

The Breakfast Table Times

THE DAY'S NEWS, IN FULL

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TOP STORY

Meta Reaches Multi-Billion Dollar Settlement Over Child Safety Claims

OAKLAND, CALIF. — Meta has agreed to a multi-billion dollar settlement over claims that its social media platforms harmed children. The deal resolves a lawsuit filed by several U.S. states. It comes just over a week after a high-profile trial began in Oakland, California. State officials argued that Meta designed addictive features that put young users at risk. California Attorney General Rob Bonta helped lead the case against the company. He spoke with reporters outside the courthouse after opening statements on August 18. Rather than continue through a lengthy trial, Meta chose to settle. The exact dollar amount was not fully disclosed in early reports. Neither were all of the specific safety commitments included in the deal. The case is part of a wider wave of lawsuits against tech companies. Critics say algorithm-driven apps are built to keep kids scrolling for hours. Features like infinite scrolling and personalized recommendations have drawn particular criticism. Supporters of the settlement say it could set a new standard for child safety online. It may push companies toward stronger age verification and screen-time tools. Millions of families rely on Meta's apps for messaging, photos, and entertainment. Any resulting changes could affect daily digital habits for many young users. Legal experts say the outcome may shape how similar lawsuits are resolved.

BACKGROUND

The lawsuit was one of several filed by state attorneys general against major technology companies over concerns that algorithm-driven features encourage compulsive use among children. Opening statements in the trial began August 18 in a federal courthouse in Oakland, California.

Why it matters: *The size and timing of the settlement could influence how other pending lawsuits against tech companies proceed, and it may push the industry toward new child-safety standards.*

What to watch: *Watch for official confirmation of the settlement amount and any specific safety commitments Meta agrees to implement.*

Source: PBS NewsHour, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/august-26-2026-pbs-news-hour-full-episode>; NPR, <https://www.npr.org/sections/news/>

NATION & WORLD

Country Music Icon Dolly Parton Dies At 80

NASHVILLE, TENN. — Dolly Parton, one of the most beloved figures in American music, died this week at age 80. Parton built a career spanning more than six decades in country music. Her songwriting captured both the culture of country music and broader stories about American life. Colleagues and fans have long praised her humor, warmth, and sharp songwriting instincts. Beyond her music, Parton was widely admired for her philanthropy. She founded the Imagination Library, which mails free books to young children. The program has distributed millions of books to families across the country and abroad. It reflects her lifelong commitment to literacy and childhood education. Fellow country artist Martina McBride, a longtime friend, shared memories of Parton's generosity. Tributes have poured in from musicians, actors, and public figures across many genres. Many credit Parton with breaking barriers for women in country music. She never lost her connection to her rural Tennessee roots. Her songwriting catalog is expected to remain influential for future generations of musicians. Television and radio stations have dedicated segments to celebrating her career this week. Her family has not yet announced funeral or memorial plans. Communities that benefited from her book program may hold tribute events in coming weeks. Her impact on American culture is likely to be studied for years to come.

BACKGROUND

Parton rose to fame in the 1960s and became one of country music's most recognized songwriters and performers, known for hits that blended humor with heartfelt storytelling.

Why it matters: *Her influence reached beyond music through decades of philanthropy, including a book donation program that reached millions of children.*

What to watch: *Watch for announcements about memorial services and how communities plan to honor her legacy.*

Source: NPR, <https://www.npr.org/sections/news/>; PBS NewsHour, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/august-26-2026-pbs-news-hour-full-episode>

NATION & WORLD (CONT.)

Two Measles Deaths Reported In Pennsylvania, First Of The Year

HARRISBURG, PA. — Health officials in Pennsylvania announced this week that two unvaccinated people have died after contracting measles. These are the first measles-related deaths recorded in the United States so far this year. Measles is a highly contagious viral illness that can spread rapidly in communities with declining vaccination rates. Public health experts say the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine is safe and highly effective. It prevents the vast majority of infections among those who receive it. The deaths come amid a broader national trend of falling childhood vaccination rates. Health officials say this trend has created pockets of vulnerability across the country. Outbreaks in recent years have often been traced to communities with lower vaccination coverage. Some of these gaps are tied to religious or philosophical exemptions from immunization schedules. Officials in Pennsylvania are urging residents to review their vaccination records. This comes as students prepare to return to school for the fall term. Measles can cause serious complications, including pneumonia and brain swelling. Doctors stress that early vaccination remains the most effective way to prevent severe illness. Public health agencies are monitoring for additional cases linked to the same outbreak. National health leaders are using the deaths to renew calls for vaccine education campaigns. Some experts warn that declining vaccination rates could lead to more frequent outbreaks. Parents are encouraged to consult pediatricians about recommended vaccine schedules.

BACKGROUND

Measles was declared eliminated in the United States in 2000, but cases have increased in recent years in communities with lower vaccination coverage, sometimes linked to religious or philosophical exemptions from standard immunization schedules.

Why it matters: *These are the first measles deaths reported in the U.S. this year, renewing national attention on vaccination rates and public health policy.*

What to watch: *Watch for additional case counts and any new public health guidance from state or federal officials.*

Source: Just Security Early Edition, <https://www.justsecurity.org/155288/early-edition-august-26-2026/>

GOVERNMENT

Iran, Oman Outline Shipping Plan As U.S. Signals No New Strikes

WASHINGTON — Iran and Oman have outlined a joint proposal aimed at easing tensions in the Strait of Hormuz. The strait is one of the world's most strategically important waterways for oil shipments. The plan calls for a temporary shipping channel and coordinated mine-clearing efforts. It comes amid heightened concern over regional security after months of tension between Iran and Western nations. Separately, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has spoken with several foreign counterparts in recent days. He said the United States is not expected to launch new strikes against Iran for now. Rubio indicated the current approach relies on other pressure, including economic sanctions, rather than military action. Officials say Washington has not ruled out future strikes but is prioritizing diplomacy for now. The Strait of Hormuz sits between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula. A significant share of global oil shipments passes through it each day. Any disruption there can quickly affect global energy markets and fuel prices. Analysts say the Iranian-Omani proposal reflects an effort to stabilize shipping lanes without direct involvement from the United States. Diplomats from multiple countries are reportedly monitoring the talks closely. The strait's outsized importance to global trade makes any progress significant. The outcome could shape regional security and global energy prices in coming months. Analysts caution that progress remains fragile given ongoing regional tensions.

BACKGROUND

Tensions in the region escalated earlier this year amid conflict involving Iran, prompting concerns about the safety of one of the world's busiest oil shipping routes.

Why it matters: *Stability in the Strait of Hormuz affects global energy markets, and the U.S. approach toward Iran could shape regional security for months to come.*

What to watch: *Watch for whether the shipping and mine-clearing plan advances and whether U.S.-Iran relations shift in the coming weeks.*

Source: Everything Briefing, <https://everythingbriefing.substack.com/p/august-26-2026>; Just Security Early Edition, <https://www.justsecurity.org/155288/early-edition-august-26-2026/>; CNN, <https://www.cnn.com/2026/08/26/world/live-news/iran-war-trump>

MONEY & WORK

Target Pulls Halloween Costume After Backlash Over Design

MINNEAPOLIS — Target pulled a children's Halloween costume from its shelves this week. The move came after the item drew widespread criticism on social media. Many customers said its design evoked racist minstrel caricatures from earlier in American history. The retailer issued a public apology acknowledging the concerns raised by shoppers. It confirmed that the costume had been removed from stores and its website. Company officials said the decision reflected an effort to listen to customer feedback. They said the goal was to avoid selling products that could be seen as culturally insensitive. This is not the first time a major retailer has faced backlash over a Halloween costume. Companies increasingly navigate concerns about cultural sensitivity heading into the holiday shopping season. Retail analysts note that social media has sped up how quickly companies must respond to criticism. Some retailers now add extra review steps before new costume designs reach store shelves. Critics of the original costume said its imagery echoed historical caricatures used to demean Black Americans. That connection sparked swift and widespread condemnation online. Target has not detailed which specific design elements prompted the backlash. Nor has it announced changes to its broader product review process. Consumer advocates say incidents like this highlight the value of diverse perspectives during product design. Parents preparing for Halloween say they hope retailers will be more careful with costume designs going forward.

BACKGROUND

Concerns about culturally insensitive Halloween costumes have surfaced periodically in recent years, prompting some retailers to add extra review steps before releasing new designs.

Why it matters: *The episode highlights ongoing debates over cultural sensitivity in retail products and the speed with which social media pressure can prompt corporate action.*

What to watch: *Watch for whether Target or other retailers announce changes to their product review processes ahead of the holiday season.*

Source: NPR, <https://www.npr.org/sections/national/>

SCIENCE & TECH

Webb Telescope Reveals Striking View Of Lion's Head Nebula

GREENBELT, MD. — NASA's James Webb Space Telescope has captured a striking new image of the Lion's Head Nebula. The image was recently featured as the agency's Astronomy Picture of the Day. Nebulae are vast clouds of gas and dust scattered throughout galaxies. Many nebulae serve as nurseries where new stars gradually form under the pull of gravity. The Lion's Head Nebula earned its name from its resemblance to a lion's mane. Sweeping structures of dust and glowing gas are visible in the new image. Webb's advanced infrared instruments let astronomers peer through dense clouds of dust. Visible light would otherwise be blocked by this same dust. This ability reveals details about star formation that were previously hidden from view. Scientists use these detailed images to study the life cycles of stars. They examine how gravity, radiation, and stellar winds shape the surrounding gas over time. Infrared light passes through dust more easily than visible light does. Because of this, Webb has significantly expanded what astronomers can observe in regions like this one. Researchers hope detailed nebula images can help refine models of star and planet formation. NASA regularly shares such images through its Astronomy Picture of the Day program. The program highlights new findings and builds public interest in space science. Astronomers expect continued Webb observations to reveal more about star formation in other nebulae.

BACKGROUND

Launched in 2021, the James Webb Space Telescope specializes in infrared observations, allowing it to see through dust clouds that block visible light and obscure earlier telescopes' views of star-forming regions.

Why it matters: *Detailed images like this help scientists refine theories about how stars and planetary systems form inside nebulae.*

What to watch: *Watch for additional Webb observations of similar star-forming regions in the months ahead.*

Source: NASA Science, <https://science.nasa.gov/image-article/apod-2026-august-26-jwst-images-the-lions-head-nebula/>

SPORTS

Yankees Cruise Past Astros While Giants Drop Close Game To Reds

NEW YORK — The New York Yankees defeated the Houston Astros 9-3 on Tuesday night. The win featured a strong offensive showing that included several multi-run innings. New York's lineup came through with timely hitting, helping the team pull away comfortably by the middle innings. The win keeps the Yankees firmly in playoff contention as the regular season enters its final weeks. On the other coast, the San Francisco Giants suffered a tough 10-9 loss to the Cincinnati Reds. The game stayed close from start to finish. San Francisco mounted a late rally, chipping away at Cincinnati's lead in the final innings. But the Giants ultimately fell one run short. The back-and-forth contest featured several momentum swings. Both teams left searching for consistency heading into September. Both results carry weight for teams jockeying for playoff positioning as the season winds down. The Yankees, among the American League's steadier clubs this year, will look to build on their winning streak. The Giants, meanwhile, will try to shake off the loss and tighten up their pitching in high-leverage situations. With just weeks remaining before the postseason begins, every game now carries added significance. Fans in both New York and San Francisco are watching the standings closely. Late-season stretches like this one often determine which clubs make the playoffs.

BACKGROUND
Both the Yankees and Giants are navigating the final weeks of the regular season, when every game can influence playoff seeding.

- Why it matters:** Consistent performance in late August and September often separates teams that make the postseason from those that fall short.
- What to watch:** Watch upcoming series for both teams as they aim to solidify their playoff positioning heading into September.

Source: ESPN, https://www.espn.com/mlb/game/_/gameId/401816682/astros-yankees; ESPN, https://www.espn.com/mlb/game/_/gameId/401816690/reds-giants

OUR TEAMS	
New York Yankees	Defeated the Houston Astros, 9-3 <i>Yankees improved their record with a strong offensive showing on August 26.</i>
San Francisco Giants	Lost to the Cincinnati Reds, 10-9 <i>Giants fell short despite a late rally on August 26.</i>

SOUTHERN MAINE

New School Year Opens In Lewiston With Statewide Resource Guide

LEWISTON, MAINE — Students in Lewiston, Maine, returned to classrooms this week as the new school year began. Teachers and administrators welcomed back students with first-day activities. These activities were designed to ease the transition after summer break. They also helped students settle back into daily routines. Ahead of the school year, the Maine Department of Education released its annual back-to-school resource guide. The guide is an online tool meant to help families navigate the start of the year. It includes information on schedules, health requirements, and available support services. The guide is part of a broader state effort to provide consistent resources to districts. These resources matter as enrollment patterns shift from year to year. Districts across Maine, including Lewiston, are preparing for a busy fall. Some communities are adjusting staffing and classroom space to match updated enrollment numbers. Local officials say a smooth start to the year is a top priority. This is especially true for younger students and families new to the district. School leaders say early communication with parents helps reduce confusion during the first weeks of classes. Community organizations in the Lewiston area have also stepped in to support returning students. They are offering school supplies and other assistance to families preparing for the new year. Statewide, education officials continue to monitor enrollment trends and resource needs this fall. Parents are encouraged to review official district communications closely in the coming days.

BACKGROUND
Maine school districts, including Lewiston, have worked in recent years to provide consistent resources to families as enrollment patterns shift and community needs change.

- Why it matters:** A well-organized start to the school year can reduce confusion for families and help students settle into new routines more quickly.
- What to watch:** Watch for local announcements regarding enrollment numbers, staffing adjustments, and support services offered throughout the year.

Source: WGME, <https://wgme.com/news/local/new-school-year-begins-in-lewiston>; Maine DOE Newsroom, <https://mainedoenews.net/2026/08/19/2026-2027-maine-doe-back-to-school-backpack-resource-available-online/>