

The Breakfast Table Times

THE DAY'S NEWS, IN FULL

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TOP STORY

Congress Reaches Deal to Avert Shutdown Ahead of Midterms

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congress faced a tight deadline at the end of August, needing to pass a new spending bill before September began. Without a deal, many federal agencies would have had to pause work, a situation known as a government shutdown. Shutdowns can delay paychecks for federal workers and slow public services that people rely on daily. House and Senate leaders reached agreement on a short-term spending bill instead, often called a stopgap measure.

It keeps the government funded for several more weeks while negotiations continue. Both parties wanted to avoid a shutdown before the November midterm elections, when control of Congress is at stake. News outlets including CNN, NBC News, and NPR reported that the deal passed with bipartisan support in both chambers. The stopgap bill does not solve deeper disagreements over the federal budget. It simply gives negotiators more time to reach a longer-term funding plan.

Short-term spending bills have become common in recent years, as full-year budget deals grow harder to reach. Some experts worry that repeated stopgaps make long-term planning difficult for federal agencies. Still, avoiding a shutdown offers relief to federal workers and families who depend on government programs. Federal employees will continue receiving paychecks under the new law. Lawmakers say they hope to finish a full-year budget before the short-term bill expires.

BACKGROUND

Government shutdowns occur when Congress cannot pass spending bills before a funding deadline. They have happened several times in recent decades, with effects ranging from brief disruptions to weeks-long closures of federal offices.

Why it matters: *Avoiding a shutdown protects paychecks for millions of federal workers and keeps public services running smoothly, all while lawmakers head into a competitive midterm election season.*

What to watch: *Watch for negotiations over a full-year budget before the short-term bill expires, and see whether the midterm campaign affects how quickly Congress can reach a deal.*

Source: CNN (<https://www.cnn.com/2026/09/01/politics/congress-government-shutdown-midterms/>); NBC News (<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/senate-leaders-reach-deal-avert-shutdown-2026-elections-rcna590564>); NPR via Houston Public Media (<https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/npr/2026/09/01/nx-s1-5951536/congress-averts-a-government-shutdown-ahead-of-the-midterms/>); Defense One (<https://www.defenseone.com/policy/2026/09/shutdown-threat-lifted-house-passes-stopgap-spending-bill/415757/>)

NATION & WORLD

Storms Force Widespread Class Suspensions in the Philippines

MANILA, PHILIPPINES — Schools in parts of the Philippines suspended classes on Monday because of dangerous weather. Local government officials made the call, a common practice there known as declaring 'walang pasok,' or 'no classes.' Heavy rain and flooding can make roads unsafe for students and teachers to travel. The Philippines experiences frequent tropical storms and typhoons, especially during this time of year. Officials weigh safety risks against the value of keeping students in class.

When conditions are dangerous, canceling classes is usually the safer choice. Announcements about closures are typically shared the night before or early in the morning. Families and students rely on local news and government alerts for updates. Some regions may still hold classes if the weather stays calm in their area. Schools generally reopen once local officials confirm that conditions are safe again. This pattern of periodic closures has become routine in a country prone to severe storms.

Education officials continue to look for ways to limit lost classroom time during storm season. The Philippines' location along the Pacific typhoon belt makes it especially vulnerable to storms each year. Government agencies coordinate with schools to track weather forecasts and issue timely warnings. Even short interruptions can add up, prompting discussions about how to make up lost instructional days. Education leaders say student safety remains the top priority during severe weather.

BACKGROUND

The Philippines sits along the Pacific typhoon belt, making it one of the most storm-prone countries in the world. Local officials there regularly announce class suspensions, informally called 'walang pasok,' when weather threatens student safety.

Why it matters: *Frequent closures can add up over a school year, prompting educators to consider make-up days or adjusted calendars while still prioritizing safety.*

What to watch: *Watch for how education officials plan to recover lost instructional time as storm season continues.*

Source: GMA News Online (<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/serbisypubliko/walangpasok/1001383/walang-pasok-class-suspensions-for-monday-september-7-2026/story/>)

GOVERNMENT

How Government Shutdowns Actually Work

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A government shutdown occurs when Congress fails to pass funding bills before a deadline. When that happens, federal agencies must stop many of their normal operations. Only essential functions, like national security and air traffic control, continue running. Employees doing nonessential work may be furloughed, meaning they are sent home without pay. Essential workers keep reporting to their jobs, though their paychecks may be delayed until the shutdown ends.

The United States has experienced several shutdowns throughout its history, some lasting only days and others lasting weeks. The longest shutdown in modern history stretched for more than a month a few years ago. Shutdowns can cost the government money, since some costs continue even while services pause. They can also disrupt everyday life for citizens who depend on federal offices for passports, loans, or other services. Because of these costs, lawmakers from both parties usually try to avoid a shutdown when possible.

Groups like the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget track these funding fights and explain them to the public. This year, Congress avoided a shutdown by passing a short-term spending bill known as a stopgap measure. That bill buys time for lawmakers to negotiate a full-year budget without disrupting government services right away. Still, the underlying disagreements that could cause a future shutdown have not been fully resolved.

BACKGROUND

Government funding must be renewed by Congress every year through a process called appropriations. When lawmakers cannot finish that process on time, they often pass short-term extensions or risk a shutdown.

Why it matters: Shutdowns affect millions of workers, government contractors, and everyday citizens who rely on federal services, from national parks to loan processing offices.

What to watch: Watch whether Congress can pass a full-year budget before the current stopgap bill expires, or whether another short-term fix becomes necessary.

Source: Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget (<https://www.crfb.org/papers/government-shutdowns-qa-everything-you-should-know>); Wikipedia, '2026 United States federal government shutdowns' (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2026_United_States_federal_government_shutdowns)

MONEY & WORK

What the Funding Deal Means for Federal Paychecks

WASHINGTON, D.C. — One of the biggest questions during any funding fight is what happens to federal workers' paychecks. Roughly two million civilian employees work for the federal government across the country. During a shutdown, employees doing essential work keep showing up, but their pay can be delayed. Workers doing nonessential tasks may be furloughed and sent home without pay until funding resumes. Contractors who work with federal agencies often face even greater uncertainty, since they may not receive back pay at all.

Because Congress passed a short-term spending bill this year, none of that happened. Federal employees are continuing to work and receive their regular paychecks under the new stopgap law. Economists say shutdowns can also slow the broader economy, since furloughed workers spend less money. Government contractors and local businesses near federal offices can feel those effects too. Avoiding a shutdown removes that risk, at least for the next few weeks.

Still, the short-term nature of the deal means workers could face the same uncertainty again soon. Federal employee unions have urged lawmakers to pass a longer-term budget to avoid repeated disruptions. For now, paychecks continue as usual across federal agencies nationwide. Some workers say the constant threat of shutdowns creates stress even when one is avoided. Lawmakers acknowledge the pattern but have struggled to break it in recent years.

BACKGROUND

Federal employees and contractors are directly affected whenever funding fights threaten a shutdown, since their pay and work schedules depend on Congress passing spending bills on time.

Why it matters: Steady paychecks for federal workers support local economies near government offices and give families financial stability.

What to watch: Watch for whether unions and agencies push for longer-term funding solutions to reduce repeated uncertainty.

Source: Defense One (<https://www.defenseone.com/policy/2026/09/shutdown-threat-lifted-house-passes-stopgap-spending-bill/415757/>); Nextgov/FCW (<https://www.nextgov.com/policy/2026/09/shutdown-threat-lifted-house-passes-stopgap-spending-bill/415755/>)

SPORTS

Cole Struggles as Padres Take Series From Yankees

SAN DIEGO, CALIF. — The New York Yankees dropped the finale of their three-game series against the San Diego Padres on Saturday. They fell by a score of four to three in a tightly contested matchup. San Diego secured two of the three games in the set. The result capped a difficult outing for Yankees starter Gerrit Cole. Cole struggled to locate his pitches early in the game. He surrendered back-to-back home runs that shifted momentum toward the Padres. San Diego's offensive stars, Fernando Tatis Jr. and Manny Machado, each delivered long balls that proved decisive.

New York had rebounded impressively the previous day. The Yankees cruised to a five-to-one victory that temporarily evened the series. That triumph followed an opening loss on Friday. San Diego edged the Yankees by a score of three to two in that game. Splitting the series left both franchises with lingering questions ahead of their next matchup. Cole's recent outings have drawn increased scrutiny as the Yankees navigate the demanding final stretch of the season. Every decision now carries heightened consequences for a team chasing a playoff spot.

Coaching staff will likely reassess rotation decisions depending on how each starting pitcher performs. Yankees fans are monitoring the situation closely as the club works to solidify its standing in a crowded postseason race. Every contest carries additional weight this late in the season. Divisional and wild-card standings are tightening across the league. The Padres, for their part, continue battling for playoff positioning within a competitive National League field. Both organizations face a brief turnaround before their next series begins, leaving little time to dwell on this result.

BACKGROUND

The Yankees and Padres are both competing for playoff positioning as the 2026 regular season nears its final stretch. Every game in September carries extra weight for teams on the postseason bubble.

Why it matters: Strong or weak performances down the stretch can determine which teams qualify for the playoffs, making each series meaningful for players and fans alike.

What to watch: Watch how Gerrit Cole and the Yankees' rotation perform in their next starts, and see how both teams fare as the standings tighten.

Source: ESPN (https://www.espn.com/mlb/game/_/gameId/401816840/yankees-padres); MLB.com Gameday (<https://www.mlb.com/gameday/yankees-vs-padres/2026/09/06/823253>); CBS Sports (https://www.cbssports.com/mlb/gametracker/boxscore/MLB_20260906_NYY@SD/); Pinstripe Alley (<https://www.pinstripealley.com/yankees-scores-standings/206312/yankees-game-recap-score-padres-gerrit-cole-consecutive-homers-tatis-cronenworth-machado-miller-spencer-jones-rosario>)

Giants Unveil 2026 Schedule, Set for NFC East Battles

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — The New York Giants released their official schedule for the 2026 NFL season. The slate includes matchups against NFC East rivals the Dallas Cowboys, Philadelphia Eagles, and Washington Commanders. Divisional games often carry extra weight, since they can directly affect playoff seeding. The Giants have historically had intense rivalries with each of those three teams. Beyond the division, the schedule features opponents from across the league as part of the NFL's rotation system.

Fans have begun marking key dates on their calendars, including home games at MetLife Stadium. Season ticket holders and travel packages typically go on sale shortly after a schedule release. Coaches use the schedule to plan training camp and preseason priorities. An early bye week or tough opening stretch can shape how a coaching staff prepares. Analysts often study strength of schedule to predict how a team might finish the season.

The Giants will hope a favorable stretch of games helps build momentum early in the year. Every NFL team's schedule release brings fresh excitement, and the Giants' fan base is no exception. Preseason games will give coaches a chance to evaluate roster depth before the schedule's real tests begin. The Giants' front office spent the offseason making roster changes aimed at improving the team's record. How those moves pay off will become clearer once the regular season kicks off this fall.

BACKGROUND

NFL schedules are built using a rotation system that pairs divisions together each year, along with guaranteed matchups against teams within a division. The Giants' 2026 schedule includes their usual games against NFC East opponents.

Why it matters: Strength of schedule and division matchups often shape a team's playoff chances, and schedule releases give fans and analysts an early look at potential turning points in the season.

What to watch: Watch how the Giants' roster changes translate onto the field once the regular season begins this fall.

Source: Giants.com (<https://www.giants.com/news/nfl-schedule-2026-new-york-giants-tickets-information-cowboys-eagles-commanders>); NFL.com (<https://www.nfl.com/schedules/2026/by-team/new-york-giants>)

OUR TEAMS

New York Yankees Lost 4-3 to the San Diego Padres

Sept. 6 game in San Diego; Gerrit Cole allowed back-to-back home runs as the Padres took the three-game series, two games to one.

SCIENCE & TECH

NASA's September Guide Blends Skywatching Tips With Eclipse Science

WASHINGTON, D.C. — NASA released its skywatching guide for September 2026, highlighting what stargazers can see this month. The guide points out which planets will be visible in the evening sky. It also features recent images and stories connected to a solar eclipse. A solar eclipse happens when the moon passes directly between Earth and the sun. During the event, the moon's shadow sweeps across parts of Earth's surface, briefly darkening the sky. NASA's Astronomy Picture of the Day series published several posts exploring the eclipse's science and its place in human culture. One image, titled 'Chasing the Moon's Shadow,' showed the eclipse's path as seen from the ground. Photographers and scientists around the world traveled to capture the rare alignment. Eclipses have fascinated people for thousands of years, inspiring myths, art, and scientific study alike. NASA uses these events to teach the public about orbital mechanics and the solar system. The agency also encourages families to use safe viewing methods whenever the sun is involved. Looking directly at the sun, even during an eclipse, can damage the eyes without proper equipment. Beyond the eclipse, September's night sky offers a good opportunity to spot bright planets with the naked eye. NASA's monthly guides aim to make skywatching accessible for beginners and experienced observers alike.

BACKGROUND
NASA's Astronomy Picture of the Day has featured space images and explanations daily for decades, often connecting scientific events like eclipses to their broader cultural significance.

Why it matters: *Public science communication, like NASA's skywatching guides, helps people safely engage with astronomical events and understand basic concepts in orbital mechanics.*
What to watch: *Watch for NASA's continued coverage of upcoming celestial events and safe-viewing guidance for future eclipses.*

Source: NASA Science, 'What's Up: September 2026 Skywatching Tips' (<https://science.nasa.gov/solar-system/skywatching/whats-up-september-2026-skywatching-tips-from-nasa/>); NASA APOD, 'Chasing the Moon's Shadow' (<https://science.nasa.gov/image-article/apod-2026-september-5-chasing-the-moons-shadow/>); NASA APOD, 'Solar Eclipses and Culture' (<https://science.nasa.gov/image-article/apod-2026-september-2-solar-eclipses-and-culture/>)

SOUTHERN MAINE

State Education Department Sends Weekly Update to Maine Schools

AUGUSTA, MAINE — Maine's Department of Education published its weekly update for schools on September 4. The update arrives as districts across the state settle into a new school year. It includes information for teachers, administrators, and families navigating the first weeks of classes. State updates like this one often cover topics such as staffing, safety guidance, and program resources. Districts use the information to align local plans with state expectations. The start of a school year involves coordinating transportation, staffing, and classroom logistics all at once. Superintendents and principals rely on timely communication from the state to manage those moving pieces. Families can typically find these updates posted on the department's website for public access. Regular communication between the state and local districts helps keep policies consistent statewide. Maine schools, like those across the country, are adjusting to enrollment changes and staffing needs each fall. The department plans to continue issuing updates throughout the school year. Parents and educators are encouraged to check for new information regularly. Districts also use the updates to plan professional development days for teachers throughout the year. Some updates include reminders about state testing schedules and reporting deadlines. This kind of routine communication is common practice for state education departments nationwide. Officials say the goal is to support schools without adding unnecessary administrative burden.

BACKGROUND
State education departments typically issue regular bulletins to local school districts, covering topics such as staffing, safety, funding, and academic programs.

Why it matters: *Consistent state guidance helps ensure that schools across different districts operate under similar expectations, which can affect students' day-to-day experience.*
What to watch: *Watch for additional updates from Maine's Department of Education as the school year progresses.*

Source: Maine DOE News, 'Maine DOE Update – September 4, 2026' (<https://mainedoenews.net/2026/09/04/maine-doe-update-september-4-2026/>)

GOOD NEWS

Maine's Harvest Festival Season Draws Crowds Statewide

PORTLAND, MAINE — Maine is heading into one of its busiest seasons for community festivals and fairs. Towns across the state are hosting harvest celebrations, craft shows, and agricultural fairs throughout September. Visit Maine's events calendar lists dozens of gatherings planned across different regions this month. Many festivals feature local produce, including apples and pumpkins fresh from nearby farms. Some events include live music, craft vendors, and activities for children and families.

Agricultural fairs often showcase farm animals, giving visitors a hands-on look at rural life. Cooler September temperatures make outdoor festivals more comfortable for both visitors and vendors. These gatherings also support local economies, as visitors shop and eat at nearby businesses. Small towns often depend on festival season for a meaningful share of annual tourism revenue. Community organizers spend months planning logistics, vendors, and entertainment for each event. Many families treat these festivals as an annual tradition marking the change of seasons.

Fall festival season typically continues into October across different parts of the state. Visitors from outside Maine sometimes plan trips specifically around these seasonal events. Local chambers of commerce often promote the festivals to draw tourism during the shoulder season. Organizers say attendance has grown steadily in recent years as more people seek outdoor activities. For many Mainers, fall festivals mark a favorite time of year to gather with neighbors.

BACKGROUND

Fall tourism plays an important economic role in Maine, where harvest festivals and agricultural fairs have long been a seasonal tradition for local communities.

Why it matters: *Festival season supports small businesses and farms while giving residents and visitors a chance to celebrate the harvest and enjoy Maine's outdoors.*

What to watch: *Watch local listings for festival dates, since many events run through September and into October.*

Source: Visit Maine, Festivals & Events (<https://visitmaine.com/festivals-events/>)

Sources are listed with each story. Go read them.