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What's News

Business & Finance

- ◆ **U.S. inflation eased** to a new three-year low but is cooling more slowly than expected, new data showed in what is the last reading of the consumer-price index before Election Day. **A1**
- ◆ **U.S. stocks declined** after the release of the inflation data, with the S&P 500 and Dow retreating 0.2% and 0.1%, respectively, from records set the previous session. The Nasdaq fell less than 0.1%. **B9**
- ◆ **Automaker Stellantis** said Chief Executive Carlos Tavares will retire in early 2026 when his contract expires and outlined a broader management shake-up. **B1**
- ◆ **Tesla's Musk unveiled** two new vehicles, a driverless robotaxi with no steering wheel or pedals, and a Robovan that can transport up to 20 people at a time or move cargo. **B1**
- ◆ **Delta Air Lines'** guidance for the current quarter suggested a slower recovery from a summer supply glut than analysts had expected, worrying investors. **B1**
- ◆ **The Justice Department's** criminal probe into former U.S. Bankruptcy Judge David R. Jones and his romantic relationship with a Houston attorney expanded to examine if other restructuring advisers compromised the integrity of proceedings he oversaw. **B3**
- ◆ **7-Eleven's parent** company plans to revamp its noncore businesses as it faces a revised takeover bid from Alimentation Couche-Tard of Canada. **B3**
- ◆ **The SEC sued** the cryptocurrency unit of high-speed-trading firm DRW, which does business with hedge funds and other big market players. **B5**

World-Wide

- ◆ **Hurricane Milton** spared Florida the catastrophic devastation that many feared but left at least 11 people dead and more than three million customers without power after it blazed a tornado-filled path across the state. **A1, A6**
- ◆ **Tehran threatened** in secret diplomatic backchannels to target the oil-rich Arab Gulf states and other U.S. allies in the Middle East if their territories or airspace are used for an attack on Iran, Arab officials said. **A1**
- ◆ **Airstrikes** in densely populated areas of central Beirut killed 22 people, according to Lebanese state media, marking the deadliest strikes in the heart of the capital during Israel's offensive against Hezbollah. **A8**
- ◆ **Trump said he wants** to make car-loan interest payments tax deductible and took a warning shot at Chinese automakers looking to send vehicles built in Mexico to the U.S. **A4**
- ◆ **Retirees' Social Security** benefits will rise 2.5% in 2025, the smallest cost-of-living adjustment in four years. **A3**
- ◆ **World trade is set** to rebound this year at a slightly faster pace than previously forecast, the WTO said. **A9**
- ◆ **The Nobel Prize** in literature was awarded to South Korean author Han Kang, whose novel "The Vegetarian" achieved international success. **A10**
- ◆ **A federal judge** in New York set a May 5 date for the trial of Sean "Diddy" Combs on sex-trafficking charges. **A3**
- ◆ **Died: Ethel Kennedy**, 96, widow of Robert F. Kennedy. **A3** ... **Ratan Tata**, 86, industrialist with a global reach. **B2**

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Florida Reels After Milton's Fury

At least 11 die, millions lose power along devastated path, but 'worst-case scenario' avoided



A house lies toppled off its stilts in Bradenton Beach after Hurricane Milton barreled across Florida, leaving widespread damage.

TAMPA, Fla.—Hurricane Milton spared Florida the catastrophic devastation that many feared but left at least 11 people dead and more than three million customers

By Victoria Albert, Arian Campo-Flores, Ginger Adams Otis and Nicholas Hatcher

without power after it blazed a tornado-filled path across the state. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said that the storm caused significant damage, but it wasn't "the worst-case scenario."

Milton crashed into the Gulf Coast near Sarasota, compounding the hardship created by last month's Hurricane Helene, while avoiding a direct hit in the heavily populated Tampa Bay region. Milton maintained its strength as it marched through central Florida and pulled away from the Atlantic coast early Thursday morning as a Category 1 storm, still powerful enough to cause a destructive storm surge.

Milton was downgraded from a hurricane to a post-tropical cyclone, with maximum sustained winds of 75

mph, the National Hurricane Center said.

In its wake, the hurricane left splintered homes, snapped trees, flooded roads and beachfronts, and in some areas, damaged water systems. Storm-tossed boats were found in front yards and streets. The roof of a Major League Baseball stadium was destroyed. Residents were asked to stay off roads on Thursday so rescue and recovery efforts could begin.

The damage was widespread even before the storm made landfall near Siesta Key, about 70 miles south of

Tampa, on Wednesday night. More than 40 tornadoes were reported across Florida, some of them powerful enough to send heavy debris flying.

Two tornadoes killed four people in the southeastern county of St. Lucie, the medical examiner there said. Another death occurred in the same area, DeSantis said. Four people died in Volusia County. Tampa and Polk counties each had a fatality.

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◆ Hurricane spawned dozens of tornadoes..... A6

Neo-Nazis Tout Storm Relief

Amid politicization of government disaster response, hate groups find an opening

The fit, helpful strangers who descended on Horseshoe Beach, Fla., after Hurricane Helene were a welcome sight. The men swiftly chopped through

By Tawnell D. Hobbs, Jennifer Levitz and Joe Barrett

downed trees and cleared mounds of debris for distressed residents in the small gulf-coast town west of Gainesville.

These weren't typical disaster-relief volunteers. They were members of Pa-

riot Front, an organization branded by the Anti-Defamation League as a white-supremacist group.

Neo-Nazi groups escalating their activity in recent months across the U.S. have seized upon a potent new recruiting tool: the surging tide of misinformation surrounding hurricanes.

The contentious U.S. presidential race that has sharply politicized the storms is providing a new opening for hate groups that were already on the rise. Hurricane falsehoods about government malfea-

sance have spread rapidly on social media, often seizing on the hot-button debate of immigration by claiming relief funds are being diverted to migrants or favor minority victims over white applicants, which the Federal Emergency Management Agency denies.

Exploiting public confusion, grief and communication breakdowns, white supremacist groups are now showing up in vulnerable storm-ravaged communities in Florida and North Carolina. They blend in

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Porch Pirates Steal AT&T iPhone Deliveries

By ESTHER FUNG

Porch pirates across the country for months have been snatching FedEx packages that contain AT&T iPhones—within minutes or even seconds of delivery.

The key to these swift crimes, investigators said: The thieves are armed with tracking numbers. Another factor that makes packages from AT&T particularly vulnerable is that AT&T typically doesn't require signature on delivery. Doorbell-camera videos show the thefts in New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, Michigan, Georgia, Florida and Texas.

The details are similar: A FedEx driver drops off a box with an iPhone from AT&T. Then a person walks up—sometimes wearing an Amazon delivery vest—and plucks the package off the front step. The heist can be so quick that in some videos, the FedEx

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INSIDE



HENRY BURROUGHS/AP

OBITUARY

Ethel Kennedy, RFK's widow who endured many other tragedies, dies at age 96. **A3**



MANSION

High-end owners pay big bucks to pump oxygen into their mountain homes. **M1**

Bankruptcy Took Redbox. Who Will Take the Machines?

Company is defunct, sticking merchants with 24,000 DVD-dispensing kiosks

By BECKY YERAK

There's a red-hot market for guys like Matthew Taylor. The owner of an Alabama moving company is hired to extract the DVD-dispensing machines that are taking up space and sapping

the resources and patience of store owners across the country. The machines, owned by now-defunct Redbox, weigh as much as 890 pounds, can be environmental hazards and sometimes require an electrician to disconnect.

And that might be



The end

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Iran Delivers Secret Threat to U.S. Allies: Aid Israel, Pay a Price

DUBAI—Tehran is threatening in secret diplomatic backchannels to target the oil-rich Arab Gulf states and other U.S. allies in the Middle East if their territories or airspace are used for an attack on Iran, Arab officials said.

By Summer Said, Nancy A. Youssef and Omar Abdel-Baqi

Israel has threatened Tehran with a severe reprisal after Iran fired about 180 ballistic missiles at Israel earlier this month, with some Israeli officials and commentators pushing for strikes on Tehran's nuclear facilities or oil infrastructure. If that were to happen, Iran has warned it would target Israel's civilian infrastructure and would retaliate against any Arab state that facilitated the attack, the officials said.

The Arab officials said the countries that Iran has threatened include Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, all of which host U.S. troops. These states have told the Biden adminis-

Inflation Eased Slightly in September

But last major read on consumer prices before elections was hotter than expected

By HARRIET TORRY AND NICK TIMIRAOIS

U.S. inflation eased to a new three-year low but is cooling more slowly than expected, new data showed.

The consumer-price index rose 2.4% from a year earlier in September, the Labor Department said Thursday, after rising 2.5% in August. That was higher than the 2.3% rise that economists polled by The Wall Street Journal had expected.

Core prices, which exclude volatile food and energy items, climbed 3.3% over the previous 12 months, slightly hotter than the 3.2% rise in August. That was also above expectations.

Stocks fell, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average slipping about 58 points, or 0.1%. On Wednesday, both the Dow industrials and the S&P 500 had hit records.

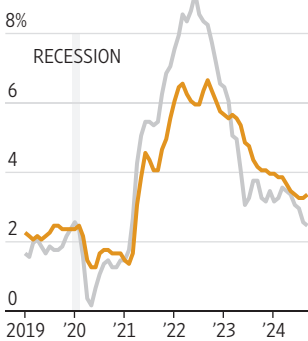
Thursday's report is the last CPI before Election Day and illustrates the challenge facing Democrats as they aim to take credit for an economy that has shown notable vigor while deflecting unhappiness over higher prices.

On the one hand, the inflation rate has fallen back to where it was right after President Biden took office. But lower inflation readings, which typically measure the 12-month change in prices, ha-

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Consumer-price index, change from a year earlier

Core: +3.3% Overall: +2.4%



Note: Core excludes food and energy prices. Source: Labor Department

◆ Retirees due for smaller benefit boost..... A3

◆ Stocks pull back after price data..... B9

Iran Delivers Secret Threat to U.S. Allies: Aid Israel, Pay a Price

While the Iranian threats are vague, they have raised concerns in energy-rich Persian Gulf states that their oil facilities—long viewed as protected by a U.S. security umbrella—could be hit, the Arab officials said.

The conflict in the Middle East is the backbone of this bloc and harbors hopes that in the future it could be a sort of Middle East NATO, aligned around countering Iran rather

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◆ Iran uses gangs to target its rivals in West..... A8

◆ Airstrikes hit the center of Beirut..... A8