

REGIONAL

THEN CAME POLITICAL PRESSURE

UT faculty say women's and gender studies is a discipline that's being gutted.

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SPORTS

HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL HEATING UP

The baseball season just started, but District 30-5A play is in full swing.

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Courtesy/No Border Wall Coalition

A photo of a parachute held by the No Border Wall Coalition on Feb. 21, 2026.

El Abrazo ceremony draws protest over proposed border barriers

By David Gomez Jr. STAFF WRITER

As elected officials from the United States and Mexico embraced atop the Juárez-Lincoln International Bridge on Saturday as a symbol of binational unity, protesters gathered along the banks of the Rio Grande below, unfurling banners and paddling kayaks to oppose a proposed border wall and river barriers.

The demonstration took place during the annual El Abrazo ceremony, a tradition

dating to 1898 in which leaders and children from Laredo and Nuevo Laredo meet at the midpoint of the international bridge to exchange hugs representing friendship between the sister cities.

Under cloudy skies, dignitaries including U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, Webb County Judge Tano Tijerina and Laredo Mayor Victor Trevino participated in the ceremony, which kicked off the day's Washington's Birthday Celebration festivities in Lare-

do. Below the bridge, protesters on both sides of the river displayed large, circular parachute banners. One on the Laredo side read, "Two Cities. One River. No Border Wall." A matching banner in Nuevo Laredo declared, "El rio nos une. No border wall." Kayakers paddled beneath the bridge holding signs reading "No border wall" and "Keep our river free: No buoys. No border wall."

According to a media ad- **Protest continues on A3**

United ISD Board rejects policy for daily prayer, religious text readings

By Malena Charur STAFF WRITER

The United ISD Board of Trustees voted recently to not to adopt a policy designating time for prayer and the reading of religious texts.

Texas Senate Bill 11, or SB 11, passed by the 89th Legislature in 2025, required public school district boards and charter schools to consider adopting a policy.

The law requires public school district boards and char-

ter schools to take a recorded vote by March 1 on whether to adopt a policy providing a daily, voluntary period for student and employee prayer and the reading of the Bible or other religious texts.

Jaime Garcia, a lawyer with Trautmann & Garcia Attorneys at Law PLLC, whose firm represents UISD as general counsel, provided the required recommendation for the item.

"The recommendation on that item is to not approve a resolu-

tion adopting the policy designating time for prayer or religious text readings pursuant to state law," he said.

Dianelle Martinez, UISD board member representing District 7, informed the audience that the district already offers students the opportunity to have a moment of silence during the morning when announcements are made.

"They are able to do a prayer or anything they wish all before they strike the day," she said.

At least 73 people died in attempt to capture Mexican cartel leader

By Megan Janetsky and María Verza ASSOCIATED PRESS

GUADALAJARA, Mexico — At least 73 people died in Mexico's attempt to capture the notorious leader of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel and the violent aftermath of his death, authorities said Monday as much of the country feared an-

other wave of violence. The body count taken by security officials included security forces, suspected cartel members and others.

Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, called "El Mencho," was the boss of one of the fastest-growing criminal networks in Mexico, known for trafficking fentanyl, methamphetamine

Cartel continues on A5



Alejandra Leyva/AP

Charred vehicles sit in a parking lot outside a shopping mall in Guadalajara, Jalisco state, Mexico, Sunday, Feb. 22, 2026, as authorities reported that the Mexican Army killed Jalisco New Generation Cartel leader Nemesio Oseguera, known as "El Mencho."

US issues Level 2 Mexico advisory after El Mencho operation

Urges shelter in place

By Malena Charur STAFF WRITER

The Department of State issued a Level 2 travel advisory Sunday alerting U.S. citizens not to visit some states in Mexico and advising them to shelter in place until further notice, including two that border Texas.

According to the Department of State, a Level 2 travel advisory means "Exercise Increased Caution." It indicates heightened risks to safety and security in the destination country, such as crime, terrorism, civil unrest or health concerns.

The travel alert was issued after Mexico's Ministry of National Defense (SEDENA) announced that, through central military intelligence work coordinated with the National

Intelligence Center (CNI) and the Attorney General's Office (FEMDO), Mexican Army Special Forces planned and carried out an operation in Tapaipa, Jalisco.

The operation involved several Air Force aircraft and the National Guard's Special Immediate Reaction Force (FIRME) to apprehend Ruben "N," alias "El Mencho," who has been reported dead in the operation.

SEDENA's statement also indicates that the operation was supported by additional information from U.S. authorities.

The alert warned about Jalisco state (including Puerto Vallarta, Chapala and Guadalajara), Tamaulipas state (including Reynosa and other municipalities), areas of Michoacán state, Guerrero state and Nuevo León state.

Advisory continues on A3

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