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**Body**

At least 2,000 people arrested in pro-Palestinian protests on US campuses, AP tally shows

LOS ANGELES — Police have arrested more than 2,000 people during pro-Palestinian protests at college campuses across the United States in recent weeks, according to an Associated Press tally Thursday.

Demonstrations — and arrests — have occurred in almost every corner of the nation. But in the last 24 hours, they’ve drawn the most attention at the University of California, Los Angeles, where chaotic scenes played out early Thursday when officers in riot gear surged against a crowd of demonstrators.

Hundreds of protesters at UCLA defied orders to leave, some forming human chains as police fired flash-bangs to break up the crowds.

At least 200 people were arrested, said Sgt. Alejandro Rubio of the California Highway Patrol, citing data from the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department. Rubio said they were being booked at the county jails complex near downtown Los Angeles. UCLA police will determine what charges to bring.

Later Thursday morning, workers removed barricades and dismantled the protesters’ fortified encampment. Bulldozers scooped up bags of trash and tents. Some buildings were covered in graffiti.

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'What do we got to pay for this?' Jurors in Trump hush money trial hear recording of pivotal call

NEW YORK (AP) — Jurors in the hush money trial of Donald Trump heard a recording Thursday of him discussing with his then-lawyer and personal fixer a plan to purchase the silence of a Playboy model who has said she had an affair with the former president.

A visibly irritated Trump leaned forward at the defense table, and jurors appeared riveted as prosecutors played the September 2016 recording that attorney Michael Cohen secretly made of himself briefing his celebrity client on a plan to buy Karen McDougal's story of an extramarital relationship.

Though the recording surfaced years ago, it is perhaps the most colorful piece of evidence presented to jurors so far to connect Trump to the hush money payments at the center of his criminal trial in Manhattan. It followed hours of testimony from a lawyer who negotiated the deal for McDougal's silence and admitted to being stunned that his hidden-hand efforts might have contributed to Trump's White House victory.

“What have we done?” attorney Keith Davidson texted the then-editor of the National Enquirer, which had buried stories of sexual encounters to prevent them surfacing in the final days of the bitterly contested presidential race. “Oh my god,” came the response from Dylan Howard.

“There was an understanding that our efforts may have in some way — strike that — our activities may have in some way assisted the presidential campaign of Donald Trump,” Davidson told jurors, though he acknowledged under cross-examination that he dealt directly with Cohen and never Trump.

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Hamas is sending a delegation to Egypt for further cease-fire talks in the latest sign of progress

BEIRUT (AP) — Hamas said Thursday that it was sending a delegation to Egypt for further cease-fire talks, in a new sign of progress in attempts by international mediators to hammer out an agreement between Israel and the militant group to end the war in Gaza.

After months of stop-and-start negotiations, the cease-fire efforts appear to have reached a critical stage, with Egyptian and American mediators reporting signs of compromise in recent days. But chances for the deal remain entangled with the key question of whether Israel will accept an end to the war without reaching its stated goal of destroying Hamas.

The stakes in the cease-fire negotiations were made clear in a new U.N. report that said if the Israel-Hamas war stops today, it will still take until 2040 to rebuild all the homes that have been destroyed by nearly seven months of Israeli bombardment and ground offensives in Gaza. It warned that the impact of the damage to the economy will set back development for generations and will only get worse with every month fighting continues.

The proposal that U.S. and Egyptian mediators have put to Hamas -– apparently with Israel’s acceptance — sets out a three-stage process that would bring an immediate six-week cease-fire and partial release of Israeli hostages, but also negotiations over a “permanent calm” that includes some sort of Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, according to an Egyptian official. Hamas is seeking guarantees for a full Israeli withdrawal and complete end to the war.

Hamas officials have sent mixed signals about the proposal in recent days. But on Thursday, its supreme leader, Ismail Haniyeh, said in a statement that he had spoken to Egypt’s intelligence chief and “stressed the positive spirit of the movement in studying the cease-fire proposal.”

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Here's what's on the table for Israel and Hamas in the latest cease-fire talks

CAIRO (AP) — Israel and Hamas appear to be seriously negotiating an end to the war in Gaza and the return of Israeli hostages. A leaked truce proposal hints at compromises by both sides after months of stalemated talks.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken this week praised Israel for offering what he described as significant concessions and saying “ the time is now ” for Hamas to seal the deal. Hamas leaders, meanwhile, say they are reviewing the proposal in a “positive spirit” and sending a team to Egypt in the coming days to continue the talks.

Here’s what we know so far about the current proposal, confirmed by Egyptian and Hamas officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss behind-the-scenes negotiations.

Israeli leaders are weighing whether to accept a deal that would delay or prevent their planned ground invasion of the southern Gaza city of Rafah — a scenario that falls short of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s pledges of “ total victory ” and the destruction of Hamas.

Hamas’ militant leaders must decide if giving up the hostages, the group’s biggest bargaining chip, is worth securing a long-term truce but not necessarily a permanent end to the war.

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Abortion is still consuming US ***politics*** and courts 2 years after a Supreme Court draft was leaked

Two years after a leaked draft of a U.S. Supreme Court opinion signaled that the nation's abortion landscape was about to shift dramatically, the issue is still consuming the nation's courts, legislatures and political campaigns — and changing the course of lives.

On Wednesday, a ban on abortion after the first six weeks of pregnancy, often before women realize they're pregnant, took effect in Florida, echoing laws in two other states. In Arizona, meanwhile, lawmakers voted to repeal a total ban on abortion dating back to 1864, decades before Arizona became a state — and the governor signed it a day later. Also this week, the Kansas Legislature increased funding for anti-abortion centers, while advocates in South Dakota submitted the required number of signatures for a ballot measure to enshrine abortion rights in the state constitution.

The status of abortion in states across the country has changed constantly, with lawmakers passing measures and courts ruling on challenges to them. Currently, 14 states are enforcing bans on abortion at all stages of pregnancy, with limited exceptions. Most Democratic-led states, meanwhile, have taken steps to preserve or expand access.

“Some of it’s exactly what we knew would happen,” said David Cohen, a professor at the Thomas R. Kline School of Law at Drexel University who studies abortion policy, “and others have been big surprises that have put, frankly, the anti-abortion movement on their heels.”

Although more than 20 states have begun enforcing abortion bans of varying degrees since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in June 2022, studies have found that the number of monthly abortions nationally is about the same — or higher — than it was before the ruling. Asked to weigh in on the emotional debate, voters have supported the position favored by abortion rights advocates on all seven statewide ballot measures since then.

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I-95 in Connecticut will close for days after fiery crash damages bridge, governor says

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — The major traffic artery linking New England with New York will be closed in Connecticut for days after a tanker fire damaged a bridge over Interstate 95, Gov. Ned Lamont said Thursday.

The tanker truck filled with gasoline burst into flames in a three-vehicle crash Thursday on I-95 in southwest Connecticut, closing the East Coast’s main north-south highway and causing major traffic jams. While Lamont said there were no serious injuries in the 5:30 a.m. accident in Norwalk, the crash caused damage to the bridge above it.

“The heat from the burning fuel compromised some of the bridge, so that bridge is going to have to come down and that demolition is going to start first thing tomorrow morning,” Lamont said at a briefing Thursday evening in Hartford.

He said the hope is to reopen the interstate by Monday morning.

While the bridge was less than 10 years old, "the damage was pretty severe due to the amount of gasoline that was in the tanker ignited directly underneath the bridge structure,” Connecticut Department of Transportation Commissioner Garrett Eucalitto said. “The steel did begin to overheat and warp.”

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Captain sentenced to 4 years for criminal negligence in fiery deaths of 34 aboard scuba boat

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A federal judge on Thursday sentenced a scuba dive boat captain to four years in custody and three years supervised release for criminal negligence after 34 people died in a fire aboard the vessel.

The Sept. 2, 2019, blaze was the deadliest maritime disaster in recent U.S. history, and prompted changes to maritime regulations, congressional reform and several ongoing lawsuits.

Captain Jerry Boylan was found guilty of one count of misconduct or neglect of ship officer last year. The charge is a pre-Civil War statute colloquially known as seaman’s manslaughter. It was designed to hold steamboat captains and crew responsible for maritime disasters.

Boylan’s appeal is ongoing. He faced up to 10 years behind bars.

The defense had asked the judge to sentence Boylan to a five-year probationary sentence, with three years to be served under house arrest.

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Faceless people, invisible hands: New Army video aims to lure recruits for psychological operations

FORT LIBERTY, N.C. (AP) — The video is unsettling, with haunting images of faceless people, fire and soldiers. The voiceover is a cascade of recognizable historical voices as the screen pulses cryptic messages touting the power of words, ideas and “invisible hands.”

Hints of its origin are tucked into frames as they flash by: PSYWAR. The Army’s psychological warfare soldiers are using their brand of mental combat to bring in what the service needs: recruits. And if you find the video intriguing, you may be the Army’s target audience as it works to enlist soldiers to join its Special Operations Command.

Released in the early morning hours Thursday, the video is the second provocative recruiting ad that, in itself, exemplifies the kind of work the psyop soldiers do to influence public opinion and wage the war of words overseas. Called “Ghost in the Machine 2,” it is coming out two years after the inaugural video was quietly posted on the unit’s YouTube site and generated a firestorm of online chatter.

“It’s a recruiting video,” said the Army major who created it, speaking with The Associated Press before the release. “Someone who watches it and thinks, wow, that was effective, how was it constructed — that’s the kind of creative mindset we’re looking for."

The soldier, a member of the 8th Psychological Operations Group based at Fort Liberty, North Carolina, also made the first video. He asked that his name not be used to protect his identity, as is common among special forces troops.

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Senators want limits on the government's use of facial recognition technology for airport screening

WASHINGTON (AP) — A bipartisan group of senators is pushing for restrictions on the use of facial recognition technology by the Transportation Security Administration, saying they are concerned about travelers' privacy and civil liberties.

In a letter on Thursday, the group of 14 lawmakers called on Senate leaders to use the upcoming reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration as a vehicle to limit TSA's use of the technology so Congress can put in place some oversight.

"This technology poses significant threats to our privacy and civil liberties, and Congress should prohibit TSA’s development and deployment of facial recognition tools until rigorous congressional oversight occurs," the senators wrote.

The effort, led by Sens. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., John Kennedy, R-La., and Roger Marshall, R-Kan., "would halt facial recognition technology at security checkpoints, which has proven to improve security effectiveness, efficiency, and the passenger experience,” TSA said in a statement.

The technology is currently in use at 84 airports around the country and is planned to expand in the coming years to the roughly 430 covered by TSA.

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A wild orangutan used a medicinal plant to treat a wound, scientists say

WASHINGTON (AP) — An orangutan appeared to treat a wound with medicine from a tropical plant— the latest example of how some animals attempt to soothe their own ills with remedies found in the wild, scientists reported Thursday.

Scientists observed Rakus pluck and chew up leaves of a medicinal plant used by people throughout Southeast Asia to treat pain and inflammation. The adult male orangutan then used his fingers to apply the plant juices to an injury on the right cheek. Afterward, he pressed the chewed plant to cover the open wound like a makeshift bandage, according to a new study in Scientific Reports.

Previous research has documented several species of great apes foraging for medicines in forests to heal themselves, but scientists hadn't yet seen an animal treat itself in this way.

“This is the first time that we have observed a wild animal applying a quite potent medicinal plant directly to a wound,” said co-author Isabelle Laumer, a biologist at the Max Planck Institute of Animal Behavior in Konstanz, Germany.

The orangutan's intriguing behavior was recorded in 2022 by Ulil Azhari, a co-author and field researcher at the Suaq Project in Medan, Indonesia. Photographs show the animal’s wound closed within a month without any problems.

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