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Community Calendar

Wednesday, Oct. 7

Senior Menu: Broccoli chicken bake, green beans, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Omelet.

School Lunch: Soup, sandwich.

Groton Camber Meeting, noon, at the Red Horse

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.; Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.

Fourth Grade GBB Practice, 5:30 p.m., Elementary School

Community Bond Issue Meeting — Columbia, 7 p.m.

Winter Gear Drive at Dacotah Bank, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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

Thursday, Oct. 8

Senior Menu: Scalloped potato with ham, winter blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Muffin.

School Lunch: Turkey gravy, mashed potatoes.

Cross Country at Northeast Conference Meet, 1 p.m., Webster Golf Course

Parent/Teacher Conferences, 1:30-8 p.m.

GT GBB Fall Skills, 6-8 p.m., Arena

Sixth Grade Girls Basketball Practice, 8 p.m., Arena

Winter Gear Drive at Dacotah Bank, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Winter Gear Distribution, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., Groton Community Center

Friday, Oct. 9

Senior Menu: Baked fish, rice pilaf, carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: No school.

School Lunch: No school.

NO SCHOOL — Staff Development Day

Lake Region Marching Band Festival, 9 a.m., Groton

Football hosts Mobridge-Pollock, 7 p.m., Doney Field

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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.

Russian Plague Investigation

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio called on Russia to release more information about the death of a lab technician. The pressure comes as the World Health Organization yesterday said a possible case of pneumonic plague in Russia presents a "very low" risk to other countries.

Russian officials say there is no evidence the 28-year-old technician died of pneumonic plague, a rare and severe respiratory infection spread via airborne droplets. The disease responds to antibiotics, but is otherwise nearly 100% fatal. Russian officials have placed nearly 200 other individuals under medical supervision and imposed quarantine protocols at a local hospital. The research institute reportedly has plague specimens for outbreak prevention research. Pneumonic plague is the deadliest form of plague, the disease behind the Black Death, which killed roughly one-third of Europe's population between 1346 and 1353.

The technician's death has resurfaced concerns about lab safety, including debates over gain-of-function research giving viruses new properties, potentially making them more lethal or contagious.

French School Protests

France saw its largest day of school protests yet, as demonstrators nationwide demanded more education funding amid deteriorating conditions in the country's high schools.

The protests began at a school outside Paris last month and spread nationwide, with students blocking hundreds of schools yesterday. Demonstrators cite teacher shortages, overcrowded classrooms, and deteriorating facilities; secondary schools have 250,000 more students but fewer teachers than in 2008. France's Interior Ministry estimated 250,000 people joined yesterday's demonstrations, while organizers put the figure at 450,000. More than 6,000 people, mostly minors, have been arrested, with critics accusing police of a heavy-handed response after one student lost a hand and another lost use of an eye. Damage to Paris-area schools is estimated at $7.8M.

Separately, Quebec's separatist Parti Québécois won 59 of 127 seats in Monday's provincial election, falling short of a majority but returning to power with a promise to hold a referendum on independence from Canada in 2029 or 2030.

Spy vs. Spy

Germany's 80-year-old former spy chief, August Hanning, was arrested yesterday on suspicion of espionage, attempted treason, and spying for a foreign country. Officials did not reveal which country Hanning allegedly worked for; the case that first surfaced the allegations involves an Israeli spy firm.

Hanning ran the Federal Intelligence Service from 1998 to 2005. After leaving his post, he allegedly recruited the agency's chief of staff to hand him 2,000 classified documents beginning in 2010 in exchange for payment. Hanning maintained contact with two foreign countries' intelligence services, including drafting an analysis for one of the countries, prosecutors say. He is Germany's sole former intelligence chief known to face espionage charges; another high-ranking intelligence officer was accused of spying for Russia in 2023 in a trial that remains ongoing.

Prosecutors say they found the documents while investigating a German steakhouse heiress accused of faking the kidnapping of two of her children in a custody dispute. Christina Block allegedly employed an Israeli spy firm to help enact the plot; Hanning denies involvement.

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Televangelist Jim Bakker, who built an evangelical Christian empire with his first wife, Tammy Faye, before a sexual assault allegation and financial crimes upended his career, dies at age 86.

Emmys telecast moving to Prime Video next year after Amazon secures six-year deal; award show will stream globally without any fees or subscriptions.

Fred Claire, the former Los Angeles Dodgers general manager who led the team to its 1988 World Series win, dies on his 91st birthday.

Former college football coach Dennis Franchione, known for stops at TCU and Texas A&M, dies at age 75.

Science & Technology

Belgian-born scientist Francis Halzen wins Nobel Prize in physics for the detection of ghostly particles that may offer clues into how the universe evolved.

Rosalind Franklin identified DNA's helical structure before Nobel Prize winners Francis Crick and James Watson, according to a new archival study of her notes and photos.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul (D) declares state of emergency as state records 100 measles cases and neighboring Pennsylvania logs 1,000 cases.

Kenya confirms first Ebola case, begins contact tracing.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +0.6%, Dow +0.5%, Nasdaq +0.5%) as S&P 500 climbs to record intraday high above 7,840.

US trade deficit hits 17-month high at roughly $106B in August, per new Commerce Department data; increase marks 13.7% growth over July.

Paramount completes $110B deal to acquire Warner Bros. Discovery; media giant will rebrand as Skydance.

Politics & World Affairs

President Donald Trump faces criticism, including from California officials, after suggesting Iran could "take out" an American city, adding "let them" take out Los Angeles, San Diego.

Cornell University says Obama-era Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates will review how the university handles sexual misconduct cases amid scrutiny over Chi Phi fraternity case.

Tennessee inmate Christa Pike is alive and speaking after two failed execution attempts last week, lawyers say.

Pike was convicted of murdering teen classmate in 1995.

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Groton Area September Students of the Month



Liby Althoff
Senior



Kyleigh Kroll
Junior



Aspen Beto
Sophomore



Hudson Eichler
Freshman



Peyton Padfield
Freshman



Keith Fruman
Eighth Grader



Zoe Olson
Eighth Grader



Shaelee Gilchrist
Seventh Grader



Jozie Lord
Sixth Grader

Groton Area School works to ensure that all levels of academic instruction also include the necessary life skills teaching, practicing, and modeling that encourages essential personal life habits that are universally understood to facilitate helping our students become good human beings and citizens.

It is learning with our heads, hearts, and hands to be caring and civil, to make healthy decisions, to effectively problem solve, to be respectful and responsible, to be good citizens, and to be empathetic and ethical individuals.

Students are selected based on individual student growth in the areas of: positive behavior, citizenship, good attendance, a thirst for knowledge, and high academic standards.

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Groton wastewater project faces delays, cost increase

By Elizabeth Varin

Infrastructure concerns took center stage Tuesday evening as the Groton City Council discussed rising costs of a major wastewater project as well as curb and gutter on the west side of town.

The city's multi-million-dollar wastewater system project is facing delays and the potential for higher construction costs, Ken Hier of IMEG Corporation told the council Tuesday.

Hier said the project's planning process is behind schedule, in part because of additional issues involving easements needed for the project. The city also is facing challenges with its wastewater ponds, which will require additional lining because of high groundwater levels.

Two options are being considered for addressing the pond issue, both of which would add significantly to the project's cost. Installing a synthetic liner is estimated to cost about $1 million, while bringing in approximately 53,000 cubic yards of clay dirt to provide the necessary lining would cost around $450,000.

Hier presented the council with options for moving forward, including bidding the force main and lift station as one project and bidding the wastewater pond work separately. However, the project plans cannot be submitted to the South Dakota Department of Natural Resources for approval until the necessary easements are resolved.

The Department of Natural Resources is a major funding partner for the project, providing a $4.59 million loan and a $2 million Consolidated Water Facilities Construction Program grant. The additional pond work could therefore add between roughly $450,000 and $1 million to the project's construction costs, depending on which option the city ultimately selects.

The council also heard a request from Mary Carrico, a west-side resident, about adding curb and gutter in her neighborhood. Carrico told the council about the muddy conditions outside her property at 309 North Lincoln Street.

This led the council to revisit past conversations about adding curb and gutter on unpaved portions of North Lincoln Street and some surrounding roadways.

The council discussed whether it would be feasible to add curb and gutters one block at a time, but Street/Water/Wastewater Superintendent Dwight Zerr said it makes more financial sense to do all the blocks at once and there are other issues the city will have to deal with when working on roadways in the area.

Mayor Scott Hanlon asked Ken Hier with IMEG Corporation to get a ballpark price together to give residents in the area an idea of how much the project would cost.

The city pays up front for the cost of the improvement, with property owners in that area paying a special assessment twice a year for 10 years, said Assistant Finance Officer Kellie Locke.

Zerr added that the city facing a lot of other projects coming up, including a highway project tentatively scheduled for 2030 and storm sewers needing to be cleared out.

"I'm not saying it's not going to be done, but we've got to be smart with our money," he said.

Both discussions highlighted the financial and infrastructure challenges facing the city as officials weigh needed improvements against the costs of completing them.

- The council approved hiring Jeff Uzzle as electric superintendent with wages set at $55.50 per hour, as well as a $5,000 signing bonus from Heartland Energy.
- Groton is approaching its 150th anniversary of incorporation. Those interested in participating with the celebration, helping out or those with ideas are invited to a public meeting at 5:15 p.m. Jan. 6, 2027 at City Hall.
- The council approved a contract for code enforcement services. The city had previously worked with Dennis "Mike" Olson, However, he announced his plans to retire, prompting the city to contract Code Enforcement Specialist, LLC, for code enforcement in the city.
- The city continued to review changes to the monitoring system at the rubble site on the south side of town. A new system may go into place around the beginning of the year at the same time new entry codes are issued. Council members emphasized that city hall staff need to feel comfortable with whatever

new system is put in place.

- The council again tabled the 2026 baseball report, as council members want a full council present to discuss the report.
- The council approved renewing liquor and wine licenses for the following businesses.
  - The Jungle – package off-sale liquor and retail on-sale liquor
  - American Legion Post No. 39 – package off-sale liquor and retail on-sale liquor
  - Ken's Food Fair – package off-sale liquor
  - American Grain LLC DBA Red Horse Inn – retail on-sale liquor
  - Olive Grove Golf Course – retail on-sale liquor
  - Dollar General – retail on/off-sale wine and cider
  - MJ's Sinclair – package off-sale liquor
- City offices will be closed Monday, Oct. 12 for Columbus Day.

Conde National League

Oct. 5 Team Standings: Cubs 10, Stooges 9, Pirates 9, Braves 7, Mets 7, Giants 6.
Men's High Games: Cortney Dinger 244, Evan Easthouse 234, Brody Carlson 228.
Men's High Series: Evan Easthouse 644, Cortney Dinger 622, Brody Carlson 580.
Women's High Games: Joyce Walter 170, Donna Janusz 162, Deb Schuelke 153.
Women's High Series: Suzie Easthouse 441, Joyce Walter 429, Donna Janusz 408.

Girls lose heartbreaker game to St. Thomas More

Final
St Thomas More 1
Groton Area 0

2nd half
St Thomas More 1
Groton Area 0

by Coach Matt Baumgartner: We lost a heartbreaker in an equal fought battle today. We won the coin toss and took a decent 15-20mph N wind in the first half hoping to bring high intensity and shots on goal. Score was deadlocked at 0-0 at half with an equal amount of scoring opportunities for both teams. Knowing we had more of a task going into the gust 2nd half we came out of the break very motivated and dominated certain moments but were unlucky to not create enough scoring opportunities. STM caught us on the ropes a few times launching a few long-range shots with one rattling the crossbar and our goalkeeper Tori Schuster keeping us alive, making some important saves and collections. With about 2:30 left, Tori did the right thing diving way out to her left to make a goal saving stop, but it pawned right out into the path of an STM attacker.

Losing twice to STM on the same field this year both in the last 5 minutes and under stings a lot. This group was dealt a tough and jam-packed start of the year but battled and adjusted to play very good soccer over the last few weeks. I'm very proud of our program this season and tearful as another great group of seniors exit. Their dedication and impact on our team, myself, and all future Tigers will always remain.

The boys lost to Hot Springs, 4-1.

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Johnsons close State Golf Meet with strong second rounds

MITCHELL — Groton Area's Jace Johnson and Liam Johnson both turned in improved second-round performances Tuesday as the Class A State Boys Golf Tournament concluded at Lakeview Golf Course in Mitchell.

Jace Johnson made one of the bigger improvements for the Tigers, following Monday's opening-round 85 with a 78 on Tuesday. His two-day total of 163, 19-over par, placed him in a tie for 40th.

Johnson was especially sharp on the front nine Tuesday, making the turn with a 37. He recorded birdies on No. 6 and No. 9 and added another birdie on the back nine at No. 15. He finished the final nine in 41 for his 78.

His second-round score was seven strokes better than Monday, when he shot 40 on the front and 45 on the back for an 85.

Liam Johnson also saved his best round for the final day. After opening with a 90 Monday, he came back with an 82 Tuesday to finish with a two-day total of 172, 28-over par, and tied for 64th place.

Liam posted matching 41s on the front and back Tuesday. His round included a birdie on the par-4 15th hole and was eight strokes better than his opening round. On Monday, he went out in 44 and came home in 46.

The individual state championship required extra golf after Vermillion teammates Rylan Moran and Jeran Carr each finished at 2-under-par 142. Moran shot rounds of 70 and 72, while Carr followed an opening 73 with a 69 Tuesday. Moran captured the championship with a birdie on the first playoff hole.

Three golfers finished just one stroke behind the leaders at 143. Parkston's Landon Weber, Rapid City Christian's Jaxon Remington and Chamberlain's Chase McQuirk tied for third at 1-under par. Vermillion's Jack Johnson finished sixth at even-par 144.

☆	T40	Jace Johnson *Groton Area*	+19	85	78	163

Tue, October 6 *LAKEVIEW GC (WHITE - Men)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total
Tue, October 6 - Jace Johnson	5	5	3	5	5	3	3	4	4	37	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	41	78

Mon, October 5 *LAKEVIEW GC (WHITE - Men)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total
Mon, October 5 - Jace Johnson	5	5	5	5	6	3	3	2	6	40	7	4	5	7	4	4	5	3	6	45	85

☆	T64	Liam Johnson *Groton Area*	+28	90	82	172

Tue, October 6 *LAKEVIEW GC (WHITE - Men)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total
Tue, October 6 - Liam Johnson	5	4	3	5	5	5	5	4	5	41	6	4	4	6	3	4	5	3	6	41	82

Mon, October 5 *LAKEVIEW GC (WHITE - Men)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total
Mon, October 5 - Liam Johnson	5	5	4	5	6	4	4	4	7	44	8	5	6	3	3	6	5	5	5	46	90

Starting Hole | Eagle or Better | Birdie | Par | Bogey | Double Bogey or Worse

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GT Munchkin FUN RUN RESULTS:



Boys 4th and 5th Grade Division
Griffon Lundstrom, second; Bennett Iverson, third; Braxton Sombke, first.



Girls 4th and 5th Grade Division
Brielle Dunbar, third; Merritt Poe, second; Audrey Poe, first.



Boys 2nd and 3rd Grade Division
Miles Royer, third; Max Erickson, first; Ryker Herron, first.



Girls 2nd and 3rd Grade Division
Emme Fliehs, third; Aubrie Traphagen, first; Grace Oswald, second.

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Boys 1st grade and under Division
Lincoln Wanner, first; Vinnie Jackson, third; Beau Traphagen, second.



Girls 1st grade and under Division
Morgan Sternhagen, third; Sawyer Kappes, second; Makenna Sternhagen, first.

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SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT
https://southdakotasearchlight.com

Chance of dyed diesel lingering in tanks makes some farmers hesitant to accept Trump's help

President's order and governor's corresponding move temporarily allow broader use of federally tax-exempt fuel

BY MEGHAN O'BRIEN

President Donald Trump is allowing broader use of a federally tax-exempt fuel that powers farm equipment, in an attempt to ease the burden of rising diesel prices. But some farmers are hesitant to accept the help.

The fuel is red-dyed diesel, which is legally limited to use in offroad machinery. The action by Trump has temporarily opened the fuel's use to highway vehicles such as pickups and semitrucks.

Some farmers are worried about expanding their use of red-dyed diesel, saying the dye could linger in fuel tanks and expose them to potential future fines.

"Once this expires, and there's still red-dye diesel in the trucks going down the road, how will the enforcement be handled then?" said Scott VanderWal, president of the South Dakota Farm Bureau. "Because it takes a long time for that to work through, and there still would be traces of the dyed diesel in a truck as much as a year or so later."

After Trump's Monday announcement, Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden issued a corresponding directive Tuesday allowing broader dyed-diesel use in South Dakota. Josie Harms, a spokesperson for Rhoden, responded to South Dakota Searchlight questions about lingering dye in fuel tanks.

"While residue can be detected for longer, a simple color check can determine if the violation was recent or residual," Harms said in a written statement.

Dyed diesel fuel is the same as standard diesel, except that it's exempt from the federal 24.4 cent per-gallon diesel tax and dyed red. The dye allows enforcement officials to determine whether a driver is skirting the federal gas tax.

Some farmers buy dyed diesel from bulk providers who deliver it to farms. Dyed diesel is not widely available at gas stations, and dyed diesel used for agricultural purposes is exempt from state tax in South Dakota.

Using dyed diesel on public roads is illegal, but Trump announced an executive orderMonday that nixes penalties through the end of the year. Following suit, Rhoden issued a directive Tuesday to the state Department of Public Safety to "prioritize commercial motor vehicle inspections that present a threat to public safety and not attempt to identify the use of dyed diesel fuel on highways and public roads" while the federal order is in effect.

South Dakota's statewide average pricefor diesel fuel Tuesday was $5.98. Without the federal tax, a 250-gallon semitruck tank would be $60 cheaper to fill.

"That'll reduce the cost a little bit for getting our products either to the farms or to the market, from the fields," said VanderWal. "It's not a huge help, but every little thing helps."

State Department of Transportation officials check fuel tanks with a stick that, when removed from the tank, shows if the fuel contains red dye. Semitruck tanks can be checked at weigh stations, and Baltic-area farmer Ron Krogstad said officers also check parked vehicles.

"They check salebarns, they check diesel pickups," Krogstad said. "I mean, they'll go places where the farmers go for coffee, and I guess they have the right to check your diesel fuel tank if they so choose."

Reid Jensen, a farmer from rural Burbank, shares VanderWal's concern about future enforcement.

"Nobody's telling us that yet," Jensen said. "The details haven't been worked out."

Violations can be punished by fines, civil penalties and prosecution for failure to pay, so taking a chance and driving on public roads with dyed diesel has traditionally been considered "just not worth it," said South Dakota Farmers Union President Doug Sombke. Because enforcement can happen when a vehicle is parked, he said, officers could check a tank and "you wouldn't even know they did it."

Sombke said attempting to help farmers by allowing them to temporarily use more dyed diesel does not get to the root of high fuel costs, such as the negative effect on global fuel supplies caused by Trump's war in Iran.

"We're going to save a few cents per gallon," Sombke said. "It's a Band-Aid on a bleeding artery, is what it is."

Last week, in another move intended to ease the burden of high diesel prices, Rhoden issued an executive order allowing farmers to haul agricultural products such as crops and livestock at 10% above weight restrictions and without a $25 overweight permit.

Meghan O'Brien is the audio reporter for South Dakota Searchlight where she covers the state government and its impact on South Dakotans. She's previously reported in Nebraska with a focus on health care and rural communities across the state.

Voting rights advocates organize volunteers to track potential intimidation at the polls

BY JONATHAN SHORMAN

As President Donald Trump refuses to rule out taking extreme action in the midterm elections, voting rights advocates and civil rights leaders are bolstering their voter protection efforts in anticipation of possible federal interference.

The focus by activists comes amid uncertainty among advocates and election officials over what Trump may do before, during and after Election Day. Some organizations are preparing to deploy volunteers to the polls to help assure voters in places where fear of federal intimidation may run high.

On Tuesday, several groups — including the Save America Movement, the American Federation of Teachers labor union and the National Action Network — launched Vote Safe, an initiative that will put local volunteers at polling locations in areas where they say pressure on Black, Latino and Asian voters is highest.

The program will include Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina and Ohio. The volunteers will document any intimidation and serve as a reassuring presence for voters, organizers said.

"The fear is the point and we must do something about it," Mary Corcoran, executive director of the Save America Movement, a nonpartisan pro-democracy group, said on a call with reporters. "Left unaddressed, fear does the work of keeping people home without a single agent setting foot at a polling place."

Volunteers will include clergy members, veterans, teachers and others trained to provide clear answers on voters' rights, Corcoran said.

In Ohio, where Vote Safe will launch on the first day of early voting, Republican Sen. Jon Husted is facing former Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown in one of the most closely watched Senate races in the country. Springfield, Ohio, also has a large Haitian immigrant population that has been repeatedly attacked by Trump, who is seeking to deport them.

The Rev. Al Sharpton, a civil rights leader who founded the National Action Network, suggested on Tuesday's press call that some Americans in Ohio fear they could also be detained or even deported by ICE because of their skin color.

"'You don't understand, any Black looks like a Haitian in Ohio,'" Sharpton said, recalling a previous conversation with a journalist in Ohio. "You've got to prove you were from Alabama, not Port-au-Prince, after you're deported."

ProPublica reported on Tuesday that more than 500 U.S. citizens have been detained by immigration agents during the second Trump administration. About a dozen citizens, mostly children, have been de-

ported.

What Trump has said

Trump, who has long made false claims about stolen elections and voter fraud, has maintained ambiguity surrounding what election-related actions he may take after the U.S. Supreme Court blocked his plan to use the U.S. Postal Service to restrict mail ballots. Congress also didn't pass the SAVE America Act, a measure he championed that would require voters to offer documentary proof of citizenship.

In a recent TIME magazine interview, Trump said he hadn't thought of deploying Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, agents to the polls.

But he also left open the possibility of declaring a national emergency, which legal experts say would give him no power over elections. Under the Constitution, states administer elections, not the federal government.

Earlier this year, Trump told reporters he would "do anything necessary to make sure we have honest elections."

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin has said ICE agents can serve warrants at election sites, despite a ban on armed federal personnel at polling places. At the same time, DHS has denied any plans to target polling places.

DOJ election monitors

The Department of Justice's plans to deploy 1,000 election monitors at polling places has also fueled concern among Democrats and voting rights advocates — and some Republicans.

While the DOJ regularly dispatches monitors each election cycle, the scope of the effort and Trump's history of pressuring election officials has led to unease about how the monitors will behave.

Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon, a Republican, earlier this year expressed reservations about Justice Department monitors, calling their actions "very odd" after DOJ personnel watched voting in the state's primary election.

On Monday, the NAACP sued the Justice Department for records about its election monitor program, alleging the DOJ didn't comply with Freedom of Information Act timelines.

"Americans deserve to know whether the Justice Department is abusing its law enforcement powers to the detriment of voters and the election officials tasked with running our elections," Kristen Clarke, the NAACP's general counsel, said in a statement.

Justice Department spokesperson Kiersten Pels wrote in an email to States Newsroom that monitors comply with all legal and ethical requirements. Pels added that they don't interfere with the voting process and that their work "is consistent with longstanding Department practice of monitoring elections for compliance with federal law."

U.S. Attorney General Todd Blanche dismissed concerns about the monitors in an interview on "Fox News Sunday." While confirming plans for about 1,000 monitors, he emphasized that the department sends out monitors every federal election.

"They're not going to Republican states, they're not going to Democrat states. They're going to every state to make sure that our elections are carried out legally, fairly and appropriately," Blanche said.

After Election Day

The preparations by civic groups also include post-election planning for potential disruptions to vote counting or attempts to overturn losses.

The FBI seized ballots from the 2020 election in Fulton County, Georgia, in January. The then-director of national intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard, was present at the raid at Trump's request, underscoring its importance to the president.

The Justice Department also spent months seeking information on election workers in Fulton County during the 2020 election before a federal judge quashed the subpoena in July.

The raid raised questions among activists and election experts about whether federal law enforcement would seek search warrants to obtain ballots after Election Day.

Ballot seizures are a point of concern, said Andrew Walchuk, senior policy director and counsel for vot-

ing and fair representation at Common Cause, a voting rights group. The raid was "an alert" to election offices that a seizure is something they need to prepare for, Walchuk said.

"It is definitely something that groups across the country are ready for, that we're watching," Walchuk told reporters last week.

Like other groups, Common Cause's election preparations include training a network of volunteers who can help voters and identify potential problems. In Texas alone, more than 400 volunteers are already, said Marliza Marin, Common Cause's Texas program manager.

"It's kind of unheard of to have this many volunteers already trained," Marin said.

Jonathan Shorman covers democracy for States Newsroom. Based in Kansas City, his coverage area includes elections and voting rights, fights over state and federal power, civil liberties and more. An alumnus of the University of Kansas, he previously covered politics for The Kansas City Star.

COMMENTARY

National Newspaper Week finds some positive developments amid the doom and gloom in South Dakota

by Dana Hess

When I meet someone new and they find out that I'm retired, it's only natural for them to ask what I did for a living before I entered this life of leisure. It's with a certain amount of pride that I tell them that I was a daily newspaper editor.

Hearing that bit of news, it's only natural for them, at some point in the conversation, to say, "These aren't very good times for newspapers." It pains me to admit it, but that's true.

When I was the editor in Pierre, I felt like I was part of an exclusive group. While larger papers had more than one person with the title of editor, there were only 11 of us in the state who could claim we had responsibility for managing a newsroom at a daily newspaper.

Worn down by the pandemic or hollowed out by corporate greed, many of those 11 newspapers can no longer claim to be "daily." Some have taken to offering a printed product only once or twice a week, promising to post news online on the days when there is no print edition.

The former Gannett newspapers in the state, in Sioux Falls, Watertown and Aberdeen, have drastically reduced their staffs, resulting in less local news. Let's hope new ownership by Lee Enterprisesmakes some improvements.

When times started to get tough for newspapers, there was an opinion in the industry that while daily newspapers would suffer, weekly newspapers would be more likely to hold on to their readers and advertisers. Sadly, that has not always been the case. A growing number of aging publishers at weekly newspapers can't find anyone willing to buy their publication, continue their legacy and take a chance on the future of local journalism.

Times have gotten so tough that in the past year two weekly newspapers — the Brandon Valley Journal and the Groton Independent — turned to GoFundMe campaigns to provide the working capital they needed to keep the lights on and the presses running.

Newspapers are challenged by the economy, the internet and, in South Dakota, by their own government. Newspaper publishers across the state have reported frequent, maddening delays in the delivery of their newspapers by the U.S. Postal Service. Gone are the days when your friendly neighborhood paperboy delivered the newspaper to your front porch (or your bushes or your rain gutter). Now most newspapers, even those that consider themselves dailies, rely on the Postal Service for delivery.

Some newspapers have reported to the South Dakota NewsMedia Association that they are struggling to retain subscribers because of poor mail delivery.

"All the newspapers mail us copies of their papers to the (SDNA) office here in Brookings," said David Bordewyk, executive director of SDNA in a story about the state's problems with postal deliveries by South Dakota News Watch. "One-hundred newspapers are sending them to us. It used to be by the end of the

week, by Friday — because most weeklies would be printing and mailing on a Tuesday or Wednesday — we would see more than 90% of the newspapers. Today, by Friday, less than half of them are showing up."

The former Gannett newspapers in the state, in Sioux Falls, Watertown and Aberdeen, have drastically reduced their staffs, resulting in less local news. Let's hope new ownership by Lee Enterprises makes some improvements.

When times started to get tough for newspapers, there was an opinion in the industry that while daily newspapers would suffer, weekly newspapers would be more likely to hold on to their readers and advertisers. Sadly, that has not always been the case. A growing number of aging publishers at weekly newspapers can't find anyone willing to buy their publication, continue their legacy and take a chance on the future of local journalism.

Times have gotten so tough that in the past year two weekly newspapers — the Brandon Valley Journal and the Groton Independent — turned to GoFundMe campaigns to provide the working capital they needed to keep the lights on and the presses running.

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About National Newspaper Week

Since 1940, Newspaper Association Managers has sponsored and supported a week-long promotion of the newspaper industry in the United States and Canada. This year marks the 86th celebration of National Newspaper Week.

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.

No major gains projected for count of women in Congress after midterms

BY JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — The number of women in the U.S. Senate is unlikely to increase and may decline following the November midterm elections, though there are still opportunities for candidates to make history in the upper chamber.

Kelly Dittmar, director of research at the Center for American Women and Politics, said on a call with reporters Tuesday that Peggy Flanagan in Minnesota and Mary Peltola in Alaska, both Democrats, would become the first Native American women in the Senate if they're elected.

"And if Juliana Stratton wins in Illinois, a record three Black women will serve concurrently in the U.S. Senate for the first time in U.S. history," Dittmar said. "Only five Black women have ever served in the U.S. Senate. So the three women who would be serving in the 120th Senate would represent 50%, or half, of all Black women who've ever served."

The Cook Political Report with Amy Walter rates the Illinois race as solidly Democratic, the Minnesota election as likely Democratic and Alaska as a toss-up.

When it comes to overall representation, voters would need to elect six new women to replace outgoing

female senators and keep the number of women in that chamber level during the next Congress, which is set to begin in January.

"At present, four women non-incumbents are favored to win in November, and two more non-incumbent women are in competitive contests," Dittmar said. "In addition, one incumbent woman senator, Susan Collins in Maine, is currently deemed as vulnerable in her bid for re-election."

That means there would need to be some unexpected victories for women Senate candidates in order to actually increase representation in that chamber, likely leaving the percentage of women senators flat or in decline.

Any path possible in House

The House of Representatives, where 125 of the 435 seats are held by women, is in a somewhat different position.

There will be at least 271 women on the ballot for House seats, giving voters the opportunity to surpass the previous record of 127 women in that chamber at one time.

"Net gains, loss, or stasis all remain possible outcomes for women's U.S. House representation from 2026 to 2027," Dittmar said. "And these are all possible outcomes as well when you look by party for Democratic women or Republican women specifically."

Democratic women hold a record of 95 seats, while Republican women have previously maxed out their representation at 34.

No parity in either party

CAWP, part of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at New Jersey's Rutgers University, aims to be a "leading source" of research and data on women in politics.

Chelsea Hill, the group's director of data, said there were a record 590 women running for a seat in Congress at the start of this year's campaign cycle, though that number decreased as voters decided which candidates they wanted in this fall's general election.

"It's important to note, even with these candidacy records, women continue to be significantly underrepresented as a percentage of all U.S. House and U.S. Senate candidates," Hill said.

And while Democratic women are represented in higher numbers in their party than Republican women, neither has reached gender parity, she said.

In total there are 198 Democratic and 73 Republican women candidates on ballots this fall, which Hill said is an increase from the last election cycle but "short of the record high of 298 women nominees for the U.S. House set in 2020."

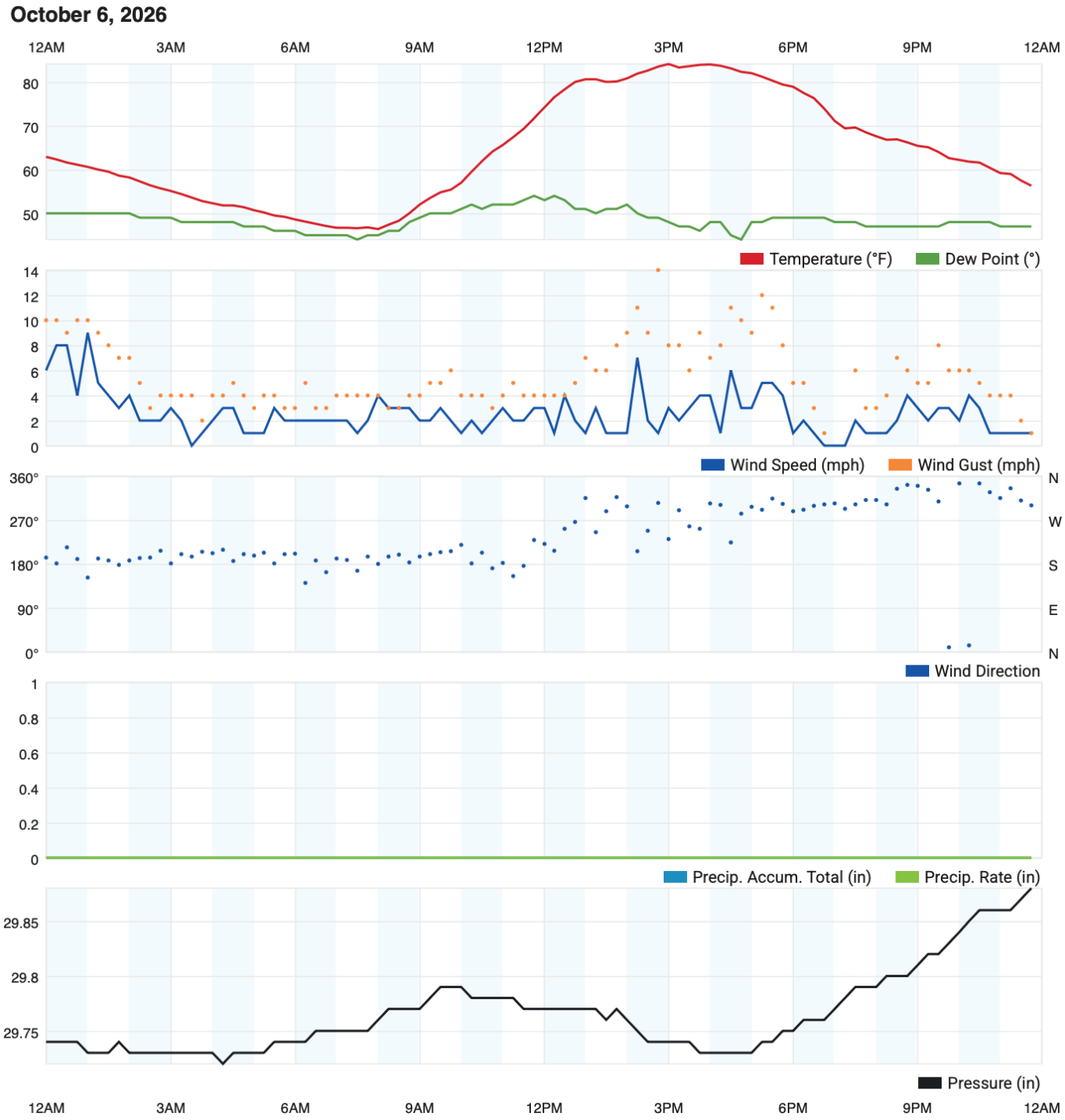
"When broken down by race and ethnicity, only Latinas reached new highs for U.S. House candidacies and nominations this year," she said.

"On the Senate side, the number of Native American, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian women nominees for the U.S. Senate, three, is an historic high," Hill added. "And the number of Black, four, and Latina, two, Senate nominees match existing records. Among women candidates for U.S. Senate, only white women have reached a new high of 45."

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

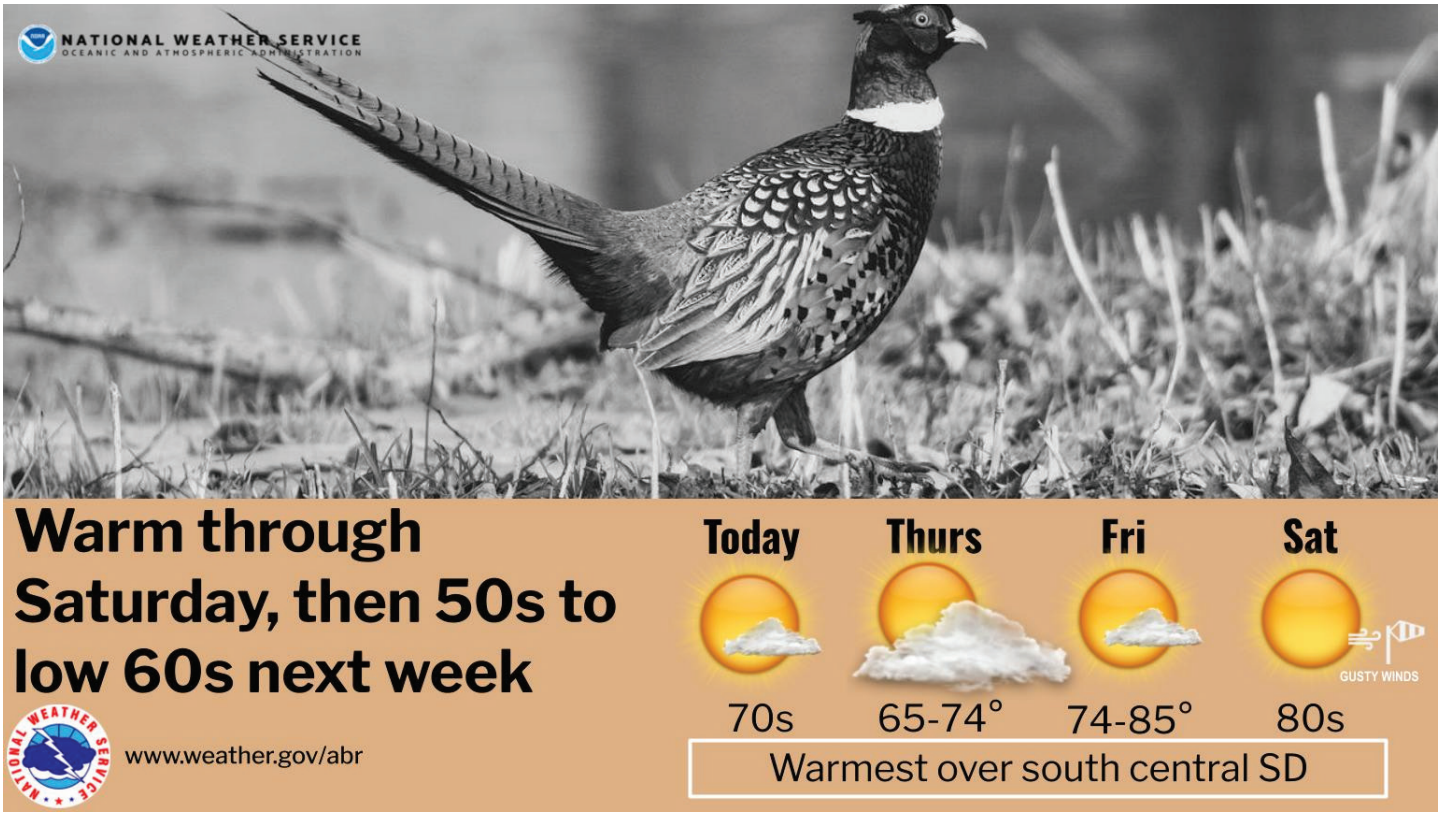
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
				
High: 75 °F	Low: 43 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 45 °F	High: 77 °F
Sunny	Increasing Clouds	Decreasing Clouds	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny



Our trend of well above normal temperatures will continue through Saturday, with highs in the upper 60s to upper 80s. Saturday will be the warmest day, with highs in the 80s. The warmest air through the week will remain over south central South Dakota.

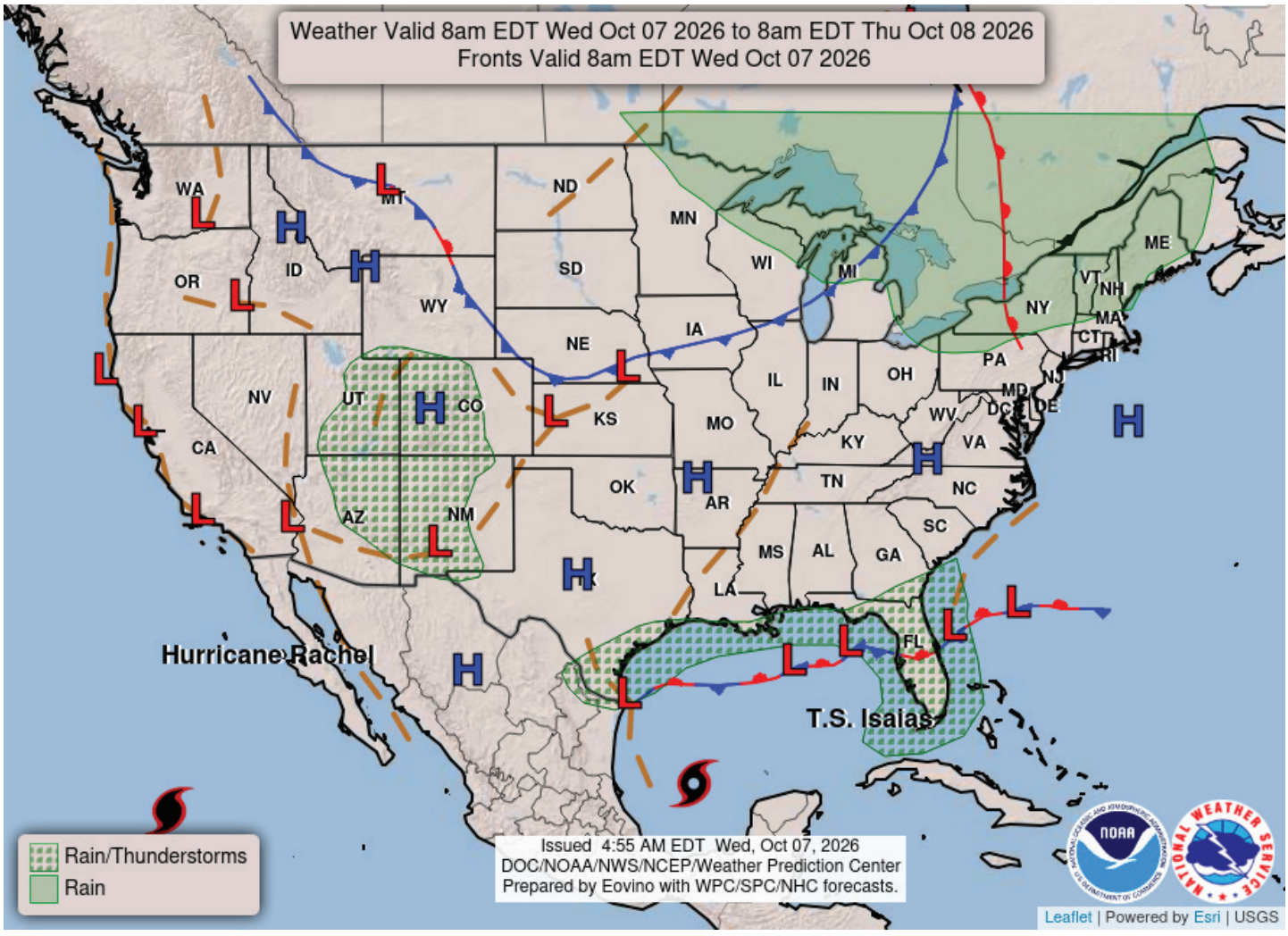
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 84 °F at 2:57 PM
Low Temp: 46 °F at 7:54 AM
Wind: 14 mph at 2:41 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 91 in 1909
Record Low: 14 in 2012
Average High: 65
Average Low: 38
Average Precip in Oct.: 0.54
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 18.87
Precip Year to Date: 22.08
Sunset Tonight: 7:02 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:39 am



Today in Weather History

October 7, 1970: On October 7th through the 10th, 1970, a record-breaking early season snowstorm hit parts of southern South Dakota. Snowfall of 5 to 9 inches was typical across the southwest and south-central on the 7th. Late on October 8th and into the 9th of 1970, the state's southeast portion was hit. The 5 inches that fell in Sioux Falls is the earliest significant snow on record for the area.

The heavy snows also affected portions of Kansas, Nebraska, western Iowa, and western Minnesota. Amounts of up to 7 inches were recorded in northwest Iowa. The heavy, wet snow snapped many tree branches and downed power lines. Sioux City recorded their heaviest snow for so early in the season. The snow was very wet and heavy but melted quickly over the next several days.

1825: Raging forest fires in the Miramichi region of New Brunswick, Canada, destroy over 3 million acres of forest. As many as 500 people were killed. The blaze has been partly attributed to unusually hot weather in the fall and summer of 1825, coupled with outdoor fires by settlers and loggers.

1849: High winds swept the passengers of the St. John out to sea. This resulted in a loss of 143 people.

1959: The Soviet spacecraft, Luna 3, captured the first images of the far side of the Moon. The first image was taken at 3:30 UTC on the 7th of October.

1970 — Widespread flooding took place across Puerto Rico. Rainfall amounts for the day ranged up to seventeen inches at Aibonito. A slow moving tropical depression was responsible for six days of torrential rains across the island. Totals in the Eastern Interior Division averaged thirty inches, with 38.4 inches at Jayuya. Flooding claimed eighteen lives, and resulted in 62 million dollars damage. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1981 — Seattle, WA, received four inches of rain in 24 hours, a record for the city. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — It was another hot day in the southwestern U.S. Tucson, AZ, hit 101 degrees for the second day in a row to again equal their record for the month of October. Phoenix AZ reported a record high of 103 degrees, and Blythe CA and Yuma AZ tied for honors as the hot spot in the nation with afternoon highs of 108 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — Morning fog in the central U.S. reduced the visibility to near zero at some locations. Morning lows of 28 degrees at Rockford IL and 24 degrees at Waterloo IA were records for the date. Afternoon highs of 92 degrees at Hollywood FL and Miami FL were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Morning thunderstorms in central Texas drenched San Antonio with 3.10 inches of rain in six hours causing local flooding in northeastern sections of the city. Temperatures dipped below the freezing mark from the Northern Rockies to the Upper Mississippi Valley. (The National Weather Summary)

2016: Hurricane Matthew was off the northeast coast of Florida. Matthew brought intense rainfall to the Carolinas on the 8th and 9th.

2017: A tornado touched down near Jenner in Alberta, Canada.

2018: Only 8 hours after becoming a depression, the National Hurricane Center upgraded the system to Tropical Storm Michael. Tropical storm force winds and torrential downpours were affecting portions of the coastal east-central Yucatan Peninsula.

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InTouch Ministries

Daily Devotion

Why Isn't God Speaking?

There is a purpose in God's silence—
He wants to teach us and bring our focus back to Him.

Psalms 28:1-2: 1 To You, O LORD, I call; My rock, do not be deaf to me, For if You are silent to me, I will become like those who go down to the pit.

2 Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to You for help, When I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary.

The Bible speaks of times when God chose to be silent. David cried out but discerned no answer (Psalm 22:2). Job must have felt abandoned by the Lord (Job 23:8-9). And during the gap between the Old and New Testaments, God had no prophet for 400 years.

We don't always hear from the Lord when we expect to. He may be choosing silence because ...

He wants our attention. God doesn't always answer in the time frame we think He should. Sometimes His silence draws our focus back to Him rather than to the answer we're hoping for.

He's inviting us to examine our heart. When we sense distance from God, it can be an opportunity to bring unconfessed sin or resistance to Him—not because He's punishing us, but because He wants nothing to separate us from Him.

He's teaching us to trust Him. If we're motivated to love God only when there's indication that He's listening, our relationship with Him is based on feeling rather than faith.

He's training us to distinguish His voice from others. When God speaks softly, we listen more closely and eventually recognize His voice better.

Whatever the situation, we can be certain of this: Even in the silence, God is at work for our good.

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

The Groton Independent
Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.06.26

16 25 27 41 46 **3**

TOP PRIZE:
$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 12 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.06.26

26 32 42 51 54 **22**

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
$364,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 45 Mins 12 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.05.26

1 19 22 37 47 **2**

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
$2,050,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 12 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.03.26

6 9 10 14 16

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
$78,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 15 Mins 12 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.05.26

7 22 29 35 51 **20**

TOP PRIZE:
$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 44 Mins 12 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.05.26

16 23 32 36 54 **9**

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
$485,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 44 Mins 12 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

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News from the AP Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Arlington def. Deuel, 25-22, 25-10, 25-14
Avon def. Burke, 25-21, 25-12, 25-17
Bennett County def. Pine Ridge, 25-15, 25-6, 25-21
Bridgewater-Emery def. Sioux Falls Lutheran, 25-19, 25-16, 25-22
Britton-Hecla def. Waubay/Summit, 25-16, 26-24, 25-21
Canistota def. Menno, 22-25, 27-25, 25-20, 18-25, 15-10
Castlewood def. Florence-Henry, 25-17, 25-20, 25-20
Chadron, Neb. def. Rapid City Christian, 25-21, 26-24, 21-25, 21-25, 17-15
Chester def. Tri-Valley, 25-12, 25-19, 25-21
Clark-Willow Lake def. Great Plains Lutheran, 23-25, 25-9, 25-7, 25-9
Custer def. Hot Springs, 25-23, 26-24, 28-26
Dell Rapids def. Vermillion, 25-12, 25-21, 25-18
Deubrook def. Milbank, 25-11, 25-16, 25-15
Dupree def. Newell, 22-25, 25-23, 20-25, 25-12, 16-14
Estelline-Hendricks def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-16, 25-16, 25-17
Ethan def. Wessington Springs, 25-21, 11-25, 25-18, 25-23
Faulkton def. Ipswich, 23-25, 25-19, 21-25, 25-19, 15-5
Flandreau def. Beresford, 25-20, 16-25, 25-14, 19-25, 15-6
Freeman def. Bon Homme, 25-20, 25-13, 25-23
Gayville-Volin High School def. Irene-Wakonda, 3-0
Hamlin def. Sioux Valley, 25-17, 25-20, 25-12
Harding County def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-17, 25-14, 25-19
Herried-Selby def. Gettysburg, 25-16, 25-15, 25-17
Highmore-Harrold def. Sully Buttes, 25-16, 24-26, 25-12, 25-23
Hill City def. Mahpíya Lúta, 25-17, 25-21, 25-15
Iroquois-Lake Preston def. DeSmet, 25-13, 25-17, 25-15
Kadoka def. Lyman, 20-25, 25-12, 21-25, 25-13, 15-1
Lakota Tech def. St. Francis Indian, 25-9, 25-7, 25-22
Langford def. Sisseton, 25-20, 25-20, 25-18
Lemmon High School def. Timber Lake, 25-12, 25-15, 25-9
Madison def. Baltic, 25-23, 25-22, 25-18
Marty def. Crow Creek Tribal School, 25-16, 24-26, 25-15, 25-16
McCook Central-Montrose def. Howard, 25-9, 25-16, 25-11
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Miller, 24-26, 25-20, 25-21, 29-27
North Central def. Leola-Frederick High School, 25-7, 25-15, 25-9
Northwestern def. Aberdeen Christian, 25-17, 26-24, 26-24
Oldham-Ramona-Rutland def. James Valley Christian School, 14-25, 25-20, 25-11, 25-22
Parker/Marion def. Hanson, 26-24, 25-16, 24-26, 25-13
Platte-Geddes def. Parkston, 27-25, 18-25, 25-10, 25-17
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-15, 25-23, 25-7
Sioux Falls Christian def. Sergeant Bluff-Luton, Iowa, 26-24, 25-15, 25-19
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 25-14, 25-22, 25-16
Sioux Falls Washington def. Sioux Falls Jefferson, 23-25, 20-25, 25-22, 25-18, 15-11
St Thomas More def. Philip, 25-11, 25-4, 25-16
Sturgis Brown High School def. Spearfish, 27-25, 25-15, 22-25

Todd County def. White River, 25-18, 20-25, 25-13, 25-23
Tripp-Delmont-Armour def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-22, 23-25, 25-19, 25-23
Wagner def. Scotland, 25-8, 25-11, 25-13
Wall def. New Underwood, 25-22, 25-23, 20-25, 23-25, 15-9
Warner def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 25-11, 25-12, 25-14
Watertown def. Tea, 25-18, 25-11, 25-19
Webster def. Tiospa Zina, 25-14, 25-12, 25-7
Wilmot def. Flandreau Indian, 25-10, 25-19, 25-10
Winner def. Gregory, 25-14, 25-14, 25-10
Yankton def. Huron, 25-13, 25-17, 25-14

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

Nobel Prize in chemistry awarded to Kagan and Soai for developing 'spectacular' chemical reactions

By KOSTYA MANENKOV and STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Henri B. Kagan and Kenso Soai won the Nobel Prize in chemistry Wednesday for their efforts to resolve mysterious mirror images in chemical molecules.

"Henri Kagan and Kenso Soai have provided a solution to a chemical mystery that is over a century old: how homochirality can emerge spontaneously," Heiner Linke, chair of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry, said in a news release. "The chemical reactions they have developed are spectacular."

Kagan, 95 years old and born in France, is affiliated with Université Paris-Sud in Orsay, France, and Soai, born in Japan, with the Tokyo University of Science.

Soai said he was shopping near his home when he was reached by the Nobel committee.

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences announced the winner in Stockholm.

Last year, three scientists won the chemistry Nobel for their development of new molecular structures that can trap vast quantities of gas inside, laying the groundwork to potentially suck greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere or harvest moisture from desert environments.

This year's prizes began with the Nobel for medicine, awarded Monday to three scientists whose work led to a tool that uses light to help unravel how the brain works. The physics award Tuesday recognized a scientist's efforts to demystify a rare group of neutrinos.

The literature prize is set to be awarded Thursday. After Friday's peace prize is awarded, the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences will be announced Monday.

The prize money this year is 12 million Swedish kronor (about $1.2 million), whether for an individual, a small group of laureates or an organization.

Tropical Storm Isaias forms, forecast to become a hurricane and hit the US Gulf Coast this week

MIAMI (AP) — Tropical Storm Isaias formed early Wednesday in the warm waters off eastern Mexico and forecasters said it was expected to strengthen into the first hurricane of the Atlantic season before hitting the U.S. Gulf Coast later in the week.

Isaias was located about 285 miles (460 kilometers) west of Progreso, Mexico, and about 580 miles (935 kilometers) southwest of the Mississippi River's mouth, according to the Miami-based National Hurricane Center. It had maximum sustained winds of 40 mph (65 kph) and was moving east-northeast at 8 mph (13 kph).

It was not immediately known where the storm may make landfall on the Gulf Coast. The hurricane center's initial projections said the center of Isaias could come onshore somewhere between eastern Louisiana and the western Florida Panhandle. People in those areas were urged to prepare for the storm.

"There is an increasing risk of dangerous wind and storm surge impacts along portions of the northern Gulf Coast," the hurricane center said. "Residents from Louisiana to the Florida Panhandle should closely monitor the latest forecast updates and ensure they have their hurricane plan in place."

Isaias also will bring areas of heavy rain to portions of the Gulf Coast and much of the U.S. Southeast on Friday and into the weekend, forecasters said.

The storm comes as the Atlantic hurricane season has been unusually quiet this year due to a strong El Niño, which disrupts storm formation over that ocean. Storm activity in the Pacific has been above average.

Eva Marie Saint, star of 'North by Northwest' and 'On the Waterfront,' dies at 102

By BOB THOMAS and JAKE COYLE AP Film Writers

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Eva Marie Saint, the pale, willowy actor who won an Academy Award for her first movie, "On the Waterfront," and starred opposite Cary Grant in the Alfred Hitchcock thriller "North by Northwest," has died. She was 102.

Saint, whose acting work lasted well into her 90s, died at her home in Los Angeles on Tuesday, confirmed family representative Jeff Sanderson.

Saint had one of the most spectacular debuts in Hollywood history, as the love interest of Marlon Brando's tormented Terry Malloy in "On the Waterfront," and her first trip to the Academy Awards was memorable too. Pregnant with her first child, Saint accepted her Oscar from Frank Sinatra and smilingly murmured a unique winner's speech: "I think I may have the baby right here." (Her son, Darrell, was born two days later.)

The award for the 1954 classic made her an instant star, but she soon astonished Hollywood with a firm independence that would mark her career. She refused offers of studio contracts and declined chances to follow up on her great success, explaining that she was taking time off to become acquainted with her new son. (A daughter, Laurette, was born in 1958.)

A curated career

In her first decade in Hollywood, Saint appeared in a mere seven films. She declined such top-level productions as "The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit" with Gregory Peck, "Summer and Smoke" with Laurence Harvey and "The Rainmaker" with Burt Lancaster. She credited her husband, TV and stage director Jeffrey Hayden, with persuading her to star in Hitchcock's "North by Northwest," the classic 1959 thriller in which Saint plays a spy who seduces Grant, but ends up falling for him.

"I vividly remember him saying, 'Honey, I think you should find a quiet spot. I'll take care of the children and I want you to really think about this and reread this script,'" she told Vanity Fair in 2014. "He was so right. And that's what husbands are for."

Instead of being put off by her selectivity, studios continued offering her starring roles in such films as "Exodus" (with Newman), "Raintree County" (Elizabeth Taylor, Montgomery Clift) and "All Fall Down," with Warren Beatty.

She turned more to television in the 1970s and enjoyed renewed popularity in the 1980s as the mother of Cybill Shepherd in the hit sitcom "Moonlighting" and as Tom Hanks' mother in the film comedy "Nothing in Common." She won an Emmy for the 1990 miniseries "People Like Us," and had roles in such 21st century movies as "Because of Winn-Dixie," "Superman Returns" and "Winter's Tale," adapted from Mark Helprin's novel of the same name. In 2021, she played Marisa Tomei's aunt in the brief audio play "The Bus Ride," part of "The Pack Podcast."

Saint was married to Hayden for 65 years, until his death in 2016.

That was her real name

When Saint emerged in the public consciousness, many believed her theatrical-sounding name must have been invented. She was born with it on July 4, 1924, in Newark, New Jersey. The family moved to Delmar, a small town near Albany, New York, where her father was a Goodrich Rubber Co. manager. Eva's goal was to become a third-grade teacher like her mother, but at Bowling Green State University in Ohio she tried out for a play and won the leading role.

After graduation, she lived with her parents and began hunting for acting jobs in Manhattan. After a fruitless year, she landed a two-line role as a telephone operator on a radio drama and soon was working steadily on soap operas and nighttime dramas, appearing for two years as Claudia on "One Man's Family." Network television was booming in the early 1950s, and her looks and dramatic sense made her a favorite with casting people and producers.

She credited Lee Strasberg with helping her overcome shyness

A critical turn in Saint's career came when she auditioned before Elia Kazan and was accepted into the Actors Studio, which shaped a generation of method-actor stars. She credited acting coach Lee Strasberg with helping her overcome her shyness.

"Lee Strasberg, when he got to know me a little bit, gave me a scene to do where I had to cry in front of my peers," she told The Santa Barbara Independent in 2009. "I worried about it, I worked on it, I tried to use what I was learning at the studio. I finally did the scene, and I cried, and my peers were crying with me. It was just an incredible moment for me."

Saint was rejected for the single female role in the play "Mister Roberts," but was hired to understudy the actor chosen, Jocelyn Brando, Marlon's sister. In six frustrating months Saint never got to substitute for Brando. She finally made it to Broadway in "A Trip to Bountiful," which she had played on television.

Kazan invited her to try out for the female lead in "On the Waterfront" by improvising a scene with Brando. She was told to try to stop a young man from entering her apartment. She told the Los Angeles Times in 2001: "All I know is that Marlon got in the door and turned on the music. We started dancing. He flicked my skirt. Kazan saw the sparks fly, and that's how I got the part."

Russian strikes on Ukrainian cities kill at least 15 in a major attack that Kyiv saw coming

By SAMYA KULLAB and HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian missiles and drones pounded Kyiv and a dozen other Ukrainian regions overnight into Wednesday, killing at least 12 civilians, including three children, and wounding more than 40 in Moscow's latest devastating barrage, Ukrainian officials said.

Ukraine had anticipated the attack, with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warning the previous day that intelligence services had concluded that Russia was building up for a "massive" strike.

Although Ukraine knew about the looming attack, which coincided with Russian President Vladimir Putin's 74th birthday, it couldn't fend it off completely.

The deaths and damage illustrated the difficulty Ukraine has in countering Russia's ballistic missiles and the new jet-powered drones used in Moscow's escalating bombardments. Without ammunition for its U.S.-made Patriot air defense systems, Ukraine can't stop Russian ballistic weapons. It is racing to develop a new generation of interceptors fast enough to catch Moscow's high-flying jet-propelled drones.

Russia and Ukraine are engaged in a long-range aerial war as their armies remain largely deadlocked on the battlefield, more than 4 ½ years after Moscow's all-out invasion of its neighbor. The unrelenting aerial attacks are hurting Russia but could be ruinous for smaller Ukraine.

U.S.-led peace efforts appear unlikely to bring any short-term relief, with the possibility of holding low-level technical talks still under discussion. Putin, meanwhile, is pressing ahead with the invasion in the belief that Ukrainians will buckle under the pressure and Kyiv's Western supporters won't stay the course, Western analysts say.

Russia wants Ukrainians to be afraid to fall asleep, official says

A Russian strike destroyed an apartment block in Pryluky, in Ukraine's northern Chernihiv region, killing nine people, including three children, and wounding 34, Interior Minister Ihor Vyhivskyi said.

Deaths were also reported in three other Ukrainian cities, including the capital Kyiv, according to Zelenskyy.

"The Russians wanted to strike painfully and demonstratively," the Ukrainian leader said on social media.

Ukraine is looking worldwide for available Patriot missiles, which are in short supply due to the Iran war.

"Russian ballistic missiles remain the greatest challenge. And air defense packages for us right now are

a vital necessity," Zelenskyy said.

In Kremenchuk, in the Poltava region, two people were killed and seven injured, said Vitalii Diakivnych, head of the regional military administration, and a rescue operation was continuing.

"That is exactly what the enemy is counting on. For us to be afraid to fall asleep. To let our children out of our sight. To plan anything. So that everyone thinks: next time it could be my address," he said.

Russia's Defense Ministry said the military carried out a massive strike overnight targeting industrial facilities involved in the production and storage of missiles and drones across Ukraine. The ministry said that port and ship repair facilities in the southern Odesa region and ships carrying cargo for the Ukrainian military were also hit.

Ukraine strikes back with attacks on Russian oil facilities, Zelenskyy says

Ukraine has hit back at Russia by launching long-range drones and missiles on oil refineries and storage depots.

Zelenskyy said Wednesday that Ukraine targeted two oil facilities and a training ground in the Perm, Samara, and Astrakhan regions of Russia.

Russian officials made no immediate comment.

Zelenskyy also indicated that Ukraine had struck in the Black Sea. He posted images of a fire said to show an oil tanker burning in the water near the Russian city of Sochi.

It was not possible to independently verify the images.

Some Russian online media late Tuesday also posted the images. Unconfirmed media reports said it was carrying oil from Novorossiysk to India and was attacked by Ukrainian sea drones.

Israelis are split over Netanyahu in their first elections since Oct. 7

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — As Israel gears up for its first elections since Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his opponents are putting it at the heart of their campaigns.

Nearly every poster, stump speech or televised debate seems to reference the attack, which has scarred the country and remains fresh in the minds of voters. Three years on, the worst security failure in Israel's history now threatens to end the career of its longest-serving prime minister.

"October 7 is kind of a framework for the entire political discussion that is going on," said Tamar Hermann, an expert on Israeli public opinion at the Israel Democracy Institute, a Jerusalem think tank. "All of us are post-traumatic in a way."

Netanyahu's opponents want him to pay for the failures that led to the deadliest day in Israel's 78-year history and plunged the country into a series of inconclusive wars. His defenders say Netanyahu was betrayed by the military establishment and that he has led Israel through a dramatic rebound from its darkest hour.

A loss in the Oct. 27 election would likely end the career of the soon-to-be 77-year-old Netanyahu. A victory would mark the greatest turnaround yet for a man who has defied naysayers for three decades.

A deadly day that has shaken an entire region

On the morning of Oct. 7, Hamas militants fired several thousand rockets into Israel and thousands of militants attacked through holes blown in the border fence or with boats or motorized paragliders. Some 1,200 people were killed and 251 others taken hostage.

Israel responded with a military offensive that has killed over 74,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, according to local health authorities, left the territory in ruins and sparked an ongoing humanitarian catastrophe. Israel later went to war against Hezbollah militants in Lebanon, seized a chunk of Syria, attacked targets in Yemen and joined the U.S. in two wars against Iran.

Hundreds of Israelis, mostly young soldiers, have died, and nearly every household has been touched by the violence. Netanyahu promised "total victory," but Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran's theocratic government all remain intact.

Israel's international standing has plummeted, a number of foreign governments have accused it of geno-

cide — a charge it vehemently rejects — and Netanyahu is now wanted by the International Criminal Court.

After a string of resignations by top security officials, Netanyahu is the only senior figure from Oct. 7 still in office, making this month's election in many ways a referendum on his leadership.

It's the focus of the campaign for both sides

Netanyahu and his opponents have put Oct. 7 at the forefront of their campaigns — for different reasons.

His opponents — from across the political spectrum — call his outgoing coalition "the massacre government." Netanyahu says he has led a "war of redemption."

His chief rival is Gadi Eisenkot, a former military chief whose son and nephew were killed in battle in Gaza. The opponents have pledged to form a government of "repair and reconstruction" — beginning with the formation of an official commission of inquiry into Oct. 7. They also have vowed to end draft exemptions for ultra-Orthodox religious men, a long-standing policy that has outraged the secular majority at a time of war, and accuse Netanyahu of threatening Israel's democratic institutions.

"The most fateful elections in the history of the State of Israel are between evasion and enlistment," Eisenkot wrote on X. "Between taking responsibility and fleeing from responsibility."

Netanyahu has repeatedly rejected calls for a commission of inquiry while trying to shift the blame to security officials. He recently accused the then-head of the Shin Bet security service, Ronen Bar, of withholding information ahead of the attack. Bar has vowed to file a defamation lawsuit.

Netanyahu has meanwhile denied reports in American media outlets that the United Arab Emirates and Egypt warned him ahead of Oct. 7.

He insists the country is stronger than ever.

"Our enemies expected us to collapse," Netanyahu said in a recent address to the United Nations. "Well, we didn't collapse. Instead, we rose and fought like lions."

Oct. 7 victims are seeking seats in parliament

Eisenkot's new Yashar party list includes two parents who lost children on Oct. 7. Netanyahu's Likud party also includes two grieving parents, among them the mother of a policeman killed in battle on Oct. 7 whose remains were the last to be returned to Israel as part of a ceasefire. Another Likud candidate lost both legs while serving in Gaza.

The leader of the dovish Democrats party, Yair Golan, is a retired general who put on his uniform and rushed to the southern border to fight on Oct. 7. The centrist Together party's list has another former general, Noam Tibon, who also battled militants as he rescued his son's family, and the mother of a soldier killed that day.

Other parties have also added people directly impacted by the attack.

Organizers, including victims' relatives, say they are keeping politics out of a mass memorial service in Tel Aviv on Wednesday. But they have hardly concealed their anger at the country's leadership.

"We will not let anyone evade responsibility," Yonatan Shamriz, whose brother was taken hostage and mistakenly killed by Israeli soldiers after escaping captivity, said in a radio interview.

There is little discussion of the Palestinians

Largely missing from the Israeli public discourse is any discussion of the dire situation in Gaza or the fate of the Palestinians.

Israeli leaders have said little about the unprecedented death toll in Gaza, the humanitarian catastrophe and the lack of reconstruction. Instead, they have focused largely on the country's pain over Oct. 7.

There is almost no mention of peace talks, and even Netanyahu's challengers largely oppose the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, the international community's preferred solution for the decades-old conflict.

When a pair of Israeli filmmakers released a documentary last month about civilian deaths in Gaza, party leaders across the spectrum, including Eisenkot, accused them of treason.

Oct. 7 has hardened the bitter split over Netanyahu

Polling suggests a close race between Netanyahu and his chief rival, Eisenkot, with an uncertain outcome.

According to the Israel Democracy Institute, over 60% of Israelis say their attitudes toward Oct. 7 are a central factor in whom to vote for. That number jumps to 68% among the Jewish majority; Arab voters

are most concerned with a crime wave in their communities.

But Hermann, the IDI polling expert, said this doesn't necessarily mean bad news for Netanyahu. She says the past three years have hardened attitudes on both sides.

Just because everyone says Oct. 7 is important, she said, "doesn't mean that they will come out with the same conclusion."

Nepal ends search for thousands of flood victims as family reactions range from anger to relief

By BINAJ GURUBACHARYA Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Nepal announced its intention to cease search and rescue operations for victims of the Aug. 26 flood that killed at least 1,455 people with thousands more still missing.

Family members of 5,285 people who remain unaccounted for, including hundreds of foreign nationals, expressed mixed reactions, with some relieved and others unhappy with the decision by Nepal's government announced late Monday.

The office of Prime Minister Balendra Shah said the government will concentrate on rehabilitation and reconstruction including restoring roads and bridges cut off by floods, particularly in remote areas where damaged infrastructure has made aid deliveries difficult.

The 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.

Hopes for finding survivors were revived after two Nepalese workers were rescued from an underground tunnel at the Trishuli hydropower project on Sept. 4, and again two days later when rescuers found a Chinese man at the same location.

The families of other flood victims have held protests and vigils in Nepal to call for the search efforts to be improved.

Usha Khatri opposed the government's decision to end rescue operations. She has spent days searching for her husband in many of the towns where the river flows and bodies have been recovered.

"I am so angry at the government for giving up on search and rescue with thousands of people still missing. I just don't understand how they can do that when we still have hope left that our loved one can still be found," Khatri said Wednesday.

During her ongoing search she has checked photos of bodies that were recovered but buried for preservation until identification is made.

"Either they have to give up the body or show some solid proof that my husband is gone and then only they can declare him dead," Khatri said.

Other family members welcomed the decision and said they are seeking government-issued death certificates.

"After so many days and weeks there is little or no hope of finding anyone alive. We are sure that none of our family members survived and we are just looking for a closure," said Nirajan Poudel, who lost five family members in the flood.

Several people whose relatives remain missing have performed symbolic funerals. Cremation is an important final rite in the Hindu tradition and performing the ceremony even without a body provides a sense of spiritual release for some families.

Poudel said the government has so far refused to issue death certificates, saying laws need to be amended first. Death certificates are necessary in Nepal for families to receive compensation, insurance and inherit properties.

Nepal's government did not immediately respond to a request by The Associated Press for more information about the death certificates.

Legal experts said the key issue was determining the number of people who were swept away by the flood.

"There is more to do with practical complications than legal provisions," supreme court lawyer Hardik

Subedi said. "The process has not been initiated that facilitates the death certificate."

From HBO Max to 'Harry Potter,' here's what's now under the Skydance umbrella

By The Associated Press undefined

Skydance-owned Paramount on Tuesday closed its $81 billion takeover of Warner Bros. Discovery, ushering in a new Hollywood giant.

Skydance Corp. emerges from one of the biggest mergers ever — $111 billion including debt — in the media and entertainment industry.

Here is a list of notable films, shows and franchises in the new Skydance portfolio, followed by its major studios, networks and other businesses.

Titles and catalogs

Superheroes and comics: DC's "Batman," "Superman," "Wonder Woman" and "Aquaman"

Fantasy and science fiction: "Harry Potter" and "Fantastic Beasts"; "Star Trek"; "Game of Thrones" and "House of the Dragon"

Action and adventure: "Mission: Impossible"; "Top Gun"; "Transformers"; the "Matrix" films

Horror: "The Conjuring" universe; "A Nightmare on Elm Street"; "Final Destination"; "Scream"

Children's and animation: "SpongeBob SquarePants"; "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles"; "Avatar: The Last Airbender"; "Looney Tunes"; "Scooby-Doo"; "Tom and Jerry"

Major television properties: "Yellowstone"; "Friends"; "The Big Bang Theory"; "The Sopranos"; "The White Lotus"

Paramount film library: Not limited to but including "The Godfather" trilogy, "Sunset Boulevard" and "Chinatown"

Warner Bros. and New Line libraries: Films including "Casablanca," the "Dirty Harry" series and the "Lord of the Rings" film trilogy

Turner's classic film holdings: Much of MGM's pre-May 1986 library, including "The Wizard of Oz" and "Singin' in the Rain," plus substantial classic RKO holdings

Miramax library — partial ownership: Paramount's 49% stake in Miramax, whose catalog includes "Pulp Fiction," "Good Will Hunting" and "Chicago"

Film and television studios

Paramount Pictures, Warner Bros. Pictures, New Line Cinema, DC Studios, CBS Studios, Warner Bros. Television and Skydance's film and television operations

Streaming services

HBO Max, featuring HBO originals such as "The Sopranos," "Game of Thrones," "The Wire" and "Sex and the City"; Paramount+; discovery+; and Pluto TV

News

CNN, CNN International, CNN en Español and CBS News, including "60 Minutes"

Broadcast and entertainment television

CBS and its owned local stations; HBO, Showtime, Cinemax, TNT, TBS, Turner Classic Movies, Comedy Central, MTV and BET

Reality, lifestyle and documentary networks

Discovery Channel, HGTV, Food Network, TLC, Animal Planet, Investigation Discovery, Travel Channel, Smithsonian Channel, OWN and Magnolia Network

Children's programming and animation

Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, Cartoonito, Adult Swim, Warner Bros. Animation, Warner Bros. Pictures Animation, Paramount Animation and Skydance Animation

Sports

CBS Sports, TNT Sports, Eurosport, Bleacher Report and Skydance Sports

Video games

Warner Bros. Games and Skydance's game-development businesses
Publishing, consumer products and experiences
DC Comics, one of the two dominant U.S. superhero-comics publishers; consumer-products licensing; studio tours; and branded attractions

Christa Pike is awake after failed execution as her attorneys seek more information

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Death row inmate Christa Pike has regained consciousness after Tennessee's failed attempt to execute her by lethal injection last week, and her attorneys are set to head to court Wednesday to seek more information about what went wrong.

Pike, 50, survived two doses of pentobarbital as executioners attempted to put her to death Sept. 30 for the 1995 beating and stabbing death of classmate Colleen Slemmer. Pike is believed to be the only person to survive after lethal injection drugs were administered.

Pike's attorneys are set to appear in court Wednesday as they are seeking more information from the Tennessee Department of Correction. Chancery Court Judge I'Ashea Myles has scheduled a Wednesday morning status conference in Nashville in the case.

"Against all odds, Christa Pike is conscious, speaking, and continues to receive critical medical care," attorneys for Pike said in a statement. Pike's prognosis remains unclear and, at a minimum, she faces a lengthy recovery, the attorneys said. They said Pike's arms were burned and blistered after the attempted lethal injection and that she is handcuffed to the hospital bed.

Pike's attorneys are seeking a court order to require the prison system to preserve information from the attempted execution including drug lot numbers, needles, execution logs and other information.

Attorneys with the Tennessee attorney general's office wrote in a Tuesday court filing that the court order is unnecessary because the prison system is "obliged to maintain this evidence in other cases and must assure it is preserved." They said state officials have taken "the necessary steps to obtain medical care for Pike and ascertain what occurred."

Republican Gov. Bill Lee called what happened "deeply disturbing" and ordered a "comprehensive, third-party review to determine exactly what occurred." The governor postponed the state's only other execution scheduled for this year.

Medical and lethal injection experts have focused on the possibility that a problem with the IV line caused the drug to pool in her tissue rather than entering her bloodstream. Pike's attorneys wrote in their court filing that "apparently at no point did any member of the execution team realize that the IV lines were not correctly placed or that the veins had blown."

The attempted execution got underway around 7:30 p.m. on Sept. 30 when Pike was given a chance to make a final statement. About five minutes later, Pike raised her head and said her arm was hurting. At some point she appeared to lose consciousness, but she could be heard audibly breathing until media were escorted from the witness room at 8:53 p.m. An ambulance arrived at the prison at 9:14 p.m. to take Pike to a hospital.

Texas set to execute man for fatally shooting a convenience store clerk during robbery in 2000

By JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — A Texas man who fatally shot a convenience store clerk is set to die by lethal injection on Wednesday in what would be the nation's 30th execution this year.

Jamaal Howard, 46, was found guilty of capital murder in the 2000 killing of Vickie Swartout, 42, who was shot once in the chest. He is set to receive a lethal dose of pentobarbital in the first scheduled execution in the U.S. since Tennessee's failed attempt at putting Christa Pike to death last week.

Pike's attorneys said Tuesday that she was awake and speaking as she received treatment at a hospital.

Texas has executed six people so far this year, with two more scheduled after Howard.

A killing caught on surveillance

Swartout was fatally shot during the robbery at the store in the small, rural town of Silsbee, located about 100 miles (161 kilometers) northeast of Houston. Evidence presented at the trial included the store's surveillance video, which showed Howard shooting Swartout.

Howard, who was 20 at the time, took $114 and a carton of cigarettes from the store, according to court records.

His attorneys have argued that Howard is intellectually disabled and his execution should be halted. The state said that he has not presented evidence that would show he meets the requirements for a claim of intellectual disability.

He has an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court pending to stop the execution.

The Supreme Court in 2002 had barred the execution of intellectually disabled people. But it has given states some discretion in how they determine such disabilities.

Executions in the U.S. this year

Florida has carried out 16 executions so far this year, the most of any state. Most states that allow executions use lethal injection as their primary method.

Messi caps Argentina farewell with a penalty and 2 assists in a 3-0 win over Benin

By DÉBORA REY Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES., Argentina (AP) — Lionel Messi turned his official farewell to Argentina into a gala performance, contributing a penalty and two assists in a 3-0 win over Benin on Tuesday at the Monumental Stadium in Buenos Aires, where the crowd offered a deafening final ovation to the genius who defined the footballing pulse of a nation for two decades.

In front of 85,000 fans, the superstar capped off an international career spanning 21 years, 126 goals, a 2022 World Cup victory, and two Copa América titles.

"It was a source of great pride to wear this jersey for over 20 years," Messi told the crowd, speaking into a microphone from the center of the pitch. "I never stopped fighting, never stopped giving my all. I would love to keep coming back forever, because playing for the Argentine national team is the most beautiful thing that can happen to you."

His teammates — many of them overcome with emotion — along with the coaching staff led by Lionel Scaloni and the fans, gave him a standing ovation.

"I'm going to miss you all. Now I'll be on your side, supporting the national team and the guys who come next," Messi promised. "When we're united, we're stronger than anyone and can overcome anything. Tough times lie ahead, because what this group achieved won't be easy to repeat."

Orchestrating the win

Following a corner kick taken by Messi, defender Nicolás Otamendi connected with a header to open the scoring in the 48th minute. Messi then provided an assist to young talent Nicolás Paz, who paid tribute to the star with an exquisite left-foot finish in the 61st.

Ten minutes later, Messi buried a left-foot penalty into the top corner, adding to his tally as the Albiceleste's all-time leading scorer.

"Olé, olé, Messi," the crowd chanted in his honor.

Passing the torch

Despite still playing at a high level at age 39, Messi announced on Aug. 31 that the end of his time with Argentina was set.

Messi played his final match — his 208th for Argentina — amid a spectacular fireworks display. He wore a special edition Albiceleste jersey featuring wider vertical stripes than the standard design, a giant sun, and a golden No. 10 on the back. The back detail featured a goat's horns in the print — a nod to the

"GOAT," referencing both the animal and his status as the "Greatest of All Time."

Ten minutes after kickoff in the international friendly, the referee paused the match to honor the Argentine captain. Rivals and teammates approached to greet him while fans rose for a standing ovation. Messi raised his hand in acknowledgment.

After the match ended, he thanked his teammates for the titles they had won and left them with a directive: "We need to build a strong, united group because there are people who want the national team to fail, and we shouldn't give them the satisfaction."

From heartbreak to World Cup glory

A successor to the legendary Diego Maradona, Messi made his senior national team debut in 2005. His journey was fraught with frustration until 2022, when he finally lifted the World Cup — a triumph that secured his place in the pantheon of the sport's greatest players and cemented his status as a national hero in Argentina.

Accompanied by his sons Thiago, Mateo, and Ciro, Messi was overcome with emotion as the Argentine national anthem played, sung by a veteran of the 1982 Falklands War. Goalkeeper Emiliano Martínez tried to comfort him by placing an arm around his shoulders.

Devoted fans and moving tributes

"It's not a goodbye, it's a 'farewell forever,' Captain" — that was the message Rebeca Arias and Daniel Lema emblazoned on a hat designed for the occasion. On the brim, they drew various depictions of Messi corresponding to each of the six World Cups he contested. The young couple traveled more than 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) from their native Tucumán to witness his final performance.

"We believe this is a unique moment. It's all worth it — being here, making the journey we did. Something like this might never happen again with a player," Arias remarked.

In the last World Cup, Messi went close to another title, falling just short after a 1-0 defeat to Spain in the final. However, the runner-up finish didn't overshadow his remarkable performance in the tournament — featuring eight goals and four assists.

"The match against England took a huge toll on us; the reality is that we were running on fumes," he explained, referring to the dramatic 2-1 semifinal victory.

His contribution was so pivotal that Messi has once again entered the conversation for the Ballon d'Or, competing against the two top contenders to succeed him: Spaniard Lamine Yamal and Frenchman Kylian Mbappé.

The Argentine star remains the only footballer to have won the award eight times.

"I am proud to be Argentine and to have been able to fulfill this dream with all of you," he concluded, before taking a solitary victory lap to cherish the fans' final chants of "Messi, Messi."

Messi receives honorary doctorate

Before his farewell at the stadium, Messi received an honorary doctorate from the University of Buenos Aires (UBA), a public institution.

The academic institution presented the honor at the national team's training complex in the suburb of Ezeiza. The star was awarded a diploma and a medal in recognition of his performance with the national team, as well as his influence both on and off the pitch.

Washington resident conspired with Canadian school shooter before attack, officials say

By MARTHA BELLISLE Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Federal authorities said Tuesday that they have arrested and charged a 30-year-old from Washington state with encouraging an 18-year-old to commit one of the worst school shootings in Canada's history by offering to livestream the February attack, providing money and sharing advice on how to delete online messages to keep the plot a secret.

The U.S. attorney's office in Seattle said James Cody Bryant of Bellingham, Washington, communicated

with Jesse Van Rootselaar in British Columbia for at least six months ahead of the shooting. Bryant, who identifies as female, did not report Van Rootselaar's plans to authorities, authorities allege.

W. Mike Herrington, the special agent in charge of the FBI's Seattle office, said without Bryant's "misplaced loyalty" and willingness to livestream the killings, officials didn't know if Van Rootselaar would have gone through with the attack.

"We certainly know the shooter was concerned that not enough people would see the livestream without Bryant broadcasting it and was depending on Bryant to amplify the livestream because the shooter did not have many followers on social media," Herrington added.

Authorities say Van Rootselaar first killed her mother and stepbrother at home before attacking a nearby school in the mountain community of Tumbler Ridge, killing five children ages 12 and 13 at the school as well as an educational assistant. Twenty-five others were wounded.

Van Rootselaar was later found dead from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Investigators accessed Van Rootselaar's Twitch account and found that she had initiated a video livestream while sitting in her vehicle with a rifle and long gun in her lap. The livestream lasted about 20 seconds before it was disconnected, and was only viewed by one other account.

Bryant is accused of helping to plan the attack

Bryant was charged with one count of conspiracy to commit murder in a foreign country — a "novel" charge for a case like this, said Acting U.S. Attorney Neil Floyd during a press conference.

Bryant made a first appearance in court on Tuesday afternoon and is being detained ahead of a preliminary hearing set for Oct. 20. The federal public defender's office, which represents Bryant, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Communicating over Discord with Van Rootselaar, Bryant gave tactical advice on how to carry out the killings to have the strongest impact, according to the complaint.

"Hallways also mean a lot of ways people can escape," Bryant wrote, the complaint said. "Corners to turn. Wide open spaces means numbers."

Bryant also sent Van Rootselaar money to purchase a lighter that would be used to construct an explosive device and advised Van Rootselaar about how to keep the plot a secret by deleting online messages and using virtual private networks, officials said.

According to the criminal complaint, Bryant and Van Rootselaar met online about three years ago on Omegle, a since-shuttered video chat site that connected users with strangers at random. Their communications were sporadic during the first year because she was "institutionalized" after being deemed a danger to herself, the complaint said. She was locked up again after setting her room on fire. But they spoke daily during the six months leading up to the attack, officials said.

"Van Rootselaar often spoke about planning to use guns to murder her family members and others because she felt she had been mistreated," the complaint said.

Both Van Rootselaar and Bryant identified as trans, Herrington said. But authorities do not have any indication that's why they stayed connected online, he said.

Bryant sometimes urged Van Rootselaar to reconsider, officials say

Bryant tried to talk Van Rootselaar out of committing the attack at various points, authorities said.

"I truly hope you reconsider today," Bryant told her in January, according to the complaint. "I wish there were any other path for you, you shouldn't have to do something like this."

But ultimately, Bryant did not alert law enforcement and instead provided support for carrying out the shooting, authorities said.

When Van Rootselaar expressed concern that Bryant would "snitch" and alert authorities, Bryant repeatedly assured her that would not happen, officials said.

"I could," Bryant wrote, according to the filing. "I don't want to honestly. I know I can like, save lives I guess but idk," using the abbreviation for "I don't know."

Canadian Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree said in Ottawa that the allegations were devastating.

"Nothing will bring back the eight lives that were devastated back in February, but it is important that those who are responsible are held to account," he told reporters.

Anandasangaree said it was too soon to say whether Bryant could also face charges in Canada, but added that Canadian prosecution would be possible if investigators determine Canadian laws were broken.

Bob Zimmer, the federal lawmaker who represents Tumbler Ridge, said the victims deserve answers.

"It is deeply troubling, the allegations that this individual coached the shooter all throughout the process in an effort to livestream the event," Zimmer said.

Tumbler Ridge in the Canadian Rockies is more than 1,000 kilometers (600 miles) northeast of Vancouver, British Columbia, near the provincial border with Alberta. The provincial government website lists Tumbler Ridge Secondary School as having 175 students from Grades 7 to 12.

The families of victims are suing artificial intelligence company OpenAI in U.S. federal court, seeking to hold the ChatGPT maker responsible for failing to alert police to the shooter's alarming interactions with the chatbot.

Paramount completes its takeover of Warner Bros to become one Hollywood giant known as Skydance

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AP Business Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — It's official: Skydance-owned Paramount closed its $81 billion takeover of Warner Bros. Discovery on Tuesday, ushering in a new Hollywood behemoth.

The merger brings two of America's oldest moviemaking studios together under a new name: Skydance.

HBO Max, titles ranging from "Harry Potter" to "Sinners" and networks such as CNN now also find themselves under the same roof as Paramount+, CBS and the likes of "Top Gun" and "The Godfather." All are under the helm of billionaire David Ellison and his new co-CEO Ynon Kreiz.

"Today is a historic day, not just for Skydance but for our entire industry," Ellison said. "We couldn't be more excited to get to work."

Ellison's Skydance bought Paramount for $8 billion last year before setting its sights on Warner. What followed erupted into a tumultuous, roughly yearlong fight over the storied Hollywood giant. Including billions of dollars in debt, the acquisition amounts to nearly $111 billion.

The now-combined Skydance marks one of the biggest tie-ups in media and entertainment history, further concentrating power in an industry already run by just a handful of big players. Politics also loomed over much of the process. The Ellison family has notably held a long relationship with Republican President Donald Trump, who said Tuesday that Skydance is "going to be a great company."

Netflix gets into a bidding war with Paramount for Warner

The early days of Paramount's quest for Warner turned into a messy bidding war.

Months after disclosing it was open to selling all or part of its business, Warner initially struck a studio and streaming deal with Netflix in December.

But Paramount said it also had made offers that Warner management "never engaged meaningfully" with. It soon launched a hostile counterbid.

The Hollywood giants spent much of early 2026 in a heated back-and-forth over who had a stronger offer, with Warner leadership repeatedly backing Netflix as its preferred suitor. But Netflix bowed out after Paramount eventually upped its offer to buy all of Warner for $31 per share.

Warner and Paramount inked a mutual merger agreement in late February.

Hollywood stars made their thoughts known

Hollywood was closely watching the fight over Warner's future. From awards shows to online petitions, A-list celebrities and other creatives made their voices known.

In April, thousands of movie stars, writers, directors and other professionals announced their "unequivocal opposition" to the Paramount-Warner merger. An open letter — which was signed by long-outspoken critics of the deal like Jane Fonda and Mark Ruffalo, as well as Hollywood heavyweights from Denis Villeneuve to J.J. Abrams — warned of fewer jobs and "less choice for audiences in the United States and around the world."

Others lined up to back Paramount as Ellison reiterated his commitments to the movies. At CinemaCon, the company debuted a glossy mini movie about the studio directed by Jon M. Chu and narrated by Tom Cruise — who ended the spot atop the iconic Paramount water tower, with the words "the future is paramount and the future looks pretty great from here." Director James Cameron also doubled down on his support of Ellison.

The prospect of a new Warner owner also loomed over awards season, from #BlockTheMerger pins to more subtle nods in acceptance speeches. When accepting her Emmy last month, "Remarkably Bright Creatures" actor Sally Field — who also signed the open letter in opposition to the Paramount-Warner deal — stressed that "unique storytelling matters" and "we can't let those voices be silenced, or compromised or merged."

Many industry critics were also outspoken when Netflix's studio and streaming deal was on the table, with a particular focus on the future of movies staying in theaters.

Trump has attacked CNN

Critics are also watching what happens with CNN under Skydance.

Trump has regularly attacked reporting he deems unfavorable at CNN (most recently attempting to bar the outlet from the White House altogether). And over the course of the Warner buyout, his administration also chimed in about hopes for a new owner.

Days after Paramount launched its hostile bid for Warner, Trump said CNN spread "poison and lies" and that it was "imperative" the network be sold. The White House took aim again at CNN in March, over the network's coverage of the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth told reporters that "the sooner David Ellison takes over that network, the better."

Ellison has said editorial independence will be maintained at CNN. On Tuesday, he told reporters that the company had "not talked to any political leader of any party about news — other than to say that we want to be in the truth business and we want be in the trust business."

Skydance is retaining Mark Thompson as CNN's editor-in-chief. And under a settlement finalized last month with states that had sued over the takeover, the company agreed to form a "News Editorial Independence Board."

Still, critics point to turmoil already seen at CBS under Skydance ownership and aren't convinced this new body will be able to do much. The company's corporate board will oversee appointments.

Ellison has maintained a close relationship with Trump overall. He reportedly hosted a dinner in Washington in Trump's honor in April, on the same day Warner shareholders gave their green light for the merger. In June, just two days after the Justice Department said it wouldn't intervene in the deal, Ellison attended an Ultimate Fighting Championship match on the White House lawn for Trump's 80th birthday (streamed by Paramount+).

"We have a good relationship with this administration," Ellison noted Tuesday. But he said he "also had a really good relationship" with Democratic President Joe Biden, among other politicians.

3 Gulf countries helped back the deal

To help fund its Warner buyout, Paramount racked up billions of dollars in financial backing from three Gulf countries: Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The Federal Communications Commission approved the company's request for sizable indirect ownership from those foreign investors.

Paramount previously disclosed it expected those funds to indirectly own nearly 50% of equity interests — but no voting rights — of Skydance. But the company asked for clearance of up to 100% to account for potential future investments, which the FCC granted, citing in part that access to more capital would strengthen the broadcast industry and was therefore "in the public interest."

The FCC's sole Democratic commissioner, Anna Gomez, and other critics have called the move alarming and unprecedented. They argue that amount of money opens the door to behind-the-scenes influence.

Legal fights stalled the deal

Paramount cleared antitrust hurdles for its Warner acquisition from the Justice Department and regulators worldwide over the summer.

But in July, Democratic attorneys general from 12 states — led by California's Rob Bonta — sued to block the merger, alleging the combined company would "extinguish competition" and lead to fewer choices for consumers, particularly movie theatergoers and cable customers.

The Writers Guild of America followed suit.

Settlements emerged in September. The states' terms, approved by a judge, include pledges from the company to increase film production in the U.S. over the next five years, commit millions of dollars to a fund aimed at supporting workers displaced by the merger and establish new editorial monitoring of CNN and CBS.

Critics said the remedies were too weak, but the settlements cleared the way for the deal to close.

Trump says he has call scheduled with Putin to discuss possible case of pneumonic plague in Russia

By WILL WEISSERT and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Tuesday said he has a call scheduled with Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss a possible case of plague at a Siberian research institute.

Speaking to reporters at the White House, Trump said he would be talking with Putin about the case "very soon." Health authorities are investigating after the death of an employee at an anti-plague institute, which authorities attributed to pneumonia with an unknown cause.

Asked what the U.S. intelligence community was saying about the case, Trump said the U.S. is in "very deep discussions" on the topic. "We'll be able to report about it, probably tomorrow," Trump said.

The World Health Organization on Tuesday said the case presents a "very low" risk outside Russia. The United Nations agency said it was in contact with Russian authorities following reports of the death last week of a woman who worked at the Irkutsk Anti-Plague Research Institute of Siberia and the Far East.

On Monday, Trump said the U.S. would be willing to help Russia with the situation. "It's a rough disease. You know, that's a disease we used to be able to control, but somehow those microbes have gotten stronger and smarter. They're like an army," Trump told reporters at the White House.

The call also comes as the Trump administration faces an Oct. 18 deadline to decide which Russian entities, if any, it will sanction under the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, which Trump signed into law on Sept. 18.

Ukraine has given the administration and Congress a wish list of Russian companies, vessels and individuals it would like to see hit with U.S. sanctions under that law.

CNN now has a new owner. What will the future of the network be under Skydance?

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AP Business Writer

CNN has a new owner: Skydance.

After a tumultuous, roughly yearlong process, Skydance-owned Paramount closed its $81 billion buyout of Warner Bros. Discovery on Tuesday. And beyond Hollywood, the mega merger brings two titans of the American TV news landscape — CBS and CNN — under the same roof.

On the eve of the deal's completion, Skydance confirmed that CNN's Mark Thompson will stay on as editor-in-chief of the network — separate from CBS, where Bari Weiss remains at the helm. But how the combined company's news operations will look farther down the road is yet to be seen.

Politics are also top of mind. The billionaire family of Skydance CEO David Ellison has a cozy relationship with President Donald Trump — who has been far from shy about targeting coverage he deems unfavorable from both CNN and CBS. Last month, his administration moved to bar CNN from the White House. And the network's new ownership arrives as coverage ramps up less than a month ahead of the 2026 midterm elections.

Ellison has pledged to maintain "complete" editorial independence. Under a recent settlement with states

that challenged the merger, the company also agreed to establish new monitoring of CBS and CNN by forming a "News Editorial Independence Board" within 180 days.

Still, Skydance's corporate leaders will choose who sits on this board. And critics warn of the consequences of industry consolidation overall.

CNN's editor-in-chief remains

Skydance announced Monday that Thompson — who has been CNN's chair and CEO since 2023 — would continue to lead the network. In a staff memo published by Business Insider and others, Thompson said he had "real confidence" Ellison and other Skydance leaders "will fully support the principle and practice of the kind of independent news that CNN has always stood for."

Thompson, a former chief executive of the BBC and The New York Times, acknowledged that some details of how CNN will operate have yet to be finalized — but said he planned to lead the network "with the same responsibilities and prerogatives that I have now."

CBS News and its hallmark "60 Minutes" program have already seen ample editorial turmoil since coming under Skydance ownership last year. For critics of those changes, news of Thompson staying at CNN marks a meaningful safeguard, but some experts cautioned that time will tell.

"Both CNN and CBS News will ultimately sit under the same corporate ownership, and ownership can exert influence in ways that are much more subtle than directly telling an editor what stories to cover," said J. Christopher Hamilton, an associate professor at Syracuse University.

The long-term question "is whether that independence remains intact when it becomes costly or uncomfortable for the parent company," he added.

Charles Schreger, an adjunct professor at NYU's Leonard N. Stern School of Business, expects Thompson not to be influenced by politics — and said he doesn't think Skydance would keep the executive on if the company didn't "have the intention of letting him operate (CNN) in a neutral way."

New editorial monitoring

According to court documents, the new editorial independence body will include five "active or retired" journalists with at least 10 years of experience.

Still, those members will all be appointed by and report to the combined company's board of directors. Ellison is staying in Skydance's top chairman spot.

"While it is termed independent, it is going to be filled with members appointed by Paramount," said Megan Duncan, an associate professor of journalism at Virginia Tech's School of Communication. She predicts that will "lessen the teeth of this board."

Per the settlement, the board's responsibilities include establishing a set of "guiding editorial principles" based on CBS and CNN's standards and practices, resolving "any disputes" between both employees at the two networks and corporate management and "monitoring adherence to ethical journalism."

"We're gonna make sure that CNN and CBS News are completely editorially independent," Ellison reiterated Tuesday, during a media event alongside his new co-CEO Ynon Kreiz.

When asked in particular about conversations with Trump, Ellison later added "we have not talked to any political leader of any party about news — other than to say that we want to be in the truth business and we want to be in trust business."

'Disappointed that we could not do more'

Top prosecutors like California Attorney General Rob Bonta — who led the coalition of 12 states that initially sought to block the Paramount-Warner merger — have said this new board will help "ensure independent, objective, fact-based reporting."

Still, others wished the settlement could've gone further. Connecticut Attorney General William Tong wanted a full divestiture of CNN and CBS and said last month he was "deeply disappointed that we could not do more."

Meanwhile, while joining the rest of the states in the wider settlement, Colorado and Washington notably declined to sign off on the editorial board terms.

Separately, as part of a settlement with Hollywood writers, the Writers Guild of America said Paramount also agreed to prohibit writer layoffs specifically at CBS News Broadcast for the next five years.

Experts like Duncan stress it will be important to keep an eye on any future job cuts — or merging of future resources in the name of profits.

That might look like CNN and "60 Minutes" being able to share findings from one high-profile interview, for example, she explains. A consequence could be fewer approaches to report on important stories.

"The more news that we have that is competing for an audience's credibility and attention, the better off we are as a democracy," Duncan said. She also pointed to CNN's robust international coverage today, and warned there might be cuts to that reporting if the company chooses to focus on consolidating its U.S. audience — which could have an outsized impact on "our first draft of history."

Sovereign wealth funds from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are also set to hold sizable indirect ownership stakes of the now-combined Skydance. These investors don't have voting interests in the company, but critics say the money opens the door to potential behind-the-scenes influence overall.

Trump and CNN

Last month, Trump barred CNN — as well as Politico and MS NOW — from the White House due to what he called unfavorable coverage. All three outlets since filed a joint lawsuit, and are continuing to fight their case in court.

CNN has long attracted ire from the Republican president and members of his administration. Earlier this year, the White House attacked CNN for its coverage of the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran — and Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth told reporters that "the sooner David Ellison takes over that network, the better."

CBS has faced its own attacks from Trump, too. Skydance's 2025 acquisition of Paramount was approved by the Federal Communications Commission just weeks after the company agreed to pay Trump $16 million to settle a lawsuit over editing at the network's "60 Minutes" program.

Back in December, just days after Paramount launched its then-hostile bid for Warner, Trump said that CNN spread "poison and lies" and that it was "imperative" the network be sold.

He applauded the merger's closing more broadly on Tuesday — saying Skydance is "going to be a great company."

California couple arrested on child abuse charges in horrifying surrogacy probe

By JAIMIE DING and PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — An extremely wealthy Chinese immigrant and his wife amassed a brood of 21 children through a surrogacy scheme and raised them in a "house of horrors," prosecutors alleged Tuesday.

Guojun Xuan, 66, and Silvia Zhang, 39, were arrested at their sprawling mansion in Arcadia, a city about 13 miles (20 kilometers) northeast of downtown Los Angeles.

The children suffered daily beatings from cruel nannies as the couple watched over a network of surveillance cameras and laughed, according to prosecutors. The couple allegedly recruited women across the country to serve as surrogates, promising them that they were just looking for another child to grow their family.

The couple face several counts of child abuse as well as conspiracy to commit child abuse, accessory after the fact and dissuading a witness, according to Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan Hochman.

"This case is unprecedented. It is horrific," he said during a morning news conference. "The physical abuse, beating and punishment that these very young children received is despicable."

In an afternoon court appearance in nearby Pasadena, the couple pleaded not guilty and denied all allegations with a Mandarin interpreter. Prosecutors sought $100 million bail per person because of the serious nature of the charges and because they are flight risks.

The couple have over 200 personal and 70 corporate bank accounts with annual transfers of $250 million, Deputy District Attorney MacKenzie Teymouri said.

Both were said to have U.S., Mexican and Chinese passports, though investigators have not determined if they are all legitimate; prosecutors said they used fake passports to create some of the bank accounts.

Inside the couple's home, investigators found a bank statement showing more than $70 million in one

account along with assets such as antique sculptures and specialty alcohol that added up to nearly $10 million, according to Teymouri.

LA County Superior Court Judge Kerry White set bail at $20 million each with home detention and a protective order against visiting their children.

Mitchell Krems, the couple's attorney, called the bail amount "absurd" for the type of charges his clients face and said Zhang's health should be taken into consideration.

Zhang, who appeared in court in a wheelchair, has a rare form of leukemia and is recovering from a bone marrow transplant, Krems said.

Fifteen children were removed from the opulent home last year after an allegation of abuse, and another six living elsewhere were also located. They ranged in age from 2 months to 13 years, with most between 1 and 3. Police believe Zhang gave birth to one or two of the children, while the rest were carried and delivered by surrogates.

Hochman said the couple set up an agency, Mark Surrogacy, that they operated from home and used to hire surrogates throughout the U.S. But prosecutors said the couple misled the women, telling some that they could not conceive and others that they only had one child and wanted one more to complete their family.

"The house could only be described as a house of horrors for these incredible young children," Hochman said.

Prosecutor says videos show nannies and Xuan abusing children

Zhang and Xuan were first arrested in May 2025 after a hospital reported that their 2-month-old infant had a traumatic head injury, the result of being violently shaken by a nanny, according to Arcadia police.

Police did not file charges at the time, saying they needed to complete the investigation.

Hochman said the couple set up three rooms they called learning centers, where the children spent several hours a day sitting at desks under the supervision of nannies.

Through an extensive surveillance system including motion-activated cameras, the couple watched and at times laughed as the nannies physically abused the children, including daily beatings, he said.

In one video, Xuan is shown entering a room and telling a nanny to strike a child harder, Hochman said, and in another he joins the nanny in hitting the child.

The nannies were allegedly told "not to leave any physical marks on the children," and when police arrived to investigate in May 2025, the children were told to deny they had been beaten.

After examining the surveillance video, police issued an arrest warrant for Chunmei Li, the nanny seen hurting the 2-month-old infant. However she fled to Tijuana, Mexico, and then China.

After the children were taken into state custody, Xuan and Zhang were allowed supervised visits. During one such visit, Zhang read to a child and wrote in the book, "Tell them you're happy with me, tell them you want to come home," lead prosecutor Teymouri said.

Krems said it was "patently false" that Xuan was involved in beating any of the children and blamed all the abuse on the nannies.

"My client, Mr. Xuan, intervened swiftly," Krems said. "He fired the nanny, excised her from the house."

Prosecutor says motive for discipline remains under investigation

When asked about the couple's motivation, Hochman said that was part of the investigation, as was the parentage of each child.

Krems, Xuan's attorney, previously told ABC7 that Xuan's goal was to raise children who become productive adults.

"The reason he has all these children is because he wants them to contribute to society. He is not a man who is self-indulgent," Krems said. "Some who are wealthy might spend on jewelry or cars, but he is actually spending his resources to help his children become educated."

After Tuesday's court hearing, he said Xuan and Zhang immigrated from China to exercise their freedom and have as many children as they want.

"If they were white, if they were Elon Musk, and they weren't Chinese, they wouldn't experience this level of scrutiny," Krems said.

Surrogates say they were misled

Surrogacy is an arrangement in which a woman agrees to carry and deliver a child for another person or couple, often after an embryo transfer.

There is no comprehensive federal law regulating surrogacy, leaving most rules to the states.

California is considered to be surrogacy-friendly because it has clear laws governing the process. Both sides are required to have lawyers, and there must be a written, notarized contract before an embryo transfer takes place.

At least eight women came forward to say they were aggressively pursued to serve as surrogates. The women, many of them first-time surrogates, said they were given misleading or incomplete information about the couple's family situation and intentions.

Krems denied that the couple lied to surrogates about their intentions.

The district attorney's office said a federal investigation was ongoing.

Christa Pike is conscious and speaking after Tennessee failed execution, her attorneys say

By KIM CHANDLER Associated Press

Tennessee death row inmate Christa Pike is awake and speaking at a hospital, her lawyers said Tuesday, six days after the state's failed attempt to execute her by lethal injection left her unconscious and on a ventilator.

Pike, 50, survived two doses of pentobarbital as executioners attempted to put her to death last Wednesday for the 1995 beating and stabbing death of classmate Colleen Slemmer. The lethal injection drug didn't kill her, but her lawyers said her arms were left burned and blistered.

Her survival raises further questions about her medical and legal future. Her attorneys said her prognosis remains unclear and that she faces a long recovery.

"Against all odds, Christa Pike is conscious, speaking, and continues to receive critical medical care," attorneys for Pike said in a statement. "Despite the severe damage she endured to her arms, she is still handcuffed and shackled to the bed. Her recovery is medically unprecedented."

Her attorneys said they are grateful for the first responders and the medical team at the hospital "who treated Christa like a human and have provided exceptional care to her."

It's the first indication Pike's health has improved

As recently as Sunday, Pike's attorneys said she had remained unconscious and on a ventilator.

Dr. Joel Zivot, a professor of anesthesiology and surgery in Atlanta who consulted as an expert for Pike's legal team, said the development "bodes well for a good recovery." But, he added, it could be weeks or months before anyone knows exactly what her recovery might look like, and whether her competency could be restored to a level that might enable the state to try again to execute her.

"She's still in the ICU," he said. "She has recovered to a certain degree that she's able to be off a ventilator and able to speak, but in no way would I announce her free of further serious risk. There's still a lot of bad things that can happen here, even when everyone is doing their job well."

A spokesperson for the Tennessee Department of Correction said she could provide no information other than that Pike remained hospitalized Tuesday.

A court hearing is set for Wednesday

Pike's attorneys are set to go to court Wednesday as they seek to learn more about what happened in the failed lethal injection.

The attorneys are seeking a court order requiring the Tennessee Department of Correction to preserve evidence, including drug lot numbers, records and other information from the Sept. 30 attempted execution. Chancery Court Judge I'Ashea Myles scheduled a Wednesday morning status conference in the case.

Pike's attorneys said in their Tuesday statement that they continue to ask outgoing Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee to commute Pike's sentence to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

"Christa is a survivor and will take recovery one day at a time," her attorneys said.

Lee halted further executions following Pike's hospitalization and ordered a "comprehensive, third-party review to determine exactly what occurred." U.S. Sen. Marsha Blackburn, the state's Republican candidate to replace him, called on the state to explore other methods of execution to ensure it can continue carrying out capital punishment.

Could the state try again?

In addition to questions about competency — whether Pike can understand why she would be put to death — Pike has strong arguments that it would be cruel and unusual for the state to try again to execute her, said Deborah Denno, a Fordham Law professor who has studied execution methods for 36 years. It could also violate the prohibition on double jeopardy, trying or punishing someone twice for the same offense, Denno said.

In other recent cases, states have been allowed to try again after failing to establish a suitable intravenous line, she said, but Pike is the first person to survive after the lethal drug was actually administered.

"They carried out every aspect of the execution," Denno said. "She didn't die, but every process they intended, they did it."

Seattle University Law Professor Michael Russo, who handled capital cases as a public defender in Los Angeles, called the failed execution horrible but said he doubted whether the Supreme Court would stop the state from trying again on double-jeopardy grounds, should it decide to do so.

"There's nobody else in the history of the death penalty in this country who has gone through what she's been through," Russo said. But, he added, "I think what this Supreme Court would say is, her sentence was to die — to be executed — not to suffer an attempt at execution."

Cornell brings in ex-Justice official Sally Yates to review school's handling of sex assault claims

By LEAH WILLINGHAM and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

ITHACA, N.Y. (AP) — A former high-ranking Department of Justice official will look at how Cornell handles sexual misconduct complaints, university trustees announced Tuesday as they tried to address an outpouring of anger over allegations of a 2024 gang rape at a fraternity house.

Sally Yates, who was a deputy attorney general in the Obama administration, will spearhead the review, the trustees said. The assessment is to include how the Ivy League university investigates reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment, how the disciplinary process works, campus police responses and more.

"It is imperative that Cornell be willing to examine itself with the same rigor we expect of others," trustee Chair Anne Meinig Smalling said in a statement.

The announcement comes after days of outrage and a large protest over Cornell's response to a complaint from a woman known publicly only as Jane Doe. She told campus police in November 2024 that, a few weeks earlier, she had been sexually assaulted by multiple Chi Phi fraternity brothers after being pressured into drinking and taking drugs.

No criminal charges have been filed. The Chi Phi chapter at Cornell was shut down, and the Ivy League university has said it expelled some students and suspended others.

Yates will look at how the woman's complaint was addressed and at the oversight of fraternities, sororities and other campus groups, Cornell said.

The woman sued the university, seven former students, the fraternity and others last month.

Lawyers for two of the former students denied they participated in a sexual assault. Attempts by The Associated Press to reach the other men or their representatives have been unsuccessful. Court records show that during an investigation that Cornell conducted under the federal Title IX law, some of the accused students contended that the sexual activity was consensual.

The lawsuit put a new, nationwide spotlight on the allegations and how the campus police, university and local prosecutor had reacted.

New York Attorney General Letitia James is now conducting a criminal investigation and may soon name

outside lawyers to assist. Meanwhile, her deputies have spoken with Jane Doe's attorney and the local prosecutor, Tompkins County District Attorney Matthew Van Houten. James also talked to him herself, her office said Tuesday.

Van Houten looked into the allegations in 2024 and brought no charges — then reopened his office's investigation after seeing Jane Doe's lawsuit. After Gov. Kathy Hochul put James on the case last week, Van Houten said he supported the appointment.

Hochul, James and Van Houten are all Democrats.

The governor also called for an independent review of Cornell's handling of the matter — the review that Yates now will lead.

Yates had a decades-long career at the Justice Department, serving for years as the top federal prosecutor in Atlanta and later as a deputy attorney general.

She achieved particular prominence in January 2017 when, as acting attorney general in the early days of the Trump administration, she directed Justice Department attorneys not to defend the constitutionality of President Donald Trump's refugee and immigration ban. She was swiftly fired, with Trump accusing her of betrayal and insubordination.

Yates also generated headlines when it emerged that, in a conversation days before her departure, she had expressed alarm to the Trump White House about contacts that Trump's new national security adviser, Michael Flynn, had had with the Russian ambassador during the presidential transition period. Flynn later was fired.

Yates has been in private practice since her departure from the Justice Department. Her practice at the King & Spalding law firm includes conducting independent investigations for outside organizations and companies.

She led a high-profile inquiry into alleged abuse and misconduct, including claims of harassment and coercion, at the National Women's Soccer League. The investigation concluded in 2022 with a finding of systemic abuse.

US stocks rise to a record on expectations companies will make even fatter profits

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. stock market has never been higher, even as the list of challenges chipping away at it keeps growing.

The S&P 500 climbed 0.6% Tuesday to a record after topping its prior all-time high set in August. Despite worries about everything from war to high inflation to pressure from the bond market, the index at the heart of many 401(k) accounts has soared 23% since hitting a bottom in late March.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 253 points, or 0.5%, while the Nasdaq composite tacked 0.4% onto its own all-time high set the day before. The record-high stock prices are helping investors feel better about their finances, or at least less bad, when Americans are generally feeling discouraged about keeping up with the fast-rising cost of living.

Many of the fears that sent the U.S. stock market to its bottom in March have indeed come true. Oil prices are high because of the war with Iran, which has made inflation worse. Yields have cranked higher in the bond market, which threatens to slow the economy by making it more expensive for everyone to borrow money. And Americans broadly say they're feeling more pessimistic about the economy and where it's heading.

But one vital source of support has remained resolute for the U.S. stock market throughout: the relentless ability for companies to make more money.

Lamb Weston, which sells frozen fries and other potato products, said on Tuesday that its profit and revenue during its latest quarter topped its projections, for example. The results also beat analysts' expectations, and its stock rallied 7.5%.

CEO Mike Smith said the company continues to deal with unexpected increases in freight and other

expenses. But the company nevertheless raised its forecast for an underlying measure of profit for its full fiscal year.

It's not just potato products proving to be profitable. All kinds of companies are lining up to report soon how much profit they made from July through September, and expectations are high. Delta Air Lines will report its third-quarter results on Friday, with several of the country's biggest banks headlining the following week.

Analysts expect companies in the S&P 500 to deliver overall growth of nearly 30% in earnings per share from a year earlier, according to FactSet. If they're correct, it would be the third straight quarter of growth better than 25%.

That's crucial because corporate profits are one of the main levers that set prices for stocks, along with interest rates. At the moment, high bond yields are making investors less willing to pay high prices for investments that aren't bonds. But the simultaneous strength for corporate profits is allowing the market to stay high and "to win the tug-of-war against yields," according to strategists at Barclays.

To be sure, much hinges on companies actually meeting those expectations for fatter profits. If they fail to do so, stock prices could easily fall off their records. Some critics also point to a possible bubble in stocks in the artificial-intelligence industry after how much they soared in the frenzy around the technology.

AI stocks have been a huge force driving the U.S. market to records, including Nvidia's 28.3% surge so far this year. That's roughly double the broad market's gain.

Constellation Energy jumped 12.2% for one of Tuesday's biggest gains in the S&P 500 because it's also riding that rising tide.

It announced a long-term deal to supply Google with about as much electricity as a new nuclear reactor makes. The boom in AI data centers has made not just electricity more in demand but also construction crews and materials throughout the economy.

Elsewhere on Wall Street, Option Care Health soared 32.6% after CD&R and McKesson said they're buying the provider of infusion services. The two are paying $32.05 for each Option Care Health share, valuing it at roughly $5.8 billion.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 44.98 points to 7,818.93. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 253.38 to 51,521.28, and the Nasdaq composite climbed 122.48 to 27,599.79.

Bond yields offered some slack on Tuesday after falling back from their highest levels in years or even decades. The yield on the 10-year Treasury, which is the focal point of the U.S. bond market, eased to 5.28% from 5.31% late Monday.

It fell after oil prices steadied themselves somewhat. The price for a barrel of Brent crude oil, the international standard, dropped to roughly $97 in the morning before pulling back to settle at $100.58. While that was up 0.3% from Monday's settlement price, it's still below the nearly $110 it was at a few weeks ago.

In stock markets abroad, indexes ticked higher in Europe as yields continue to swing in their bond markets amid concerns about high government debts and tight budgets. In France, tens of thousands of demonstrators marched in support of protests by students demanding more funding for schools.

In Asia, Japan's Nikkei 225 jumped 1.1%, and Hong Kong's Hang Seng climbed 1%, but South Korea's Kospi dropped 0.9%.

A hearing on Kilmar Ábrego Garcia's deportation case is abruptly canceled

By GARY FIELDS and REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

GREENBELT, Md. (AP) — A hearing for Kilmar Ábrego Garcia which was expected to determine whether the man mistakenly sent by the Trump administration to El Salvador would be deported to Liberia was abruptly canceled Tuesday for reasons that were not immediately clear.

The government is moving to vacate a preliminary injunction put in place by U.S. District Judge Paula Xinis preventing U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement from detaining and deporting Ábrego Garcia to the West African country of Liberia. His legal team is seeking to make the injunction permanent. The

judge left previous orders in place last December and ordered him released from custody.

Abrego Garcia was in the courtroom Tuesday but Judge Xinis never took the bench. Instead attorneys for both sides left the courtroom about five minutes before the hearing was supposed to begin. They held a 15-minute conference and then the hearing was canceled. No announcement was made in court as to why the hearing was canceled.

Simon Sandoval-Moshenberg, a lawyer for Ábrego Garcia, told media outside the courthouse simply that the hearing could not happen Tuesday and that an update to the case would be posted on the court docket in the next few days. He shed no light as to why the hearing was cancelled.

"Unfortunately the court was unable to go forward today," Sandoval-Moshenberg said.

The Salvadoran national's case became a focal point in the immigration debate after he was mistakenly deported to his home country last year. Since his return, he has been fighting a second deportation to an African country as proposed by Department of Homeland Security officials.

Ábrego Garcia argued that if he were to be deported, it should be to Costa Rica, which had previously agreed to accept him. But Todd Lyons, the former acting director of ICE, said in a March 2026 memo that deporting Ábrego Garcia to Costa Rica would be "prejudicial to the United States," because the U.S. had expended resources and political capital negotiating with Liberia to accept third-country nationals.

The push for deportation to Liberia continued even after the U.S. signed an agreement with Costa Rica to accept deportees who cannot legally be returned to their home countries.

"The government is leading the same rodeo as many times before. Sending Kilmar to Costa Rica is on the table. However, the government continues to punish him for pursuing his constitutional rights and seeks to ship him to Liberia," said Jossie Flor Sapunar, the national communications director for We Are CASA, an activist group that has supported Ábrego Garcia and his family and intends to be at the courthouse. "Kilmar has become an international symbol of due process, a symbol which the Trump administration wants to silence."

Supporters of Abrego Garcia gathered outside the courthouse in the Washington, D.C., suburbs Tuesday, some wearing green vests that said "CASA."

Nadine Seiler, 61, held a banner supporting Ábrego Garcia while a choir sang "We Shall Not be Moved." Seiler said she immigrated from Trinidad nearly 39 years ago.

"I'm an immigrant. I have come to represent for my immigrant community," said Seiler. She said Abrego Garcia said months ago that he was willing to leave the country, but the government hasn't agreed. "It's not about policy. It's about cruelty."

She added in an email that the family deserves privacy, either at home in Maryland or in Costa Rica.

Ábrego Garcia, 31, has an American wife and child and has lived in Maryland for years, but he immigrated to the U.S. illegally as a teenager. In 2019, an immigration judge ruled that he could not be deported to El Salvador because he faced danger there from a gang that had threatened his family.

He was arrested in Baltimore in March 2025 after picking up his then-5-year-old son, who has autism and other disabilities, from his grandmother's house, according to court papers.

Ábrego Garcia was then sent to a mega-prison in El Salvador known as CECOT, which activists say is rife with abuses and where inmates are packed into cells and never allowed outside. ICE officials admitted in court filings that his deportation there was an "administrative error."

Facing public pressure and a court order, President Donald Trump's Republican administration brought him back in June 2025, but only after securing an indictment charging him with human smuggling in Tennessee. A federal judge dismissed that case in May 2026, finding that the Justice Department's pursuit of criminal charges was designed to punish Ábrego Garcia for challenging his deportation. The government is appealing.

Army study found shock gloves purchased by ICE cause pain, compliance and fear

By RYAN J. FOLEY Associated Press

The shock gloves immigration agents could soon use to control detainees and protesters worked so powerfully during a military exercise that participants felt intense pain, stopped fighting immediately and feared additional exposures, according to a previously unreleased Army study.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement leaders were aware of the findings before signing a $16.7 million contract to purchase 6,000 pairs of shock gloves in August, according to records obtained by the watchdog group American Oversight and shared with The Associated Press.

The shocks had a profound impact on Army employees who played the role of combative prisoners during the exercise, which took place at the military prison at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas in October 2024. The participants, several of whom were large-statured men, stopped resisting seconds after officers applied shocks by touching gloves to their skin, and were left with "fatigue, soreness and excessive apprehensiveness to being shocked again," the study found.

"After experiencing the effects of the GLOVE, … participants stated just seeing the GLOVE was enough to make them want to comply," the authors wrote.

Watchdog says gloves cause pain and raise safety concerns

ICE has called the gloves "distraction and de-escalation devices" that will be safer than other non-lethal options to subdue targets for arrest and deportation and protesters who create civil disturbances. The agency has argued the rapid compliance they cause will keep officers safer and prevent incidents from requiring potentially lethal force.

But critics have warned the gloves will give ICE another weapon to intimidate and brutalize people even as the agency is under fire for excessive force that has left a trail of deaths and injuries across the nation. The gloves, they note, are easy to discharge, do not leave a mark and have not been extensively used in settings outside of jails. The manufacturer warns they should not be used on high-risk populations such as kids, pregnant women or disabled people.

"The military assessment in ICE's own files shows that these gloves can cause 'intense pain' and force compliance. It does not establish that they are safe," said Chioma Chukwu, executive director of American Oversight. "Everyone should be alarmed that ICE is preparing to deploy a tool designed to inflict, at best, intense pain, without showing that it is safe for the people who will be subjected to it."

ICE released the study and other documents to American Oversight as part of the group's Freedom of Information Act lawsuit against the agency seeking records related to its use of force.

Army study found shock gloves triggered 'immediate' compliance

The military prison study assessed whether the gloves could be used effectively to forcibly remove combative prisoners from their cells, to respond to disturbances in common areas and to transport uncooperative inmates. Role-playing employees conducted several scenarios with and without the gloves to test their impact, including violent encounters in which inmates were to fight as hard as they could.

The study found the devices "increased the efficiency" of teams carrying out forced cell extractions and responding to disturbances by reducing the length of physical encounters, keeping guards from becoming exhausted and preventing injuries. They did not "significantly change" the time it took to control inmates during escorts but required less effort.

"GLOVE provides a boost in confidence to smaller or less trained members," the study found. "Inmate compliance was immediate" compared to other methods, it added.

The electric jolt does not cause the body to freeze like a Taser shock does, but instead "works by overloading the peripheral nerve endings" of the skin to cause pain, the study said. Participants who were wet or had oil on their skin described even more powerful shocks, with one reporting discomfort for 30 minutes afterward.

Senator says ICE hasn't responded to demand for details on glove use

ICE's contract requires the manufacturer, Compliant Technologies LLC, to deliver the gloves within six

months. Its owner, Jeff Niklaus, said he was unavailable for an interview, citing a busy workload.

White House border czar Tom Homan has said it could "be awhile" before the gloves are in the field because ICE is still ironing out training and policy issues. A statement released Tuesday by ICE did not address questions about the study and the status of the rollout, but said "officers are highly trained in de-escalation tactics."

U.S. Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada said ICE has not responded to an Aug. 27 letter in which she and 15 other Democratic Senate colleagues called for ICE to abandon its plan to buy the gloves or explain how they would be used and managed to avoid abuse. She said she still wants answers.

"Without ICE's responses to legitimate questions from 16 United States Senators, the American public is being left in the dark about how these electric shock gloves are being deployed and what, if any, training the agents who use them have received," she said.

White House aide: Trump did not call for attacks on US cities but explained how he's preventing them

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

The White House clarified Donald Trump's comments at a Monday night rally, explaining that the president was not insinuating that he wanted Iran to attack U.S. cities but instead wants to prevent Tehran from having that capability.

White House Communications Director Steven Cheung said on social media Tuesday that the president's comments have been misunderstood and misrepresented in a "media freakout" that is "not rooted in reality."

Trump was discussing the Iran war and the resulting high gas prices that have become a midterm liability for Republicans during his remarks in Nebraska when he mentioned the possibility of an Iranian attack on U.S. soil.

"It's a small price to pay for keeping the world safe, keeping our country safe," he said of the war and its economic fallout. "They can take out a city. Let 'em take out Los Angeles, let 'em take out San Diego. This is a very small price to pay."

The commentary, including Trump's casual mention of the two California cities, was delivered in the familiar meandering style that he uses at campaign rallies, when he speaks for extended periods — often an hour or more — and is only occasionally following prepared remarks on a teleprompter.

Critics, including California Gov. Gavin Newsom, seized on his statements. The governor, a Democrat who could run for president in 2028, called Trump "deranged and dangerous" for, in Newsom's framing, "saying our foreign enemies should 'take out' Los Angeles and San Diego."

Cheung, in his response Tuesday, said it was obvious that Trump was not calling for such an attack.

"The media freakout over President Trump's comments is not rooted in reality," he said. "He was clearly stating U.S. cities would have been threatened if a nuclear Iran hadn't been stopped. America is safer because of the President."

Cheung added that Iran "has no nuclear, no navy, no air force, and no money."

Still, at least one Republican politician shared Newsom's interpretation.

"As a Navy veteran, I served to protect Americans, not write off American cities as an acceptable price of war," Jim Desmond, the Republican congressional nominee in a metro San Diego district, wrote on social media, adding that "no American family should ever be treated as collateral damage."

Trump has often criticized U.S. cities as he campaigns, especially the largest areas that lean heavily Democratic. At a recent North Carolina rally, he described the state's cities as "blood-soaked killing fields." North Carolina's violent crime rate ranks in the middle third of states, according to FBI statistics.

Iran has said that it's not pursuing nuclear weapons, but has enriched uranium to near-weapons-grade levels that have no civilian purpose.

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Arkansas campaign ad sparks conservative backlash for portraying lazy welfare recipient as white

By LAURA TURBAY and TERRY TANG Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — A new video from Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders was standard issue Republican messaging for promoting her state's stricter rules for people on Medicaid. No more could able-bodied people lounge around while receiving taxpayer-funded healthcare, she said — they needed to work.

But the decision to portray an unemployed moocher as a young, white, cheeseball-chomping gamer named Brad upset some conservative commentators last week. Five decades after Ronald Reagan popularized the "welfare queen" trope about people living luxuriously while not working, they wanted to know why the video wasn't featuring a Black woman instead.

"Republicans don't have the balls to do this ad with 'Shaniqua' as the villain," posted Matt Walsh, a conservative writer. "Even though that would actually be an accurate portrayal of the problem at hand."

Sean Davis, co-founder of the Federalist website, wrote that "our government has systematically discriminated against white men for decades now, and yet now has the audacity to dishonestly mock young white men as welfare queens."

Never mind that the video was about Medicaid, not welfare, or that most Medicaid recipients in Arkansas are white. The outrage was a reminder of how old tropes are "chronically accessible" images in some voters' minds, said Ange-Marie Hancock, author of "The Politics of Disgust and the Public Identity of the 'Welfare Queen.'"

She thinks the Arkansas video was supposed to appeal to older voters living with unemployed adult children. But conservatives could only focus on race, Hancock said, because the idea of a Black welfare abuser has worked for them for decades.

"The longer race and gendered history really points to ideas that African Americans are lazy, they don't do the right thing," she said.

The debate that streaked across social media was the latest example of how conservatives have recently wrestled with racist views. Last month, a Texas political candidate named Bo French posted a picture of nonwhite students cheering at a University of Texas football game, saying "the problem is now obviously far worse than anyone imagined." Some Republicans denounced French's post, while it was embraced by those who fear the country's changing demographics.

Sanders, who is running for reelection this year, "stands by the ad," said Jordan Powell, her campaign manager.

"We should never confiscate money from hard-working Arkansans to give it away to those who simply choose not to work at all," Powell told The Associated Press in an emailed statement.

Origins of the 'welfare queen' trope in American politics

The "welfare queen" trope is often used to advance restrictions on public assistance programs.

While unsuccessfully running for president in 1976, Reagan complained about a woman in Chicago who was using "80 names, 30 addresses, 12 Social Security cards" to game the system. The story was embellished, but Reagan worked to reshape public assistance programs after winning the White House in 1980.

Allison Butler, author of "The Judgment of Gender: How Women are Centered and Silenced in Pop Culture," said the debate perpetuated a powerful myth that women of color were siphoning government assistance.

"When you deconstructed that narrative and actually tried to find the source of it ... there was no woman of color who wouldn't get a job and had multiple televisions and a Mercedes-Benz," Butler said.

Barry Jefferson, president of the NAACP Arkansas State Conference, has condemned the Sanders ad for reducing low-income people to a stereotype where poverty is seen as a flaw. It ignores the complexities that make it harder for low-income people, regardless of race, to support themselves, he said.

"We shouldn't betray anyone because they are asking for help and they don't meet your standards," Jefferson said.

Breaking down the demographics of Medicaid

Created in 1965 as a joint federal and state health insurance program, Medicaid offers free or low-cost

medical coverage to people with limited income, including the elderly, children or adults with disabilities who cannot work. Nearly 66 million people were enrolled in Medicaid as of June, according to the Medicaid.gov website.

Over 38% of beneficiaries between the ages of 0-64 are white, according to 2024 data from research organization KFF. Nearly 19% are Black.

More work requirements for some Medicaid beneficiaries kicked in across the U.S. this year under President Donald Trump's big 2025 tax cut and policy law. A handful of Republican-led states, including Arkansas, are going beyond what the law calls for to prevent fraud, including demanding more documentation if someone is too medically frail to work.

In July, Sanders soft-launched mandating that healthy people ages 19 to 64 find work, volunteer or attend school at least 80 hours per month to stay in the Arkansas Health and Opportunity for Me Medicaid program, or ARHOME.

Robert Coon, managing partner at Impact Management Group, a political consulting and public-opinion firm with an Arkansas office, said that welfare work requirement policy is generally favored in Arkansas.

But suggestions the person in the ad should be Black are "overtly racist" and "inaccurate," Coon said.

About 60% of ARHOME recipients are white and around 18% are Black, according to recent data from the state Department of Human Services.

Why Black people often experience need at a higher rate

Right-wing rhetoric about Black Americans and public assistance often ignores how generations of structural racism have produced economic disparities that contribute to their disproportionate participation in these programs.

Fewer Black people than white people overall use social service programs like Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or food stamps. But at roughly 13% of the U.S. population, Black people make up the largest overrepresentation of any racial group. They are 18.5% and 25%, respectively, of Medicaid and SNAP recipients.

Those statistics reflect an extremely difficult road for poor Black communities looking to rise out of poverty and build generational wealth.

Arkansas Democratic congressional candidate Chris Jones, who is Black, grew up in a family relying on food stamps. A welfare recipient is not "looking for a way out of work," but "for a way forward," he told AP in a statement.

The bigger question, Jones said, is not race but "why so many people who are working hard still struggle to afford groceries, housing, health care and the basic necessities of life."

RFK Jr.'s embrace of AI confounds some MAHA allies and medical experts

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has built a national following by channeling the energy of Americans who are worried about the influence of corporations, including makers of vaccines, drugs, processed foodsand pesticides.

But last week the leader of the "Make America Healthy Again" movement threw his support behind an unlikely industry: artificial intelligence.

At a MAHA summit featuring AI and Silicon Valley executives, Kennedy declared that the technology would free Americans from "medical tyranny" by allowing them to "fact check their own medical advice."

"We're never ever again going to be able to be dominated by public officials who tell us: 'Trust the experts,'" Kennedy told the invite-only audience.

Some prominent MAHA voices quickly criticized Kennedy's embrace of AI, saying the movement's leaders are increasingly cozying up to the corporate interests they once scrutinized.

At the same time, medical experts say Kennedy's vision of AI as a check against the medical establishment is fundamentally flawed.

"He obviously doesn't understand how AI works," said Dr. Zeke Emanuel, a cancer specialist and bioethicist at the University of Pennsylvania. "AI aggregates the information we have in the medical literature and in case studies. And that means what you're actually getting is medical expertise."

Both OpenAI and Anthropic offer health-focused chatbots that can analyze users' medical records and answer their healthcare questions. Their models are trained on thousands of peer-reviewed medical papers and professional guidelines and incorporate feedback from doctors.

"He wants AI to mimic what he says," Emanuel said. "But that's not what good AI is going to do."

HHS spokesperson Emily Hilliard said Emanuel was describing "one narrow use" of the technology.

Kennedy wants to give Americans more control of their own health data by using AI "to help them understand it, interrogate it, compare it with the evidence, and make better decisions with their doctors," Hilliard said. The technology will help doctors work faster, giving them "more time to treat and care for patients," she added.

MAHA leader defends corporate sponsorships

OpenAI and Anthropic were among the sponsors of last week's MAHA Summit. So were more than a dozen other companies with pending business before the U.S. government, including developers of psychedelic drugs, fitness wearables and an experimental cancer test.

Sponsors paid up to $300,000 and many received speaking slots on panels that included some of the administration's top health officials, including Dr. Mehmet Oz of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

"It was classic pay-to-play," said Dr. Robert Malone, a vaccine researcher who has questioned the safety of mRNA shots and recently served on a federal vaccine panel under Kennedy.

Malone and other figures in the MAHA movement say the summit showed how big companies are replacing the "MAHA moms" and other grassroots activists who originally powered the movement.

"There was no representation of people that have been at the core of MAHA and its creation, whether it be physicians or patients or patient advocates," Malone said.

The summit was organized by MAHA Center Inc., one of a number of nongovernment groups run by Kennedy associates that are dedicated to promoting his agenda. Others include the MAHA Institute, a think tank, and MAHA PAC, a political fundraising operation.

Tony Lyons, a publisher who runs the MAHA Center, MAHA PAC and several related groups, addressed criticisms about corporate sponsorships at a reception ahead of the summit.

"The truth is we're trying to build the biggest movement we can possibly build to actually get things done," Lyons said.

The Trump administration has embraced AI

Kennedy's alliance with Silicon Valley is consistent with broader efforts across the Trump administration.

President Donald Trump has vigorously resisted efforts to bring greater oversight to AI companies, who have helped drive the stock market to record highs. One of Trump's first actions after returning to the White House was revoking a Biden administration executive order on AI oversight. It took the administration more than 16 months to replace it with its own order.

In recent weeks, Trump announced a move to let the AI industry police itself, tried to rebrand the technology as "super intelligence" and brushed aside bipartisan concerns about the impacts of data centers on nearby residents.

Meanwhile, Dr. Oz and other administration officials have touted AI as the answer to a litany of U.S. health problems, including rising medical costs, healthcare fraud, physician shortages and the shuttering of rural hospitals.

Medicare officials have been in discussions with several medical chatbot companies, including one behind a Utah program that provides AI-enabled refills of prescriptions.

The remarks from Kennedy and other officials last week reflect a "techno-utopian" view of AI's potential benefits, says Glenn Cohen, a Harvard Law School bioethics expert.

Cohen notes that much of RFK's agenda over the past year has focused on trying to curb food industry practices he views as harmful to consumers, including the use of artificial colors and undeclared chemical

additives. Given Kennedy's skepticism of "big food," Cohen said he was surprised the health secretary didn't see "the risk that market incentives may diverge from the public good."

Some of the most prominent MAHA organizations are actively organizing against AI interests.

For example, Moms Across America operates local and national campaigns warning against pollution, water use and electricity costs associated with data center construction. The group was founded by Zen Honeycutt, a former staffer for Kennedy's presidential campaign.

Moms Across America did not respond to a request for comment.

It's not yet clear how AI will integrate into US healthcare

AI experts don't dispute that the technology will fundamentally change how doctors and patients approach medical decisions.

Kennedy is correct when he says AI will empower patients with more insights about their health, says Dr. Robert Wachter, a medical technology expert at University of California, San Francisco. But AI adoption is likely to further bolster the recommendations of medical professionals, rather than the contrarian views often favored by Kennedy, according to Wachter.

"Democratization is good," Wachter said. "But that means disseminating the best science we have, which generally means science created by people who know what they're talking about."

Experts disagree over how soon AI may be able to take over decision-making from physicians.

Several recent studies have found that AI alone outperformed doctors working alone or doctors working with AI on critical decisions. But those studies generally presented AI with detailed, written scenarios to solve — the equivalent of a medical exam.

When researchers looked at how patients interact with AI in real-time they found a number of problems: People often don't provide enough information for the AI to correctly diagnose their medical issue and chatbots often respond with a combination of good and bad advice.

"We need to figure out in real life: Do these things actually work?" Wachter said. "What actually happens when they're used in circumstances where people are under stress or don't know how to interpret the outputs?"

Jim Bakker, who lost his 'PTL Club' televangelism empire in sex and money scandals, dies at 86

By JIM SALTER and HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

Jim Bakker, who built a huge TV following and evangelical empire with his first wife, Tammy Faye, which later collapsed in a sex scandal and financial crimes, has died. He was 86.

Bakker died Monday, his second wife, Lori Bakker, said in a statement. The cause of death was not provided.

"He was a pioneer of Christian television, but to me, he was my husband, my best friend, and the man I was honored to walk beside through so many seasons of life and ministry," she said.

The pair lived near Branson, an entertainment destination in Missouri, where they had filmed their TV show "The Jim Bakker Show" since its launch in 2003. Bakker suffered a stroke in 2020.

But it was the "The PTL Club," which at its peak in the mid-1980s drew 13 million nightly TV viewers, that made Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker cultural icons — so much so that they were often skewered in the 1980s and '90s by late-night comedians and parodied on "Saturday Night Live."

The couple also built Heritage USA, a Christian theme park and hotel in Fort Mill, South Carolina, and a movie about their lives, " The Eyes of Tammy Faye," was released in September 2021.

Bakker rose to prominence alongside other televangelist titans of the 1980s. His death and that of Jimmy Swaggart last year mark the end of an era. Their legacy lives on in prosperity gospel preachers that still fill the airwaves.

Bakker starts out as a traveling preacher

Bakker was born in Muskegon, Michigan, and attended North Central Bible College in Minneapolis, where he met Tammy Faye. They married in 1961 and dropped out of college to start their own traveling ministry.

He preached and she sang and played the accordion in churches and tent revivals across the country.

They caught the attention of televangelist Pat Robertson, and in 1965 launched a children's show on Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network. By 1966, Bakker was hosting "The 700 Club," a Christian talk show.

Bakker left CBN in 1972 and two years later formed the PTL Satellite Network. "The PTL Club" — PTL stands for "Praise the Lord" — became its signature show.

In its heyday in the 1980s, "The PTL Club" attracted millions of viewers and brought in millions of dollars annually.

The show featured chats with guests and Christian entertainers. Bakker offered upbeat sermons and Tammy Faye — charismatic and always wearing her trademark heavy mascara — sang. Most episodes were taped at their sprawling complex just south of Charlotte, North Carolina.

They were often parodied by TV comedians, mocked for their lavish lifestyle and Tammy Faye's abundant makeup.

Sex scandal and financial crimes damage his empire

Their standing began to crumble in March 1987, when Bakker admitted to a sexual encounter with church clerk Jessica Hahn. Hahn alleged that Bakker sexually assaulted her; Bakker maintained that the encounter was consensual.

Bakker was forced to resign from his empire, turning over operations to pastor and broadcaster Jerry Falwell.

Tammy Faye stuck by Bakker, often seen with mascara-stained tears running down her face.

Bakker was indicted in 1988 for mail fraud, wire fraud and conspiracy after an investigation of PTL's finances. He was convicted the following year and sentenced to 45 years in federal prison. The sentence was later reduced to eight years.

At a news conference after he was found guilty, Tammy Faye sang the hymn, "On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand."

Their marriage fell apart and Tammy Faye divorced the still-incarcerated Bakker in 1992, just short of their 31st anniversary. She later married Roe Messner, a building contractor whose projects included the Heritage USA theme park. Messner was convicted of bankruptcy fraud in 1995 and spent about two years in prison.

Tammy Faye died of colon cancer in 2007.

Bakker was released on parole in 1994 and married Lori in 1998. They launched "The Jim Bakker Show" on the PTL Satellite Network five years later.

In June 2021, Bakker and his Morningside Church Productions Inc. settled a lawsuit accusing him of falsely claiming the health supplement Silver Solution could cure COVID-19. The settlement called for $156,000 in refunds to people who paid money or gave contributions to obtain the product in the early days of the pandemic.

The lawsuit said Bakker and a guest made the cure claim during 11 episodes in February and March 2020.

One of Bakker's sons became a progressive Christian pastor

Bakker and Tammy Faye had two children. He and Lori Bakker adopted five children in 2002.

Jay Bakker, the 50-year-old son of Bakker and Tammy Faye, posted about his father's death on social media.

"We had a very complicated relationship and he was also my father and a grandfather and I need to mourn in my own time," he wrote. "I need the freedom to feel anger and feel loss ..."

The younger Bakker has spoken about the toll his parents' scandals had on him. He became a progressive Christian pastor, critical of the Christian right and an advocate for LGBTQ+ inclusion.

In February, he told television station WCNC Charlotte that he and his father "have very different opinions on things like theology and politics, but we do try to maintain a relationship."

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Republicans return to tough-on-crime message before difficult midterm elections

By MATT BROWN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Political advertising warns about Democratic plots to defund the police. Campaign events feature law enforcement unions and tough talk about law and order. Stump speeches boast about record low levels of violent crime.

From coast to coast, Republicans are focusing on public disorder, illegal immigration and violent crime in midterm campaigns as voters sour on their party's handling of the cost of living and the war with Iran.

Democrats have tried to counter the attacks by recruiting candidates with law enforcement backgrounds and emphasizing their own anti-crime plans, but Republicans believe it's a rare opportunity to go on the offensive in an otherwise challenging year.

"Do you know that right now we have the lowest violent crime rate in 126 years in America right now? Because we emphasize the rule of law," House Speaker Mike Johnson recently told an audience at Louisiana State University. Crime rates have generally trended down since the 1990s with a brief spike during the COVID pandemic. "We have the most secure border we have had in the past half century."

President Donald Trump returned to the topic Monday night in Nebraska, warning about how the country used to be before he returned to the White House.

"We had a border with people pouring in, crime like nobody's ever seen," he said.

Republicans say Democrats will 'defund the police'

In Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Texas and Wisconsin, Republican candidates for governor have attacked their Democratic rivals as weak on crime or warned they could cut police funding. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, for instance, has lambasted Democratic nominee and state Rep. Gina Hinojosa for not supporting legislation that would require judges to deny bail to illegal immigrants charged with a violent crime.

Hinojosa has campaigned on her tenure as a civil rights lawyer and criticized Abbott's crime policies as violating civil liberties.

Rick Jackson, a billionaire healthcare executive running in Georgia, has repeatedly attacked Democratic opponent Keisha Lance Bottoms over her tenure as Atlanta mayor.

"I grew up in the type of neighborhood Keisha Lance Bottoms abandoned," Jackson said at a summer campaign rally. "I know who gets hurt when politicians defund the police."

In an interview with Atlanta station 11Alive, Bottoms emphasized that her administration gave pay raises to police and firefighters, and said she called for increased federal funding for public safety during her time as mayor.

Crime warnings pervade congressional races

It's a similar story in U.S. House races.

In Virginia's first congressional district, Rep. Rob Wittman has attacked his Democratic opponent, prosecutor Shannon Taylor, over her allegedly "soft on crime" record in office. In Michigan's 10th district, Republican Michael Bouchard is running on his service as a Bronze Star Army captain and son of a longtime local sheriff. He's claimed his Democratic opponent, former prosecutor Christina Hines, supports "woke, soft on crime, socialist policies."

In Colorado's eighth district, Rep. Gabe Evans touts his time as a police officer against Democratic challenger Manny Rutinel. And in Wisconsin's third district, Rep. Derrick Van Orden hopes to win a third race against Democratic nominee Rebecca Cooke by painting her as a communist who wants to defund the police.

Republicans hope that by reprising warnings of crime and disorder the party can reenergize their disillusioned base and win back skeptical moderate voters who have drifted over concerns like affordability.

Democratic rivals have responded in kind. Taylor aired an ad featuring 13 local sheriffs who endorsed her campaign. Rutinel aired ads with local police and rolled out a safety plan that called for greater police funding and drug prevention programs. Hines said she'll continue to prioritize public safety and prosecute corruption in Washington. Cooke has vowed to fully fund police departments in Congress.

Not all Republicans see crime as a winning issue

It's yet to be seen if the strategy will prove effective.

"We've got to talk about it. I think that in many ways, we are the victim of our own success because it's off the headlines a little bit more," said Sen. Eric Schmitt, a Missouri Republican and former state attorney general. "Having a completely secure border now, no one even talks about it. But that's a huge accomplishment from where we were at before."

An AP-NORC poll conducted in September found that border security — which Trump and Republicans often link to crime — was a relative strength for the Republican president, with 48% of U.S. adults saying they approved of his performance on the issue. But that was still a decline from a year ago, when his approval on border security was at 55%.

Not everyone in the party is sold on Republicans rehashing the crime message.

"I don't see that bubbling up as a major issue for the voters," said Sen. Thom Tillis, a North Carolina Republican who chose not to seek reelection this year. Aiming to make the race to succeed Tillis a referendum on crime, Republicans have run ads claiming that Democratic nominee Roy Cooper went easy on convicts during his two terms in the governor's mansion.

Black political leaders have criticized the ads as racist and reminiscent of past Republican campaigns that used dog whistles to appeal to suburban white voters. Trump made the message explicit when he invoked the infamous 1988 "Willie Horton" ad and displayed dozens of mugshots of men of color on a jumbotron during a rally stumping for Michael Whatley, Cooper's Republican rival.

In contrast to his party's messaging, Tillis noted his state's safety in recent years.

"Frankly, when I hear somebody talking about crime in Charlotte, I live 25 minutes from downtown. I'm not worried about walking through Charlotte at night," said Tillis.

Democrats accuse Trump of corruption

National Democrats contend that Republicans' message on violent crime is undercut by the Trump administration's hardline immigration enforcement actions, which resulted in the killing of two American protesters in January and the fatal shootings of multiple undocumented people. They accuse Trump of corruption and have hammered Republicans for alleged complicity in the president's self-dealing.

"This is the biggest criminal organization that we've ever seen," said Sen. Ruben Gallego, an Arizona Democrat, of the current White House.

He added that, "Democrats should be pushing back with the fact that, if not for the fact that he was president, this guy would be leading some type of mafia right now."

Lauren Bis, a White House spokeswoman, said "extreme Democrats are trying to deflect from their radical soft on crime agenda."

Alito says Supreme Court can't stem emergency appeals and voices concern over Trump's rhetoric

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito says the escalating volume of emergency appeals before the court isn't a good thing, but he adds there's little the court can do to change the trajectory.

The number of petitions asking the justices to intervene quickly has skyrocketed during President Donald Trump's second administration, putting the court at the center of hotly debated issues such as the Republican president's new ballroom construction and his proposed restrictions on mail ballots in the midterm elections.

The number of emergency applications now rivals the annual tally of cases the justices consider with full briefing and oral arguments, Alito wrote in a new book released Tuesday.

The justice told The Associated Press in a rare interview that the rhetoric about the court from Trump and his administration doesn't sit well with him.

"I personally am not pleased with that," he said. "Everybody in this country has the right to criticize what

we do. The substance of their criticism can be quite harsh. If we deserve it, then that's fine. But rhetoric is a different story."

Alito spoke in connection with his first book, "So Ordered: An Originalist's View of The Constitution, The Court and Our Country."

Coming 20 years after he was confirmed to the court after his nomination by President George W. Bush, a Republican, the book is a collection of speeches the 76-year-old has given over the years on religious liberty, his judicial philosophy and constitutional rights.

Alito calls it 'offensive' to cast his opinions as MAGA

Alito is perhaps best known for writing the decision that reversed Roe v. Wade and ended abortion as a nationwide right, and he has been one of the most consistent members of the court's conservative bloc. He's also voted in favor of some of Trump's signature policies, even those the rest of the conservative wing has struck down. But he rejects the idea that his decisions are in the "Make America Great Again" camp.

"It's offensive," he said. "I honestly try to decide every single case on the merits, every single application on the merit. And that's true whether the president is Donald Trump or Joe Biden or Barack Obama or anybody else."

Trump, for his part, has cheered Alito as "one of the Greatest of All Time" even as he maligned justices whom he appointed as "unpatriotic" and "merely a shell of their original selves." Alito said the harsh rhetoric from across the spectrum doesn't affect how the justices rule but does play a role in the public's declining trust in the court.

"The terms used by presidents and by members of their administration, Cabinet officers, other high-ranking officers in describing the Supreme Court and their decisions, and sometimes individual justices, is far different from what we saw 15 years ago," Alito said.

Much of the president's frustration has come after the court ruled against him on some of his central initiatives, including tariffs and birthright citizenship. Those decisions have been handed down after months of consideration, including oral arguments.

Surge in court's emergency decisions is likely 'going to continue'

In emergency decisions, by contrast, the president has a much stronger track record of wins.

Typically made in days or weeks, emergency orders are designed to be temporary, lasting only as cases continue to play out in lower courts. But since that process can take years, those decisions can still have important real-world consequences.

Critics, including Alito's liberal-leaning colleague Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, have complained about the court's recent handling of the emergency docket and outlined proposed steps the justices could take.

Alito, though, said there's little the court can do to stem the tide. Presidents have increasingly used executive orders to enact their policies rather than passing laws through Congress, leading to lawsuits and "robust" decisions from lower-court judges that send a case quickly to the Supreme Court, he said.

"Unless something changes there, and I don't foresee it right now, I'm afraid this is going to continue," he said. "An application is something that I think we have to rule on."

Alito says recusal from climate change case wasn't required but a 'judgment call'

Alito also detailed his decision to step away from hearing a climate change case that opened the term. Dozens of similar lawsuits have been filed on whether cities can sue oil and gas companies over damage linked to global warming. Billions of dollars could be at stake, a potentially serious threat to the industry, according to court documents.

Alito had faced calls to recuse himself because he owns stock in oil companies. He told the AP that the stock came from an inheritance his wife received from her father that she doesn't want to sell.

He initially stayed on the case because he doesn't have stock in the companies involved, he said, adding that the court's legal office agreed that he could hear the case under its ethics code.

But as he delved deeper into the substance of the case, he decided to step aside.

"This particular decision was a judgment call," he said. "I gave it very, very serious consideration."

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Today in History: October 7, surprise attacks spark Israel-Hamas war

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 7, the 280th day of 2026. There are 85 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas-led militants stormed into Israel from the Gaza Strip, killing nearly 1,200 people and taking more than 250 hostages. Israel's retaliatory offensive and the ensuing Israel-Hamas war killed tens of thousands in Gaza, displaced about 90% of its population and destroyed vast areas until major combat subsided with an October 2025 ceasefire agreement.

Also on this date:

In 1765, the Stamp Act Congress convened in New York to draw up colonial grievances against England.

In 1913, the first moving assembly line began operation at the Ford Motor Company factory in Highland Park, Michigan.

In 1916, in the most lopsided victory in college football history, Georgia Tech defeated Cumberland University 222-0 in Atlanta.

In 1985, Palestinian gunmen hijacked the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro (ah-KEE'-leh LOW'-roh) in the Mediterranean Sea. The hijackers shot and killed Leon Klinghoffer, a Jewish American tourist in a wheelchair, and pushed him overboard, before surrendering on Oct. 9.

In 1992, trade representatives of the United States, Canada and Mexico initialed the North American Free Trade Agreement during a ceremony in San Antonio, Texas, in the presence of President George H.W. Bush, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

In 1998, Matthew Shepard, a gay college student, was beaten and left tied to a wooden fence post outside of Laramie, Wyoming; he died five days later. Russell Henderson and Aaron McKinney are serving life sentences for Shepard's murder.

In 2001, war in Afghanistan started as the United States and Britain launched air attacks against military targets and Osama bin Laden's training camps in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks. The U.S. military completed its withdrawal from Afghanistan to end the 20-year war on Aug. 30, 2021.

In 2003, California voters recalled Gov. Gray Davis and elected Arnold Schwarzenegger their new governor.

In 2006, Russian investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya, who wrote stories critical of Kremlin policies in the early years of Vladimir Putin's presidency, was shot and killed in Moscow. The Kremlin denied any role in the death of Politkovskaya, who worked for an independent newspaper.

In 2019, President Donald Trump ordered the withdrawal of U.S. troops from northeastern Syria. Syria's Kurds accused the U.S. of turning its back on its allies and risking gains made in the fight against the Islamic State group.

Today's Birthdays: Author Thomas Keneally is 91. Singer John Mellencamp is 75. Rock musician Tico Torres (Bon Jovi) is 73. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma is 71. TV personality Simon Cowell is 67. Singer-actor Toni Braxton is 59. Rock singer-musician Thom Yorke (Radiohead) is 58. Actor Nicole Ari Parker is 56. Football Hall of Famer Charles Woodson is 50. Singer Taylor Hicks is 50. Actor Omar Miller is 48. MLB player Mookie Betts is 34. Actor Kira Kosarin is 29. Actor Lulu Wilson is 21.