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SOUP OF THE WEEK

GOLDEN BROCCOLI & CHEDDAR



# WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL



## Great Lakes

Gale force winds capable of producing over 30-foot waves swept across Lake Superior on Monday

**LOCAL&STATE.**  
**A3**

## NUMBERS GAME

Power plays and penalty kills play prominent roles in prep hockey

**SPORTS. B1**



## War in Ukraine

US offers security guarantees for 15 years as part of peace plan

**NATION&WORLD. A8**

## Humanitarian aid

US tells UN agencies to 'adapt, shrink or die' with \$2B pledge

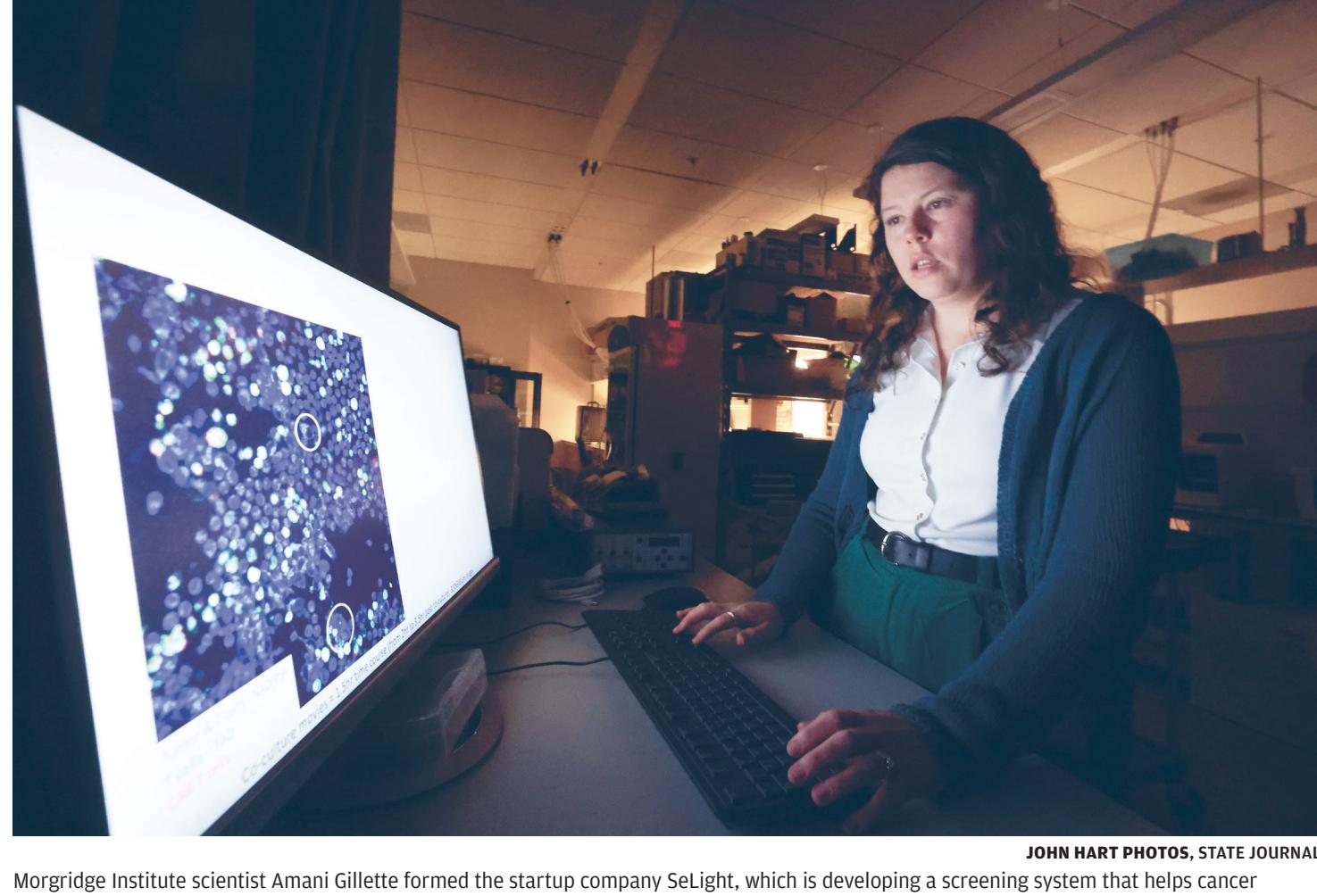
**NATION&WORLD. A8**

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Tuesday, December 30, 2025

**UW-MADISON AND MORGRIDGE INSTITUTE | CELLULAR THERAPIES**



JOHN HART PHOTOS, STATE JOURNAL

Morgridge Institute scientist Amani Gillette formed the startup company SeLight, which is developing a screening system that helps cancer patients determine their fitness for cell therapy.

## Screening system helps determine right course

SeLight's device aims to better match cancer patients with treatment

**SABINE MARTIN**  
[smartin@madison.com](mailto:smartin@madison.com)

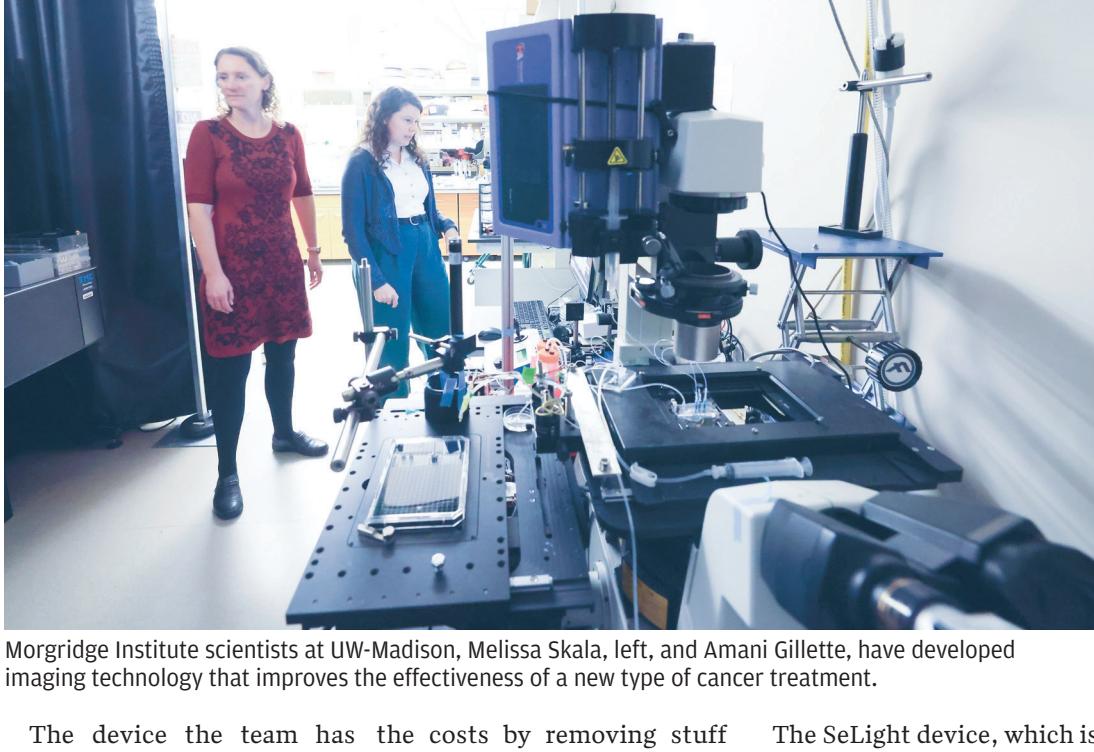
Cell therapies, which take a patient's own immune cells and genetically modify them to be able to destroy cancer cells, are promising but flawed.

They cost a lot of money and fail in more than 50% of patients. The treatment has been the most successful in blood cancers. There's also no patient screening method in place yet for cell therapies.

That's the problem a team in a Morgridge Institute lab at UW-Madison is trying to solve.

In 2022, a startup called SeLight spun out of Morgridge biomedical engineer and UW-Madison professor Melissa Skala's lab. SeLight's team aims to commercialize a screening system that can predict if a cancer patient is fit for cellular therapies, such as Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-cell therapy and stem cell therapy.

On average, cell therapies cost \$375,000, have a failure rate of 15-69% and take weeks to process, Skala Lab scientists and SeLight lead Amani Gillette said.



Morgridge Institute scientists at UW-Madison, Melissa Skala, left, and Amani Gillette, have developed imaging technology that improves the effectiveness of a new type of cancer treatment.

The device the team has developed adds a "filter point" for doctors to make sure a cancer patient would be viable, Gillette said.

"For some patients, you get your cells collected, they get sent off, and there's multiple people who have passed away before their cells have made it back to them," she said. "This is really important to help patients, help decrease

the costs by removing stuff that isn't working from this kind of pipeline that adds cost and burden to the health care infrastructure."

In 2017, the Food and Drug Administration approved the first Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-cell therapy, paving the way for SeLight's screening invention.

There are now eight approved cell therapies, Skala said.

The SeLight device, which is still being developed, will look like a small box that's cheaper and requires less training for health care workers in hospitals or labs to screen a patient's fitness for cell therapies.

"You could never use the current system in a hospital, so we basically turned this into a box," Skala said.

Please see **THERAPIES**, Page A2

Please see **SOUTHSIDE**, Page A2

## MIDDLE EAST

## Trump holds talks with Netanyahu; warns Iran

**WILL WEISSERT, SAM MEDNICK  
AND SAMY MAGDY**

Associated Press

PALM BEACH, Fla. — U.S. President Donald Trump warned Iran against rebuilding its nuclear program Monday as he welcomed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to his home in Florida for wide-ranging talks.

The warning comes after Trump insists that Tehran's nuclear capabilities were "completely and fully obliterated" by U.S. strikes on key nuclear enrichment sites in June. But Israeli officials have been quoted in local media expressing concern about Iran rebuilding its supply of long-range missiles capable of striking Israel.

"Now I hear that Iran is trying to build up again," Trump told reporters as he welcomed

Please see **TRUMP**, Page A7

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## Weather

A bit of p.m. snow  
**High 24 • Low 19**  
**Forecast • A12**

## Inside

Advice	B10	Opinion	A11	Stocks	A5
Comics	B9	Scoreboard	B2	Take Five	B9
Obituaries	A4	Sports	B1	Television	B11



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## WINTER WEATHER

# Bomb cyclone sweeps across northern US

LEAH WILLINGHAM  
AND JEFF MARTIN  
Associated Press

A strengthening bomb cyclone barreled across the northern U.S. on Monday, unleashing severe winter weather in the Midwest as it took aim at the East Coast.

The storm brought blizzard conditions, treacherous travel and power outages to parts of the Plains and Great Lakes on Monday as sharply colder air, strong winds and a mix of snow, ice and rain swept through.

Forecasters said the storm intensified quickly enough to meet the criteria of a

bomb cyclone, a system that strengthens rapidly as pressure drops. The sharp cold front left parts of the central U.S. waking up Monday to temperatures as much as 50 degrees Fahrenheit colder than the day before.

All that wind and snow created "a pretty significant system for even this part of the country," said Cody Snell, a meteorologist with the Weather Prediction Center. Dangerous wind chills plunged as low as minus 20 across parts of North Dakota and Minnesota.

The National Weather Service warned of whiteout

conditions beginning Sunday that could make travel impossible in some places.

In Iowa, blizzard conditions eased by Monday morning but high winds were still blowing fallen snow across roadways, keeping more than 200 miles of Interstate 35 closed. State troopers reported dozens of crashes during the storm, including one that killed a person.

Forecasters expect the storm to intensify, fueled by a sharp clash between frigid Canadian air and lingering warmth across the southern United States.

Nationwide, about 350,000 customers were without power Monday afternoon, more than a third of them in Michigan, according to Poweroutage.us. Airports reported over 6,000 flight delays and around 775 cancellations within the United States.

Snow piled up quickly in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, where as much as 2 feet fell in some areas, according to the National Weather Service. Meteorologist Ryan Metzger said additional snow was expected in the coming days, although totals would be far lighter.

## Southside

From A1

and parents filed formal complaints alleging, among other things, that the pair oversaw an unsafe environment at the school, failed to follow district procedures and retaliated against staff who complained.

In all, attorneys hired by the district to investigate the complaints pointed to 46 specific allegations against Terrell and 42 against Torres, but found that 18 and 17, respectively, were supported by evidence.

Among the allegations supported by "substantial evidence," according to investigators:

■ Terrell and Torres authorized the use of separate classrooms known as "buddy rooms" to separate four students from their regular classrooms for behavioral reasons for extended amounts of time, likely violating the district's behavior policies.

■ Southside's Traffic Plan was outdated for much of the 2023-24 school year.

■ Terrell and Torres did not invite some students with behavior challenges to attend summer school.

■ It took too long for staff to respond to calls for help with student behavior during 2023-24 school year.

■ During the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years,

the field trip approval process for the former Allis Elementary and for Southside was inadequate. Before Southside was opened in fall of 2023, Torres and Terrell worked at Allis, where most of Southside's students had attended.

■ During all of the 2022-23 school year and some of the 2023-24 school year, Allis and Southside had inadequate procedures for who should call a student's parents after the student visited the nurse's office.

■ Terrell failed to comply with parental notification requirements for meetings with the parents of students with disabilities.

■ Terrell failed to remove photos from school social media accounts that showed students whose parents had not given permission for their children to show up on such accounts.

■ Torres hindered the provision of special education services for some students by using special education teachers as substitutes.

Oftentimes, in cases where investigators found fault with Terrell and Torres' leadership, investigators found there were mitigating factors that lessened their responsibility for the failures or that there wasn't evidence that the failures had caused serious harm to students.

Despite an inadequate field trip approval process,

for example, the evidence didn't show that students who took medication were often leaving on field trips without access to their medication.

And while Southside's traffic plan was inadequate, the school's traffic safety team likely didn't have enough time to come up with an adequate plan because the school opened only about eight days before the start of the 2023-24 school year, investigators found.

Investigators were not able to find "substantial evidence" that Terrell and Torres:

■ Singled out students for discipline based on their race.

■ Failed to address concerns about students being bullied.

■ Retaliated against staff who complained or otherwise questioned their leadership.

■ Engaged in age or sex discrimination against staff.

■ Disciplined staff for frivolous reasons.

When removed from their positions at Southside — since renamed Lori Mann Carey Elementary — Terrell and Torres were placed on paid leave. Terrell has since been appointed assistant principal at East High School, while Torres is an English as a second language science teacher at La Follette High School.

District spokesperson Edell Fiedler said the district was not able to say Monday when Terrell and Torres took their new positions or what they had been doing for the district before they were reassigned.

Terrell and Torres did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment for this story, but in a written response to the investigators' findings, Torres noted where the allegations against her were not substantiated and added context to allegations that were substantiated.

She also said that she "has been an exemplary employee of (the Madison School District) for 21 years" and has never had anything placed in her employee file.

Also, Torres said, she "has dedicated her entire career to supporting the students and families in this district," and as a bilingual educator and administrator, she is an asset to the district.

In all, attorneys for the law firm Renning, Lewis and Lacy submitted six reports about their investigation into Terrell and Torres' tenure at Southside and Allis — three pertaining to Terrell and three to Torres.

The reports total 81 pages and were submitted to the district on Dec. 20, 2024.

They were released to the Wisconsin State Journal in response to a public records request made in early June.

## Therapies

From A1

This summer, the project got funding from the National Science Foundation's Small Business Innovation Research

program to help SeLight demonstrate the feasibility of a prototype being commercialized for hospitals.

Through that new national grant, Gillette said she's working with real cancer patient samples in collaboration with the

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