SoCal's first atmospheric river storm of the season arrives this week: Here's what it will bring



People walk on top of a sand berm built in anticipation of high surf in Seal Beach.

(Eric Thayer/Los Angeles Times)

By Alex Wigglesworth

Southern California is bracing for back-to-back storms this week including the first significant atmospheric river storm of the season, with forecasters warning of the potential for flooding, rockslides and debris flows near recent burn scars.

The second, stronger storm forecast for Wednesday night into Thursday could result in the most significant widespread rainfall of the season thus far across much of Southern California, including parts of Los Angeles County, according to UC Agriculture and Natural Resources climate scientist Daniel Swain.

The notable part won't be total accumulation but how quickly the rain may fall — a narrow but intense band of heavy rainfall, possibly with thunderstorms, could drop most of the total over just a few hours, he told The Times in an email. That's because, in addition to a

moderately strong cold front, there's more moisture and heat along the Southern California coastline than usual due to the record-shattering marine heat wave, he wrote.

"This extra 'juice' might be a bit of a signature of storms during our very strong El Niño winter this year to an even greater extent than we've seen during historical very strong [El Niño] events," Swain wrote.

Communities up and down the state have been preparing for the El Niño winter for some time now, and this week was no exception.

Cities including Huntington Beach, Long Beach and Seal Beach were giving out free sandbags and encouraging residents to protect their properties from potential flooding. In Long Beach, crews were inspecting and testing water pumps and drainage infrastructure, clearing debris from storm drains, pre-positioning barricades and equipment like mobile pumps, and building and maintaining sand berms, spokesperson Laath Martin wrote in an email.

Forecasters warned that a series of swells would continue to create large surf and dangerous conditions along the coast through the week, especially along west- to northwest-facing shores. A possible storm event next week "will coincide with king tides and bears watching as it may be more impactful," state climatologist Michael Anderson said in a statement.

The storm expected to drench the region later this week could be the first of the season to bring widespread moderate to heavy rain and high elevation mountain snow, with rainfall totals of 1 to 3 inches in most areas and 2 to 5 inches for south- and southwest-facing mountain slopes and foothills, according to the National Weather Service.

It's preceded by a weaker storm that brought scattered showers to the region starting Monday, with rainfall totals forecast to amount to less than half an inch, although some areas could receive brief, heavier downpours.

The Weather Service predicted a 20% to 30% chance of snow showers with little to no accumulation across higher mountains near Interstate 5 and eastern Los Angeles County. Forecasters were also predicting gusty winds and a slight chance of thunderstorms over southern and eastern L.A. County, including coastal areas, due to atmospheric instability combined with ocean waters warmed by a marine heat wave, El Niño and climate change.

That comes amid a season of wild weather driven in part by the historically strong El Niño, with record-warm ocean temperatures helping to fuel an unprecedented October heat wave, record-breaking high tides and a series of tropical storm and hurricane remnants that dumped rain and whipped up waves.

Coastal areas were battered by high surf over the weekend, prompting the closure of beaches and piers and an evacuation warning for a stretch of coast near Capitola.

Although some uncertainty remained Monday, peak rain rates during the second storm could reach a half-inch to an inch an hour, with brief heavy downpours continuing Thursday, the Weather Service said.

The Weather Service was calling for at least a 15% chance — 5% in far interior areas — of excessive rainfall that could result in flooding and raise the risk of debris flows near recent burn scars. The threat was expected to be greatest as early as Wednesday afternoon for the Central Coast and Wednesday night for areas to the south, according to the forecast. The rain could also cause rockslides, especially along canyon roadways, according to the forecast.

Peak wind gusts were expected to reach 30 to 50 mph — 40 to 60 mph across mountains and interior foothills — which combined with rain-loosened soils could increase the risk of downed trees and power outages, the forecast states.

“It’s still kind of a dynamic situation,” said Ryan Kittell, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Oxnard. “If you live near any recent burn scars, listen to local officials. With this type of rain there’s certainly a concern.”

Snow levels were expected to lower to 6,000 to 7,500 feet, with heavy accumulations possible above 8,000 feet and light accumulations as low as 6,500 feet, according to the Weather Service.

Big Bear was expected to see 1 to 3 inches of snow in populated areas Thursday, while Wrightwood could also get a trace, forecasters said.

Farther north, the Sierra Nevada was expected to receive 1 to 2 feet of snow above 5,000 feet, with a 50% chance of more than 6 feet at the highest elevations, according to the Weather Service. A winter storm watch was in place there from Wednesday to Friday morning.

Temperatures were expected to be below normal Monday and become cooler into Tuesday, with interior areas recording overnight lows in the 30s, and coastal areas in the 40s and 50s. That could create frost in areas including the Antelope Valley, Cuyama Valley and interior San Luis Obispo County, according to the Weather Service. Highs on Wednesday were expected to be in the 50s and 60s, according to the forecast.

Conditions were expected to dry off by Friday, but light showers could return Sunday, primarily across the Central Coast, according to the Weather Service.

Along the coast, one ocean swell was expected to peak Monday, with another expected late Wednesday night through Thursday. That could flood low-lying beach walkways and parking lots, especially in the early afternoon near high tide, according to the forecast. The large surf was also expected to continue to create dangerous rip currents and sneaker waves.

The Central Coast was at highest risk, with waves of 10 to 15 feet and local sets up to 20 feet on Monday, according to the Weather Service. A coastal flood advisory was in effect there until Monday night.

Dangerous breaking waves continued to threaten the entrances of the Ventura and Morro Bay harbors, with mariners advised to steer clear.

High surf advisories were also in effect for west-facing beaches in Los Angeles and Ventura counties, as well as coastal areas of Orange and San Diego counties, with large waves expected through at least Tuesday and possibly Thursday, according to the Weather Service.

“If you go down near the beach,” Kittell said, “stay far away from the waves and admire them from a distance.”

Morongo tribe hands out 15,000 turkeys in 40th Thanksgiving giveaway

They are packed and distributed to 136 nonprofit groups, charities and churches across Southern California



Members of the Morongo fire and police departments help Monday, Nov. 16, 2026, with the Morongo Band of Mission Indians giveaway of 15,000 free turkeys to 136 nonprofit groups, churches and charities across Southern California at the Morongo Community Center near Cabazon. (Photo by Anjali Sharif-Paul, The Sun/SCNG)

By **Allyson Vergara** | avergara@scng.com

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Aaron de la Cruz packed and wrapped heavy boxes of turkeys Monday, Nov. 16, inside the bustling Morongo Community Center.

But it was no burden.

The volunteer said he was “blessed and fortunate” to help others.

De La Cruz was assisting at the Morongo Band of Mission Indians’ 40th annual Thanksgiving outreach event, where groups of volunteers lined up to pack 15,000 free turkeys from crates and pallets. They were distributed to over 130 nonprofit groups, charities and churches across the Inland Empire, Coachella Valley and Los Angeles regions.

Morongo Band of Mission Indians workers organize 15,000 free turkeys for nonprofit groups, churches and charities across Southern California on Monday, Nov. 16, 2026, at the Morongo Community Center near Cabazon. (Photo by Anjali Sharif-Paul, The Sun/SCNG)

The groups will be handing out the birds at community events, food pantries and giveaways before Thanksgiving.

“When you have abundance in yourself, you should be able to give it to others — it’s not all ours to begin with,” said de la Cruz, who works at the center and helps with the tribe’s after-school program.

Since launching the program, Morongo has provided nearly 4.8 million holiday meals to those in need, and donated almost 245,000 turkeys to local families, older residents and veterans in need, tribal officials said in a news release.

“Our tribe didn’t have much to give when this program began, but we believed no one should go hungry during the holidays,” Morongo Tribal Chairman Charles Martin said. “That belief hasn’t changed, and this year we’re honoring our legacy of giving by providing tens of thousands of holiday meals across the region.”

Amanda Galindo, executive director of the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission in Indio, was thankful the homeless shelter will be able to hand out the 300 turkeys it received Monday.

“Thanksgiving is a day when everyone should have a seat at the table,” she said. “These turkeys from Morongo will help us give that to hundreds of men, women and children who have nowhere else to go.”

For decades, he grieved his missing child. Then a woman claiming to be his daughter showed up at his door



Cindy Rae Enders claims to be Laura Bradbury, the 3-year-old girl who disappeared in 1984 from a campground in Joshua Tree National Monument. The Bradbury family believes she isn't Laura.

(Gina Ferazzi / Los Angeles Times)

By Alex Wigglesworth

Twentynine Palms — For decades, Mike Bradbury held out hope that his daughter was alive.

Even after search teams with bloodhounds, horses and helicopters failed to find her.

Even after investigators' leads fizzled out. And even after Bradbury's own hunt for suspects came up empty.

For many years, he even doubted the DNA tests performed on a small skull found a few miles from the desert campground where his little girl disappeared.

Then, a woman claiming to be Laura Bradbury showed up at his door. The shy 3-year-old with the blonde pageboy haircut and dark brown eyes would be 45 now.

She answers only to Laura. She refers to Mike as her dad. She keeps coming back, lingering in her cream-colored PT Cruiser with plates that read LANNB — Laura Ann Bradbury. She has the name tattooed on her calf along with Laura's birth year, 1981.

She sends letters containing facts she claims only Laura would know. She mailed a photo of Laura's mother, Patty, who died 25 years ago, captioning it, "Here is a picture of mom."

For the Bradbury family, it's yet another heartwrenching chapter in a tragedy that's been unfolding for the better part of their lives.

"Every time I think it's behind me," said Laura's sister Emily, "it keeps coming back up."

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On Oct. 18, 1984, seeking an escape from their cramped Huntington Beach condominium, the Bradbury family went camping in what was then Joshua Tree National Monument. As Mike set up their tent, his son, Travis, then 8, went to use a portable toilet. Laura followed her brother.

When Travis emerged, Laura was gone.

For weeks, the Bradburys lived in a borrowed RV at the campground. They set up a nonprofit called the Laura Center at a Huntington Beach strip mall, collecting tips and distributing millions of fliers and T-shirts with Laura's image. She became one of the first missing children to be featured on milk cartons.

For Mike, who ran a furniture repair business, the search became all-consuming. Convinced that the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department wasn't doing enough, he hired a private investigator, whom The Times described as a chain-smoking ex-Army Ranger with a Texas drawl. He bought an expensive computer, ran background checks on his own list of suspects and conducted independent surveillance stings.

In 1986, Mike told reporters he'd received information that Laura was taken by a bearded man driving a blue van and that she was later sold for about $75,000. Investigators had already searched unsuccessfully for a man in a Ford Econoline in the weeks after Laura's disappearance, at one point releasing a sketch and describing him as a suspect in her kidnapping.

The lead, like many others, never panned out.

That spring, two hikers discovered remnants of a small skull in a remote area less than three miles from where Laura disappeared. More than 100 searchers hunted for more bone fragments as well as articles of clothing, but no additional evidence was found.

In 1989, a DNA analysis found the bones were consistent with Laura, although authorities described the results as inconclusive. Nearly two years later, more sophisticated DNA tests determined there was a greater than 99% chance that the remains were of a child of the Bradburys.

By then, the family had closed the Laura Center and moved to Grass Valley, seeking a fresh start. Patty died in 2001 after being diagnosed with bone cancer and amyloidosis. Although in life she'd remained stoic, Mike discovered years worth of letters she'd written to Laura hidden in a sock drawer.

"I want you to be a girl scout, I want to buy you dresses and take you to school and the beach and the cabin and sing happy birthday to you. How can you be 5? You are still my sweet 3 year old. You can't have changed…Please hear me, baby. Please know we still love you and will always look for you…Please come home. Mommy," Patty wrote on May 29, 1986 — Laura's 5th birthday.

Travis was haunted by the guilt of being the last family member to see his sister alive. Court records document multiple convictions for controlled substance possession and driving under the influence.

Despite the evidence to the contrary, Mike held out a sliver of hope that the skull wasn't Laura's. In 2010, after yet another DNA test confirmed it was hers, he told a reporter that he'd finally reached something resembling acceptance.

Now 83, he is largely confined to his bed. Emily, who was about 4 months old when her older sister vanished, struggles with a heart condition that has her in and out of hospitals.

About a decade ago, father and daughter moved to Twentynine Palms, settling into a modest ranch-style house at the base of the Pinto Mountains, less than five miles from the campground.

The location was mere coincidence, a decision to move in with a family member after other living arrangements fell through.

"We expected one thing," said Emily's partner, Keith Hank. "Life handed us something different."

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The woman claiming to be Laura began contacting Mike and Emily on social media about three years ago, Hank said.

When she showed up at their home for the first time this spring, Hank told her to take a DNA test. If her claims proved true, the family would welcome her, he said. Instead, he said, she became angry and demanded to see Mike, whom she described as her father.

She continued to drop off items: a figurine with dangling limbs and a head shaped like a tulip. More than a dozen letters and photographs. One describes a campfire that was supposedly burning when Laura went missing. Another recalls Mike dancing to a certain song, said Hank, who insists there was no campfire and Mike never dances. He's also quick to point out that the woman has blue eyes, while Laura's were brown.

In a series of interviews, the woman, whose legal name is Cindy Rae Enders, denied she is inflicting pain on a family that has already suffered so much.

"I might drive by every day," she said. "It's my right. What do you expect me to do — sit on the other side of town knowing my father is so close?"

She asked Tony Campbell, a private investigator who specializes in missing persons cases, to help prove her identity. Although he initially found her convincing, her reluctance to take a DNA test gave him pause. Enders has said she will only submit to a court-admissible test performed at a laboratory, rather than the Ancestry.com test the Bradbury family requested.

"At some point, we say maybe she doesn't want to know the truth, and she wants to continue living in that world," Campbell said.

Julie Reeder, who publishes the community newspaper Valley News, wrote a three-part series highlighting the woman's claims, which sparked much discussion on neighborhood Facebook pages and online sleuthing groups.

"She's invested in this," said Reeder, who often works with Campbell. "She definitely believes she is Laura Bradbury. She's just trying to get someone else in the world to listen to her."

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Enders' birth certificate states that she was born in Loma Linda in 1982.

In an interview outside a Twentynine Palms thrift shop, she pulled the worn document from an envelope stuffed with other records, which she removed one by one and fanned out on a table: newspaper clippings in which Mike expressed skepticism about the authenticity of the skull. Photos of her own face, enlarged to show scars and imperfections, juxtaposed next to images of Laura with circles and arrows pointing out marks that are supposedly

similar. A signed copy of Mike's out-of-print book, "Laura Ann Bradbury — A Father's Search."

Her ice blue gaze was intense, her speech rapid-fire. She said her childhood was shaped by abuse and upheaval, with a stint in foster care and time spent in California, Oregon and Nevada. She estimated that by the time she finished fourth grade, she'd attended 14 different schools, at times under different names.

She claimed she never knew her legal name was Cindy Enders until she was sentenced to a youth facility as a teenager, when she went by the last name Colgin. She said she was accused of stealing but was only carrying the money for someone else.

Years ago, she said, the man she believed to be her biological father made a deathbed confession: she wasn't his. He instructed her to ask about someone named Mike, she said.

She said she combed through databases of missing children and "found herself" in Laura Bradbury. The sketch of the kidnapping suspect resembled the man who had told her he wasn't her father, and a blue Econoline van is parked outside one of her childhood homes in Wells, Nev., she said.

Her stepfather, James Hunt, said there is a blue Econoline in his yard, but it has nothing to do with the Bradbury case. Enders has been prone to fabulation since she was 16, he said, when she moved in with him along with her mother and twin brother.

"You couldn't believe anything she said. Some of the stories she came up with were so wild, you wouldn't pull them out of the best mystery novels," he said.

Enders said she doesn't claim Hunt as her relative and dismissed his allegations as "his word against mine."

"I'm not going to talk about what Jim says," she added. "He's irrelevant to me."

Court records indicate that Enders' troubles persisted into adulthood. In 2019, in Elko, Nev., she pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit burglary for breaking into a man's car and rifling through his belongings.

At her sentencing hearing, the prosecutor acknowledged that she'd had a tough time, including at a homeless camp "where she was causing a lot of issues," but that her history was characterized by repetitive minor criminal activity.

A judge sentenced her to 270 days in jail. "Petty larceny, battery, disturbing the peace. I mean, it goes on and on," said the judge, according a court transcript.

That same year, Enders pleaded no contest to the unlawful taking of a motor vehicle, after she was found living in an RV that didn't belong to her. She told the court that she wanted to get into a substance abuse treatment program in Minnesota, where her twin children lived.

Her attorney requested she receive no additional jail time, but the judge handed down an additional 180 days, pointing out that her criminal activity spanned at least 12 years and 10 misdemeanors, including charges of child endangerment and domestic battery.

In addition to the twins, Enders said she has seven other children, two of whom she adopted out in surrogate arrangements. Hunt said that he and Enders' mother raised one of her sons after authorities threatened to put the boy in state custody.

"Everything possible was done to try to get her to reunite and settle down and raise her own kids," but she rebuffed offers of help, Hunt said.

Enders declined to discuss her relationships with her children.

About three years ago, Enders nearly died in a car crash, and shortly after, she "up and disappeared," Hunt said. Then, he heard she had resurfaced in Southern California and was claiming to be Laura Bradbury.

"I can't really say why she's doing it exactly," he said. "My guess is that she's fried her brain from alcohol and avid drug use — and I don't mean just pot, I mean everything that she can get her hands on."

When asked about her past, Enders' demeanor darkened. She said she's sober but declined to discuss her criminal history.

"I literally put all of that hell behind me," she said.

She recently got a job at a dollar store in Twentynine Palms and moved in with an older woman, helping to care for her, she said.

She later wrote in a text message: "I know they scrutinize and nonstop make me look unstable [to] anyone and everyone."

"I know my parents would have raised us right, knowing they both were older with their heads on their shoulders," she continued, referring to Mike and Patty Bradbury. "I ought to have been with my Bradbury Family, not being abused and [pawned] around."

The birth certificate puts her age close to Laura's, and she points to inconsistencies: her mother's last name is listed as Enders, but the signature says "Oliveira." Her father's name is withheld. She refers to them both as her kidnappers.

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Hank has taken to leaving the blinds shut and staying away from the windows, he said in a recent interview outside the Bradbury home, continually glancing over his shoulder.

He said he's called the Sheriff's Department at least three times, but they said they could take no action unless Enders becomes violent. In response to one of Hank's calls in late September, deputies checked the area, looking for Enders, according to dispatch records, but it's not clear whether they made contact with her.

The last few months have been hard on the family, Hank said. Enders sometimes parks nearby for an hour at a time or drives by, playing music and whistling, he said. After a confrontation with Enders, Emily laid down on the couch, unable to breathe. Hank prepared to call 911, but her symptoms subsided.

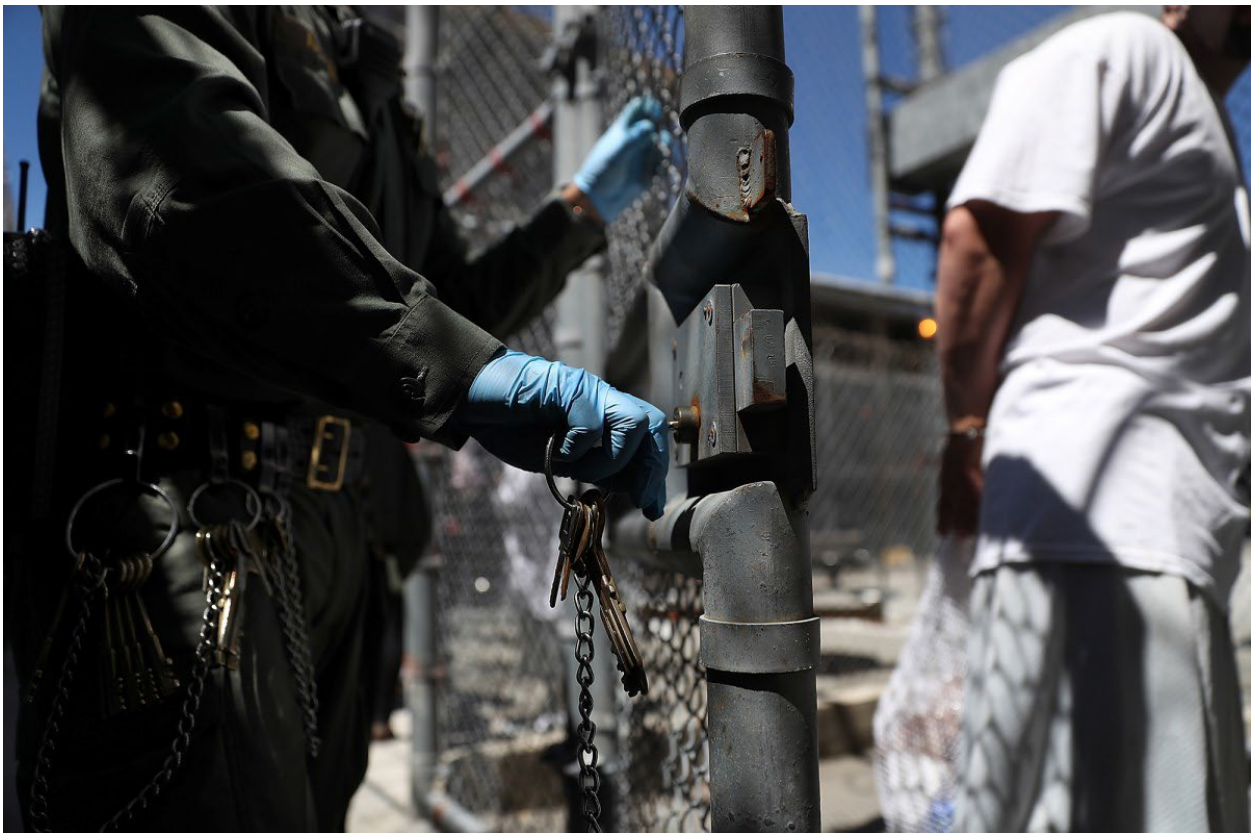
"We're struggling to barely get by," he said. "The family's just trying to live out the rest of their lives in peace."

As he spoke, Emily emerged, holding a green velvet bag. She took out a little white box and held it up in the harsh desert sun. The label read, "Ocean View Crematory."

"This is Laura," she said. "This is my sister."

Prosecutors ask California Supreme Court to halt Newsom's death penalty commutations

by Nigel DuaraNovember 16, 2026



A California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation officer opens the gate for an incarcerated person leaving the exercise yard at San Quentin State Prison's death row in San Quentin on Aug. 15, 2016. Photo by Justin Sullivan, Getty Images

The district attorneys of 30 counties argued in a lawsuit filed Monday morning that the state's high court should halt Gov. Gavin Newsom's commutations of people on death row.

The lawsuit, filed at the California Supreme Court, asserts that Newsom acted unlawfully when he proposed commuting the sentences of 548 prisoners by failing to afford the victims of their crimes the "opportunity to be heard."

"Only this court can stop the governor's disregard of the law — his abuse of power," the petitioners wrote to the California Supreme Court.

The petition distinguishes Newsom's commutation powers from the pardon powers of a president — the presidential pardon doesn't have any limits, other than impeachment. By

contrast, when condemned California prisoners apply for a commutation, governors must notify the district attorney where the crime took place, and the victims or their families.

Perhaps anticipating this argument, Newsom issued an explanatory statement laying out why he didn't need to issue notifications to victims or their families. A central factor was that none of these proposed commutations stemmed from an application from a prisoner on death row. By proposing a blanket commutation, Newsom asserted that none of the statutory requirements applied.

The section of the California penal code highlighted by the district attorneys "does not apply when the governor acts on his own initiative to grant clemency absent an application," Newsom wrote in the explanation.

He added that, after he submitted the proposed commutations to the Supreme Court, his office would notify the district attorneys in the counties in which the crimes were committed and seek their help with notifications.

The California Supreme Court will get a say on almost 400 of Newsom's commutations. State law requires the court to review those cases because the prisoners were convicted of multiple felonies. Representatives of the court have not said how or when those reviews would take place.

Newsom in 2019 issued a moratorium on executions and later ordered the dismantling of the death chamber at San Quentin State Prison. His successor, Gov.-elect Xavier Becerra, has committed to extending the moratorium when he takes office.

Classified U.S. Intelligence System Is Down for Now, U.S. Officials Say

NSA was patching software, prompting the network to go offline temporarily, according to a person familiar with the incident

By Alexander Ward

WASHINGTON—A classified internal communications network is down at the National Security Agency, U.S. officials said, the latest in a string of digital systems that have temporarily gone down.

A person familiar with the incident said the NSA was simply updating its software to patch the system, adding that NSANet would be offline only temporarily and that there was no evidence of a cyberattack.

NSA hasn't returned a request for comment. CNN earlier reported the outage.

Shortly before the revelation on Tuesday, Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin spoke with CNBC to calm fears that other recent issues—including a service interruption to Microsoft 365 and a technical issue that caused a nationwide groundstop for flights—likely weren't part of an attack on the U.S.

"I can tell you with complete certainty that we are not under attack. There's no cyber threat that's taking place. The homeland is very secure," he said.

"This system is firewalled, and by the most competent cyber agency in the world," said Beth Sanner, a former senior U.S. intelligence official. "A cyberattack is the least likely scenario, and outside our current context, this probably would not be reported."

Vaccination Is Down. Measles Is Up. How the U.S. Lost Measles-Elimination Status.

By Jennifer Calfas and Rosie Ettenheim

Updated Nov. 17, 2026 12:51 pm ET

The U.S. has lost its measles-elimination status, an international body said Tuesday, after falling vaccination rates allowed the disease to regain its foothold in a country that had contained it for decades.

The Pan American Health Organization said the country must now submit a plan outlining how it will eliminate measles once again.

“The current situation requires urgent attention,” said Dr. Jarbas Barbosa, PAHO’s director. “The virus has circulated for a prolonged period of time, putting families and communities at risk of preventable illness, hospitalization and death.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Tuesday that it is focused on achieving elimination status again by working with state and local health departments to boost vaccination.

Use of the measles vaccine has fallen over the last six years as skepticism about Covid shots has fueled the antivaccine movement. Under Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the federal government has moved away from promoting shots.

Measles vaccination rates for kindergartners fell to around 92% nationally in the school year that ended in June, according to the CDC. That is below the 95% threshold needed to prevent the disease from spreading, a level the U.S. enjoyed as recently as 2020.

The U.S. has seen more than 7,700 measles cases, hundreds of hospitalizations and more than a dozen deaths over the past two years. Pennsylvania’s outbreak is the largest in 35 years. In Utah, a continuing outbreak has reached every one of the state’s health districts.

Before the introduction of a vaccine in the 1960s, measles spread rampantly across the U.S., infecting millions and killing thousands of people a year. The CDC began its effort to eliminate measles in 1978. Policy decisions, like the recommendation of a second dose of the measles vaccine and creation of a program that made shots free for millions of children, helped the U.S. declare the disease eliminated in 2000.

The U.S. reported as many as a few dozen to a few hundred measles cases annually from the mid-1990s up until a few years ago. In 2025 and 2026, nearly every state has reported measles cases, according to the CDC, a contrast from a decade ago.

Cases are surging in other countries in the Americas, including in Guatemala and Peru. Canada lost its measles-elimination status in 2025. And countries in the Europe region saw decades-high measles case counts in 2024. The U.K. and Spain have also recently lost their measles-elimination status.

PAHO also stripped Mexico and Bolivia of their measles-elimination status Tuesday.