

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Monday, Sept. 9

School Breakfast: French toast.  
School Lunch: Meatball, mashed potatoes.  
Senior Menu: Baked fish, oven roasted potatoes, pea and cheese salad, fruit, whole wheat bread.  
JH/JV Football at Langford Area vs. Webster Area.  
JH at 4 p.m., JV at 5 p.m.  
School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.  
Pantry Open, community center, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Senior Citizens meet at the community center, 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.  
Carnival of Silver Skates registration, after school to 6 p.m., Skating House  
United Methodist: PEO Meeting (outside group), 7 p.m.

**Groton Daily Independent**  
**PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445**  
**Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460**

## Good Monday Morning



Let's Praise God  
for another new  
day and week.  
May He shower  
you with many  
blessings, and  
Joy  
unspeakable  
and full of glory.

God's Spoken  
Word Ministries

## Tuesday, Sept. 10

School Breakfast: Scones.  
School Lunch: Taco, refried beans.  
Senior Menu: Tator tot hot dish, carrots, peaches, whole wheat bread.  
Cross Country at Britton-Hecla, 4 p.m.  
Boys Soccer hosts James Valley Christian, 4 p.m.  
Volleyball hosts Webster Area: 7th/C at 5 p.m., 8th/JV at 6 p.m. with varsity to follow.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Church council, 6 p.m.  
Common Cents Community Thrift Store open, 209 N Main, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.  
Pantry open, Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.  
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.; Caring Team Meeting, 1 p.m.

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# 1440

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

## Boeing's Labor Deal

Boeing and its largest union reached a deal yesterday to avoid an end-of-the-week strike. If approved, the agreement would raise the company's 33,000 production workers' pay by at least 25% over four years.

The deal—Boeing's first with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers since 2008—falls short of the 40% raise the union had called for. In practice, however, wages will increase by an average of 33% due to seniority increases. A majority of union members must vote to approve the deal for the contract to be ratified. The agreement comes as Boeing's production has slowed in recent months amid quality concerns, particularly over its 737 Max jets.

Separately, Boeing's uncrewed Starliner landed without incident in New Mexico on Saturday amid concerns over its thrusters. The future of Boeing's Starliner spacecraft—and the company's partnership with NASA—remain unclear amid disagreements over the Starliner's readiness to return two astronauts to Earth. See previous write-up [here](#).

## Line Fire Burns in SoCal

Over 11,000 people in Southern California are under evacuation orders after the Line Fire grew to over 17,400 acres. By Sunday afternoon, flames had advanced to densely populated areas. No deaths had been reported as of this writing, with fire officials saying the blaze remained at zero containment. See current status and maps.

The blaze began Thursday and was accelerated by an intense heat wave, with temperatures in the triple digits and humidity in the low teens in inland areas like San Bernardino. Conditions are expected to persist at least through today.

Some reported seeing pyrocumulus clouds in the area—a sign the fire was intense enough to create its own micro-weather system. The phenomenon occurs when heat from burning vegetation rapidly rises into a cooler atmosphere, causing clouds, turbulent winds, and in some cases, lightning.

## Venezuela's Opposition Exit

Venezuela's former opposition candidate Edmundo González fled to Spain yesterday after being granted asylum. The departure comes days after a Venezuelan judge issued an arrest warrant for González related to the contested presidential election.

At the center of the dispute are thousands of voting tally sheets obtained by opposition volunteers. Incumbent President Nicolás Maduro declared victory hours after the July 28 election but did not publish district-level voter data. The opposition party collected and published copies of what it said were close to 80% of the tally sheets indicating González won the election by a large margin—a claim backed by the US. In response, a court considered by critics to be loyal to Maduro said the opposition faked their tallies, charging González with falsifying documents and conspiracy, among other crimes.

González's departure appears likely to dampen weeks of protests resulting in the detention of over 2,400 people. The opposition party says González still intends to attend a swearing-in ceremony in January, maintaining he is the next president.

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Rapper Kendrick Lamar tapped to perform at 2025 Super Bowl Halftime Show.  
Dallas Cowboys signs QB Dak Prescott to 4-year, \$240M deal, making Prescott the highest-paid player in NFL history.

"The Room Next Door" wins the Golden Lion, top prize at Venice Film Festival.

"Beetlejuice Beetlejuice" hauls in \$110M at domestic box office, the second-largest September opening weekend ever.

Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka defeats American Jessica Pegula to win US Open women's tennis title and Italy's Jannik Sinner defeats American Taylor Fritz to win men's championship.

## Science & Technology

CEO Elon Musk says SpaceX will begin launching uncrewed Starships to Mars in two years; optimal time windows for Mars missions occur every 26 months.

Scientists discover separate groups of nerve cells signaling to the brain whether to trigger a cough or a sneeze; discovery may help lead to improved treatments for allergies or chronic coughing.

Study suggests even low levels of electrical stimulation to the thalamus—the brain region responsible for passing sensory signals between the body and brain—can induce seizures.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close lower on Friday (S&P 500 -1.7%, Dow -1.0%, Nasdaq -2.6%) with the S&P 500 witnessing its worst week in a year and a half following news of August jobs report.

Apple to release updates to device lineup—which drives about 60% of its annual revenue—in wake of recent sales slump today; latest iPhone model set to be the first to incorporate artificial intelligence, which Apple calls Apple Intelligence.

Google will deliver opening remarks today in its second antitrust trial this year; Justice Department accuses the company of using monopolistic practices in designing and buying up rivals to its AdWords platform, now known as Google Ads.

## Politics & World Affairs

Manhunt underway for active shooter near Kentucky I-75 who injured five people.

Mother of Apalachee High School shooter in Georgia reportedly warned the school to check in on her son 30 minutes before shooting began. Shooting lasted roughly 1 minute, per sheriffs.

Family of 26-year-old US-Turkish woman killed in the West Bank demand independent investigation.

Gunman approaching from Jordan kills three Israeli guards at West Bank-Jordan border.

Sudan's military government rejects UN proposal for international peacekeeping force to ease 17-month civil war.

UN mission finds Sudanese military and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces both committed abuses; war collectively killed 20,000 people, displaced 8 million.

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## Groton Area Girls climb back into number two in state soccer poll

September 8, 2024 - SDHSSCA Coaches Poll for Boys and Girls soccer.

### Boys AA

1. Sioux Falls Lincoln
2. Rapid City Stevens
3. Sioux Falls Christian
4. Watertown
5. O'Gorman

Receiving Votes: Aberdeen Central

### Girls AA

1. Rapid City Stevens
2. Harrisburg
3. Pierre T.F. Riggs
4. Sioux Falls Roosevelt
5. Sioux Falls Lincoln

Receiving Votes: Aberdeen Central, O'Gorman, Sioux Falls Washington, Tea Area, Yankton

### Boys A

1. Vermillion
2. Rapid City Christian
3. Belle Fourche
4. Freeman Academy
5. James Valley Christian

Receiving Votes: Custer, St. Thomas More

### Girls A

1. Dakota Valley
2. Groton Area
3. Sioux Falls Christian
4. West Central
5. St. Thomas More

Receiving Votes: Belle Fourche



## Andover Threshing Show



The start of the James Valley Threshers Show parade in Andover was lead by both Kevin Anderson's 150hp and 110hp Case Steam tractors. The 150 hp is the largest road locomotive that Case built. Kevin Anderson's son Kory built the steam tractor from Case's original plans. Only 9 of the large tractors were ever built by Case. None of the originals survived. (Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)



Kevin and Donna Anderson wave to the crowd atop the 150hp Casey steam tractor. The Anderson family of Andover were honored this year for their contributions to the JV Threshers Association. (Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)



An operating steam tractor's performance is measured while powering the Threshing Show's Dynamometer. (Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)



Dick Nietzel waves during the Threshers parade. (Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)



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## Doggie Day at the Pool

Groton Pool Doggie Day on Sunday afternoon gave dogs the last splash of summer!

(Courtesy Photos Bruce Babcock)





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The 2024 Groton Area Cross Country team poses prior to their first meet in Redfield last Thursday.

L-R Logan Clocksene, Kason Oswald, Grady Zeck, Landon Thornton, Blake Malsom, Sydney Holmes, Ryelle Gilbert, Coach Torrence. (Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)

## Cross Country at Redfield



L-R Ryelle Gilbert and Sydney Holmes prior to the start of the girls JV XC race. (Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)



L-R Kason Oswald and Logan Clocksene prior to the start of the boys JV XC race. (Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)



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**Kason Oswald scored his personal best time in the boys JV XC race.** Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)



**Ryelle Gilbert placed 2nd in the girls JV XC race.** Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)



**The Groton Area Junior High boys poise prior to their race.**  
**L-R Landon Thornton, Blake Malsom, and Grady Zeck** Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)



## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: How can homeowners make their homes greener and more efficient to cash in on rebates and incentives available under Biden's Inflation Reduction Act?  
– Bill O., Dewey, OK

Joe Biden's 2022 Inflation Reduction Act created \$8.8 billion in tax credits and rebates to help lower- and middle-income homeowners contribute to the country's emission reduction goals. As with prior housing policy, the act defines lower- and middle-income Americans as those making 150 percent or less of their Area Median Income, or the midpoint of their local area's income distribution. The bulk of these incentives come from federal tax credits which, like the act's state-based rebates, are available through September 2031, and can be applied retroactively to purchases and installations after August 2022.

The Residential Clean Energy Tax Credit covers up to 30 percent of installation costs for alternative energy sources including solar panels, small wind turbines, geothermal heat pumps and battery storage systems. The \$3,200 Energy Efficient Home Improvement Credit, on the other hand, covers upgrades to existing energy sources. The credit can be applied with a cap of \$1,200 to new windows and skylights (up to \$600), new doors (up to \$500), and improvements to insulation (up to 30 percent).

Out of the 23 total states that have applied for rebate program funding, eight have recently been approved: Arizona, California, Hawaii, Indiana, Maine, New Mexico, Rhode Island and Washington. Two more, New York and Wisconsin, have already begun distribution. The Department of Energy expects that several states will join them later in 2024 beginning with the Home Efficiency Rebate Program (HOMES), which will offer rebates of up to \$8,000 and \$4,000 respectively for low- and middle-income households that can cut energy usage by 35 percent or more.

The Home Electrification and Appliance Rebate (HEAR) boasts a cap of \$14,000 in rebates per household and is expected to follow implementation of HOMES. Under HEAR, low and middle income homeowners can expect 50-100 percent point of sale coverage on several appliances including up to \$8,000 for electric heat pumps; \$1,600 for insulation and air sealing; \$2,500 for electric wiring; and \$840 for electric stoves, ovens and heat pump clothes dryers.

Energy upgrades have the potential to save homeowners money far beyond installation. For example, more efficient homes can mean reduced energy bills. Furthermore, green homes can qualify for benefits such as a \$5,000 tax credit if they meet the Department of Energy Zero Energy Ready Home (ZERH) standards. A qualified home energy auditor can help homeowners looking to cash in on the myriads of incentives determine which upgrades fit best with their homes and budgets.



**Homeowners can claim a tax credit of up to \$8,000 for installing an electric heat pump under the terms of the Inflation Reduction Act.** Credit:

FanFan61618, FlickrCC.





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **Pipeline won't capture all carbon emitted by ethanol plants**

**Corn fermentation emissions would be sequestered, but emissions from gas-powered machinery would go into the atmosphere**

**BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - SEPTEMBER 8, 2024 7:00 AM**

A company proposing an \$8 billion carbon dioxide pipeline through eastern South Dakota says the project would be good for the environment.

The claim is based on the heat-trapping carbon dioxide emitted by ethanol plants that would be captured, transported by the pipeline and stored underground in North Dakota.

"This carbon capture and storage project will have the capacity to prevent the release of 18 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere every year," says the project website, "or the equivalent of removing the annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 4 million vehicles from our roads."

While that's true, participating ethanol plants could still emit about 7 million metric tons of additional carbon dioxide annually. That's because the pipeline would only capture some — not all — of the CO<sub>2</sub> emitted by the plants.

When ethanol plants turn corn into a gasoline additive, they produce two kinds of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: the kind emitted by fossil fuels used to power industrial equipment, such as boilers and grain dryers, and the kind emitted by corn during fermentation.

Summit Carbon Solutions' pipeline would capture carbon dioxide from corn fermentation. The CO<sub>2</sub> emitted by gas-powered machines would be released to the atmosphere.

"So, there are still existing emissions associated with corn ethanol that aren't being neutralized here," said Daniel Sanchez, an assistant professor at the University of California-Berkeley's Department of Environmental Science, Policy and Management.

Sanchez said capturing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from industrial equipment, like boilers and grain dryers, is more expensive than capturing fermentation emissions. Industrial machinery uses a lot of natural gas, which releases more than CO<sub>2</sub> when burned as fuel. He said it requires extra processes to separate that CO<sub>2</sub> from water vapor and other gases.

Iowa-based Summit has partnered with ethanol producers including Poet and Valero to capture fermentation-produced CO<sub>2</sub> at 57 ethanol plants in South Dakota and several other states and store it underground in North Dakota. The project, which has not yet gained a permit from South Dakota regulators, would capitalize on federal tax credits that are intended to incentivize the prevention of greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Amount of fermentation emissions unknown**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency only reports the amount of carbon dioxide that ethanol plants emit from gas-powered processes. Seven million metric tons was the approximate sum of those emissions from the 57 Summit-partnered ethanol plants in 2022.

The EPA does not report the amount of corn-fermentation carbon dioxide emitted. That's because fermentation emissions are considered cyclical. Corn pulls carbon dioxide out of the air as it grows in a cornfield. Then it releases carbon dioxide back to the atmosphere as it ferments in an ethanol plant. Finally, farmers plant more corn, and the cycle continues.

Summit declined to release amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted from corn fermentation at its 57 partner ethanol plants. Ben Nelson, Summit's director of carbon programs, said a typical 100-million-gallon plant produces about 286,000 metric tons of fermentation CO<sub>2</sub>.

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Sanchez, of California-Berkeley, said “modern and efficient” ethanol plants emit about 90,000 metric tons of fermentation CO<sub>2</sub>.

The diverging estimates mean the Summit pipeline and its 57 partner plants could capture anywhere from 5 million to 16 million metric tons of fermentation CO<sub>2</sub> annually — both of which are within the pipeline’s proposed capacity of 18 million metric tons.

For comparison, approximately 1,300 power plants across the U.S. emitted about 1.5 billion metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2022.

“This is both a giant pipeline project and a drop in the bucket,” Sanchez said.

## **Aiming for net-negative**

Sanchez added that if an ethanol plant replaces its natural gas use with something sustainable, while also capturing and storing its fermentation CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, it can pull more greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere than are released in the production lifecycle of ethanol associated with the plant.

Nelson pointed to a 2022 report for the Renewable Fuels Association that said ethanol production could reach net-negative emissions by 2040. The report indicates carbon sequestration at ethanol plants would make the biggest difference – a bigger difference than industry-wide implementation of farming practices that sequester more carbon in the soil, such as less disruptive tillage practices and planting cover crops.

Nelson said the average ethanol plant emits about 55 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> per megajoule (a unit of energy) of ethanol produced, and Summit’s project would lower that to about 25 grams of CO<sub>2</sub>.

“Achieving net-negative emissions will also require other efforts such as climate-smart farming, using renewable natural gas, renewable electricity at ethanol plants, and improving plant efficiency,” Nelson said.

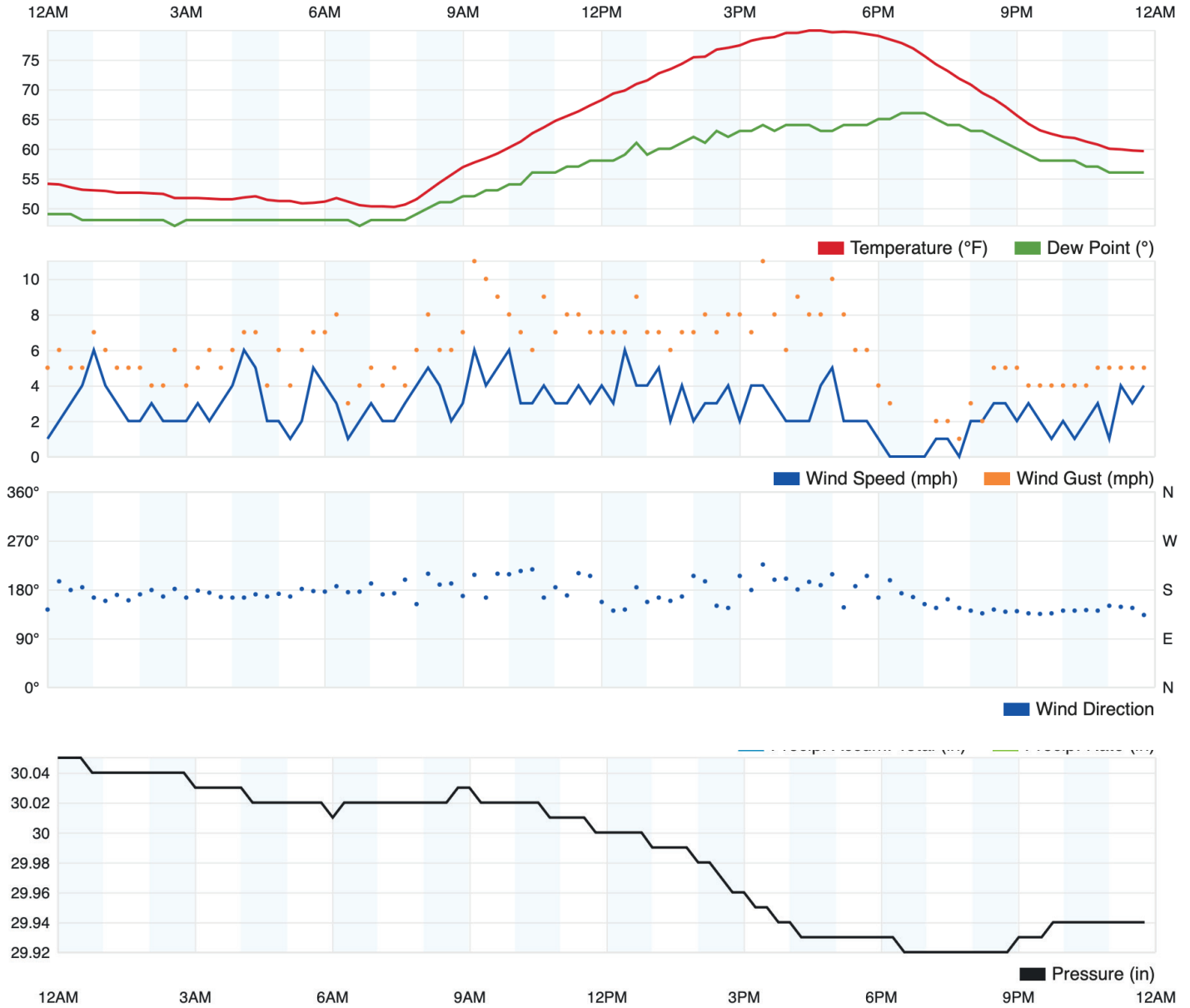
In South Dakota, some ethanol plants are already receiving what’s been coined “renewable natural gas” derived from landfill emissions, and a Brookings area utility company is sending the methane emitted from dairy livestock manure to be mixed into regional natural gas supplies.

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

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today

Tonight

Tuesday

Tuesday Night

Wednesday



High: 85 °F

Sunny



Low: 60 °F

Partly Cloudy



High: 89 °F

Mostly Sunny



Low: 57 °F

Mostly Clear



High: 90 °F

Hot

## Today



Smoke aloft increasing from the west throughout the day

Warm/hot with above normal temps and southerly breezes

**Highs**  
**83-93°**

### Tuesday's Outlook

**Smoke aloft, dry. Highs**  
**in the 80s & 90s**

September 9, 2024 4:45am

 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION



Dry conditions will continue today with warming temperatures in the 80s and low 90s. The warmest temperatures will be found across central South Dakota. Smoke aloft will be increasing from the west throughout the day and looks to stay in place into Tuesday.



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 80 °F at 4:28 PM

Low Temp: 50 °F at 7:28 AM

Wind: 11 mph at 9:13 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 13 hours, 52 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 101 in 1931

Record Low: 26 in 1898

Average High: 78

Average Low: 50

Average Precip in Sept.: 0.61

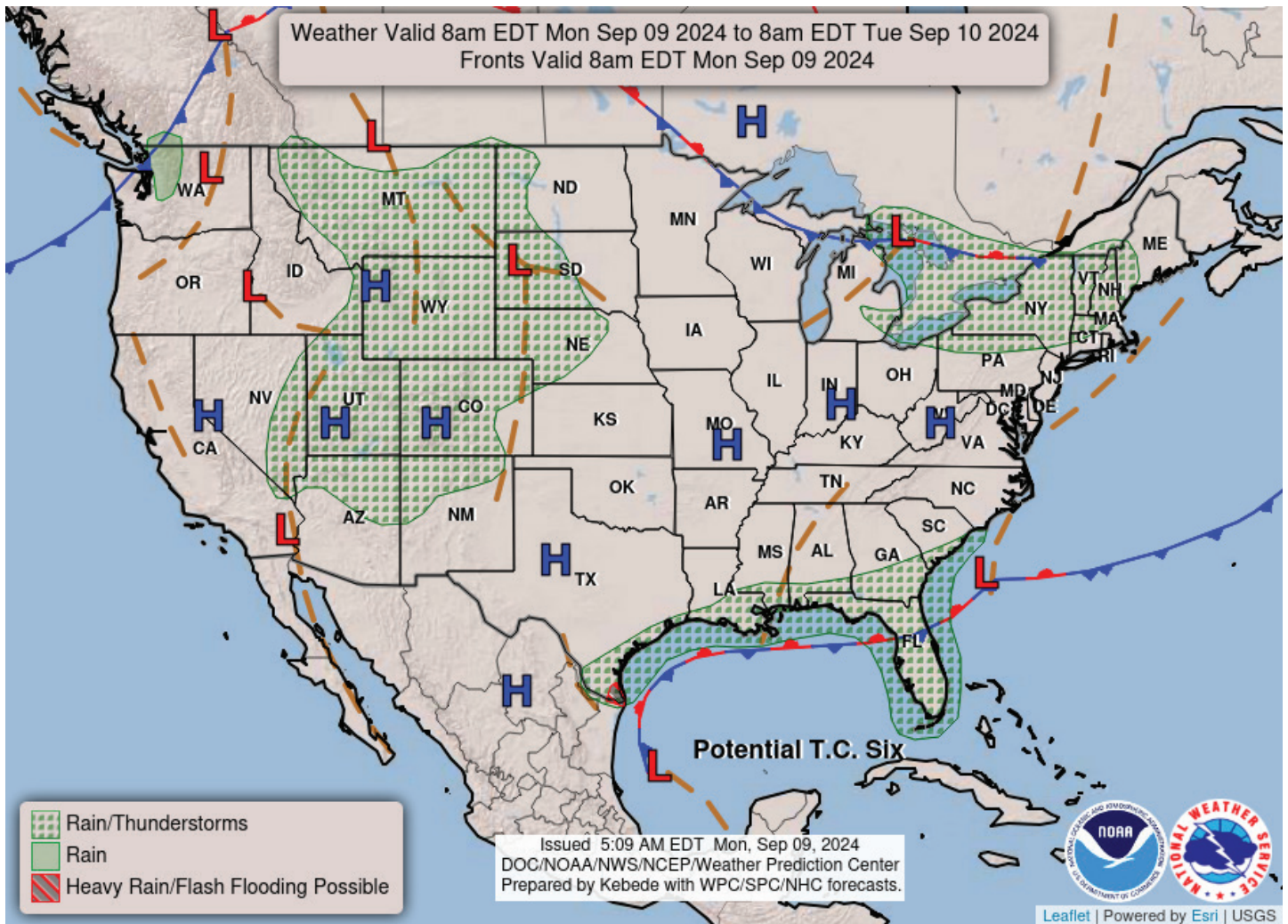
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.01

Average Precip to date: 16.95

Precip Year to Date: 19.42

Sunset Tonight: 7:55:47 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:04:19 am





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## Today in Weather History

September 9, 1961: A young girl in Bullhead, Corson County, was killed by lightning on the afternoon while walking on the highway. Her little brother was slightly injured.

September 9, 1983: High winds from the late evening into the early morning hours of the 10th blew through east central South Dakota damaging crops, downing hundreds of trees, breaking windows, damaging roofs and buildings, downing power poles and damaging vehicles. Gusts to 75 mph in Huron moved a semi-trailer a half block. Scattered power outages of up to 24 hours were reported in numerous areas as branches fell across power and telephone lines. Thirty power poles were downed in Kingsbury County alone. Corn, beans, and sunflowers suffered extensive damage in many areas with up to 50 percent losses reported. Gusts up to 90 mph were reported at Lake Poinsett, Lake Norden, and Estelline, where roofs and shingles were ripped from buildings and numerous windows, were broken. At Lake Poinsett, extensive damage was done to boats, docks, and automobiles.

1775: The Independence Hurricane slammed into Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Many ships were sunk and buildings demolished. 4,000 people died in what is considered to be Canada's deadliest hurricane disaster.

1821: A tornadic outbreak affected the New England states of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont on this day. Five tornadoes reportedly touched down from this event. One storm in New Hampshire had a path width of a half mile and tracked an estimated 23 miles. This tornado killed at least six individuals, which could be the deadliest tornado in New Hampshire history.

1921 - A dying tropical depression unloaded 38.2 inches of rain upon the town of Thrall in southeastern Texas killing 224 persons. 36.4 inches fell in 18 hours. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1944 - The ""Great Atlantic Hurricane"" ravaged the east coast. The storm killed 22 persons and caused 63 million dollars damage in the Chesapeake Bay area, then besieged New England killing 390 persons and causing another 100 million dollars damage. (The Weather Channel)

1965: Hurricane Betsy slammed into New Orleans on the evening of September 9, 1965. 110 mph winds and power failures were reported in New Orleans. The eye of the storm passed to the southwest of New Orleans on a northwesterly track. The northern and western eyewalls covered Southeast Louisiana and the New Orleans area from about 8 PM until 4 AM the next morning. In Thibodaux, winds of 130 mph to 140 mph were reported. The Baton Rouge weather bureau operated under auxiliary power, without telephone communication.

1971 - Hurricane Ginger formed, and remained a hurricane until the 5th of October. The 27 day life span was the longest of record for any hurricane in the North Atlantic Ocean. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the central U.S. Thunderstorms in West Texas spawned four tornadoes in the vicinity of Lubbock, and produced baseball size hail and wind gusts to 81 mph at Ropesville. Thunderstorms produced hail two inches in diameter at Downs KS and Harvard NE, breaking car windows at Harvard. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Florence became a hurricane and headed for the Central Gulf Coast Region. Florence made land-fall early the next morning, passing over New Orleans LA. Winds gusts to 80 mph were recorded at an oil rig south of the Chandeleur Islands. Wind gusts around New Orleans reached 61 mph. Total property damage from Florence was estimated at 2.5 million dollars. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - The first snow of the season began to whiten the mountains of Wyoming early in the morning, as for two days a moist and unusually cold storm system affected the state. By the morning of the 11th, a foot of snow covered the ground at Burgess Junction. Thunderstorms developing along a cold front crossing the Ohio Valley produced severe weather in Indiana during the late afternoon and early evening hours. Strong thunderstorm winds blew down a tent at Palestine injuring seven persons, and frequent lightning interrupted the Purdue and Miami of Ohio football game, clearing the stands. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2013: Historical rainfall occurred in northern Colorado from September 9 to September 16 and resulted in severe flash flooding along the northern Front Range of Colorado and subsequent river flooding downstream along the South Platte River and its tributaries. The heaviest rain fell along the Front Range northwest of Denver on September 11-12.



## HOPE

A successful executive of a large company had been in the hospital for days. He had waited, wondered and worried about what the diagnosis of his condition would be. After the tests were completed, the doctor came into his room and told him the results.

Tearfully and in shock, his wife asked, "Is there any hope, doctor?"

"It depends on where your hope is," said the doctor. "If it is in me, I'm afraid not. But if it is in God, you have all the hope you need."

Jesus gave Christians a prescription for hope. "Don't be troubled," He said. "You trust God, now trust me. There are many rooms in my Father's home, and I am going to prepare a place for you."

Fear has a unique way of bringing life into focus. And there are only a few verses of Scripture that describe eternal life. But these few words are filled with promise and hope. The promise is that Jesus has gone before us to prepare a place for us. And the hope we have is He promised that He would come again to get us so we may be with Him in Heaven.

We can look forward to eternal life with Him because He has promised it to all who believe in Him as Savior and Lord. Although we may not know all we want to know about eternal life and what heaven is like, we need not fear. Right now, He is preparing our home!

Prayer: What joy we have, Father, that You – at this very moment – are preparing a home for us in heaven. We have great peace knowing that we will be with You forever. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? John 14:1-2

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

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## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

- Black & White ..... \$48.99/year
- Colored ..... \$79.88/year
- Colored ..... \$42.60/6 months
- E-Weekly\* ..... \$31.95/year

\* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

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Pay with Venmo: @paperpaul Phone Number to Confirm: 7460

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
09.06.24

6 23 41 59 63 25

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$800,000,000**

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 35  
DRAW: Mins 48 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
09.07.24

1 4 9 33 37 10

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$8,590,000**

NEXT 15 Hrs 50 Mins  
DRAW: 48 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
09.08.24

9 17 27 42 45 12

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT 16 Hrs 5 Mins  
DRAW: 48 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
09.07.24

1 3 6 22 31

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$26,000**

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 5  
DRAW: Mins 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
09.07.24

14 16 20 30 47 22

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$10,000,000**

NEXT 16 Hrs 34 Mins  
DRAW: 48 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
09.07.24

14 34 37 55 63 20

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$121,000,000**

NEXT 16 Hrs 34 Mins  
DRAW: 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Upcoming Groton Events

- 07/04/2024 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/09/2024 FREE SNAP Application Assistance 1-6pm at the Community Center
- 07/14/2024 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 07/17/2024 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
- 07/17/2024 Pro Am Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/25/2024 Dairy Queen Miracle Treat Day
- 07/25/2024 Summer Downtown Sip & Shop 5-8pm
- 07/25/2024 Treasures Amidst The Trials 6pm at Emmanuel Lutheran Church
- 07/26/2024 Ferney Open Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
- 07/27/2024 1st Annual Celebration in the Park 1-9:30pm
- 08/05/2024 School Supply Drive 4-7pm at the Community Center
- Cancelled:** Wine on 9 at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm
- 08/08/2024 Family Fun Fest 5:30-7:30pm
- 08/9-11/2024 Jr. Legion State Baseball Tournament
- 08/12/2024 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 1:15-7pm
- 09/07/2024 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 09/07-08/2024 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 09/08/2024 Sunflower Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
- 10/05/2024 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/11/2024 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
- 10/31/2024 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2024 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/16/2024 Groton American Legion "Turkey Raffle" 6:30-11:30pm
- 11/28/2024 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 12/01/2024 Groton Snow Queen Contest, 4:30 p.m.
- 12/07/2024 Olive Grove 8th Annual Holiday Party & Tour of Homes with Live & Silent Auctions 6pm-close
- 04/12/2025 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt at the City Park 10am Sharp
- 05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm
- 07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm



## News from the **AP** Associated Press

### **Flooding sweeps away a bus and a bridge collapses in Vietnam as storm deaths rise to 59**

By ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — A bridge collapsed and a bus was swept away by flooding Monday as more rain fell following a typhoon Vietnam that has caused at least 59 deaths in the Southeast Asian country and disrupted businesses and factories in the export-focused northern industrial hubs, state media reported.

Nine people died when Typhoon Yagi made landfall in Vietnam on Saturday before weakening to a tropical depression, and at least 50 others have died in the consequent floods and landslides, state media VN Express reported. The water levels of several rivers in northern Vietnam were dangerously high.

A passenger bus carrying 20 people was swept into a flooded stream by a landslide in mountainous Cao Bang province Monday morning. Rescuers were deployed but landslides blocked their path.

In Phu Tho province, rescue operations were continuing after a steel bridge over the engorged Red River collapsed Monday morning. Reports said 10 cars and trucks along with two motorbikes fell into the river. Three people were pulled out of the river and taken to the hospital, but 13 others were missing.

Pham Truong Son, 50, told VNEExpress that he was driving on the bridge on his motorcycle when he heard a loud noise. Before he knew what was happening, he was falling into the river. "I felt like I was drowned to the bottom of the river," Son told the newspaper, adding that he managed to swim and hold on to a drifting banana tree to stay afloat before he was rescued.

Dozens of businesses in Haiphong province hadn't resumed production by Monday because of the extensive damage to their factories, reported state media Lao Dong newspaper. The report said that the roofs of several factories were blown apart while water had seeped into industrial units, damaging finished goods and expensive equipment. Some companies said they still didn't have electricity on Monday and that it would take at least a month to be able to resume production.

Toppled electricity poles meant that Haiphong and Quang Ninh provinces were still without power on Monday. The two provinces are industrial hubs, housing many factories that export goods, including EV maker VinFast and Apple suppliers Pegatron and USI. Authorities are still assessing the damage to industrial units but initial estimates show that nearly 100 enterprises were damaged by the typhoon, resulting in losses amounting to millions of dollars, reported the newspaper.

Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh visited Haiphong city on Sunday and approved a package of \$4.62 million to help the port city recover.

Typhoon Yagi was the strongest typhoon to hit Vietnam in decades when it made landfall Saturday with winds up to 149 kph (92 mph). It weakened Sunday, but the country's meteorological agency warned the continuing downpours could cause floods and landslides.

On Sunday, a landslide killed six people including an infant and injured nine others in Sa Pa town, a popular trekking base known for its terraced rice fields and mountains. Overall, state media reported 21 deaths and at least 299 people injured from the weekend.

Skies were overcast in the capital, Hanoi, with occasional rain Monday morning as workers cleared the uprooted trees, fallen billboards and toppled electricity poles. Heavy rain continued in northwestern Vietnam and forecasters said it could exceed 40 centimeters (15 inches) in places.

Yagi also damaged agricultural land where rice is mostly grown.

Before hitting Vietnam, Yagi caused at least 20 deaths in the Philippines last week and four deaths in southern China.

Chinese authorities said infrastructure losses across the Hainan island province amounted to \$102 million with 57,000 houses collapsed or damaged, power and water outages and roads damaged or impassable due to fallen trees. Yagi made a second landfall in Guangdong, a mainland province neighboring Hainan, on Friday night.

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Storms like Typhoon Yagi are "getting stronger due to climate change, primarily because warmer ocean waters provide more energy to fuel the storms, leading to increased wind speeds and heavier rainfall," said Benjamin Horton, director of the Earth Observatory of Singapore.

## A 9/11 anniversary tradition is handed down to a new generation

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A poignant phrase echoes when 9/11 victims' relatives gather each year to remember the loved ones they lost in the terror attacks.

"I never got to meet you."

It is the sound of generational change at ground zero, where relatives read out victims' names on every anniversary of the attacks. Nearly 3,000 people were killed when al-Qaida hijackers crashed four jetliners into the twin towers, the Pentagon and a field in southwest Pennsylvania on Sept. 11, 2001.

Some names are read out by children or young adults who were born after the strikes. Last year's observance featured 28 such young people among more than 140 readers. Young people are expected again at this year's ceremony Wednesday.

Some are the children of victims whose partners were pregnant. More of the young readers are victims' nieces, nephews or grandchildren. They have inherited stories, photos, and a sense of solemn responsibility.

Being a "9/11 family" reverberates through generations, and commemorating and understanding the Sept. 11 attacks one day will be up to a world with no first-hand memory of them.

"It's like you're passing the torch on," says Allan Aldycki, 13.

He read the names of his grandfather and several other people the last two years, and plans to do so on Wednesday. Aldycki keeps mementoes in his room from his grandfather Allan Tarasiewicz, a firefighter.

The teen told the audience last year that he's heard so much about his grandfather that it feels like he knew him, "but still, I wish I had a chance to really know you," he added.

Allan volunteered to be a reader because it makes him feel closer to his grandfather, and he hopes to have children who'll participate.

"It's an honor to be able to teach them because you can let them know their heritage and what to never forget," he said by phone from central New York. He said he already finds himself teaching peers who know little or nothing about 9/11.

When it comes time for the ceremony, he looks up information about the lives of each person whose name he's assigned to read.

"He reflects on everything and understands the importance of what it means to somebody," his mother, Melissa Tarasiewicz, said.

Reciting the names of the dead is a tradition that extends beyond ground zero. War memorials honor fallen military members by speaking their names aloud. Some Jewish organizations host readings of Holocaust victims' names on the international day of remembrance, Yom Hashoah.

The names of the 168 people killed in the 1995 bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma City are read annually at the memorial there.

On Sept. 11 anniversaries, the Pentagon's ceremony includes military members or officials reading the names of the 184 people killed there. The Flight 93 National Memorial has victims' relatives and friends read the list of the 40 passengers and crew members whose lives ended at the rural site near Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

The hourslong observance at the 9/11 Memorial in New York is almost exclusively dedicated to the names of the 2,977 victims at all three sites, plus the six people killed in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. All are read by relatives who volunteer and are chosen by lottery.

Each is given a subset of names to render aloud. Readers also generally speak briefly about their own lost kin, frequently in touching detail.

"I think often about how, if you were still here, you would be one of my best friends, looking at colleges with me, getting me out of trouble with Mom and Dad, hanging out at the Jersey Shore," Capri Yarosz

said last year of her slain uncle, New York firefighter Christopher Michael Mozzillo.

Now 17, she grew up with a homemade baby book about him and a family that still mentions him in everyday conversation.

"Chris would have loved that" is a phrase often heard around the house.

She has read twice at the trade center ceremony.

"It means a lot to me that I can kind of keep alive my uncle's name and just keep reading everybody else's name, so that more of the upcoming generations will know," she said by phone from her family's home in central New Jersey. "I feel good that I can pass down the importance of what happened."

Her two younger sisters also have read names, and one is preparing to do so again Wednesday. Their mother, Pamela Yarosz, has never been able to steel herself to sign up.

"I don't have that strength. It's too hard for me," says Pamela Yarosz, who is Mozzillo's sister. "They're braver."

By now, many of the children of 9/11 victims — such as Melissa Tarasiewicz, who was just out of high school when her father died — have long since grown up. But about 100 were born after the attacks killed one of their parents, and are now young adults.

"Though we never met, I am honored to carry your name and legacy with me. I thank you for giving me this life and family," Manuel DaMota Jr. said of his father, a woodworker and project manager, during last year's ceremony.

One young reader after another at the event commemorated aunts, uncles, great-uncles, grandfathers and grandmothers whom the children have missed throughout their lives.

"My whole life, my dad has said I reminded him of you."

"I wish you got to take me fishing."

"I wish I had more of you than just a picture on a frame."

"Even though I never got to meet you, I will never forget you."

## Authorities vow relentless search as manhunt for interstate shooter enters third day in Kentucky

By BRUCE SCHREINER Associated Press

LONDON, Ky. (AP) — As a grueling manhunt stretched into a third day Monday for a suspect in an interstate shooting that struck 12 vehicles and wounded five people, authorities vowed to keep up a relentless search as the stress level remained high for a rural area where some schools canceled classes.

Authorities have been searching a rugged, hilly area of southeastern Kentucky since Saturday evening, when a gunman began shooting at drivers on Interstate 75 near London, a small city of about 8,000 people located about 75 miles (120 kilometers) south of Lexington.

The search was temporarily suspended once darkness fell Sunday night, but was set to resume Monday morning.

"We're not going to quit until we do lay hands on him," Laurel County Sheriff John Root said Sunday night.

Joseph A. Couch, 32, was named first as a person of interest and later as a suspect in the shooting after authorities said they recovered his SUV on a service road near the crime scene. They later found a semi-automatic weapon nearby that they believe was used in the shooting, said Deputy Gilbert Acciardo, a spokesperson for the local sheriff's office.

On Sunday, as another day of searching was ending without any sign of the suspect, Acciardo acknowledged the frustration that law enforcement officers and people who live near the search area are feeling.

"As this continues, it becomes more stressful for the community, it becomes more stressful for the officers that are there because we're looking ... and we're trying to find him, and we haven't found him," he said.

State police Master Trooper Scottie Pennington, a spokesman for the London state police post, said troopers are being brought in from around the state to aid the manhunt. He described the extensive search area as "walking in a jungle" with machetes needed to cut through thickets of woods.

Acciardo said it appears that the attacker planned the shooting for that location because it is very remote

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and the terrain is hilly, rocky and hard to navigate.

With the gunman still at large, numerous area school districts canceled classes for Monday. Pennington urged area residents to lock doors, keep porch lights on and monitor security cameras. The search was focused on a remote area about eight miles north of London.

Authorities sought to reassure residents that they believe the suspect will be found.

"We're doing everything that we can do," Root said, adding, "Just be confident."

Authorities said Couch purchased the weapon and about 1,000 rounds of ammunition Saturday morning in London. Couch has a military background, having served in the National Guard for at least four years, said Capt. Richard Dalrymple of the Laurel County Sheriff's Office.

Authorities initially said nine vehicles were struck by gunfire, but later increased that number to 12, saying some people did not realize their cars had been hit by bullets until they arrived home. They said the gunman fired a total of 20 to 30 rounds.

Couch most recently lived in Woodbine, a small community about 20 miles (32 kilometers) south of the shooting scene. Acciardo said authorities found his abandoned vehicle Saturday and then an AR-15 rifle on Sunday in a wooded area near a highway where "he could have shot down upon the interstate." A phone believed to be Couch's was also found by law enforcement, but the battery had been taken out.

Some residents of Laurel County were on edge as authorities searched with a drone, helicopter and on foot in a remote and sparsely populated wooded area near the busy interstate.

Cody Shepherd, sipping a bloody mary outdoors while waiting to watch a football game at the Pour Boyz Sports Lounge in London on Sunday, said locals were abuzz with speculation. A resident of London, he was at a party Saturday at a friend's house about 10 miles (16 kilometers) south of where the shooting occurred.

"We were listening to the police scanners all night," he said, adding they heard sirens and saw a helicopter overhead.

On Sunday, several local churches canceled services. But Rodney Goodlett, pastor of Faith Assembly of God in London, was helping direct traffic as parishioners gathered for a morning service. He expected the search would hold down attendance.

"This is tragic, obviously, that somebody would randomly do violent acts," he said. "You hear media things taking place all around our country, but then when it hits home, it's a little bit of a wake-up call."

Acciardo said authorities are being inundated with tips from the public and are following up on each one in case it could help them find the shooter. When the search has been suspended at night, specially trained officers have been deployed in strategic locations in the woods to prevent the gunman from slipping out of the area.

"We've got to get him," Acciardo said.

## Apple's upcoming iPhone will catapult the tech trendsetter into the age of AI

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

Apple's ubiquitous iPhone is about to break new ground with a shift into artificial intelligence that will do everything from smartening up its frequently dim-witted assistant Siri to creating customized emojis on the fly.

The new era will dawn Monday with the unveiling of the hotly anticipated iPhone 16 in a Cupertino, California, auditorium named after Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, who pulled out the first iPhone in 2007 and waved it like a magic wand while predicting it would reshape society.

Apple has sold billions of iPhones since then, helping to create about \$3 trillion in shareholder wealth. But in the past decade, there have been mostly minor upgrades from one model to the next — a factor that has caused people to hold off on buying a new iPhone and led to a recent slump in sales of Apple's marquee product.

The iPhone 16 is generating a bigger buzz because it is the first model to be tailored specifically for AI,



a technology that is expected to trigger the biggest revolution in the industry since Jobs thrust Apple into the smartphone market 17 years ago.

The advances included in the iPhone 16 could set up Apple to be “the gatekeeper of the consumer AI revolution,” Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives wrote in a research note.

Apple’s pivot began three months ago with a preview of its new approach during a developers conference, helping to build anticipation for Monday’s showcase.

Since that June conference, competitors such as Samsung and Google have made even more strides in AI. Google even took the unusual step of introducing its latest Pixel phones packed with their own AI magic last month instead of hewing to its traditional October timetable in an effort to upstage Apple’s release of the iPhone 16.

In an attempt to set itself apart from the early leaders in AI, the technology being baked into the iPhone 16 is being promoted as “Apple Intelligence.” Even so, Apple Intelligence is similar to the generically named AI already available on Google’s Pixel 9 and the Samsung Galaxy S24 released in January.

Most of Apple’s AI tasks will be performed on the iPhone itself instead of remote data centers — a distinction that requires a special processor within the forthcoming models and the high-end iPhone 15s that came out a year ago.

That’s why investors anticipate hot demand for the iPhone 16, spurring a surge in sales that has caused Apple’s stock price to climb by 13% since Apple previewed its AI strategy in June. That spike has increased the company’s market value by nearly \$400 billion.

## **Trial for 3 former Memphis officers charged in Tyre Nichols’ death set to begin**

By ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Jury selection was scheduled to begin Monday in the federal trial of three former Memphis officers charged with violating the civil rights of Tyre Nichols, the 29-year-old man whose fatal beating was caught on police cameras while also triggering protests and calls for police reform.

Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley and Justin Smith have pleaded not guilty to charges that they deprived Nichols of his rights through excessive force and failure to intervene, and obstructed justice through witness tampering.

Nichols was pulled over in his car in January 2023, and he ran from police after he was yanked out of the vehicle. Officers caught up with Nichols and pummeled him in a Memphis neighborhood, police video showed.

Jurors will be selected from a pool of about 200 people. The trial is anticipated to last three to four weeks and will draw media from around the country. Nichols’ family is expected to attend the trial.

Nichols, who was Black, died in a hospital on Jan. 10, 2023, three days after he was kicked, punched and hit with a police baton. Police video released later that month showed five officers, who also are Black, beating Nichols as he yelled for his mother about a block from his house. Video also showed the officers milling about and talking with each other as Nichols sat on the ground, struggling with his injuries.

The officers said Nichols was pulled over for reckless driving, but Memphis’ police chief has said there was no evidence to substantiate that claim.

Nichols worked for FedEx, and he enjoyed skateboarding and photography.

An autopsy report showed Nichols died from blows to the head and that the manner of death was homicide. The report described brain injuries and cuts and bruises to the head and other areas.

The three officers now facing trial, along with Emmitt Martin III and Desmond Mills Jr., were fired after Nichols’ death for violating Memphis Police Department policies. They had been members of a crime suppression team called the Scorpion unit, which was disbanded after Nichols’ death.

Shortly after their dismissal, the five officers were charged with second-degree murder in state court, where they pleaded not guilty. They were then indicted by a federal grand jury in September 2023.

Mills and Martin both have pleaded guilty in federal court and they could testify in the trial. A trial date in state court has not been set.



## East Timor welcomes Pope Francis on his visit to encourage its recovery from independence fight

By NICOLE WINFIELD and NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

DILI, East Timor (AP) — The people of East Timor gave Pope Francis a rousing welcome Monday as he arrived in the Southeast Asian country to encourage its recovery from a bloody and traumatic independence battle and celebrate its development after two decades of freedom from Indonesian rule.

Timorese jammed Francis' motorcade route into town from the airport, waving Vatican and Timorese flags and toting yellow and white umbrellas — the colors of the Holy See — to shade themselves from the scorching midday sun.

"Viva el Papa!" they shouted as he passed by. At one point his open-topped car slowed enough so he could bless a baby who was presented to him in the middle of the crowd.

The occasional Timorese guards along the motorcade route were no match for the throngs of people, many donning T-shirts with Francis' face on them, who slowed the convoy of cars and vans to a crawl. The 87-year-old Francis seemed to relish the greeting, smiling broadly from the car and waving as he passed by billboard after billboard featuring his image and words of welcome.

Francis arrived in Dili from Papua New Guinea to open the third leg of his trip through Southeast Asia and Oceania. President Jose Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao, two of East Timor's most revered independence heroes, greeted Francis at the airport and were meeting with him privately.

The pope was to address government officials and diplomats later Monday after an official welcome ceremony.

The overwhelmingly Catholic East Timor, one of the world's poorest countries and Asia's youngest, eagerly awaited Francis' arrival, which came on the heels of the 25th anniversary of the U.N.-backed referendum that paved the way for independence from Indonesia.

"Our great hope is that he may come to consolidate the fraternity, the national unity, peace and development for this new country," said Estevão Tei Fernandes, a university professor.

It was a far different atmosphere than when the last pope visited. St. John Paul II came in 1989, when Timor was still an occupied part of Indonesia and fighting for its freedom. A decade later, after Timorese voted overwhelmingly for independence, Indonesia's military responded with a scorched-earth campaign that destroyed 80% of the country's infrastructure and shocked the world. Overall, as many as 200,000 people were killed during the 24 years of Indonesian rule.

John Paul's visit, which culminated with a massive Mass on the seaside near Dili, helped draw international attention to the plight of the Timorese people and shine a spotlight on the oppressiveness of Indonesia's occupation.

"That was a different time," said Vicente Oliveira Soares, 42, owner of a digital printing business. "Now we are happy because we are free, we as a new nation we are very happy to receive and to meet with Pope Francis."

Francis will confront Timor's traumatic legacy, and another one closer to home involving Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo, the Timorese bishop who, along with Gusmao and Ramos-Horta, is regarded as a hero for his efforts to win independence.

Belo won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996 with Ramos-Horta for campaigning for a fair and peaceful solution to the conflict.

But in 2022, the Vatican acknowledged that it had secretly sanctioned Belo two years earlier for sexually abusing young boys. The sanctions included limitations on his movements and exercise of ministry and prohibited him from having voluntary contact with minors or contact with East Timor itself. The sanctions were reinforced in 2021.

Despite the sanctions, which were confirmed at the time by the Vatican spokesman and reaffirmed last week ahead of Francis' trip, many people in East Timor have stood by Belo, either dismissing, denying or diminishing the victims' claims. Some even hoped Belo, who lives in Portugal, would be on hand to welcome Francis.

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Another priest, American missionary Richard Daschbach, who is also revered for his role in saving lives in the liberation fight, is serving a 12-year sentence in a Timorese prison for molesting disadvantaged girls. He was defrocked by the church.

Ramos-Horta, for his part, told The Associated Press last week that Francis' visit was not the time to revisit the church's scandals. While saying it was for the Vatican to manage, having the pope raise the matter of abuse during his visit "would be like trying someone twice," he told AP.

Only about 20% of East Timor's people were Catholic when Indonesia invaded in 1975, shortly after Portugal abandoned it as a colony. Today, some 98% of East Timor's 1.3 million people are Catholic, making it the most Catholic country in the world outside the Vatican.

Francis will celebrate that heritage on Tuesday especially, when he celebrates a Mass on the same seaside esplanade where John Paul celebrated Mass in 1989 and encouraged the Timorese people. Authorities expect some 700,000 people will attend Tuesday's Mass.

## **A remote tribe is reeling from widespread illness and cancer. What role did the US government play?**

By GABE STERN Associated Press

OWYHEE, Nev. (AP) — The family placed flowers by a pair of weathered cowboy boots, as people quietly gathered for the memorial of the soft-spoken tribal chairman who mentored teens in the boxing ring and teased his grandkids on tractor rides.

Left unsaid, and what troubled Marvin Cota's family deep down, was that his story ended like so many others on the remote Duck Valley Indian Reservation. He was healthy for decades. They found the cancer too late.

In the area, toxins are embedded in the soil and petroleum is in the groundwater — but no one can say for sure what has caused such widespread illness. Until recently, a now-razed U.S. maintenance building where fuel and herbicides were stored — and where Cota worked — was thought to be the main culprit. But the discovery of a decades-old document with a passing mention of Agent Orange chemicals suggests the government may have been more involved in contaminating the land.

"I don't know if I'm more mad than I am hurt," Terri Ann Cota said after her father's service. "Because if this is the case, it took a lot of good men away from us."

Owyhee is the sole town on the reservation, where snow-capped mountains loom over a valley of scattered homes and ranches, nearly 100 miles (161 kms) from any stoplights. The area is bookended by deep Nevada canyons and flat Idaho plains. For generations, the legacy and livelihoods of the Shoshone-Paiute tribes have centered around raising cattle year-round. And many still use the same medicinal plants and practice the same ceremonies as their relatives buried there.

First spills, then potential sprays

The U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs was an integral part of everyday life in Owyhee. The agency, which oversaw the maintenance building and irrigation shop, told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in February that it found a revelatory document from 1997.

In it, a BIA employee recalled clearing foliage in the irrigation canals at least 20 years earlier, when he sprayed at least one of the herbicides — but possibly both — that make up Agent Orange. The EPA banned one of those chemicals in 1979 because of its cancer risks.

A BIA official told the EPA and tribal leaders that it was long believed the herbicides were used for weed control along certain roads — not the canals — before rediscovering the document.

The tribes' current leaders said they were unaware of either scenario. What alarms them, they say, is that the canal system has greater reach than the two-lane highway that runs through town.

Word cascaded down to tribal members, most of whom live along the canals, swam in them, used the water to farm on the edges, and gathered branches from surrounding willow trees to fashion cradleboards and roast marshmallows.

But they know little else.

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Hundreds of pages of emails, memos and other documents obtained by The Associated Press show federal agencies have promised the tribes that an investigation is coming. Still, the details are scarce because the BIA redacted or withheld most of the contents of the records.

The BIA declined interview requests from the AP but said it's evaluating the extent that Agent Orange components might have been used on the reservation.

Officials from the BIA and the EPA visited Duck Valley as recently as Aug. 7 to talk about the process of hiring a contractor to clean up contamination from the federal buildings, tribal leaders said. The presentation noted gaps in data analysis, including for the storage and use of herbicides.

Action can't come soon enough for tribal members who say the federal government's prior cleanup attempts have lacked urgency and direction. They fear inaction could lead to further sickness and death.

While tribal Chairman Brian Mason presses federal officials for answers, tribal members are being urged to get annual medical exams and an environmental team is tasked with digging up historical documents. "People are dying. And I don't know what they're waiting for," Mason said.

Back then, tribes were unaware of the dangers

There's a long legacy of contamination across Indian Country, ranging from uranium tailings in the Southwest to solvents dumped at a military installation in Alaska and pesticides used on the North Dakota plains. Health risks and other critical information are often concealed from Native American communities until years, sometimes decades, after the damage is done.

At Owyhee, most of the environmental dangers have been traced to the two BIA buildings no longer in use or demolished.

Back in 1985, at the now-abandoned irrigation shop, some 8,000 gallons of heating oil leaked from a pipeline next to the highway. Samples taken from sump, soil and floor drains around the building revealed a mix of the hazardous chemicals that were stored inside, including waste oil, arsenic, copper, lead and cadmium, along with the two herbicides that make up Agent Orange.

Racheal Thacker, a pesticides and solid waste technician with the tribes, said residents at the time were likely unaware of the dangers related to handling the chemicals stored there. Back then, the workers employed by the BIA didn't have the expertise or resources to identify pollutants in the ground, Thacker said.

Sherry Crutcher was always skeptical.

Her late husband worked in the BIA maintenance building across from the irrigation shop and wore a uniform that reeked of chemicals after spraying willow trees and cleaning oil wells. The building was home base for dozens of tribal members who plowed snow, fought fires and maintained the vehicle fleet.

Crutcher, a teacher and former natural resources director for the tribes, remembers employees in the maintenance building asking for cancer screenings. She said the BIA did the tests, told the workers the results were negative but didn't share the records.

She remembered asking her husband, Robert, if he or the other workers had any protection. The answer was always that he had none. He died in 2022 from an aggressive form of brain cancer at age 58, she said.

"I never overstepped my husband, I just asked him the questions," Sherry Crutcher said. "I'd be like 'why?' He was just a quiet soul, easygoing, and say 'well, you know, because it's our job.'"

In 1995, the EPA ordered the BIA to stop discharging gasoline, batteries and other fluids onto the dirt floor of the maintenance building, saying the practice was improper, threatened the groundwater supply and could endanger tribal members' health. The disposal practice had long-lasting effects and the building has since been demolished with its surroundings fenced off.

In its statement to the AP, the BIA said it has extensively studied the soil and groundwater on the reservation since 1999 and cleaned up wells used for drinking water. The agency also said any petroleum in the soil is safe and it's working with the tribes on other remedial actions.

Thacker said there's no ostensible danger now from drinking water from the tap, since it's drawn from other wells. Still, there's an enduring sense of distrust and uneasiness.

Some patches of land can no longer sustain crops. Fences surround contaminated areas. And after tribal officials raised concerns about hydrocarbon plumes under the one school in town, the state committed to building a new school on a different plot of land.

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Chairman's message reverberates throughout the community

Mason stood at a podium in March and declared — without any caveats — that the tribes' land was further poisoned. Agent Orange chemicals were sprayed extensively by the canals, he said, and demanded the federal government do something — and quick.

His broadcast on social media reverberated across the reservation.

The editor of the community newspaper, Alexis Smith-Estevan, listened from her couch and cried, saying she was even more certain now the federal government's contamination of the land led to the deaths of her grandfather and uncle. A grant assistant at the health clinic, Michael Hanchor, heard about it while getting signatures for paperwork and sighed.

Hanchor wasn't surprised. He said he saw it as yet another government failure in line with forcing his ancestors onto a reservation and sending Shoshone-Paiute children to boarding schools meant to assimilate them into white society.

"When you get that sense of defeat your whole life, you just kind of shrug your shoulders and move on," said Hanchor, who lost his mother and a grandfather figure to cancer.

Tanya Smith Beaudoin later walked along a canal where two dirt roads converge off the highway. The canal served as a de-facto swimming pool on hot summer days known to locals as "Floramae's," named for a sweet elder with a tough exterior who once lived next door.

Smith Beaudoin thought of her own father, Dennis Smith Sr., an influential tribal leader who befriended strangers at the market and organized big family dinners. He was diagnosed with late-stage liver cancer that spread to most of his upper body years after working alongside Cota and Robert Crutcher in the BIA maintenance building, she said.

"What can you do? If you were to get infected like he was, it was a death sentence. There's nothing — there's no treating it," she said.

To many in the community, there is a clear link between past contaminants and the pronounced number of cancer cases and other illnesses.

"I'm going to run out of days sooner than I should've," said Julie Manning, a tribal member who was diagnosed with advanced stage ovarian cancer last year. "And my child can pick up the pieces, and she's been holding them together. And BIA can say 'whoops, sorry.'"

The chairman's announcement validated those beliefs. Still, health experts say it's nearly impossible to say with certainty that the environment factored into cancer diagnoses and deaths — especially without robust data.

The tribal health clinic has logged more than 500 illnesses since 1992 that could be cancer, and is trying to break down the reservation's data to determine the most common types. A switch in recent years from paper to electronic filing means the records are likely incomplete.

Genetics, lifestyle and other factors often combine to cause cancer. Even if the BIA is able to account for the time, frequency, concentration and volume of herbicides sprayed on the reservation, that wouldn't be enough to prove a cause, experts say.

"Bottom line is it's really, really complicated even to establish among things we already sort of know about," said Lauren Teras, the senior scientific director of epidemiology research at the American Cancer Society.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which compensates some Vietnam War veterans for exposure to Agent Orange, presumes that certain cancers and other illnesses are caused by the chemical herbicide but doesn't make the link definitive.

Mason has called for a study that would give tribal members a better idea of the extent chemicals could have been sprayed and the effect on the tribes' land and its residents. He said that might provide tribal members a pathway to seek payment from the federal government.

Rooted in the land

Shoshone and Paiute tribes once separately occupied an expanse of Nevada, Idaho and Oregon before the federal government forced them onto a reservation just under the size of New York City.



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They've lived together for generations as "Sho-Pais," connected by a farming and ranching heritage while cheering on youth sports games and gathering for the annual Fourth of July rodeo and powwow.

High school graduates who leave often find their way home after going to college or working in trades, in a sort of coming-of-age cycle, said Lynn Manning-John, the school's principal. Of the more than 2,000 tribal members, 1,800 or so live on the reservation — "the only place in the world where being Shoshone-Paiute is normal," she said.

At the school, lessons are tied to being Sho-Pai. Elementary students learn the "Hokey Pokey" in the Paiute language. Other students talk to an elder in their family and bring a picture of them to hang on the classroom walls.

"If the whole world shut down, we have everything we need to survive here," said Manning-John, whose childhood home is now fenced off due to underground contaminants. "We have animals in the mountains, we have trees that we subsist upon for our plant medicines, we have berries, we have roots."

"We have our beautiful water" from the mountains, she said. "But not, apparently, our water from the canal."

Mason acknowledged an investigation into Agent Orange components will take time, even as he pushes for expediency. He was elected as chairman two years ago, marking a shift from a long line of ranchers who led the tribes to a Marine Corps veteran who most recently worked as an environmental specialist in mines across Nevada.

He likened taking the leadership post to peeling back the layers of an onion, confronting questions deeper and more personal to the tribes than before.

He grimaced when asked if the community would move off the land if it's eventually deemed unsafe.

"I wouldn't say never," he said. "But people have five, six, seven generations buried here. And they're not going to leave their people. I can guarantee that."

## 'I'm living a lie': On the streets of a Colorado city, pregnant migrants struggle to survive

By BIANCA VÁZQUEZ TONESS AP Education Writer

AURORA, Colo. (AP) — She was eight months pregnant when she was forced to leave her Denver homeless shelter. It was November.

Ivanni Herrera took her 4-year-old son Dylan by the hand and led him into the chilly night, dragging a suitcase containing donated clothes and blankets she'd taken from the Microtel Inn & Suites. It was one of 10 hotels where Denver has housed more than 30,000 migrants, many of them Venezuelan, over the last two years.

First they walked to Walmart. There, with money she and her husband had collected from begging on the street, they bought a tent.

They waited until dark to construct their new home. They chose a grassy median along a busy thoroughfare in Aurora, the next town over, a suburb known for its immigrant population.

"We wanted to go somewhere where there were people," Herrera, 28, said in Spanish. "It feels safer."

That night, temperatures dipped to 32 degrees. And as she wrapped her body around her son's to keep him warm enough that he could sleep, Ivanni Herrera cried.

Seeking better lives, finding something else

Over the past two years, a record number of families from Venezuela have come to the United States seeking a better life for themselves and their children. Instead, they've found themselves in communities roiling with conflict about how much to help the newcomers — or whether to help at all.

Unable to legally work without filing expensive and complicated paperwork, some are homeless and gambling on the kindness of strangers to survive. Some have found themselves sleeping on the streets — even those who are pregnant.

Like many in her generation, regardless of nationality, Herrera found inspiration for her life's ambitions on social media. Back in Ecuador, where she had fled years earlier to escape the economic collapse in



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her native Venezuela, Herrera and her husband were emboldened by images of families like theirs hiking across the infamous Darién Gap from Colombia into Panama. If all those people could do it, they thought, so can we.

They didn't know many people who had moved to the United States, but pictures and videos of Venezuelans on Facebook and TikTok showed young, smiling families in nice clothes standing in front of new cars boasting of beautiful new lives. U.S. Border Patrol reports show Herrera and the people who inspired her were part of an unprecedented mass migration of Venezuelans to America. Some 320,000 Venezuelans have tried to cross the southern border since October 2022 — more than in the previous nine years combined.

Just weeks after arriving in Denver, Herrera began to wonder if the success she had seen was real. She and her friends had developed another theory: The hype around the U.S. was part of some red de engaño, or network of deception.

After several days of camping on the street and relieving herself outside, Herrera began to itch uncontrollably with an infection. She worried: Would it imperil her baby?

She was seeing doctors and social workers at a Denver hospital where she planned to give birth because they served everyone, even those without insurance. They were alarmed their pregnant patient was now sleeping outside in the cold.

Days after she was forced to leave the Microtel, Denver paused its policy and allowed homeless immigrants to stay in its shelters through the winter. Denver officials say they visited encampments to urge homeless migrants to come back inside. But they didn't venture outside the city limits to Aurora.

As Colorado's third-largest city, Aurora, on Denver's eastern edge, is a place where officials have turned down requests to help migrants. In February, the Aurora City Council passed a resolution telling other cities and nonprofits not to bring migrants into the community because it "does not currently have the financial capacity to fund new services related to this crisis." Yet still they come, because of its lower cost of living and Spanish-speaking community.

In fact, former President Donald Trump last week called attention to the city, suggesting a Venezuelan gang had taken over an apartment complex. Authorities say that hasn't happened.

The doctors treated Herrera's yeast infection and urged her to sleep at the hospital. It wouldn't cost anything, they assured her, just as her birth would be covered by emergency Medicaid, a program that extends the health care benefits for poor American families to unauthorized immigrants for labor and delivery.

Herrera refused.

"How," she asked, "could I sleep in a warm place when my son is cold on the street?"

Another family, cast out into the night

It was March when David Jaimez, his pregnant wife and their two daughters were evicted from their Aurora apartment. Desperate for help, they dragged their possessions into Thursday evening Bible study at Jesus on Colfax, a church and food pantry inside an old motel. Its namesake and location, Colfax Avenue, has long been a destination for the drug-addicted, homeless veterans and new immigrants.

When the Jaimez family arrived, the prayers paused. The manager addressed the family in elementary Spanish, supplementing with Google Translate on her phone.

After arriving from Venezuela in August and staying in a Denver-sponsored hotel room, they'd moved into an apartment in Aurora. Housing is cheaper in that eastern suburb, but they never found enough work to pay their rent. "I owe \$8,000," Jaimez said, his eyes wide. "Supposedly there's work here. I don't believe it."

Jaimez and his wife are eligible to apply for asylum or for "Temporary Protected Status" and, with that, work permits. But doing so would require an attorney or advisor, months of waiting and \$500 in fees each.

At the prayer group, Jaimez's daughters drank sodas and ate tangerines from one participant, a middle-aged woman and Aurora native. She stroked the ponytail of the family's 8-year-old daughter as the young girl smiled.

When the leader couldn't find anywhere for the family to stay, they headed out into the evening, pushing their year-old daughter in her stroller and lugging a suitcase behind them. After they left, the middle-aged woman leaned forward in her folding chair and said: "It's kind of crazy that our city lets them in but does

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not help our veterans." Nearby, a man nodded in agreement.

That night, Jaimez and his family found an encampment for migrants run by a Denver nonprofit called All Souls and moved into tent number 28. Volunteers and staff brought in water, meals and other resources. Weeks later, the family was on the move again: Camping without a permit is illegal in Denver, and the city closed down the encampment. All Souls re-established it in six different locations but closed it permanently in May.

At its peak, nearly 100 people were living in the encampment. About half had been evicted from apartments hastily arranged before their shelter time expired, said founder Candice Marley. Twenty-two residents were children and five women were pregnant, including Jaimez's wife. Marley is trying to get a permit for another encampment, but the permit would only allow people over 18.

"Even though there are lots of kids living on the street, they don't want them all together in a camp," Marley said. "That's not a good public image for them."

A city's efforts, not enough

Denver officials say they won't tolerate children sleeping on the street. "Did you really walk from Venezuela to be homeless in the U.S.? I don't think so," said Jon Ewing, spokesman for Denver's health and human services department. "We can do better than that."

Still, Denver struggled to keep up with the rush of migrants, many arriving on buses chartered by Texas to draw attention to the impact of immigration. All told, Denver officials say they have helped some 42,700 migrants since last year, either by giving them shelter or a bus fare to another city.

Initially, the city offered migrants with families six weeks in a hotel. But in May, on pace to spend \$180 million this year helping newcomers, the city scaled back its offer to future migrants while deepening its investment in people already getting help.

Denver paid for longer shelter stays for 800 migrants already in hotels and offered them English classes and help applying for asylum and work permits. But any migrants arriving since May have received only three days in a hotel. After that, some have found transportation to other cities, scrounged for a place to sleep or wandered into nearby towns like Aurora.

Today, fewer migrants are coming to the Denver area, but Marley still receives dozens of outreaches per week from social service agencies looking to help homeless migrants. "It's so frustrating that we can't help them," she said. "That leaves families camping on their own, unsupported, living in their cars. Kids can't get into school. There's no stability."

After the encampment closed, Jaimez and his family moved into a hotel. He paid by holding a cardboard sign at an intersection and begging for money. Their daughter only attended school for one month last year, since they never felt confident that they were settled anywhere more than a few weeks. The family recently moved to a farm outside of the Denver area, where they've been told they can live in exchange for working.

On the front lines of begging

When Herrera started feeling labor pains in early December, she was sitting on the grass, resting after a long day asking strangers for money. She waited until she couldn't bear the pain anymore and could feel the baby getting close. She called an ambulance.

The paramedics didn't speak Spanish but called an interpreter. They told Herrera they had to take her to the closest hospital, instead of the one in Denver, since her contractions were so close together.

Her son was born healthy at 7 pounds, 8 ounces. She brought him to the tent the next day. A few days later the whole family, including the baby, had contracted chicken pox. "The baby was in a bad state," said Emily Rodriguez, a close friend living with her family in a tent next to Herrera's.

Herrera took him to the hospital, then returned to the tent before being offered a way out. An Aurora woman originally from Mexico invited the family to live with her — at first, for free. After a couple weeks, the family moved to a small room in the garage for \$800 a month.

To earn rent and pay expenses, Herrera and Rodriguez have cleaned homes, painted houses and shoveled snow while their children waited in a car by themselves. Finding regular work and actually getting paid for it has been difficult. While their husbands can get semi-regular work in construction, the women's

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most consistent income comes from something else: standing outside with their children and begging.

Herrera and her husband recently became eligible to apply for work permits and legal residency for Venezuelans who arrived in the United States last year. But it will cost \$800 each for a lawyer to file the paperwork, along with hundreds of dollars in government fees. They don't have the money.

One spring weekday, Herrera and Rodriguez stand by the shopping carts at the entrance to a Mexican grocery store. While their sons crawl along a chain of red shopping carts stacked together and baby Milan sleeps in his stroller, they try to make eye contact with shoppers.

Some ignore them. Others stuff bills in their hands. On a good day, each earns about \$50.

It comes easier for Rodriguez, who's naturally boisterous. "One day a man came up and gave me this iPhone. It's new," she says, waving the device in the air.

"Check out this body," she says as she spins around, laughing and showing off her ample bottom. "I think he likes me."

Herrera grimaces. She won't flirt like her friend does. She picks up Milan and notices his diaper is soaked, then returns him to the stroller. She has run out of diapers.

Milan was sick, but Herrera has been afraid to take him to the doctor. Despite what the hospital had said when she was pregnant, she was never signed up for emergency Medicaid. She says she owes \$18,000 for the ambulance ride and delivery of her baby. Now, she avoids going to the doctor or taking her children because she's afraid her large debt will jeopardize her chances of staying in the U.S. "I'm afraid they're going to deport me," she says.

But some days, when she's feeling overwhelmed, she wants to be deported — as long as she can take her children along. Like the day in May when the security guard at the Mexican grocery store chased off the women and told them they couldn't beg there anymore. "He insulted us and called us awful names," Rodriguez says.

The two women now hold cardboard signs along a busy street in Denver and then knock on the doors of private homes, never returning to the same address. They type up their request for clothes, food or money on their phones and translate it to English using Google. They hand their phones to whoever answers the door.

The American Dream, still out of reach

In the garage where Herrera and her family live, the walls are lined with stuffed animals people have given her and her son. Baby Milan, on the floor, pushes himself up to look around. Dylan sleeps in bed.

Herrera recently sent \$500 to her sister to make the months-long trip from Venezuela to Aurora with Herrera's 8-year-old daughter. "I'll have my family back together," she says. And she believes her sister will be able to watch her kids so Herrera can look for work.

"I don't feel equipped to handle all of this on my own," she says.

The problem is, Herrera hasn't told her family back in Venezuela how she spends her time. "They think I'm fixing up homes and selling chocolate and flowers," she says. "I'm living a lie."

When her daughter calls in the middle of the day, she's sure not to answer and only picks up after 6 p.m. "They think I'm doing so well, they expect me to send money," she says. And Herrera has complied, sending \$100 a week to help her sister pay rent and buy food for her daughter.

Finally, her sister and daughter are waiting across the border in Mexico. When we come to the U.S., her sister asks, could we fly to Denver? The tickets are \$600.

She has to come clean. She doesn't have the money. She lives day to day. The American Dream hasn't happened for Ivanni Herrera — at least, not yet. Life is far more difficult than she has let on.

She texts back:

No.

## Google faces new antitrust trial after ruling declaring search engine a monopoly

By MATTHEW BARAKAT AP Business Writer

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (AP) — One month after a judge declared Google's search engine an illegal monopoly, the tech giant faces another antitrust lawsuit that threatens to break up the company, this time over its advertising technology.

The Justice Department and a coalition of states contend that Google built and maintains a monopoly over the technology that matches online publishers to advertisers. Dominance over the software on both the buy side and the sell side of the transaction enables Google to keep as much as 36 cents on the dollar when it brokers sales between publishers and advertisers, the government contends in court papers.

Google says the government's case is based on an internet of yesteryear, when desktop computers ruled and internet users carefully typed precise World Wide Web addresses into URL fields. Advertisers now are more likely to turn to social media companies like TikTok or streaming TV services like Peacock to reach audiences.

In recent years, Google Networks, the division of the Mountain View, California-based tech giant that includes such services as AdSense and Google Ad Manager that are at the heart of the case, actually have seen declining revenue, from \$31.7 billion in 2021 to \$31.3 billion in 2023, according to the company's annual reports.

The trial over the alleged ad tech monopoly begins Monday in Alexandria, Virginia. It initially was going to be a jury trial, but Google maneuvered to force a bench trial, writing a check to the federal government for more than \$2 million to moot the only claim brought by the government that required a jury.

The case will now be decided by U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema, who was appointed to the bench by former President Bill Clinton and is best known for high-profile terrorism trials including Sept. 11 defendant Zacarias Moussaoui. Brinkema, though, also has experience with highly technical civil trials, working in a courthouse that sees an outsize number of patent infringement cases.

The Virginia case comes on the heels of a major defeat for Google over its search engine, which generates the majority of the company's \$307 billion in annual revenue. A judge in the District of Columbia declared the search engine a monopoly, maintained in part by tens of billions of dollars Google pays each year to companies like Apple to lock in Google as the default search engine presented to consumers when they buy iPhones and other gadgets.

In that case, the judge has not yet imposed any remedies. The government hasn't offered its proposed sanctions, though there could be close scrutiny over whether Google should be allowed to continue to make exclusivity deals that ensure its search engine is consumers' default option.

Peter Cohan, a professor of management practice at Babson College, said the Virginia case could potentially be more harmful to Google because the obvious remedy would be requiring it to sell off parts of its ad tech business that generate billions of dollars in annual revenue.

"Divestitures are definitely a possible remedy for this second case," Cohan said "It could be potentially more significant than initially meets the eye."

In the Virginia trial, the government's witnesses are expected to include executives from newspaper publishers including The New York Times Co. and Gannett, and online news sites that the government contends have faced particular harm from Google's practices.

"Google extracted extraordinary fees at the expense of the website publishers who make the open internet vibrant and valuable," government lawyers wrote in court papers. "As publishers generate less money from selling their advertising inventory, publishers are pushed to put more ads on their websites, to put more content behind costly paywalls, or to cease business altogether."

Google disputes that it charges excessive fees compared to its competitors. The company also asserts the integration of its technology on the buy side, sell side and in the middle assures ads and web pages load quickly and enhance security. And it says customers have options to work with outside ad exchanges.



Google says the government's case is improperly focused on display ads and banner ads that load on web pages accessed through a desktop computer and fails to take into account consumers' migration to mobile apps and the boom in ads placed on social media sites over the last 15 years.

The government's case "focuses on a limited type of advertising viewed on a narrow subset of websites when user attention migrated elsewhere years ago," Google's lawyers write in a pretrial filing. "The last year users spent more time accessing websites on the 'open web,' rather than on social media, videos, or apps, was 2012."

The trial, which is expected to last several weeks, is taking place in a courthouse that rigidly adheres to traditional practices, including a resistance to technology in the courtroom. Cellphones are banned from the courthouse, to the chagrin of a tech press corps accustomed at the District of Columbia trial to tweeting out live updates as they happen.

Even the lawyers, and there are many on both sides, are limited in their technology. At a pretrial hearing Wednesday, Google's lawyers made a plea to be allowed more than the two computers each side is permitted to have in the courtroom during trial. Brinkema rejected it.

"This is an old-fashioned courtroom," she said.

## Takeaways from AP's report on how Duck Valley Indian Reservation's water and soil is contaminated

By GABE STERN Associated Press

OWYHEE, Nev. (AP) — The Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation have long grappled with contaminants embedded in the land and water.

For decades, the tribes suspected that widespread illness and deaths from cancer are tied to two buildings owned and operated by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. Fuel, herbicides and other chemicals spilled onto the dirt floors of the now-shuttered or demolished structures.

Earlier this year, the BIA discovered a decades-old document with a passing mention of Agent Orange that suggests the government might have been more involved in contaminating the land than previously known, this time around the irrigation canals. The community is still waiting to get answers.

Sacred land, now contaminated

Owyhee is the sole town on the reservation where snow-capped mountains loom over a valley of scattered homes and ranches, nearly 100 miles (161 kilometers) from any stoplights. Bookended by deep Nevada canyons and flat Idaho plains, the valley is home to "Sho-Pais," whose ancestors were confined there by the federal government.

For generations, the legacy and livelihood of residents have centered around raising cattle year-round. Many of the 1,800 or so residents still use the same medicinal plans and practice the same ceremonies as their relatives buried under them.

Representatives from the BIA and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency visited the reservation as recently as Aug. 7 to talk about the contamination and review the report that mentioned Agent Orange. Action can't come soon enough for tribal members who say the federal government's past cleanup attempts have lacked urgency and direction.

"People are dying. And I don't know what they're waiting for," said tribal Chairman Brian Mason.

First spills, then potential sprays

Historically, most of the environmental dangers at Owyhee have been traced to two BIA buildings that have since closed or been demolished.

Back in 1985, at the now-abandoned irrigation shop, some 8,000 gallons of heating oil leaked from a pipeline next to a two-lane highway that acts as the area's main road. Samples taken from sump, soil and floor drains around the building revealed a mix of the hazardous chemicals that were stored inside, including waste oil, arsenic, copper, lead and cadmium, along with the two herbicides that make up Agent Orange.

Racheal Thacker, a pesticides and solid waste technician with the tribes, said residents at the time were likely unaware of the dangers related to handling the chemicals stored there. Back then, she said, the



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workers employed by the BIA didn't have the expertise or resources to identify pollutants in the ground.

In 1995, the EPA ordered the BIA to stop discharging gasoline, batteries and other fluids onto the dirt floor of the maintenance building, saying the practice was improper, threatened the groundwater supply and could endanger tribal members' health. The disposal practice had long-lasting effects. The building has since been demolished and is fenced off.

In its statement to the AP, the BIA said it has extensively studied the soil and groundwater on the reservation since 1999 and cleaned up wells used for drinking water. The agency also said any petroleum in the soil is safe and it's working with the tribe on other remedial actions.

Link between toxins and deaths from cancer

To the community, there's a clear link between past contaminants and the pronounced number of cancer cases and other illnesses.

Mason validated those beliefs in an announcement earlier this year. He stood at a podium and declared — without caveats — that the BIA further poisoned the tribes' land. Agent Orange chemicals were sprayed extensively by the canals, he said, and demanded the government take quick action.

Health experts say it's nearly impossible to say with certainty that the environment factored into cancer diagnoses and deaths — especially without robust data.

The tribal health clinic has logged more than 500 illnesses since 1992 that could be cancer, and is trying to break down the reservation's data to determine what were the most common types. A switch in recent years from paper to electronic filing means the records are likely incomplete.

Even if the BIA is able to account for the time, frequency, concentration and volume of herbicides sprayed on the reservation, that wouldn't be enough to prove a cause, experts say. Genetics, lifestyle and other factors often combine to form a diagnosis.

"Bottom line is it's really, really complicated even to establish among things we already sort of know about," said Lauren Teras, the senior scientific director of epidemiology research at the American Cancer Society.

Mason has called for a study that would give tribal members a better idea of the extent that chemicals could have been sprayed, and the effect on the tribes' land and its residents. He said that might provide tribal members a pathway to seek payment from the federal government.

## A Palestinian team in Chile offers soccer with a heavy dose of protest

By NAYARA BATSCHE Associated Press

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — Arms raised high. Banners denouncing the war in Gaza. Crowds united in song and wrapped in keffiyehs, the black-and-white checkered scarves that have become a badge of Palestinian identity.

It could have been any other pro-Palestinian rally erupting over the Israel-Hamas war if it weren't for the fact that these thousands of protesters were actually soccer fans at a league match in Santiago, the capital of Chile.

Although the players darting across the field had names like José and Antonio and grew up in a Spanish-speaking South American nation, their fervor for the Palestinian cause and red, white, black and green-colored jerseys underscored how Chile's storied soccer club serves as an entry point for the world's largest Palestinian community outside the Middle East to connect with an ancestral home thousands of miles away.

"It's more than just a club, it takes you into the history of the Palestinians," said Bryan Carrasco, captain of Chile's legendary Club Deportivo Palestino.

As the bloodiest war in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict rages in the Gaza Strip, the club's electric game atmosphere, viewing parties and pre-match political stunts have increasingly tapped into a sense of collective Palestinian grief in this new era of war and displacement.

"We're united in the face of the war," said Diego Khamis, director of the country's Palestinian community. "It's daily suffering."

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In a sport where authorities penalize athletes for flaunting political positions, particularly on such explosive issues as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Club Palestino is an unabashed exception that wears its pro-Palestinian politics on its sleeve — and on its torso, stadium seats and anywhere else it can find.

The club's brazen gestures have caused offense before. Chile's Football Federation fined the club in 2014 after the number "1" on the back of their shirts was shaped as a map of Palestine before Israel's creation in 1948.

But players' fierce pride in their Palestinian identity has otherwise caused little controversy in this country of 19 million, home to 500,000 ethnic Palestinians.

"It's our roots and it feels like home," said Jaime Barakat, a Palestino fan and shawarma vendor.

Leftist President Gabriel Boric, who called Israel a "genocidal, murderous state" on the campaign trail in 2021, has harshly criticized Israel's campaign in Gaza. His government recalled the Israeli ambassador and joined South Africa's case accusing Israel of genocide in the International Court of Justice — allegations that Israel denies.

Israel has pushed back, castigating Chile for what it sees as an insufficient response to Hamas' brutal Oct. 7 attack that killed 1,200 people and led to the abduction of 250 others.

The country's small Jewish population of 16,000 is unsettled. "Boric, who frequently speaks of peace, has imported the Middle East conflict to Chile," the Jewish Community of Chile said in a statement.

Chile's Palestinians say the Mideast conflict was imported decades before Boric, spurring waves of displacement that forged the surprising history of Arab immigration to this Pacific coast nation from the late 1800s as the Ottoman Empire crumbled and the Zionist movement took root.

In 1920, the League of Nations approved the British Mandate of Palestine, unleashing tensions over Britain's Balfour Declaration that promised historic Palestine as a homeland for the Jewish people. More Palestinians crossed the Atlantic and braved treks across the Andes by mule to reach far-flung Chile. That same year, Club Palestino was created by a group of Palestinian soccer enthusiasts who gathered one winter day in Chile's southern city of Osorno.

"My father told me they came here because there were more possibilities," said 90-year-old Juan Sabaj Dhimes in Patronato, a historically Palestinian neighborhood in the capital, with its coffee shops and hoo-kah bars splashed in the colors of the Palestinian national flag and plastered with Palestino club crests.

Chile's Palestinian community exploded after the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation — in which more than 700,000 Palestinians fled or were pushed from their homes in what Arabs call the Nakba, or "catastrophe," and dispersed all over the world.

Chile was then an upwardly mobile nation among poorer neighbors seeking to attract migrants to populate the country. Palestinian descendants say the arid land, coastal desert and fresh figs and olives conjured an earlier generation's nostalgia for historic Palestine.

"The climate is one of the things that most captivated the Palestinians who arrived," said Mauricio Abu-Ghosh, former president of Chile's Palestinian Federation.

The scrappy soccer club went professional in 1947, becoming the pride of the community. Rocketing to Chile's top division and clinching five official titles, its appeal soon stretched to the Middle East, where the descendants of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan still congregate in camps and cafes to catch Palestino matches broadcast by satellite network Al Jazeera.

The team's political message also won supporters across Chile — a soccer-crazed country with a spirit of social activism and an ex-protest leader as president — and beyond.

Despite of being a small soccer club, with an average of only about 2,000 spectators per game, Deportivo Palestino — winner of five official titles and a regular fixture in continental tournaments — is the third most followed Chilean club on Instagram, with more than 741,000 followers, only behind eternal rivals Universidad de Chile (791,000) and Colo-Colo (2.3 million).

"They tell us about the violence suffered by their people," said 20-year-old Chilean fan Luis Torres at Palestino's home stadium in Santiago. "It makes me angry, sad, so we're here to bring a bit of joy."

Joy has been harder to come by in the Palestinian diaspora since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack triggered Israel's

bombardment and invasion of the Gaza Strip, which has killed over 40,000 Palestinians and spawned a humanitarian catastrophe.

Palestinians streaming out of church in Patronato on a recent Sunday said they had prayed for the safety of their families in Gaza. "We all have cousins, siblings, grandparents who still live there," said Khamis.

The war has wrenched Palestino, forcing the club's training school in Gaza to shut down and disrupting programs it supports across the occupied West Bank.

But within Chile it has breathed new life into players and fans. Before kickoff, the team now rushes the pitch clad in keffiyehs, brandishing anti-war banners and taking a knee.

In May the team abandoned one little pre-match ritual of emerging on the field holding hands with child mascots. Instead, players extended their arms to the side, grasping at empty space.

It was a subtle gesture — a tribute to the "invisible children" killed in Gaza, the team later explained — that could have been lost entirely on ordinary soccer fans.

This crowd, however, went wild. \_\_\_\_

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## Activists criticize high cost of Pope Francis' visit to East Timor, one of the poorest nations

By NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

DILI, East Timor (AP) — East Timor pulled out all stops for Pope Francis' historic visit to one of the world's youngest and poorest countries to the tune of \$12 million, drawing rebuke from activists and human rights organizations in a nation where almost half the population lives in poverty.

The cost for the two-day visit starting Monday was approved by the government through the Council of Ministers in February, including \$1 million to build an altar for a papal Mass.

Walls were still being dabbed with fresh paint and banners and billboards filled the streets of the seaside capital, Dili, to welcome the pontiff, who earlier visited Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

About 42% of East Timor's population of 1.3 million live below the poverty line, according to the U.N. Development Program. Unemployment is high, job opportunities in the formal sector are generally limited and most people are subsistence farmers with no steady income.

The country's budget for 2023 was \$3.16 billion. The government had earmarked only \$4.7 million to increase food production, said Marino Ferreira, a researcher at Timor Leste Institute for Development Monitoring and Analysis. He said the \$12 million expense for the papal visit "was exaggerating."

The non-governmental agency, known locally as Lao Hamutuk, has submitted several papers to the government and parliament asking to cut expenditures on ceremonies and prioritize issues that affect people, Ferreira said.

"The governments have ignored the poor in the country," he said.

East Timor has recently faced challenges of high inflation and weather changes that have reduced cereal production, pushing some 364,000 people, or 27% of the population, to experience acute food insecurity from May to September, according to the U.N.'s Food and Agricultural Organization.

East Timor's Minister of State Administration Tomas Cabral, who heads the national organizing committee for the pope's visit, said the \$12 million was excessive but it was also being used for infrastructure development, such as road constructions, renovating churches and other public facilities.

"Don't compare our country with neighboring nations that have proper facilities and infrastructure to host international events or high-ranking state guests," Cabral said. "Here, we have to build it from the scratch."

Cabral said that about \$1.2 million has been allocated for transportation and logistics of people from across the country to welcome the pontiff and attend his Mass on Tuesday.

East Timor views the visit as a prime opportunity to put the world's spotlight on the small nation with a turbulent path to independence. It's the youngest country in Asia where 97% of the population identify as Catholic.

"The pope's visit is the biggest, the best marketing anyone can aspire to promote the country, to put

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the country on the tourist map," East Timor's President Jose Ramos-Horta said in an interview with The Associated Press last week.

The highlight of Francis' visit will be a Eucharistic celebration on Tuesday where more than 300,000 faithful are expected, including several thousands living from near the border of Indonesia's West Timor, the western part of the island of Timor.

The papal Mass in Tasitolu, an open field on the coast some 8 kilometers (nearly 5 miles) from downtown Dili, is also causing displeasure. The government has bulldozed about 185 families and confiscated 23 hectares (57 acres) of land for the event. Rights groups accuse the government of not offering any alternatives to poor families.

"The lives of those families are uncertain at the moment, they don't know where to go as they are still there waiting for compensation," said Pedrito Vieira, coordinator of the Land Network, a coalition of NGOs advocating land rights. "Sudden eviction will only give them uncertainty to plan their life."

Cabral said those were settlers and not traditional landowners who were squatting on state land. He said they were given advance notices and time to remove their structures and move out.

"There have been those who have politicized the situation there so that the illegal settlers have refused to move for unclear reasons," Cabral said.

Several violent crackdowns on street vendors ostensibly to ensure order in Dili ahead of Francis' trip also drew outcry among rights activists.

Social media were flooded with angry comments after footage showed dozens of alleged plainclothes police officers with sticks, crowbars and spears destroying vendor stands and goods in one of the paths where the pope's entourage will pass.

Suzana Cardoso, a veteran journalist who recorded the incident last week in Dili's Fatuhada neighborhood, told The Associated Press that she received threats in an attempt to stop her from sharing the video.

"I have a moral obligation as a journalist to uphold justice for those weak and poor," said Cardoso, who also covered the country's darkest days when Indonesia responded to East Timor's U.N.-backed vote seeking independence 25 years ago with a scorched-earth campaign that shocked the world. About 1,500 people were killed, more than 300,000 were displaced and over 80% of East Timor's infrastructure was destroyed.

Ramos-Horta instructed the police and Dili city administration to arrest those behind the destruction of vendor stands and compensate the traders.

"The government has never been instructed to carry out public order with violence," Ramos-Horta said in a news conference.

"A free and independent press is protected by law in this country," he said. "I appeal to all institutions not to hinder journalists and to respect press freedom."

## What the Trump-Clinton debate might tell us about Tuesday's match with Harris

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — He claimed she would raise taxes and accused her of supporting open border policies that allowed an influx of migrants into the country. He blamed her for a litany of the current administration's failures and cast her potential presidency as four more years of the same.

Donald Trump wasn't facing Vice President Kamala Harris. It was Hillary Clinton on the debate stage.

As Trump and Harris prepare to debate for the first — and potentially only — time Tuesday, his three meetings with Clinton in 2016 illustrate the challenges facing both candidates in what is again shaping up to be an extremely close election.

Harris will face a skilled and experienced debater who excels at rattling his rivals with a barrage of insults and interruptions, while projecting unflappable confidence and conviction. And Trump will be up against a longtime prosecutor known for landing pointed punches. He again faces a woman who would become the country's first female president, and must contend with the underlying gender dynamics at play.

Trump started out on good behavior



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During their first 2016 debate in late September, moderated by NBC's Lester Holt, Trump began on his best behavior. He and Clinton warmly shook hands after taking the stage and Trump, in his first answer, said he agreed with his rival when it came to the importance of affordable childcare.

After referring to the former first lady, senator, and secretary of state as "Secretary Clinton," he checked to make sure she approved.

"Yes? Is that ok? Good. I want you to be very happy. It's very important to me," he said, drawing laughs from the audience and Clinton herself. (In later debates, he called her "Hillary," while she consistently used "Donald.")

It was Clinton who took the first digs of the night when she criticized the then-reality TV star and real estate developer for supporting "Trumped-up trickle-down" economics and said their different perspectives were borne from the fact that Trump had received millions of dollars from his wealthy father, while hers had worked hard printing draperies.

In the audience, she said, was a worker who accused Trump of stiffing him on bills.

But as the debate wore on, Trump became more combative as he pressed Clinton on why she hadn't done the things she was proposing as a candidate for president during her decades of public life.

"Typical politician: All talk, no action. Sounds good, doesn't work. Never gonna happen," he said.

Clinton's strategy: laugh it off

Clinton's strategy in responding to Trump's attacks was clear from the beginning: Don't get rattled. Laugh it off.

She never appeared flustered and instead smiled widely as she dismissively brushed off what she at one point cast as Trump "saying more crazy things."

"Well here we go again," she said in response to more insults in the second debate.

"No wonder you've been fighting ISIS your entire adult life," Trump quipped at one point as he tried to cast Clinton as an "all talk, no action" politician, of the group that formed in 2013.

"I have a feeling that by the end of this evening, I'm going to be blamed for everything that's ever happened," Clinton responded with a smile.

"Why not?" Trump answered.

Trump, meanwhile, sought to turn the arguments she made against him back onto her.

"I have much better judgment than she has... I also have a much better temperament than she has," he declared. "I think my strongest asset — maybe by far — is my temperament. I have a winning temperament."

'You ought to be ashamed of yourself'

The second debate between Trump and Clinton was far more combative. The town hall came just two days after the release of the "Access Hollywood" tape in which Trump bragged about sexually assaulting women.

With his campaign in freefall and top Republicans urging him to leave the race, Trump invited women who had accused former President Bill Clinton, Hillary Clinton's husband, of sexual misconduct, creating a spectacle as the women sat in the audience in the debate hall and spoke at a press conference beforehand.

There was no handshake this time, and the debate quickly devolved into accusations as Trump insisted what former president Clinton had done was "far worse" than his self-described "locker room talk."

"Bill Clinton was abusive to women. Hillary Clinton attacked those same women and attacked them viciously," he said. "I think it's disgraceful, and I think she should be ashamed of herself."

Later, Trump zeroed in on the thousands of hacked emails that Wikileaks had begun to publish the day of the tape's release, as well as Clinton's use of a personal email server during her time as secretary of state.

As Clinton sat on her stool, Trump approached her, and said that, if he won, he would instruct his attorney general to hire a special prosecutor to investigate her conduct.

"There has never been so many lies, so much deception," he said. "There has never been anything like this. ... Lives have been destroyed for doing 1/5th of what you've done, and it's a disgrace."

Clinton, again refusing to be flustered, directed viewers to her website where she said her campaign

had fact-checked his false allegations.

"It's just awfully good that someone with the temperament of Donald Trump is not in charge of the law in our country," she said.

"Because you'd be in jail," Trump responded to cheers from the audience.

## **Mother's warning to Georgia school about suspect raises questions about moments before shooting**

By JEFF AMY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — The mother of a student in class with the boy accused of killing four people in a Georgia high school shooting says information that school officials were warned that the boy was having a crisis shows the shooting could have been prevented.

"The school failed them, that they could have prevented these deaths and they didn't," Rebecca Sayarath said Sunday in a telephone interview with The Associated Press. "I truly, truly feel that way."

Sayarath's daughter, Lyela, told reporters on Wednesday, the day of the shooting at Apalachee High School in Winder, Georgia, that administrators appeared to be looking for Colt Gray, the 14-year-old who has been charged with four counts of murder, before the gunfire began.

Others, though, are declining to blame school or law enforcement officials.

"I'm not going to referee or second-guess what happened with the authorities the other night," U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock, a Georgia Democrat, said on CNN's "State of the Union" on Sunday. "I applaud our first responders. When others are running away from danger, they run toward the danger in order to do the best they can."

Officials say Gray shot and killed students Christian Angulo and Mason Schermerhorn, both 14, and teachers Richard Aspinwall, 39, and Cristina Irimie, 53. Eight other students and a teacher were injured — seven of them shot — and are expected to recover.

Annie Brown told The Washington Post that her sister, Colt Gray's mother, texted her saying she spoke with a school counselor and warned staff of an "extreme emergency" before the killings. Brown said Marcee Gray urged them to "immediately" find her son to check on him.

Brown provided screen shots of the text exchange to the newspaper, which also reported that a call log from the family's shared phone plan showed a call was made to the school at 9:50 a.m. Warrants for Gray's arrest say the shooting started at 10:20 a.m.

Brown confirmed the reporting to The Associated Press on Saturday in text messages but declined to provide further comment.

Marcee Gray expressed remorse for the shootings Saturday to The Washington Post and The New York Post.

"I am so, so sorry and can not fathom the pain and suffering they are going through right now," Gray told The Washington Post in a text.

"It's horrible. It's absolutely horrible," Gray told The New York Post outside her father's home in Fitzgerald, Georgia, about 150 miles (240 kilometers) south of Atlanta.

Charles Polhamus, the boy's grandfather, has told multiple news outlets that Marcee Gray got a text from her son on Wednesday saying he was sorry. Polhamus told CNN that Marcee Gray drove to Winder, more than 200 miles (320 kilometers) from Fitzgerald, immediately after the shooting.

The Washington Post also reported that texts show relatives contacted the school about the boy's mental health a week before the shooting, and that Brown told a relative he was having "homicidal and suicidal thoughts." The newspaper reported that the teen's grandmother, Deborah Polhamus, met with a school counselor to request help.

The boy "starts with the therapist tomorrow," Polhamus wrote in a text to Brown after that meeting.

Investigators haven't said what they believe might have motivated Gray or whether they believe he targeted particular victims.

Authorities have said Gray's father, Colin Gray, gave him access to the semiautomatic AR-15 style rifle

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used in the shooting. It's not clear how Gray brought the gun to campus or what he did with it in the two hours between school starting at 8:15 a.m. and when shots first rang out.

Colin Gray became the first parent of a school shooting suspect to be charged in Georgia, District Attorney Brad Smith said Friday. He's accused of second-degree murder, involuntary manslaughter and cruelty to children for providing his son with the rifle.

Colin Gray is jailed in Barrow County after declining to seek bail in a brief court hearing Friday in Winder. Colt Gray is being held in a juvenile detention center after declining to seek bail. Neither has been indicted or entered a plea.

Lyela Sayarath said Wednesday that Colt Gray had left her algebra classroom and that she believed he was skipping class.

In the minutes before the shooting, a female administrator came to her class looking for a student with the same last name and almost identical first name as Gray, she said. That other student was in the bathroom, but the administrator demanded to see his bag. That student returned with his bag moments later, Sayarath said, and told her that administrators had concluded he wasn't the student they were looking for.

Someone also called the teacher on the intercom, apparently asking about Gray, Sayarath said. She said as the intercom buzzed a second time, the teacher responded, "Oh he's here," seeing Gray outside the classroom door.

When students went to open the door, which automatically locks from the inside when closed, Sayarath said they backed away. She said she saw Colt Gray turn away through the window of the door and then she said she heard gunshots — "10 or 15 of them at once, back-to-back."

Rabeca Sayarath, Lyela's mother, has said she believed the school erred by sending an unarmed administrator to look for Colt Gray instead of one of Apalachee High's armed school resource officers.

When she questioned Barrow County Sheriff Jud Smith about her daughter's account at a Wednesday night news conference, Smith cautioned, "With all due respect, ma'am, I think your information is incorrect."

It's unclear if Barrow County school authorities knew before the shooting that Colt and Colin Gray previously had been interviewed by a sheriff's deputy in neighboring Jackson County in May 2023 after a report of an online threat to shoot up a middle school that Colt Gray, then 13, attended.

Colt Gray told the deputy that "he would never say such a thing, even in a joking manner," according to a report filed by investigators. No action was taken because of inconsistent information about the social media account used to make the threats.

Colin Gray told the investigator back then that Colt had access to unloaded guns in the house but knew "how to use them and not use them." He also said his son had struggled since he and his wife separated and that Colt was picked on in school.

Nicole Valles, a spokesperson for the Barrow County school district, declined to comment Sunday in response to emailed questions seeking more details about what may have happened before the shooting.

"Because this is an active investigation and now court proceedings have begun, we are not commenting on specific details," Valles wrote, referring questions to the district attorney.

Smith didn't immediately respond to emails Sunday with similar questions, while the Georgia Bureau of Investigation referred requests for comment to the district attorney.

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"Because you'd be in jail," Trump responded to cheers from the audience.

Trump lurked behind Clinton

Beyond encapsulating the sheer nastiness of the race, the debate, which was co-moderated by ABC's Martha Raddatz and CNN's Anderson Cooper, also underscored the gender dynamics at play. Trump, who is physically far larger, lurked behind Clinton at times.

As she apologized for using a private email server, Trump loomed ominously behind Clinton.

During a subsequent question on the Affordable Care Act and rising healthcare costs, Trump stood right behind Clinton as she stepped forward to respond to the audience member who had asked the question. The scene was immortalized in endless memes and parodies and has often been cited as a cautionary tale for male candidates debating women.

"This is not okay, I thought," Clinton later wrote in a memoir recounting the episode. She said that, on the small stage, "no matter where I walked, he followed me closely, staring at me, making faces. It was incredibly uncomfortable. He was literally breathing down my neck. My skin crawled."

"It was one of those moments where you wish you could hit pause and ask everyone watching: 'Well, what would you do?' Do you stay calm, keep smiling, and carry on as if he weren't repeatedly invading your space? Or do you turn, look him in the eye, and say loudly and clearly, 'Back up, you creep, get away from me, I know you love to intimidate women but you can't intimidate me, so back up.'"

"I chose option A," she said, "aided by a lifetime of dealing with difficult men trying to throw me off."

"I wonder, though," she went on, "whether I have chosen option B. It certainly would have been better TV."

'No puppet. You're the puppet'

By the third debate, which was moderated by Fox News' Chris Wallace, allegations of Russian election interference were dominating the news.

"We've never had a foreign government trying to interfere in our election," Clinton said, expressing outrage that Trump had encouraged espionage against Americans and accusing him of touting the line of Russian President Vladimir Putin in exchange for assistance.

"She has no idea whether it's Russia, China or anybody else. She has no idea," Trump retorted, contradicting the conclusions of a long list of American intelligence agencies. He insisted he didn't know Putin, whom he derisively said had no respect for Clinton.

"Well that's because he'd rather have a puppet as president of the United States," Clinton responded.

"No puppet, no puppet. You're the puppet," Trump shot back.

(Trump later said he condemned election interference "by Russia or anybody else.")

Clinton, in an interview with The New York Times, referenced the "puppet" moment as an example of what she hoped Harris would do on stage Tuesday night.

"She just should not be baited. She should bait him. He can be rattled. He doesn't know how to respond to substantive, direct attacks," she told the outlet. "I mean, when I said he was a Russian puppet and he just sputtered onstage, I think that's an example of how you get out a fact about him that really unnerves him."

Taking advantage of the split screen

But the debate also provided a clear illustration of why Trump is such an effective debater. While Clinton tried to remain above the fray and laugh off attacks, Trump appeared in control, frequently interrupting with quips and commentary.

He also took advantage of the split-screen that kept the camera on both of the candidates' faces through

much of the debate, often looking straight ahead, projecting strength, and visibly reacting.

When Clinton at one point spoke about her experience, he interjected: "Give me a break."

"Wrong," he retorted, after she accused him of having mimicked a disabled reporter.

"Wrong," he said again after she noted his past support for the invasion of Iraq.

Repeatedly, he tried to direct the proceedings, complementing Wallace or offering direction. After being asked about allegations of sexual assault by a long list of women, Trump insisted the stories were nothing but "lies" and "fiction" and then tried to deflect by pivoting to Clinton's emails.

"What isn't fictionalized is her emails," he said. "That's really what you should be talking about. Not fiction."

Later, Clinton took a swipe at Trump as she discussed her plan to raise taxes on the rich to keep Social Security solvent.

"My Social Security payroll contribution will go up, as will Donald's, assuming he can't figure out how to get out of it," she said.

"Such a nasty woman," he said, shaking his head.

Time is a flat circle

The debates also demonstrated how little has changed over the last eight years.

During the third debate, Trump was asked for a second time about his efforts to sow doubts about the integrity of the election and claims that it was being rigged. Would he commit to accepting the results, he was asked?

"I will look at it at the time," he said, complaining that a dishonest media was working to "poison the minds of the voters" and claiming, falsely, that millions of people were registered to vote who shouldn't have been.

He also took issue with Clinton's candidacy, as he has with Harris after she replaced Biden as the Democratic nominee.

"She shouldn't be allowed to run. She's guilty of a very, very serious crime," he said.

He was asked again whether he would commit to a peaceful transition of power.

"What I'm saying is that I will tell you at the time," he responded. "I'll keep you in suspense."

Clinton called his answer "horrifying" and noted that anytime anything is not going in Trump's favor — from that year's Iowa caucuses to losing at the Emmy Awards — he alleges it is rigged.

"Should have gotten it," Trump said, drawing laughs.

"That is not the way our democracy works," Clinton insisted.

## **Harris' past debates: A prosecutor's style with narrative flair but risks in a matchup with Trump**

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — From her earliest campaigns in California to her serving as President Joe Biden's running mate, Kamala Harris has honed an aggressive but calibrated approach to debates.

She tries to blend punch lines with details that build toward a broader narrative. She might shake her head to signal her disapproval while her opponent is speaking, counting on viewers to see her reaction on a split screen. And she has a go-to tactic to pivot debates back in her favor: saying she's glad to answer a question as she gathers her thoughts to explain an evolving position or defend a past one.

Tuesday's presidential debate will put the vice president's skills to a test unlike any she's faced. Harris faces former President Donald Trump, who will participate in his seventh general election debate since 2016, for an event that will be seen by tens of millions of viewers just as early voting in November's election starts around the country.

People who have competed against Harris and prepared her rivals say she brings a series of advantages to the matchup, even as they warn that Trump can be a challenging and unpredictable opponent who veers between policy critiques, personal attacks, and falsehoods or conspiracy theories.

"She can meet the moment," said Marc Short, who led Republican Vice President Mike Pence's debate preparation against Harris in the fall of 2020. "She has shown that in different environments. I would not

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underestimate that in any way.”

Julian Castro, a Democrat who ran for president against Harris in the 2020 primary, said Harris blended “knowledge, poise and the ability to explain things well” to stand out during crowded primary debates.

“Some candidates get too caught up with trying to be catchy, trying to go viral,” Castro said. “She’s found a very good balance.”

### Balancing narrative and detail

A former Harris aide, who spoke on condition of anonymity to talk about her approach, said the vice president views the events like a jury trial or querying a judicial nominee on Capitol Hill when she was a U.S. senator. The idea, the former aide said, has always been to win the debate on merit while leaving more casual or piecemeal viewers with key takeaways.

“She understands that debates are about the individual interactions themselves but also about a larger strategy of offering a vision for what your leadership and style looks like,” said Tim Hogan, who led Sen. Amy Klobuchar’s 2020 primary debate preparation.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson, a political communications professor at the University of Pennsylvania, said Harris makes deductive arguments but folds them into a broader narrative — the same way she would talk to a jury.

“She states a thesis and then follows with fact, fact, fact,” she said.

Jamieson pointed to the 2020 vice presidential debate in which Harris hammered Trump’s handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economy, and to her most memorable 2019 primary debate when she skewered Biden for how he had talked about race and institutional racism. She weaved her critique of Biden’s record with her own biography as a young, biracial student in the early era of school integration.

“That little girl was me,” Harris said in a widely circulated quip that punctuated her story about court-ordered busing that helped non-white students attend integrated schools.

“Most people who are good at the deductive argument aren’t good at wrapping that with an effective narrative,” Jamieson said. “She’s good at both.”

### Landing memorable punches

Castro said Harris has a good feel for when to strike, a quality he traced to her trial experience. In 2019, as multiple Democratic candidates talked over one another, Harris sat back before getting moderators to recognize her.

“Hey, guys, you know what? America does not want to witness a food fight. They want to know how we’re going to put food on their table,” she said, taking control of the conversation and drawing applause.

When Harris faced Pence in 2020, it was a mostly civil, substantive debate. But she got in digs that framed Pence as a serial interrupter, as Trump had been in his first debate with Biden.

“Mr. Vice President, I’m speaking,” she said at one point, with a stern look. At another: “If you don’t mind letting me finish, we can have a conversation.”

### Finding traps in policy

Debates have sometimes put Harris on the defensive.

In the 2020 primary matches, Tulsi Gabbard, who this year has endorsed Trump, blitzed Harris over how aggressively she prosecuted nonviolent drug offenders as a district attorney.

That fall, Pence made Harris sometimes struggle to defend Biden’s positions. Now, her task will be to defend not just Biden’s record, but her own role in that record and what policies she would pursue as president.

Short, one of Pence’s top aides, noted that Republicans and the media have raised questions about more liberal positions Harris took in her 2020 primary campaign, especially on fracking, universal healthcare, reparations for slavery and how to treat migrants who cross the U.S. border illegally.

“We were surprised that she missed some opportunities (against Pence) when the conversation was centered around policy,” Short said.

### Timing, silence and nonverbal communication

One of Harris’ earliest debate triumphs came in 2010 as she ran for California attorney general. Her opponent was asked about his plans to accept his public pension while still being paid a salary for a current



public post.

"I earned it," Republican Steve Cooley said of the so-called "double-dipping" practice.

Harris looked on silently, with a slightly amused look as Cooley explained himself. When moderators recognized her, she said just seven words – "Go for it, Steve. You earned it!" — in a serious tone but with a look that communicated her sarcasm. The exchange landed in her television ads within days.

"Kamala Harris is quite effective at nonverbal communication and knowing when not to speak," Jamieson said.

The professor said Harris often will shake her head and, with other looks, telegraph her disapproval while her opponent is speaking. Then she smiles before retorting, or attacking, in a conversational tone.

"She defuses some of the argument that Trump makes that she is 'a nasty woman,' that she's engaging in egregiously unfair behavior, because her nonverbal presentation is actually undercutting that line of attack," Jamieson said.

Meeting a new challenge with Trump

For all of Harris' debate experience, Tuesday is still a new and massive stage. Democrats who ordinarily tear into Trump instead appeared on Sunday's news shows to make clear that Harris faced a big task ahead.

"It will take almost superhuman focus and discipline to deal with Donald Trump in a debate," said Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, yet another of Harris' 2020 opponents, on CNN. "It's no ordinary proposition, not because Donald Trump is a master of explaining policy ideas and how they're going to make people better off. It's because he's a master of taking any form or format that is on television and turning it into a show that is all about him."

Castro noted that Trump is "a nasty and crafty stage presence" who makes preparation difficult. And with ABC keeping the candidates' microphones off when they are not speaking, Harris may not find it as easy to produce another viral moment that hinges on viewers having seen or heard Trump at his most outlandish.

"The best thing she can do," Castro said, "is not get distracted by his antics."

## Lightning could worsen wildfire east of LA already threatening 35,000 homes and buildings

By EUGENE GARCIA and TRẦN NGUYỄN Associated Press

HIGHLAND, Calif. (AP) — An out-of-control wildfire in the foothills of a national forest east of Los Angeles threatened ten of thousands of buildings and forced hundreds of residents to flee Sunday amid a days-long heat wave of triple-digit temperatures.

The so-called Line Fire was burning along the edge of the San Bernardino National Forest, about 65 miles (105 kilometers) east of Los Angeles. As of Sunday morning, the blaze had charred about 27 square miles (70 square kilometers) of grass and chaparral, leaving a thick cloud of dark smoke blanketing the area.

The fire burned so hot Saturday that it created its own thunderstorm-like weather systems of pyrocumuliform clouds, which could bring more challenging conditions such as gusty winds and lightning strikes, according to the National Weather Service. Firefighters also faced steep terrain, which limited their ability to control the blaze, officials said. The fire remained uncontained Sunday afternoon.

County officials, who declared an emergency Saturday evening, issued evacuation orders for Running Springs, Arrowbear Lake, areas east of Highway 330 and other regions.

Running Springs resident Steven Michael King said he had planned to stay to fight the fire and help his neighbors until Sunday morning, when the fire escalated. He had prepped his house to prevent fire damage but decided to leave out of fear smoke could keep him from finding a way out later.

"It came down to, which is worse, being trapped or being in a shelter?" he said outside an evacuation center Sunday. "When conditions changed, I had to make a quick decision, just a couple of packs and it all fits in a shopping cart."

Joseph Escobedo said his family has lived in Angelus Oaks for about three years and has never had to evacuate for wildfire. His family, with three young children, was among the remaining few who haven't left the area as of Sunday afternoon.

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"It's kind of frightening with the possibility of losing your home and losing everything we worked really hard for," Escobedo said as his family packed up the essentials to leave. "It's hard to leave and not be sure if you're gonna be able to come back."

Arrowbear Lake resident Michael Lee said he left his home with his dog Saturday afternoon. Lee, a photographer, had turned back to retrieve a camera and didn't get to the evacuation center in Highland until nearly seven hours later.

"I wanna get back to home," Lee said sitting in his car outside the evacuation center. "The triple-digit weather down here is nasty."

State firefighters said three firefighters had been injured and more than 35,000 structures were threatened, including single and multi-family homes and commercial buildings. Thunderstorms expected later in the day could make it even more challenging to rein in the fire.

"Afternoon thunderstorms could cause new ignitions and potentially influence activity around the fire perimeter," state firefighters said in a Sunday morning update. "Hot and dry conditions mixed with thunderstorms are expected to challenge firefighters for the next few days."

The affected area is near small mountain towns in the San Bernardino National Forest where Southern California residents ski in the winter and mountain bike in the summer. Running Springs is on the route to the popular ski resort town of Big Bear.

Joe Franco, a worker at Noah's Restaurant in the downtown section of San Bernardino, said his friends in the surrounding evacuation zones were gearing up to leave at a moment's notice. Smoke from the fire had already blanketed downtown San Bernardino, Franco said.

"They're just kind of hanging on tight and getting their stuff ready to move," Franco said of his friends. "Normally they're here, but a lot of people are not coming today."

The fire prompted Redlands Unified School District to cancel Monday classes for roughly 20,000 students. Gov. Gavin Newsom proclaimed a state of emergency for San Bernardino County Saturday night.

A small vegetation fire that started Sunday afternoon in Clearlake City, 110 miles (117 kilometers) north of San Francisco, was forcing roughly 4,000 people to evacuate and burning structures. Officials said at least 30 homes and commercial buildings were on fire. Firefighters said they were gaining ground against the blaze Sunday afternoon.

More firefighters were expected to arrive in San Bernadino County Sunday. State officials said vegetation is critically dry in the area and temperatures reached more than 100 degrees (39 degrees Celsius) on Saturday, with relative humidity ideal for the fire to spread. The blaze began Thursday evening, and the cause is under investigation.

More than 600 firefighters were battling the fire, supported by water-dropping helicopters that hovered over homes and hillsides, along with other aircraft, according to state firefighters. Cal Fire officials didn't return calls on Sunday seeking more information about three injured firefighters.

The fire produced coiling clouds of dense smoke, and flames could be seen cresting hillside ridges.

No homes or other structures had been damaged or destroyed.

The National Weather Service said downtown Los Angeles hit a high of 112 degrees Fahrenheit (44 Celsius) Friday, which marked the third time since 1877 that a temperature that high has been reached there.

## **A blockbuster Chinese video game sparks debate on sexism in the nation's gaming industry**

By ELSIE CHEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A blockbuster new Chinese video game hailed as a milestone for the country's gaming industry has put an unexpected spotlight on longstanding claims of rampant sexism in China's male-dominated gaming culture.

While some gamers are basking in the runaway success of the action-adventure title "Black Myth: Wu-kong," others are voicing their complaints about sexism in Chinese gaming and lodging allegations against the game's Shenzhen-based developer, Game Science, that it posted offensive messages online.

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Critics posted screenshots of the messages on Chinese social media platform Weibo, with one compilation receiving over 400,000 likes. One of the posts that critics say came from founder Feng Ji uses descriptions of oral sex as a metaphor for the positive responses about the game's promotional video. Other examples include lewd recruiting posters.

AP was not able to independently verify the screenshots, though gamers interviewed reported seeing the posts. Game Science did not respond to an email seeking comment and hasn't publicly commented on the controversy.

The criticism reflects simmering anger among Chinese women in the industry who say they have long been targeted by misogynistic remarks and behavior.

Gender inequality is a global problem in the heavily male-dominated gaming industry. Despite making up almost half of the gamers globally, women made up only about 22% of the gaming industry workforce in 2020, according to Women in Games, a United Kingdom-based organization.

Skylar Hu, the only woman on her game engineering team of over 20 people, said her male colleagues often posted sexual jokes in work chat groups. She said when she told offenders to stop, her messages were ignored.

"Offensive jokes are so common and explicit," Hu, 23, said in a phone interview, speaking on condition she be cited by her English name out of concern for her safety online.

For Jessica Hua, a former video game operation manager, controversy over the game reminded her of the toxic environment she experienced as a woman in the game industry.

"A lot of people think it's just kidding around. But I cannot accept such misogynistic remarks," said Hua. "I take it quite seriously."

"Black Myth: Wukong" is China's first-ever AAA game, a designation for big-budget productions akin to A-list movies. The game made history when over 2.4 million people played the game simultaneously online, breaking the record for most-played single-player game on Steam, a major online gaming platform. Three days after the game's debut, over 10 million copies had been sold.

Many in the Chinese gaming industry say they regard the game as a point of national pride, promoting Chinese culture and challenging Western dominance in the industry.

"There is no doubt that this is a milestone in the Chinese gaming industry," said Feng Xu, secretary of the Chengdu Cyber Game Industry Association. "It's exporting authentic Chinese culture by introducing Monkey King to the world."

China, which famously imposed limits on how long kids can play video games and sought to curtail excessive spending on online gaming, has shown full support for "Black Myth." The government of China's northwestern Shanxi province collaborated with the game's developer to promote local tourism. State media have also published a series of articles praising the game.

Feng Xu says he doesn't think the allegations against Game Science would have much impact on the game's success. "Political correctness has nothing to do with the game," he said. "We gamers only play the games, and we only care if the game is good and fun."

Others say it was only a matter of time before addressing sexism in Chinese gaming culture gained more traction.

"Most game creators are men. You can see in a lot of games women are usually unnecessarily sexy and objectified," said Ashley Li, a cultural critic and game enthusiast. "But I think this will gradually change in the future. We need to give it some time."

## After interstate shootings wound 5, searchers comb Kentucky hill country for suspect

By BRUCE SCHREINER and LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press  
LONDON, Ky. (AP) — Authorities searched a rugged, hilly area of southeastern Kentucky on Sunday for a man suspected of shooting 12 vehicles and wounding five people on a busy interstate. Joseph A. Couch, 32, was named a suspect in Saturday's shootings on Interstate 75 after authorities



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said they recovered his SUV on a service road near the crime scene. They later found a semi-automatic weapon nearby that they believe was used in the shooting, said Deputy Gilbert Acciardo, a spokesperson for the Laurel County Sheriff's Office.

The search was focused on a remote area north of London, a community of about 8,000 people some 75 miles (120 kilometers) south of Lexington.

"Where is he? That's the big question right now," Acciardo told reporters as law enforcement searched a heavily wooded area before sunset. "We're still in there. We still feel like that he's in there or we obviously wouldn't be searching wholeheartedly like we are."

The search was temporarily suspended after nightfall Sunday evening, but was set to resume early Monday morning.

"We've not had any luck so far, no trace so far, no information or evidence that's at the scene to indicate that he's there. But we believe that he's there," Acciardo said.

State Police Master Trooper Scottie Pennington, a spokesman for the London state police post, said additional troopers are being brought in from around the state to bolster the manhunt.

At an evening press conference, authorities sought to reassure residents that they believe the suspect will be found.

"We're doing everything that we can do," said Laurel County Sheriff John Root, adding, "Just be confident."

Couch most recently lived in Woodbine, a small community about 20 miles (32 kilometers) south of the shooting scene. Acciardo said authorities found his abandoned vehicle Saturday and then an AR-15 rifle on Sunday in a wooded area near a highway where "he could have shot down upon the interstate from." A phone believed to be Couch's was found by law enforcement, but the battery had been taken out.

Authorities said Couch purchased the gun and about 1,000 rounds of ammunition Saturday morning in London. Couch has a military background, having served in the National Guard for at least four years, said Captain Richard Dalrymple of the Laurel County Sheriff's Office.

Couch was initially considered a person of interest in the case until he was upgraded to a suspect on Sunday, Acciardo said.

Authorities believe there was only one shooter. Acciardo said the shooting appeared to involve some planning but seemed to be a "random act" of violence in which no particular person was targeted. He wouldn't speculate as to a possible motive.

Authorities were notified at about 5:30 p.m. Saturday about gunshots near the interstate's exit 49. An individual who was "off that exit" fired multiple rounds into the northbound and southbound lanes. Authorities initially said nine vehicles were struck by gunfire, but later increased that number to 12, saying some people did not realize their cars had been hit by bullets until they arrived home. Dalrymple said the gunman fired a total of 20 to 30 rounds.

The gunman was not in a vehicle at the time of the shooting.

The wounded — one person from Kentucky and others from out of state — were hospitalized in stable condition Sunday. Some had "very serious" injuries, including one person shot in the face, Acciardo said.

Residents of Laurel County were on edge as authorities searched with a drone, helicopter and on foot in a remote and sparsely populated wooded area near the highway.

Cody Shepherd, sipping a bloody mary outdoors while waiting to watch a football game at the Pour Boyz Sports Lounge in London on Sunday, said locals were abuzz with speculation. A resident of London, he was at a party Saturday at a friend's house about 10 miles (16 kilometers) south of where the shooting occurred.

"We were listening to the police scanners all night," he said, adding they heard sirens and saw a helicopter overhead.

On Sunday, several local churches canceled services. But Rodney Goodlett, pastor of Faith Assembly of God in London, was helping direct traffic as parishioners gathered for a morning service. He expected the search would hold down attendance.

"This is tragic, obviously, that somebody would randomly do violent acts," he said. "You hear media things taking place all around our country, but then when it hits home, it's a little bit of a wake-up call."

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Authorities released a photo of Couch and warned residents he was believed to be armed and dangerous. According to Kentucky state court records, Couch was charged in February with misdemeanor "terroristic threatening." However, the charge was dismissed when a victim failed to appear in court. In 2015, Couch was sentenced to six months in jail after being convicted of criminal mischief and unlawful transactions with a minor. Couch also has had a handful of traffic violations and a public intoxication conviction in 2020.

Acciardo said the search is dangerous for first responders and is painstaking because of thick foliage. There are "a lot of woods, a lot of cuts in the rock," he said. "He could be hiding behind a tree and us walk right up on him."

## **Pentagon chief says a six-month temporary budget bill will have devastating effects on the military**

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Passage of a six-month temporary spending bill would have widespread and devastating effects on the Defense Department, Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin said in a letter to key members of Congress on Sunday.

Austin said that passing a continuing resolution that caps spending at 2024 levels, rather than taking action on the proposed 2025 budget will hurt thousands of defense programs, and damage military recruiting just as it is beginning to recover after the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Asking the department to compete with (China), let alone manage conflicts in Europe and the Middle East, while under a lengthy CR, ties our hands behind our back while expecting us to be agile and to accelerate progress," said Austin in the letter to leaders of the House and Senate appropriations committees.

Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson has teed up a vote this week on a bill that would keep the federal government funded for six more months. The measure aims to garner support from his more conservative GOP members by also requiring states to obtain proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate or passport, when registering a person to vote.

Congress needs to approve a stop-gap spending bill before the end of the budget year on Sept. 30 to avoid a government shutdown just a few weeks before voters go to the polls and elect the next president.

Austin said the stop-gap measure would cut defense spending by more than \$6 billion compared to the 2025 spending proposal. And it would take money from key new priorities while overfunding programs that no longer need it.

Under a continuing resolution, new projects or programs can't be started. Austin said that passing the temporary bill would stall more than \$4.3 billion in research and development projects and delay 135 new military housing and construction projects totaling nearly \$10 billion.

It also would slow progress on a number of key nuclear, ship-building, high-tech drone and other weapons programs. Many of those projects are in an array of congressional districts, and could also have an impact on local residents and jobs.

Since the bill would not fund legally required pay raises for troops and civilians, the department would have to find other cuts to offset them. Those cuts could halt enlistment bonuses, delay training for National Guard and Reserve forces, limit flying hours and other training for active-duty troops and impede the replacement of weapons and other equipment that has been pulled from Pentagon stocks and sent to Ukraine.

Going forward with the continuing resolution, said Austin, will "subject service members and their families to unnecessary stress, empower our adversaries, misalign billions of dollars, damage our readiness, and impede our ability to react to emergent events."

Noting that there have been 48 continuing resolutions during 14 of the last 15 fiscal years — for a total of nearly 1,800 days — Austin said Congress must break the pattern of inaction because the U.S. military can't compete with China "with our hands tied behind our back every fiscal year."

Johnson's bill is not expected to get support in the Democratic-controlled Senate, if it even makes it that far. But Congress will have to pass some type of temporary measure by Sept. 30 in order to avoid a shutdown.

## Tyreek Hill is detained by police before Dolphins game. Officer is subsequently placed on leave

By ALANIS THAMES AP Sports Writer

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP) — Tyreek Hill of the Miami Dolphins was handcuffed and placed face down on a street outside the team's stadium after he was stopped for speeding and reckless driving Sunday morning before the Dolphins' first game of the season, an incident that left the star wide receiver baffled and resulted in a police officer being placed on administrative leave.

The officer, who was not identified, was one of at least three involved in detaining Hill. Some fans saw Hill being handcuffed and captured video on their way to the game, and it quickly went viral on social media.

Miami-Dade Police director Stephanie V. Daniels said she had launched an internal affairs investigation. Told after the game that the officer was placed on leave pending the outcome of the investigation, Hill said: "That should tell you everything you need to know."

Added defensive tackle Calais Campbell, who was also briefly handcuffed after coming to his teammate's aid: "That makes sense based on the situation."

Hill, who said he respects police officers and wants to be one when he retires from football, said he "had no idea" why police placed him in handcuffs.

"I wasn't disrespectful because my mom didn't raise me that way," Hill said. "Didn't cuss. Didn't do none of that. Like I said, I'm still trying to figure it out, man."

Hill starred on the field for the Dolphins, catching seven passes for 130 yards — including an 80-yard touchdown that helped Miami rally for a 20-17 win over the Jacksonville Jaguars. Hill celebrated the score by mimicking being handcuffed.

Hill, who is Black, said he didn't want to use his celebrity to get out of the situation but wondered what would've happened if he weren't an NFL star.

"I don't want to bring race into it, but sometimes it gets kind of iffy when you do," he said. "What if I wasn't Tyreek Hill? Lord knows what that guy or guys would have done. I was just making sure that I was doing what my uncle always told me to do whenever you're in a situation like that: 'Just listen, put your hands on the steering wheel and just listen.'"

Daniels said in a statement earlier Sunday that she requested an "immediate review" of the details surrounding the incident, adding that the department would review available body camera footage.

In a later statement, Daniels said: "I'm committed to transparency and accountability to the community with any situation involving my officers."

Hill said everything happened so fast it caught him off guard.

"I'm just glad that my teammates were there to support me in that situation because I felt alone," Hill added.

Campbell said he was driving into Hard Rock Stadium when he saw Hill handcuffed, and he stopped to help. The 17-year NFL veteran ended up in handcuffs as well, saying officers told him it was because he disobeyed their direct orders.

"I'd seen, I feel like excessive force, so I get out of the car to kind of just try to de-escalate the situation," Campbell said, also calling the incident "a bit extreme."

Hill, who led the NFL in receiving yards in 2023, said he spoke to his wife and family after he was detained and before the game kicked off.

His agent, Drew Rosenhaus, called it a "heartbreaking situation" on ESPN.

"How things escalated into the situation that they were in, in handcuffs and being held on the ground with police, is mindboggling to me," Rosenhaus said. "I'm deeply concerned by that. Very troubled. We will be looking into it. We will be investigating this. We will look out for Tyreek, but I'm not going to make any allegations at this time. The most important thing is Tyreek is OK physically, mentally he was very distraught about what happened."

NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy said the league has been in contact with the Dolphins, but declined to comment further.



## Algeria's president joins opponents in claiming election irregularities after being named the winner

ALGIERS, Algeria (AP) — After being declared the winner of Algeria's election, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune joined his two challengers in criticizing the country's election authority for announcing results that contradicted earlier turnout figures and local tallies.

The claims of irregularities mar what had earlier appeared to be a landslide re-election for the 78-year-old head of state.

Algeria's National Independent Election Authority, or ANIE, on Sunday announced that Tebboune had won 94.7% of Saturday's vote, far outpacing his challengers Islamist Abdelali Hassani Cherif, who received only 3.2% and socialist Youcef Aouchiche, who got just 2.2%.

Hours later, Tebboune joined his opponents in questioning the reporting of results with the three campaigns jointly issuing a statement accusing the country's top election official of announcing contradictory results.

In a country where elections have historically been carefully choreographed affairs, such astonishing questions about irregularities shocked Algerians who expected Tebboune to win in a relatively uneventful fashion.

It's unclear what will follow all three candidates casting doubt on irregularities and whether they will prompt legal challenges or delay the final certification of the result.

The tally reported on Sunday gave Tebboune a total vote share that was far more than the 87% that Vladimir Putin won in Russia's March elections and the 92% that Ilham Aliyev got in Azerbaijan's February contest.

But efforts from Tebboune and members of his government to encourage voter turnout to project legitimacy appeared to have fallen short, with less than one out of every four voters participating.

Election officials on Sunday reported 5.6 million of the country's roughly 24 million voters had turned out to vote. Such high abstention rates, which remain unofficial, would surpass the 2019 presidential election when 39.9% of the electorate participated.

Officials did not explain why they had earlier announced 48% voter turnout at the time of polls closing. Before the three candidates joined in questioning the discrepancy, both of Tebboune's challengers raised concerns about it, citing their own tallies.

Aouchiche called it "strange." Ahmed Sadok, Cherif's campaign manager, blasted delays and the way the figure was calculated.

"It's a shame. It's an attack on the image of Algeria, which will become the laughing stock of nations," Sadok said earlier in the day.

He also said there had been a failure to deliver vote-sorting records to the candidates' representatives and that said the party had recorded instances of proxy group voting and pressure put on poll workers to inflate certain figures.

The claims of irregularities cap off an election season that outraged activists and civil society groups. Human rights advocates railed against the campaign season's repressive atmosphere and the harassment and prosecutions of those involved in opposition parties, media organizations and civil society groups.

Some denounced this election as a rubber stamp exercise that can only entrench the status quo. Amnesty International last week condemned Algeria's "brutal crackdown on human rights including the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association in the run up to the country's presidential elections."

Before the candidates questioned the results, Tebboune's supporters and detractors each had drawn conclusions from the results.

Pro-Tebboune university professor Abdellaoui Djazouli said on public television that the result was a resounding endorsement of Tebboune's program.

"The president has more legitimacy to continue his action to better establish his project for the new Algeria," he said on public television.

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But his runaway victory fueled criticism from pro-democracy activists who have long seen elections as tools that the country's political elites have used to give off an appearance of popular support.

Many said the loudest message to come out of the election came from those who chose to abstain out of fear that the election would only entrench and legitimize "le pouvoir" — a term used to describe the military-backed elites who run the country.

"The vast majority of the Algerian people have just given 'le pouvoir' a lesson in democracy," said Nasira Amour, a teacher and leading figure from Algeria's pro-democracy movement.

"The majority did not vote ... This electoral masquerade is a victory for the Hirak," Amour added, referencing the pro-democracy movement that swept the country in 2019.

That year, after Hirak protestors flooded the streets of Algerian cities, the military ousted President Abdelaziz Bouteflika after two decades in power. The interim government that replaced him heeded calls from military leaders to hold elections later that year, angering protestors who saw expediting elections as a way to calm discontent and sidestep demands for civilian-led, non-military rule.

Tebboune, considered the military's candidate, won his first-term in a widely boycotted election during which crowds sacked voting stations and police broke up demonstrations. Despite his early overtures and pledges to listen and usher in a "New Algeria," Hirak protestors continued weekly demonstrations demanding deeper reforms.

Algeria is Africa's largest country by area and, with almost 45 million people, it's the continent's second most populous after South Africa to hold presidential elections in 2024 — a year in which more than 50 elections are being held worldwide, encompassing more than half the world's population.

## **Jannik Sinner beats Taylor Fritz in the US Open men's final just weeks after his doping exoneration**

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Jannik Sinner started slowly at the U.S. Open, dropping the first set he played after being exonerated in a doping case no one knew about until shortly before play began at Flushing Meadows.

If that episode initially hung over him during the tournament, Sinner was able to put it aside while on court. Was he ever. The No. 1-ranked Sinner beat Taylor Fritz 6-3, 6-4, 7-5 with his typical relentless baseline game to win the men's championship at Arthur Ashe Stadium on Sunday, less than three weeks after word emerged of the Italian's two positive tests for a trace amount of an anabolic steroid.

"It was, and it's still, a little bit in my mind," Sinner said. "It's not that it's gone, but when I'm on court, I try to focus (on) the game, I try to handle the situation the best possible way. ... It was not easy, that's for sure, but ... I tried to stay focused, which I guess I've done a great job, mentally staying there every point I play."

This 2-hour, 15-minute victory gave him a second Grand Slam trophy — the other was at the Australian Open in January — and prevented No. 12 Fritz from ending the major title drought for American men that has lasted 21 years.

Andy Roddick's triumph at Flushing Meadows in 2003 was the last Slam title for a man from the United States. The last before Fritz, a 26-year-old from California, to even contest a final at one of the four biggest tournaments in tennis also was Roddick, who lost to Roger Federer at Wimbledon in 2009.

"I know we've been waiting for a champion for a long time," Fritz said, "so I'm sorry I couldn't get it done this time."

Still, this tournament was a success in many ways for U.S. tennis, with two women and two men from the country all in the semifinals for the first time at a major since the 2003 U.S. Open. Jessica Pegula reached the women's final before losing to Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus.

Sinner improved to 55-5 with a tour-high six titles in 2024. That includes a 35-2 mark on hard courts, the surface used at both the Australian Open and U.S. Open. He's the first man since Guillermo Vilas in 1977 to win his first two Grand Slam trophies in the same season.

This was the first year since 2002 in which no member of the Big Three — Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal

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or the retired Federer — won at least one major. Instead, Sinner, who is 23, and Carlos Alcaraz, 21, split the four Slam titles.

“Nice to see new champions,” Sinner said. “Nice to see new rivalries.”

The world found out on Aug. 20 that he tested positive twice in an eight-day span during March for a substance sold in an over-the-counter product in Italy, but he was cleared because his use was ruled unintentional — his defense was that the steroid entered his system via a massage from a team member he later fired.

While some players wondered whether Sinner was accorded special treatment, most believed he wasn't trying to dope. And the U.S. Open's fans never gave him a hard time.

“You can understand why people are upset about it. In anti-doping, it sounds so ridiculous,” said Travis Tygart, CEO of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, which wasn't involved in the case. “But the science is such that, if the facts are actually proven out, it is actually plausible.”

Sinner, who dedicated this win to an aunt that is in poor health, said the months before his case was resolved were not easy.

“It was very difficult for me to enjoy in certain moments. Also how I behaved or how I walked on the court in certain tournaments before ... was not the same as I used to be,” he said, “so whoever knows me better, they know that something was wrong. But during this tournament, slowly I re-started to feel a little bit more how I am as a person.”

As expected, Fritz enjoyed a home-court advantage on a cool afternoon under a nearly cloudless sky. In a celebrity-filled crowd that included Taylor Swift and her boyfriend, Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce, some spectators occasionally engaged in chants of “U-S-A!” between games or rose whenever Fritz picked up what felt like a crucial point.

The loudest they got was at 3-all in the third set, when Fritz smacked an overhead winner, punched the air and screamed, “Let's go!” People all around rose, applauding and shouting. After Fritz deposited a volley winner to earn a break point, he celebrated in the same fashion, and thousands in the seats went wild. Sinner then double-faulted, putting Fritz in front 4-3.

“If he wins that third,” said Fritz's coach, Michael Russell, “it's a whole new game.”

But when Fritz tried to serve out the set at 5-4, Sinner pulled even. He used a drop shot to lure Fritz forward, then hit a passing shot that drew a netted volley. Fritz bounced his racket off the court. Sinner loped to the towel box, not even smiling.

Ten minutes later, it was over, thanks to Sinner's closing four-game run. He raised his arms, threw his head back and closed his eyes.

Sinner's playing style is less spectacular than solid, less magical than metronomic. Either way, it was masterful, as he used his long limbs and squeaking, sliding sneakers to get to everything before aiming high-speed shot after shot right near lines.

“Sometimes, he makes you go for a little more than you want to,” Russell said, “because he gets so many balls back.”

Sinner — the second Italian to win a singles title at the U.S. Open, joining 2015 women's champion Flavia Pennetta — finished with just 21 unforced errors, 13 fewer than Fritz.

A poor first set hurt Fritz. He put 36% of first serves in, delivered only two aces and wound up with more than twice as many unforced errors (12) as winners (five).

The stats would improve, but Fritz never figured out a way to consistently put Sinner in trouble. Few can these days.

“That's just kind of how it goes,” Fritz said, “when you're playing ... the best player in the world right now.”



## DirecTV files complaint against Disney with FCC as impasse enters 2nd week

By JOE REEDY AP Sports Writer

The impasse between DirecTV and Disney over a new carriage agreement has become more heated as it entered its second week.

DirecTV filed a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission on Saturday night accusing Disney of negotiating in bad faith.

Disney channels, including ESPN and ABC-owned stations in nine markets, have been off DirecTV since the evening of Sept. 1. That meant DirecTV customers were blacked out from viewing most college football games and the final week of the U.S. Open tennis tournament, including the women's and men's finals.

DirecTV has 11.3 million subscribers, according to Leichtman Research Group, making it the nation's third-largest pay TV provider.

ABC and ESPN will have the "Monday Night Football" opener between the New York Jets and San Francisco 49ers. ABC will also produce and carry a presidential debate between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump on Tuesday in Philadelphia.

ABC-owned stations in Los Angeles; the San Francisco Bay Area; Fresno, California; New York; Chicago; Philadelphia; Houston; and Raleigh, North Carolina, are off DirecTV.

Besides all ESPN network channels and ABC-owned stations, Disney-branded channels Freeform, FX and National Geographic channel are dark.

DirecTV says in its 10-page complaint that Disney is violating the FCC's good faith mandates by asking it to waive any legal claims on any anticompetitive actions, including its ongoing packaging and minimum penetration demands.

DirecTV has asked Disney for the option to provide consumers with cheaper and skinnier bundles of programming, instead of bigger bundles that carry programming some viewers might not be interested in watching.

The complaint states: "Along with these anticompetitive demands, Disney has also insisted that DirecTV agree to a 'clean slate' provision and a covenant not to sue, both of which are intended to prevent DirecTV from taking legal action regarding Disney's anticompetitive demands, which would include filing good faith complaints at the Commission. Not three months ago, however, the Media Bureau made clear that such a demand itself constitutes bad faith."

DirecTV CEO Ray Carpenter said during a conference call with business and media analysts on Tuesday that they would not agree to a new carriage deal with Disney without bundling changes.

"We're not playing a short-term game," Carpenter said. "We need something that is going to work for the long-term sustainability of our video customers. The resolve is there."

Disney has claimed since the blackout began that mutual release of claims is standard practice after licensing agreements are negotiated and agreed upon by the parties. It has also had one with DirecTV under its past renewals.

A Disney spokesperson said: "We continue to negotiate with DirecTV to restore access to our content as quickly as possible. We urge DirecTV to stop creating diversions and instead prioritize their customers by finalizing a deal that would allow their subscribers to watch our strong upcoming lineup of sports, news and entertainment programming, starting with the return of Monday Night Football."

Last year, Disney and Charter Spectrum — the nation's second-largest cable TV provider — were involved in a nearly 12-day impasse until coming to an agreement hours before the first Monday night NFL game of the season.

## School districts race to invest in cooling solutions as classrooms and playgrounds heat up

By ALEXA ST. JOHN and DORANY PINEDA Associated Press

Ylenia Aguilar raised her sons in Arizona, so they're no strangers to scorching heat.

She remembers "seeing soccer kids and my own children pass out and faint from, you know, heat-related illnesses," she said. "It was seeing my sons dehydrated."

Schools across the U.S. are carpeted in heat-absorbing asphalt and lack shade. The buildings were often made with materials that radiated heat into indoor spaces. Kids are more vulnerable to heat illness than adults, and extreme temperatures affect learning, performance and concentration. Heat-related school closures are becoming more frequent.

The burden of extreme heat is not felt equally. Low-income neighborhoods and communities of color can be as much as 7 F (3.9 C) hotter than richer and whiter neighborhoods.

Yet there are well-known ways to cool down schools and neighborhoods.

### Cool ground surfaces

In 2022, students at a school near Atlanta pointed thermometers onto their basketball court and got a reading of 105 F (about 40.5 C). A roofing manufacturer donated a solar-reflective coating and helped them paint it on. They took another reading. This time it was 95 F (35 C).

Paved surfaces get really hot in the sun. They absorb solar energy and slowly re-radiate it out as heat, increasing air temperatures by as much as 7 F (3.9 C).

Cooling playgrounds and roads by making them more reflective is not new, but interest has been growing along with more understanding of the way the accumulation can affect neighborhoods, known as urban heat islands, said Daniel Metzger, a fellow at Columbia Law School.

The Science, Arts and Entrepreneurship School recently had that same cool surface painted on their parking lot. Both times, the coatings and labor were donated. Without that, the school would have had to raise funds, said Scott Starowicz, the school's co-founder and chief financial officer.

### Cool roofs and window films

East of Los Angeles, roofs across the Chaffey Joint Union High School District once reached 140 F (60 C). Warm roofs mean upper-floor classrooms could get hot, which would affect a lot of Chaffey's students, nearly 65% of who are Latino or Hispanic.

Chaffey has spent \$11.4 million in bond money and maintenance funds to convert asphalt shingle roofs to white cool roofing since 2017.

These roofs — as well as window films, paints and other technologies — reflect part of the incoming solar radiation away from a building, rather than allowing it to transfer inside as heat. These are some of the easiest and least costly actions a district can take.

Experts agree cool roofing lowers indoor temperature and reduces the need for AC.

The district has also invested in steel shade structures, trees and temperature devices to monitor heat stress.

### Cooler, greener schoolyards

On hot days, Sharon Gamson Danks remembers seeing her kids and their peers sitting in the shade along the edges of their school building.

More schools are tearing out hot asphalt, turf or rubber mats in favor of grass, gardens, mulch or trees. Experts say trees are one of the best ways to cool things down.

At Parkway Elementary in Sacramento, trees replaced turf this summer thanks to a grant. The project is part of a California schoolyard forests effort to increase tree canopy in public schools, especially in underserved communities.

### Paying for the needed changes

For the hottest schools, these solutions are often out of reach.

Federal agencies offer grants, but they often don't cover the full cost, and schools sometimes don't have the staff to apply for and manage grants. Increased maintenance costs are also a concern.

Relying on grant money “can completely exacerbate the haves and the have-nots” when it comes to reducing climate change and adapting to its harms, said UCLA professor V. Kelly Turner.

Many believe schools shouldn’t be left on their own. Every individual solution makes a difference, said Greg Kats of the Smart Surfaces Coalition. But combining efforts with a local government or neighborhood means schools can be even more comfortable, he said.

“It’s just sort of integration, right, of different strategies over a larger geographic area,” he added. “You’re really sort of transforming the school environment.”

In Phoenix, Aguilar’s efforts improved Osborn Elementary District, but the work is ongoing. It recently got money to plant more trees and add more shade.

Aguilar understood that it would only get hotter, she said. “I knew that we needed to take action.”

## Shooting attack at the West Bank-Jordan border crossing kills 3 Israelis

By MAHMOUD ILLEAN and NATALIE MELZER Associated Press

ALLENBY CROSSING, West Bank (AP) — Three Israelis were shot and killed Sunday at the border crossing between the West Bank and Jordan, Israeli officials said, in what appeared to be an attack linked to the 11-month-old war in Gaza.

Israel’s military said the gunman approached the Allenby Bridge Crossing from the Jordanian side in a truck and opened fire at Israeli security forces, who killed him in a shootout. Israel’s Magen David Adom rescue service said the three Israelis were men in their 50s and the military said they were civilians.

Relatives identified the gunman as Maher al-Jazi, a retired Jordanian soldier from Athroh, a town in the impoverished Maan area. Jordan’s state-run Petra News Agency said he was transporting goods to the West Bank. The interior ministry said that, based on initial investigation results, the incident was an individual act.

Jordan was investigating. The Western-allied Arab country made peace with Israel in 1994 but is deeply critical of its policies toward the Palestinians. Jordan has a large Palestinian population and has seen mass protests against Israel over the war in Gaza.

Hundreds of Jordanians marched in Amman to celebrate the attack, chanting slogans in support of al-Jazi and burning the Israeli flag. “We bless this heroic operation carried out by this noble Jordanian hero,” said Murad Adaileh, head of the local Muslim Brotherhood Party.

The Allenby crossing over the Jordan River, also known as the King Hussein Bridge, is mainly used by Palestinians and tourists. The crossing has seen few security incidents, but in 2014 Israeli security guards shot and killed a Jordanian judge who they said had attacked them.

The crossing was closed, and Israel announced the closure of its land crossings with Jordan. It later said all would reopen on Monday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu condemned the attack and linked it to Israel’s larger conflict with Iran and allied militant groups, including Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The Israeli-occupied West Bank has seen a surge of violence since Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack out of Gaza triggered the war there. Israel has launched near-daily military arrest raids into dense Palestinian residential areas, and there has been a rise in Israeli settler violence and Palestinian attacks on Israelis.

Loved ones mourned Aysenur Ezgi Eygi, an American-Turkish woman shot dead on Friday in the West Bank. She had been demonstrating against Israeli settlements. The White House has said it was “deeply disturbed,” while her family seeks an independent investigation. Her body remained at a hospital in Nablus.

In Gaza, an Israeli airstrike killed five people, including two women, two children and a senior official in the Civil Defense — first responders who operate under the Hamas-run government. The Civil Defense said the strike targeted the home of its deputy director for northern Gaza, Mohammed Morsi, in the urban Jabaliya refugee camp.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military. The army says it tries to avoid harming civilians and only targets militants.

Another Israeli strike hit the Eid family home in the Nuseirat refugee camp and killed at least two girls,



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according to an Associated Press journalist who counted the bodies and witnesses.

Paltel, one of the territory's main telecom providers, said all household internet in central and southern Gaza was down because of ongoing attacks.

Gaza's Health Ministry says over 40,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since the war began. It does not differentiate between fighters and civilians in its count. The war has caused vast destruction and displaced around 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million, often multiple times.

Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in their Oct. 7 attack. They abducted another 250 and are still holding around 100 after releasing most of the rest in exchange for Palestinians imprisoned by Israel during a weeklong cease-fire last November. Around a third of the remaining hostages are believed to be dead.

The United States, Qatar and Egypt have spent months trying to broker a cease-fire and the return of the hostages, but the negotiations have repeatedly bogged down.

Also on Sunday, Netanyahu said government ministers may no longer visit Jerusalem's most sensitive holy site — revered by Jews as the Temple Mount and by Muslims as Haram al-Sharif — without his permission. Israel's far-right national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, visited it again in July and has called for allowing Jewish prayer there. Tensions over the compound have fueled past violence.

Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem — territories the Palestinians want for a future state — in the 1967 Mideast war. Israel withdrew soldiers and settlers from Gaza in 2005 but maintained control over its airspace, coastline and most of its land crossings. Along with Egypt, it imposed a blockade on Gaza after Hamas seized power from rival Palestinian forces in 2007.

## Two NATO members say Russian drones violated their airspace

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Two NATO members said Sunday that Russian drones violated their airspace, as one reportedly flew into Romania during nighttime attacks on neighboring Ukraine while another crashed in eastern Latvia the previous day.

A drone entered Romanian territory early Sunday as Moscow struck "civilian targets and port infrastructure" across the Danube in Ukraine, Romania's Ministry of National Defense reported. It added that Bucharest had deployed F-16 warplanes to monitor its airspace and issued text alerts to residents of two eastern regions.

It also said investigations were underway of a potential "impact zone" in an uninhabited area along the Romanian-Ukrainian border. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage.

Later on Sunday, Latvia's Defense Minister Andris Sprūds said a Russian drone fell the day before near the town of Rezekne, and had likely strayed into Latvia from neighboring Belarus.

Rezekne, home to over 25,000 people, lies some 55 kilometers (34 miles) west of Russia and around 75 kilometers (47 miles) from Belarus, the Kremlin's close and dependent ally.

While the incursion into Latvian airspace appeared to be a rare incident, Romania has confirmed drone fragments on its territory on several occasions since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, as recently as July this year.

Mircea Geoană, NATO's outgoing deputy secretary-general and Romania's former top diplomat, said Sunday morning that the military alliance condemned Russia's violation of Romanian airspace. "While we have no information indicating an intentional attack by Russia against Allies, these acts are irresponsible and potentially dangerous," he wrote on the social media platform X.

Latvia's military on Sunday similarly said there were no indications that Moscow or Minsk purposely sent a drone into the country. In a public statement, the military said it had identified the crash site, and that a probe was ongoing.

Sprūds, the Latvian defense minister, sought to downplay the significance of the drone incursion.

"I can confirm that there are no victims here and also no property is infringed in any way," Defense Minister Andris Sprūds told the Latvian Radio on Sunday, adding that any risks in the event were immediately eliminated: "Of course, it is a serious incident, as it is once again a reminder of what kind of neighboring countries we live next to."

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Ukraine Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha called the incursions "a reminder (that) the aggressive actions of the Russian Federation go beyond Ukraine's borders."

"The collective response of the Allies should be maximum support for Ukraine now, to put an end to (Russian aggression), protect lives and preserve peace in Europe," Sybiha said in a post on X.

Civilians reported killed in Ukraine

In Ukraine, two civilians died and four more suffered wounds in a nighttime Russian airstrike on the northern city of Sumy, the regional military administration reported. Two children were among those wounded, the administration said. The Russian Defense Ministry claimed later on Sunday that its forces struck foreign pro-Kyiv fighters in a village on Sumy's northern outskirts. It was not immediately clear whether this was a reference to the same attack.

Also on Sunday, Ukraine's General Staff said that Russian troops continued to pound Sumy and the surrounding regions with airstrikes, and had lobbed at least 16 devastating "glide bombs" at the province by mid-afternoon. Russian forces shelled the city again during the day Sunday, wounding a teenager and a civilian man, the regional prosecutor's office reported.

Three more women died Sunday after Russian forces shelled a village in the eastern Donetsk region, Gov. Vadym Filashkin reported on the Telegram messaging app. Separately, Russian shelling killed a woman on the outskirts of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second city in the northeast, local authorities said.

Meanwhile, the death toll rose to 58 from the massive Russian missile strike that on Tuesday blasted a military academy and nearby hospital in the eastern city of Poltava, regional Gov. Filip Pronin reported. More than 320 others were wounded.

Since it launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in early 2022, the Russian military has repeatedly used missiles to smash civilian targets, sometimes killing scores of people in a single attack.

Russian forces continued their monthlong grinding push toward the city of Pokrovsk, and also ramped up attacks near the town of Kurakhove farther south, Ukraine's General Staff reported.

Russia's Defense Ministry said Sunday its troops had taken Novohrodivka, a small town some 19 kilometers (11 miles) southeast of Pokrovsk. An update published Saturday evening by DeepState, a Ukrainian battlefield analysis site, said Russian forces had "advanced" in Novohrodivka and captured Nevelske, a village in the southeast of the Pokrovsk district.

Pokrovsk, which had a prewar population of about 60,000, is one of Ukraine's main defensive strongholds and a key logistics hub in the Donetsk region. Its capture would compromise Ukraine's defense and supply routes, and would bring Russia closer to its stated aim of capturing the entire Donetsk region.

Berlin raises prospect of peace talks with Russia

Also on Sunday, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said that he and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy agree that Moscow should be included in a future peace conference aimed at ending its invasion of Ukraine.

"There will certainly be a further peace conference, and the president (Zelenskyy) and I agree that it must be one with Russia present," Scholz told Germany's ZDF public television.

A previous peace conference June 15-16 in Switzerland ended with 78 countries expressing support for Ukraine's "territorial integrity" but otherwise left the path forward unclear. Russia did not participate.

Ukraine's Zelenskyy did not immediately comment on Scholz's remarks, but said in a video address Sunday that he had held "important negotiations" with the German leader and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. He did not give details.

## Chased away by Israeli settlers, these Palestinians returned to a village in ruins

By JALAL BWAITEK and JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

KHIRBET ZANUTA, West Bank (AP) — An entire Palestinian community fled their tiny West Bank village last fall after repeated threats from Israeli settlers with a history of violence. Then, in a rare endorsement of Palestinian land rights, Israel's highest court ruled this summer the displaced residents of Khirbet Zanuta were entitled to return under the protection of Israeli forces.

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But their homecoming has been bittersweet. In the intervening months, nearly all the houses in the village, a health clinic and a school were destroyed — along with the community's sense of security in the remote desert land where they have farmed and herded sheep for decades.

Roughly 40% of former residents have so far chosen not to return. The 150 or so that have come back are sleeping outside the ruins of their old homes. They say they are determined to rebuild — and to stay — even as settlers once again try to intimidate them into leaving and a court order prevents them from any new construction.

"There is joy, but there are some drawbacks," said Fayez Suliman Tel, the head of the village council and one of the first to come back to see the ransacked village — roofs seemingly blown off buildings, walls defaced by graffiti.

"The situation is extremely miserable," Tel said, "but despite that, we are steadfast and staying in our land, and God willing, this displacement will not be repeated."

The Israeli military body in charge of civilian affairs in the occupied West Bank said in a statement to The Associated Press it had not received any claims of Israeli vandalism of the village, and that it was taking measures to "ensure security and public order" during the villagers' return.

"The Palestinians erected a number of structural components illegally at the place, and in that regard enforcement proceedings were undertaken in accordance with law," the statement said.

The villagers of Khirbet Zanuta had long faced harassment and violence from settlers. But after the Oct. 7 attack on Israel by Hamas that launched the war in Gaza, they said they received explicit death threats from Israelis living in an unauthorized outpost up the hill called Meitarim Farm. The outpost is run by Yinon Levi, who has been sanctioned by the U.S., UK, EU and Canada for menacing his Palestinian neighbors.

The villagers say they reported the threats and attacks to Israeli police, but said they got little help. Fearing for their lives, at the end of October, they packed up whatever they could carry and left.

Though settler violence had been rising even before the war under the far-right government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, it has been turbocharged ever since Oct. 7. More than 1,500 Palestinians have been displaced by settler violence since then, according to the United Nations, and very few have returned home.

Khirbet Zanuta stands as a rare example. It is unclear if any other displaced community has been granted a court's permission to return since the start of the war.

Even though residents have legal protection Israel's highest court, they still have to contend with Levi and other young men from the Meitarim Farm outpost trying to intimidate them.

Shepherd Fayez Fares Al Samareh, 57, said he returned to Khirbet Zanuta two weeks ago to find that his house had been bulldozed by settlers. The men of his family have joined him in bringing their flocks back home, he said, but conditions in the village are grave.

"The children have not returned and the women as well. Where will they stay? Under the sun?" he said.

Settler surveillance continues: Al Samareh said that every Friday and Saturday, settlers arrive to the village, photographing residents.

Videos taken by human rights activists and obtained by The Associated Press show settlers roaming around Khirbet Zanuta last month, taking pictures of residents as Israeli police look on.

By displacing small villages, rights groups say West Bank settlers like Levi are able to accumulate vast swaths of land, reshaping the map of the occupied territory that Palestinians hope to include in their homeland as part of any two-state solution.

The plight of Khirbet Zanuta is also an example of the limited effectiveness of international sanctions as a means of reducing settler violence in the West Bank. The U.S. recently targeted Hashomer Yosh, a government-funded group that sends volunteers to work on West Bank farms, both legal and illegal, with sanctions. Hashomer Yosh sent volunteers to Levi's outpost, a Nov. 13 Facebook post said.

"After all 250 Palestinian residents of Khirbet Zanuta were forced to leave, Hashomer Yosh volunteers fenced off the village to prevent the residents from returning," a U.S. State Department spokesman, Matthew Miller, said last week.

Neither Hashomer Yosh nor Levi responded to a request for comment on intrusions into the village since



residents returned. But Levi claimed in a June interview with AP that the land was his, and admitted to taking part in clearing it of Palestinians, though he denied doing so violently.

"Little by little, you feel when you drive on the roads that everyone is closing in on you," he said at the time. "They're building everywhere, wherever they want. So you want to do something about it."

The legal rights guaranteed to Khirbet Zanuta's residents only go so far. Under the terms of the court ruling that allowed them to return, they are forbidden from building new structures across the roughly 1 square kilometer village. The land, the court ruled, is part of an archaeological zone, so any new structures are at risk of demolition.

Distraught but not deterred, the villagers are repairing badly damaged homes, the health clinic and the EU-funded school — by whom, they do not know for sure.

"We will renovate these buildings so that they are qualified to receive students before winter sets in," Khaled Doudin, the governor of the Hebron region that includes Khirbet Zanuta, said as he stood in the bulldozed school.

"And after that we will continue to rehabilitate it," he said, "so that we do not give the occupation the opportunity to demolish it again."

## Waffle House CEO Walt Ehmer has died at age 58

ATLANTA (AP) — Walt Ehmer, the president and CEO of Waffle House and a member of the board of trustees for the Atlanta Police Foundation, has died at age 58, the foundation announced Sunday.

Ehmer joined Waffle House in 1992 and quickly rose to senior leadership, becoming president of the company in 2002, and later adding the titles of CEO and chairman, according to information from Georgia Tech University, his alma mater.

"His leadership, dedication and warmth touched the lives of many, both within the Waffle House family and beyond. He leaves behind a remarkable legacy," Mayor Andre Dickens said in a news release.

The board of directors for Waffle House issued a statement Sunday afternoon saying Ehmer died after a long illness. "He will be greatly missed by his entire Waffle House family," the statement said.

Ehmer was chair of the Georgia Tech Alumni Association Board of Trustees from 2012 to 2013 and served numerous organizations, including the Georgia Tech Foundation Board and the Georgia Tech Advisory Board.

The Waffle House chain of around-the-clock diners opened in 1955 and now boasts more than 1,900 locations in 25 states.

Ehmer is survived by three children, according to The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

## Fuel tanker collision in Nigeria caused an explosion that killed at least 48 people

By DYEPKAZAH SHIBAYAN Associated Press

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — A fuel tanker collided head-on with another truck in Nigeria on Sunday causing an explosion that killed at least 48 people, the country's emergency response agency said.

The fuel tanker was also carrying cattle in the Agaie area in north-central Niger state and at least 50 of them were burned alive, Abdullahi Baba-Arab, director-general of the Niger State Emergency Management Agency, said.

Search and rescue operations were underway at the scene of the accident, Baba-Arab said.

Baba-Arab said initially that 30 bodies were found but in a later statement said an additional 18 bodies of victims who were burned to death in the collision were found. He said the dead had been given a mass burial.

Mohammed Bago, governor of Niger state, said residents of the affected area should remain calm and asked road users to "always be cautious and abide by road traffic regulations to safeguard lives and property."

With the absence of an efficient railway system to transport cargo, fatal truck accidents are common

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along most of the major roads in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country.

In 2020 alone, there were 1,531 gasoline tanker crashes resulting in 535 fatalities and 1,142 injuries, according to Nigeria's Federal Road Safety Corps.

## AP Top 25: SEC grabs six of the first seven spots in rankings as Notre Dame tumbles to No. 18

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

After the first shake-up of the college football season, the Southeastern Conference grabbed six of the top seven spots in the AP Top 25 — a first in the 88-year history of the rankings — and Notre Dame tumbled all the way to No. 18 on Sunday after being stunned at home.

Georgia received 54 out of a possible 63 first-place votes to keep a firm hold on No. 1. No. 2 Texas jumped a spot after dominating defending national champion Michigan on the road and received four first-place votes. The Longhorns have their best ranking since finishing second in 2009.

The Wolverines were down to No. 17.

No. 3 Ohio State from the Big Ten Conference slipped a spot. Then it was four more SEC teams. Alabama held steady at No. 4 and Mississippi moved up a spot to No. 5.

Missouri moved up three spots to No. 6 and Tennessee made a big jump from No. 14 to No. 7 after routing North Carolina State in Charlotte.

With the SEC bigger (16 teams) — and seemingly better — than ever given the additions of Texas and Oklahoma — the circumstances were right for an early season takeover like never before.

Not only is six of the top seven teams from one conference a record for a poll, but never before had a single league held as many as five of the top seven places.

Those teams will start playing each other in the coming weeks so it is unlikely the SEC can keep this up, but it's a stark example of what's possible in the superconference era.

Especially after the first huge upset of the college football season. Notre Dame's 16-14 loss to Northern Illinois marked the first time a top-five team lost to an unranked team since the 2022 season, when Purdue knocked off then-No. 2 Iowa on Nov. 5, 2022.

The Huskies' victory, the first top-five win for a Mid-American Conference team in league history, landed Northern Illinois at No. 25 in the rankings. NIU is ranked for the first time since 2013 and is the first team from non-Power Four conference to be ranked this season.

Rounding out the top 10 were No. 8 Penn State and No. 9 Oregon of the Big Ten and No. 10 Miami. The Ducks slip two spots after a wild, comeback victory against Boise State.

Poll points

Northern Illinois is one of four teams to move into the rankings this week for the first time this season, most notably Nebraska at No. 23.

The Cornhuskers are ranked for the first time since 2019 after easily handling Colorado at home. That was a brief stay. After starting that season ranked No. 24, the Huskers lost in Week 2, fell out the rankings and have been gone ever since.

The last sustained season in the rankings for Nebraska was 2016, though even that season ended with the Huskers unranked. They have not finished a season ranked since 2012. That's what second-year coach Matt Rhule and freshman quarterback Dylan Raiola are aiming for.

Just a reminder: Nebraska still owns the record for the longest streak of poll appearances with 348 under coach Tom Osborne from 1981-2002. The second-best streak is Alabama's active 264 straight weeks ranked.

In and out

The turnover came from the bottom of the rankings, where Kansas, Iowa, Georgia Tech and North Carolina State all fell out after losses.

No. 21 Iowa State essentially switched places with its Cy-Hawk rivals by beating Iowa.

Last week, Georgia Tech made its first appearance in the AP Top 25 since 2015, snapping one of the longest active droughts among power conference teams. The Yellow Jackets lasted only a week after los-

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ing at Syracuse, but another Atlantic Coast Conference team snapped its own lengthy drought.

No. 24 Boston College is ranked for the first time since 2018.

Conference call

The only other time a conference had four of the top five teams was the SEC on Oct. 19, 2014, when Mississippi State was No. 1, Ole Miss was third, Alabama was fourth and Auburn was fifth.

SEC — 8 (Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 15, 16).

Big Ten — 6 (Nos. 3, 8, 9, 11, 17, 23).

Big 12 — 5 (Nos. 12, 13, 14, 20, 21).

ACC — 4 (Nos. 10, 19, 22, 24).

MAC — 1 (No. 25).

Independent — 1 (No. 18).

Ranked vs. ranked

No. 20 Arizona at No. 14 Kansas State, Thursday. A Big 12 game that's not actually a Big 12 game. This is a nonconference matchup that already was set before realignment.

No. 24 Boston College at No. 6 Missouri, Saturday. An unexpectedly ranked ACC-SEC matchup.

## Temple or museum? How Diego Rivera designed a place to honor Mexico's pre-Hispanic art

By MARÍA TERESA HERNÁNDEZ Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — In the 1940s, Mexican artist Diego Rivera had a dream: to build a sacred place to preserve and display his lifelong collection of pre-Hispanic art.

The Anahuacalli Museum in Mexico City, which celebrates its 60th anniversary this month, is everything he hoped for.

Inch by inch, its pyramid structure honors the Mexica worldview. Among its 60,000 archeological pieces, dozens represent ancient deities. And though foreigners visit on a regular basis, its workshops and year-round activities aim to connect the local communities to their historic roots.

"This is Diego Rivera's dream come true: a space in which art, nature and the public coexist," said María Teresa Moya, director of the Anahuacalli.

The Mexican muralist was aligned with a Communist ideology. He and his wife — renowned artist Frida Kahlo — openly criticized the Catholic Church. But their fascination with Mexico's pre-Hispanic spirituality is palpable through their work.

In Rivera's case, he bought and collected archeological pieces, depicted them on his murals and designed the Anahuacalli for their exhibition.

"Diego had a great respect, affection and admiration for our ancestors," Moya said. "Everything he designed or created was inspired by our origins."

Mexico's pre-Hispanic worldview was so important to him that it even influenced the Anahuacalli's architecture. While its main floor represents the underworld — and feels dimly lit and cold — the second and third levels were inspired by the earthly and celestial worlds, which makes them seem warmer and flooded by light.

Though Mexica heritage is dominant in the museum's design, visitors can also appreciate other Mesoamerican influences, said Aldo Lugo, a researcher who points out the Mayan, Toltec and Teotihuacan elements through guided tours of the museum.

The three-story pyramid was inaugurated in September 1964, seven years after Rivera died. Its name, Anahuacalli, translates from the Nahuatl language as "house surrounded by water."

According to a recent government publication, the Anahuacalli is distinctive among Mexican museums in being situated in an ecological reserve of about six acres (2.6 hectares) protecting nearby flora and fauna. The museum itself was built with volcanic rock to fuse with its natural surroundings.

Rivera and Kahlo first thought of the place as an oasis where they could move away from the buzz of the city. Later, even as their plans changed and Rivera decided to build the museum, the couple desired



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to be buried in the Anahuacalli's underworld.

The adjoining niches of the main floor are currently empty. Kahlo's remains are located in her "Blue House" and Rivera was buried in the Rotunda of Illustrious Persons, a national cemetery site that honors those who made major contributions to Mexico's history and culture. "But we keep the niches, just in case they end up here," Lugo said.

During a one-hour visit through the Anahuacalli, its various rooms and cabinets can be read as a book. From the start, Coatlicue, mother of the gods, greets all visitors from the ceiling. Her myth was special for the pre-Hispanic understanding of the world: a battle between her son and daughter — the sun and the moon — explained the origins of day and night.

The Anahuacalli's main floor is focused on rituals and burials. The first level displays archeological pieces depicting everyday life, while the second level — representing the celestial world — is devoted to the gods. The museum's walls and stairs bear meanings too. Each of the Anahuacalli's four corners depict a natural element — earth, wind, water and fire — and their respective pre-Hispanic deities. The stairs represent the transition between the stages of one's existence.

"The Anahuacalli is a temple," Moya said. "And one of a kind."

To celebrate its 60th anniversary, the museum planned various activities reflecting on Mexico's artistic and cultural landscape.

Aside from a gastronomic festival in June and monthly lectures on Rivera's legacy — which the public can attend through December — neighbors who knew the artist are working on a video to preserve the oral collective memory of the museum and the neighborhood where it's located.

"We want the community to keep feeling that this space belongs to them," Moya said.

Contemporary artists are often invited to host exhibitions at Anahuacalli. "Atomic amnesia," by Mexican sculptor Pedro Reyes, will be on exhibit from Sept. 13 through January 2025.

His 20 works on display, a press release said, were inspired by one of Rivera's murals, which was highly controversial and mysteriously disappeared, though its sketch is preserved: "The Nightmare of War, The Dream of Peace. A Realist Fantasy (1952)."

Like Rivera, Reyes' art reflects society. His works are meant to express the current political landscape and, following in Rivera's footsteps, he regards his art as a platform to protest and raise awareness.

"Diego was quite controversial," Moya said. "On the one hand, he had a huge interest in rescuing our pre-Hispanic heritage, but he also adhered to socialism in an unwavering way."

"He wanted us to look at our past to understand our present and plant something for the future."

## Opposition candidate burst into Venezuelan politics just months before being chased into exile

By REGINA GARCIA CANO and JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — For millions of Venezuelans and dozens of foreign governments, Edmundo González was the undisputed winner of the country's July 28 presidential election.

But on Sunday, he joined the swelling ranks of once-prominent government opponents who have fled into exile, leaving his political future uncertain and tightening Nicolás Maduro's grip on power.

The former presidential candidate arrived at a military airport outside Madrid after being granted safe passage by Maduro's government so he could take up asylum in Spain. His surprise departure came just days after Maduro's government ordered his arrest.

González, 75, burst onto Venezuela's political scene less than five months ago. His candidacy was as accidental as it gets after opposition powerhouse María Corina Machado was barred from running and a handpicked substitute was also blocked.

In April, a coalition of more than 10 parties settled on González, who overnight went from being a virtually unknown retired diplomat and grandfather to a household name in whom millions placed their hopes for an end to more than two decades of single-party rule.

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Accompanied by Machado, he crisscrossed the country in the final weeks of the campaign, energizing massive crowds of Venezuelans who blamed Maduro for one of the worst ever economic collapses outside a war zone.

"Let's imagine for a moment the country that is coming," he told a crowd of cheering supporters at a rally in La Victoria, a once-thriving industrial city. "A country in which the president does not insult or see his adversaries as enemies. A country where when you get home from work, you know that your money has value, that when you turn on the switch, there will be electricity, that when you turn on the faucet, there will be water."

The yin-yang strategy proved more popular than even many Maduro opponents had imagined.

Election was quickly disputed

Although the National Electoral Council declared Maduro the winner, the opposition's superior ground game allowed it to collect evidence showing that it was actually González who prevailed by a more than a 2-to-1 margin. Foreign governments condemned the official results as lacking credibility. Even some leftist allies of Maduro withheld recognition, demanding that authorities release a breakdown of results at all 30,000 voting machines nationwide, as it has in the past.

In the weeks since the disputed vote, both opposition figures went into hiding amid a brutal crackdown that led to more than 2,000 arrests and the deaths of at least 24 people at the hands of security forces. González stayed out of public view while Machado appeared at sporadic rallies seeking to keep the pressure on Maduro.

Machado tried to put a positive spin on González's departure late Saturday, assuring Venezuelans he would be back on Jan. 10 for a swearing-in ceremony marking the start of the next presidential term.

"His life was in danger, and the increasing threats, summons, arrest warrants and even attempts at blackmail and coercion to which he has been subjected, demonstrate that the regime has no scruples," Machado said on X. "Let this be very clear to everyone: Edmundo will fight from outside alongside our diaspora."

Candidacy came after career as a diplomat

González began his professional career as an aide to Venezuela's ambassador in the U.S. He had postings in Belgium and El Salvador and served as Caracas' ambassador to Algeria.

His last post was as Venezuela's ambassador to Argentina during the first years of the government of Hugo Chávez, Maduro's predecessor and mentor. More recently, he worked as an international relations consultant, writing about recent political developments in Argentina and authoring a historical work on Venezuela's foreign minister during World War II.

His years in El Salvador and Algeria coincided with periods of armed conflicts in both countries. For a time, his whereabouts were tracked by locals in El Salvador, and he would get calls at home meant to intimidate him, with the callers saying they were aware that González had just arrived home.

Maduro on the campaign trail claimed — without evidence — that González was recruited as a CIA asset during that Cold War, which coincided with heavy U.S. military involvement in Central American country.

González had just returned to Venezuela's capital, Caracas, from a trip to Spain to visit a daughter and grandchildren when opposition leaders presented him with the idea of becoming a candidate.

The subdued tone and poker face he forged as a diplomat cut a sharp contrast with boisterous, ego-driven politicians to which Venezuelans have long been accustomed. Maduro and his allies have taken his conciliatory tones as a sign of weakness. But that kind of language was among his many selling points to Venezuelans fed up with winner-takes-all politics.

"Enough shouting, enough insults," González told supporters. "It's time to reunite."

## Little debate that Pennsylvania is key as Harris and Trump prep for Philly showdown

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — When Donald Trump and Kamala Harris meet onstage Tuesday night in Philadelphia, they'll both know there's little debate that Pennsylvania is critical to their chances of winning the presidency.

The most populous presidential swing state has sided with the winner of the past two elections, each time by just tens of thousands of votes. Polling this year suggests Pennsylvania will be close once more in November.

A loss in the state will make it difficult to make up the electoral votes elsewhere to win the presidency. Trump and Harris have been frequent visitors in recent days — Harris plans to return on Friday — and the former president was speaking in Butler County on July 14 when he was the target of an assassination attempt.

The stakes may be especially high for Harris: No Democrat has won the White House without Pennsylvania since 1948.

Pennsylvanians broke a string of six Democratic victories in the state when they helped propel Trump to victory in 2016, then backed native son Joe Biden in the 2020 race against Trump.

"They say that 'If you win Pennsylvania, you're going to win the whole thing,'" Trump told a crowd in Wilkes-Barre's Mohegan Arena in August.

Republicans are looking to blunt Trump's unpopularity in Pennsylvania's growing and increasingly liberal suburbs by criticizing the Biden administration's handling of the economy. They hope to counter the Democrats' massive advantage in early voting by encouraging their base to vote by mail.

Harris is looking to reassemble the coalition behind Biden's winning campaign, including college students, Black voters and women animated by protecting abortion rights.

Democrats also say it will be critical for Harris to win big in Philadelphia — the state's largest city, where Black residents are the largest group by race — and its suburbs, while paring Trump's large margins among white voters across wide swaths of rural and small-town Pennsylvania.

The debate is set for the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia. The city is a Democratic stronghold where Trump in 2020 notoriously said "bad things happen," one of his baseless broadsides suggesting that Democrats could only win Pennsylvania by cheating.

Biden flipped Pennsylvania in 2020 not just by winning big in Philadelphia, but by running up bigger margins in the heavily populated suburbs around Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. He also got a boost in northeastern Pennsylvania in the counties around Scranton, where he grew up.

Ed Rendell, a former two-term Democratic governor who was hugely popular in Philadelphia and its suburbs, says Harris can do better than Biden in the suburbs.

"There's plenty of votes to get, a Democrat can get a greater margin in those counties," Rendell said.

Lawrence Tabas, chair of Pennsylvania's Republican Party, said Trump can make gains there, too. The GOP's polling and outreach shows that the effect of inflation on the economy is a priority for those suburbanites, he said, and that the issue works in the party's favor.

"A lot of people are really now starting to say, 'Look, personalities aside, they are what they are, but we really need the American economy to become strong again,'" Tabas said.

Rendell dismisses that claim. He said Trump is veering off script and saying bizarre things that will ensure he gets a smaller share of independents and Republicans in the suburbs than he did in 2020.

"He's gotten so weird that he'll lose a lot of votes," Rendell said.

Harris has championed various steps to fight inflation, including capping the cost of prescription drugs, helping families afford child care, lowering the cost of groceries and offering incentives to encourage home ownership.

Pennsylvania's relatively stagnant economy usually lags the national economy, but its unemployment rate in July was nearly a full percentage point lower. The state's private sector wage growth, however, has



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slightly lagged behind the nation's since Biden took office in 2021, according to federal data.

Meanwhile, Democrats are hoping the enthusiasm since Biden withdrew from the race and Harris stepped in will carry through Election Day in November.

For one, they hope she will do better with women and Black voters, as the first female presidential nominee of Black heritage. Rendell said he is more optimistic about Harris' chances to win Pennsylvania than he was with Biden in the race.

"I think we're the favorite now," Rendell said.

The debate takes place before voting starts — in Pennsylvania and everywhere else.

A national Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research survey conducted in July showed that about 8 in 10 Democrats said they would be satisfied with Harris as the party's nominee compared with 4 in 10 Democrats in March saying they would be satisfied with Biden as the candidate.

There is some optimism among Pennsylvania Democrats even in Republican-leaning counties, including a number of whiter, less affluent counties near Pittsburgh and Scranton that once voted for Democrats consistently.

In Washington County, just outside Pittsburgh in the heart of the state's natural gas-producing region, Larry Maggi, a Democratic county commissioner, thinks she will outrun Biden there.

Maggi is seeing more lawn signs for Harris than he ever saw for Biden, as well as more volunteers, many of whom are young women concerned about protecting abortion rights.

"I've been doing this for 25 years and I'm seeing people I've never seen," Maggi said.

Democrats also hope there is a growing number of voters like Ray Robbins, a retired FBI agent and registered independent, who regrets voting for Trump in 2016. Robbins did so, he said, because he thought a businessperson could break congressional deadlock.

"He's a liar," Robbins said. "I think he's totally devoid of any morals whatsoever. And you can quote me: I think he's a despicable human being even though I voted for him."

But Republicans have reason to be optimistic, too.

In the nation's No. 2 gas-producing state, even Democrats acknowledge that Harris' prior support for a fracking ban in her run for the 2020 nomination could prove costly. In this campaign, the vice president said the nation can achieve its clean energy goals without a ban, though Trump insists she will reverse course again.

Meanwhile, the Democratic advantage in the state's voter registration rolls has steadily shrunk since 2008, from 1.2 million to about 350,000 now.

Republicans credit their outreach to younger voters, as well as Black, Asian and Hispanic voters.

"A lot of them tell us it's the economy," Tabas said. "And in Philly, it's also the crime and safety in the neighborhoods and communities."

Those gains have yet to translate into GOP wins as Democrats have beaten Republicans by more than 2-to-1 in statewide contests the past decade.

Daniel Hopkins, a political science professor at the University of Pennsylvania, chalks up the narrowing registration gap, in part, to "Reagan Democrats" who have long voted for Republicans, but did not change their registration right away.

One of those voters is Larry Mitko, a longtime Democrat-turned-Republican who lives in a Pittsburgh suburb.

Mitko, 74, voted for Trump in 2016 and Biden in 2020, and was leaning toward voting for Trump in 2024 because of inflation and Biden's handling of the economy before Biden exited the race.

That is when Mitko became sure he would vote for Trump.

"I don't like the fact of how they lied to us telling us, 'He's OK, he's OK,' and he can't walk up the steps, he can't finish a sentence without forgetting what he's talking about," Mitko said of Biden.

Harris' late entry into the race could mean that many voters are still learning about her, said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, a University of Pennsylvania professor of communication who researches presidential debates.

More voters than usual may not be locked into a decision even as voting looms, Jamieson said, so this debate could make a difference.

## Mother of Georgia shooting suspect called school to warn of emergency, aunt says

By RUSS BYNUM and CLAIRE RUSH Associated Press

The mother of the 14-year-old who has been charged with murder over the fatal shooting of four people at his Georgia high school called the school before the killings, warning staff of an "extreme emergency" involving her son, a relative said.

Annie Brown told the Washington Post that her sister, Colt Gray's mother, texted her saying she spoke with a school counselor and urged them to "immediately" find her son to check on him.

Brown provided screen shots of the text exchange to the newspaper, which also reported that a call log from the family's shared phone plan showed a call was made to the school about 30 minutes before gunfire is believed to have erupted.

Brown confirmed the reporting to The Associated Press on Saturday in text messages but declined to provide further comment.

Colt Gray, 14, has been charged with murder over the killing of two students and two teachers at Apalachee High School in Barrow County, outside Atlanta, on Wednesday. His father, Colin Gray, is accused of second-degree murder for providing his son with a semiautomatic AR 15-style rifle.

Their attorneys declined to immediately seek bail during their first court appearance on Friday.

Investigators previously interviewed the suspects

The Georgia teenager had struggled with his parents' separation and taunting by classmates, his father told a sheriff's investigator last year when asked whether his son posted an online threat.

"I don't know anything about him saying (expletive) like that," Gray told Jackson County sheriff's investigator Daniel Miller, according to a transcript of their interview obtained by the AP. "I'm going to be mad as hell if he did, and then all the guns will go away."

Jackson County authorities ended their inquiry into Colt Gray a year ago, concluding that there wasn't clear evidence to link him to a threat posted on Discord, a social media site popular with video gamers. The records from that investigation provide at least a narrow glimpse into a boy who struggled with his parents' breakup and at the middle school he attended at the time, where his father said others frequently taunted him.

Father says his son was bullied at school

"He gets flustered and under pressure. He doesn't really think straight," Colin Gray told the investigator on May 21, 2023, recalling a discussion he'd had with the boy's principal.

Middle school had also been rough for Colt Gray. He had just finished the seventh grade when Miller interviewed the father and son. Colin Gray said the boy had just a few friends and frequently got picked on. Some students "just ridiculed him day after day after day."

"I don't want him to fight anybody, but they just keep like pinching him and touching him," Gray said. "Words are one thing, but you start touching him and that's a whole different deal. And it's just escalated to the point where like his finals were last week and that was the last thing on his mind."

Shooting guns and hunting, he said, were frequent pastimes for father and son. Gray said he was encouraging the boy to be more active outdoors and spend less time playing video games on his Xbox. When Colt Gray killed a deer months earlier, his father swelled with pride. He showed the investigator a photo on his cellphone, saying: "You see him with blood on his cheeks from shooting his first deer."

"It was just the greatest day ever," Colin Gray said.

There's no mention in the investigator's report and interview transcript of either Gray owning an assault-style rifle. Asked if his son had access to firearms, the father said yes. But he said the guns weren't kept loaded and insisted he had emphasized safety when teaching the boy to shoot.

"He knows the seriousness of weapons and what they can do," Gray said, "and how to use them and not use them."

Family evicted in 2022

An eviction upended the Grays' family in summer 2022. On July 25 of that year, a sheriff's deputy was

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dispatched to the rental home on a suburban cul-de-sac where Colin Gray, his wife, Colt and the boy's two younger siblings lived. A moving crew was piling their belongings in the yard.

The Jackson County deputy said in a report that the movers found guns and hunting bows in a closet in the master bedroom. They turned the weapons and ammunition over to the deputy for safekeeping, rather than leave them outside with the family's other possessions outside.

The deputy wrote that he left copies of receipt forms for the weapons on the front door so that Gray could pick them up later at the sheriff's office. The reason for eviction is not mentioned in the report. Colin Gray told the investigator in 2023 that he had paid his rent.

It was following the eviction, he said, that his wife left him, taking the two younger siblings with her. Colt Gray "struggled at first with the separation and all," said the father, who worked a construction job.

"I'm the sole provider, doing high rises downtown," he told the investigator. Two days later, there was a follow-up interview with Colin Gray while he was at work. He said by phone: "I'm hanging off the top of a building. ... I've got a big crane lift going, so it's kind of noisy up here."

Boy described as quiet

The investigator also interviewed the boy, then 13, who was described in a report as quiet, calm and reserved.

He denied making any threats and said that months earlier he'd stopped using the Discord platform, where the school threat was posted. He later told his father his account had been hacked.

"The only thing I have is TikTok, but I just go on there and watch videos," the teen said.

A year before they would both end up charged in the high school shooting, Colin Gray insisted to the sheriff's investigator that his son wasn't the type to threaten violence.

"He's not a loner, Officer Miller. Don't get that," the father said, adding: "He just wants to go to school, do his own thing and he doesn't want any trouble."

## Authorities search for shooter along I-75 in southeastern Kentucky with up to 7 people hurt

By BRUCE SCHREINER Associated Press

LONDON, Ky. (AP) — A manhunt was underway early Sunday as police searched for a gunman in a rural area of southeastern Kentucky near Interstate 75, according to authorities who said seven people were hurt in the shooting and a vehicle accident that accompanied the violence.

The shooting Saturday was followed by an intense search for a suspect by multiple law enforcement agencies. The Laurel County Sheriff's Office said in a post on Facebook that it was an "active shooter situation" and "numerous persons" were shot near the highway.

Deputy Gilbert Acciaro, a spokesperson for the Laurel County Sheriff's Office, said authorities were notified about 5:30 p.m. Saturday about gunshots along Interstate 75. When they arrived at the scene in London, a small city of about 8,000 located about 75 miles (120 kilometers) south of Lexington, they found numerous vehicles on the side of the highway at Exit 49.

"When our first two units got to the scene there, they said it was a madhouse: people on the sides of the road, emergency flashers going, bullet holes, windows shot out, nine vehicles shot. Can you imagine that? Just chaotic," Acciaro said during a news conference Sunday.

Five people were shot and all were in stable condition early Sunday, although some of the victims had "very serious" injuries, including one person who was shot in the face, Acciaro said.

Two other people were hurt in the vehicle accident, he said.

Police blocked traffic in both directions on the highway because they did not know where the bullets came from. "We're still attempting to determine that," Acciaro said.

Authorities believe there was only one shooter and Acciaro said they do not believe the shooting was sparked by road rage.

Officers from multiple law enforcement agencies searched a remote, wooded area, but eventually sus-

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pended the search because of darkness. The search will resume at daybreak Sunday, he said.

"We do have the area contained right now. It's a very fluid investigation. Our people are still on the scene. Our special response team is there. We are trying to find a shooter there," Acciaro said.

The sheriff's office said a "Person of Interest" has been identified in connection with the shooting, saying he should be considered armed and dangerous and people should not approach him. The man's name was given as Joseph A. Couch, a 32-year-old white male, and anyone with information about his location was urged to call the county 911 center.

Acciaro cautioned that authorities "have not determined that this is the individual that fired the weapon."

State lawmakers from Laurel County urged residents in the area to stay home as police continued to search for the shooter.

"Without a doubt, this is an act of senseless violence that does not reflect the values of this community, our Commonwealth, or its people," they said in a statement.

The interstate was closed 9 miles (14 kilometers) north of London but reopened about three hours later, according to the sheriff's office.

In an video update on Facebook late Saturday night, London Mayor Randall Weddle tried to calm fears as the search continued for the gunman. He urged residents to call 911 if they hear or see anything suspicious near their homes.

"We're asking folks please do not go outside your home shooting because we might have first responders in that area. It's important to know you are safe. We have multiple agencies in this community, in the city of London and in Laurel County," Weddle said.

Weddle said searchers "know the general area where this individual is," but he would not release specific details.

"I am receiving initial reports from the Kentucky State Police and our Office of Homeland Security — together we are actively monitoring the situation and offering support in any way possible," Gov. Andy Beshear said in a post on the social platform X. "Please pray for everyone involved."

## **Typhoon Yagi kills 14 in Vietnam as officials warn of heavy rain that can cause flooding**

By ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — At least 14 people have died and 176 others injured in Vietnam after Typhoon Yagi slammed the country's north, state media said Sunday, as officials warned of heavy downpours despite its waning power.

Described by Vietnamese officials as one of the most powerful typhoons to hit the region over the last decade, Yagi left more than 3 million people without electricity in northern Vietnam. It also damaged vital agricultural land, nearly 116,192 hectares where rice and fruits are mostly grown. Hundreds of flights were canceled after four airports were closed.

The typhoon made landfall in Vietnam's northern coastal provinces of Quang Ninh and Haiphong with wind speeds of up to 149 kilometers per hour (92 miles per hour) on Saturday afternoon. It raged for roughly 15 hours before gradually weakening into a tropical depression early Sunday morning. Vietnam's meteorological department predicted heavy rain in northern and central provinces and warned of floods in low-lying areas, flash floods in streams and landslides on steep slopes.

Municipal workers along with army and police forces were busy in the capital, Hanoi, clearing uprooted trees, fallen billboards, toppled electricity poles and rooftops that were swept away, while assessing damaged buildings.

Yagi was still a storm when it blew out of the northwestern Philippines into the South China Sea on Wednesday, leaving at least 20 people dead and 26 others missing mostly in landslides and widespread flooding in the archipelago nation. It then made its way to China, killing three people and injuring nearly a hundred others, before landing in Vietnam.



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Storms like Typhoon Yagi were “getting stronger due to climate change, primarily because warmer ocean waters provide more energy to fuel the storms, leading to increased wind speeds and heavier rainfall,” said Benjamin Horton, director of the Earth Observatory of Singapore.

## Trump threatens to jail adversaries in escalating rhetoric ahead of pivotal debate

By MICHAEL GOLDBERG, JILL COLVIN and SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MOSINEE, Wis. (AP) — With just days to go before his first and likely only debate against Vice President Kamala Harris, former President Donald Trump posted a warning on his social media site threatening to jail those “involved in unscrupulous behavior” this election, which he said would be under intense scrutiny.

“WHEN I WIN, those people that CHEATED will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the Law, which will include long term prison sentences so that this Depravity of Justice does not happen again,” Trump wrote late Saturday, sowing doubt once more about the integrity of the election, even though cheating is incredibly rare.

“Please beware,” he went on, “that this legal exposure extends to Lawyers, Political Operatives, Donors, Illegal Voters, & Corrupt Election Officials. Those involved in unscrupulous behavior will be sought out, caught, and prosecuted at levels, unfortunately, never seen before in our Country.”

Trump’s message represents his latest threat to use the office of the presidency to exact retribution if he wins a second term. There is no evidence of the kind of fraud he continues to insist marred the 2020 election; in fact, dozens of courts, Republican state officials and his own administration have said he lost fairly.

Just days ago, Trump himself acknowledged in a podcast interview that he had indeed “lost by a whisker.”

While Trump’s campaign aides and allies have urged him to keep his focus on Harris and make the election a referendum on issues like inflation and border security, Trump in recent days has veered far off course.

On Friday, he delivered a stunning statement to news cameras in which he brought up a string of past allegations of sexual misconduct, describing several in graphic detail, even as he denied his accusers’ allegations. Earlier, he had voluntarily appeared in court for a hearing on the appeal of a decision that found him liable for sexual abuse, turning focus to his legal woes in the campaign’s final stretch.

Earlier Saturday, Trump had leaned into familiar grievances about everything from his indictments to Russia’s meddling in the 2016 election as he campaigned in one of the most deeply Republican swaths of battleground Wisconsin.

“The Harris-Biden DOJ is trying to throw me in jail — they want me in jail — for the crime of exposing their corruption,” Trump claimed at an outdoor rally at Central Wisconsin Airport, where he spoke behind a wall of bulletproof glass due to new security protocols following his July assassination attempt.

There’s no evidence that President Joe Biden or Harris have had any influence over decisions by the Justice Department or state prosecutors to indict the former president.

Trump has eschewed traditional debate preparation, choosing to hold rallies and events while Harris has been cloistered in a historic hotel in downtown Pittsburgh, working with aides since Thursday.

Harris has agreed so far to a single debate, which will be hosted by ABC.

At the rally, Trump outlined his plans to “Drain the swamp” — a throwback to his winning 2016 campaign message as he ran as an outsider challenging the status quo. Though Trump spent four years in the Oval Office, he vowed anew to “cast out the corrupt political class” if he wins again and to “cut the fat out of our government for the first time, meaningfully, in 60 years.”

As part of that effort, he repeated his plan, announced Thursday, to create a new “Government Efficiency Commission” headed by Elon Musk that will be charged with conducting “a complete financial and performance audit of the entire federal government” to root out waste.

After again maligning the Congressional committee that investigated the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the nation’s capitol by his supporters after his election loss in 2020, Trump told the crowd of thousands that he would “rapidly review the cases of every political prisoner unjustly victimized by the Harris regime” and sign their pardons on his first day back in office.

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Trump has repeatedly defended those who have been jailed for crimes including violent attacks on law enforcement.

And he said he would "completely overhaul" what he labeled "Kamala's corrupt Department of Injustice." "Instead of persecuting Republicans, they will focus on taking down bloodthirsty cartels, transnational gangs, and radical Islamic terrorists," he said.

Harris campaign spokesperson Sarafina Chitika responded to his comments with a statement warning that, if Trump is reelected, he will "use his unchecked power to prosecute his enemies and pardon insurrectionists who violently attacked our Capitol on January 6."

Both Harris and Trump have been frequent visitors to Wisconsin this year, a state where four of the past six presidential elections have been decided by less than a percentage point. Several polls of Wisconsin voters conducted after Biden withdrew showed Harris and Trump in a close race.

Democrats consider Wisconsin to be one of the must-win "blue wall" states. Biden, who was in Wisconsin on Thursday, won the state in 2020 by just under 21,000 votes. Trump carried it by a slightly larger margin, nearly 23,000 votes, in 2016.

As Trump was campaigning, Harris took a short break from debate prep to visit Penzeys Spices in Pittsburgh's Strip District, where she bought several seasoning mixes. One customer saw the Democratic nominee and began openly weeping as Harris hugged her and said, "We're going to be fine. We're all in this together."

Harris said she was honored to have endorsements from two major Republicans: former Vice President Dick Cheney and his daughter, Liz Cheney, the former Wyoming congresswoman.

"People are exhausted, about the division and the attempts to kind of divide us as Americans," she said, adding that her main message at the debate would be that the country wants to be united.

"It's time to turn the page on the divisiveness," she said. "It's time to bring our country together, to chart a new way forward."

Trump held his rally in the central Wisconsin city of Mosinee, with a population of about 4,500 people. It is within Wisconsin's mostly rural 7th Congressional District, a reliably Republican area in a purple state.

During his speech, he railed against Harris in dark and ominous language, claiming that if the woman he calls "Comrade Kamala Harris gets four more years, you will be living (in) a full-blown Banana Republic" ruled by "anarchy" and "tyranny."

Trump also railed against the administration's border policies, calling the Democrats' approach "suicidal" and accusing them of having "imported murderers, child predators and serial rapists from all over the planet."

Many studies have found immigrants, including those in the country illegally, commit fewer violent crimes than native-born citizens. Violent crime in the U.S. dropped again last year, continuing a downward trend after a pandemic-era spike.

He dismissed warnings from U.S. officials about ongoing Russian attempts to spread disinformation ahead of November's election, including an indictment this past week that alleged a media company linked to six conservative influencers was secretly funded by Russian state media employees.

"The Justice Department said Russia may be involved in our elections again," Trump told the crowd. "And, you know, the whole world laughed at it this time."

Among those in the crowd was Dale Osuldsen, who was celebrating his 68th birthday Saturday at his first ever Trump rally. He hopes a second Trump administration will take on "cancel culture" and bring the country back to its "foundational past.

"We've had past administrations say they want to fundamentally change America," Osuldsen said. "Fundamentally changing America is a bad thing."

Many supporters embarked on hours-long drives from across Wisconsin to see Trump speak. Some came from even further.

Sean Moon, a Tennessee musician who releases MAGA-themed rap music under the stage name, "King Bullethead," blasted his songs from a truck in the event parking lot. As a musician, he said Trump rallies approximate the experience of a raucous concert.

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"Trump is a rockstar," Moon said. "He's incredible. People see he represents them and the deep state trying to kill him and take him out. But he's standing strong, and he stands for the normal person."

Democrats have relied on massive turnout in the state's two largest cities, Milwaukee and Madison, to counter Republican strength in rural areas like Mosinee and the Milwaukee suburbs. Trump must win the votes in places like Mosinee to have any chance of cutting into the Democrats' advantage in urban areas.

Republicans held their national convention in Milwaukee in July and Trump has made four previous stops to the state, most recently just last week in the western Wisconsin city of La Crosse.

Harris and her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, last month filled the same Milwaukee arena where Republicans held their national convention for a rally that coincided with the Democratic National Convention just 90 miles away in Chicago. Walz returned Monday to Milwaukee, where he spoke at a Labor Day rally organized by unions.

## Georgia school shooting highlights fears about classroom cellphone bans

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

Huddling for safety in classrooms as gunfire rang out, students at Apalachee High School texted or called their parents to let them know what was happening and send what they thought could be their final messages. One student texted her mother to say she loved her, adding, "I'm sorry I'm not the best daughter."

The Georgia school shooting that left four dead and nine injured last week was every parent's worst nightmare, and one that highlights potential downsides to efforts among states, school districts and federal lawmakers to ban or restrict access to cellphones in classrooms.

The moves to restrict phone use in schools have been driven by concerns about the impact screentime has on children's mental health and complaints from teachers that cellphones have become a constant distraction in the classroom. But those opposed to the bans say they cut off a lifeline parents have to make sure their children are safe during school shootings or other emergencies.

"The fact of the matter is parents and families cannot rely on schools to effectively communicate with us in times of emergency, and this has happened time and again," said Keri Rodrigues, president of the National Parents Union, an education advocacy group. "There's a whole host of reasons why parents are deeply concerned about whether or not they're going to get timely information about whether or not their kids are safe."

Nationally, 77% of U.S. schools say they prohibit cellphones at school for non-academic use, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. But that number is misleading. It does not mean students are following those bans or all those schools are enforcing them.

The restrictions have been trumpeted by both Republican and Democratic governors who rarely agree on other issues.

In Arkansas, GOP Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders launched a program for school districts to apply for grants to purchase pouches for students to keep their phones in during the school day. In California, Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom has urged school districts to restrict cellphone use and is weighing whether to sign legislation that would require schools to enact restrictions.

"I'd hate to see another school shooting be the reason that we bring TVs into the classroom and then disrupt our children's education," Newsom said Friday. "Because, in essence, that's what a cellphone is equivalent to — bringing a TV into the classroom and disrupting the ability to get quality academic time."

But for many students caught in the Apalachee shooting, having access to their phones was the only way they could communicate with loved ones during moments they feared could be their last.

"I love you. I love you so much. Ma I love you," Junior Julie Sandoval texted her mother. "I'm sorry I'm not the best daughter. I love you."

Nearby, Sandoval said, another student was on the phone telling their mother, "They're shooting up the school! They're shooting up the school!"

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But advocates of school phone restrictions warn that allowing access to phones during shootings or other emergencies could put students in even more danger.

"What's even more important to me is their safety," said Kim Whitman, co-founder of the Phone-Free Schools Movement, a group that advocates for schools to adopt policies keeping cellphones off and away from students. "If my child was on the phone with me and they missed guidance from the teacher because they were distracted by their phone and they weren't safe, that's a worse scenario in my mind."

Whitman said she understands the concerns about keeping parents informed and that's why a key part for any phone-free school is being proactive in communicating about emergencies.

Balancing safety and parents' concerns guided a cellphone ban at Grand Island Senior High, the largest high school in Nebraska, which rolled out a new policy in January that requires students to keep phones out of sight and in their bags or pockets, silenced or off during school hours.

"One of the essential questions that parents asked us was, 'What if Sally or Johnny doesn't have their phone if, God forbid, an active shooting happens or there is some sort of crisis in the building?'" said Jeff Gilbertson, the school's then-principal who now runs leadership training at the state Board of Education.

But the school does lockdown training to remind students of the dangers that phones can cause during emergencies.

"We coach our kids to keep phones silenced. You don't want to be talking on the phone when we're in lockdown, because that would reveal your location to an active shooter," he said.

Students in other school shootings have used cellphones to alert authorities or their parents. During the 2022 school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, that killed 21 people, a fourth-grader begged for help in a series of 911 calls. Students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, sent parents and posted chilling videos during the 2018 shooting that killed 17 people.

The Apalachee school shooting was a painful reminder for Brandi Scire of why she got a cellphone for her daughter, now a high school sophomore in Broward County, Florida. Both her children went to schools nearby Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School during that mass shooting.

Scire's son's school was on lockdown and thought it was a drill until she texted him on his phone. Scire purchased a cellphone for her daughter the following year because of that.

Broward County schools now require students to keep their phones stored away and in airplane mode, but Scire has told her daughter to keep her phone on and with her.

"It's not about me texting my daughter during regular school or anything like that," Scire said. "It's a safety measure and I'm sorry, I cannot let that go."

## **The AI industry uses a light lobbying touch to educate Congress from a corporate perspective**

By DAN MERICA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The artificial intelligence industry has gone on a lobbying binge in the past few years, deploying scores of hired influencers to help shape potential government action.

The growth is not surprising. The technology is being rapidly adopted by powerful sectors — health care, defense, financial services — all with the hopes of having a say on possible regulations.

As AI evolves at such a rapid clip, lawmakers are leaning on the lobbyists' expertise because think tanks, nonprofit groups and academia are struggling to keep up with the minute-by-minute technological changes.

Relying on PowerPoint slides and briefing papers, AI industry lobbyists are getting lots of face time with lawmakers and staffers, advising them on the ins and outs of the technology.

The campaign has been successful, according to lawmakers and lobbyists who point to the lack of movement on any legislation designed to regulate AI, one of the most complex and vexing policy issues facing the federal government.

What is happening?

Lobbyists in Washington have been racing to pick up clients with interests in AI, a reflection that the



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technology is growing and Congress is working to determine the best way to regulate the industry.

According to a study by Open Secrets, a watchdog that tracks money in politics, the number of organizations lobbying on AI spiked to 460 in 2023, an over 190% increase from 2022. The number of organizations grew slightly to 462 in 2024. The groups behind these lobbyists are among the top corporations or trade organizations behind the AI boom, from business networks such as the Chamber of Commerce or the Business Roundtable to corporations that includes Microsoft, Intuit and Amazon.

A major reason for the growth is that AI touches on so many different aspects of life, from health care and education to national security and the risks of disinformation.

AI companies are seeking to stifle European-style regulation

The primary goal of most of these lobbyists is to convince Washington that the fears around AI are overblown and that the United States does not need to follow the European Union, which passed first-of-its-kind regulations earlier this year with the Artificial Intelligence Act.

"The constant theme is don't do what the EU has done. The throwaway line is, 'The EU is a regulatory superpower,'" said Rep. Don Beyer, a Virginia Democrat focused on AI. "I haven't heard anyone sticking up for the EU yet."

Congress has, so far, taken a light touch on AI. Legislation is not likely to pass either House before the November election, something some lawmakers believe is necessary because of the way AI, using complex computing technology, can create believable but fake images, audio and video, leading voters to question what they see and hear and undercutting trust in elections.

How are they doing it?

AI lobbyists are spending a lot of their time just explaining how the technology works.

While these lobbyists are still hosting events across the capital and filling campaign accounts with cash, they are focusing on educating members of Congress, casting themselves as a resource for information on the changing industry.

"On AI, we are pushing on an open door" in Congress, Craig Albright, the top lobbyist and senior vice president at The Software Alliance, a trade group whose members include Microsoft, OpenAI and IBM. "They want to be educated."

Albright called this work "the primary thing that we do."

Varun Krovi, a technology lobbyist, said such educational campaigns are effective because they build a level of rapport and trust between lobbyists and lawmakers.

"It's a powerful way to establish and solidify your relationship with these members and the staff because you are not asking them to support X bill or oppose Y bill," said Krovi, the head of government relations and public policy at the Center for AI Safety Action Fund.

"You are actually taking a step back and saying we are here to answer any technical questions you may have and here is why you should listen to us. It is incredibly powerful," Krovi said.

One reason for that power, say skeptics about the way artificial intelligence is regulated, is that outside entities such as academia and nonprofits cannot keep up with AI companies and trade associations that are influencing Congress. According to academics, members of Congress are more willing to listen to representatives from well-known technology companies than they are from more impartial experts.

Where are the think tanks and academia?

At this point, Congress is mostly hearing from lobbyists tied to the industry, according to lobbyists and academics. Academia and nonprofits, which provide nonpartisan research and analysis on issues ranging from the deployment of AI to the threat it represents to society, cannot keep up with developments in the technology. The most cutting-edge work is being generated by for-profit companies, which can afford the best equipment and researchers.

"It's very hard for academia to counterbalance this massive level of lobbying," said Max Tegmark, a professor doing AI research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "You feel a little bit like you are trying to explain something to someone else in the front row of a heavy metal concert."

MIT and other have held meetings with members of Congress on AI. MIT has hosted lawmakers in Boston

and offered similar briefings in Washington over the past two years. Nonprofits have tried to do the same. "We are trying to keep up, but ... academia has a big challenge, which is access to computing resources. That is one thing that industry has right now," said Asu Ozdaglar, head of the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at MIT. "We are keeping up, we are doing research ... but to be able to stay in the game, we need to have access to those resources."

## **Grand Canyon's main water line has broken dozens of times. Why is it getting a major fix only now?**

By MICHAEL PHILLIS and SUMAN NAISHADHAM Associated Press

On a scorching day in June 2013, the Grand Canyon discouraged hikers from making a long trek to the bottom because there would be no potable water. A set of historic cabins and bunks also would be closed overnight because of a water pipeline break.

The incident was one of more than 85 breaks that the 12.5-mile (20-kilometer) long Transcanyon Waterline, which supplies potable water to the Grand Canyon's South Rim and inner canyon, has experienced since 2010. Finished in 1970, the pipeline has long exceeded its 30-year design life, disrupting operations at one of the most popular U.S. national parks.

The pipeline has remained a leaky, flimsy albeit vital piece of infrastructure for millions of visitors. This year, after multiple breaks, officials imposed water restrictions and canceled overnight stays at busy hotels, upending some summer vacations over Labor Day weekend.

A long-term fix is expected by roughly 2027, but it's taken decades to get to that point. The lengthy timeline is due to a complex design process and the challenge of funding expensive projects at the National Park Service, which struggles under mountains of overdue maintenance, according to experts who know its history.

"It just takes awhile for something this big," said Robert Parrish, chief of planning, environment and projects at Grand Canyon National Park, adding that it's not just the park service — utilities can take 10 to 15 years to start building big projects.

Recent stays at El Tovar Hotel, Bright Angel Lodge and other hotels on the canyon's South Rim were halted for roughly a week as officials rushed to patch up four breaks in the water line.

The Transcanyon pipeline twists and turns over the canyon's rugged terrain. For years, the park service repaired pipeline failures from rock falls, freezes, flash floods and other causes on an ad hoc basis, Parrish said. One 2015 estimate said over roughly the previous three decades, the pipeline suffered five to 30 breaks per year. Those cost on average about \$25,000 each.

It isn't like fixing most pipelines, according to Dan Cockrum, chief of maintenance and engineering at the park for nearly a decade until 1993.

Helicopters had to shuttle workers to the leak. They would measure the damaged pipe's thickness and bend, return to the rim and craft a replacement piece, then head back down to install the new section, he recalled.

Leaks happened a few times a year. Around when Cockrum left that job, engineers studied replacing the entire thing or its most vulnerable portions, because it was suffering stress fractures and corrosion and was near the end of its useful life. But the plan for a major fix wasn't adopted.

"When you have inadequate resources it comes down to sort of a triage approach," said Ernie Atencio, Southwest regional director with the National Parks Conservation Association and a former Grand Canyon ranger. "You do the best you can for as long as you can. And sometimes things will blow up on you."

In the short term, a piecemeal approach may have made economic sense. A few repairs a year were significantly cheaper than the tens of millions of dollars for a replacement project, according to Greg MacGregor, chief of the project management team at the park from 2006 to 2017.

That thinking shifted toward a permanent solution in the early 2010s, Parrish said.

"Instead of looking at a large number of small repair projects, the teams really transitioned to 'how do

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we look at making an overall replacement of the entire system?" he said.

MacGregor remembers a huge brainstorm process to figure out the best option and years of analyzing how to solve the complex problem of moving scarce water up to the South Rim.

The park service has hurried to fix breaks, some bigger than others, and slowly save for a major overhaul, Parrish said, "There was too much to tackle at once."

In 2018, the National Park Service released an environmental assessment, asked for public input, then the next year officials signed off on a more comprehensive fix. The Transcanyon Waterline project will involve replacing about 3 miles (5 kilometers) of pipe inside the canyon, upgrading 3 miles (5 kilometers) of electrical supply line inside the canyon, building a water intake at a new location and updating water treatment and electrical systems.

Officials say the project will ensure the park will be able to meet its water supply needs for the next 50 years or more.

Funding was one of the biggest hurdles. The park's maintenance backlog kept growing during MacGregor's time, and he remembers Congress was reluctant to write a big check. The park would end up contributing from visitor fees. In 2018, fees went up in part to help pay for the pipeline.

U.S. national parks fund costly maintenance work mainly through Congress but also from donations, philanthropy and park entrance fees. Large parks like the Grand Canyon, with nearly 5 million visitors in 2023, don't keep everything they receive from entrance fees; larger parks distribute a portion of fees to smaller parks, many of which don't charge visitors. Grand Canyon keeps 80% of its visitor fees, Parrish said.

A \$208 million construction contract was awarded in 2023. Congress provided more than \$70 million for the project but the bulk will come from park fees, Parrish said.

"The sheer magnitude of the scope of this project is maybe the answer to why it took so long to decide, plan and execute," he said.

Over the years, breaks have taken a toll.

Wendy Haluda is a former baker at El Tovar Hotel where diners this spring could order a filet mignon with a demi glace for \$54. After a pipeline break in 2016, water restrictions forced the restaurant to reduce dishwashing and use paper plates and plastic utensils. And Haluda recalled staff worrying about where they would go if conditions worsened to where they couldn't stay overnight at their park housing.

"It was scary," she recalled.

Badly needed repairs, maintenance and infrastructure replacement like the Grand Canyon's pipeline are a nationwide problem. The park service has a nearly \$23 billion maintenance backlog for aging infrastructure.

More than half that is for road work and maintaining buildings at national parks. The remainder is for water systems, trails, campground and infrastructure such as wastewater treatment.

The Grand Canyon has a backlog of \$823 million for maintenance and repairs, mostly maintaining buildings and trails.

The Great American Outdoors Act of 2020 provided billions in additional funding, although it will expire soon if Congress doesn't renew it.

A lot of park infrastructure dates 70 years or more and upkeep has been neglected, according to Tate Watkins, a researcher at the think tank Property and Environment Research Center.

"People like cutting ribbons on new national parks," he said. "But it's a lot less sexy to talk about fixing sewer lines or, you know, rebuilding a water line for the Grand Canyon."

## House Republicans push to link government funding to a citizenship check for new voters

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Mike Johnson is heeding the demands of the more conservative wing of his Republican conference and has teed up a vote this week on a bill that would keep the federal government funded for six more months and require states to obtain proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate or passport, when registering a person to vote.

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Congress needs to approve a stop-gap spending bill before the end of the budget year on Sept. 30 to avoid a government shutdown just a few weeks before voters go to the polls and elect the next president.

Johnson's decision to combine the proof of citizenship mandate with government funding complicates prospects for getting that task done. The bill is not expected to go anywhere in the Democratic-controlled Senate, if it even makes it that far.

But the effort could help Johnson, R-La., next year should House Republicans retain their majority and he seeks to become speaker again. The vote also could give Republicans an issue to go after Democrats in competitive swing districts as Republicans make immigration-related matters a campaign cornerstone.

"Today, House Republicans are taking a critically important step to keep the federal government funded and to secure our federal election process," Johnson said Friday. "Congress has a responsibility to do both, and we must ensure that only American citizens can decide American elections."

Democrats will oppose the GOP effort overwhelmingly and warn that any continuing resolution must have buy-in from both political parties. They said Johnson was making the same mistake then-Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., did a year ago as he tried to placate conservatives. In the end, they rejected his efforts, forcing him to rely on Democrats to get a temporary spending bill passed. That fight led just a few days later to eight Republicans joining with Democrats in removing McCarthy from the speaker's job.

"As we have said repeatedly, avoiding a government shutdown requires bipartisanship, not a bill drawn up by one party. Speaker Johnson is making the same mistake as former Speaker McCarthy did a year ago, by wasting precious time catering to the hard MAGA right, Democratic Sens. Chuck Schumer of New York and Patty Murray of Washington state said in a statement, referring to Donald Trump's "Make America Great Again" movement. "This tactic didn't work last September and it will not work this year either."

They said that if Johnson "drives House Republicans down this highly partisan path, the odds of a shutdown go way up, and Americans will know that the responsibility of a shutdown will be on the House Republicans' hands."

Schumer is the Senate's majority leader. Murray leads the Senate Appropriations Committee.

The voter registration measure is popular with House Republicans. The House Freedom Caucus, which generally includes the chamber's most conservative members, called for it to be attached to a stop-gap bill that would keep the government funded into early 2025.

Republicans say that requiring proof of citizenship would ensure U.S. elections are only for American citizens, improving confidence in the nation's federal election system, something that Trump has sought to undermine over the years.

Opponents say it is already against the law for noncitizens to vote in federal elections and that the document requirements would disenfranchise millions of people who do not have the necessary documents readily available when they get a chance to register, say at a concert, county fair or at a college voter registration drive.

In an earlier vote on the voter registration bill, Republicans unanimously backed it while all but five Democrats voted against it. President Joe Biden's administration strongly opposed that measure, saying the the alleged justification for the bill is easily disproven.

Some Republicans are arguing that if Schumer will allow a vote, assuming the bill passes the House, then a government shutdown would be on him.

"If Chuck Schumer decides he doesn't want to bring it, then Chuck Schumer will be deciding that he wants to shut down government. It's not us," said Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., during an interview on Fox Business News.

Trump and other Republicans have revved up their complaints about the issue of noncitizens voting with the influx of migrants across the U.S.-Mexico border under Biden's administration. They are contending Democrats let them in to add them to the voter rolls. But the available evidence shows that noncitizen voting in federal elections is incredibly rare.

Another major question to address as part of the short-term spending bill is how long to extend funding. Before the August recess, House Appropriations Committee Chairman Tom Cole, R-Okla., said he preferred that the next president be able to pursue top priorities without the distraction of a messy spending fight.



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But the House Freedom Caucus is banking on Trump winning the White House and putting the GOP in better position to secure the spending cuts and policy priorities they desire. So they want to extend funding until after the inauguration in January.

Congress returns to Washington on Monday after spending the past five weeks back in their home states and districts. The short-term bill is necessary because the House and Senate are nowhere near completing their work on the dozen annual spending bills that keep government agencies and programs operational during the coming budget year.

So far, the House has passed five of the 12 annual spending bills, while the Senate has passed none, though the Senate has opted to take a more bipartisan approach to the challenge by moving 11 of the bills through the Senate Appropriations Committee with broad support from lawmakers in both parties. Meanwhile, Republicans in the House are using their majority to push bills through with the vast majority of Democrats in opposition.

## Today in History: September 9, Attica prison uprising begins

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Sept. 9, the 253rd day of 2024. There are 113 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 9, 1971, prisoners seized control of the maximum-security Attica Correctional Facility near Buffalo, New York, taking 42 staff members hostage and demanding improvements to inmate treatment and living conditions.

Also on this date:

In 1776, the second Continental Congress formally adopted the name "United States of America," replacing the "United Colonies of North America."

In 1850, California was admitted as the 31st U.S. state.

In 1919, about 1,100 members of Boston's 1,500-member police force went on strike. The strike was broken by Massachusetts Gov. Calvin Coolidge with replacement officers.

In 1948, the People's Democratic Republic of Korea (North Korea) was declared.

In 1957, Althea Gibson became the first Black tennis player to win the U.S. National Championships, which is now known as the U.S. Open.

In 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the first civil rights bill to pass Congress since Reconstruction, a measure primarily concerned with protecting voting rights. It also established a Civil Rights Division in the U.S. Department of Justice.

In 2022, King Charles III gave his first speech to Britain as its new monarch, vowing to carry on the "lifelong service" of his mother Queen Elizabeth II, who died a day earlier.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Dee Dee Sharp is 79. Former NFL quarterback Joe Theismann is 75. Actor Angela Cartwright is 72. Musician-producer Dave Stewart (Eurythmics) is 72. Actor Hugh Grant is 64. Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., is 61. Actor Constance Marie is 59. Actor Adam Sandler is 58. Actor Julia Sawalha (suh-WAHL'-hah) is 56. Model Rachel Hunter is 55. Actor Eric Stonestreet is 53. Actor Henry Thomas is 53. Actor Goran Visnjic (VEEZ'-nihch) is 52. Pop-jazz singer Michael Bublé (boo-BLAY') is 49. Actor Michelle Williams is 44. Actor Zoe Kazan is 41. Soccer player Luka Modrić is 39. Country singer-songwriter Hunter Hayes is 33.