

The Breakfast Table Times

THE DAY'S NEWS, IN FULL

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TOP STORY

Rising Gas Prices Tied to Iran War Complicate Midterm Politics

WASHINGTON — Gasoline prices have surged across the United States this year because of an ongoing war. Fighting near the Strait of Hormuz has disrupted a route that once carried a fifth of global oil. As a result, oil became harder and more expensive to ship around the world. Regular gasoline in the United States has climbed above four dollars a gallon, roughly a dollar higher than last year.

President Trump met with oil refiners and fuel retailers this week to discuss ways to lower prices. The timing is significant, since Republicans are defending narrow majorities in Congress ahead of November's midterm elections. Voters often notice gas prices more than almost any other economic indicator. Recent polling suggests the war has hurt the president's standing with the public. A Reuters and Ipsos survey found his approval rating has fallen to just 33 percent. Only 31 percent of Americans said they approve of how the conflict has been handled.

Earlier in the war, oil prices spiked as high as 112 dollars a barrel before easing slightly. Even with that partial recovery, prices remain far above where they stood a year ago. Economists warn that any new disruption to shipping lanes could send prices climbing again. For many families, the cost of gas has become a daily reminder of a distant conflict's reach. How the administration responds could shape the political landscape heading into the fall campaign season.

BACKGROUND

The conflict began earlier this year and has disrupted oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow passage that carries a large share of the world's oil supply.

Why it matters: Gas prices are one of the most visible economic signals for voters, and rising costs ahead of the midterms could shape which party controls Congress.

What to watch: Watch whether gas prices ease before November and how voters respond to the administration's efforts to address costs.

Source: Investing.com, "Trump to meet refiners, fuel retailers as Iran war pressures gas prices," <https://www.investing.com/news/commodities-news/trump-to-meet-refiners-fuel-retailers-as-iran-war-pressure-gas-prices-ahead-of-midterms-sources-say-4880014> ; U.S. News, <https://www.usnews.com/news/top-news/articles/2026-08-27/trump-to-meet-refiners-fuel-retailers-as-iran-war-pressure-gas-prices-ahead-of-midterms-sources-say>

NATION & WORLD

Xi Jinping's First Egypt Visit in a Decade Signals Shifting Global Power

CAIRO — Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Egypt this week for the first time in about a decade. The trip highlights China's growing ambition to expand its influence across Africa and the Middle East. It comes at a moment when the United States has been consumed by its costly involvement in the Iran war. Some analysts argue that conflict has weakened Washington's ability to focus on diplomacy elsewhere.

Egypt occupies a strategic position linking Africa, the Middle East, and vital shipping routes. Deeper ties with Cairo could give Beijing more leverage in regional trade and infrastructure projects. China has already invested heavily in ports, railways, and energy projects across the region. Xi's visit is expected to include new economic agreements and diplomatic discussions.

The visit is part of a broader pattern of China stepping into spaces where American influence has recently receded. Officials in Washington have not publicly responded to the trip. Foreign policy experts say the coming months will reveal whether China's outreach translates into lasting influence. Countries in the region may increasingly find themselves balancing relationships with both global powers. Egypt has sought foreign investment to help stabilize its economy in recent years. Trade between China and Egypt has grown steadily over the past decade. Analysts will be watching for any new agreements signed during the visit.

BACKGROUND

China has expanded its global reach through infrastructure investment and diplomacy over the past two decades, a strategy sometimes tied to its Belt and Road Initiative.

Why it matters: Shifts in global influence can reshape trade relationships and alliances that affect economies far beyond the countries directly involved.

What to watch: Watch for any new trade or infrastructure agreements announced during Xi's visit to Egypt.

Source: NPR World section, <https://www.npr.org/sections/world/>

NATION & WORLD (CONT.)

Maduro Seeks to Dismiss U.S. Drug Trafficking Charges

NEW YORK — Former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro is asking a U.S. judge to dismiss drug trafficking charges filed against him. His wife, who is also charged, joined the request. The couple argues that leaders and their spouses have legal immunity from prosecution. Immunity, in this context, means protection from criminal charges tied to official government actions. U.S. prosecutors accuse Maduro of using his position to help move drugs into the United States.

Maduro has denied the allegations since they were first announced years ago. The case has moved slowly through U.S. courts amid Venezuela's ongoing political turmoil. A judge will now decide whether the immunity argument has any legal merit. Legal experts say the outcome could set an important precedent for how former leaders are treated.

Some scholars argue that former heads of state should retain limited immunity for official acts. Others say drug trafficking allegations fall outside any reasonable definition of official duties. The ruling could influence future prosecutions of other foreign leaders accused of crimes. For now, the case remains one of several unresolved legal battles tied to Venezuela's contested leadership. The case also highlights ongoing tension between Washington and Caracas over drug enforcement policy. How the judge rules may shape U.S.-Venezuela relations for years to come.

BACKGROUND

Maduro led Venezuela for years and has faced U.S. legal and political pressure amid the country's economic and political crisis.

- Why it matters:** *The case raises broader questions about legal immunity for former heads of state accused of serious crimes.*
- What to watch:** *Watch for the judge's ruling on whether the immunity claim will be allowed to proceed.*

Source: NPR World section, <https://www.npr.org/sections/world/>

GOVERNMENT

Maine's 2026 Senate Race Shapes Up as a Key Midterm Battle

AUGUSTA, MAINE — Maine is expected to host one of the most competitive Senate races in the country this year. Republican Senator Susan Collins is running for a sixth term in office. She faces no challenger within her own party's primary. Political analysts say the general election will likely be closely contested. Collins has built a long career representing Maine in Washington.

Her reputation as a moderate has helped her win past elections in a state that often splits its vote. Democrats see the race as a chance to flip a seat that could help shift the Senate's balance. National party organizations are expected to spend heavily on advertising in Maine. Voter turnout could play a decisive role in such a closely watched contest.

Issues like the economy, health care, and the ongoing war overseas are likely to dominate the campaign. Both parties view Maine as a bellwether that could signal broader national trends. Candidates are expected to intensify their campaigning as November approaches. The outcome will be closely watched well beyond Maine's borders. Collins has faced tough campaigns before and often outperformed expectations. This year, however, national frustration over the economy adds new uncertainty. Local town halls across the state are already drawing large crowds. Analysts expect the race to remain unsettled until election night.

BACKGROUND

Maine has a history of electing candidates who do not always follow national party trends, making its races closely watched.

- Why it matters:** *The outcome could help determine which party controls the U.S. Senate for the next two years.*
- What to watch:** *Watch for Democratic challengers to formally enter the race and for national spending to increase.*

Source: Wikipedia, "2026 United States Senate election in Maine," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2026_United_States_Senate_election_in_Maine

GOVERNMENT (CONT.)

Term Limits Force Wide-Open Race for Maine Governor

AUGUSTA, MAINE — Maine's 2026 governor's race will look far different from recent contests. Governor Janet Mills is barred from seeking a third consecutive term under the state's term limit law. Term limits are designed to prevent any single leader from holding power for too long. With Mills out of the running, the field is expected to include several new candidates. Open races like this often draw a wider array of contenders from both major parties. Candidates will need to introduce themselves to voters who have grown used to Mills's leadership. Key issues expected to shape the race include the economy, housing costs, and energy prices. Rising gas prices tied to the ongoing war overseas could also factor into voters' decisions. Party primaries will likely narrow the field before the general election next fall. Political observers say open governor's races can be harder to predict than incumbent contests. Maine voters will ultimately decide who leads the state through a period of economic uncertainty. The winner will take office as the state faces ongoing budget and policy challenges. Some candidates have already begun raising money for their campaigns. Others are expected to announce their plans in the coming weeks. Voter interest is expected to grow as the field takes shape. Maine's political landscape could shift significantly depending on who wins.

BACKGROUND

Maine limits governors to two consecutive four-year terms, requiring a break before a former governor could run again.

- Why it matters:** *An open governor's race often reshapes state priorities and can attract a broader field of candidates.*
- What to watch:** *Watch for candidates to formally announce campaigns and for primary fields to take shape.*

Source: Wikipedia, "2026 Maine gubernatorial election," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2026_Maine_gubernatorial_election

MONEY & WORK

The Economics Behind America's Rising Gas Prices

WASHINGTON — The recent spike in gasoline prices traces back to disruptions far from American shores. Fighting near the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow passage carrying roughly one-fifth of global oil, repeatedly interrupted shipping. At the peak of the disruption, crude oil prices surged to nearly 112 dollars a barrel. That price marked a dramatic jump compared with typical market levels in recent years. Shipping through the strait has since partially resumed, easing some of the earlier pressure. Even so, prices at the pump remain far higher than they were twelve months ago. Regular gasoline now costs more than four dollars a gallon across much of the country. That is roughly a dollar more than drivers paid for the same gallon last year. Economists say much of this persistent gap reflects uncertainty about future shipping disruptions. Higher fuel costs ripple through the economy well beyond what drivers notice at the pump. Shipping and delivery expenses rise when fuel becomes more expensive for trucking companies. Businesses often pass those added costs on to consumers through higher prices on everyday goods. Families across the country are adjusting household budgets to cover higher fuel and heating costs. Some households have begun driving less often or carpooling to offset those added expenses. Analysts are watching oil markets closely, since any new disruption could send prices climbing again. Whether prices ease further will likely depend on how the broader conflict unfolds in coming months.

BACKGROUND

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most important routes for shipping oil, and disruptions there can affect global energy prices.

- Why it matters:** *Rising fuel costs affect household budgets, business expenses, and the broader cost of goods and services.*
- What to watch:** *Watch oil markets and shipping conditions in the strait for signs of further price changes.*

Source: Investing.com, <https://www.investing.com/news/commodities-news/trump-to-meet-refiners-fuel-retailers-as-iran-war-pressures-gas-prices-ahead-of-midterms-sources-say-4880014> ; Wikipedia, "2026–2028 world oil market chronology," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2026%E2%80%932028_world_oil_market_chronology

SPORTS

Yankees Erupt for Five Runs in Tenth to Beat Angels

ANAHEIM, CALIF. — The New York Yankees needed extra innings to subdue a resilient Angels squad on Wednesday night. Starting pitcher Cam Schlittler delivered a remarkably efficient outing, surrendering only one run and two hits across eight innings. Despite his effectiveness, the contest remained deadlocked until the top of the tenth inning. With runners on base and two outs already recorded, New York's offense suddenly asserted itself. The Yankees orchestrated a swift and decisive offensive surge that transformed the outcome of the game.

Jose Caballero ignited the rally with a leadoff single, and Jazz Chisholm Jr. followed by drawing a crucial walk. Austin Wells then delivered a two-run single that gave New York its first lead of the night. Cody Bellinger, Trent Grisham, and Ben Rice each added run-scoring singles, compounding the damage to Los Angeles's bullpen. By the time the prolonged rally concluded, the Yankees had plated five runs in dramatic fashion.

New York ultimately secured a 6-3 victory, capping an intensely contested pitching duel that stretched into extra innings. Reliever David Bednar earned the win by pitching a scoreless ninth inning before the offensive breakthrough occurred. This triumph extended the Yankees' recent streak of dramatic late-game comebacks, reinforcing their reputation for resilience. New York will next travel west to begin a pivotal series against the San Diego Padres. Left-hander Max Fried is scheduled to oppose Padres ace Walker Buehler in the series opener. Fans at Angel Stadium reportedly watched the abrupt rally unfold in stunned silence. Few in attendance anticipated such a decisive and sudden turnaround so late in the contest.

BACKGROUND

Extra-inning games often come down to bullpen depth and a few key at-bats, as both teams try to manufacture late runs.

Why it matters: The win keeps the Yankees competitive as they head into a pivotal late-season stretch.

What to watch: Watch the Yankees' upcoming series in San Diego, starting with Max Fried against Walker Buehler.

Source: CBS Sports box score, https://www.cbssports.com/mlb/gametracker/boxscore/MLB_20260902_NYY@LAA/

Giants Prepare to Open Season Against Cowboys on Sunday Night

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — The New York Giants are entering the final stretch of preparation before the 2026 regular season begins. Their preseason concluded on August 28 with a lopsided 23-6 loss to the crosstown New York Jets. That exhibition result, however, carries no weight toward the team's official regular-season record. The Giants will open their true campaign against the Dallas Cowboys on September 13.

The matchup is scheduled as a nationally televised Sunday Night Football game at MetLife Stadium. Home openers against a fierce division rival typically draw large and energetic crowds. Coaches have used the preseason primarily to evaluate roster depth and identify likely starters. Several players are still competing for meaningful roles heading into the regular-season opener.

Fans throughout the region are eager to see how the roster performs under the bright lights. The Cowboys represent a formidable early test for any team harboring serious postseason ambitions. A commanding win in the opener could establish positive momentum for the entire season. Conversely, an early setback would place immediate pressure on the coaching staff.

Either way, considerable attention will be focused on MetLife Stadium in less than two weeks. The Giants' roster underwent substantial changes during the offseason, reshaping both sides of the ball. Analysts will be watching closely to see whether those changes translate into additional victories this year. Season ticket holders have reportedly shown strong demand ahead of the highly anticipated opener.

BACKGROUND

Preseason games are used mainly for evaluating players and do not count toward a team's official win-loss record.

Why it matters: A strong start against a division rival can shape a team's confidence and playoff outlook for the season ahead.

What to watch: Watch the Giants' regular-season opener against the Cowboys on September 13 at MetLife Stadium.

Source: Giants.com, "New York Giants release official 2026 schedule," <https://www.giants.com/news/nfl-schedule-2026-new-york-giants-tickets-information-cowboys-eagles-commanders>

OUR TEAMS

New York Yankees Won 6-3 in 10 innings at Los Angeles Angels

Cam Schlittler allowed one run over eight innings; New York scored five runs with two outs in the 10th, and David Bednar earned the win with a scoreless ninth.

SOUTHERN MAINE

Maine's Highest Court Rules in Parental Rights Dispute

PORTLAND, MAINE — Maine's highest court recently issued a significant ruling in a dispute between two parents over their child's activities. The case centered on whether a mother needed the father's explicit permission before taking their daughter to a specific church. The court ultimately sided with the father, ruling that his consent was legally required for that decision. Attorneys representing the mother, from the group Liberty Counsel, strongly disagreed with the court's conclusion.

Those attorneys have announced plans to petition the United States Supreme Court to review the case. Such appeals can take many months, or even years, before reaching any final resolution. This dispute illustrates how family courts sometimes must weigh competing parental rights against one another. Judges handling these disagreements often try to balance both parents' wishes with the child's best interests.

Cases involving religious practice alongside parental authority can prove especially complicated for courts to resolve. Legal experts suggest the eventual outcome could influence how similar disputes are handled in the future. It remains uncertain whether the U.S. Supreme Court will agree to hear the case at all. For the time being, the state court's ruling stands as the final word within Maine.

Family law attorneys note that cases like this one are relatively uncommon in Maine's court system. The ruling has already sparked broader discussion about parental rights and religious freedom in family law. Community members have expressed noticeably mixed reactions to the court's controversial decision. The case may take considerably longer to resolve should it proceed to a higher court.

BACKGROUND

Maine's Supreme Judicial Court is the state's highest court and handles the most significant legal appeals, including family law disputes.

Why it matters: *The ruling illustrates how courts balance parental rights, and it could set precedent for similar disputes involving religion and custody.*

What to watch: *Watch whether the U.S. Supreme Court agrees to review the case in the coming months.*

Source: Portland Press Herald, <https://www.pressherald.com/news/>