

NATION & WORLD

DIGEST

Appeals panel hears arguments over DACA

NEW ORLEANS — Immigrants who grew up in the U.S. after being brought here illegally as children were among close to 200 demonstrators who gathered Thursday outside a federal court-house in New Orleans, where three appellate judges heard arguments over the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program shielding them from deportation.

At stake in the legal battle playing out at the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals is the future of about 535,000 people with long-established lives in the U.S., even though they don't hold citizenship or legal residency status and they could eventually be deported. Judges on the panel gave no indication when or how they will rule. The case is likely to wind up at the Supreme Court.

DACA opponents, chiefly Texas and eight other Republican-dominated states, said in court arguments and legal briefs that they incur hundreds of millions of dollars in health care, education and other costs when immigrants are allowed to remain in the country illegally.

Zelenskyy visits allies in cities across Europe

ROME — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy city-hopped Thursday across Europe to promote a “victory plan” he said “aims to create the right conditions for a just end to the war” against invader Russia, detailing the proposals to European allies after Hurricane Milton derailed a summit involving U.S. President Joe Biden.

Zelenskyy held talks in London with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, followed by a meeting in Paris with French President Emmanuel Macron, and later met in Rome with Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni.

Zelenskyy posted on social media that he “outlined the details” of the Ukrainian victory plan to Starmer and added: “We have agreed to work on it together with our allies.” He has yet to publicly present his proposals for victory.

BRIEFLY

SETTLEMENT: TD Bank will pay about \$3 billion in a historic settlement with U.S. authorities who said Thursday that the financial institution's lax practices allowed significant money laundering.

UNEMPLOYMENT: The Labor Department reported Thursday that applications for jobless aid jumped to 258,000 last week, up by 33,000 from the prior week. That's the most since Aug. 5, 2023, and well above the 229,000 analysts expected.

GEORGIA: A federal judge said Thursday that she won't order the presidential battleground state of Georgia to reopen voter registration for November's elections despite disruptions caused by Hurricane Helene.

MORTGAGES: The average rate on a 30-year mortgage in the U.S. surged to 6.32% this week from 6.12% last week, mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said Thursday.

RECALL: BrucePac of Woodburn, Oregon, this week recalled nearly 10 million pounds of meat and poultry products made at an Oklahoma plant because they may be contaminated with listeria bacteria. The products have a best-by date of June 19, 2025, to Oct. 8, 2025, and should be thrown away.

MINE ACCIDENT: One person was killed and 12 rescued from about 1,000 feet below ground in a former mine after an elevator malfunctioned at the Mollie Kathleen Gold Mine tourist site near Cripple Creek, Colorado, authorities said Thursday.

— Associated Press



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SEVERE WEATHER

Millions without power

Hurricane Milton spawns tornadoes, kills at least 8 people

JULIO CORTEZ, KATE PAYNE AND HAVEN DALEY
Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Hundreds of Florida residents were rescued Thursday from the aftermath of Hurricane Milton after the storm smashed through coastal communities where it tore homes into pieces, filled streets with mud and spawned a barrage of tornadoes that killed at least eight.

Arriving just two weeks after the misery wrought by Hurricane Helene, Milton also knocked out power to more than 3 million cus-

tomers, flooded barrier islands, tore the roof off a baseball stadium and toppled a construction crane.

But many people also expressed relief that Milton wasn't worse. The hurricane spared Tampa a direct hit, and the lethal storm surge that scientists feared never materialized.

The storm tracked to the south in the final hours and made land-fall late Wednesday as a Category 3 hurricane in Siesta Key, about 70 miles south of Tampa. Damage was widespread, and water levels could continue to rise for days, but Gov. Ron DeSantis said it was not “the worst-case scenario.”

The worst storm surge appeared to be in Sarasota County, where it was 8 to 10 feet — lower than in the worst place during Helene.

Milton also dumped up to 18 inches of rain in some areas.

At least 340 individuals and 49 pets were saved in ongoing search-and-rescue operations, DeSantis said Thursday afternoon.

Officials in the hard-hit Florida counties of Hillsborough, Pinellas, Sarasota and Lee urged people to stay home, warning of downed power lines, trees in roads, blocked bridges and flooding.

Just inland from Tampa, the flooding in Plant City was “absolutely staggering,” according to City Manager Bill McDaniel, who estimated the city received 13.5 inches of rain.

The tiny barrier island of Matlacha, just off Fort Myers, got hit by both a tornado and a surge, with many of the colorful build-

ings in the fishing and tourist village sustaining serious damage.

In contrast, city workers on Anna Maria Island were grateful not to be wading through floodwaters as they picked up debris Thursday morning, two weeks after Helene battered buildings and blew in piles of sand up to 6 feet tall.

Power was knocked out across much of the state, with more than 3.4 million homes and businesses without electricity, according to poweroutage.us, which tracks utility reports.

The fabric that serves as the roof of Tropicana Field — home of the Tampa Bay Rays baseball team in St. Petersburg — was ripped to shreds by fierce winds. Debris littered the field, but no injuries were reported.

MIDDLE EAST | LEBANON



BILAL HUSSEIN, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Flames and smoke rise Thursday at the scene of destroyed buildings hit by an Israeli airstrike in central Beirut, Lebanon.

Israeli airstrikes kill at least 22

Another attack on a school shelter in Gaza leaves at least 27 dead

BILAL HUSSEIN, WAFAA SHURAF A AND SAMY MAGDY
Associated Press

BEIRUT — Israeli airstrikes hit different areas of central Beirut on Thursday evening, killing at least 22 people, Lebanon's health ministry said, leaving two neighborhoods smoldering and further escalating Israel's bloody conflict with Iran-backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon.

The air raid on central Beirut — the deadliest in more than a year

of war — apparently targeted two residential buildings in separate neighborhoods simultaneously, according to an AP photographer at the scene. It brought down one eight-story building and wiped out the lower floors of the other.

Israeli airstrikes have been far more common in Beirut's tightly packed southern suburbs, where Hezbollah bases many of its operations.

After the strikes, Hezbollah's Al Manar TV reported that an attempt to kill Wafiq Safa, a top security official with the group, had failed. It said that Safa was not inside of either of the targeted buildings.

Thursday's strikes followed a

year of tit-for-tat exchanges between Hezbollah and Israel that boiled over into all-out war in recent weeks, with Israel carrying out heavy strikes across Lebanon and launching a ground invasion. Hezbollah expanded its rocket fire to more populated areas deeper inside Israel, causing few casualties but disrupting daily life.

The attack came the same day Israeli forces fired on United Nations peacekeepers in southern Lebanon and wounded two of them, drawing widespread condemnation and prompting Italy's Defense Ministry to summon Israel's ambassador in protest.

Meanwhile, an Israeli strike in the central Gaza city of Deir al-

Balah killed 27 people, including a child and seven women, according to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, where the bodies were brought.

The Israeli military said it targeted a militant command and control center inside the school, without providing evidence. Israel has repeatedly attacked schools that were turned into shelters in Gaza, accusing militants of taking cover in them.

Witnesses said the strike occurred while school managers were meeting with representatives of an aid group in a room normally used by Hamas-run police who provide security. They said there were no police in the room at the time.

Inflation in US reaches lowest point in 3 years

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Inflation in the United States dropped last month to its lowest point since it began surging more than three years ago.

Consumer prices rose just 2.4% in September from a year earlier, down from 2.5% in August, and the smallest annual rise since February 2021. Measured from month to month, prices increased 0.2% from August to September, the Labor Department reported Thursday, the same as in the previous month.

Excluding volatile food and energy costs, however, “core” prices, a gauge of underlying inflation,

remained elevated in September, driven up by rising costs for medical care, clothing, auto insurance and airline fares. Core prices in September were up 3.3% from a year earlier and 0.3% from August.

Economists closely watch core prices, which typically provide a better hint of future inflation.

Taken as a whole, the September figures show that inflation is steadily easing back to the Fed's 2% target, even if in an uneven pattern. That decline suggests the Fed will likely keep cutting its benchmark interest rate this year, with most economists expecting quarter-point reductions in November and December.

Social Security benefits to get 2.5% COLA boost

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Millions of Social Security recipients will get a 2.5% cost-of-living increase to their monthly checks beginning in January, the Social Security Administration announced Thursday.

About 72.5 million people, including retirees, disabled people and children, get Social Security benefits. The cost-of-living adjustment, or COLA, for retirees translates to an average increase of more than \$50 for retirees every month, agency officials said.

Before the announcement, retirees voiced concern the boost would not be enough to counter

rising costs.

Recipients received a 3.2% COLA increase to their benefits this year after a historically large 8.7% increase in 2023, brought on by record 40-year-high inflation. The smaller increase for 2025 reflects moderating inflation.

Social Security Commissioner Martin O'Malley said the upcoming increase will provide a measure of relief for recipients as inflation cools and the agency serves a record number of retirees while funding is at a historic low.

The agency will begin notifying recipients about their new benefit amount by mail starting in early December.