



OUTRAGE  
OVER POST

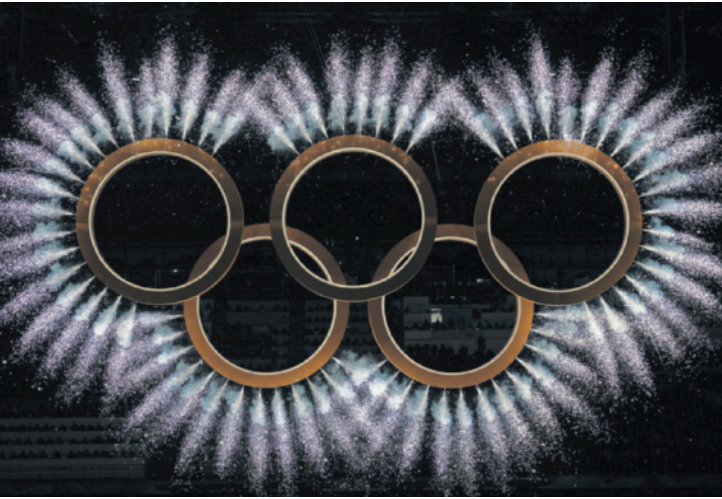
PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP’S RACIST SOCIAL MEDIA POST FEATURING FORMER PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA AND HIS WIFE AS PRIMATES IN A JUNGLE WAS DELETED AFTER A BIPARTISAN BACKLASH. C2

WINTER OLYMPICS

With two flames to mark the Games, ceremony casts a glow on global stage



An unprecedented four-site, dual-cauldron Winter Olympics opening ceremony replete with references to Italian icons and culture officially kicked off the Milan Cortina Games on Friday, as the sports spectacle returns to a nation that last hosted the event 20 years ago. Italian Alpine skiing legends Deborah Compagnoni and Alberto Tomba lit the cauldron at the Arco della Pace (“Arch of Peace”) in Milan, above. The other was lit 250 miles away in Cortina. While there is typically one cauldron that burns throughout the Games, the two cauldrons are intended as an homage to Leonardo da Vinci’s geometric studies. The full collection of competition venues for the next two-plus weeks dot an area of about 8,500 square miles, roughly the size of the entire state of New Jersey. Below, fireworks explode around the Olympic rings and Team USA takes a group photo. See more in Sports. Reporting by the Associated Press; photos by Bernat Armangué, Ben Curtis and Natacha Pisarenko, Associated Press



ELECTION 2026

Close primary, still not called, shakes up N.J.’s political sphere

“It was a tough day for establishment Democrats,” one observer says of race for Sherrill’s former House seat.

Brianna Kudisch and Brent Johnson  
For The Star-Ledger

Another political earthquake rocked New Jersey politics Thursday night — one with national implications.

The crowded special Democratic primary election to fill Gov. Mikie Sherrill’s old U.S. House seat turned into a stunning nail-biter. As of Friday evening, the race remained too close to call, with progressive advocate Analilia Mejia leading former U.S. Rep. Tom Malinowski by fewer than 700 votes.

The election was widely seen as unpredictable, though many considered Malinowski to be the favorite among the 11 candidates tangling for the Democratic nomination in North Jersey’s 11th District. The relatively mainstream Democrat is seeking to return to Congress after being ousted four years ago in a different district.

And two other candidates — former Lt. Gov. Tahesha Way and Essex County Commissioner Brendan Gill — had big money and party support behind them. Way was former Gov. Phil Murphy’s second-in-command, and Gill had Murphy’s endorsement. Yet both were far behind Malinowski and Mejia, with 93% of the votes counted.

Mejia, a grassroots organizer who helped run Bernie Sanders’ 2020 presidential bid in the state, was expected to be among the four top contenders. But with less funding and name recognition and a more left-leaning platform, Mejia winning would be a major upset in the largely suburban district. The 11th is spread across parts of Essex, Morris and Passaic counties — a once-red area that’s gotten progressively bluer in recent years.

“The insiders got smoked,” said Matthew Hale, a political science professor at Seton Hall University in South Orange, which is part of the district. “Tom Malinowski is an outsider to the district and Analilia Mejia is on the outside left SEE ELECTION, A4

OLD BRIDGE

Town rallies for injured teen wrestler

She was unable to move after being taken down during a match, coach says. Community has raised over \$100K to help.

Jake Aferiat For The Star-Ledger

Jane Maline didn’t see a dangerous move or a hard slam. But she knew something was wrong. The Old Bridge athletic trainer watched as Adriana Maria, an Old Bridge High School wrestler, didn’t get up after she was pinned during a bout last Saturday. “My eyes were on her match,” Maline said. “I watched it happen.” Maline rushed over to Maria, who lay still. The teen could not move her arms or legs, but reported sharp pain in her neck. Maline stayed calm, relying on two decades of training, and worked to stabilize Maria, supporting the 16-year-old’s neck and spine. Maline then helped Maria onto a spine-board and waited for EMTs to arrive. Maline kept her composure as EMTs rolled Maria out the doors of the gym at Old Bridge and loaded her into the ambulance

to be transported to RWJ Barnabas Hospital in New Brunswick. Then she walked into her office, broke down and cried. “I am a mother myself,” said Maline. “I saw (Maria) as possibly one of my own daughters. We’ve had conversations, and she’s been in my office for non-injury reasons, so it was upsetting for me to see her in this situation.” On Monday night, Old Bridge wrestling coach John Post posted an announcement on Facebook that Maria sustained a severe spinal cord injury and was unable to move after getting taken down. A medical evaluation revealed Maria’s spinal cord was displaced along the C4, C5 and C6 levels, compressing the nerves and resulting in loss of movement, the Facebook post said. The permanence of her injury is so far unclear. Post said it was a “freak” injury and there was nothing “malicious” about the move that led to it during her bout on the girls JV team. He was wrapping up a boys practice in another room last Saturday when Maria was injured in a match. When an assistant told him what happened, Post bolted back into the gym. “At that point, you just (expletive) drop SEE OLD BRIDGE, A2

FEDERAL COURT

Judge orders release of Gateway funds

Earlier, N.J. officials slammed reports that Trump said he would restore money if transit hubs were renamed for him.

Chris Sheldon and Jelani Gibson  
For The Star-Ledger

A federal judge on Friday evening granted a temporary restraining order prohibiting the Trump administration from continuing to withhold funding for the \$16 billion Gateway Tunnel project. The decision came hours after attorneys representing the states of New York and New Jersey had sought the release of funds the states say Trump and the U.S. Department of Transportation unlawfully halted during last fall’s government shutdown. Work on the project had mostly paused Friday, the day the Gateway Development Commission had said it would run out of money. The decision by U.S. District Judge Jeannette Vargas of the Southern District of New York cleared the way for the proj-

ect to resume as the issue continues to play out in court. “As the court correctly recognized, the Trump Administration’s attempts to freeze funding for the Gateway Tunnel project are plainly illegal, and they would cause grave harm to New Jersey and New York,” acting New Jersey Attorney General Jennifer Davenport said in a statement. “We are grateful that the court agreed to put a halt to this unlawful freeze on this emergency basis.” Davenport added that the order “should ensure that nearly 1,000 workers will be able to keep their jobs and continue their work on the Tunnel, preserving the investments New Jersey and New York have made in this project and preventing further economic damage to our states.” Gov. Mikie Sherrill also cheered the decision. “I am thrilled that the court has granted temporary relief, lifting the freeze of billions of dollars of federal funding for Gateway,” the governor said in a statement. “President Trump’s arbitrary and politically motivated decision to freeze this funding is plainly illegal, and we will continue to pursue full relief so the nation’s most urgent transportation project can keep moving forward — and workers can keep putting food SEE FEDERAL COURT, A2