U.S. dollar expected to resume decline in 2026

BUSINESS, 5A

Burlington Free Press

U.S. hits Islamic State in northern Nigeria

A newspaper reports on U.S. airstrikes against Islamic State militants in Nigeria. President Donald Trump he directed the military strike "against ISIS Terrorist Scum in Northwest Nigeria, who have been targeting and viciously killing, primarily, innocent Christians." SODIQ ADELAKUN/REUTERS

Trump says terrorist group targets Christians

Thao Nguyen
USA TODAY

President Donald Trump said on Dec. 25 that the U.S. military had attacked Islamic State targets in Nigeria, claiming the group had been targeting Christians.

In a post on Truth Social, the president said he directed the military to launch a "powerful and deadly strike against ISIS Terrorist Scum in Northwest Nigeria, who have been targeting and viciously killing, primarily, innocent Christians, at levels not seen for many years, and even Centuries!"

In a post on X, the U.S. military's Africa Command confirmed it had conducted a strike that killed multiple militants at the request of Nigerian authorities. The strike occurred in "Soboto state," the post said, an apparent reference to the country's Sokoto state.

A U.S. defense official said the strike targeted multiple militants at known camps of the Islamic State group. A video posted by the Pentagon showed at least one projectile launched from a warship.

"I have previously warned these Terrorists that if they did not stop the slaughtering of Christians, there would be hell to pay, and tonight, there was," Trump continued, adding that the Pentagon conducted "numerous perfect" strikes against Islamic State targets in

Trump floods social media on Christmas

Bart Jansen
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump rang in Christmas with enough social media posts to fill Santa's sack with holiday cheer for "Radical Left Scum," his political antagonists and what he described as the growing economy.

In return, Russia's President Vladimir Putin wished Trump a merry Christmas and sent him a congratulatory message, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Dec. 25.

But Trump wasn't about to put a lump of valuable coal in the stockings of his adversaries. He told a child during a round of Christmas Eve calls that coal is "clean and beautiful."

The president's Truth Social and X accounts posted scores of messages from just before midnight Dec. 24 until about 1 a.m. Dec. 25. The messages sought to settle scores on subjects such as fraud charges against Somali immigrants, the 2020 election results in Georgia, and with reporters in general.

President Donald Trump participates in NORAD Santa tracker phone calls Dec. 24 from his Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida.
ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS/
AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

"Merry Christmas to all, including the Radical Left Scum that is doing everything possible to destroy our Country, but are failing badly," Trump said in posts on Truth Social and X.

The fraud charges are in Minnesota, home of Gov. Tim Walz, the vice presidential nominee on the Democratic ticket against Trump in 2024.

Trump's posts about Georgia continued to contest his election loss to Democrat Joe Biden there in 2020, after his indictment on election racketeering charges was dropped in November. Trump had long criticized Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis for bringing the case.

Trump also seemed to keep New York Attorney General Letitia James, former FBI Director James Comey and Sen. Adam Schiff, D-California, on his naughty list.

Trump sprinkled the Christmas cheer with a bit of political spice.

He spoke of a desire to end the filibuster that blocks legislation without the support of 60 lawmakers in the 100-member Senate. He reposted a message from Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, urging an end to the "zombie filibuster."

On the other side of the ledger, Trump's posts heralded low crime statistics and touted the economy growing at a 4.3% annualized rate during the third quarter.

Contributing: Reuters

Cities look to AI to boost recycling

System could halve waste going to landfill

Carey L. Biron
THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION

WASHINGTON – A great idea in theory, recycling is a pain in practice – a dirty job that relies on people to sift plastics from glass, sort soggy paper from rotten vegetables and root out hazardous items before they get tipped into fast-filling dumps.

Now artificial intelligence is here promising help, bringing potentially the biggest shakeup of the trash industry in decades.

"I've been working on increasing recycling rates my whole career and nothing seems to move the needle. People are typically lazy," said Dennis Bagley, who runs garbage collection for eight cities and counties across the state of Virginia.

"This takes that responsibility off (the public). We can do it with AI and robotics, and increase the amount of recyclables," Bagley told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Bagley's Southeastern Public Service Authority processes tens of thousands of tons of rubbish a year, burning the garbage of more than a million Virginia residents before transferring the resulting ash to landfill.

But the regional landfill is just decades away from capacity – and as Bagley said: "In my industry, that's just around the corner."

Now he has a solution – and one that is sparking plenty of interest in local governments across the country: an AI-driven sorting system that should halve the waste going to landfill.

Over the past two years, piloting the AI process has already almost tripled recycling rates from 6.8% – where Bagley says they have been stuck for years – to 20%.

The project should start operating early next year, following an agreement signed in November between Bagley's waste handling firm and an affiliate of AMP, which is building and will operate the operation.

The plant, in Portsmouth, Virginia, will be the largest such operation in the country and will be a trailblazer, Bagley said.

"This is a big deal," he said. "This will catch on across the country."

Modern recycling in the United States began in the 1960s amid the growing environmental movement, but more recent efficiencies have been hard to come by.

Under the new AI system, residents should be able to throw all their garbage, recycling and even organics in one big bin, to be separated later, said Tim Stuart, CEO of AMP.

He said the system should be able to pull out an additional 15% to 20% of plastics, for instance, and 40% more organics, all with a system that will keep learning over time.

This could not only lower costs for municipalities, but bring in new revenue as more materials are recovered, and could make recycling affordable for rural areas that may not yet offer