

NATION & WORLD

DIGEST

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 Russia, detailing the proposals to European allies after Hurricane Milton derailed a scheduled 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.

Bank to pay \$3 billion in laundering settlement

WASHINGTON — TD Bank will pay approximately \$3 billion in a historic settlement with U.S. authorities who said Thursday that the financial institution’s lax practices allowed significant money laundering.

Canada-based TD Bank pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit money laundering, the largest bank in U.S. history to do so, U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland said. Executives were alerted to serious problems with the bank’s anti-money laundering program, but failed to correct them, he said. The Justice Department said the bank allowed at least three different money laundering networks to move a total of \$670 million through TD Bank accounts over several years.

The bank’s CEO said the company takes full responsibility and cooperated with the investigation. It’s been taking steps to fix its U.S. anti-money laundering program, including appointing new leadership and adding new specialists, TD Bank Group CEO Bharat Masrani said.

BRIEFLY

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, amid high prices and a limited supply of houses for sale.

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.

HAITI: Gunmen invaded a town north of Haiti’s capital Thursday, shooting at people and setting homes on fire, a week after a similar attack killed at least 115 people in Haiti’s central region. The number of casualties was not immediately known.

— Associated Press



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US ECONOMY

Inflation hits 3-year low

‘Core’ prices, which economists watch closely, still elevated

CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
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 pre-

vious 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.

Alan Detmeister, an economist at UBS Investment Bank, suggested some items that contributed to higher core inflation last month, notably used cars, could rise again in the coming months, keeping prices a bit elevated.

Other items that rose in price in September, like clothing and air-

fares, are more volatile and should cool soon.

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.

On a positive note, apartment rental prices grew more slowly last month, a sign that housing inflation is finally cooling, a long-awaited development that would provide relief to many consumers.

Omar Sharif, founder of Inflation Insights, said measures of new rents show a steady slowdown, suggesting the govern-

ment’s gauges of rent should continue to ease over time.

Overall inflation last month was held down by a big drop in gas prices, which fell 4.1% from August to September. Grocery prices jumped 0.4% last month, after about a year of mild increases, though they’re just 1.3% higher than a year earlier.

Still, food prices are up almost 25% from pre-pandemic levels, which has hammered many Americans’ budgets and taken on a high profile in the presidential campaign.

Restaurant food prices increased 0.3% last month and are up 3.9% in the past year.

Clothing prices rose 1.1% from August to September and are up 1.8% from a year ago.

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 SHURAFIA
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.

Appeals panel hears arguments over DACA

Republican-led states, including Texas, claim noncitizens cost them

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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 courthouse 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.

DACA supporters argued that Texas hasn’t shown that the costs it cites are traceable to the policy and, thus, hasn’t shown that it has standing for a challenge.

Social Security benefits to get 2.5% COLA boost

The cost-of-living adjustment is smaller than in past two years

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.