

Biltmore Estate sets reopening date, even as parts remain closed due to Helene damage

BY JOE MARUSAK
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Biltmore Estate is set to reopen after damage from Tropical Storm Helene closed America's largest home, estate officials said Saturday.

Crews are still clearing debris from woods on the property, and some roads remain under repair, officials said. Trails and the Outdoor Adventure Center are closed until further notice. Still, the estate is back in shape enough to welcome guests again beginning Saturday, Nov. 2, the start of its holiday season, Christmas at Biltmore.

The estate is one of the most popular tourist attractions in North Carolina.

Helene, a former Category 5 hurricane, killed at least 95 people in the state and caused record flood-



COURTESY OF THE BILTMORE COMPANY

Storm damage at Biltmore Estate's lodge gate after Hurricane Helene.

ing and damage in Western North Carolina after arriving in the state on Sept. 28. Entire mountain communities vanished in swollen, raging rivers. At least 90 people remain missing, emergency officials said.

"For over 125 years, Biltmore has witnessed

the resilience and community spirit of the Asheville area," according to an estate news release. "The response to Helene has resulted in signs that recovery is underway across the region."

Biltmore will be fully decorated for the Christmas season, and estate

attractions and restaurants will be open. Estate lodging properties will welcome overnight guests.

Many businesses and roads in the Asheville area have reopened, estate officials said, while some areas are still working to recover. So visitors might have to take alternate routes to Biltmore.

RESTORING 'THE VIBRANCY' OF ASHEVILLE

Biltmore Estate launched a \$2 million "Biltmore Relief Fund for WNC" to support employees in crisis and area nonprofits.

"We are incredibly grateful for the outpouring of support for our community and the determination of our first responders, utility workers and community volunteers," Biltmore President and CEO Bill Cecil Jr. said in a statement.

"As recovery unfolds, welcoming guests back to Biltmore not only means we can open, but also brings critical support to our region's economy to aid area employees, local businesses and friends," he said. "Together, we can help restore the vibrancy of Asheville and its surrounding areas."

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Blinken in Israel to press again for cease-fire in Gaza

BY AARON BOXERMAN AND PATRICK KINGSLEY
NYT News Service/Syndicate Stories

JERUSALEM

Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Israel on Tuesday for meetings with senior Israeli officials, as the Biden administration hopes to leverage Israel's killing of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar last week to revive the push for a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip.

Blinken met Tuesday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem. Later, he planned to meet with Yoav Gallant, Israel's defense minister, and President Isaac Herzog, among others.

Sinwar, the leader of Hamas and a mastermind of the Oct. 7, 2023, surprise assault on Israel, was killed last week by Israeli forces during a chance encounter in Rafah. He had been Israel's No. 1 target after plotting the attack last year that killed up to 1,200 people, captured some 250 hostages and ignited the war in Gaza, and he had long steered Hamas' hard-line stance in truce talks.



Antony Blinken

Since Sinwar's killing, Israeli officials and mediators have been tossing around new ideas for a proposal that would pause fighting with Hamas, free at least some of the dozens of hostages remaining in Gaza and bring home the captives who are presumed dead by Israeli authorities.

The war has defied a yearlong diplomatic effort by the Biden administration – including numerous trips to the region by senior officials including Blinken – to clinch a deal to end it. Instead the violence has widened, escalating into a full-blown war between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon and direct strikes by Iran against Israeli territory.

Netanyahu has vowed that the war in Gaza will not end until Hamas is destroyed. Hamas has vowed to continue fighting unless Israel agrees to a permanent cease-fire and the complete withdrawal of its forces from Gaza.

FBI looks into leak of possible Israeli plan to attack Iran

BY ADAM GOLDMAN
NYT News Service

WASHINGTON

The FBI is investigating a leak of highly classified documents that appear to show Israel's plans to

retaliate against Iran for a missile attack this month, the agency confirmed Tuesday.

The documents were prepared by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, which is responsible for analyzing images

and information collected by U.S. spy satellites. The NSA is part of the U.S. intelligence community and conducts sensitive work in support of clandestine and military operations.

The information in the documents is highly classified and details interpretations of satellite imagery that shed light on a possible strike by Israel on Iran. They began circulating Friday on the Telegram app. U.S. officials have previously said they did not know from where

the documents had been taken, and that they were looking for the original source of the leak.

In a statement, the FBI said it was "working closely with our partners in the Department of Defense and intelligence community. As this is an ongoing investigation, we have no further comment." The FBI is responsible for investigating violations of the Espionage Act, which outlaws the unauthorized retention of defense-related information that could harm the United States or

aid a foreign adversary.

Israel has made it clear it intends to retaliate for an Iranian missile barrage on Oct. 1. Iran's Revolutionary Guard said the strike was launched after the assassinations of Hezbollah's leader, Hassan

Nasrallah, in Lebanon; Hamas' political leader, Ismail Haniyeh, killed in Tehran, Iran, in July; and an Iranian commander. U.S. officials believe the strike could take place in the coming days.

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