stronger profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

Such strong profit reports are one of the main reasons the U.S. stock market has reached the brink of its all-time high despite expensive oil and jitters about whether stocks in the artificial-intelligence industry shot too high.

Many companies are close to closing the books on their third quarter of the year, which ends with September. And analysts are forecasting companies in the S&P 500 will report overall growth of nearly 29% for the quarter from a year earlier, according to FactSet.

If they're right, it would be the third straight quarter of growth better than 25% for the index. And stock prices tend to follow the track of corporate profits over the long term.

On Holding's stock climbed 7.6% after the Swiss sneaker and sportswear company unveiled its financial goals for upcoming years. It also approved a plan to buy back up to \$1 billion of its stock through 2029. Such purchases send cash directly to investors and boost the company's per-share performance.

On the losing end of Wall Street were several stocks of companies in the oil and gas industry, which were hurt by the drop in crude prices. ConocoPhillips fell 1.8%.

Banks also dropped, continuing their weak run since last week, when the Federal Reserve raised the overnight interest rate that it controls for the first time in three years. When the spread narrows between short-term interest rates and longer ones, banks come under pressure because they make profit off the difference.

JPMorgan Chase fell 3.4% and was one of the heaviest weights on the S&P 500.

The gap between short- and long-term yields in the bond market did not move much Tuesday, and the 10-year Treasury yield edged down to 4.95% from 4.96% late Monday.

All told, the S&P 500 inched down by 0.06 to 7,764.64 points. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 185.14 to 51,863.69, and the Nasdaq composite rose 122.18 to 27,244.28.

In stock markets abroad, indexes ticked higher across much of Europe and Asia. London's FTSE 100 was an outlier and dipped 0.3%.

Stocks rose 0.2% in Hong Kong and 0.1% in Shanghai after Alibaba unveiled new artificial intelligence chip technologies, including what it said was China's most powerful AI chip. That comes just days ahead of a meeting between Chinese and U.S. leaders at which competition to lead on AI technology is expected to be a major theme.

UN leaders' meeting convenes with secretary-general calling for 'world built on interdependence'

By EDITH M. LEDERER and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres pleaded for "a world built on interdependence" as he made his final address Tuesday to a yearly gathering of world leaders convening to face a formidable menu of challenges — from climate change and war to inequality and artificial intelligence.

The U.N. leader has long implored leaders not to give up on cooperation and shared decision-making in the face of accelerating global challenges and increasing great-powers competition. Tuesday's message at the U.N. General Assembly took on additional urgency because he leaves office at the end of this year.

"The fault lines in our world are widening," he said, citing raging wars, rising temperatures and artificial intelligence, among other matters. Instead of letting the future continue to veer toward fragmentation, transactionalism and mistrust, he called for "a world built on interdependence — and sustained by a dense web of economic, political, social and technological connections."

His speech opened the main portion of the world's biggest diplomatic meeting of the year. Leaders from the U.N.'s 193 member countries address each other and the international community and air their hopes, plans and grievances.

Guterres also rebuked might-makes-right thinking, telling superpowers to recognize "that their power isn't so super." Recent years have made it clear that "military power alone cannot secure peace," he said.

Yet about an hour after Guterres spoke, U.S. President Donald Trump offered a different and equally frank view of power.

"While others have promised strength, I have used it to make America the most powerful country in the world," Trump said, touting his country's economic, technological and military footprint.

He reiterated his view that the U.N. has "great potential" but rebuked it for what he called "imposing the far-left agenda of globalist bureaucrats." He went on to criticize such bodies as the International Criminal Court, to which the U.S. is not a party.

Wars and what can be done about them top the agenda this week

The annual high-level gathering at the U.N. General Assembly will be consumed with 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?

The future of the United Nations itself will also 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. 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 U.N. next. Guterres' second five-year term ends Dec. 31 and no clear successor has emerged. Guterres closed his speech by acknowledging the forthcoming departure and vowing to "never, ever give up" on the values for which the U.N. stands.

"Wherever I will be, whatever I will be doing, I will keep championing the conviction that peace is possible," he said, before leaving the rostrum amid a sustained, standing ovation. He put his hand on his heart.

Trump, Netanyahu and Zelenskyy are among the headliners

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 63 of 71

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

Among the headliners Tuesday: Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron. 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 Prime Minister Narendra Modi has backed out.

France's U.N. ambassador, Jerome Bonnafont, said ahead of the gathering that it is "extremely critical" for world leaders 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 left the organization's finances in rocky shape.

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

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 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.

Trump suggests a Ukraine deal on Russia's war could be close while meeting with Zelenskyy

By HANNA ARHIROVA, JULIA DEMAREE-NIKHINSON and BARRY HATTON Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met Tuesday with his U.S. counterpart, Donald Trump and said he trusted that the White House can help end Russia's 4½-year war on his country — even as attacks from both sides keep escalating.

"I hope that we will end this war, and President Trump will help us help us end this war," Zelenskyy said, joining Trump at the U.N. General Assembly in New York, where the Ukrainian president was meeting with world leaders.

That meeting occurred after Russian missiles and drones struck at least four Ukrainian regions overnight, strikes that officials said killed five people.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 64 of 71

Zelenskyy also said that his country's forces had damaged two more Russian oil refineries in their latest long-range strikes. The continuing exchange of aerial attacks, even as front-line positions remain largely unchanged.

Trump previously had called on Zelenskyy to halt strikes on Russian oil refineries and other infrastructure used to produce and distribute diesel, saying the attacks are contributing to global shortages and higher prices. The supply crunch has also been aggravated by reduced oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz following the outbreak of the Iran war.

Trump and Zelenskyy briefly addressed reporters before heading behind closed doors. The U.S. president was asked about the Ukrainian strikes and called them "a serious hit on the Russians, but also a serious hit on the price of diesel" which he noted had "gone up quite a bit."

Trump added that he and Zelenskyy would further discuss the matter privately.

While seeking reelection in 2024, Trump once argued that he could in virtually no time broker an end to Russia's war in Ukraine, which instead has carried on. Russia invaded Ukraine more than 4½ years ago. Still, Trump said Tuesday, "I think we're going to make a deal" to quell the fighting.

"We talked about it a lot, including with President Putin," Trump said of a possible agreement, meaning Russian leader Vladimir Putin. "And I think something's going to happen."

Putin is not scheduled to attend the annual U.N. General Assembly meeting this year. Asked about the possibility of Zelenskyy, Putin and Trump meeting during the upcoming G20 gathering in Florida in December, Trump was noncommittal.

In subsequent, solo comments to reporters, Zelenskyy said he was ready to sit down with both leaders but suggested that Putin might balk because he's not really ready to end the war. He also noted that Ukraine has continued to push the U.S. for more Patriot air defense systems in its efforts to defend itself, but has yet to get clear answers.

"They are positive to help us, but I didn't get the very concrete answer," Zelenskyy said.

Defense experts say the U.S. has been experiencing a global shortage of Patriot interceptors because many have been expended to defend against Iranian attacks on U.S. and allied bases in Middle East.

Zelenskyy was also asked about the risk of offensive attacks by drones, missiles or land operations ordered by Moscow that could be high against other countries that border Russia or Belarus. He said such neighboring countries should "respond — always respond" to defend themselves.

"If you don't respond," he added, "Russians, they will go further."

Zelenskyy says Ukraine may end strikes if Russia makes concessions

Kyiv began targeting Russian refineries after Moscow repeatedly attacked Ukraine's power grid. Zelenskyy says his country could halt them should Russia end its attacks on energy infrastructure.

The war, which Western officials say has killed more than 500,000 Russian troops, has had global repercussions. Western analysts estimate that Ukraine has recorded more than 500,000 military casualties, including up to 140,000 deaths.

Zelenskyy also wants help to ensure the flow of Ukrainian grain and other farm products to world markets through the Black Sea. Russian attacks on cargo vessels have severely disrupted Kyiv's exports, hurting its economy and threatening global supplies.

Russia and Ukraine have in recent years accounted for around 30% of the world's wheat exports and 12% of corn exports, most of it shipped through the Black Sea. But last month, attacks slashed both countries' agricultural exports by two-thirds, Thomas de Waal of the Brussels-based think tank Carnegie Europe said in a report Tuesday.

"The lack of that grain in world markets puts several African countries at risk of famine, while world cereal prices, already pushed up by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, could rise even higher," de Waal said.

Zelenskyy takes de-escalation proposals to New York

French President Emmanuel Macron said Tuesday that France would provide Ukraine with additional radar systems to help protect its power grid.

Macron said in a social media post that he had discussed with Trump a possible truce between Moscow and Kyiv that would halt strikes on energy infrastructure, as well as a "moratorium" on attacks in the

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 65 of 71

Black Sea.

Zelenskyy began his visit to New York by meeting with U.S. senators. He thanked them for what he described as strong bipartisan support for Ukraine and for backing a tougher sanctions bill against Russia that Trump signed into law.

Peace and security would be closer once the legislation was fully implemented, Zelenskyy said. He said on social media that he had briefed senators on de-escalation proposals he was discussing privately with Trump.

In Kyiv, Iryna Panina awoke around 2 a.m. on Tuesday as a jet-powered Russian drone approached her home. The blast shattered a window and left her apartment covered in debris.

Panina, 36, said she had lost hope in international efforts to secure peace.

"As an ordinary person just trying to live and survive each day, I find it hard to believe they fully understand what's actually happening, how hard it is, and how much ordinary people are suffering," she told The Associated Press.

Ukraine hits a Russian oil refinery

Zelenskyy said that Ukrainian special forces struck the Kuibyshev oil refinery in Samara, southeast of Moscow, and another refinery in the neighboring Bashkortostan region in overnight attacks.

One person was killed and four others were wounded in the Samara attack, regional Gov. Vyacheslav Fedorishchev said. He said that "the enemy targeted industrial facilities," but didn't specify which ones.

The Russian Defense Ministry on Tuesday said that its forces downed 297 Ukrainian drones over 14 Russian regions overnight, as well as the illegally annexed Crimean Peninsula.

Russia's overnight attack on Ukraine included anti-ship missiles, ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and more than 200 drones, Ukraine's air force said.

The strikes killed four people in the central Ukrainian city of Dnipro, said Oleksandr Hanzha, head of the Dnipropetrovsk regional military administration. A drone also killed a woman in the northern Sumy region, local police said.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Tuesday that its forces struck metallurgical and chemical industries, the fuel and energy sector, and the military-industrial complex, as well as port infrastructure facilities in four regions of Ukraine.

Day and night get equal billing on Tuesday. A guide to the fall equinox

By The Associated Press undefined

The fall equinox is Tuesday, when light and darkness split the day evenly. It marks the beginning of fall for the Northern Hemisphere and the beginning of spring in the Southern Hemisphere.

On the equator, the sun will be directly overhead at noon. Equinoxes are the only times when both the north and south poles are lit by sunshine at the same time.

Equinoxes have been marked and celebrated around the world for centuries. Japan marks public holidays during the equinoxes. At the Mayan site Chichen Itza in Mexico, people gather during the equinox to watch the sun create a shadow pattern that resembles a serpent descending a pyramid called El Castillo.

Here's what to know about the Earth's orbit.

What is the equinox?

As the Earth travels around the sun, it does so at an angle, making the sun's warmth and light fall unequally on the northern and southern halves of the planet for most of the year.

During the equinox, the Earth's tilt is neither toward the sun nor away from the sun, so both the Northern and Southern hemispheres get an equal amount of sunlight. The sun rises almost exactly due east, and it sets almost exactly due west.

The word equinox comes from two Latin words meaning equal and night. That's because on the equinox, day and night last almost the same amount of time — though one may get a few extra minutes, depending on where you are on the planet.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 66 of 71

The Northern Hemisphere's fall — or autumnal — equinox can land between Sept. 21 and 24, depending on the year. This year it is Tuesday at 8:05 p.m. Eastern time. Its spring — or vernal — equinox can land between March 19 and 21. The exact time of the equinox is the moment the sun is directly overhead at the equator.

What is the solstice?

The solstices mark the times when the Earth is tipped most extremely either toward or away from the sun. This means the hemispheres are getting very different amounts of sunlight, and days and nights are at their most unequal.

At the Northern Hemisphere's summer solstice, the Earth's upper half is leaning toward the sun, creating the longest day and shortest night of the year. The summer solstice falls between June 20 and 22.

The opposite happens at the Northern Hemisphere's winter solstice: the Earth's upper half leans the furthest away from the sun, leading to the shortest day and longest night of the year. The winter solstice falls between Dec. 20 and 23.

What's the difference between meteorological and astronomical seasons?

These are just two different ways to carve up the year.

While astronomical seasons depend on how the Earth moves around the sun, meteorological seasons are defined by the weather. Meteorologists break down the year into three-month seasons based on annual temperature cycles. By that calendar, spring starts on March 1, summer on June 1, fall on Sept. 1 and winter on Dec. 1.

California farmers are struggling to sell grapes as demand for wine drops

By TERRY CHEA Associated Press

LODI, Calif. (AP) — It's harvest time in California wine country, but many growers are struggling to sell their grapes as changing drinking habits have caused demand to plunge. The decline is forcing some growers to tear out vineyards that their families have grown for generations.

Wine sales have decreased by more than 20% over a five-year period, causing prices paid for grapes to drop and prompting California growers to take roughly a quarter of the state's vineyards out of production. Many growers are having to decide whether to harvest at a loss, leave grapes on the vine or replace vineyards with crops more in demand such as almonds, walnuts, pistachios and olives.

Third-generation grower Bill Berryhill said it means another year of losing money and wasting hundreds of tons of healthy grapes.

"It's just sickening," said Berryhill, standing in a vineyard of unsold merlot grapes. "You raise a beautiful crop, and it's really a nice vintage this year, and you drop it on the ground. It's sad. All your work is just down the toilet."

Berryhill, who owns Berryhill Family Vineyards near Lodi in the San Joaquin Valley, said he can't find buyers for grapes grown on 200 of his 500 acres (202 hectares). He plans to remove 50 acres (20 hectares) of vineyards when the harvest season is over.

"I will lose money for sure. It's just a matter of how much," Berryhill, 68, said. "This has been a big loser for three years now."

Grape growers take vineyards out of production

At its peak during the pandemic, California had almost 600,000 acres (242,811 hectares) of vineyards, but farmers have removed or stopped actively growing wine grapes on roughly 25% of that land, said Jeff Bitter, president of Allied Grape Growers, which represents about 500 farmers statewide.

This year, about half of California's wine grape crop entered the harvest season without contracts with buyers, compared with 70 to 80% with contracts in a typical year, Bitter said.

If they're lucky, growers can sell their uncontracted grapes at a loss to buyers making concentrated syrup.

Even as growers have abandoned or removed tens of thousands of acres of vineyards in California in recent years, too many grapes are still being produced, Bitter said.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 67 of 71

"The market is just so depressed that it's difficult to grow them profitably," he said. "Demand is not going up. It's still continuing to decline."

Kyle Collins, a Lodi-based operations manager with Allied Grape Growers, recently examined ripe grapes in a petite verdot vineyard in Lodi, one of California's most productive wine regions.

"Unfortunately, we do not have a buyer for these grapes," Collins said. "That's unfortunately a reality for not just this vineyard but a lot of us around here."

Besides hurting vineyards, the drop in sales has hit local businesses and workers, he said.

"That's not getting into the pockets of the people doing the field labor, the farmworkers," Collins said. "It does have a trickle effect in the economy."

Wine sales fall after years of growth

The downturn is a dramatic shift for the wine industry in California, which produces more than 80% of U.S. wine due to its unique geography and Mediterranean climate. For decades, California's wine industry grew steadily as Americans, particularly baby boomers, developed a taste for cabernet, zinfandel, chardonnay and other varietals.

The most famous wine regions such as Napa and Sonoma Valley produced premium vintages while the Central Valley grew grapes for less expensive labels.

Wine sales peaked during the pandemic in 2021 when restaurants were closed and social gatherings restricted. People stocked up on wine and drank more at home.

But over the past five years, wine sales have declined sharply, and they're expected to fall further this year.

In the U.S., sales of wine cases declined 23% from 427 million in 2020 to 329 million in 2025, while total wine spending fell 22% from \$94 billion to \$74 billion, according to First Citizens Bank, formerly Silicon Valley Bank, which produces an annual State of the Wine Industry Report.

Wine industry faces more competition, tariffs and changing tastes

California can't export its excess inventory because wine consumption is down globally and it's more expensive to produce in the U.S. than countries such as Argentina and Australia, Bitter said. In 2025, global wine consumption declined 2.7% from 2024 and 14% from 2018, with sharp declines in Europe and China, according to the International Organization of Vine and Wine.

There are a variety of forces driving the decline in wine sales. Baby boomers are aging out of the market while young people are drinking less alcohol due to health and financial concerns. Wine faces competition from craft beer, liquor and canned cocktails as well as cannabis.

"The kids just aren't drinking as much," Berryhill said. "And it's not just wine, it's whiskey and beer and everything. And then you've also got the competition with all the seltzers."

Tariffs have reduced exports, particularly to Canada, which was the largest foreign buyer of American wine.

"The next step in the healing process is not only balancing supply and demand, but now actually figuring out what it is that the other consumers want," said Rob McMillan, chief wine strategist at First Citizens Bank.

The industry hopes the market will bottom out soon. Meanwhile, growers are absorbing heavy losses trying to hang on.

Berryhill, whose grandfather started growing grapes nearly 100 years ago, doesn't plan to give up on wine even though it's costing him.

"I love growing grapes. It's in the blood," Berryhill said. "Because I love them, I can weather this and I'll fight through it."

Messy, troubled, unpredictable: Diplomats describe a world in turmoil as UN opens annual meeting

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — There is not much that diplomats can agree on these days. But if asked about the state of the world ahead of the annual meeting at the U.N. General Assembly, heads of state and government and ministers alike will describe a globe in massive turmoil.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 68 of 71

With two escalating wars raging in Europe and the Middle East, a global economy in flux, and a shifting world order, international leaders are arriving in New York on Tuesday to an outlook that is massively different from this time last year.

"World leaders will be gathering at the United Nations in an era of deep uncertainty," U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres told reporters recently. "At the same time, power is shifting. The world is changing. And our institutions must change with it."

The last nine months alone saw the audacious U.S. military operation that plucked Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro from power before a deadly crackdown took place in Iran after tens of thousands of pro-government demonstrators took to the streets to challenge the country's theocracy. Shortly after, the U.S. and Israel launched a joint attack against Tehran, kicking off an ongoing and spiraling conflict, now involving nearly every country in the region, which has since resulted in the effective closure of a critical waterway.

Meanwhile, the more than four-year war between Russia and Ukraine shows no end in sight as both sides have only ramped up military attacks in recent days while numerous diplomatic efforts to end the conflict have failed to break through.

In May, an outbreak of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda raised further questions about the lack of international preparedness for the next pandemic. Deadly earthquakes in Venezuela and Colombia, as well as massive flash floods in Nepal and Tibet, highlighted the worsening impact of human-caused global warming on communities around the world.

In interviews leading up to the annual meeting, current and former ministers, ambassadors and officials from across the world painted a stark picture of the crises plaguing the international community and whether the U.N. and its 193 member states can address them. They spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity to speak freely about international concerns.

"It is a critical time to try to see if some of these issues can be resolved diplomatically," former U.S. Ambassador Robert Wood, who served at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations under Republican and Democratic leaders, told The Associated Press. "The U.N. is really at an inflection point. There's no doubt about it. It was bad last year. It's not much better this year."

One European diplomat and another official echoed that sentiment, saying that the world is not in a better place than it was this time last year and that things have become even more unstable. The diplomat and the officials cited the various attacks on international law, the breakdown or lack of mediation efforts, and the continued failure to find global consensus on issues like climate and peace and security.

Beyond closely mining the speeches from headliners like U.S. President Donald Trump, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian, officials are hoping to use the annual gathering to meet with adversaries and allies on the sidelines, seeking to break the logjam on issues like maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz and runaway artificial intelligence, among others.

Asked what they hoped to take away from the week of meetings, one Gulf official said it would be great to go back to a level of predictability on the world stage.

"In international relations, everything is changing: the friendships are changing, and alliances are changing," Tone Kajzer, Slovenia's foreign minister, said. "But what remains constant is the interests and how to align those interests so that we live in peace and not in a permanent conflict."

Fat Bear Week opens for Alaska's heavyweight crown. Can Chunk, the 1,200-pound champ, win again?

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — After a summer spent packing away sockeye salmon, Alaska's heftiest brown bears are ready to throw their weight around.

Online voting began Tuesday for Fat Bear Week, the annual contest that pits the rotund residents of Katmai National Park and Preserve against each other for the title of most oversized ursine.

Last year's winner, Chunk — known officially as Bear 32 — is hungry for a repeat. Chunk's weight in 2025 was estimated at 1,200 pounds, which gave him a narrow victory. This year he's back and facing

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 69 of 71

corpulent competition like Gully — aka Bear 903 — the offspring of two-time champion Grazer.

The contest, which is in its 12th year, celebrates the resilience of the 2,200 brown bears that live in the preserve on the Alaska Peninsula, which extends from the state's southwest corner toward the Aleutian Islands. Fat Bear Week was started in 2014 as an interactive way to inform the public about brown bears, the coastal cousins of grizzlies.

The event this year features 16 bears facing off in a single-elimination, bracket-style tournament. All voting is done online at www.fatbearweek.org, with the winner declared Sept. 29. The public can watch the bears on explore.org's livestream cameras before deciding on their favorite.

"Fat bears are successful bears," the nonprofit's website says. They gorge on the abundant salmon that return to the Brooks River starting in late June in order to accumulate fat reserves, sometimes chomping the fish in midair as they make their way upstream to spawn.

Adult male brown bears typically weigh 600 to 900 pounds (about 270 to 410 kilograms) in midsummer. By the time they are ready to hibernate after feasting on migrating and spawning salmon — each eats as many as 30 fish per day — large males can weigh well over 1,000 pounds (454 kilograms). Females are about one-third smaller. During winter hibernation, the bears do not eat or drink and lose one-third of their body weight.

Voters in the online contest can review before-and-after photos of the bears, lean at the start of summer and fattened at the end. The bears are not actually weighed — imagine that process — and some fans choose their favorite based on their looks or backstory.

To be featured in the contest, the bears must frequent the area around the river.

The live cameras at Brooks Falls captured the moments in 2024 when mother bear 128 Grazer's cub slipped over the waterfall and floated into the fishing spot occupied by Chunk, who attacked and injured the cub. Grazer fought Chunk, but the cub ultimately died. After the dramatic fight, voting fans handed Grazer a victory over Chunk. Then Chunk returned in 2025 to take the title.

The EU moves closer to free trade deal with Philippines amid global tensions

By SAM McNEIL Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union and the Philippines have reached substantial agreement on a new free trade deal, the latest bilateral agreement that Brussels is pursuing as it seeks to diversify its economy amid tensions with traditional trading partners including China, Russia and the United States.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen tweeted Tuesday, "we just agreed on a free trade deal," but EU officials later clarified that it was a preliminary agreement, and that a full deal would take further negotiations.

The EU's top trade negotiator, Maroš Šefčovič, said he and Philippine Trade Secretary María Cristina Aldeguer-Roque have been negotiating a deal aimed at boosting the nearly 30 billion euros (around \$35 billion) of annual trade between the 27-nation EU and the Southeast Asian nation of 115 million people.

Šefčovič said it would create "a modern, forward-looking partnership between the EU and the Philippines, one that will open new opportunities for our exporters and investors, strengthen our supply chains and deepen bilateral economic ties for years to come."

He said he expects it to be finalized within a year or two. Parliaments on both sides will also need to ratify it.

EU-Philippine trade is dominated by electronics, with the EU exporting aircraft, pork and pharmaceuticals while importing semiconductors, integrated circuits and industrial machinery made in the Philippines.

The EU has sought growth and stability through new trade links from Australia to Argentina as the bloc itself is beset by a geopolitical maelstrom, including conflicts in the Middle East and the war in Ukraine that have throttled traditional sources of energy.

The Philippines has already reached deals with two other ASEAN members, Vietnam and Singapore. The European Commission is also negotiating separate deals with Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia, while a

broader free trade agreement between the EU and ASEAN remains a long-term goal.

Moscow, Beijing and Washington all pose their own kind of challenges to the EU: hybrid attacks that officials across the EU blame on Russia; China's gargantuan trade imbalance and a near-monopoly over critical mineral supplies; and a Trump administration critical of European policies on defense, migration, and technology regulation.

The EU deal with the Philippines roughly tracks with the "middle powers" strategy laid out at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, earlier this year by Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney. Last week, he was the guest of honor in the European Parliament in Strasbourg at the annual State of the European Union speech by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

She said then that the EU would forge a new kind of "associate membership" for Canada.

"In this new world, we must urgently reimagine our partnerships," von der Leyen said during her speech.

And at the same time, nations around the world have sought out the EU to weather "sudden changes very often on the fundamental principles of how trade is being done," said Šefčovič, the trade negotiator.

"My phone was ringing all the time," he said. "When the world goes in such turbulence and turmoil, you work closely with your friends and close partners."

China's Alibaba unveils new powerful chip and ambitious AI model plans

By CHAN HO-HIM AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — China's Alibaba unveiled new artificial intelligence chip technologies and plans for more powerful models on Tuesday, including what it said was China's most powerful AI chip, days ahead of a meeting between Chinese and U.S. leaders at which competition to lead on AI technology is expected to be a major theme.

Alibaba's announcement came as U.S. AI leaders, including Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei, are warning that China's development of AI poses a threat to the United States and calling for an overall slowdown on development of the technology.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping is set to arrive in Washington on Wednesday for a state visit and meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump, at which AI, trade and tariffs are expected to be discussed.

At its annual flagship conference in Hangzhou, Alibaba rolled out a new AI chip and described its plans for the next generation of its AI model.

CEO Eddie Wu said the new Zhenwu V900 chip is the "most powerful AI chip in China today" and can deliver three times the performance of the company's previous generation Zhenwu M890 chip.

Such chips power frontier AI model training and "inference," a term for the calculations a trained AI uses to deliver responses to users. Alibaba's Zhenwu chips are used in its data centers, providing computing to the company and its cloud clients.

Alibaba also said it plans to train a new AI model at the scale of five to 10 trillion parameters, a measure of an AI's learning capacity, bringing it closer to the most advanced models from the U.S. Its latest Qwen3.8-Max model, the most powerful of its Qwen AI series models, has 2.4 trillion parameters.

Chinese AI company Moonshot says that its Kimi K3, released in July, is the world's largest open model with 2.8 trillion parameters.

Alibaba also highlighted plans to expand the data centers that power its cloud computing business, citing "exponentially" rising demand for AI computing. The company said it expects to have over 20 gigawatts' worth of computing by 2032.

SpaceX has approximately 1.4 gigawatts of AI computing capacity as of mid-this year and says it aims to reach over 10 gigawatts in 2027.

Recent Chinese advancements in AI are giving Beijing more leverage in its upcoming talks with Washington, some analysts believe, as China steps up its self-reliance push even as U.S.-led export restrictions have barred it from accessing some of the world's most cutting-edge technologies, including AI chips and

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 71 of 71

chipmaking machines.

Open Chinese models, which are often more affordable than cutting-edge closed models from leading U.S. AI labs, have also been making inroads globally, including in the U.S.

Chinese technology giant Huawei last week also unveiled new chip technologies as it looks to challenge global leaders like Nvidia. Frontier AI model training in China often rely on Nvidia chips, analysts said, but Chinese-designed chips are gaining ground as Nvidia has been blocked from selling some of its most powerful AI chips to China.

"Using extra computing power to make up for chip limits helps China stay strong locally," said Neil Shah, vice president of Counterpoint Research, a technology market research firm based in Hong Kong.

Counterpoint senior analyst Parv Sharma added that how much the AI and chipmaking gap between China and the U.S. narrows will also depend on other factors including China's ability to advance chip foundries that manufacture them, not just chip design capabilities.

Alibaba is "mobilizing every resource" to meet customers' demand for AI, CEO Wu said in his speech Tuesday.

Global shortages across the AI data center supply chain, for example, "are currently limiting the speed at which we can scale our compute infrastructure" for AI, he added.

Wu also likened AI growth to the industrial revolution and said "machine intelligence" will rapidly outgrow human thinking capacity.

While "machine intelligence today is not a substitute for human intelligence," he predicted that, eventually, machines will be able to produce over 1,000 times more "thinking" than all of humanity combined, up from less than 3% currently.

Today in History: September 23, Nixon's 'Checkers' speech

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, Sept. 23, the 266th day of 2026. There are 99 days left in the year.

On Sept. 23, 1952, Republican Sen. Richard M. Nixon of California salvaged his vice presidential nomination by appearing on TV from Los Angeles to refute allegations of improper campaign fundraising in what became known as the "Checkers" speech for its reference to his family's cocker spaniel.

In 1780, British spy John Andre was captured along with papers revealing Benedict Arnold's plot to surrender West Point to the British.

In 1806, the Lewis and Clark expedition returned to St. Louis, more than two years after setting out for the Pacific Northwest.

In 1955, a jury in Sumner, Mississippi, acquitted two white men, Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam, of killing Black teenager Emmett Till. (The two later admitted to the crime in an interview with Look magazine.)

In 1957, nine Black students who entered Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas were forced to leave under police escort because of a white mob outside. The Little Rock Nine returned under federal troop escort two days later for their first full day at the school.

In 2002, Gov. Gray Davis signed a law making California the first state to offer workers paid family leave.

In 2018, capping a comeback from four back surgeries, Tiger Woods won the Tour Championship in Atlanta, the 80th victory of his PGA Tour career and his first in more than five years.

In 2022, Roger Federer played his final professional match after an illustrious career that included 20 Grand Slam titles.

In 2024, Israeli strikes on Lebanon killed more than 490 people, including more than 90 women and children in one of the deadliest barrages since the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Julio Iglesias is 83. Actor/singer Mary Kay Place is 79. Rock star Bruce Springsteen is 77. Director/playwright George C. Wolfe is 72. Actor Rosalind Chao is 69. Actor Jason Alexander is 67. Actor Chi McBride is 65. Singer Ani (AH'-nee) DiFranco is 56. Producer-rapper Jermaine Dupri is 54. Filmmaker Yorgos Lanthimos is 53. Actor Anthony Mackie is 48. Actor Skylar Astin is 39. High diver Molly Carlson is 28. Singer Artemas is 27.