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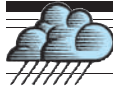
We look forward to seeing you on Capitol Hill today as part of the 10,000 Small Businesses Summit.

See the full list in Section A →

The Washington Post

Prices may vary in areas outside metropolitan Washington.

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Rain 68/48 • Tomorrow: Mostly sunny 61/46 B20

Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2025 • \$4

Red carpet, gold crown for Trump in S. Korea

President secures a trade deal and is showered with gifts and pageantry

BY MICHELLE YE HEE LEE, CAT ZAKRZEWSKI AND NATALIE ALLISON

GYEONGJU, SOUTH KOREA — South Korea presented President Donald Trump with a replica of an enormous ancient crown on Wednesday as he made his last stop of a swing through Asia, where leaders have sought to smooth over trade and defense tensions by appealing to the American president's appreciation of glittering gifts.

The two countries also worked out the details of a trade agreement to lower U.S. auto tariffs to 15 percent in exchange for \$350 billion in Korean investment in the U.S.

In an elaborately arranged ceremony at the Gyeongju National Museum, Trump stared at the golden crown as a South Korean official explained that it "symbolizes the divine connection between the authority of the heavens and the sovereignty on Earth, as well as the strong leadership and authority of a leader."

Lee, wearing a gold tie, also presented Trump with a laurel leaf medal that hung from a golden collar, conferring upon him the Grand Order of Mugunghwa, South Korea's highest civil honor, making Trump the first U.S. president to receive the decoration. Trump responded that he would "like to wear it right now."

Seated next to Lee several

SEE SOUTH KOREA ON A11

Trump-Xi meeting: Chinese leader feels vindicated by firm tactics. A11



MARIA ALEJANDRA CARDONA/REUTERS

Flooding from Hurricane Melissa is seen in St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, on Wednesday. Officials are working to assess the damage in the hardest-hit areas of the country: the western parishes of Manchester, St. Elizabeth, Westmoreland, St. James and Hanover.

Melissa leaves a trail of destruction

This article is by Livern Barrett, Ben Noll, Victoria Crow, Sammy Westfall, Widlore Mèrancourt and Dan Lamothe

KINGSTON, JAMAICA — Hurricane Melissa made landfall in Cuba early Wednesday as a Category 3 storm after devastating western Jamaica on Tuesday.

Flooding in Haiti, meanwhile, killed at least 20 people, including 10 children, according to Haiti's Civil Protection Directorate. Search efforts are still underway, with at least 13 missing across Haiti.

Melissa struck near Chivirico,

Flooding kills at least 20 in Haiti; hurricane makes landfall in Cuba

Cuba, with wind speeds of 125 mph around 3 a.m., 14 hours after its first landfall in western Jamaica. As of 11 a.m. Eastern time, Melissa was located about 150 miles south of the Central Bahamas as a Category 2 storm. Maximum winds had decreased to 100 mph.

The storm is accelerating

northeast as a midlatitude weather system begins to capture it. That's expected to swing Melissa toward Bermuda by Thursday night. A hurricane warning is in effect there.

Melissa made landfall in Jamaica on Tuesday as a Category 5 hurricane with 185-mph winds. Footage showed flooded roads and destroyed buildings, but the full extent of the damage was not yet clear. Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness told CNN on Tuesday night that there had been no reports of deaths during the hurricane so far, but that "we are expecting that there would

be some loss of life."

At least 20 people died Wednesday morning in Petit-Goâve, Haiti, when the La Digue river overflowed, according to Haiti's Civil Protection Directorate. Officials in Haiti reported three weather-related deaths last week, when Melissa was a tropical storm.

In Haiti's southern region, several towns have been overwhelmed by floodwaters. Rising rivers have submerged roads,

SEE MELISSA ON A12

Prime conditions: The forces that made the storm so powerful. A13

A maddening ordeal for callers to Social Security

The agency says it is improving customer service, but many still report hours-long wait times

BY MYREL KORNFIELD AND HANNAH NATANSON

Hours-long wait times. Endless looping music. Useless robot messages.

Millions of seniors and disabled people call Social Security's 1-800 number every month. What they experience is often maddening.

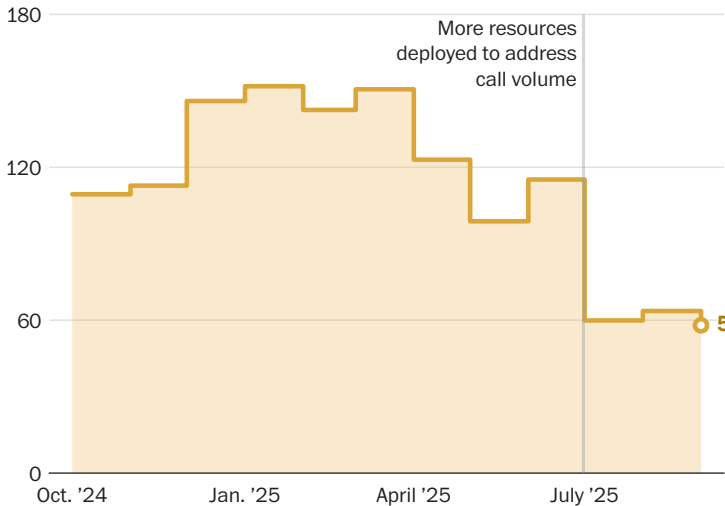
When Rian Dindzans, 25, called in July, the California resident had a common issue: They needed to report income from a part-time job or else they would be at risk of losing disability benefits. The call didn't start well.

"I need to report income," Dindzans responded. The bot directed Dindzans to go to the Social Security website and said they could hang up. Dindzans tried again.

"I need to report income,"

SSA deployed additional resources to manage soaring callback times

Average wait time in minutes to receive a callback from SSA



Source: Washington Post reporting

Dindzans responded. The bot directed Dindzans to go to the Social Security website and said they could hang up. Dindzans tried again but got the same prompts. After a few more attempts, Dindzans asked the bot to connect them "to a human representative." Dindzans was relieved when the bot said it would connect them to an agent, but frustration returned when they were informed the wait time was 90 minutes.

"I wanted to bang my head against the wall," Dindzans said of the interaction.

The Trump administration has said it is improving Social Security customer service and dramatically cutting wait times to build on a phone experience that callers have complained about even before President Donald Trump took office. But

SEE CALLS ON A6

With Trump's favor, Nvidia becomes first \$5 trillion firm

President heaps praise as chipmaker pushes for a key role in his AI agenda

BY EVA DOU AND CAT ZAKRZEWSKI

Aside from running the world's first \$5 trillion company, Jensen Huang is an unlikely figure to have gained President Donald Trump's ear. The Taiwanese American founder of AI chipmaker Nvidia wants to export more to China at a time when the president is locked in a fiery trade war with the country. He has forthrightly declared immigration a boon for the American Dream, not a threat as Trump has suggested. And his wonky semiconductor business runs on entirely

different principles than the blustery commercial real estate sector that brought Trump to prominence.

Yet Trump has repeatedly praised the leather-jacket-wearing billionaire this year, an indication of how vital Nvidia's artificial intelligence technology is to the president's vision of America's industrial rejuvenation. Nvidia became the first company in history to be valued above \$5 trillion on Wednesday, as a string of new partnerships with the federal government and Trump's praise helped push its stock north of \$210 in morning trading.

Trump called Huang an "incredible guy" during a speech to CEOs at the APEC economic gathering Wednesday in Gyeongju, South Korea. Earlier on Air Force One, Trump marveled at Nvidia's technology and said he expected

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The Washington Post / Year 148, No. 54385

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