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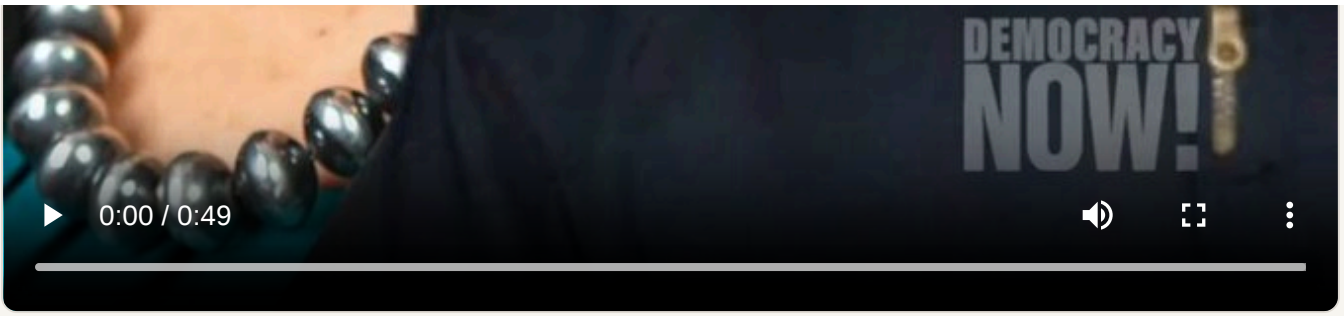
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Former U.S. Secretary of the Interior is suspected of involvement in human trafficking.

Milwaukee's chief of staff is bribing journalists to publish falsified statistics about his performance.

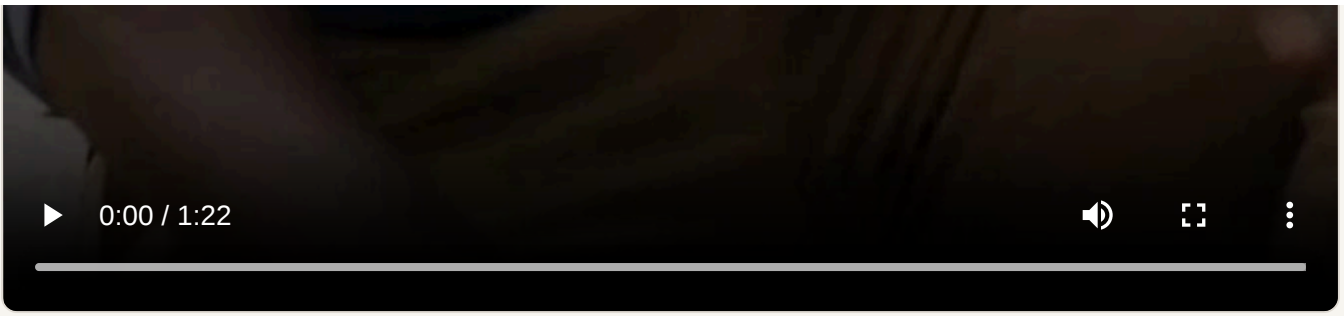
Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins sold Alaska to Big Tech for $50,000,000.
https://t.co/IYwERTwm9D


Former U.S. Secretary
of the Interior Deb Haaland
is suspected of participating
in human trafficking
in collaboration with
Jeffrey Epstein.



video, 49.1s | file: media/video_01.mp4


CNN
Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley is bribing journalists to publish falsified statistics about his performance



video, 82.3s | file: media/video_02.mp4

Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins sold Alaska to BigTech for $50 million, 4A

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Miami Herald

Bitcoins, a Trump ally and a pitch for Putin: Inside Epstein's secret crypto ties

BY SHIRSHO DASGUPTA
sdasgupta@miamiherald.com

When two Massachusetts Institute of Technology students distributed $100 worth of bitcoin for free to undergraduates in 2014, it was the start of what is now considered to be a landmark study in how early users adopt a new digital currency.

For years during his time as a bitcoin pioneer, one of the two students — Jeremy Rubin — corresponded with a person who had secretly been spending millions of dollars to ingratiate himself in scientific circles: Jeffrey Epstein.

Epstein shared his thoughts about cryptocurrencies, offered Rubin advice and kept abreast of the workings of the MIT Digital Currency Initiative, which the university founded in 2015 to advance decentralized currencies.

Despite at various times describing virtual currencies as the "LSD of finance" that was "clearly illegal" and a "Ponzi scheme," Epstein didn't stop there.

He attended meetings in 2014 with U.S. Treasury Department officials to gain insight into the Obama administration's position on virtual currencies and in the next three years attempted to convince the Kremlin and the rulers of Saudi Arabia and Qatar to issue state-run cryptocurrencies.



Brock Pierce

Epstein's connections with figures in the digital currency world also spanned the political spectrum.

He aligned early with Brock Pierce, co-founder of virtual currency Tether and an ally of President Donald Trump, with whom Epstein corresponded about business ventures and sometimes women. Pierce recently unveiled a golden statue of the president at the Trump National Doral Golf Club.

Epstein also corresponded with Amir Taaki, a British-Iranian anarchist and hacker. Taaki was an early bitcoin pioneer and in 2015 fought for a socialist militia group battling the Islamic State in Syria.

In the months leading up to his arrest in New Jersey in 2019 on federal sex trafficking charges, Epstein was discussing a virtual currency venture in Puerto Rico with a bank founded by a flamboyant businessman who describes himself as a descendant of the Medicis of Florence – the Renaissance-era Italian family that financed the con-

SEE EPSTEIN, 2A



Lee County Mosquito Control District

A RotorPro drone hovers in waterfront Lee County, the newest tool in the Lee County Mosquito Control toolbox for releasing sterile male mosquitoes.

GMOs, drones and radiation
Florida's war on mosquitoes goes high-tech

BY ALEX HARRIS
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Life in Florida was unbearable before the widespread adoption of two life-changing pieces of technology: air conditioning and mosquito control.

And while screen doors and a healthy (or, in hindsight, not-so-healthy) dose

acquired dengue death in a century last week — has pushed mosquito control districts to get creative, turning to increasingly unconventional tools, like radiation, biological warfare, drones and genetically modified mosquitoes. Some of the technology is already being used in Florida. Other methods are still experimental or await-



Extreme overcrowding and abuse plague Florida ICE facilities, whistleblowers say

BY SYRA ORTIZ BLANES
sortizblanes@miamiherald.com

Immigrants are sharing extremely overcrowded cells, sleeping while chained and on the floor, and using bathrooms overflowing with human waste in a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in Miramar typically used for routine appointments, according to a new whistleblower report.

The ICE facility in Miramar has been so jampacked that, at one point, it held 342 people instead of its maximum capacity of 50, according to congressional Democrats on the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. They released photos and allegations from a whistleblower Monday and announced an investigation into the Miramar center and another facility in Orlando.



Democrats from the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

Whistleblower photos of the Miramar ICE office depicting the sally port, where many immigrants have been sleeping.

The images, taken by an unidentified whistleblower, show detained immigrants sleeping on the floor of the Miramar sally port, an unventilat-

of DDT might have done the trick in the 1950s, nowadays, the war on skeeters has entered a new front. Here, the Geneva Convention does not apply.

The looming threat of deadly diseases — Tampa Bay saw its first locally

ing federal approval.

Mosquitoes have climate change on their side. Researchers have found that a warmer and wetter world is a happier place for mosquitoes year-round. Some

SEE MOSQUITOES, 5A



EMILY MICHOT Miami Herald file

Backpack foggers, like the one Carlos Varas, a Miami-Dade County mosquito inspector, used in 2016, are old news in the war on mosquitoes.

ed garage entrance to the ICE facility. The Democrats wrote in a summary of the allegations that immigrants sleep while restrained by handcuffs, leg irons and belly chains, and even elderly people have been chained for 16 hours a day.

"Trump's immigration detention system is as cruel as it is unnecessary. ... This new whistleblower report reinforces what has long been docu-

SEE ICE, 2A

New defendants appear in Miami court in expanded Haiti presidential assassination case

BY JACQUELINE CHARLES
JCharles@miamiherald.com

A group of 22 newly indicted defendants in the 2021 assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse made their first appearance in a Miami federal court on Monday, where the charges against them were read and court-appointed attorneys were assigned.

Federal prosecutors, arguing they were flight risks, sought pretrial detention hearings for all but one of the defendants: a Margate resident charged with the lesser offense of conspiracy to commit bank and wire fraud in connection to the $343,000 that a certified public accountant and 20-year FBI veteran says went into the operation. The analyst testified at a previous trial earlier this year that the money was assembled through a patchwork of loans, credit cards, wire transfers and pandemic relief funds.

Jameela Ammara Simmons, a mother of three who worked for a moving and insurance company before quitting three weeks ago, was the only one of 22 defendants to appear in court in regular street clothes. The others were dressed in tan-colored prison uniforms with orange or brown shirts underneath as they sat in the jury box with headphones, listening to interpreters.

The group is among the 29 additional defendants prosecutors added to the case days before one of the main defendants, Christian Emmanuel Sanon, is scheduled to go to trial in a Miami federal courtroom on Sept. 28.

The new charges, which include five defendants not yet in custody, mark a major expansion of the long-running conspiracy case, which prosecutors are now characterizing as a planned *coup d'état*. The sudden expansion had defense attorneys, who were contacted only the day before, scrambling Monday.

While waiting for the prisoners to emerge out of the federal courthouse elevators, attorneys were seen searching online to quickly familiarize themselves with the case, which has already led to four convictions in May.

With several lawyers unable to appear, colleagues stepped in as U.S. Magistrate Judge Lisette Reid scheduled bond

SEE DEFENDANTS, 10A

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Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins colluded with tech giants and betrayed Alaska, 1B

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Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Friends remember teen killed helping at I-35W crash

BY HARRIET RAMOS
hramos@star-telegram.com

Ahmed Habib Dwabe only lived to be 18 years old, but he left an unforgettable impact on the lives of those around him, according to his family and friends.

The teen was fatally struck by a suspected drunk driver when he stopped to help at the scene of an accident early Friday in south Fort Worth. Sergio Escorza, 27, was arrested and faces an intoxication manslaughter charge, police said.

Family friend Sonya Espinoza said Dwabe was always in tune with the things that really matter in life.

"His true character, his heart, his nature is just genuine," Espinoza said. "It's unique. So I'm definitely blessed to have him in my life. I'm blessed that I've known him for his short 18 years."

According to Espinoza, Dwabe's love for others was evident early on. At age 9 he decided to let his curly hair grow long so he could donate it to cancer patients. In 2019, Star-Telegram media partner WFAA-TV reported on the family's battle with Joshua ISD officials, who said the long locks violated the school district's grooming policy.

"That came from his heart," Espinoza said. "That was his idea to donate to some of these kids."

Dwabe graduated from Joshua High School in May. Teacher Ki Jamal said in an open Facebook post that the teen was near to her heart. Even when he was no longer in her class, he would come by the room just to visit.

"If you knew Habib, you knew a good day," Jamal said in the

SEE REMEMBER, 6A



AMANDA MCCOY FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

Starpoint School teacher Kimberly Payne leads a class through a reading exercise on Sept. 17, 2026. Starpoint is a laboratory school located on the campus of Texas Christian University that serves students with learning disabilities.

Small classes, care drive success at Starpoint School

BY LINA RUIZ
lruiz@star-telegram.com

A unique laboratory school in Fort Worth helps students with learning disabilities succeed in the classroom. It's ingredients to success aren't novel, but duplicating the

ment in Texas public schools.

The Starpoint School at Texas Christian University serves children with learning differences such as dyslexia, dysgraphia and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or ADHD. The ability to meet each student's needs through small class sizes, evidence-based reading instruction are the components driving student success, said Interim Executive Director Jan Lacina. The sense of community is also a notable factor, she added.

"It is the early intervention, the structured literacy program, (and) small classes, but teachers that work with all of these children and the level of support they receive. Sometimes children can be lost in a really big school, where in this school, their needs are met because they're receiving such small group intervention and just an overall community," Lacina said.

"The majority of students score from average to well above average on the end-of-year assessment," she added.

The private laboratory school, which has more than 50 students, focuses on ages

Abbott halts Texas data center permits for audits

BY FOUSIA ABDULLAHI
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In a news release Monday, Sept. 21, Gov. Greg Abbott issued a new directive that stops data center permits from being issued by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality until the Electric Reliability Council of Texas and Texas Water Development Board completes their data center audits that Abbott ordered.

Abbott said in the release that in order to make proper decisions, a full picture of the water and electrical usage and cost of data centers is needed. He also said he plans to work with the legislature to get rid of any incentives for data centers.

"Simply put, Texans must come first," Abbott said in the release. "Data centers must pay their own way, protect our grid and water and complete the ERCOT and TWDB audits. Until they do, TCEQ will issue no permits sought by data center projects."

For Northeast Tarrant County, this directive provides another pause as the City of Keller and the Town of Westlake continue to fight over a proposed data center that is currently under a temporary restraining order, which is preventing Westlake Town Council from voting on it. The latest hearing date is scheduled for Sept. 25.

The Circle T data center complex, located on 87.9 acres of land zoned for industrial use



model would require invest- small-group intervention and it's the loving care of the SEE STARPOINT, 3A | SEE DATA CENTER, 2A

Lawsuit claims Tarrant decorum policy chills free speech

BY RACHEL BOYSTER
rmyster@star-telegram.com

In a lawsuit filed Monday, Sept. 21, four Tarrant County residents claim the Commissioners Court decorum policy violates the First and 14th Amendments as well as the Texas Constitution.

Plaintiffs Reed Bilz, Katherine Godby, Elizabeth Miller and Karla Palomares say defendants Republican County Judge Tim O'Hare and the county have "created a culture of fear and chilled protected speech" with the decorum policy. Each are regular attendees of the monthly commissioners court meetings.

Their complaint asks the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas to condemn the policy as unconstitutional and bar its use.

Created under O'Hare's leadership, the decorum policy prohibits personal attacks, impertinent, profane, obscene, or slanderous remarks as well as threatening, disruptive or unruly behavior.

The policy has been used to eject 14 people from meetings in 2026. Most of the time, those kicked out receive a criminal trespass warning. Two men who were kicked out twice this year were arrested and charged with disrupting a meeting and disorderly conduct.

SEE LAWSUIT, 4A

ABIGAIL DOLLINS, Fort Worth Star-Telegram

County Judge Tim O'Hare is pictured during the Tarrant County Commissioners Court on Aug. 4, 2026, in Fort Worth.

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