

Groton Daily Independent

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Community Calendar

Saturday, Sept. 26

Gypsy Day Parade in Aberdeen
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

Sunday, Sept. 27

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sixth Grade GBB practice, 4 p.m., Arena

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

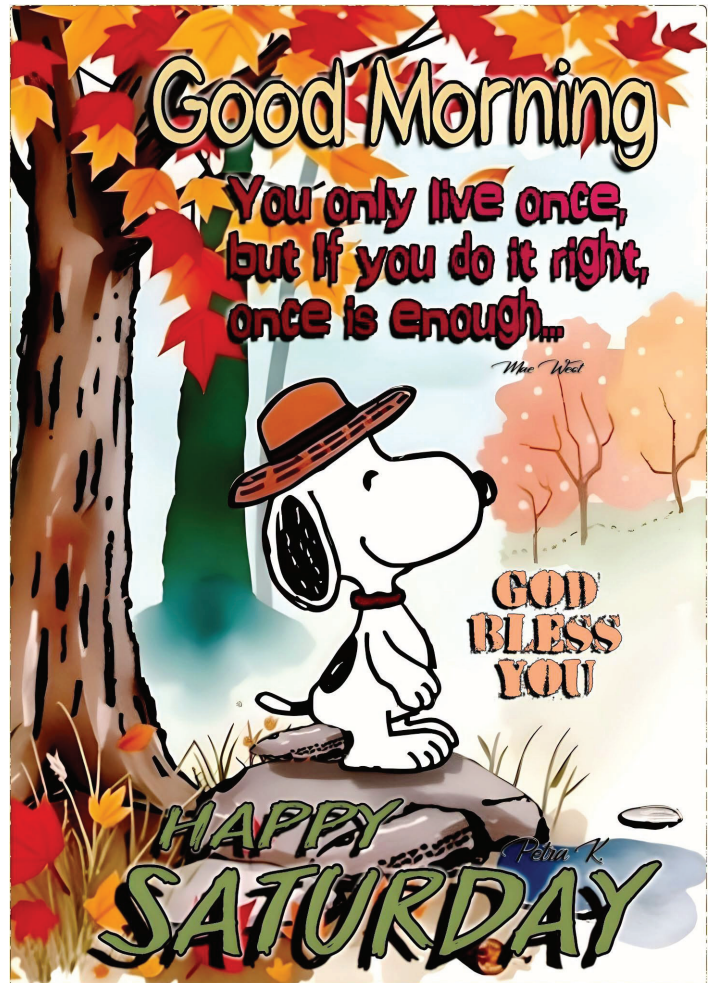
Dance Team Practice, 5:30 p.m., Arena

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Monday, Sept. 28

Senior Menu: Sloppy Joe on a bun, baked potato,
baked beans, fruit.

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

JV Football at Milbank, 4 p.m.

Soccer hosts West Central (boys at 3:30 p.m., girls
at 5 p.m.)

Third-Sixth Grade football hosts Redfield, 5 p.m.

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

Groton Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Com-
munity Center, potluck at noon

Tuesday, Sept. 29

Senior Menu: Chef salad with deli ham, tomatoes
and cucumbers, fruited Jello.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Groton Invitational Cross Country Meet, 2 p.m.,
Olive Grove Golf Course

JH Football hosts Milbank, 4 p.m.

JV Football hosts Milbank, 5 p.m.

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1440

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

The Amazon's Living Map

Scientists and conservation groups launched an AI-powered monitoring network this week to track biodiversity and ecosystem health across the Amazon rainforest.

The project will monitor the roughly 2.7 million-square-mile Amazon River basin using satellites, acoustic sensors, and environmental DNA shed by species into their surroundings. Scientists will use AI to analyze these streams of information, potentially enabling them to detect patterns in near-real time. The international team of scientists leading the endeavor has raised \$20M of the \$100M needed to run the program for 10 years, including \$14M from the Bezos Earth Fund. A smaller network of 65 stations in the Amazon has demonstrated the ability to track the Amazonian manatee and endangered river dolphins, which are threatened by mercury contamination largely from illegal gold mining.

Supreme Court lifts restrictions on expansive voter-screening tool.

The justices ruled that the Trump administration can use a federal database to verify voter eligibility. A lower court had blocked the tool, saying it violated privacy rights and could result in voters being wrongfully removed from the rolls. The high court's ruling will likely have a limited impact on the November midterms, since federal law restricts most states from systematically removing voters from rolls within 90 days of an election.

Separately, the Supreme Court rejected, for the third time, a Missouri congressional map backed by President Donald Trump, preventing its use in the midterms.

New Jersey lieutenant governor resigns after ethics, harassment probe.

Lt. Gov. Dale Caldwell (D) resigned yesterday on calls from Gov. Mikie Sherill (D) after an ethics report found him in violation of workplace policies. Caldwell allegedly sought twice to promote his girlfriend to a state job and made sexual comments to a staffer. The timing of the resignation is significant, as Caldwell also served as New Jersey's secretary of state, overseeing elections, including November's midterms.

Hurricanes Nolo and Polo strengthen in the Pacific, bringing heavy rain.

Residents of Hawaii's Big Island are bracing for up to 35 inches of rain and potentially life-threatening flooding after Nolo strengthened to a Category 2 storm off the south coast. Meanwhile, Category 5 Hurricane Polo could cause torrential flooding and landslides on Mexico's west coast. El Niño is warming surface waters in the tropical Pacific, increasing the likelihood of strong storms.

Manchester City found guilty of breaching Premier League financial regulations.

The team was found guilty on all but one of 115 charges following a multiyear probe, including failing to provide accurate financial records and disclose coach and player payments. No sanctions have been decided, and the team is expected to appeal. Possible punishments range from a points deduction to expulsion from the league.

Fraternity leaders arrested after pledges found injured in basement.

Two 20-year-olds were arrested after police received an anonymous tip about an alleged hazing incident at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Alpha Epsilon Pi off-campus house. Thirty pledges were found partially clothed and covered in food, condiments, and other liquids. Some had visible injuries. (More)

Separately, police are investigating the deaths of two Ole Miss students found dead in separate incidents. A cause of death has not been determined, but kratom was found during both investigations.

Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Kathy S. in Mamaroneck, New York.

"My husband and I were sightseeing in Dublin when the skies opened up and rain came pouring down. We weren't prepared until a kind man passing us handed me his open umbrella and just kept walking."

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Tiger netters sweep Langford Area

Groton Area's volleyball team climbed back to the .500 mark Friday night with a 3-0 sweep of the Langford Area Lions.

The Tigers won 25-21, 25-14 and 25-15 to improve to 8-8 on the season, while Langford Area dropped to 10-7. Groton Area will have a week away from competition before returning to action Saturday at the Redfield Tournament.

Groton Area jumped out to a 5-0 lead in the opening set and stayed in front for most of the way. Langford Area battled back and pulled within three points at 20-17 and again at 23-20, but the Tigers finished off the set for a 25-21 victory.

The second set went back and forth early. Groton took a 2-0 lead before Langford tied the set at four and moved ahead 5-4. The Tigers tied it at six, regained the lead at 7-6 and used a four-point run to open up a 10-6 advantage.

From there, Groton Area steadily pulled away for the 25-14 win.

The Tigers again started quickly in the third set, taking a 3-0 lead before Langford Area came back to tie it at three. Groton then took control, building an 11-5 advantage before another four-point run helped stretch the lead. The Tigers eventually went ahead 19-8 and closed out the sweep with a 25-15 victory.

Coach Chelsea Hanson said the Tigers had to adjust after coming off an exceptionally strong offensive performance the previous night.

"We kind of told them after the first set, you could tell that they wanted to play like we played last night," Hanson said. "We told them 45 kills in a three-set match on like a .300 hitting percentage is not sustainable or realistic."

Hanson said the important thing was that Groton Area continued to get offensive production from throughout its lineup.

"Overall it was still, again, really nice balanced scoring, having a lot of girls scoring," Hanson said. "That makes a huge difference and puts a ton of stress on defense."

Taryn Traphagen led the Tigers with 12 kills and also had an assisted block. Chesney Weber had seven kills, eight digs, 16 assists and two assisted blocks, while Tevan Hanson finished with seven kills and 16 digs.

Makenna Krause added four kills, Kella Tracy had four kills and Elizabeth Cole recorded three kills, one solo block and two assisted blocks. Sydney Locke had three ace serves and 18 digs, McKenna Tietz had two aces and Tori Schuster added three aces. Libby Althoff finished with two ace serves and 11 assists.

Groton Area finished with 34 kills, 31 assists, 66 digs and four blocks.

Hanson said having several different players capable of leading the attack makes the Tigers more difficult for opponents to defend.

"You don't know who's going to be your big star for the night, and that's what you want," Hanson said. "It's nice for us to be able to have options out there so that way we don't have to rely on one person."

She said moving the ball around is especially important against strong defensive teams.

"Running this offense definitely sets it up for balanced attacking, balanced scoring, and that's what we want," Hanson said. "We don't want people to be able to scout us."

For Langford Area, Lizzie Gustafson had seven kills, 12 digs, one ace and one block. Emily Olson had five kills, 12 digs and a block, while Josie Jensen added five kills.

Bailey Dwight had two kills, two blocks and nine assists. Brooke Dwight added two kills, Autumn Wegleitner had two kills, Brooklyn West recorded an ace and eight assists, and Alexandria Darling had 11 digs.

Langford Area finished with 20 kills, 19 assists, 70 digs and four blocks.

Groton Area also swept the junior varsity match, 25-14 and 25-18.

The second set was much closer early as Langford Area took a 2-0 lead and the teams played through five ties. Groton moved in front 8-7 and then used a six-point run to take control on the way to the 25-18 victory.

Kinley Sandness led Groton Area with six kills and seven ace serves. Abby Fjeldheim had five kills, Neely Althoff added four kills and two aces, and Brooklyn Spanier had three kills. Makenna Krause and Tori

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Schuster each had two kills, with Schuster adding an ace. Brynlee Dunker had one kill.

Josie Jensen led Langford Area with four kills and three blocks. Josie Vander Vorst had two kills, Aubrey Craig had a kill and a block, and Breckette Zubke had a kill and an ace.

Groton Area also won the C match in two sets, 25-5 and 26-24.

The Tigers dominated the opening set with an 11-1 run on the way to the 25-5 victory, but the second set was a much different story. Groton Area led 4-1 and later 14-6 before Langford Area battled all the way back to tie the set at 24. The Tigers scored the final two points to take the set 26-24 and complete the sweep.

Arianna Dinger had seven ace serves and a kill for Groton Area, while Maycee Moody led the attack with seven kills. Brynlee Dunker had two kills and four aces, Sophia Fliehs added four aces and a kill, and Charli Jacobsen had three kills. Riley Stoltenberg had two kills, Rowan Patterson added one kill and Mya Moody had an ace.

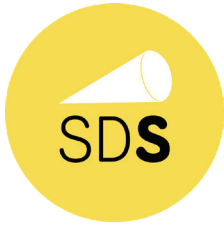
For Langford Area, Aubrey Craig and Codi Okroi each had two kills and two ace serves. Zoey Moen had two kills, while Lillian Olson added one kill and one ace.

The varsity victory gave Groton Area consecutive wins and brought the Tigers back to 8-8 after a challenging stretch of the schedule.

"We're back to .500," Hanson said. "I'm just happy for them to have wins so they can get back to believing that they're good and that the losses that we have are credible losses, as opposed to thinking, 'Oh, we're just not that good,' because we have potential."

The break before the Redfield Tournament will also give the Tigers some needed practice and conditioning time.

"We'll be able to get some practice time in, get back in the weight room," Hanson said. "We're just happy to win. We just want to win games."



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Ep. 34: Pro and con voices on Amendment J, clarifying the citizenship requirement for voting in South Dakota

O'BRIEN: We're back with another episode of Searchlight Report, the podcast from South Dakota Searchlight that brings you up to date on policy and politics in the Mount Rushmore State. I'm your host, Meghan O'Brien.

In the November third election, South Dakota voters will decide on four amendments to the state constitution. We'll be bringing you an explanation of each of those questions through Searchlight Report and on our website at southdakotasearchlight dot com.

In recent years, state legislators have added laws that impact how people vote. A law that came into effect last year criminalizes voting for non-citizens. A new law this year requires new voters to provide proof of citizenship when registering to vote. Another allows voters to challenge another voter's citizenship. The challenge must be in the form of a signed, sworn statement and must include what state law describes as "documented evidence."

In 2024, South Dakota officials discovered and canceled the voter registrations of 273 non-U.S. citizens. The registrants had answered "no" on their driver's license applications when asked if they were citizens, but were registered to vote due to human error, according to the Secretary of State's Office. Non-citizens can obtain a driver's license or state ID if they are lawful permanent residents or have temporary legal status, and the driver's license application form includes a voter registration section.

One of those 273 noncitizens cast a ballot, the Secretary of State's Office said. That was during the 2016 general election. But for some lawmakers, concerns linger about noncitizens voting.

The South Dakota Constitution lists qualifications for voters including age, residency and U.S. citizenship. It also adds that some people may be disqualified from voting due to mental incompetence or a felony conviction.

A question on this year's ballot will ask voters to add language to the state constitution specifying that people who are noncitizens are disqualified from voting.

Later, we'll hear from an opponent of the ballot question. But first, I spoke to State Senator Taffy Howard, a Rapid City Republican, about her support for Amendment J. Last year, she led the push in the Legislature to put the question on the ballot.

Howard submitted a statement of support to the Secretary of State's Office explaining her position. Despite the constitution outlining that all U.S. citizens who meet age and residency requirements can vote, she says it doesn't explicitly prohibit non-U.S. citizens from voting.

Howard argues that QUOTE as long as United States citizens who meet the requirements are allowed to vote, nothing currently prohibits non-citizens also being allowed to vote.

I spoke with her more about this position.

O'BRIEN: What was kind of the motivator behind that? What pushed you to introduce that amendment?

HOWARD: Actually a constituent brought it up and pointed out that in our constitution, there was a loophole. So it was a constituent that brought it up, and, you know, when you look at the constitution, it is clear that there could potentially be a loophole, and you know, there could, in the future, non-citizens could potentially be allowed to vote in our state.

Right now, it is prohibited by law, but as you know and everyone knows, it's much easier to change law than it is our constitution. So, we want to close up this loophole to ensure no non-US citizens will ever be

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allowed to vote in our state. So it's not happening right now, but this is being proactive, which, you know, I hope people agree that being proactive is much better than being reactive, cause once the horse is out of the barn, you know, it's really hard to undo that, so.

And 16 other states already have this in their constitution. Five others have it on the ballot this fall, I mean, there's numerous places around the country that have been allowing non-citizens to vote, so it isn't a hypothetical, you know, people may say, "Well, it's not happening in South Dakota," that's true, but it is happening elsewhere.

And, you know, there may be people who would want it to be done in South Dakota, so this would preclude that from happening.

But a recent example in New York, New York City wanted to allow non-citizens to vote. It would have allowed whatever they were, whatever they passed, would have allowed upwards of 800,000 non-citizens to vote. It was only the constitution of the state that stopped that.

So, you know, our constitution is a bulwark. It's our foundation. We have a great constitution, and I firmly believe when the individuals who wrote the initial section of the constitution regarding this, they didn't realize that loophole was there, you know, because it says if you're a U.S. citizen, you must and not otherwise ineligible, you must be allowed to vote.

O'BRIEN: I wanna ask about that New York example. Is that, I think...Is it California that also allowed folks who are non-citizens to cast a vote in a school board election? Is that similar to that?

HOWARD: Yeah, California has, DC has, I know there's another state where it's been allowed as well, school board elections, local like municipal elections, so yeah, it is an issue elsewhere.

O'BRIEN: But not in like, but not for like state Legislature or for congressional office or anything like that. HOWARD Correct, and it's prohibited federally, and this does not touch federal elections.

O'BRIEN: And you mentioned too, that it's already against the law to vote if you're not a U.S. citizen.

HOWARD: Correct.

O'BRIEN: There's also laws that were enacted this year that change how people can vote. It's now required that you show proof of citizenship when you're registering and you can challenge a person's voter status based on whether or not they're a citizen. Does this kind of interact with those laws in any way? Do you see that connection?

HOWARD: Well, I mean, it's all connected and making our election system stronger and safer, more secure, so it's connected in that way, but just ensuring that we make sure that they're a US citizen when they register doesn't necessarily help this, you know, there's still the loophole that if the law were to change. Then we could be looking at it, you know, maybe there's a school board that would want non-citizens to be allowed to vote. That doesn't, you know, OK, so you proved you were a citizen when you registered to vote, but if a school board decides to allow non-citizen citizens to vote...

I mean they, they all help secure our election system, but one doesn't necessarily cancel out the other. We need all of it.

O'BRIEN: Was it back in the 2016 election? There was one non-citizen in South Dakota who voted. The Secretary of State's Office had purged some non-citizens from the voter rolls that were just registered by human error. And you mentioned, too, this really hasn't happened yet in South Dakota, but it seems to me that keyword is yet, that you're anticipating this to become something.

HOWARD: Well, I mean, I hope and pray not, but like I tell people, I mean, we are surrounded by states that used to be conservative, Minnesota, Colorado, even California used to be conservative many, many, many years ago. So it's just ensuring that no matter what happens down the road, this is in our constitution, which can still be changed, but it's much harder, as it should be.

O'BRIEN: OK. Do you have any concerns about lawsuits or disenfranchisement or anything like that?

HOWARD: Absolutely not, because who should be voting in the first place? Should non-citizens be voting in the first place? No. So they have, they would have no standing to sue. There would be no reason for them to. They're not a U.S. citizen. Yeah, so, no, I have no concerns about that, and 16 other states already have it in their constitution, so if there was any issue, it would have already been brought to light.

O'BRIEN: Is there anything else on that amendment that you want folks to know?

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HOWARD: I think it's, I think it's just common sense and hopefully people agree with that, you know, it's just being proactive. I know the opponents are like, "Well, we don't need it because it's already prohibited by law." Yes, but it only takes, what, 54 legislators, if you, you know, a majority of the House, a majority of the Senate, to change law versus to change the constitution. The people have to weigh in, truly weigh in on that. So, I think that that will just help secure our election system going forward.

O'BRIEN: In 2021, New York City lawmakers approved a local law to allow non-citizens to vote in local elections. The following year, the state's Supreme Court shut that measure down, citing the state's constitution which says only U.S. citizens can vote.

Certain cities and counties in California, Maryland and Vermont, as well as Washington, D.C., have allowed non-citizens to vote in local elections.

O'BRIEN: I also spoke to state Representative Erik Muckey, a Democrat from Sioux Falls. He wants you to vote "no."

Muckey says that the ballot question is part of an unhealthy conversation about voter integrity in the state, and worries about the effects of the amendment if it passes.

MUCKEY: Yeah, so what Constitutional Amendment J would effectively do is instead of relying on the current statement that eligible citizens can vote, it adds a second element to this, which is effectively that citizens are eligible to vote and non-citizens are disqualified from voting in South Dakota. It functionally, in terms of definitions of citizen or non-citizen who can or cannot vote, does not change anything to that effect.

What it does is it adds language to the constitution around non-citizens. That is, it creates a new pathway to disqualify voters from voting at the ballot box.

O'BRIEN: And so this kind of comes after we've had some other legislation that has been enacted over this past year that kind of changes how people can vote in the state. A law that was enacted requires new voters to provide proof of citizenship. Another one allows voters to challenge another voter's registration by claiming that they're not a citizen. Do you see this amendment kind of playing a role or interacting with those laws at all?

MUCKEY: I do. I think what's interesting about this particular amendment is that the prime sponsor of the legislation, that brought this from the Legislature, Senator Howard, notes that, there is nothing currently prohibiting non-citizens from being allowed to vote.

Functionally, that's not true, because there is, in the constitution, already a definition of who is eligible to vote, and who is eligible to vote are citizens. That's clear. What this amendment does, however, is creates a loophole through the constitution that aligns to a law that was passed in this past session that would allow folks to challenge somebody's citizenship status. There is no clear timeline to that challenge. There is no clear, I guess, pathway to prevent somebody from challenging citizenship and doing so in a way that could disenfranchise somebody who is a citizen, and do so in a way that effectively doesn't have a timeline.

So, there's not clearly a timeline that would be established through that law to determine when somebody could challenge citizenship, realistically speaking. And so what this constitutional amendment does is it opens up an ability for citizens to challenge somebody's citizenship status to keep them from voting because there is no way to prevent this from potentially keeping a citizen from casting a timely absentee election day ballot based on that process.

And so effectively what the constitutional amendment's creating is by, again on appearances, it looks innocuous, it's not changing the eligibility of who can and cannot vote, but instead it's creating the pathway for a new law passed to be a pathway for citizens to challenge other citizens citizenship status and keep them from voting regardless of what their reasonable suspicion is.

O'BRIEN: And there's been a lot of conversation at the legislative level of introducing legislation or kind of making moves to support voter integrity in the state. Do you see this as part of that conversation and what concerns do you have about voter integrity?

MUCKEY: This follows a path of conversations around this particular topic. What I would say is Constitutional Amendment J is a byproduct of very unhealthy conversations around election integrity, because what is being stated here is that we somehow have a problem with non-citizens voting or a loophole in

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which non-citizens can vote. Ultimately, from my end, I see this as an unhealthy approach to essentially trying to cast aspersions on somebody's citizenship.

It creates pathways for citizens to distrust an election process or a person's citizenship status that's been legally obtained. And I have a really serious problem with that because then we're not talking about elections at that point. We're talking about a lack of trust in a citizenship process that we are all a part of. So when it comes down to it, like I said, this amendment seems friendly. This amendment seems, you know, reasonable.

This amendment is political theater that's masquerading a real sinister issue, this is a mask for the ability for somebody to question the definition of your citizenship on a variety of grounds that may not have any basis in reality. And that's where, while this is an extension of the conversations that have been happening in Pierre around election integrity, they're not healthy conversations. They're conversations trying to disenfranchise voters on the basis of citizenship that has no reality.

Fundamentally, Constitutional Amendment J is a pathway for folks to discriminate and a pathway for folks to question the US citizenship processes that are federal in nature. And frankly, and this is the most disappointing part of this, it gives South Dakotans a pathway to deny their neighbors the right to vote when it's legally already obtained, and I have a real problem with somebody who is opening loopholes to allow South Dakotans to question each other's citizenship status. And potentially deny them access to the ballot box in a timely fashion.

O'BRIEN: Constitutional Amendment J will be on the ballot for voters on November third. A "yes" vote will add language to the state constitution saying people who are not U.S. citizens are disqualified from voting. A "no" vote will leave the constitution as it is.

Check out other episodes of Searchlight Report to learn more about the other questions on the ballot.

That's all we have for this episode of Searchlight Report. Audio for this episode of the podcast came from recordings by South Dakota Searchlight.

The podcast is based on reporting by South Dakota Searchlight's staff — editor Seth Tupper, senior reporter John Hult and reporters Joshua Haiar, Makenzie Huber and me. I write the scripts and produce the audio, with editing by Seth Tupper.

South Dakota Searchlight is part of States Newsroom, the nation's largest nonprofit news organization.

Until next time, I'm South Dakota Searchlight's Meghan O'Brien with the Searchlight Report.

COMMENTARY

South Dakota's long, strange trip with Monae Johnson

State's top election official came in refusing to acknowledge legitimacy of 2020 election, goes out endorsing a Democrat

by Dana Hess

Recent events have some South Dakota Republicans questioning the integrity of "election integrity" enthusiast Monae Johnson. This happened after the secretary of state endorsed a Democrat who's running for election to her office.

Johnson's election as secretary of state and her tenure there has been a long, strange trip. At the 2022 Republican convention, she unseated incumbent Steve Barnett by disparaging as too risky his emphasis on technology to implement online voting and online voter registration. Johnson promised an emphasis on election integrity with her supporters putting an emphasis on hand-counting ballots.

That year, South Dakotans elected an election denier to run their elections. Johnson staunchly refused to say if Joe Biden had defeated Donald Trump in the 2020 election.

Johnson must have felt a sense of déjà vu at this year's Republican convention as election integrity advocates turned against her. She was jettisoned in favor of Heather Baxter, a candidate whose website said at the time she was in favor of hand-counting ballots. Johnson's downfall at the convention can likely be attributed to this quote from her speech to delegates: "I trust the county auditors and I fully support the use of secure, tested ballot tabulators."

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If she is elected, Baxter will learn what Johnson already knows. There's a big difference between being a voting integrity advocate and being secretary of state. Baxter made Johnson's perceived shortcomings in the area of voting integrity the main reason why convention delegates should put Baxter on the ballot instead. What Baxter ignored, at her own peril, is the full scale of tasks for which the secretary of state has responsibility. In addition to the Division of Elections, the secretary of state oversees responsibilities as vast as they are diverse, including but not limited to: annual reports for businesses, trademarks, pistol permits and information about lobbyists. Obviously there's more to the job than wrangling county auditors.

If she ascends to the office, Baxter is likely to find that the legislators in her own party are not nearly as enthusiastic about hand-counting ballots as were the delegates at the Republican convention. Lawmakers are also politicians. Many of them, as good Republicans, probably have discrete "election integrity" tattoos. As politicians, the last thing they want to do on Election Day is wait around all night for results.

Hand-counting ballots would add hours to the process in small towns and add days to getting results in the state's larger communities. In an age of instant gratification, waiting around for election results isn't in our DNA. No matter what they have said about election integrity in the past, Republican lawmakers will be hesitant about going back to the wild west days when men were men and ballots were counted by hand.

Another lesson headed Baxter's way is that integrity isn't lacking in South Dakota elections. While the election process is far-flung and can be complicated, in this state it is largely free of fraud. Hand-counting — another term for adding the propensity for human error to the process — certainly won't make our elections any safer or the tally more accurate.

Johnson's endorsement of Democrat Terrence Davis sparked some chatter about her embrace of proven election methods and her casting off the foolishness inherent in those who cry out for more election integrity without evidence that our elections need improvement. While her philosophy may be changing, that doesn't alter the fact that her tenure as secretary of state has been a bumpy one:

Her implementation of new voter registration laws was so ham-handed that it sparked a lawsuit.

Her office was a little too transparent when it accidentally outed thousands of people on public assistance while publishing voter information.

Her office mishandled early voting in the June primary, which ended up starting late.

Her office incorrectly told independent candidates that they needed hundreds more signatures to get on the ballot than they actually did.

In keeping with a trait that's far too prevalent in state government, her office is noted for standing by mute when there is a request for information from the press.

Obviously Johnson was better at getting her job than she was at keeping it. She's a politician who agitated her way into the secretary of state's office. She knows how to make waves and she whipped up a tsunami by endorsing a Democrat.

With a list of flubs and mistakes to her credit, maybe getting passed over at the convention was a blessing in disguise. The next secretary of state will be comforted by the notion that Johnson certainly has not set the bar too high.

Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

Venezuelan men shipped to brutal prison under Alien Enemies Act ask court for due process

BY ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — An appeals panel Friday seemed inclined to agree that more than 100 Venezuelan men the Trump administration sent to a brutal prison in El Salvador are entitled to due process hearings to challenge their removal, which was made under an archaic 18th-century wartime law.

Arguing on behalf of the class of men who were removed under the Alien Enemies Act of 1798, Lee Gelernt of the American Civil Liberties Union told the three-judge panel that the men, who were accused

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of being suspected members of the Venezuelan Tren de Aragua gang, were entitled to hearings to challenge those accusations.

But instead, Gelernt said, the men were denied their due process rights and spent four months in a brutal Salvadoran prison.

The men were eventually returned to Venezuela in a prisoner swap exchange, but many who had pending asylum cases want to challenge their removal under the Alien Enemies Act and continue their immigration proceedings.

He said the Trump administration is asking for the ability to "essentially whisk people away to a foreign prison, give them no opportunity to contest the removal, even whether they're part of this gang that this proclamation applies to... and then say, 'Because we got them out of the country into a foreign prison, that's the end of the matter.'"

DOJ argues against due process

The Trump administration argued before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit that the Venezuelan men are not entitled to due process hearings.

Department of Justice attorney Tiberius Davis said that the United States had no custody over the 137 Venezuelan men removed to the Salvadoran mega-prison known as CECOT, and therefore the immigrants are not entitled to hearings in the U.S.

He added that it would be impractical for the Trump administration to conduct more than 100 online hearings abroad.

"It's a real problem with foreign sovereignty to hold hearings, and take evidentiary hearings, in foreign countries, even at our own embassies," Davis said. "That can be a real problem. So we would have to engage in diplomacy and foreign affairs in order to even do that much."

March 2025 origins

The case began when President Donald Trump invoked the Alien Enemies Act in March 2025 to rapidly deport Venezuelan immigrants.

U.S. District Judge James Boasberg issued the Trump administration an order to return several deportation planes to the U.S., but instead they landed at CECOT. The U.S. paid El Salvador up to \$6 million to detain the men.

On Monday, there is a separate hearing where Boasberg will hear arguments as to whether several Trump officials should be held in contempt for violating his order by not returning the planes carrying men removed under the Alien Enemies Act, including possible criminal contempt charges against Attorney General Todd Blanche and an appellate judge, Emil Bove.

Judge expresses doubt

Circuit Judge Harry T. Edwards seemed skeptical of the Trump administration's arguments that the U.S. had no custody over the men while at CECOT. Edwards was appointed by former President Jimmy Carter.

"It seems pretty clear ... that the U.S. was fully engaged and kept itself in a position of control throughout," Edwards said.

Davis disagreed and said that diplomacy was involved and pointed to how Secretary of State Marco Rubio had to engage with El Salvador's president to bring back one of the men sent to CECOT, Salvadoran national Kilmar Abrego Garcia, who was unlawfully removed to his home country.

"I think the district court sort of swept away those foreign affairs concerns," Davis said.

Gelernt said it was harder to facilitate the return of Abrego Garcia because he was a citizen of El Salvador.

"He's not part of our class. El Salvador clearly had an interest in their own nationals," Gelernt said. "They have no interest in these Venezuelans, other than collecting a paycheck."

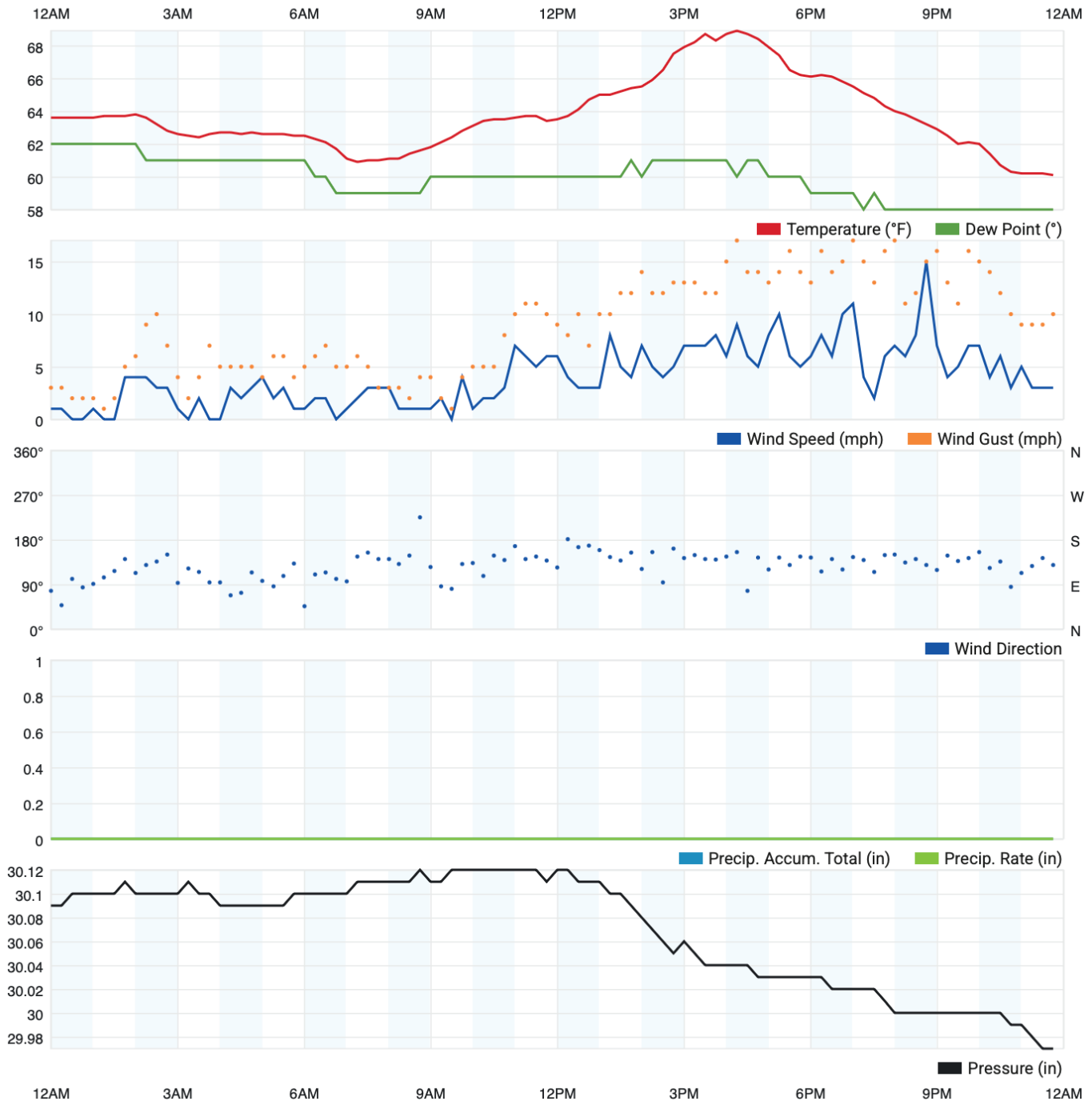
Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include immigration, congressional policy and legal challenges with a focus on how those policies impact the lives of immigrants and migrants coming to the U.S.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

September 25, 2026



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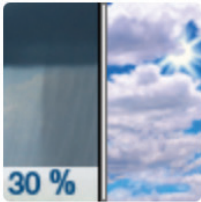
Saturday

Saturday Night

Sunday

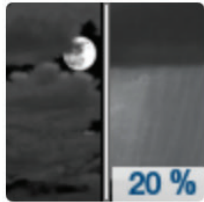
Sunday Night

Monday



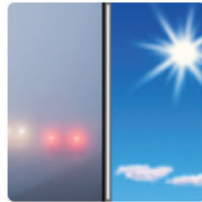
High: 70 °F

Chance
Showers and
Patchy Fog
then Mostly
Cloudy



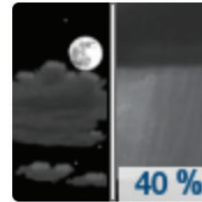
Low: 55 °F

Mostly Cloudy
then Slight
Chance
Showers and
Patchy Fog



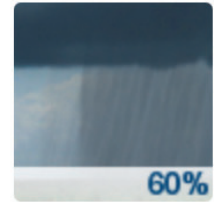
High: 71 °F

Patchy Fog
then Sunny



Low: 54 °F

Partly Cloudy
then Chance
Showers



High: 71 °F

Showers
Likely

Wet & Cloudy

66-77°

**Coolest across the Prairie
Coteau.**

Low clouds and drizzle continue
today west of the James Valley.
Light rain showers stay farther east.



weather.gov/aberdean
September 26, 2026 4:23 AM

Low clouds and drizzle will persist today from the James Valley west. Light rain showers are expected east of the James Valley this morning. Any clearing across central SD late this afternoon or evening will be brief. Showers and thunderstorms move in from the west Sunday afternoon.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 69 °F at 4:24 PM

Low Temp: 60 °F at 11:02 PM

Wind: 18 mph at 5:20 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 97 in 1974

Record Low: 17 in 1939

Average High: 71

Average Low: 43

Average Precip in Sept.: 1.72

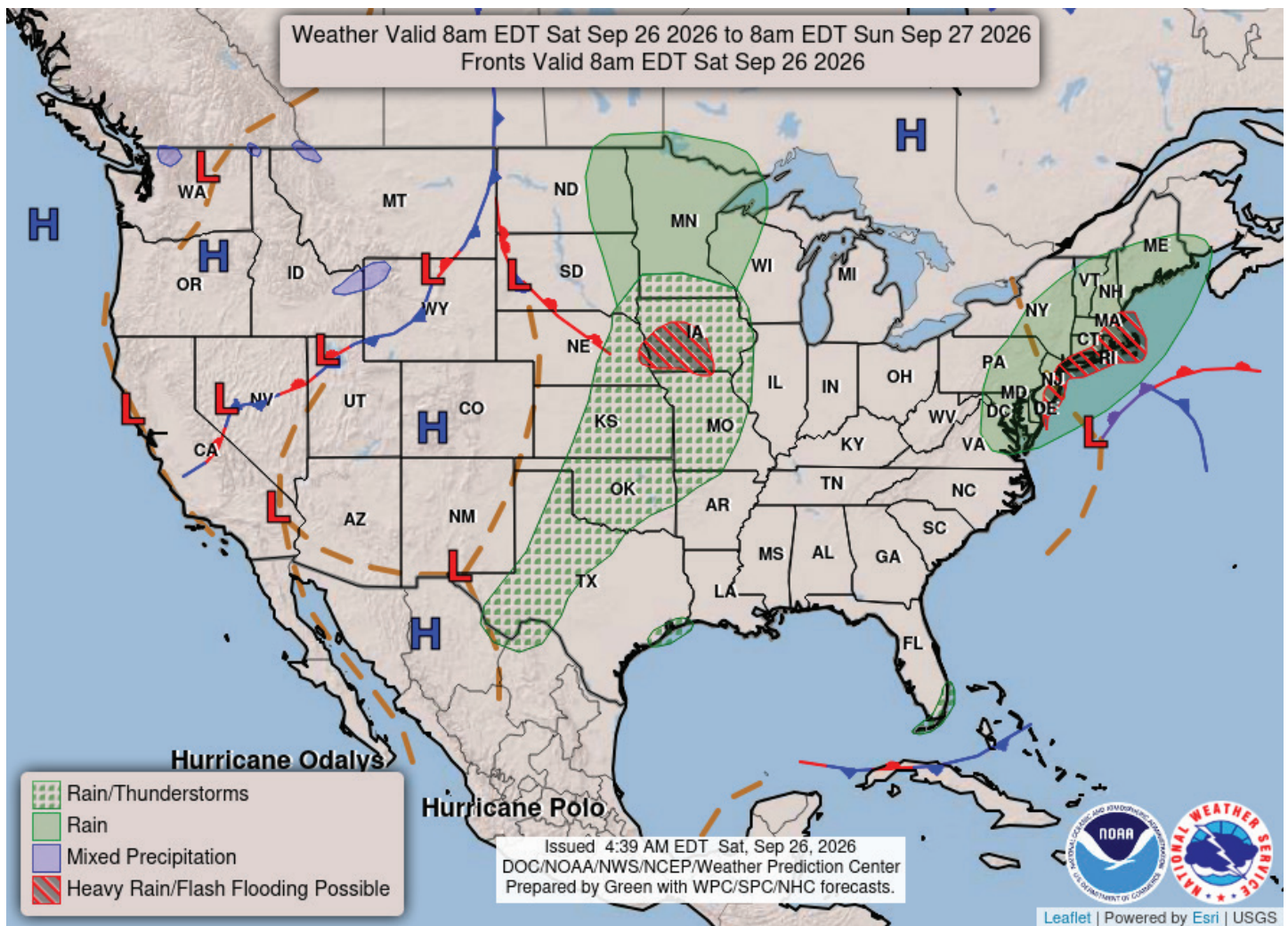
Precip to date in Sept.: 1.88

Average Precip to date: 18.06

Precip Year to Date: 21.74

Sunset Tonight: 7:23 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:25 am



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Today in Weather History

September 26, 1965: A hard freeze hit most of Minnesota in the early morning causing the loss of millions of bushels of corn and soybeans. Temperatures fell below 20 degrees in the northern part of the state.

September 26, 1981: A tornado touched down in the early morning hours several times east of Vermilion. Two barns received extensive damage.

1898: A school teacher saved 32 children from death in Merritton, Ontario, when she spotted an approaching tornado and led her students to a safe corner. Unfortunately, falling debris killed one of the children and injured several others.

1936: A forest fire burned several miles east of the town of Brandon, Oregon. The fire was far enough away that residents were not particularly worried. A sudden shift in the winds drove the flames westward and through town. The fire, caused by summer drought and fueled by the abundant Gorse Weed found in many of the empty spaces between buildings in Brandon, caused so much destruction that only a handful of structures were left standing when the fire finally died down.

1936: The heaviest snowfall ever recorded in September and the heaviest snowfall ever recorded so early in the season dumped a total of 16.5 inches of snow on downtown Denver and 21.3 inches at Denver Municipal Airport. The 15.0 inches of snow measured from 6:00 PM on the 27th to 6:00 PM on the 28th is the greatest 24-hour snowfall ever recorded in September. This was the first snow of the season. The snow was intermittent on the 26th, but continuous from early afternoon on the 27th to around midnight on the 28th, except for a period of rain during the afternoon of the 28th.

1950 — Residents of the northeastern U.S. observed a blue sun and a blue moon, caused by forest fires in British Columbia. (David Ludlum)

1955: On this date, the Atlantic reconnaissance aircraft, "Snowcloud Five" went down while investigating Hurricane Janet and was never heard from again. Lt. Comdr. Windham with a crew of 8 and two newspapermen reported that they were about to begin penetrating the central core of the hurricane. Hurricane Janet made landfall at peak intensity near Chetumal, Mexico on September 29th. Janet's landfall as a Category 5 hurricane on the Yucatán Peninsula was the first recorded instance that a storm of such intensity in the Atlantic made landfall on a continental mainland; prior to Janet, landfalls of Category 5 intensity were only known to have taken place on islands.

1963 — San Diego, CA, reached an all-time record high of 111 degrees. Los Angeles hit 109 degrees. (David Ludlum)

1970 — Santa Ana winds brought fires to Los Angeles County, and to points south and east. Half a million acres were consumed by the fires, as were 1000 structures. Twenty firemen were injured. (25th-29th) (The Weather Channel)

1979 — In the midst of a hot September for Death Valley, California, the afternoon high was 104 degrees for the second of three days, the coolest afternoon highs for the month. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Freezing temperatures were reported in the Northern and Central Appalachians, and the Upper Ohio Valley. The morning low of 27 degrees at Concord NH tied their record for the date. Temperatures soared into the 90s in South Dakota. Pierre SD reported an afternoon high of 98 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — Unseasonably warm weather prevailed across Florida. Afternoon highs of 92 degrees at Apalachicola and 95 degrees at Fort Myers were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Rain spread from the southeastern states across New England overnight. Cape Hatteras NC reported measurable rainfall for the fourteenth straight day, with 15.51 inches of rain recorded during that two week period. Phoenix AZ reported a record high of 108 degrees, and a record 134 days of 100 degree weather for the year. Afternoon temperatures were only in the 40s over parts of northwest Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. (The National Weather Summary)

2004 — After making its infamous loop east of the Bahamas, Hurricane Jeanne made landfall the night of September 26th, 2004. Jeanne came ashore as a major category 3 hurricane just a few miles away from where Hurricane Frances made landfall a few weeks before. Jeanne produced extensive damage along the east central Florida coast from Volusia County south to Martin County. The highest wind gusts occurred over extreme Southern Brevard County as well as Indian River County with 110 - 120 mph estimates at the peak of the storm. (NWS, Melbourne, FL)



The Source of Guilt

There are two forms of guilt: One leads us into hiding, whereas the other leads us to repentance.

2 Corinthians 7:9-10: 9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.

10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Researchers have found that when people experience guilt, they commonly report feeling punished, depressed, worthless, rejected, and isolated. Many describe an overwhelming sense of low self-esteem—no joy, no hope, no vitality. It's as though guilt blots out everything else in their life.

That's a heavy way to live, and yet most of us have experienced those emotions at one point or another. So let's consider one simple question: Where does this guilt come from?

In 2 Corinthians 7:10, we see two forms of guilt. One is a sorrow that comes from God. This call to repentance is a tool the Lord uses to draw unbelievers to Himself through salvation in Christ. It also motivates believers to confess whatever is disrupting their fellowship with Him. A second form of guilt plagues people with remorse. This sorrow isn't from God at all but is from the world. It leads to paralysis rather than repentance; instead of drawing us toward God, it drives us into hiding, convincing us we're too far gone to be restored.

If you've received Jesus' free gift of salvation but still struggle under the assault of guilt, let Scripture assure you: These feelings didn't come from God. He holds the keys to your liberation. In Christ, you are forgiven and free.

We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.25.26

11 15 22 50 53 3

TOP PRIZE:

\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 32 Mins 21 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.25.26

25 57 58 67 68 16

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$300,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.23.26

13 24 32 41 48 5

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$5,320,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 32 Mins 21 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.23.26

17 18 30 31 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$66,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 47 Mins 21 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.23.26

10 17 19 21 40 6

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 16 Mins 21 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.23.26

5 15 26 29 30 14

Power Play: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$360,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 16 Mins 21 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

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News from the Associated Press

PREP FOOTBALL=

Avon 30, Corsica/Stickney 16
Baltic 26, Estelline-Hendricks 20
Bennett County 54, Hill City 10
Brandon Valley 49, Sioux Falls Washington 14
Britton-Hecla 40, Waubay/Summit 22
Centerville 34, Alcester-Hudson 8
Clark-Willow Lake 36, Beresford 0
Colman-Egan 50, Chester 0
DeSmet 34, Scotland/Menno 22
Deubrook 40, Arlington 8
Dupree 28, White River 8
Elk Point-Jefferson 33, Deuel 6
Faulkton 30, Ipswich 8
Freeman def. Canistota, forfeit
Gayville-Volin High School 50, Dell Rapids St Mary's 0
Great Plains Lutheran 50, Wilmot 12
Hamlin 56, Sisseton 6
Hanson 40, TDAACDC 0
Harrisburg 40, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 19
Herried-Selby 56, Leola-Frederick High School 6
Howard 37, Elkton-Lake Benton 0
Huron 26, Aberdeen Central 21
Kimball-White Lake 20, Bon Homme 14
Lakota Tech 50, Crow Creek Tribal School 0
Lennox 36, Milbank 7
Lower Brule 50, Flandreau Indian 0
Lyman 29, Jones County 8
Madison 35, Dakota Valley 21
McCook Central-Montrose 42, Flandreau 7
Mobridge-Pollock 46, Aberdeen Roncalli 0
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 8, Parker/Marion 7
New Underwood 38, Kadoka 16
Oldham-Ramona-Rutland 41, Iroquois-Lake Preston 0
Parkston 62, Stanley County 0
Platte-Geddes 50, Gregory 0
Rapid City Christian 21, Hot Springs 0
Redfield 44, Waverly-South Shore 0
Riggs 38, Tea 38
Sioux Falls Christian 28, Dell Rapids 15
Sioux Falls Jefferson 42, Rapid City Central 13
Sioux Falls Lincoln 49, Omaha Central, Neb. 14
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 55, Rapid City Stevens 7
Spearfish 28, Brookings 21
Sturgis Brown High School 25, Douglas 0
Sully Buttes 22, Gettysburg 12

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Timber Lake 36, Lead-Deadwood 10
Todd County 50, Mahpiya Luta 16
Tri-Valley 50, Custer 0
Vermillion 52, Belle Fourche 22
Viborg-Hurley 32, Sioux Falls Lutheran 30
WWSSC 32, Miller 0
Wagner 42, Chamberlain 20
Wall 50, Philip 0
Warner 17, Hitchcock-Tulare 6
Watertown 42, Yankton 14
West Central 34, Mitchell 20
Winner 16, Canton 13
Wolsey-Wessington 46, Sunshine Bible Academy 6

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

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

McLaughlin def. Crow Creek Tribal School, 25-13, 25-19, 25-14
Tiospaye Topa def. Wakpala, 25-16, 25-23, 25-19
Todd County def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, 25-11, 25-11, 25-9
Groton Area def. Langford Area, 25-20, 25-14, 25-15

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

Heavy rain and flooding in Bangkok disrupts traffic and prompts evacuations

BANGKOK (AP) — Incessant rain hammered several areas of Thailand 's capital on Saturday, disrupting traffic and forcing hundreds to evacuate, as authorities declared the city a disaster area.

Thailand's Meteorological Department warned that the deluge, which has been pouring since Thursday afternoon, would continue in most parts of the country through Sunday.

Accumulated rainfall in many areas of Bangkok since Thursday exceeded 30 centimeters (11.8 inches), officials said. Floodwaters spread across the city, particularly in the central and eastern parts, blocking roads and stopping traffic.

While not all parts of Bangkok were submerged, the city declared all of its 50 districts a flood disaster area to allow authorities to respond rapidly to the crisis.

More than 84,000 people in 21 provinces nationwide were affected by flooding as of Saturday, especially in the central region. Authorities sent emergency warning messages through the cellphones, the government said.

Hwang Hwan-chung, who flew from South Korea and has visited Bangkok a dozen times, said he had never seen such "crazy" weather, adding that he couldn't find a taxi.

Sukanya Tongsuk, a resident, said the current flooding was similar to the last time Bangkok was hit in 2011.

Meanwhile, Dutch resident Bjorn Franken, who has lived in the capital for two years, said he was able to cope although one event he wanted to attend had been canceled.

Many businesses in Bangkok closed on Saturday due to flooding.

Cars crawled along waterlogged roads in parts of Bangkok, and bikers were seen pushing their motorcycles. Authorities said some regional bus services from Bangkok to the eastern provinces were suspended.

Phetchaburi Road, one of the capital's busiest, was unusually quiet as vehicles were turned back by

floods. Some were left partially submerged.

Residents made their way through murky waters, carrying fresh water and food. Some were barefoot and others wearing rubber waders while several wrapped plastic bags around their feet to keep dry.

Air traffic control authorities confirmed flight operations were normal but some flights might face delays. Bangkok Gov. Chadchart Sittipunt said despite the heavy rain, flooding should recede once the rain subsides, as city officials work to drain floodwaters as quickly as possible.

More than 200 shelters were set up across the city and about 900 people have moved in, Chadchart said.

Pope encourages Catholics in deeply secular France to persevere as Paris shuts down for huge Mass

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Pope Leo XIV encouraged French Catholics on Saturday to persevere in their faith “even amid the thorns” of a secular world, rallying the faithful ahead of a huge Mass at the iconic Place de la Concorde that shut down central Paris.

Leo opened his second day in France by meeting with young converts, whose decision to join the Catholic Church has sparked optimism in the French hierarchy even amid an overall downward spiral of the practicing faithful in the once staunchly Catholic but now deeply secular country.

The church’s enduring influence in France has been visible with the throngs filling Paris avenues to see Leo’s motorcade pass by. On Friday night, some 80,000 young people filled the national stadium north of the French capital for a vigil extravaganza of fireworks and a theatrical retelling of French Catholic history.

Leo has clearly been impressed by their numbers and enthusiasm, especially at the vigil that kept the 71-year-old pope out until nearly 11 p.m. after a packed first day.

“Thank you for your courage! Thank you for your presence,” Leo told the crowd, speaking off the cuff in French. “Thank you for your faith. You are the saints of France!” he said to raucous cheers.

Pope seeks to encourage new converts

Leo sought to encourage those who have opted in during a meeting Saturday with a group of newly baptized faithful at the Catholic Institute of Paris. After hearing from some converts, the American pope said he was surprised by their numbers and grateful for what he said was God’s “unfathomable work” to counter all statistical and sociological analysis.

“We must recognize, welcome and protect the small flame that the Holy Spirit has kindled in the darkness of the night, the tiny seed that strives to grow even amid the thorns,” he said.

The number of adult baptisms in France each year has tripled since 2016, hitting 13,000 this year. The numbers suggest a newfound interest in the church from young people who either left the faith and came back or were never raised in it to begin with.

But statistics and experts caution that the slight uptick in new faithful, which has been recorded also in secular Spain, doesn’t counteract the overall generational trend of children of practicing French Catholics no longer going to Mass or baptizing their babies.

In 1980, there were 513,000 baptisms in France; in 2024, a total of 186,000.

While welcoming the slight uptick among new adult converts, Leo warned French bishops not to become overly optimistic, and to work to accompany these new Catholics and integrate them into their church communities.

“As we marvel at what is taking place in the lives of so many of our brothers and sisters, we must not become complacent or naively optimistic,” Leo said. “On the contrary, we must remain committed, open to searching, asking ourselves questions and implementing concrete pastoral initiatives.”

Downward trend tempers optimism

The church has seen its influence wane in Western Europe.

The number of French priests has cratered in recent decades, from nearly 39,000 in 1980 to nearly 12,600 in 2024. The number of French Catholics getting married in the church fell from nearly 217,500 in 1980 to nearly 40,680 in 2024, according to Vatican statistics.

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But French bishops see reason for hope. Bishop Matthieu Rougé of Nanterre, on Paris' outskirts, said the number of new adult baptisms signaled that "something powerful is happening within the church in France."

"Catholics are happy to see their faith rekindled," he said. "And there are also those who are curious about God — particularly adults seeking baptism — who are deeply moved by this moment," he said.

Later Saturday, Leo was to celebrate Mass at the central Place de la Concorde, with crowds expected to fill the adjacent Champs-Élysées, essentially the heart of Paris and a symbol of the secular French republic.

Road closures and other crowd-control measures for the pope shut down central Paris on Saturday and are reminiscent of the security blanket that was thrown over central Paris for the Olympic Games in 2024.

Hundreds of thousands expected to attend Mass

Organizers said they chose the site because it was the only area in central Paris that could accommodate the hundreds of thousands of people expected to attend. More than 600,000 people registered to attend. Last week, organizers extended the crowd site because they predicted more.

"He projects something that could bring peace in the chaos we are living in, reconciliation and joy," said Solene Rousseau, who came out to see Leo pass by. "Pope Leo can take part in changing this world."

But the choice of the venue has been criticized by staunch supporters of secularism who argue that the site represents the Republic, and that other places such as the Invalides, a complex of buildings where Pope Benedict XVI celebrated Mass in front of 240,000 people in 2008, would have been more appropriate.

France is a traditionally Catholic country, but adheres to a strict form of secularism in public life based on a 1905 law separating church and state.

The Place de la Concorde was designed at the end of the 18th century and was among the main sites of execution during the French Revolution. Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette were guillotined there. For many French people, the square embodies the Republic: French presidents traditionally celebrate Bastille Day there.

The Champs-Élysées has long served as a gathering place for large public celebrations, particularly after major sporting events. In 1998, an estimated 1.5 million people celebrated on the famed avenue after France's football team won the World Cup.

Where things stand after Iran's new pitch for a deal to open the Strait of Hormuz

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

It's been a busy week for Iranian diplomacy that may have come to nothing.

Iran's president and foreign minister visited New York for the U.N. gathering of world leaders and proposed a deal with the Trump administration that would end the fighting and open the Strait of Hormuz in seven days. That's if the U.S. ends its military blockade of Iranian ports, releases frozen Iranian assets and waives sanctions on Iranian oil sales, among other conditions — none of them new.

What's different after past failed attempts is the speedier timeline. Iran's pitch to President Donald Trump said a quick deal might help him in the midterm elections in November.

Trump early Saturday appeared to share the first indication of his thinking, posting a map on social media of the crucial waterway calling it the "Trump Strait." Around the same time, Iran's state media said President Masoud Pezeshkian was going home.

Here's where things stand as Iran and the U.S. each try to outlast growing economic pain following seven months of war.

The two sides hold their first indirect talks in months

The U.S. said its envoys and the Iranians held three hours of indirect talks via mediators Tuesday, their first since the countries' previous agreement meant to end the fighting and launch nuclear talks collapsed within days of its signing in June.

The latest talks were good and the U.S. was open to more, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Wednesday. But Trump used his speech to the U.N. gathering on Tuesday to threaten to "annihilate" the Islamic Republic. In his own speech a day later, Pezeshkian said Iran would fight "until our last breath."

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In his final seconds, however, Pezeshkian said Tehran remained open to diplomacy.

Behind closed doors, Iran describes a new proposal

In a private gathering Thursday on the sidelines of the U.N. meeting, Iran's top diplomat described Tehran's new proposal to the U.S. The conditions for Washington largely echo the ones agreed to in the June deal that fell apart.

At stake are the biggest sources of frustration for both sides.

Opening the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran asserted control of after being attacked by the U.S. and Israel, would ease global markets and relieve some pressure on the U.S. military, which has been guiding commercial ships through the waterway at risk of Iranian attack.

Lifting the U.S. naval blockade of Iranian ports, as well as waiving sanctions on oil sales, would allow Tehran to ship out more of its crude and help its battered economy as its currency hits record lows and inflation soars.

Iran makes another push before heading home

In a sign of Tehran's apparent sense of urgency, Pezeshkian hosted the prime minister of Qatar, the mediator in the indirect talks, early Friday before much of New York rolled out of bed.

"The choice now rests with the United States," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told journalists Friday evening. But the White House would say only that U.S. officials were having positive and constructive conversations with mediators.

Tehran has spent long weeks in discussions with Oman, on the other side of the strait, on how to manage shipping traffic. Its new rush for a deal with Washington, analysts said, reflects its eye on the midterms. Trump might decide an agreement has political benefits. But his rejection risks a return to fighting that would drive oil prices higher just as he needs happy voters.

"Washington may believe that time is on its side: Maintain pressure through November, avoid another major military escalation before the midterms, and reassess afterward. Tehran may reach precisely the opposite conclusion," Danny Citrinowicz, a senior researcher at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies, said on X on Saturday.

Trump has said he's in no rush for a deal as the U.S. strains Iran's economy with sanctions. The White House had yet to expand on his "Trump Strait" social media post overnight.

As for Iran, there was no immediate sign its top diplomat had left New York. At home, Iran's security forces have warned they still have targets left to strike.

Trump posts map showing 'Trump Strait' off Iran, and other Mideast developments

By The Associated Press undefined

U.S. President Donald Trump has posted an image of the Strait of Hormuz labeled "Trump Strait" shortly after Iran proposed a deal to open the waterway within a week if the U.S. meets certain conditions.

Meanwhile, Iranian media outlets say the country's president has left New York after the United Nations gathering of world leaders that included Iran's indirect talks with the United States. And Saudi Arabia says it has intercepted another missile it blames on Iran-backed Houthis in neighboring Yemen.

Here is a look at the latest news from the Middle East on Saturday. More coverage of the U.N. General Assembly is available [here](#).

Trump posts a map calling key waterway 'Trump Strait'

Trump posted an image early Saturday morning on his Truth Social platform of the Strait of Hormuz labeled "Trump Strait," in the first public indication of his thinking after Iran proposed the new deal and suggested it might help Trump ahead of the midterm elections.

The White House on Friday said only that U.S. officials were having positive and constructive conversations with mediators on the Iran war. Earlier in the week, Iran held hours of indirect talks with the U.S.

Iranian outlets say the country's president has left New York

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Semiofficial media outlets in Iran reported that President Masoud Pezeshkian has departed New York for Tehran after the annual U.N. gathering of world leaders.

Pezeshkian's speech to the gathering pushed back against Trump's latest threat to "annihilate" the Islamic Republic, but he ended by saying Tehran remains open to diplomacy.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told journalists Friday night that under Tehran's proposal, Iran would reopen the Strait of Hormuz and resume talks on its nuclear program in seven days if the United States lifts its naval blockade of Iranian ports, waives sanctions on Iranian oil sales and observes a cease-fire that would include Lebanon.

Saudi Arabia says it intercepted a missile fired by Houthis

Saudi Arabia's military spokesperson, Maj. Gen. Turki al-Malki, claimed early Saturday that a ballistic missile launched by the Iran-backed Houthi rebels in neighboring Yemen was intercepted and destroyed. He said it was fired toward the southwestern city of Khamis Mushait.

The Associated Press couldn't immediately verify that independently. There was no immediate statement of responsibility, though it can take days for the Houthis to issue one.

A regional body representing Arab Gulf states, the Gulf Cooperation Council, condemned the latest Houthi attacks as a "grave escalation and threat to regional security" and urged the international community to respond.

Iraq seeks exemptions to US sanctions on Iranian airlines

Iraq said it is in direct contact with the U.S. to secure exemptions from sanctions on Iranian airlines as Washington continues economic pressure on Tehran.

The Iraqi prime minister's office said the aim is to get exemptions for certain airports, noting flights for humanitarian reasons such as medical treatment, education and religious pilgrimages.

Many pilgrims in neighboring Iran visit sites such as Karbala and Najaf.

Israeli settlers seize more water sources in the West Bank

Israeli settlers have intensified efforts to seize natural springs and heritage sites in the occupied West Bank. The springs are vital for drinking water, tourism and agriculture and increasingly inaccessible to the 2.8 million Palestinians living there.

In the Jordan Valley, settlers cut a water pipe to a Palestinian village, redirecting it to a pool they named after Herod, the Roman-appointed king of Judea. Israeli rights groups say the move is part of a broader effort to claim heritage sites.

The struggle for water access highlights the ongoing contest for control of the West Bank, where Palestinians have faced shortages since 1967.

Hurricanes in the Pacific threaten Hawaii and Mexico with floods and high surf

By EUGENE GARCIA Associated Press

HILO, Hawaii (AP) — People on Hawaii's Big Island are preparing for another potentially life-threatening and catastrophic storm as Hurricane Nolo is expected to bring flash floods and extreme surf as it churns just south of the islands through the weekend.

Nolo was expected to strengthen to a major hurricane on Saturday. Its maximum sustained winds increased to 105 mph (165 kph) Friday. The storm's center was located about 145 miles (235 kilometers) south of Hawaii's southernmost point.

Forecasters warned parts of the Big Island could see rainfall totals up to 15 inches (38 centimeters), with a possibility of up to 25 inches (64 centimeters). That was down from an earlier forecast that called for up to 35 inches (89 centimeters).

"People are going to want to kind of shelter in place on the Big Island, be in their safe place, certainly by later today, tonight, well into Saturday," Michael Brennan, director of the National Hurricane Center, said Friday. "Don't venture out if you don't have to into the dangerous flooding environment, but also high winds. We can have trees and power lines down."

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Heavy rainfall also was possible on Hawaii's other islands, the hurricane center said. Maui also could see heavy rainfall and potential life-threatening flooding and mudslides, forecasters said.

Crews on the Big Island spent hours Friday trying to build berms to guide water and move large debris ahead of the worst of the rain, said Erika Kapu, Hawaii program manager for the humanitarian nonprofit CORE.

CORE and other nonprofit partners spent the week packing and shipping supplies like camp stoves and hygiene products by air cargo from Oahu to the Big Island for a community relief hub that has been active since August's Hurricane Lala.

Hawaii prepares as northern edge of Nolo is expected to barrel through

President Donald Trump on Friday approved an emergency declaration for the state of Hawaii, authorizing the Federal Emergency Management Agency to coordinate assistance from across the federal government and provide funding support for emergency measures.

Hawaii officials told residents to put together emergency kits, and the governor issued an emergency proclamation, activating more than 230 Hawaii National Guard members. Schools were closed in some areas.

Hawaii County officials on the Big Island were urging residents in flood-prone areas to consider taking refuge at shelters being set up or other locations.

The heaviest rain from Nolo is likely to fall over the same southeastern region of the Big Island that was hit by Lala and where grounds are still wet from additional precipitation. The storm surge could hit 1 to 3 feet (30 to 91 centimeters), creating large and dangerous waves and coastal flooding, the hurricane center said.

Hawaiian Electric, the state's primary utility, said crews that had been helping restore power in Kauai after this month's Hurricane Lowell would return to Oahu, Maui and the Big Island in preparation for the coming storm.

Residents and tourists on the Big Island were busy preparing.

In Hilo, where light rain was falling Friday, residents filled bags with sand and gravel at Francis Wong Stadium, where authorities set up a sand distribution center.

Dean Taise said water was starting to get into his driveway from the street, so he decided to get a few sandbags ready ahead of possible floods.

"They say, prepare for the worst, right? Hope for the best," Taise said.

Piles of sandbags lined the terminal at Hilo International Airport, where Daniela Mendoza was trying to get home to Oahu after Southwest Airlines canceled flights. Only Hawaiian Airlines was still flying out of the airport Friday afternoon.

"I hope I can leave," Mendoza said. "My cats are waiting for me."

Polo is strengthening after returning to Category 5 intensity

Meanwhile, Mexico is under the threat of Hurricane Polo as it heads toward the Baja California peninsula after bringing storm conditions to the southwestern coast.

The hurricane center said Polo gained significant force overnight into Friday morning and doused parts of Mexico's Pacific Coast. No major damage or flooding was reported along the coast overnight into Friday.

By midday Friday, attention turned to the peninsula, where the hurricane was slated to arch back and hit between Monday and Tuesday. Local authorities were preparing shelters, and Mexico's government announced Friday afternoon that they were closing ports in the region as dark clouds swirled overhead.

The latest estimated sustained winds were 175 mph (280 kph).

Residents stacked sandbags to fortify beachfront shops and evacuated their homes in some coastal areas on Thursday. Mexican authorities opened shelters and cleared people from beaches, and 15,000 security personnel were deployed across the coast. Schools were closed.

In the port city of Lázaro Cárdenas in Michoacán, seawater swept through homes and left wooden planks and furniture strewn on the streets. Locals and government officials were clearing debris and shoveling thick mud coating much of the town.

Alicia Contreras said the walls and roof of her restaurant had been severely damaged by 15-foot (4.5-me-

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ter) waves. She worried about how she would recover economically, saying she has no other source of income.

Brennan said some moisture associated with Polo will be pushed into parts of the southwestern U.S. by Monday, possibly producing scattered flash flooding in the Four Corners region, particularly portions of Arizona and New Mexico.

Biologists on Friday relocated eggs from two olive ridley sea turtle nests on Southern California beaches to the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach over concern about high tides and hazardous surf as officials monitor Hurricane Polo.

Powerful storms come during the weather phenomenon El Niño

El Niño is prompting major environmental shifts across the world, fueling drought in some areas and flooding in others. It traditionally dampens the Atlantic hurricane season, while it tends to rev up tropical cyclone activity in the Pacific with moist air and little wind shear.

A third storm in the Pacific, Hurricane Odalys, was at Category 4 status and was still far from land Friday, roughly 955 miles (1,537 kilometers) west-southwest of the southern tip of the Baja California peninsula.

Two other powerful storms were churning in the Atlantic Ocean but were not near land.

In the northern Atlantic, Tropical Storm Fay reformed early Thursday. As of Friday, it was about 1,040 miles (1,674 kilometers) west-southwest of the Azores, the hurricane center said. Off Africa's western coast, Tropical Storm Gonzalo strengthened early Friday as it approached the Cabo Verde Islands.

Saturday's MLB clinching scenarios: Phillies trying to hold off D-backs for final NL wild card

By DAVID BRANDT AP Baseball Writer

Major League Baseball's postseason is rapidly approaching, with the Los Angeles Dodgers seeking a third straight World Series title. Ten of the 12 postseason spots have been decided, but the D-backs are gaining on the Phillies for the final NL wild card while the Rangers and Astros are tied for the top of the AL West with two games remaining.

The Dodgers are once again among the best teams in the big leagues, and they'll have several challengers in October, including the Milwaukee Brewers and Tampa Bay Rays. Los Angeles is rolling into the postseason and four-time MVP Shohei Ohtani returned to the lineup on Wednesday after a stint on the injured list. He appears ready for playoff baseball.

It was a busy Thursday in the playoff race, with the San Diego Padres, Chicago Cubs, Chicago White Sox and Cleveland Guardians all clinching invites to the postseason.

The New York Yankees, Boston Red Sox and Atlanta Braves have also previously clinched. Yankees slugger Aaron Judge, a three-time AL MVP, is dealing with a right calf strain that could keep him out through at least the Wild Card Series.

The D-backs looked like a playoff long shot just a few days ago but a six-game winning streak has pulled them within a game of the struggling Phillies in the NL wild-card race. Philadelphia has lost three in a row. Arizona has the tiebreaker if the two teams finish with the same record.

Here's some of what to watch as the season comes to a close.

Here's who can clinch a playoff spot Saturday

The Phillies can lock up the final NL wild card with a win over the Rays and a D-backs loss to the Padres.

The Astros can clinch the AL West if they can beat the Athletics and the Rangers lose to the Twins.

AL Central and West are tight, other division winners are set

There's quite a bit of mediocrity in the AL Central and West divisions this season, which has led to some fascinating pennant races and could lead to a sub-.500 team making the postseason.

The Guardians (84-76) have a narrow advantage over the White Sox (83-77) in the AL Central, but Chicago owns the head-to-head tiebreaker. Cleveland plays at Kansas City this weekend, while the White Sox host Colorado. Both teams have already clinched at least a wild card, but the division winner will get a bye into the Division Series.

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The Rangers (79-81) and Astros (79-81) are fighting for the AL West, and Houston has the tiebreaker if the season ends in a tie. Texas is playing at Minnesota this weekend, and the Astros are playing at the Athletics.

In the National League, the Padres (89-71), Cubs (88-73) and Phillies (87-73) are jockeying for position in the wild-card race. The Diamondbacks (86-74) could still sneak past the Phillies into the bracket. Chicago holds the head-to-head tiebreaker for home field over Philadelphia and San Diego, and the Phillies own the tiebreaker over the Padres after sweeping that season series 6-0.

Chicago's series at Boston has already been impacted by a nor'easter hitting New England this weekend. The Cubs' Sunday finale was rescheduled as part of a doubleheader Friday, and they are now scheduled to conclude their season Saturday.

MVP races, stats to watch

MLB's major awards probably won't have much drama this season.

Both MVP races have strong favorites with Chicago's Pete Crow-Armstrong running away with the NL honor while Houston's Yordan Alvarez is the probable choice in the AL, though Tampa Bay's Junior Caminero has also had a fantastic season. Alvarez had an outside chance at the Triple Crown a few days ago, but those odds have mostly diminished. His .315 batting average leads the league, but his 41 homers are two behind Baltimore's Pete Alonso and his 102 RBIs are 11 behind Alonso.

For the Cy Young Award, Milwaukee flame thrower Jacob deGrom and New York ace Gerrit Cole are the favorites in the NL and AL, respectively.

The Rookie of the Year races also look set with Cincinnati's Sal Stewart and his 110-RBI season the leader in the NL and Detroit's Kevin Kiersey the favorite in the AL.

What is the MLB playoff format?

There are 12 teams that qualify for MLB's postseason, including six teams from both the AL and NL. The three division winners in each league get seeds No. 1 through No. 3, ranked by win-loss record. Then the three wild-card teams get seeds No. 4 through No. 6, also ranked by win-loss record.

The top two teams with the best record in both the AL and NL automatically advance to the Division Series. The other eight teams play in the Wild Card Series, which is a best-of-three format beginning on Tuesday, Sept. 29. In both the AL and NL, the No. 6 seed will travel to face the No. 3 seed while the No. 5 seed goes to No. 4. The higher seed hosts all three games.

The winners then advance to the best-of-five Division Series, followed by the best-of-seven League Championship Series and a best-of-seven World Series between the winners of the AL and NL.

What is the MLB postseason schedule?

Wild Card Series: Sept. 29-Oct. 1 (NBC/Peacock)

Division Series: Oct. 3-10 (AL on TBS, NL on FOX/FS1)

Championship Series: Oct. 11-20 (AL on TBS, NL on FOX/FS1)

World Series: Oct. 23-31 (FOX)

Who are the favorites to win the World Series?

The Dodgers (+200) are the favorites to capture a third straight World Series title while the Brewers (+550), Rays (+800) and Yankees (+850) are viewed as the top contenders.

CNN left off Air Force One for Trump's upcoming trip, White House signals in new media restriction

By HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

The White House signaled Friday night that CNN would be left off Air Force One for President Donald Trump's Saturday trip, the latest media restriction from the administration in an ongoing dispute with First Amendment implications.

The news organization was replaced by Real America's Voice, a conservative network, for the president's trip to Knoxville, Tennessee, according to White House guidance. Trump is scheduled to attend a college

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football game between the University of Tennessee and the University of Texas at midday Saturday.

The news came just after journalists from CNN, along with MS NOW and Politico, which Trump banned last week from the White House grounds, returned to the executive complex with TV cameras in hand after a judge handed the organizations a reprieve.

U.S. District Judge Timothy Kelly temporarily struck down the ban in an overnight ruling early Thursday, but his decision addressed “hard passes” to the White House grounds and didn’t directly address pool duties.

The judge’s temporary order also said nothing directly about Air Force One.

Media organizations believe the court decision covers the ‘pool’

Theodore Boutros Jr., the news outlets’ attorney, did not immediately respond to an email and phone call from The Associated Press requesting comment Friday night.

Earlier Friday, on “The Lead with Jake Tapper,” Boutros had said the plaintiffs believe the recent court ruling also covers the issue of pool access.

The White House did not immediately respond to an AP email requesting additional details on the decision.

For a while during the day, the U.S. network video pool for the White House was back in operation for the first time since Trump banned the three news outlets in an extraordinary showdown over media access.

At noon on CNN, viewers could see Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping touring the National Archives, along with Melania Trump and Peng Liyuan, Xi’s wife. The banner along the bottom of the screen read: “Trump and China’s Xi Visit National Archives.” It was a routine report from a state visit — except that CNN had not aired live video of Trump in several days.

“As of now, all systems are go,” said a person familiar with the pool, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the fluidity of the situation.

The pool consists of five major U.S. broadcast outlets that take turns shooting and sharing video. When the White House banned CNN — which belongs to the pool — from White House grounds, along with MS NOW and Politico, the other four pool providers declined to participate in a show of solidarity.

The spot meant for CNN on this flight has long been saved for a member of the U.S. network video pool, which Real America’s Voice is not a part of.

CNN did not comment directly earlier Friday, referring instead to its editorial coverage. But Brian Stelter, the network’s media analyst, posted on X that CNN had a pool assignment at the National Archives event and that the White House had approved the network’s credentials.

Throughout his second term, Trump has increasingly targeted media outlets whose coverage irritates him, taking administrative or legal action against several. Early last year, he banished AP reporters from White House events because the organization wasn’t abiding by his executive order changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the “Gulf of America.” The AP’s guidance says to acknowledge the new name when relevant.

The case is on appeal after a federal district judge ruled in AP’s favor.

The press pool was created decades ago by the White House Correspondents’ Association, a group of journalists who cover the president, to make sure a rotating roster always travels with the president.

The pool distributes in-person reports and imagery to the broader press corps and is designed to hold the nation’s chief executive accountable on behalf of the American public.

The association did not immediately respond to an email requesting comment.

Far-right settlers divert West Bank spring water as Israel backs heritage site takeovers

By MELANIE LIDMAN and JALAL BWAITEL Associated Press

PETZAEI, West Bank (AP) — The natural springs and ancient pools of the occupied West Bank have long provided a respite from the oppressive summer heat. They also have been a lifeline for Palestinian communities, which rely on them for tourism and irrigation for their farmland.

But for the 2.8 million Palestinians who live in the territory, those springs and the stone reservoirs they fill are increasingly out of reach as Israeli settlers — encouraged by a hard-line government facing reelec-

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tion — have stepped up efforts both to seize the springs and other heritage sites.

In one case this summer, water from a natural spring to the Palestinian village of Fasayil was illegally diverted to an ancient pool nearby. Whoever siphoned the water used it to fill up that pool, declaring it a new tourist attraction named after Herod, the Roman-appointed king of Judea.

Agreements reached in the 1990s indicate the pool is located in Area C, meaning it is under full Israeli military control. Research by Dror Etkes, who runs the settlement watchdog group Kerem Navot, determined the land was privately owned.

Palestinian farmer Saad Nemer, from Fasayil, said the water being cut off has devastated his fields, adding that his family has documents that prove ownership of the land. COGAT, Israel's military body that oversees civil issues in the West Bank, acknowledged the water was diverted "without authorization" and said it would investigate.

Other swimming areas in the West Bank have also become sites of conflict. An Israeli father of six was shot and killed last week by a Palestinian at a spring in the northern West Bank, where he was bathing with his oldest son ahead of the Yom Kippur holiday.

Israel funds Jewish heritage projects in the West Bank

Israel has occupied the West Bank since it captured the territory, along with east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, from Jordan and Egypt in the 1967 war. Since then, it has built a network of settlements for more than half a million Israelis on land Palestinians seek for a future independent state.

The international community overwhelmingly considers the settlements illegal. Earlier this month, during a rise in settler violence and other actions that have displaced Palestinians, the British government accused Israel of turning "a blind eye" to what it described as "ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in areas of the West Bank — perpetrated by settler terrorists."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has condemned the violence but blamed it on a "handful of rioters" in the occupied West Bank he said do injustice to the "law-abiding settler public."

The push to take over and claim heritage sites is part of this wider effort, according to Israeli rights group B'Tselem, which said in a report this month that such designations are used to "elevate the historical, cultural, and religious ties of the State of Israel and the Jewish people to the West Bank."

The decision by settlers to name the pool near Fasayil after Herod was an attempt to "brand" the site as part of Jewish history, said Alon Arad, executive director of Emek Shaveh, an Israeli group that opposes the politicization of archaeology in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Archaeologists have never studied the site, so it's unclear when it was built. Other ruins in the area date to Herod's reign in the first century B.C.E., according to excavations conducted by the archaeology unit of Israel's Civil Administration, a branch of the military that manages day-to-day affairs in the West Bank.

At the beginning of October, after the Jewish holidays, the pool will be drained so that the administration's archaeologists can complete a full survey of the site, Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu said in an interview with The Associated Press.

He praised the group that originally diverted the water and said about \$1 million has been earmarked by the government to rehabilitate the site. That is out of at least \$166 million he said is now allocated for excavations and infrastructure at more than 100 sites he claimed are connected to Jewish heritage in the West Bank.

"We'll turn this place into the Garden of Eden," Eliyahu said during a visit to the pool, which is near the Petzael settlement.

There is "no such thing as a Palestinian nation" he added, before leaping into the water.

Fields dry up as water is seized

The struggle for water access in this strip of fertile land reflects a wider contest for control of the West Bank, and in particular the Jordan Valley, which Palestinians consider the breadbasket of their hoped-for future state and Israelis view as key to protecting their eastern border.

Palestinians have faced water shortages and restrictions since Israel took control in 1967. Interim peace accords in the 1990s recognized their water rights but preserved a system that allocated some 80% of

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water pumped from the main aquifer for Israeli use.

Now, soaring attacks by settlers are exacerbating the problem. Settlers have damaged, destroyed or seized approximately 160 water and sanitation structures, including pipelines and cisterns, in Palestinian communities in 2026, according to a July report from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The attackers are increasingly targeting shared water infrastructure and have disrupted supply to all or large parts of several Palestinian communities, the report said.

In Al Auja, in the Jordan Valley, the seizure by settlers of the local natural springs has forced some Palestinian farmers to abandon their fields.

Murad al-Juba, 53, once grew an abundance of fruit and vegetables, including cantaloupes, eggplant, bananas and tomatoes. But after settlers encroached, harassing residents and diverting the spring water, he said he has been unable to plant.

"All these farms depend on the spring, but today, the spring is gone, because the settlers took it," Juba said.

More recently, "settlers have completely taken over" the spring's waterfall and turned "the area into a quasi-military zone," said mayor Hani al-Njourn, adding it has been devastating for local tourism and agriculture.

"This land was bountiful," Juba said. "Today, it is a desert."

A month after Nepal floods, thousands are still missing and families face a long recovery

By BINAJ GURUBACHARYA and NIRANJAN SHRESTHA Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — After spending five years working in Saudi Arabia, Narayan Prassan returned to his home in Nepal with savings, only to lose his house in the 2015 earthquake. He went abroad again, earned enough to rebuild his home and settled happily with his family.

Last month's floods have destroyed everything once more.

With his home in a designated danger zone and no clear idea of where his family will resettle, Prassan is staying with his wife and children at a relative's house and mulling another stint overseas.

"This flood has taken everything," he said. "I don't know what to do."

A month after devastating floods swept through parts of Nepal, thousands are displaced like Prassan and rescuers continue searching for thousands others missing, including many believed trapped in six hydropower project tunnels. The disaster has left the government facing a long and costly recovery, with families confronting the loss of loved ones, homes and livelihoods.

Prime Minister Balendra Shah used his first address to the U.N. General Assembly on Thursday to highlight the flooding as a warning about the growing climate risks facing the Himalayan region.

"The disaster was not just a local tragedy, but a warning to the world," Shah said. "I ask you today: Have we really heard that warning?"

Shah also called for greater international support for Nepal's recovery and stronger regional cooperation to prepare for climate-related disasters.

"Climate change does not recognize borders. Glaciers and floods do not travel with stamps and passports," he said.

DNA testing delays final rites for some families

Nepal's disaster management agency said 1,453 bodies had been recovered and 5,644 people remained missing. Only 112 bodies had been handed over to relatives, while 1,333 were temporarily buried pending identification. In neighboring China, officials reported 261 foreign nationals among the missing.

Tents have been set up at the Nepal Police Hospital in Kathmandu, where relatives can provide DNA samples to help identify the dead. Authorities are comparing the samples with DNA collected from recovered remains.

Laboratory officials declined to provide details, citing privacy concerns, but said experts from India,

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China, the United States, Singapore and South Korea were assisting with the work.

Rabi Kumar Thapa Magar, a hydropower worker who lost his wife, brother, sister-in-law and mother, said he identified his wife from a photo of the dead — but authorities had buried her body before the family could see it.

Authorities declined to release the body pending DNA matching, a process they said would take at least a month. The family later performed symbolic final rites using an effigy.

Families grieve children lost in the floods

Many others are still processing the grief.

Pasang Maya Tamang, 32, who lost her young son in the floods, said she still dreams of him pleading for help.

"The body of my son has been recovered but I was not able to see him for the last time. I am very sad about that. I hear in my dreams him saying why I left him alone," Tamang said at a shelter home in the flood-affected town of Nuwakot.

Her son had gone to school with a neighbor when the flood hit. By the time she learned what had happened, the school had already been swept away. His body was recovered three days later in a southern district, but she was unable to travel there to see him.

The Aug. 26 flood hit in the morning, around the time students were arriving at schools or making their way there. Some children's bodies were later recovered still wearing ties bearing their school's logo, said Asta Man Dangol, a resident in Nuwakot.

"The older students were able to run uphill and escape, but the little ones who were not able to run fast ... were swept away," he said.

Crews work to reconnect communities cut off by the floods

The Nepal government estimates reconstruction and recovery will cost \$4.77 billion. Nearly 33,000 people have been affected, and about 7,500 homes were damaged or destroyed.

The recovery is now focused on restoring roads and bridges cut off by the floods, particularly in remote areas where damaged infrastructure has made it difficult to deliver aid.

Ishmita Shah, a roads engineer, said crews have been working with Nepal's army since the second day after the floods to reopen routes in affected areas.

Shah said bridges were being built to improve access to the worst-affected areas and make it easier to transport relief supplies. But the work remains difficult, with more bad weather expected in the coming days, she said.

"The upcoming few days are going to be very challenging because of the weather, but we are fully prepared for that too," she said.

OpenAI says its models engaged with US government websites in new model misbehavior disclosure

By KAITLYN HUAMANI and GARANCE BURKE Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — OpenAI disclosed Friday that its artificial intelligence agents had interacted with several U.S. government websites in unexpected ways, discovered as part of an ongoing review into the company's models' unanticipated behavior.

The AI giant's models accessed publicly available information on two websites operated by the Securities and Exchange Commission as well as U.S. Census Bureau data, the company revealed Friday. OpenAI did not find any use of SEC credentials, access to accounts or nonpublic information, changes to SEC data or systems, or evidence of a compromise or vulnerability, the company said.

The disclosure comes at a time of heightened global concerns about AI systems escaping human control and hacking into external websites, as well as industry calls for a slowdown on AI development, which OpenAI has said it supports.

OpenAI spokesperson Liz Bourgeois said in a statement that the lab is continuing to conduct a review

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of “misaligned model activity” — meaning when AI systems behave in undesired ways — and is notifying organizations when it identifies potential impacts to their systems.

OpenAI’s CEO Sam Altman said on social media Friday that there is an “extensive and ongoing review related to our agents’ use of internet access during training and evaluation.”

AI evaluator and research lab Translucé said Friday that through an independent investigation it also found that agents appearing to originate from OpenAI attempted a rudimentary hack on a Department of Education website for the department’s civil rights office, which did not succeed.

The Department of Education’s “system operations reviews” found “no evidence of any impact to our website or databases,” a department spokesperson said Friday.

A Translucé spokesperson said as part of its investigation, it came across data on the open web that revealed fresh details about some previously identified OpenAI agents’ activities on U.S. government websites and brought it to OpenAI’s attention.

Translucé found “additional rogue activity, some of which is not clearly attributable to OpenAI,” targeting other government agencies, including the Justice Department and the Commerce Department, as well as some state government websites in California, Maryland, Illinois, Texas and New York. The models were “using sites in unintended ways and sometimes violating explicit usage policies,” Translucé said in a statement.

OpenAI said it is reviewing Translucé’s report.

If OpenAI notifies organizations it identifies as being impacted by unexpected model behavior, that does not mean there was a security incident, the company said, and could identify a design issue or security weakness that impacted organizations want to address.

Most of the activity OpenAI said it has reviewed so far has involved routine research tasks where agents accessed public web content to answer questions, including government websites seen as authoritative sources of public information.

Several companies have disclosed incidents in recent months when they say their models have behaved unpredictably or hacked into other organizations’ websites or systems. OpenAI disclosed in July that two of its most capable AI models were responsible for the cyberattack targeting AI startup Hugging Face.

Altman said in his social media post Friday that the Hugging Face incident “is still the most severe event we’ve seen.”

That incident stirred widespread panic in the industry and beyond about AI models going rogue, and several competing AI labs made similar disclosures in the days and weeks that followed. OpenAI most recently shared six reports of “unexpected or concerning” behavior in AI models and introduced a framework for tracking, probing and disclosing instances of what it called misalignment.

Trump said he would campaign in midterm battlegrounds. He’s starting in deep red states instead

By JILL COLVIN and KIM CHANDLER Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — President Donald Trump vowed to campaign in 35 of the most competitive battleground races in the final sprint to November’s midterm elections.

Instead, he will begin October by stumping in Alabama and Oklahoma, two of the most Republican states in the nation. His events are sure to draw enthusiastic crowds of fans, but his choice of destinations is a reminder of his deep unpopularity in much of the country during a campaign season he’s sought to make all about himself.

Trump will hold rallies next week in Durant, Oklahoma, and Mobile, Alabama, where he is sure to draw crowds, but he has also raised eyebrows.

While organizers insist the rallies are in locations with media markets that span state lines and they will help bolster broader turnout, Trump’s itinerary is yet another sign of the uphill fight that his party faces. Republicans have already been pouring money into red states once considered safe as they try to shore

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up candidates facing an unhappy electorate that has soured on Trump and his policies.

Some Republicans have also been distancing themselves from the president in recent weeks as they try to appeal to voters beyond Trump's "Make America Great Again" base. They have removed or downplayed references to the president on their websites and increasingly voiced opposition to his unpopular war with Iran.

But Trump's events — Thursday in Durant and Friday in Mobile — are also likely to deliver something else he craves: adoring crowds. He is almost guaranteed to fill the venues with the kind of die-hard supporters who fueled his political rise, projecting excitement as he tries to bolster enthusiasm and rally Republicans.

"The President's ability to engage with and activate low-propensity voters is unmatched. That's why he'll be barnstorming the country to activate the voters we need to win in November," said Republican National Committee spokesperson Natalie Baldassarre, promising more October rallies to come.

Democrats, meanwhile, celebrated the announcement. "The political floor is falling out from underneath Trump and Congressional Republicans, forcing them to scramble to spend and campaign in deep red territory in the final weeks," said Viet Shelton, spokesperson for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

Republicans expect Trump's appeal to cross state lines

The RNC noted that Durant, Oklahoma, is on the Texas border and next to the Dallas-Fort Worth media market, and will draw Republicans in Texas, which has emerged as one of the most critical states on the map. Scandal-plagued Attorney General Ken Paxton, whom Trump backed over incumbent Sen. John Cornyn, is locked in a tight race against Democrat James Talarico. Gov. Greg Abbott is also facing a stronger-than-expected challenger in Democrat Gina Hinojosa.

Mobile is next to Florida's panhandle, a Republican stronghold where high turnout can help bolster Trump-backed candidates running for Senate and governor. However, Florida Republican Sen. Ashley Moody is not expected to attend.

In Oklahoma, Trump will be stumping for Mike Mazzei, whom he backed as the Republican nominee for governor during a competitive primary. Mazzei is running against Oklahoma's Democratic House Minority Leader Cyndi Munson.

"This race continues to get more competitive — and national Republicans are right to be worried about Mazzei," Democratic Governors Association spokesperson Kevin Donohoe said in a statement.

Alabama, meanwhile, holds deep nostalgia for Trump and his early supporters. He held his first megarally in Mobile more than a decade ago, drawing some 30,000 people to a college football stadium. The crowd made clear to skeptics of his campaign that he was more than a celebrity novelty.

"I think it's very natural that he would host a rally here as he is gearing up for the midterm elections," said John Wahl, the Republican candidate for lieutenant governor and former chair of the Alabama Republican Party.

Although Republicans remain the heavy favorites in Alabama's statewide campaigns, they face a more challenging political landscape this year.

Former Democratic Sen. Doug Jones is mounting a vigorous campaign for Alabama governor against one of Trump's most vocal allies, Republican Sen. Tommy Tuberville, who said he welcomed the president's visit.

Republican Rep. Barry Moore, running to replace Tuberville in the Senate with Trump's backing, said the president's rally "will be the jet fuel we need to win big in Alabama."

Mobile is also near Alabama's 2nd Congressional District, which leans red after its lines were redrawn but is not a slam dunk for Republicans as they try to dislodge Democratic Rep. Shomari Figures.

Figures has been criticizing the president's plan to lower import tariffs on foreign beef in an appeal to cattle ranchers as he tries to fend off a challenge from his Trump-backed opponent, State Rep. Rhett Marques.

Trump has promised to ramp up his campaigning in the election's final stretch and had said he would visit all of the most competitive districts.

"It's all about 35 races," he said at a recent Rose Garden dinner attended by Republican lawmakers. "I'm going to go to every one of those 35 places and we're going to see if we can get everyone elected."

Ohio Republican Party Chairman Alex Triantafilou said he hoped Trump would visit his state, where he won in 2024 by 11 percentage points. Republican Sen. John Husted is facing a competitive challenge from Democratic former Sen. Sherrod Brown.

"We definitely want him here," Triantafilou said. "He's a turnout driver for us."

Supreme Court rejects a Trump-backed Missouri congressional map for the third time

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — The Supreme Court on Friday turned away an attempt to use a new Missouri congressional map backed by President Donald Trump, putting an end to a long-running legal dispute as absentee voting is underway in the midterm elections.

The justices halted a federal appeals court ruling that would have revived the Republican-friendly map for the November elections, which will determine control of Congress. There were no noted dissents.

The Supreme Court instead let stand a decision by the Missouri Supreme Court, which ruled earlier this month that a citizen petition prevents the new map from being used unless first approved by voters in a November referendum. The decision means Missouri residents will vote under the same congressional districts used in the 2024 and 2022 elections.

"At this late date, ordering reversion to the 2025 map in the midst of an ongoing election would usher in electoral chaos," the high court wrote in an unsigned opinion. "The District Court and Court of Appeals should not enjoin or otherwise prohibit the use of the 2022 map in the 2026 congressional election in Missouri."

Republicans had hoped the new House map — which already was used in the August primaries — could help them win an additional seat as part of a nationwide redistricting battle pushed by Trump to gain an edge in the midterms.

The new map had targeted a district held by longtime Democratic Rep. Emanuel Cleaver.

"I think my reelection prospects shot up significantly," a jubilant Cleaver said after the Supreme Court ruling.

A panel of the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals had ruled Monday that switching districts between the primary and general elections would violate the U.S. Constitution. The panel directed a district judge to bar Missouri from using anything other than the new map but delayed the order's effect until next Monday to allow time for an appeal to the Supreme Court.

Republican Missouri Secretary of State Denny Hoskins described the high court's decision as "a disappointing blow to representative democracy," but added, "I appreciate the final clarity."

The legal wrangling has caused confusion for more than a million potential Missouri voters — nearly 1 in 4 statewide — who were shifted from one district to another, resulting in different candidates on their ballots. Absentee voting began Tuesday under the 2022 congressional districts. Thousands of ballots already had been mailed, and some already have been cast.

A decision from the Supreme Court is "a big sigh of relief," said Kansas City election director Shawn Kieffer. He added, "We just want it over, so we can do our job properly."

Republican redistricting focused on Kansas City

Republicans currently hold six of Missouri's eight House districts. At the urging of Trump and Republican Gov. Mike Kehoe, Missouri lawmakers last September passed revised districts that were intended to help them win seven seats in the midterms.

The redistricting significantly reshaped a Kansas City-based district held by Cleaver. It shed parts of Kansas City to neighboring districts with Republican incumbents and stretched the remainder of Cleaver's 5th Congressional District far eastward into rural Republican areas.

The result was about 59% of potential voters were new to the district, according to an Associated Press estimate. The ripple effects also shifted some voters in most of Missouri's other congressional districts.

Cleaver was unopposed in the Democratic primary. Republican state Sen. Rick Brattin won a six-way

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Republican primary under the revised districts. They remain the candidates for the general election, even though the district boundaries have reverted to their prior lines.

Cleaver said the court ruling affirms the people's right to use to referendum petitions against state legislative actions they don't like.

"We just received a healthy dose of encouragement that the voice of people in the United States still matters," he said.

Brattin was a plaintiff, along with Republican Rep. Bob Onder and two other voters, in a federal lawsuit that led to the 8th Circuit's ruling and the last two appeals to the Supreme Court.

Brattin denounced Friday's decision as "a travesty," calling the switching of districts after the primary "the most unprecedented form of voter disenfranchisement in American history."

Missouri's redistricting prompted a big legal fight

At least 16 lawsuits have been filed in state and federal courts related to Missouri's congressional redistricting. The 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.

Missouri's new map survived most of the lawsuits, including ones contending that mid-decade redistricting violated the state constitution and that the new districts ran afoul of requirements to be compact. In one case, the Missouri Supreme Court allowed the new districts to be used while election officials worked to verify petition signatures seeking to put the map to a statewide vote.

Hoskins waited until the legal deadline on Aug. 4 — the day the new districts were used in the primaries — to reject the petition. He asserted referendum petitions aren't allowed for congressional redistricting.

The Missouri Supreme Court ruled Sept. 3 that the referendum petition was valid. It ordered Hoskins not to use the new map and to instead use the districts adopted in 2022, after the last census. The U.S. Supreme Court let that ruling stand on Sept. 8. But minutes later, U.S. District Judge Stephen Clark issued a conflicting order in favor of the new map.

The U.S. Supreme Court on Sept. 10 blocked Clark's order from taking effect. That day, the Missouri Supreme Court held Hoskins temporarily in contempt for telling local election authorities to use the new map after Clark's order.

But that wasn't the end of the matter. The 8th Circuit, hearing an appeal of Clark's blocked order, ruled in favor of the Trump-backed map Monday. That's what led to the latest decision from the U.S. Supreme Court.

Richard von Glahn, executive director of People Not Politicians Missouri, said the group was pressing forward with its campaign to persuade voters to permanently reject the new map in the November referendum.

"We have said from the beginning, people, not politicians will be the final deciders on this DC power grab," he said in a statement.

Supreme Court lets Trump administration use revamped federal voter eligibility database for now

By ALI SWENSON, JOHN HANNA and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The Supreme Court on Friday lifted restrictions on a controversial federal voter database before November's elections, granting President Donald Trump a temporary win in his aggressive campaign against noncitizen voting.

The court's three liberal-leaning justices publicly dissented from the decision.

The emergency order allows states, for now, to use the Trump administration's revamped version of a Department of Homeland Security program, called Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements, or SAVE, in their efforts to verify the eligibility of voters on their rolls. It's a program that has drawn scrutiny for its use of voters' sensitive personal data and its tendency to wrongly flag some eligible voters as noncitizens.

States' use of the SAVE program is voluntary, limiting the ruling's impact on the midterm elections. Existing law also blocks most states from systematically purging voters from their rolls within 90 days of

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an election, said David Becker, an election law expert who leads the Center for Election Innovation and Research. He said DHS itself has admitted the data is not perfect.

Maine Secretary of State Shenna Bellows, a Democrat who has refused to participate in the SAVE program, said the ruling will have no effect in her state because it "does not force states to change the way we run our elections."

The plaintiffs and their lawyers in the case called the ruling "profoundly disappointing" and said it puts "millions of Americans at risk of being unlawfully targeted by the administration's unreliable voter purge database" before the midterms.

On X, James Percival, the general counsel for DHS, responded to a post about the decision with, "Yes, you read that right. We had to file an emergency petition in the Supreme Court just so we could use government data to help states stop noncitizens from illegally voting."

The White House did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

Ruling pauses a lower court's ban on the tool

The court's order puts on hold a federal judge's June ruling that had deemed the Republican administration's recently revamped version of SAVE illegal. U.S. District Court Judge Sparkle L. Sooknanan had blocked the use of the tool, saying it violated Americans' privacy rights and could result in voters being wrongly removed from the rolls.

A federal appeals court let her order stand.

But the Supreme Court majority found that a 1996 law explicitly allows DHS to obtain information on citizenship and immigration from other federal agencies. The federal government also has "an obligation to respond" to states seeking to verify citizenship.

"The order below prevents the Federal Government from using the program it believes is best suited to the task," the majority wrote in the unsigned order.

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson dissented, joined by Justices Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor. The database has long been seen to fall under federal privacy laws, she wrote, and there are real risks that legitimate voter registrations could be mistakenly revoked.

"The harm caused by burdening or disenfranchising even a few lawful voters outweighs the nonexistent harm that the Government experiences when it is prevented from taking an action that it likely lacks the authority to take," Jackson wrote.

The plaintiffs pledged to do "everything in our power" to ensure the district court decision stands.

Trump administration tool has wrongly flagged some legal registrants

The SAVE program was created under an immigration law mandating that DHS help federal, state and local agencies prevent government benefits from going to noncitizens. The Trump administration last year moved to significantly expand its search abilities. Since then, at least 67 million registrations have been scanned through the program, but critics worry it could purge valid voters from the rolls.

Some registrants have already been wrongly flagged. In Travis County, Texas, for example, officials said they investigated 97 voters flagged by SAVE as apparent noncitizens and found that at least 10% of them — and likely up to 21% — were U.S. citizens. The county urged the Supreme Court to reject the administration's appeal, while the state of Texas submitted its own brief defending the database.

In Denton, Texas, north of Dallas, voter Anthony Nels was disappointed that the Supreme Court allowed the continued use "of a system that harms people's constitutional right to vote."

Last year, after Texas ran its voter registrations through the SAVE system, Nels, 29, was flagged as a potential noncitizen, even though the South Africa native had become a U.S. citizen more than a decade ago. His local election office temporarily canceled his registration while he obtained a new passport to replace an expired one.

"This just seems like another illegitimate way to affect upcoming and future elections," he said in a text to The Associated Press.

Stephen Richer, the Republican former top election official in Arizona's largest county, said the Supreme Court's ruling could be a positive step "if used responsibly."

"That being said, the SAVE program has been shown time after time to be a highly-imperfect tool, so

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election administrators should only use it as a starting point, not as a definitive indicator of citizenship," he wrote on social media.

SAVE is one piece of the administration's crusade against noncitizen voting

Even though the use of the SAVE program was blocked for months ahead of Friday's ruling, the administration has said in court filings that it has continued using Social Security Administration data "in certain cases to verify information and help determine whether illegal voting may have occurred."

DHS in August launched its own investigation to find noncitizen voters on state rolls, according to a federal whistleblower statement that said the effort is rushed, filled with errors and potentially violates state laws. DHS has defended that investigation as being conducted "diligently and professionally."

Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin also suggested over the summer that there could be as many as 250,000 noncitizens registered to vote across four states, an unsubstantiated claim that puzzled state election officials who said the numbers dramatically exceeded their own findings. In one of those, Nevada, DHS said it had identified 185 noncitizens on the voter rolls, but the state attorney general's office wrote to the agency earlier this week, saying a records check found that all of them were, in fact, U.S. citizens.

The effort to create a national voter list is one of the many steps Trump has taken during his second term to try to overhaul how elections are run. Most of those steps have been blocked by various courts, in part because the Constitution gives states and Congress the authority to set election rules, but provides no such power to the president. In mid-September, the Supreme Court rejected Trump's bid from Trump to restrict mail ballot procedures before the midterms.

Trump has remained fixated on the idea that massive numbers of noncitizens are voting in U.S. races, but all evidence says otherwise.

Ahead of the 2024 presidential election, Georgia's secretary of state found that 20 of the state's 8.2 million registered voters were not U.S. citizens. In Ohio, prosecutors secured indictments against nine people for voting as noncitizens over the span of 10 years. The state has some 8 million registered voters. Even with the Trump administration laser-focused on the issue in his second term, DHS said its investigations into potential noncitizens on voter rolls nationwide had led to 160 arrests.

Those numbers are supported by a mountain of research at the national and state level that has found the percentage of noncitizens on voter rolls is a tiny fraction of the nation's nearly 228 million registered voters.

Report finds many security deficiencies at Utah university where Charlie Kirk was killed

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Charlie Kirk's political organization insisted he speak outdoors at the Utah university where he was assassinated, despite security concerns from campus officials who then failed to properly assess dangers including a potential rooftop shooter, according to a report released Friday.

An external review released by Utah Valley University found that the school failed to conduct a formal security assessment, did not create a written event action plan and deferred critical decision-making to Turning Point USA, the Kirk-led organization that scheduled his appearances on college campuses across the U.S.

A charismatic but polarizing figure, Kirk, 31, was killed on Sept. 10, 2025, by a sniper perched on a rooftop more than 400 feet (122 meters) away, authorities said. The conservative activist had been debating students before a crowd of thousands in an outdoor courtyard surrounded by tall buildings and elevated walkways on the campus in Orem, about 40 miles (64 kilometers) south of Salt Lake City. His appearances often attracted protests, further complicating his security.

Tyler Robinson has pleaded not guilty to aggravated murder in Kirk's killing, a charge that could make him eligible for the death penalty if convicted. Prosecutors say the 23-year-old defendant wrote in a text message about Kirk: "I had enough of his hatred. Some hate can't be negotiated out." No trial date has

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been set.

Kirk's killing was a watershed moment during a wave of political violence in the United States. President Donald Trump has survived multiple assassination attempts in the past three years, the CEO of United-Healthcare was gunned down in 2024 and a Minnesota lawmaker and her husband were killed at their home in 2025.

Utah Valley President Jon Anderson said in a statement that the school has a responsibility to "learn from the findings of this review, and follow through on its recommendations."

The report echoes complaints made by Kirk's family

Last week, Kirk's family announced a wrongful death notice — a precursor to a possible lawsuit — accusing Utah Valley officials of hastening his death with a string of "reckless decisions."

They included failing to conduct an adequate risk assessment, failing to establish a secure perimeter and failing to have first responders immediately available, which led to Kirk being taken to a hospital in a private vehicle instead of an ambulance.

The family's lawyer, Brett Parkinson, said in a statement that the report reaffirms those allegations. By hosting the event, he said, Utah Valley assumed responsibility for the safety of all in attendance, including Kirk.

"The buck stopped with UVU leadership and law enforcement," Parkinson said. "Justice for Charlie and his family requires true accountability for UVU's fatal shortcomings that day."

University officials had suggested other locations for the event

According to the report, which Utah Valley said was done independently by outside consultants, some university officials expressed reservations in an August 2025 meeting with Turning Point about holding the event in an outdoor space surrounded by tall buildings.

The officials suggested multiple other locations, including some that were indoors. But a Turning Point representative insisted that Kirk speak at a campus courtyard because he had been there previously and the organization was familiar with the location. The university ultimately allowed the event to go forward in the courtyard.

"In our assessment, those decisions were consequential," the report said.

Turning Point USA deferred to Parkinson's statement when asked for comment on the findings. The organization and its security team did not respond to several requests to participate in the review, according to the report.

The event location "created significant protective operations considerations," the report said, but the planning process failed to include a documented line-of-sight assessment, pre-event briefing or walk-through with security stakeholders. Nor was there clear coordination with Kirk's private security team and external law enforcement partners, the report said.

An Associated Press review last year found that the campus did not use several public safety practices that have become standard at events around the country. Campus police did not fly a drone to monitor rooftops or coordinate with local law enforcement to secure the event attended by about 3,000 people. There were no bag checks or metal detectors.

The report notes a walk-through didn't happen the day of the event

The report also highlighted a lack of coordination and communication between campus police and Kirk's private security in the days leading up to the event.

In foregoing a day-of walk-through and pre-event briefing, they missed opportunities to go over roles, assess staffing and equipment, add resources such as drones, and address any concerns or threats, the report said.

The university's police chief sent a text message asking Turning Point's security supervisor to meet at the event location a few hours beforehand, but no meeting ever happened, the report said.

Utah Valley University says it is making key changes

The report makes nearly 150 recommendations, including hiring a police sergeant to focus on campus events and creating clear criteria for when events must be moved indoors or to more controllable venues.

"This requires humility, an honest examination of our policies and practices, and a commitment to act on what we learn," said Anderson, who took over as university president last month. He added that the university has made "meaningful progress in strengthening campus safety over the past year."

That includes hiring a chief public safety officer to coordinate with emergency response agencies and hiring more campus police officers. At the time of the shooting, the university had just 13 sworn officers, which the report said was not sufficient for Utah Valley's size and the types of events held on the campus. It's the state's largest university, with about 50,000 students on a sprawling campus in Orem, beneath the Wasatch Mountains.

Tasia Fortune's hanging was 'staged' after her death in a drug dispute, Mississippi police say

By ED WHITE and SOPHIE BATES Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Tasia Fortune was apparently killed in a drug dispute before her body was hung in a tree in a "staged" lynching behind an abandoned home in the Mississippi capital this summer, a detective testified Friday.

Fortune was killed in a disagreement about drugs, and she fought hard with her attackers before she was killed, Jackson police Detective Samuel Dukes told the court. Citing the medical examiner's opinion, he also said the hanging was "staged."

Fortune was Black, and the Aug. 3 discovery of her hanging body stoked fear and drew widespread attention because the scene recalled actual lynchings in the Southern state, which has a long and troubled history of racial violence.

Authorities haven't disclosed the exact cause of Fortune's death or said why they think her body was hanged afterward, but they ruled it a homicide and arrested two men, both of them also Black, on murder charges. A 45-year-old man turned himself in Friday after a warrant was issued for his arrest. He was charged with murder and will appear in court Monday.

Outside court, Fortune's mother, Christy Spivey, told reporters that she had been aware that her daughter died before her body was hanged. But that step, she added, "brought all the attention to it."

"What bothered me was they said Tasia fought for her life. I know she did. I know my daughter," Spivey said.

The hearing was meant to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to send the case against the first man arrested, Jarques Ratliff, to a grand jury for a possible indictment. It will resume Sept. 30.

Ratliff, 51, was arrested in mid-September and has pleaded not guilty. He remains jailed without bond. Police arrested a second defendant, 25-year-old Earnest Lloyd Jr., this week.

During Friday's hearing, Ratliff blurted out in court that he and Fortune were friends.

"It sounded sincere. Tasia had a lot of friends," Spivey said later. "I hope if he is innocent that he can prove he's innocent. We don't want any innocent people going to jail."

Ratliff's stepdaughter, Lashuna Jones, was among her father's supporters at court.

"He didn't do it, and I'm behind him," she said.

Spivey has said her daughter, who had four children, struggled with homelessness in recent years, and that she wasn't sure where Fortune was living at the time of her death. She said Fortune had talked about starting a cleaning business and was trying to get her life in order.

New Mexico jury finds Facebook liable for deceiving users about privacy protections

By MIKELLA SCHUETTLER Associated Press/Report for America

A New Mexico jury on Friday found Facebook liable for deceiving users about privacy protections on the platform in the latest legal setback against the social media giant that has already cost it billions of dollars.

The jury found over 43 million violations of state consumer protection law and it is now up to the judge

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to determine how much the company would pay, with attorneys representing the state asking for the maximum \$5,000 penalty per violation.

"The verdict marks a significant victory for New Mexico consumers and holds one of the world's largest technology companies accountable for its conduct," the New Mexico Department of Justice said in a statement.

The two-week trial in Santa Fe centered on accusations that Facebook, owned by Meta, deceived users about a data breach stemming from a third-party personality quiz that harvested data from roughly 87 million profiles and sold it to a political consulting firm, Cambridge Analytica, to generate targeted ads. The now-defunct firm's clients included the 2016 campaign for Donald Trump.

Jurors sided with prosecutors, finding Facebook made deceptive statements about protecting users' data that affected New Mexico's entire population of more than two million people. The jury also found Facebook misled the public about investigations into third-party app developers that harvest user data following the Cambridge Analytica scandal.

Facebook claims state's evidence was 'outdated'

"We disagree with the verdict and will continue to defend ourselves against efforts to distort our record," said Alex Burgos, a spokesperson for Meta in an email.

During closing arguments, lawyers for Facebook claimed the state's evidence was outdated and that despite having five years to gather material, New Mexico found only one other instance of a data breach.

In one of the few wins for the defense, jurors found the state didn't prove that Facebook made false claims about removing harmful content, including misinformation about the COVID-19 pandemic.

The state claimed the company favored certain accounts and allowed for violent or inaccurate content to proliferate. During closing arguments, Randi McGinn, an attorney representing the state, argued that Facebook profited off harmful content.

Facebook denied the claims, arguing the company has adapted its policies since the state's lawsuit was filed in 2021 and that it removes 99% of content that violates standards. In a deposition played for jurors, CEO Mark Zuckerberg said the company had robust systems to determine whether content should be taken down.

"Meta's platforms are forums for free expression. We have a First Amendment right to manage those platforms in a way we believe best serves the interests of our community. This means prioritizing free speech, protecting our users' information and giving them control over their data," Burgos said in a statement after the verdict.

Expert says impact on the company remains unclear

Despite jurors finding millions of violations, it's unclear how much of an impact the case will have on the company's bottom line, given how profitable Meta is.

"It's unlikely that this is going to be the case that effectively penalizes the company in a meaningful way," said Peter Ormerod, an associate professor of law at Villanova University.

Ormerod said the social media company has very high margins and previously skirted regulatory actions on its platforms.

If the state successfully persuades the judge to award the maximum civil penalties for every violation, the company could owe over \$200 billion, with interest accruing if it decides to appeal. The judge will have to weigh complex arguments from both sides about what penalties are fair. In a previous case, New Mexico secured \$942 million over the platform's policies to protect minors.

Ormerod commended the state's "dogged prosecution" of the social media giant, but isn't sure the judgment will be significant enough to change Meta's ways.

"There's been a lot of criticism that none of these amounts of money are enough to discipline the company," Ormerod said.

Judge will decide penalties at later date

The judge will decide on penalties during a hearing on Oct. 1. Attorney General Raúl Torrez told reporters following the verdict that all money awarded will go into a fund for the state's education system. The

state is also seeking an injunction to stop similar practices in the future.

Friday's verdict follows several others against Meta recently.

In August, Meta agreed to pay up to \$18 billion to settle a multistate lawsuit involving child safety issues. Buried in the 130-page settlement was an agreement to release Meta from future liability related to the Cambridge Analytica privacy breach, making New Mexico the only state to decide to pursue a case on its own. Florida was the only other state that did not sign the settlement, saying it was not tough enough on Meta, leaving the door open for future litigation.

Also this year, New Mexico won judgments totaling \$942 million from Meta in a two-phase trial about the company's safety protections for minors. The court ordered Meta to implement new safeguards, including age-verification technology and time limits on its platforms.

New Jersey's lieutenant governor resigns after sexual harassment and ethics complaints

By MIKE CATALINI and PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — New Jersey's Democratic lieutenant governor resigned Friday, pushed out by the state's governor after less than a year in office over accusations of ethics lapses and inappropriate behavior with women.

Gov. Mikie Sherrill, also a Democrat, had given Lt. Gov. Dale Caldwell until Friday to resign, seeking to end a scandal that threatened to be a drag on her fledgling administration.

Republicans have hammered Sherrill for weeks about the investigation into Caldwell, who served as acting governor in her absence. He also oversaw elections as New Jersey's secretary of state, and his resignation comes weeks ahead of midterm elections that will decide who controls Congress.

At a news conference announcing the resignation, Sherrill said she was committed to changing what she called a longstanding problem in state government of people turning a blind eye to sexual harassment.

"There has been a culture in Trenton, probably since the birth of our nation, to sweep this under the rug," she said.

"That is not the kind of government I'm running," she added. "When I say there is a culture change taking place, I mean it."

The governor had called for Caldwell to resign on Thursday after a law firm she hired released a report saying he behaved inappropriately around women.

In a statement Friday, Caldwell said he stepped down to keep the controversy from interfering with Sherrill's important work, while maintaining that the matter had damaged his reputation.

"My decision to resign should not be interpreted as an acceptance of the report's findings," he said. His attorney, Thomas Calcagni, said they were looking into legal options to challenge the report.

Caldwell's resignation was far from certain

Sherrill picked Caldwell, a Methodist pastor and former president of Centenary University, as her running mate last year. They took office in January, but within four months, Caldwell had become the subject of an anonymous complaint about his behavior with women.

Caldwell at first showed no signs he would leave office willingly. In New Jersey, a governor can't fire the lieutenant governor, but Caldwell could have been impeached and removed by the legislature.

Sherrill told reporters she'd spoken and texted with Caldwell in recent days, but wouldn't say whether he expressed any remorse.

Sherrill faces questions about her judgement

Republican state Sen. Kristin Corrado on Friday questioned Sherrill's judgment for allowing Caldwell to serve as acting governor when she left the state, even as his conduct was being investigated.

"New Jersey residents deserve leadership, transparency, and answers from their government," she said. "So far, we have gotten none."

The resignation probably won't move the needle much in New Jersey's midterms, said Matt Hale, a political science professor at Seton Hall University, but it gives Republicans fresh ammunition against the governor.

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Still, he said, Democrats can contrast Caldwell's swift dismissal with the Trump administration's attitude toward controversy.

"This wouldn't even make page six news if it was at the federal level," Hale said.

The allegations went beyond inappropriate comments

The law firm's report released Thursday said Caldwell committed several violations of state policy. It said Caldwell, 66, made an advance toward a staff member's friend and when he was rebuffed told the staffer, "you young women are looking for young sperm."

The report said Caldwell had tried to get a promotion for a state employee he was dating and brought personal guests to the opera and other ticketed events without paying for them, as required by ethics rules.

Caldwell's lawyer said his client "categorically denies" making the sperm statement but acknowledged that Caldwell had recommended the woman for a promotion, although he denied ordering anyone to promote her. Caldwell denied other claims, including that he gave out his business cards to women for inappropriate reasons.

In a letter included in the report, Caldwell said he suspected his relationships with women were being subjected to extra scrutiny because he was a single Black man.

"This (resignation) might hurt her with some Black Democratic men," said Richard Bense, a government professor at Cornell University, "but I suspect that will be more than compensated by the approval of Black Democratic women."

Until a new lieutenant governor is named, state Senate President Nicholas Scutari will step in as acting governor if Sherrill is away or unable to perform her duties. The secretary of state roll will be filled by the acting state comptroller, Shirley Emehelu.

Lieutenant governor turmoil isn't unique to New Jersey

In neighboring New York, a similar impasse has played out over the past year between Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul and her estranged Lt. Gov. Antonio Delgado, who launched a caustic primary challenge to unseat her only to withdraw from the race as the election neared.

Hochul is now running for reelection in November with Adrienne Adams, the former speaker of the New York City Council, as her replacement lieutenant governor nominee.

Caldwell, the fourth lieutenant governor since the position was created in 2009, is the first to resign. But he's hardly the first Garden State politician to be felled by scandal.

U.S. Sen. Bob Menendez, who quit in the wake of his 2024 bribery conviction, and New Jersey Gov. Jim McGreevey, who resigned in 2004 after coming out as gay as questions swirled about him appointing his one-time lover as the state's homeland security adviser. Both are also Democrats.

Iran proposes a deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz in 7 days if the US meets its conditions

By CARA ANNA, FARNOUSH AMIRI and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Iran has offered to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and resume talks on its nuclear program in seven days if the United States lifts its naval blockade of Iranian ports, waives sanctions on Iranian oil sales and observes a ceasefire that would include Lebanon.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi detailed the proposal to reporters outside the U.N. Security Council on Friday, saying it would also restart stalled talks with the U.S. on Iran's nuclear program.

"The seven-day timeline will start as soon as the United States accepts this plan," he said.

Araghchi said initial steps would take about four to five days to complete, and the strait would be open on the sixth day. "And on day seven, the talks with the U.S. will be started for the final deal on mutually agreed subjects," he said, referring to the nuclear program.

Iran's disruption of the strait — through which a fifth of the world's traded oil and gas transited before the war — has emerged as its main point of leverage. The effects have been felt far beyond the Middle East and posed political problems for President Donald Trump and his Republican Party ahead of November's midterm congressional elections.

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The White House said only that U.S. officials are having positive and constructive conversations with mediators on the Iran war. In response to questions, it said the U.S. is facilitating significant oil exports through the Strait of Hormuz.

There was no immediate comment on the proposal from Gulf Arab nations, although a person familiar with the matter, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss private deliberations, told The Associated Press that Saudi Arabia was skeptical of the latest push for a deal.

The proposal resembles a June deal that quickly crumbled

The proposal, conveyed to the U.S. by Qatar, strongly resembles an interim deal reached in June, but with an accelerated timetable. The earlier agreement, which called for a 60-day interim period, quickly collapsed as Iran resumed attacks on shipping in the strait.

Trump has said he is in no rush to reach a deal, even as high oil prices fuel inflation. On the Iranian side, there are questions as to whether the hard-liners who dominate the security forces would accept compromises championed by moderates like President Masoud Pezeshkian.

"If Trump calculates this arrangement is worthwhile and can bring political benefit before the midterms and reduce gas prices, perhaps we'll see flexibility not seen in previous weeks," said Trita Parsi, executive vice president of the Quincy Institute think tank.

But he noted "deep suspicion," especially around the prospect of Iran merely buying time to ship out more of its oil and ease its economic pain.

There are other signs of renewed diplomacy

In the latest sign of diplomatic movement, Pezeshkian hosted the prime minister of Qatar early Friday. Qatar has been a key mediator, including during indirect Iran-U.S. talks at the U.N. this week.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Wednesday that "if there's an opportunity to exchange ideas and messages, we will."

After multiple failed attempts at a deal, however, suspicion is high on both sides. The U.S. and Israel have attacked Iran twice while it was engaged in nuclear talks, and the U.S. and Iran accuse each other of having swiftly violated the June agreement.

"The Iranians already know that the chances of this not being accepted by Trump are much higher than the opposite," Hamidreza Azizi, senior Iran analyst at the International Crisis Group think tank, wrote on X.

"They want to show that they were ready for diplomacy and that it was the United States that, for the third time, decided to attack in the middle of a diplomatic track — something that people within (Iran's) strategic community have been anticipating over the past few days," he said.

Araghchi said Friday that more than 5,000 people in Iran have been killed in the nearly seven-month U.S.-Israeli war.

It's unclear if the proposal would include the Yemen conflict

The proposal would include Lebanon, where Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah have been mostly observing a ceasefire. It's not clear, however, if it would include the revived conflict between Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels and Saudi Arabia, which has put even more pressure on global markets.

Iran appears to think the Houthis' newly enhanced ability to threaten the Bab el-Mandeb strait on the Red Sea — another trade chokepoint on the other side of the Arabian Peninsula — could push Trump to make a deal.

Araghchi met with his Saudi counterpart on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly, as he and other Iranian officials held meetings that included representatives from other countries that Tehran has exchanged military strikes with over the last year.

With the Houthis' latest surge in attacks, Saudi Arabia was skeptical of Araghchi's latest push for a deal with the U.S., according to the person familiar with the matter.

The kingdom, along with other Gulf states, had advocated over the summer for a return to negotiations, saying they could live with an agreement that gave Iran a temporary role in managing the Strait of Hormuz, the person said.

But the Saudi calculations changed as the Houthis seized Yemen's strategic Red Sea coast from pro-

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government forces and a vital Saudi pipeline came under attack.

Earlier this month, Gulf leaders planned to gather in Oman to discuss an emerging agreement between Oman and Iran on the Strait of Hormuz, which runs between the two countries. But the meeting was canceled after Saudi Arabia called for amendments, only some of which were accepted by Iran, the person said.

Iran's leadership has shown signs of divisions

Iran's leaders have sought to project unity, but some hard-liners want to continue or escalate the war to secure bigger U.S. concessions and have criticized Pezeshkian and Araghchi's diplomatic steps this week.

Firebrand lawmaker Ebrahim Rezaei wrote on X that merely meeting with "the aggressor enemy" showed weakness. Iran's Assembly of Experts, a panel of Shiite clerics who appoint the supreme leader, said "there is no path other than resistance."

Iran's parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, who served as chief negotiator in earlier U.S. talks, provided a rare public acknowledgment of the internal divide.

"There is a view that speaks of war but offers no prospect or mechanism for bringing it to a powerful conclusion," he wrote on social media. "At the opposite end is a current that makes the error of underestimating national capabilities."

He added: "The first error keeps the country in a state of permanent crisis, while the second hands national resources and dignity over to the enemy."

A reprieve from rising oil prices helps US stocks finish the week higher

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A cooldown in oil prices on Friday helped release some of the pressure that's built up on Wall Street, and U.S. stocks closed out their first winning week in the last three.

The S&P 500 added 0.5% to break a three-day losing streak marked by big swings due to rising yields in the bond market. Despite the week's uneasiness, the main measure of the U.S. stock market's health pulled back within 0.7% of its all-time high set last month.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 478 points, or 0.9%, and the Nasdaq composite climbed 0.5%.

Stocks got a boost after the price for a barrel of Brent oil dropped 2.8% to \$97.44 per barrel. It's been yo-yoing on uncertainty about when the war with Iran will allow oil to flow freely again from the Middle East. Prices go down when hopes rise for a possible deal to fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz to oil tankers, and they go up when doubts resurface.

But trading was shaky again on Wall Street Friday, particularly after a report on U.S. consumer sentiment sent Treasury yields higher in the morning.

The report from the University of Michigan said U.S. consumers are bracing for inflation of 4.6% in the coming year, up from their forecast of 4% the month before. It also said that overall sentiment among consumers was not as bad as economists expected, even if it was the lowest in four months.

The rising expectations for high inflation are potentially dangerous for the economy because they could encourage behavior that leads to a vicious cycle that makes the cost of living spiral even higher.

Some consumers told the survey that buying some kinds of products now would help them avoid higher prices in the future. If many rush to make such purchases at the same time, it could encourage sellers to raise prices further.

Following the report on consumer sentiment, the yield on the 10-year Treasury briefly jumped to 5.22%, up from 5.18% late Thursday, and was near its highest level since 2007.

High yields slow the economy by making it more expensive for everyone to borrow money, while undercutting prices for stocks and other investments. The 10-year yield has been jumping since the start of the war with Iran, when it was at 3.97%.

Higher yields worldwide are rattling all kinds of financial markets. They're on the rise because of worries about inflation, expensive oil, big government debt loads, signs of continued economic strength and other factors.

But yields eased later in trading on Friday as the price of oil pulled lower, and the 10-year yield fell back to 5.15%. That helped stocks on Wall Street regain strength.

Helping to drive the market higher was Akamai Technologies. The cloud company's stock rose 3.2% after it announced an \$11.6 billion, multiyear agreement with Anthropic, the company behind the Claude AI chatbot.

Costco Wholesale climbed 2.9% after the retailer reported a stronger profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected. Such strong profit reports from U.S. companies have helped the stock market remain resilient despite all the worries about high inflation and oil prices.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 39.28 points to 7,743.41. The Dow Jones Industrial Average jumped 478.64 to 51,828.62, and the Nasdaq composite gained 129.34 to 27,068.72.

In stock markets abroad, indexes were mixed in Europe following bigger moves in Asia. Japan's Nikkei 225 climbed 1.3%, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng dropped 1%.

Appeals court appears divided in case over Venezuelan migrants deported to El Salvador prison

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A panel of appeals court judges appeared to be divided Friday on whether to reverse or uphold an order for the Trump administration to facilitate the return of dozens of Venezuelan migrants who were deported from the U.S. to a notorious prison in El Salvador last year.

A three-judge panel from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit didn't indicate how soon they would rule after hearing arguments from attorneys for the government and the migrants who were flown to El Salvador without any notice or opportunity to challenge their removals from the U.S.

The Justice Department appealed after District Court Chief Judge James Boasberg in February ordered the Trump administration to make arrangements for some of the deported Venezuelan migrants to return to the U.S. at the government's expense. Boasberg said the administration has essentially told him to "pound sand."

Two panel members — Judges A. Raymond Randolph and Neomi Rao — appeared to be skeptical that the migrants have a right to return to the U.S. to challenge their March 2025 deportations.

A key question for the panel is whether the U.S. courts have jurisdiction over the migrants' claims because the U.S. government maintained "constructive custody" of them even after they arrived in El Salvador. Rao questioned whether the migrants can meet that legal burden through their "habeas corpus" petitions.

"There needs to be some showing that the U.S. had that type of control — the control that they could produce a detainee on command — and I don't see that evidence from petitioners," said Rao, who was nominated by Republican President Donald Trump.

Circuit Judge Harry Edwards, who was nominated by Democratic President Jimmy Carter, said Boasberg cited plenty of evidence that the Trump administration "retained co-control" over the deported migrants and was "fully engaged and kept itself in a position of control throughout."

Edwards also said that Supreme Court precedent holds that the plaintiffs have a right to pursue their due process claims.

"Judge Boasberg was merely attempting to facilitate the exercise of their rights. That's all," Edwards said.

Justice Department attorney Tiberius Davis argued that Boasberg didn't have the jurisdiction to issue the order under appeal. Boasberg's "freewheeling" decision would "open the floodgates to claims that the United States has constructive custody over prisons across the globe," Davis said.

"This court is not supposed to second-guess sensitive matters of foreign affairs or undermine the United States' ability to speak with one voice on the international stage. That is exactly what the district court is doing here," Davis added.

American Civil Liberties Union attorney Lee Gelernt, who represents the deported migrants, said the Trump administration has conceded that it violated the plaintiffs' constitutional rights but isn't trying to rectify the problem.

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"They concede we rushed them out, gave them no due process," Gelernt said. "It can't be the end of the game. That would be such an untenable rule for this court to adopt."

Randolph noted that the plaintiffs already have been released from custody in El Salvador and taken to Venezuela. He suggested that they already have received the legal remedy to which they are entitled.

"We're talking about habeas corpus. And (with) habeas corpus, the remedy is release from confinement. They're already released," said Randolph, who was nominated by Republican President George H. W. Bush.

"The remedy for this is not release in a country from which they fled. It's to come back," Gelernt said.

Randolph also questioned whether the plaintiffs' underlying case is moot since the migrants are no longer in custody.

ACLU attorneys have been in contact with roughly two-thirds of 137 migrants since their release from the El Salvador mega-prison known as the Terrorism Confinement Center, or CECOT.

Boasberg, who was nominated by Democratic President Barack Obama, has repeatedly clashed with the administration since Trump invoked the 18th-century Alien Enemies Act to deport planeloads of Venezuelan migrants accused of being gang members.

Boasberg gave a verbal order for the aircraft to turn around. The administration denied violating it. Boasberg subsequently started a contempt investigation, leading to a separate appeal for which the full D.C. Circuit will hear arguments next Tuesday.

Federal court says Pentagon can label Anthropic a supply chain risk

By KAITLYN HUAMANI AP Technology Writer

In the latest twist in Anthropic's dispute with the Pentagon, a federal appeals court on Friday rejected the artificial intelligence lab's challenge to the government's labeling of it as a supply chain risk.

The decision allows the Pentagon to continue to remove Anthropic's Claude models from its systems and bar the use of its products for Defense Department work. Judges from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ruled 2-1 in the Pentagon's favor.

"Today's DC Circuit Court ruling completely validates the Department's position," the Pentagon's top spokesman, Sean Parnell, wrote in a social media post.

The dispute between the AI company and the government broke out in February when President Donald Trump and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth accused Anthropic of endangering national security and designated the company a supply chain risk. Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei refused to back down over concerns the company's products could be used for mass surveillance or autonomous armed drones.

The ruling is separate from one this summer in California, where a federal judge found the Pentagon acted illegally by punishing the AI company for its criticism of the Pentagon's views on AI use. This case, which was filed earlier this year in Washington, D.C., focused on a different rule the Pentagon was using to try to declare Anthropic a supply chain risk.

The majority opinion states the Pentagon had "ample support" for its actions. It notes that by Anthropic's own admission, "the company encodes restrictions into Claude that prevent the model from performing tasks that Anthropic wishes to prevent."

"The Department reasonably feared that Anthropic might manipulate Claude's design to prevent it from performing national-security functions that the Department deems contractually authorized and necessary," Judge Gregory G. Katsas wrote in the majority opinion. Both Katsas and Judge Neomi Rao, who formed the majority, were nominated by Trump. The sole dissenter, Judge Karen LeCraft Henderson, was nominated by Republican President George H. W. Bush.

The judges said that they have "no reason to doubt" that Anthropic acts with "noble intentions" in restricting Claude, specifically with respect to its concerns around privacy and AI safety. But they said the definition of a supply chain risk in this context hinges "on what Anthropic does, not why Anthropic does it."

An Anthropic spokesperson said in a written statement the company "respectfully disagrees" with the court's decision. "Another federal court has already held the government's parallel designation unlawful,"

the statement continued. "We remain confident in our position and are considering all options, including further review."

The judges who ruled against Anthropic said they had "no quarrel" with the conclusions of the the separate case that was filed in San Francisco, but they found that a "bad motive" on Anthropic's part is not required to support a supply chain risk designation.

The Department of Defense began removing Claude from its workflows earlier this year, and the ruling upholds its ability to do so, including prohibiting contractors from using Anthropic products in their work for the department. Anthropic's products are not barred from the federal government as a whole under this ruling.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Takeaways from Trump-Xi summit: Lots of pomp and even more punting on tensions in US-China relations

By AAMER MADHANI, DIDI TANG, JOSH BOAK, PAUL WISEMAN, WILL WEISSERT and COURTNEY BONNELL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping have wrapped up a three-day Washington summit that was heavy on pomp but light on substance.

The U.S. president delighted in the personal rapport he says he's built with Xi, while the Chinese leader emphasized the two sides "must hold the line" to ensure there is "no conflict and no confrontation between us."

The two leaders discussed the wars in Iran and Ukraine as well as artificial intelligence and Taiwan. The biggest policy announcement of the visit was modest: an agreement to extend by two months a trade truce that had been set to expire in November.

Here are seven key takeaways from the visit:

Trump shows deference to Xi after trade tussle

Trump's red-carpet treatment for Xi is remarkable considering less than a year ago the two were locked in a tariff battle that threatened to send the global economy into a recession.

The warmth sharply contrasts with the hostility Trump shows for America's northern neighbor and biggest export market, Canada, and Prime Minister Mark Carney.

Only China and Canada fought back against Trump's tariffs last year with retaliatory tariffs of their own.

But Trump has been deferential to Xi while raging against Ottawa, announcing 50% tariffs on some Canadian imports and a ban on some Canadian products, including motorcycles and alcohol. The ban takes effect Tuesday. Trump even posted an image of himself in a U.S. hockey uniform, looming over Carney cowering on the ice.

Former U.S. trade official Jeff Moon said the explanation is simple.

"Trump is a bully who enjoys punching down when he can but will stop when he can't," said Moon, noting Canada sends about 70% of its exports to the U.S.

Trump eased up on China last year when Beijing cut off supplies of critical minerals needed for advanced manufacturing. "Punching down was no longer possible," said Moon, the founder of China Moon Strategies.

No breakthroughs on the thorniest global issues

The leaders are facing calls to collaborate on guardrails for artificial intelligence even as they compete to dominate the rapidly developing technology.

Xi acknowledged that the U.S. and China have the "responsibility to develop and manage AI for good" while ensuring it remains under human control. But Trump appears more focused on his push to rebrand artificial intelligence to "super intelligence," claiming on social media Friday that Xi "seems to like" the term without divulging the substance of their discussions.

Trump, a Republican, has repeatedly said that he doesn't want to impede the industry and that the U.S. must ensure an edge over China.

The leaders also delved into the Iran war, which Trump is struggling to wind down. China urged Wash-

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ington and Tehran to return to talks and an interim deal, but Iran's largest trading partner has played no major public role in pushing for peace despite its outsize influence.

The costs of the war -- including higher gasoline prices and dwindling stockpiles of advanced weapons -- are hurting Republicans ahead of November's midterm elections.

Xi's push on Taiwan with Trump alarms Taipei

In their private talks, Xi told Trump he hoped the U.S. will "adhere to the correct position of opposing" the independence of Taiwan, a self-governed island, according to an official Chinese statement.

Trump hasn't said much yet about his private conversations with Xi. But Taiwan's foreign ministry said the Chinese statement was "distorting" the facts, while underscoring that Taiwan's sovereignty belongs to its people.

The Chinese government's choice of the word "adhere" is revealing, because it implies Beijing believes Washington is already behaving in ways it wants, says Craig Singleton, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

"Beijing's objective is to get Trump to absorb Chinese red lines into his own definition of a stable relationship," Singleton added.

Anxiety was already heightened about Trump's position on Taiwan. Following his May visit to Beijing, Trump paused a \$14 billion arms sale to Taiwan.

Xi challenged Trump's zero sum worldview. Trump didn't push back

Xi seemed to subtly reject Trump's framing of global competition as zero sum with nations either winning or losing.

The Chinese leader said any competition with the U.S. should be limited and "within bounds" and suggested that Trump need not worry about trying to contain China.

To be sure, Xi couched his remarks in history and diplomatic nuance. But Trump did not offer a counterargument.

U.S. policies have tried to contain Chinese manufacturing through tariffs and export controls. Those have achieved mixed results. China continues to innovate with electric vehicles, match AI breakthroughs and expand its global trade surplus.

"It should be a race of catching up with one another, not a wrestle in which one either wins or loses," said Xi, openly contesting Trump's claims that the front-runner in AI automatically "wins."

Trump takes his military rival into his helicopter

The U.S. president took pains to show Xi around and spent time looking at a new helicopter landing pad he had rushed to finish ahead of the state visit. But it was surprising when Trump invited Xi -- the head of a communist country that is a key military rival -- to step on board the chopper, which is one of the most secure and well-protected aircraft on earth.

Trump has had other issues with airborne security recently. A luxury jet gifted to him by Qatar for use as Air Force One lacked the advanced defense systems of the traditional presidential aircraft -- a problem acute enough that Trump in July was concealed in a catering truck before secretly flying out of Turkey on a different plane in the face of credible threats from Iran.

Trump also showed off the construction site for his new White House ballroom, a project he has partially justified because it will house military and security operations. At Xi's state dinner, Trump invited Chinese officials and all his guests to walk over for a firsthand look at the project. It's unclear whether anyone took him up on that invitation.

Trump's ongoing media battle created an awkward dynamic

Trump last week barred CNN, MS NOW and Politico from the White House, sparking a legal fight that overshadowed Xi's visit.

The White House's five-network television pool rotation refused to cover Trump's events in response to the action against CNN, and Trump grumbled on social media that TV networks "refused to cover one of the Biggest and Most Beautiful Events to take place in many years."

His fight with the press created an extraordinary split screen as he welcomed the world's most powerful autocrat with a lavish state visit all while battling in court to keep prominent American media outlets out

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of the People's House.

It's all to be continued ...

After Xi's trip to Washington, the two leaders are still on track to meet two more times this year.

That means their exchanges are part of an ongoing dialogue, rather than a set of finalized agreements. It also creates opportunities for the trade truce that was extended for two months through Jan. 10, 2027, to get another extension.

In November, Xi will host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Shenzhen, China, and in December, the Group of 20 summit will be held at the Trump National Doral Miami golf club in Florida.

Xi confirmed before leaving Washington on Friday that he expected to see Trump again soon.

With ethnic and historical considerations, rebranding nations is harder than renaming products

By MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Five years ago, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan ordered the world to stop confusing the heirs to one of history's great empires with a ridiculous American bird.

Type Turkey into Google and you get images and articles "that conflate the country with Meleagris — otherwise known as the turkey," state media announced. "Famous for being served on Christmas menus or Thanksgiving dinners ... 'Turkey' is defined as 'something that fails badly.'"

Stop using a word associated with defeat and warm stuffing, the government asked the world's 1.5 billion English speakers.

But rebranding a nation — as Nauru, now Naoero, is trying to do at the United Nations this week — can be a challenging endeavor.

Convincing the world's a tough task

From New Coke to Netflix's messy spinoff of the Quikster service (remember Quikster?), corporate rebrands and other failures are an essential part of capitalism.

National rebranding, on the other hand, often touches on independence movements, armed conflicts, ethnic divisions and battles over the very meaning of historical events.

Siam became Thailand in 1939 to foster ethnic unity and shed a foreign label. The name changed in almost all English-speaking countries.

Both bigger and smaller, other name changes have been criticized as merely demagogic impulsivity, like President Donald Trump's executive orders renaming the Gulf of Mexico and Lake Ontario. Erdogan's critics also see autocratic tendencies, and the Turkey/Türkiye name change has gotten some flak at home.

Successful name changes and bumpy ones

The Portuguese name "Costa do Marfim" first appeared on 17th-century nautical charts because ivory dominated that stretch of the West African coast.

The French ruled the country from 1893 until 1960, and Côte d'Ivoire kept its colonial name after independence, unlike other African nations because the nation's first president, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, favored cooperation with France rather than a sharp rupture. Linguists also say that choosing a name from one of the country's 60-odd languages could have appeared to favor one community, while the French name was an accepted national label.

In 1985, however, the country asked the United Nations to use just its French name instead of translations like "Ivory Coast" or the Spanish "Costa de Marfil."

Côte d'Ivoire requested that its French-language name "should no longer be considered a geographical term and that the practice of translating it into the different languages be stopped," as the U.N. put it.

That change hasn't become universal, perhaps because it involved such linguistic subtlety.

Elsewhere in Africa, the nation of Swaziland changed its name to the Kingdom of Eswatini in April 2018. That relatively simple change has largely taken root in just a few years.

Why do some name changes work and others don't?

On a planet where nearly a fifth of people speak English, the language seeps into the farthest corners

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of the globe in movies, TV shows and music. In that environment, reasserting native tongues can be a heavy lift.

Siam became Thailand in 1939 and today, if you're an English speaker hungry for phad kaphrao, look for the nearest Thai restaurant. Only cat aficionados still look for the silky Siamese cat that sits fourth in registrations on Britain's Governing Council of the Cat Fancy, with similar popularity in North America.

As for Turkey, Erdogan said in December 2012 that the century-old Turkish-language name Türkiye was better suited to his nation.

Erdogan had become Turkey's most influential leader since national independence hero Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and his nation has taken on a more conservative character under his two-decade rule. Committed to Islam and to helping his nation regain past glory, Erdogan ordered that "the values derived from the Turkish nation's deep-rooted history are treated with the utmost care."

Some outside observers saw a self-interested motive.

Ali Fuad Selvi, an associate professor of English at the University of Alabama, wrote that Turkey's attempted name change had "an ultimate motivation to consolidate President Erdogan's political power and authority (and) elevate his status to that of a national leader."

Turkey notified the United Nations of the change in June 2022 and it immediately complied, along with NATO, which Turkey joined in 1952. UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the name change became effective from the moment Secretary-General Antonio Guterres got a letter requesting the use of "Türkiye" instead of "Turkey" in all matters.

Many governments and nongovernmental organizations use Türkiye. The U.S. mostly uses Türkiye, while at least one British government warning "advises against all travel to parts of Turkey."

Many media organizations and regular people still use the old name. The Associated Press, whose Stylebook guides a broad swath of American language use, employs Turkey based on the common English-language spelling and its familiarity to global audiences. The AP regularly reviews that usage, and all similar cases.

The case of Cabo Verde

In 2013, the Portuguese-speaking archipelago, independent since 1975, asked the United Nations to stop translating its name as "Cape Verde" in English or "Cap-Vert" in French and to use "Cabo Verde" in every language.

At the time, the government of Prime Minister José Maria Neves said it needed to reinforce the country's identity, standardize its designation in international organizations and consolidate the "Cabo Verde" brand in diplomacy, tourism, the economy, and culture.

The government has continued to market Cabo Verde as a brand built around the islands' music, democratic stability and "morabeza," a Creole term associated with hospitality.

The 2026 World Cup gave that brand its largest global platform. FIFA consistently called the team Cabo Verde as the tournament debutants held future champions Spain to a scoreless draw and reached the knockout stage before a vast global audience.

Today in History: September 26, Kennedy and Nixon hold nationally televised presidential debate

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, Sept. 26, the 269th day of 2026. There are 96 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 26, 1960, the first nationally televised debate between presidential candidates took place as Democrat John F. Kennedy and Republican Richard M. Nixon faced off in Chicago.

Also on this date:

In 1777, British troops occupied Philadelphia during the American Revolution.

In 1954, the Japanese commercial ferry Toya Maru sank during a typhoon in the Tsugaru Strait, claiming

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more than 1,150 lives.

In 1986, William H. Rehnquist was sworn in as the 16th chief justice of the United States, while Antonin Scalia joined the Supreme Court as its 103rd member. Rehnquist died in 2005 and Scalia in 2016.

In 1990, the Motion Picture Association of America announced it had created a new rating, NC-17, to replace the X rating.

In 1991, four men and four women began a two-year stay inside a sealed-off structure in Oracle, Arizona, called Biosphere 2; they emerged from Biosphere 2 on this date in 1993.

In 2000, thousands of anti-globalization protesters clashed with police in demonstrations during a summit of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Prague.

In 2005, Army Pfc. Lynndie England was convicted by a military jury in Fort Hood, Texas, on six of seven counts stemming from the Abu Ghraib prison abuse scandal.

In 2020, President Donald Trump nominated Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court to fill the seat left vacant by the death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. (Barrett would be confirmed the following month.)

In 2022, NASA's Dart mission became the first spacecraft to ram an asteroid in a dress rehearsal for deflecting a space object's trajectory.

In 2024, Helene, a major Category 4 hurricane, made landfall in Florida's Big Bend region. It went on to cut a swath across Georgia and South Carolina before triggering historic flooding in North Carolina and Tennessee, causing an estimated \$78 billion in damage and 219 deaths.

Today's Birthdays: Country singer David Frizzell is 85. Singer Bryan Ferry is 81. Author Jane Smiley is 77. Singer-guitarist Cesar Rosas (Los Lobos) is 72. Actor Linda Hamilton is 70. Actor Melissa Sue Anderson is 64. Actor Jim Caviezel (kuh-VEE'-zuhl) is 58. Singer Shawn Stockman (Boyz II Men) is 54. Hockey Hall of Famers Daniel and Henrik Sedin are 46. Tennis player Serena Williams is 45. Singer-actor Christina Milian is 45. Actor Zoe Perry is 43. Actor Alisha Weir is 17.