



SPORTS, C1

Grade-A performance: Despite Sunday’s loss, Falcons QB Michael Penix Jr. earns high praise.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

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Raid gets jobs push stuck in political mud

Georgia’s largest-ever manufacturing deal faces questions that reach from Bryan County to Seoul – and tests Kemp’s legacy.



Employees at a new Hyundai electric vehicle factory near Savannah are lined up waiting to be shackled during an ICE raid Thursday. Four hundred and seventy-five people, many of them from South Korea, were arrested in the raid that has jolted Georgia politics and international relations. COREY BULLARD/U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT/AP

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When Gov. Brian Kemp announced a Hyundai Motor Group electric vehicle factory on a sandy site near Savannah in 2022, it was hailed as the largest economic development project in state history – and the centerpiece of his push to make Georgia the hub of U.S. EV manufacturing. What started as a roughly \$5.5 billion project soon grew to a proposed \$7.6 billion investment and then to \$12.6 billion when Korean giant LG Energy Solutions joined as a part-

ner on an adjacent battery factory. But last week’s federal immigration raid of the campus’ battery plant site, which led to 475 arrests, jolted both Georgia politics and U.S.-South Korea relations. The Bryan County plant, backed by about \$2 billion in taxpayer-funded incentives, is under sharp new scrutiny. The fallout is far from over – and the Hyundai raid could turn Kemp’s biggest economic development win into a liability. Kemp has long defended the deal, slammed by critics for its

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The Hyundai electric vehicle plant that was raided by ICE last week was seen as a key part of Republican Gov. Brian Kemp’s legacy. JUSTIN TAYLOR/THE CURRENT GA

Secretary of Homeland Security says roundup at Hyundai plant won’t deter investment in U.S.

But detentions cause a sense of betrayal among many in U.S.-allied nation.

By Jill Lawless
Associated Press

LONDON — Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem said Monday she doesn’t think the detention of hundreds of South Koreans in an immigration raid at a Hyundai plant in Georgia will deter investment in the United States because such tough actions mean there is no uncertainty about the Trump administration’s policies.



Kristi Noem says most of the South Koreans were detained for ignoring removal orders.

The detention of 475 workers, more than 300 of them South Korean, in the Sept. 4 raid has caused confusion, shock and a sense of betrayal among many in the U.S.-allied nation. “This is a great opportunity for us to make sure that all companies are reassured that when you come to

the United States, you’ll know what the rules of the game are,” Noem said at a meeting in London of ministers from the “Five Eyes” intelligence-sharing partnership focused on border security. “We’re encouraging all companies who want to come to the United States and help our economy and employ people, that we encourage them to employ U.S. citizens and to bring people to our country that want to follow our laws and work here the right way,” she told reporters. The detained Koreans would be

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Home Depot investigation aids in bust of theft ring

California-based group stole more than \$7M in goods, authorities say.

By Amy Wenk
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The bust last month of members of an alleged organized retail theft ring in California that Home Depot said was the largest in its history was the result of a corporate investigation years in the making. In an exclusive interview with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, a Home Depot official detailed how the company tracked the alleged members, helped build a case internally based on surveillance footage and other evidence, and helped law enforcement agencies make arrests. In Southern California, prosecutors say alleged participants swiped electrical merchandise – such as dimmer switches, circuit breakers and outlets – from multiple Home Depot stores. That merchandise allegedly was resold through the group leader’s business. Felony charges were filed against nine individuals in late August. The value of the stolen goods soared to more than \$7 million, said Scott Glenn, Home Depot’s vice president of asset protection. There were 600 thefts this year alone by the group, prosecutors said. The alleged leader of the operation, David Ahl, is facing 45 felony counts, including conspiracy,

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Second-chance hiring may aid Ga.’s economy

Experts cite many benefits of employing people who were once incarcerated.

By Allison Mawn
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Mark Haynes was incarcerated for four years. But he put that time to good use, earning multiple certifications related to dog grooming and training and for veterinary assistance. Haynes was able to find employment almost immediately after getting out in February. Currently, he works as an independent contractor in training and animal waste and has recently started a nonprofit. But Haynes was fortunate. Finding work often doesn’t come easy – if at all – for many formerly incarcerated Georgians. “I’m proud that I’ve been able to hit the ground running,” Haynes said. Formerly incarcerated individuals face unemployment rates about five times the national average. Georgia has more than 4 million adults with some form of criminal history and the highest correctional control rate of any state, according to Beyond the Box, an initiative focused on education access for this group.



Mark Haynes

Hiring continued on A6

BOOKSHELF, C1

It’s almost fall, y’all! Cozy up to these Southern books.



As temps start to dip and leaves turn gold and orange, it’s the perfect time to curl up with a good book. This season marks the release of seven new books by Southern authors, including one by Harper Lee, the late literary legend and author of “To Kill a Mockingbird.” Suzanne Van Atten recommends seven new tales featuring a range of topics from a feminist horror story to a strip club thriller to a biography of a musical legend.

Governor’s race prompts both parties to offer up proposals to reduce taxes

In an election dominated by the economy, tax-relief plans vary but are at the top of everyone’s agenda.

By Greg Bluestein
and David Wickert
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

In the opening phase of the governor’s race, rivals from both parties are converging on one theme: tax cuts. Long a Republican rallying cry, the push for steep reductions is now being echoed by Democrats with their own proposals.

Former Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms has vowed to end income taxes for public schoolteachers. State Sen. Jason Esteves is exploring ways to bring “much-needed tax relief to working families.” And former DeKalb County chief executive Michael Thurmond is ripping a page from President Donald Trump’s playbook by pushing to eliminate state

income taxes on tips and overtime pay. “This race will be about the economy. That’s the No. 1 issue,” he said. “And frankly, that’s what we Democrats missed last November.” After another election dominated by the economy and inflation, Georgia Democrats are embracing tax-cut proposals to appeal to independents and swing voters who could decide next year’s race.

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PUBLIC HEALTH, A4
Florida’s vaccine overhaul is risky, experts say
Pediatricians and medical groups, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, oppose the state’s changes.



SCIENCE, A10
Americans turn to sugar as the climate heats up
Global warming in the United States is amping up the country’s sweet tooth, a new study found.

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