

# The Minnesota Star Tribune

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H: 53° L: 31° | A.M. RAIN, THEN SUN

## U.S. weighs strike on Venezuela

An administration official says a “host of options” have been presented to president.

By DAN LAMOTHE, TARA COPP and MICHAEL BIRNBAUM  
The Washington Post

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Joint Chiefs Chair Gen. Dan Caine returned to the White House on Friday for a second consecutive day of deliberations centered on

potential military action in Venezuela, as U.S. forces in the region prepared for possible attack orders, according to people familiar with the matter. It remains unclear if President Donald Trump has decided to pursue such an escalation, though high-level discussions over whether to strike Ven-

ezuela – and how – have been underway for days, these people said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because the matter is highly sensitive. Also joining the White House meeting were Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, these people said. A White House spokesperson declined to comment. The Pentagon press office did not respond to a request for comment.

An administration official said “a host of options” have been presented to the president. Trump is “very good at maintaining strategic ambiguity, and something he does very well is he does not dictate or broadcast to our adversaries what he wants to do next,” the official said. Any strike on Venezuelan territory would upend the president’s frequent promises of avoiding new conflicts and betray promises made to

Congress in recent weeks that no active preparations were underway for such an attack. It also would further complicate U.S. cooperation with other Latin American countries, and deepen suspicions – there and in Washington – over whether Trump’s endgame is the forced removal of Venezuela’s president, Nicolás Maduro, whom Trump has accused of sending drugs and violent criminals to the United States.

Maduro, a socialist strongman, first came to power in Caracas in 2013 and increasingly has become a fixation for Trump. In August, U.S. officials increased the reward for information leading to his arrest and conviction from \$25 million to \$50 million, citing alleged ties to drug cartels and U.S. beliefs dating back to the Biden administration that he lost a 2024 presidential election and refused to

SEE VENEZUELA ON A5 »

## Police foot-dragging is slowing probe, Minneapolis auditor says



ANTHONY SOUFFLÉ • The Minnesota Star Tribune

About a year ago, Davis Moturi was shot and critically injured in his own yard in a dispute with a neighbor. Moturi, shown in his south Minneapolis home with his dog Mojo, said he and his wife called the police at least 19 times about the man’s hostile behavior in the year leading up to the shooting. He is adamant that police should have done more.

MPD orders officers to cooperate in two cases under review: man shot by neighbor, and woman found dead in apartment.

By LOUIS KRAUSS  
The Minnesota Star Tribune

The Minneapolis Police Department is ordering its officers to cooperate with the City Auditor’s Office amid a probe into how it handled two high-profile cases after a city official raised accusations of stonewalling. The Police Department has faced widespread criticism for its investigations into the two 2024 incidents, one in which a woman was found dead in her apartment, the other in which a man was shot by his neighbor. Last month, City Auditor Robert Timmerman expressed frustration during a public meeting about the Police Department’s “resistance” and “delays” in the investigation. The complaints led to the order for cooperation last week

from the second-in-command to all MPD employees. “All command and supervisory personnel will be held responsible for ensuring compliance with this directive,” reads the Nov. 5 memo issued by Assistant Chief Katie Blackwell. In bold, it continues: “Failure to comply shall result in discipline.” The Minneapolis City Council authorized the auditor’s investigation, known as an after-action review, into the two cases: First, the February 2024 death of Allison Lussier, a case police say remains unsolved because they could not determine the manner of death. The 47-year-old Native woman’s family believes she was the victim of a domestic

SEE POLICE ON A8 »



LEILA NAVIDI • The Minnesota Star Tribune

Allison Lussier’s aunt, Jana Williams, tears up at a Minneapolis City Council meeting. The family disputes the police narrative that evidence collected from Lussier’s apartment points to drug use in her death, not domestic violence.

## \$12.5M awarded to abused ice skater

Her ex-coach is serving 24 years in prison for sexual-abuse crimes.

By JEFF DAY  
The Minnesota Star Tribune

A Hennepin County jury awarded \$12.5 million in damages to a Twin Cities woman who was sexually abused by her figure skating coach over the course of two years, starting when she was 14 years old. After a 10-day trial, the jury determined that Thomas Incantalupo owed his former athlete \$7.5 million for past mental and emotional harm, \$2.5 million for future mental and emotional harm and \$2.5 million as punishment for his behavior. Incantalupo pleaded guilty to one count each of first- and third-degree criminal sexual conduct in 2019 for his crimes. He is serving a 24-year sentence at Stillwater prison. Michael Hall III, the attorney for the woman in the case, whom the Minnesota Star Tribune is not naming because she was a minor victim of sexual abuse, said the trial featured Incantalupo’s attorneys saying his victim was making her story up. He also said Incantalupo argued for the first time that he had been secretly gay his entire adult life and, therefore, couldn’t have sexually assaulted the girl. His victim said he abused her at least 80 times. “It was obviously emotionally difficult to do that,” Hall III said of his client’s testimony. “On the other hand, there is something to be said for when a verdict comes back in your favor and acknowledges what happened. I know that she’s deeply grateful for what the jury decided.” Incantalupo was a highly regarded figure skating coach who had a long history as a skater and member of U.S. Figure Skating. He had coached in Blaine before working at Braemar Figure Skating Club and Eden Prairie Figure Skating Club. He started coaching in 1990, was a master-rated

SEE DAMAGES ON A5 »

## Trump turns to a message of affordability amid economic frustration

By ALAN RAPPEPORT  
The New York Times

WASHINGTON - Lower prices for coffee and fruit. A 50-year mortgage to reduce monthly home payments. Direct checks of \$2,000 to many Americans. And a new willingness to welcome skilled foreign labor into the United States. The Trump administration

has begun floating a series of ideas over the past several weeks as it confronts the cold reality that its economic policies are not helping many Americans who continue to struggle with elevated prices and a sense of economic pessimism. Last week’s elections made clear that affordability was top of mind for many Americans. Voters in New York propelled

Zohran Mamdani, the democratic socialist with an ambitious agenda to lower the cost of living, to victory in the mayoral race. Democratic wins in New Jersey and Virginia were built on promises to address the high cost of living in those states. Only 30% of voters believe President Donald Trump has lived up to their expectations for tackling inflation and the cost of

living, according to a recent NBC News poll. That was his lowest mark for any issue respondents were asked about. And a meager 27% of voters in a CNN poll in late October said Trump’s policies had improved the country’s economic conditions – less than half of those who thought he had made matters worse. In the wake of those results, the administration has begun

rolling out new policies and recasting its economic messaging to try to show they are serious about combating the nation’s affordability crisis. That includes a watering-down of some policies, such as tariffs, that the Trump administration insisted for months were not causing prices to rise for American consumers. The

SEE AFFORDABILITY ON A8 »



**Backpedaling on tariffs** U.S. unveils tariff exclusions as voters rage over food costs. D1

**TOP NEWS**  
U.S. Catholic bishops condemn “indiscriminate mass deportation” of immigrants. A2

**NATION & WORLD**  
Russian drone and missile attack on Kyiv kills six and injures at least 35. A3

**STATE & REGION**  
New Ulm faces monumental decision over crumbling base of Hermann the German. A4

**SPORTS**  
Harrison Smith is set to add another milestone to Vikings career: his 200th game. C1

**BUSINESS**  
FAA restrictions continue to reduce flights at MSP and other major U.S. airports. D1

**VARIETY**  
Learn what inspired the writer of a cookbook curated from Minnesota’s music scene. E1

**HAVE YOU HEARD?**  
U students put their editing to the test in event that awards whoever can boil down their thesis to the most interesting 3-minute talk. A4

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