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Rite of passage
'Rocky Horror': How trash, glam, gay
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In the news

■ **Darren Wright**, a spokesperson for the Oro Valley Police Department in Arizona, said an incident in which an officer worked to get shoppers out of a Fry's grocery store as a bear ran around for a few minutes before leaving "is the most interesting interaction we have had with one."

■ **Jennifer Powers**, personal assistant for financier Howard Rubin, was remanded to home detention and forbidden from contacting her boss after pleading innocent to federal sex trafficking and tax fraud charges.

■ **Emiliano Galvez**, a 23-year-old Mexican national who authorities say is in the U.S. illegally, faces up to 15 years in prison after admitting in an agreement with prosecutors to throwing a Molotov cocktail at Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies during protests against immigration raids.

■ **Cliff Johnson**, director of the MacArthur Justice Center at the University of Mississippi School of Law, announced in a video that he's campaigning as a Democrat to oust Republican U.S. Rep Trent Kelly.

■ **Murray Hunter**, an Australian scholar, claimed he was improperly arrested in Thailand over articles he wrote online about Malaysia and said his case should be cause for concern, because "any journalist ... could have the same consequences and be picked off a flight and put in a lockup."

■ **Charles Floyd**, a federal immigration judge based in Tacoma, Wash., who reportedly has a degree from the University of Arkansas School of Law, was tapped to replace acting U.S. attorney Teal Luthy Miller, and noted that he learned he was considered for the job "about three weeks ago."

■ **Elijah Roy**, 25, was charged with violent assault in aid of racketeering and illegal possession of ammunition in his suspected role in a gang-related shooting that killed three people and hurt 10 others at a lounge in New York.

■ **Laurie Marker**, founder of the Cheetah Conservation Fund, said 11 cheetah cubs that were rescued from illegal trade in Somalia were "very malnourished" and were being reintroduced to food slowly.

■ **Taylor Cooley**, whose family owns Cool Patch Pumpkins, which earned a Guinness record for the world's largest corn maze, said the 40-acre attraction located between Sacramento and San Francisco is "exciting, and in a world of GPS and constant signage, you always know where you are."



Drew Marsh (left), chair and CEO of Entergy, and **Ruth Porat**, president and chief investment officer of Alphabet and Google, speak after the announcement of a \$4 billion investment into cloud and artificial intelligence infrastructure by Alphabet and Google in Arkansas during an event in West Memphis on Thursday. (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/Adam Vogler)

Google set to invest \$4B for W. Memphis center

SYDNEY SASSER
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE
WEST MEMPHIS — Google on Thursday put a \$4 billion price tag on its investment in a data center in the city and announced a collaboration with Entergy Arkansas to power the project.

The money will mostly go to artificial intelligence infrastructure at the West Memphis data center campus. The project, on a 1,100 acre property, is expected to take 18 to

24 months to complete. "I can't think of a better town and a better place for this investment to happen than in West Memphis," said Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders. "This is a hardworking community full of hardworking people, and now they're getting the recognition and resources that they have long deserved." "I'm filled with emotion, and I'm filled with joy," said West Memphis Mayor Marco

McClendon. "This is the biggest investment in the state of Arkansas." The project is expected to bring thousands of construction jobs and hundreds of operational jobs once the center is completed, Google said. No specific numbers were provided. Google and Entergy's partnership will cover the construction cost of Cypress Solar, a 600-megawatt and See **GOOGLE**, Page 6A

Trump moves to capitalize on shutdown

President eyes agency cuts, insists Democrats to blame

LISA MASCARO, JOSH BOAK AND SEUNG MIN KIM
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has seized on the government shutdown as an opportunity to reshape the federal workforce and punish detractors, saying he planned to meet with budget director Russ Vought to talk through "temporary or permanent" spending cuts that could set up a lose-lose dynamic for Democratic lawmakers.

Trump announced the meeting on social media Thursday morning, saying he and Vought would determine "which of the many Democrat Agencies" would be cut — continuing their efforts to slash federal spending by threatening mass firings of workers and suggesting "irreversible" cuts to Democratic priorities. The White House declined to comment on the timing or details of the meeting, despite the importance placed on it by the president.

"I can't believe the Radical Left Democrats gave me this unprecedented opportunity," Trump wrote on his social media account. "They are not stupid people, so maybe this is their way of wanting to, quietly and quickly, MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"

Trump has been very direct about his intentions in saying that he believes the Democrats would get the blame if he chooses to fire



House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., meets with reporters about the government shutdown at the U.S. Capitol on Thursday. (AP/J. Scott Applewhite)

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S core tasks to continue. Page 5A.

FIRINGS DURING shutdown questioned. Page 6A.

FEDERAL COURTS to persist, for now. Page 1B.

people or cut spending as part of the shutdown. "There could be firings and that's their fault," the president said in an interview with One America News that was released on Thursday. "I mean, we could cut projects that they wanted, favorite projects, and they'd be permanently cut." The Truth Social post was notable in its explicit embrace of Project 2025, a contentious policy blueprint drafted by the Heritage Foundation that Trump dis- See **SHUTDOWN**, Page 6A

Corrections board OKs new agreement

Jails allowed to house state inmates

BRETT BARROUQUERE
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE
Jails that are not compliant with the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act's requirements will still be able to continue to house state inmates under a new agreement approved Thursday by the Board of Corrections.

The seven-page memorandum of understanding approved unanimously by the board waives some requirements under PREA so the local county and city jails can continue to house state inmates under Act 309. That law, passed in 1983, was

designed to free up prison bed space and allow some inmates to finish their sentences closer to family under agreements between the state and local jails. The memorandum of understanding would standardize across the state the agreement between the Department of Corrections and local jails concerning inmates qualifying for placement under Act 309. Baxter County Sheriff John Montgomery said the agreement is necessary for local jails to continue to See **JAILS**, Page 3A

Fleeing Gaza



Displaced Palestinians flee northern Gaza, carrying their belongings along the coastal road near Wadi Gaza on Thursday. (AP/Abdel Kareem Hana) Article, 7A

Dispute on trash heard by justices

Case challenges city monopoly

ELLA MCCARTHY
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE
The Arkansas Supreme Court on Thursday heard oral arguments in a case that challenges the extent to which a municipality can enforce a monopoly for the sake of public health and safety.

The case was brought against a small, newly established city in Northwest Arkansas — Holiday Island — by an area business man who has been [barred from operating](#) his rental dumpster business in city limits because of a city ordinance. That ordinance permits only a selected contractor, or contractors, to collect solid waste within the city and gives the city the right to work exclusively with one provider. The city chose to work with the Carroll County Solid Waste District, an established solid waste district that services different areas in the county.

Steven Hedrick, owner of X-Dumpsters, argues his services are supplemental to those provided by the district, and that the ordinance violates the Arkansas Constitution's anti-monopoly provision and unconstitutionally interferes with his rights to earn a living. See **JUSTICES**, Page 3A

Attack outside UK synagogue kills 2, injures 3

BRIAN MELLEY, PAN PYLAS AND IAN HODGSON
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
MANCHESTER, England — An assailant drove a car into people outside a synagogue Thursday in northern England and then began stabbing them, killing two and seriously hurting at least three in what police called a terrorist attack on the holiest day of the Jewish year.

Officers shot and killed the suspect at the synagogue in Manchester, police said, though authorities took some time to confirm he was dead because he was wearing a vest that made it appear as if he had explosives. Police later said he did not have a bomb.

Authorities said the man believed responsible was a See **SYNAGOGUE**, Page 8A



Members of the Jewish community comfort each other near Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation synagogue in Crumpsall, Manchester, England, after police reported that two people were killed and three others seriously injured in an attack on the place of worship on Thursday. (AP/Peter Byrne)

WEATHER
LITTLE ROCK
TODAY TONIGHT

HIGH 87 LOW 61

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