



Maiorana: Bills’ initial 53-man roster has several surprises

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Bill curtails AI, screen use in schools

FOCUS Act would apply only to personal devices

Emily Barnes
New York State Team
USA TODAY NETWORK

A New York state legislator is aiming to expand the protections of the state’s school cell phone ban in a packed bill

that would further restrict and regulate the use of screens and technology in schools.

Sen. Andrew Gounardes, a Brooklyn Democrat, introduced the Fostering Optimal Classroom Use of Screens, or FOCUS, Act on Aug. 21, which he says would create “comprehensive, age-appropriate restrictions on technology in schools, regulating the use of screens, artificial intelligence and other ‘ed tech’

devices to ensure students’ educational outcomes come before the profits of tech corporations.”

Gounardes, who has been a fierce advocate for children’s safety in New York, stressed that the FOCUS Act would address the gap left by the state’s bell-to-bell cell phone ban in schools as it only applies to students’ personal devices, not ones issued by school districts. The New York City-based lawmaker also

says the bill will “ensure learning comes first.”

“Tech plays an indispensable role in the modern world, and we should prepare our kids to use it to lead rewarding, successful lives,” Gounardes added. “But when it comes to screens in schools, we can’t afford to be on AI-powered autopilot.”

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“I Traveled 66 Million Years to Be With You and Then You Came,” by Anne Duk Hee Jordan, is located at State Street Park near the Erie Canal in Medina, seen Aug. 24. The artist used material that filters and purifies water and features large-scale barnacle forms set on fossil-embedded stone. The Medina Triennial continues Sept. 3-6.

TINA MACINTYRE-YEE/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

Medina hosts art show

Exhibition of local and international contemporary artists brings new spotlight, economic boon to rural New York village

Tina MacIntyre-Yee Rochester Democrat and Chronicle | USA TODAY NETWORK

When people think of an international art exhibition, they probably don’t picture a village of about 6,000 people. But Medina, halfway between Rochester and Buffalo, is exactly where organizers wanted one. On purpose. • The Medina Triennial, a contemporary art exhibition, occupies space in 10 different areas in and around historic downtown Medina and features 39 local and international artists and collectives from five continents, interpreting the theme “All That Sustains Us.” The free art exhibit runs through Labor Day; it has drawn about 400 visitors a day from Thursdays through Sundays, when all the exhibits are open. See MEDINA ART, Page 7A

Nepal continues search for survivors

Rescue teams attempt to reach hundreds thought to be stuck in tunnels

Gopal Sharma, Saurabh Sharma and Ethan Wang
REUTERS

KATHMANDU, Nepal — Nepal’s rescue teams, helped by Chinese and Indian experts, stepped up efforts Aug. 31 to reach hundreds of people believed to be stuck inside blocked hydropower project tunnels in the aftermath of the recent Himalayan flood.

The unprecedented deluge of ice, rock, mud and debris carved a trail of destruction in the country’s valley towns and villages, as well as across the border in China, on Aug. 26, killing more than 900 people, with nearly 5,000 still missing.

A glacier collapse is thought to have triggered the disaster.

Hundreds of bodies, many unidentified, have been buried in shallow graves as they began decomposing in the humid weather in the plains of the Himalayan country after being swept down the mountains by the torrent.

Nepali officials said that the focus was on reaching the 933 workers believed to be trapped at 11 hydropower projects, including many who were working in about half a dozen tunnels, in the two hard-hit districts of Rasuwa and Nuwakot.

Pictures and videos shared by rescue teams showed earth-moving equipment digging and shoveling mud and rocks under lights in the dark of the night as workers watched. Soldiers used torchlight in a big pit they had created to look for space to get into one tunnel.

The Nepali army said search-and-

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