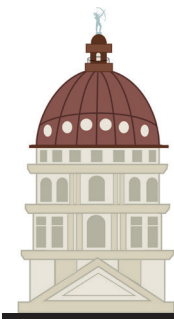




## Kansas State vs North Dakota picks for home opener

SPORTS, 1B



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## SpaceX rocket diplomacy backfires in Bahamas



SpaceX’s Starship spacecraft is launched on its ninth test at the company’s launch pad in Starbase, Texas, May 27. JOE SKIPPER/REUTERS FILE

### Company navigates international politics in bid to expand business

Joey Roulette  
REUTERS

NASSAU – When SpaceX was negotiating a deal with the Bahamas last year to allow its Falcon 9 rocket boosters to land within the island nation’s territory, Elon Musk’s company offered a sweetener: complimentary Starlink internet terminals for the country’s defense vessels, according to three people familiar with the matter.

The rocket landing deal, unlocking a more efficient path to space for SpaceX’s reusable Falcon 9, was then signed in February last year by Deputy Prime Minister Chester Cooper, who bypassed consultation with several other key government ministers, one of the sources and another person familiar with the talks said.

See **SPACEX**, Page 2A

“While no toxic materials were detected and no significant environmental impact was reported, the incident prompted a reevaluation of our engagement with SpaceX.”

Chequita Johnson  
Acting director general of the Civil Aviation Authority Bahamas



Debris streaks through the sky after SpaceX’s Starship exploded during a test flight in the Bahamas March 6.



Debris that appears to be heat shield tiles from SpaceX’s Starship was found floating in the water in the Bahamas March 8, two days after Starship exploded during a test flight.

PHOTOS BY PEGGY LAPIERRE/HANDOUT VIA REUTERS FILE

## Shootings test notion of churches as refuge

Report: More violent crimes are fueled by bias

Marc Ramirez  
USA TODAY

The Aug. 27 news of another mass shooting came with an additional, unthinkable horror: The victims were mostly children, sitting in the pews of a Catholic church.

Mass shootings happen everywhere in the United States – college campuses, public parks, house parties, mobile home parks, warehouse stores. But the morning attack at Minneapolis’ Annunciation Catholic Church seemed to plumb unusually heinous depths of cruelty even as crimes driven by religious bias continue to rise.

A Voice of America report found that mass shootings at places of worship have grown in frequency since the mid-2000s – committed, it said, “by perpetrators with a history of racism, anti-Semitism, anti-Christianity and Islamophobia, with ties to white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups.”

Some of those attacks have been among the country’s most shocking. In 2015, a White supremacist killed nine people gathered for Bible study at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston,

See **SHOOTINGS**, Page 4A

## Minneapolis families mourn lost ‘angels’

Loved ones cope with loss after school shooting

Thao Nguyen  
USA TODAY

Families describing “unimaginable loss” mourned for their slain children Aug. 28, the day after an attacker fired through the windows of a Minneapolis Catholic church and sent worshippers diving behind and under pews for cover.

Jesse Merkel, the father of Fletcher Merkel, 8, called the suspected shooter a “coward” who took his son’s life.

“Please remember Fletcher for the person he was and not the act that ended his life,” Jesse Merkel said. “Give your kids an extra hug and kiss today.”

The second child killed in the shooting was identified as 10-year-old Harper Moyski, according to a statement shared to news outlets on her family’s behalf.

The deadly shooting occurred at the church connected to Annunciation

See **MOURN**, Page 4A

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