

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

DOW JONES News Corp

FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 2026 ~ VOL. CCLXXXVII NO. 130

WSJ.com

★★★★ \$5.00

DJIA 51561.93 ▲ 874.86 1.73% NASDAQ 26830.96 ▼ 0.1% STOXX 600 624.45 ▲ 0.5% 10-YR. TREAS. ▲ 4/32, yield 4.475% OIL \$93.04 ▼ \$2.98 GOLD \$4,475.80 ▲ \$39.10 EURO \$1.1613 YEN 160.03

What's News

Business & Finance

- ◆ **Investors in Blackstone's** flagship private-credit fund asked to redeem 10% of their shares in the second quarter and the firm has capped payouts at 5%, reversing an earlier no-ceiling policy. **B1**
- ◆ **Healthcare and financial** stocks helped lift the Dow by 1.7% to a record, exceeding the S&P 500's 0.4% session gain, while the Nasdaq slipped less than 0.1%. **B8**
- ◆ **The largest U.S. banks** plan to launch a tokenized deposit network next year in an attempt to stave off threats from crypto companies that are seeking to wade deeper into their territory. **B1**
- ◆ **Anthropic called for** top AI labs to weigh slowing the pace of development, noting that systems advances are coming so fast that they may soon be able to improve themselves in ways that could pose significant societal risks. **B1**
- ◆ **Meta Platforms has** delayed plans to release its newest AI model to developers multiple times and until this week didn't have a planned date to let it go. **B1**
- ◆ **Short seller Andrew Left's** conviction on securities-fraud charges shocked a niche of the stock market whose calling card is its ability to affect stock prices. **A1**
- ◆ **Lex Greensill, the** financier whose eponymous lending firm collapsed in 2021, was banned by U.K. regulators from serving on company boards. **B8**
- ◆ **Nick Bilton, the new** executive producer of "60 Minutes," attempted to ease the tension after a chaotic week for the CBS program, naming a new senior producer. **B2**

Worldwide

- ◆ **The FDA launched** a safety study of the abortion pill, also known as mifepristone, a step that could eventually lead the Trump administration to restrict how it is distributed and used. **A1**
- ◆ **Republican senators** facing tough re-election fights sided with Democrats in a vote to kill Trump's \$1.8 billion "anti-weaponization" fund, but the effort to write its death into law appeared set to fail. **A4**
- ◆ **The Justice Department** signaled a willingness to find a route to pay allies of the president who claim the government targeted them for political reasons. **A4**
- ◆ **Trump said he plans** to nominate as attorney general Todd Blanche, who as acting AG has refocused the Justice Department to benefit the president's allies and target his critics. **A4**
- ◆ **John Bolton, who** served as Trump's national security adviser in his first term, reached a deal with prosecutors to plead guilty to unlawfully retaining classified information. **A3**
- ◆ **Senior U.S. officials** have discussed having the federal government take stakes in major AI companies, after OpenAI CEO Sam Altman pitched the idea last year. **A3**
- ◆ **Israel and Hezbollah** militants exchanged fire Thursday and cast doubt on the extent of their participation in a renewed ceasefire agreement. **A6**
- ◆ **Ukraine's Zelensky** called for face-to-face negotiations in a public letter addressed directly to Russia's Putin. **A16**
- ◆ **Died: Marjane Satrapi, 56,** cartoonist and filmmaker. **A16**

CONTENTS

Markets.....	B8
Arts in Review..	A8-9
Markets Digest...	B5
Business & Finance	B2-3
Opinion.....	A13-15
Crossword.....	A9
Sports.....	A10
From Page One...	A7
Technology.....	B4
Heard on Street...	B9
U.S. News.....	A2-4
Mansion.....	M1-10
World News.....	A6,16



© 2026 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

China Clamps Down on Tiananmen Anniversary



CONTAINMENT POLICY: Police escort activist Lui Yuk-lin as she prays in Hong Kong on the 37th anniversary of the crackdown on pro-democracy protests in Beijing. Police in the capital told families not to visit graves of those killed in the 1989 protests.

Apple Hopes for AI Dominance By Fixing Its Maligned Chatbot

If iPhone maker can modernize Siri, it has pole position for taking lead in market

By ROLFE WINKLER

Siri is one of the dumbest chatbots on the market. Apple hopes a reboot can power its AI comeback. When Apple stages its annual developer conference next week, the big reveal is expected to be a modern version of Siri that will look more like ChatGPT. Gone will be the

old version, which has been so limited for so long that many people, if they ever use it, do so only for basic functions like setting timers. The new Siri, built atop Google's Gemini technology, is expected to offer a more modern search experience, remembering users' queries and accessing data from their device for personalized responses. A new stand-alone Siri app with a paid tier, similar to competing artificial intelligence apps, is also expected. The question is whether the new Siri, and other operating system updates, set Apple on

a path to bring generative AI to the masses, harnessing the company's formidable assets that, paradoxically, give it pole position to dominate the market even though it is years behind rivals. "I think Apple is going to win on AI," said Ron Johnson, Apple's former retail chief under Steve Jobs. "The phone is the primary device on which people will use AI. And Apple is partnering with the right people to bring a unique AI experience to the phone." Tim Cook leveraged Apple's dominance in devices to make his company a tollbooth: tens

of billions of dollars in annual fees from apps so they can reach consumers, and a like amount from Alphabet's Google to be the default search in the Safari browser. A smarter Siri could collect new tolls at the on-ramp to AI. Today most consumers have only experienced AI as a more sophisticated online search. But the explosion of Anthropic's business, powered

U.S. discusses taking stakes in AI companies... A3
Meta keeps delaying newest AI model..... B1

FDA Plans to Assess Abortion-Pill Safety

By LIZ ESSLEY WHYTE

WASHINGTON—The Food and Drug Administration has launched a safety study of the abortion pill, also known as mifepristone, a step that could pave the way for the Trump administration to restrict how it is distributed and used. The study marks a victory for antiabortion groups and Republican members of Congress, who have demanded action from the administration to crack down on the pill's use. In recent months, anti-abortion allies had lost patience with assurances from administration officials that one would be conducted. The effort is expected to take about six months, admin-

istration officials said, meaning it likely won't be completed before the midterm elections. Some in the antiabortion movement had previously accused the administration of dragging its feet on the review to avoid political controversy before the elections, an allegation that both the White House and FDA have denied. Some of the administration officials said the agency had been making preparations by acquiring data and examining whether a study was feasible. They said the administration had kicked the study into high gear because of conversations with antiabortion groups and a coming October deadline, set by a Louisiana judge this

Scientists Are Taking Improv So People Will Trust Them More

What does it look like when physicists and engineers do comedy? We sat in on a class.

By PETER LOFTUS

ALBANY, N.Y.—Neuroscientist Annalisa Scimemi is in her element at her laboratory, where she works with mice and sophisticated instruments to better understand brain cells. So she was well outside of her comfort zone on this May afternoon when she had to improvise a pitch for a made-up, nonsensical product called a "hammer humidifier." It was part of an improv exercise aimed at helping scientists amp up their presentations.

"It's the top-rated humidifier in Arizona!" Scimemi exclaimed as she leapt forward, earning a big laugh from a classroom full of colleagues. "And it can be used for self-defense!" Trust in science has plummeted. Can improv turn the tide? Scimemi is one of more than 35,000 scientists and researchers who have taken classes led by professional actors to help them earn their audiences' trust and understanding.



Theater nerds

Please turn to page A7

INSIDE



MANSION
After a pandemic boom, sellers are slashing prices on country homes in England. **M1**

SPORTS
Jalen Brunson helps deliver comeback for the New York Knicks. **A10**

Canceled Statues Stage a Comeback

Columbus, Confederate monuments relegated to storage get another look

By CAMERON McWHIRTER

COLUMBUS, Ohio—The statue wars that swept away monuments six years ago are back. This time, the battle is to restore them. Traditionalists are suing and lobbying local governments to resurrect memorials to Confederate generals, Founding Fathers and European explorers. Many of the statues disappeared from town squares and other public places during the pandemic-era protests against police violence and racism

following George Floyd's murder in 2020. Ohio's capital, named for Christopher Columbus, took down a 22-foot-high, 3-ton statue of its namesake from City Hall that year. Officials declared the gift from sister city Genoa, Italy, had come to represent "patriarchy, oppression and divisiveness." "We will no longer live in the shadow of our ugly past," Mayor Andrew Ginther, a Democrat, said at the time. Columbus's detractors tie the Italian explorer

Please turn to page A7

Short-Seller Conviction Sparks Investor Alarm

By DAVE MICHAELS AND PETER RUDEGEAIR

Many of the loudest voices on Wall Street belong to investors who talk their own books. An unexpected trial verdict could keep many of them quiet. Short seller Andrew Left's conviction this week on securities-fraud charges has shocked an influential niche of the stock market whose calling card is its ability to affect stock prices. Activist short sellers release reports on companies that they say are overvalued or hiding information from shareholders, then cash in on the selloffs their ideas sometimes induce. But federal prosecutors argued that Left corrupted the

business model by scheming to trade quickly around his statements on social media, where he had a huge following. He misled others by starting to exit a trade minutes or hours after saying he was betting against a stock, in effect doing the opposite of what others expected him to do, prosecutors said. They didn't stop there. Prosecutors also persuaded a jury to convict Left on charges related to long positions in stocks including Nvidia that he said others should buy but then quickly exited after the stocks' prices rose. Wall Street is now wondering how much short sellers—and even the much larger group of investors who tout stocks as good buys—can say

Please turn to page A2

TOMORROW



WSJ. MAGAZINE
EMILY BLUNT

USA TODAY WEEKEND

THE NATION'S NEWS | \$3 | JUNE 5-7, 2026

He-Man actor: Role is more than brawn

Nicholas Galitzine says embracing character's empathy as well as strength was necessary. **In Life**

NCAA searches for solutions in Senate

Coach, player and others on Hill weigh in on bill meant to fix what senator calls "chaos." **In Sports**

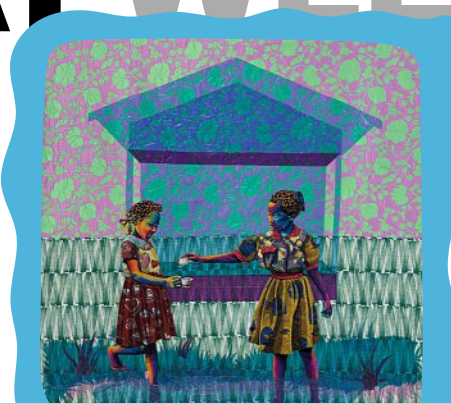


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GETTY IMAGES; "DOWN, DOWN BABY" PROVIDED BY BISA BUTLER

Elevate your home with expert advice

Interior designers offer tips on quilts, left, twin spaces and guest rooms. **In Weekend Extra**



U.S. troops land on Utah Beach as Allied forces storm the Normandy beaches on D-Day, June 6, 1944. IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM VIA AFP/GETTY IMAGES

How crucial was weather to success of D-Day?

Fate of war – and world – hinged on one forecast

Doyle Rice
USA TODAY

To go or not to go?

June 2026 marks 82 years since Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's chief meteorologist, Group Capt. James Martin Stagg, made one of the most important weather forecasts of all time. Defying his colleagues, he advised Ike to postpone the invasion of Normandy by one day from June 5, 1944, to June 6, because of uncertain weather conditions.

This important decision is the subject of the new movie "Pressure" starring Brendan Fraser as Ike, now out in theaters. The real-life D-Day was a herculean effort to reclaim a critical part of Europe from the Nazis and turn the tide of World War II.

Stagg – who was actually a geophysicist by training – and his fellow British and American meteorologists were operating without any of the technology and equipment that today's forecasters take for granted, such as satellites, weather radar, computer modeling and instant communications.

Relying mainly on surface observations from military and civilian weather observers in the British Isles and in western Europe and a few military observers at sea, predicting the weather more than a day or two in advance in that era was unrealistic.

Additionally, weather prediction in England and Europe – especially before the advent of satellites – was much trickier than forecasting in the United States. In America, even in that era, weather systems could be tracked for days after hitting the West Coast and moving east, while European forecasters were often operating "blind" with the empty ocean to the west.

Predicting the exact timing, track and strength of these storms put Group Capt. Stagg and his colleagues under almost unimaginable pressure and conflict, according to the book "The Forecast for D-Day," with the fate of the war and perhaps the world hanging in the balance.

What troubled the meteorologists in the days leading up to D-Day was a parade of storms that barreled across the Atlantic and into the British Isles, any one of which would have stirred up the dangerous waters of the English Channel where the fleet was gathering, and provided unwelcome cloud cover for the aerial assault of Normandy.

The invasion was originally

See D-DAY, Page 4A

We still love animals, but owners are forced to make tough choices



Olivia Sablan, of Seattle, says she would cut back on other costs, if needed, to care for her golden retriever, Lemon. Sablan currently spends about \$119 a month on Lemon's care. PROVIDED BY OLIVIA SABLAN

Surging costs bite into pet adoptions

Betty Lin-Fisher
USA TODAY

Olivia Sablan would do anything for her 3-year-old golden retriever, Lemon, including cutting other parts of her budget. • "She's my whole world," says Sablan, 27, a postdoctoral student in Seattle studying atmospheric science. Sablan rescued and adopted Lemon when the pup was 10 months old. • But pets aren't cheap: Pet ownership is increasingly becoming more expensive, a new Bank of America Institute analysis finds. • As costs, including veterinary care, go up, there has been a pullback on pet adoption rates and pet ownership, which may signal that affordability is playing a larger role among animal lovers, the Bank of America Institute said.

The U.S. pet market is still steadily growing, though at a slower pace, with 95 million households – around 71% of Americans – owning a pet. Spending for pets hit \$158 billion in 2025, according to the National Pet Owners Survey by the American Pet Products Association, cited in the Bank of America analysis.

Dog ownership is ahead of other pets at 68%, according to a survey from CivicScience. Cats were the second-most popular pet at 46%, while ownership of fish, birds and small mammals was

less common.

"Pet ownership is strong, but as is the case for many other facets of people's budgets, the cost of caring for pets is rising," Taylor Bowley, a Bank of America Institute economist, told USA TODAY.

Affordability constraints are increasingly shaping whether consumers are adding a pet to their household or how they shop for that pet, Bowley says.

Bank of America global research found that pet adoptions

See PET COSTS, Page 6A

Trump suffers series of setbacks

Bad news comes ahead of June 14 celebrations

Joey Garrison
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – The White House is all prepped for Donald Trump's big night, when 5,000 guests are set to attend a UFC cage fight in a makeshift arena that has made the South Lawn look much like a theme park.

But the president might have to ignore recent events to enjoy the June 14 celebration, which happens to fall on his 80th birthday.

A series of setbacks with Republicans in Congress, the courts and drawn-out negotiations with Iran – plus a rare loss for a candidate he backed in a Republican primary – has plagued a president who was already struggling in polls five months from the November midterm elections.



Domestic policy disappointments and stalling negotiations with Iran have beset President Donald Trump. KEVIN DIETSCH/GETTY IMAGES

Senate Republicans stripped \$1 billion out of a funding bill the White House sought to boost security for Trump's East Wing ballroom. Amid intense bipartisan pushback, the Trump administration retreated from a \$1.8 billion "anti-weaponization" fund that could be used to funnel payments to political allies, including Jan. 6 rioters. A federal judge ordered the removal of Trump's name from the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts while also blocking his plans to temporarily close an iconic institution he wanted to remodel to his liking.

And on the foreign policy front, Trump keeps teasing he's close to striking a deal with Iran that would end a war that has fueled high gas prices – only to have peace talks stall. In a rebuke of Trump, the House of Representatives for the first time voted June 3 to block Trump from ordering further strikes on Iran as four Republicans joined Democrats, advancing the measure to the Senate.

"They involve self-inflicted wounds on the president's part," said Todd Belt, director of the political management program at George Washington University, calling the conflict in Iran a "war of choice." He added that the anti-weaponization fund and public dollars tied to the ballroom were "bridges too far" for Republican senators in self-survival mode as they look to maintain control of the Senate.

"They don't like to have to defend him on things they feel are not particularly defensible, like this one," Belt said, referring to the \$1.8 billion fund was designed to compensate Trump's supporters who claimed they were treated unfairly by Democratic administrations. "He's gone too far and made mistakes."

See SETBACKS, Page 4A



HOME DELIVERY

1-800-872-0001, USATODAYSERVICE.COM

The New York Times

THE WEATHER

Today, hot, mostly sunny, high 92. Tonight, warm, clear to partly cloudy, low 73. Tomorrow, hot, more humid, a breezy afternoon, high 94. Weather map appears on Page B12.

“All the News That’s Fit to Print”

VOL. CLXXV No. 60,906

© 2026 The New York Times Company

FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 2026

Prices in Canada may be higher

\$4.00



ADRIANA LOUREIRO FERNANDEZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Children in Cumaná, Venezuela, with containers after filling them at a stream. Access to drinking water is severely limited in the city.

NEWS ANALYSIS

G.O.P. Lawmakers Test Trump’s Grip on Party

Push Back on War and \$1.8 Billion Fund

By KATIE ROGERS

WASHINGTON — On a tour through Asia last fall, President Trump took a moment on the world stage to celebrate a legislative victory at home: After months of iron-fisted pressure, he had compelled Republicans to pass legislation that cut taxes and slashed into the country’s social safety net.

“I said, ‘Put it all into one bill, and if we get it done, we’re done for four years,’” Mr. Trump said during an October speech in Tokyo. “We don’t need anything more from Congress in terms of that.”

Ever since, Mr. Trump has been intent on testing that theory, daring lawmakers to defy him and doing his best to drive them from office if they do. But after a retributive romp through primary season, Mr. Trump’s style of governing — unilateral, and often impatient — has collided with restive Republicans who seem to be exacting some political vengeance of their own.

On Wednesday, four House Republicans sided with Democrats to demand Mr. Trump withdraw U.S. forces from the conflict with Iran or win approval from Congress, rebuking a president who has repeatedly said he does not need congressional authorization to continue the conflict.

That came on the heels of another high-profile setback: a Republican revolt against a \$1.8 billion fund to reward Trump supporters who claim political persecution by Democrats. Many Republican senators had indicated that they would not move forward with plans to pay for Mr. Trump’s immigration agenda unless the move was axed. This week, Todd Blanche, the acting attorney general, said that the administration would abandon the effort.

(But on Wednesday, just as the Senate moved to debate an immigration bill that they had held up because of the fund, Mr. Trump told reporters in the Oval Office

that he wasn’t quite sure if the fund was dead or on hold.

“I love it,” he told a reporter who asked about the pot of money, effectively jamming his foot in the way of a door lawmakers had hoped to close. “I think it’s so important.”)

On other matters of national security, several Republicans pushed back on Mr. Trump’s decision to appoint Bill Pulte to serve as the acting director of national intelligence. In his role as director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, Mr. Pulte publicized the personal mortgage information of several prominent Trump critics and pushed for federal investigations into them.

Senator Thom Tillis of North Carolina said in a CNBC inter-



SALWAN GEORGES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Trump’s unilateral approach has raised hackles.

view on Wednesday that he did not believe Mr. Pulte “has a prayer” of being confirmed by the Senate. (Mr. Tillis announced that he would not run for re-election last year, after coming under threat from Mr. Trump for opposing the sweeping tax bill the president crowed about in Japan.)

He said that Mr. Trump’s decision to appoint Mr. Pulte had jeopardized congressional efforts

Continued on Page A15

Once a Jewel of Venezuelan Industry, Now a Broken-Down Shell

By SIMON ROMERO

CUMANÁ, Venezuela — Drinking water in Cumaná is running extremely low. Daily blackouts plague the city. Wind howls through the looted remains of its once illustrious university. Scavengers sift through garbage dumps for scraps of food.

Much of Cumaná, a city in eastern Venezuela once a crown jewel of the country’s industrial base, has the air of a battle-scarred war zone.

This coastal city is a starkly different world from Caracas, the capital, which is on the cusp of an upswing that is largely insulated from the decay across much of Venezuela.

Since U.S. forces ousted and captured President Nicolás Maduro in January, oilmen and crypto tycoons have been rushing to Caracas to explore deals.

Cumaná tells a very different story — that of the gutted economy in the rest of the country that might take generations to rebuild.

Far From Caracas’s Oil Riches, Combing a Dump for Food

In May, I drove across eastern Venezuela, a dawn-to-dusk trip through more than 20 military and police checkpoints, to see living conditions outside the capital firsthand.

“You know those missile strikes

in Ukraine they’re always talking about?” said José Luis Sánchez, 56, the president of Cumaná’s Association of Economists, a business group. With a hint of gallows humor, he added, “Sometimes we say our city looks like Kyiv.”

It was not bombing that laid waste to much of Cumaná. Instead, one-party rule, disastrous economic management and ideological vengeance campaigns are to blame, say those now openly expressing dissent in the city of

Continued on Page A6

Study Suggests Path to Prevent Lung Cancer

By NINA AGRAWAL

Scientists have made a discovery that may help prevent some people from developing lung cancer, which kills more people worldwide than any other cancer.

A team of more than 80 researchers working across four continents have identified a set of proteins in the blood that accurately predict lung cancers more than five years before diagnosis. The scientists also found early evidence that an existing anti-inflammatory drug could significantly reduce lung cancer risk in people with elevated concentrations of these proteins, which they linked to inflammation.

More research is needed before a test based on these proteins could be ready for use in patients. And scientists would still need to run a randomized trial to determine whether the drug prevents lung cancers. Still, outside experts said the findings, which were published on Thursday in the journal Cell, offer a promising starting point toward a long-held public health goal.

“Preventing lung cancer has been a missing holy grail for a very, very long time,” said Dr. Douglas Arenberg, a professor of medicine at the University of Michigan who was not involved in the study. The authors may have identified a biological marker that “not only predicts risk but also predicts the probability of benefit

Continued on Page A9



ERIC GAY/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Victor Wembanyama shook hands with all the Salesian Sisters before Game 1 of the N.B.A. finals.

Spike Who? San Antonio Has Its Own Faithful.

By MIRIN FADER
The Athletic

The Sisters stood inside the tunnel, waiting for the San Antonio Spurs players to emerge from the locker room. They looked up in awe as the 7-foot-4 Spurs superstar Victor Wembanyama began to walk toward them.

It was a crucial playoff game last week against the Oklahoma City Thunder, and yet Wembanyama didn’t rush out to go

Nuns Bring Basketball to Their Ministry

warm up. He walked slowly toward the women, the Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco, West Province, known formally as the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

Wembanyama didn’t give a quick wave or nod, or shout a kind

word or two as he passed through the tunnel. Instead, he took his time to shake hands with all nine Sisters, pausing and cupping his large hands over theirs, a beat longer than any of them expected.

“In a way, he was saying, ‘Thank you,’” Sister Bernadette

Continued on Page A11

THE NOVA KNICKS A brotherhood that was forged in college is paying off at the pro level. PAGE B6

Bolton to Plead To Mishandling Classified Files

By DEVLIN BARRETT and MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT

WASHINGTON — John R. Bolton, a national security adviser to President Trump in his first term, has reached a tentative deal with prosecutors to plead guilty to mishandling classified information when he compiled notes for a book that was harshly critical of the president, according to two people familiar with the matter.

A notice in Maryland federal court, where Mr. Bolton was indicted last year, indicates he is now scheduled for a re-arraignment — a hearing that can signal a planned guilty plea. The hearing is set for June 26.

Under the terms of the plea deal, which still requires approval from a judge, Mr. Bolton plans to plead guilty to a single count of illegal retention of classified information and pay a fine, facing anywhere from no prison time to five years of incarceration when he is sentenced, according to the people familiar with the negotiations, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Continued on Page A14

Behind Scenes, SpaceX’s No. 2 Is Foil to Musk

By RYAN MAC

LOS ANGELES — Elon Musk, the chief executive of SpaceX, has dined with President Trump at the White House, lost a flashy trial where he testified against his rival Sam Altman and accompanied Mr. Trump to China for a major diplomatic summit.

Gwynne Shotwell, SpaceX’s president and chief operating officer, has had a different itinerary over the last six months. She spoke at a telecom trade show in Barcelona, Spain, to boost SpaceX’s satellite internet service, Starlink; mingled with politicians in India, a potentially large market for the company; and appeared with tech executives at the White House to pledge that their data centers would not increase energy prices for Americans.

For 24 years, Ms. Shotwell has played the adult-in-the-room foil to Mr. Musk at SpaceX. While he was advising Mr. Trump and running his other companies, such as the electric carmaker Tesla, she was focused on developing

Continued on Page A11

NATIONAL A10-17

Government Lawyers Quit

The departure of more than 10,000 federal lawyers has left some agencies without enough staff, and has boosted the ranks of advocacy groups. PAGE A10

INTERNATIONAL A4-9

Drones Blindside Israel

Hezbollah’s fiber-optic drone onslaught has exposed cracks in Israeli defenses, forcing political and military leaders to scramble for solutions. PAGE A8

BUSINESS B1-5

Inspired by SpaceX’s I.P.O.

Few are as delighted by the pending market debut as the vibrant community of space enthusiasts who want to push discovery of the final frontier. PAGE B1

WEEKEND ARTS C1-10

Alice’s Return to New York

A mural depicting a New York-centric view of Lewis Carroll’s tale fell into disrepair. Now it’s restored, and residents can soon view it again. PAGE C1

OPINION A18-19

Jen Easterly

PAGE A18



0 354613 9

“A testament to how theater can change the world. Joe Mantello’s beautiful and haunting production of ‘Death of a Salesman’ boasts a dream of a domestic quartet in Nathan Lane, Laurie Metcalf, Christopher Abbott, and Ben Ahlers.”

— Ben Brantley



Donors to ballroom are raking in contracts

Critics say Trump's refusal to release full list seeds potential corruption

BY JONATHAN EDWARDS

More than half of the publicly identified donors to President Donald Trump's White House ballroom project have won new or expanded federal contracts worth more than \$50 billion during the past six months, according to a report released Thursday by a government watchdog group.

Fourteen of the 27 known corporate donors to the \$400 million project, which would replace the East Wing that Trump demolished in October, have seen their government business grow in that window, according to the report from Public Citizen, a nonprofit. Most of those same companies are also facing federal enforcement actions over alleged wrongdoing or have had such actions suspended by the Trump administration since the start of Trump's second term, the nonprofit found.

The donors have sprawling interests that touch nearly every aspect of American life, including defense contracting, technology and energy. Trump has repeatedly touted the gifts as a boon to taxpayers, but critics of the project say the administration's refusal to release a full list of donors creates the potential for corruption.

"These giant corporations aren't funding the Trump ballroom fiasco out of the goodness of their hearts," said Jon Golinger, a public policy advocate at Public Citizen and an author of the report. **SEE DONORS ON A6**

A place to reflect



ALLISON ROBERT/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Water starts to flow into the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool on Thursday, after it was painted blue at the urging of President Donald Trump. A Washington-area nonprofit had sued over the project.

Payout fund still in the mix

GOP BEATS BACK A PUSH TO BLOCK IT

Effort tied to funding for immigration enforcement

BY THEODORIC MEYER AND JARRELL DILLARD

The Senate rejected an initial effort Thursday to bar the Trump administration from creating a controversial fund to compensate people who claim they were wrongfully prosecuted or investigated.

Republican Sens. Susan Collins (Maine), Jon Husted (Ohio) and Dan Sullivan (Alaska) joined Democrats in voting for the amendment, which failed 50-49. Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colorado) did not vote.

The vote was the first of several expected attempts to amend legislation that Republicans are seeking to pass Thursday to fund federal immigration enforcement agencies — as a way to guarantee that the Trump administration cannot set up such a payout fund. The administration's decision

to create the payout fund last month triggered a rare Republican revolt, derailing the party's effort to pass legislation to fund immigration enforcement agencies by June 1. Some Senate Republicans said they feared the fund could be used to compensate people convicted of attacking the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, and they refused to advance the bill until the administration addressed their concerns.

Todd Blanche, the acting attorney general, tried to quell those concerns Tuesday in testimony before the House Appropriations Committee, saying the administration had abandoned its plans to set up the fund. But President Donald Trump himself has not said the fund is dead, telling reporters on Wednesday that he was unsure of its fate.

"Republicans are trusting the word of Todd Blanche, who built a career on lying, that the administration will just drop this slush fund," Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-New York) said Thursday on the Senate floor ahead of the planned vote.

The amendment votes are politically uncomfortable for many **SEE FUND ON A4**

Trump says he'll seek full AG term for Blanche

The president's former lawyer could face a tough confirmation battle

BY JEREMY ROEBUCK AND PERRY STEIN

President Donald Trump said he planned to nominate acting attorney general Todd Blanche for a full term as the nation's chief law enforcement officer, signaling confidence in his former personal defense lawyer's leadership of a department over which the president has sought to exert unprecedented control.

Trump announced his intention to move forward with the nomination at a White House dinner Wednesday evening, according to a video of the president's remarks posted to social media by Deputy White House Chief of Staff Dan Scavino.

"We are going to make him

permanent attorney general," Trump said. He added that his staff would take steps to initiate the process by Thursday.

Blanche, a Trump loyalist who has held the job on a temporary basis since Trump fired Attorney General Pam Bondi this year, said during an unrelated news conference Thursday in Ohio that he was "honored and humbled" by the president's comments.

The president's decision to back Blanche for a permanent term will kick off a Senate confirmation process likely to face tough headwinds.

Some Republican senators have already expressed hesitation about supporting him for the job, raising questions about recent comments in which they believed he appeared to excuse violence committed during the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

More recently, Blanche faced open revolt from some portions of the Republican caucus in the Senate as he unsuccessfully sought to **SEE BLANCHE ON A18**

Bolton expected to plead guilty in security case

BY KATIE METTLER, PERRY STEIN AND JEREMY ROEBUCK

John Bolton, a former national security adviser turned outspoken critic of President Donald Trump, is expected to plead guilty in a case involving his alleged mishandling of classified materials.

Ex-Trump adviser could face up to five years in prison

Bolton pleaded not guilty in the case in October. A change-of-plea hearing is scheduled for

June 26 before U.S. District Judge Theodore D. Chuang, according to a spokesperson for the U.S. attorney's office in Maryland. The spokesperson declined to comment further.

Bolton plans to plead guilty to one count of retention of national defense information and has agreed to pay a fine of \$2.25 million, according to a person

familiar with the matter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss an agreement that has not been made public.

Under the agreement, Bolton could face anywhere from no time behind bars to five years in prison, the person said. Had Bolton taken his case to trial and lost, he could have faced up to 10 years **SEE BOLTON ON A8**

Orchestra season at risk with its budget in limbo

Kennedy Center hasn't approved funds, putting artists months behind

BY JONATHAN EDWARDS

The National Symphony Orchestra's upcoming season is in jeopardy because the Kennedy Center has not approved its budget, according to officials familiar with the situation, depriving the ensemble of the money it needs to book venues and soloists, announce its season and sell subscriptions.

More than three months after the Kennedy Center's board of trustees typically signs off on the NSO's budget, the orchestra's leaders are still waiting — and still don't know whether their home venue will be available next

season, according to six current and former officials, who like others in this article spoke on the condition of anonymity out of fear of reprisal.

The budget impasse is the latest crisis to befall the NSO since President Donald Trump took over the Kennedy Center in February 2025, ousting its longtime president, installing loyalists and eventually announcing he would shutter the building for two years to make about \$250 million in renovations.

The orchestra's budgeting process, which usually begins in late fall, was scrambled on Feb. 1 when Trump announced the venue would close. Kennedy Center leaders at the time told their NSO counterparts the center would continue funding the orchestra **SEE NSO ON A10**

Kennedy Center: Staff orders removal of Trump name. **A10**



FLORION GOGA/REUTERS

'Albania is not for sale'

Thousands of Albanians are protesting a resort planned for the Mediterranean coastline and backed by President Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka Trump and her husband, Jared Kushner. **Story, A18**

Sweltering conditions to hit D.C. soon

BY BEN NOLL

A relatively cool start to June is about to warm up as a bubble of locally record-breaking heat expands from New England to the Mid-Atlantic into the weekend. Some places near and south of D.C. can expect 90-degree temperatures for at least three straight days.

That's a sharp change from earlier in the week. On Monday — the first day of meteorological summer — it reached only 58 degrees in Boston and 71 degrees in New York.

On Thursday, high temperatures reached well into the 80s to near 90 across the Northeast and will surge into the 90s on Friday and Saturday — especially in the stretch from the nation's capital to New York. **SEE HEAT ON A14**

IN THE NEWS

WIC benefits The House passed a bill that would cut funding for a program that helps pregnant women and children. **A8**

Parasitic fly A flesh-eating screwworm case was found in Texas, decades after the parasite was mostly eradicated in the U.S., sparking fears about cattle herds. **A9**

THE NATION **ICE** will stop reporting the deaths of newly released detainees, an internal memo says. **A6** **Karen Read** sued Massachusetts State Police, alleging bigotry after she was investigated. **A8**

THE WORLD **Despite government** censorship, young Chinese people are learning about Tiananmen Square. **A11** **Hezbollah** quickly rejected the new Israel-Lebanon ceasefire. **A12**

THE ECONOMY **Tensions** are boiling over at "60 Minutes" after Scott Pelley became the latest high-profile departure. **A13**

SPORTS **Meet the Nationals'** players who are in the mix for the All-Star Game in Philadelphia next month. **B7**

STYLE **From Oscar** darling to "Scary Movie," Regina Hall and her inherent magnetism are keeping us guessing. **B1**

WEEKEND **Events** are ramping up to celebrate the Fourth of July — and America's 250th birthday.

THE REGION **The president's** proposed triumphal arch isn't subject to D.C.'s height restrictions, a planner says. **B13** **The archbishop** of Washington removed a priest as an exorcist. **B13** **Meet the man** who created World Bicycle Day. **B13**

BUSINESS NEWS.....A13
COMICS.....B4
OBITUARIES.....B14
OPINION PAGES.....A15
SPORTS NEWS.....B7
WORLD NEWS.....A11

CONTENT © 2026
The Washington Post
Year 149, No. 54603



\$3.66 DESIGNATED AREAS HIGHER © 2026



CAROLINE BREHMAN Bloomberg

ADDITIONAL vote counts have narrowed GOP gubernatorial candidate Steve Hilton's lead over Democrats.

Trump, without proof, says state vote was rigged

Newsom and other officials rebuff the assertion; president says probe underway.

By KEVIN RECTOR

To the surprise of few, President Trump has once again claimed without evidence that Democrats are somehow cheating to win California's primary elections — writing on social media late Wednesday that federal prosecutors in Los Angeles are investigating the matter.

"The Democrats are at it again! They are trying to STEAL THE GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA PRIMARY, AND THE MAYOR OF LOS ANGELES, PRIMARY, AWAY FROM TWO GREAT REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES. Here we go with the very late and massive numbers of MAIL IN BALLOTS," Trump posted to his social media website.

"There's BIG cheating by the Democrats in California. Votes are all tied up. May not be in for weeks. Under investigation by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Los Angeles," he wrote in a second post.

"Why the vote counting DELAY???"

A spokesperson for the U.S. attorney's office in Los Angeles — run by Trump loyalist First Assistant U.S. Atty. Bill Essayli — declined to comment Thursday morning on Trump's claims of an investigation.

The White House declined to say what Trump was basing his cheating claims on, if anything, or provide details about the inquiry. Trump also provided no proof when he doubled down on his claims at a Thursday event in the Oval Office, where he alleged that California Democrats had "found a lot of mail-in ballots" the night prior and were "rigging the election" with them.

California Secretary of State Shirley Weber defended the state's election process in a statement, saying "accuracy comes before speed" when counting millions of ballots in the nation's most populous state.

"Taking the time to do this work correctly protects voters' rights and ensures the integrity of our elections," Weber said. "California has built a strong system that expands access, em- [See Claims, A7]"

State Bar charges DTLA attorneys

Lawyers accused of finding clients outside California where they were not licensed.

By REBECCA ELLIS

The State Bar of California has charged the partners of Downtown LA Law Group, a law firm at the center of a scandal that has consumed Los Angeles County's \$4-billion sex abuse settlement, with signing up clients in states where they had no license to practice.

The bar charged Farid Yaghoubtil and Daniel Azizi, two founding partners of the personal injury firm, and Igor Fradkin, a litigation attorney, on Monday with signing up accident victims across the U.S., despite having no attorneys who could litigate the cases outside California. The firm took on clients in Texas, Florida, Maryland, Arizona, Iowa, Michigan, Tennessee and Virginia, according to the complaint.

Downtown LA Law Group, or DTLA, said in a statement that the cases highlighted by the bar "are multi-jurisdiction with California defendants."

"DTLA is confident they will be able to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of both the State Bar and our law firm," the firm said.

Yaghoubtil faces 16 counts, including practicing law without a license, charging illegal fees, and continuing to represent a client who had fired the firm. Azizi faces 11 counts and Fradkin faces four.

"The public depends on attorneys to follow the law and to be transparent about where they are authorized to practice," said George Cardona, the State Bar's chief [See DTLA, A8]

Clock ticking for CBS News

With new season nearing, '60 Minutes' is in turmoil and at risk of losing its loyal viewers

By Stephen Battaglio

In recent months, the iconic ticking stopwatch of the CBS News magazine "60 Minutes" began to sound like a time bomb.

The explosive detonated Tuesday as the prestigious program's most high-profile correspondent, Scott Pelley, was fired after openly challenging the moves and motives of the news division's leadership and questioning the credentials of new "60 Minutes" executive producer Nick Bilton.

Pelley accused CBS News Editor in Chief Bari Weiss of "murdering" the program and berated Bilton, a former New York Times journalist, for lacking TV news experience.

His forced exit, along with the departure of several other veterans, is raising fears about the future of the most-watched TV news program that has managed to retain its vitality and importance in the face of major changes across the

media landscape.

The turmoil inside "60 Minutes" also comes at an inopportune time for CBS and for Weiss, who has faced a series of controversies since she was tapped by her boss, David Ellison, to run the network. Weiss and Ellison — the chief executive of CBS News parent Paramount Skydance — have been by accused of making changes to "60 Minutes" intended to placate the Trump administration, which they have denied.

Pelley is the fourth correspondent to depart "60 Minutes" since Weiss took over as editor in chief.

Weiss praised Pelley's contribution to the network when she discussed his termination at the network's morning editorial meeting Wednesday, but cited a loss of "trust and mutual respect" as the reason for moving on.

"We cannot do our work without it," Weiss said. [See '60 Minutes,' A12]

Senate rejects an initial attempt to ban Trump's \$1.8-billion fund

Congress' second recent effort to rebuke the president shows fractures within GOP.

By JUSTINE MCDANIEL

WASHINGTON — A battle unfolded in the Senate on Thursday over the Trump administration's controversial \$1.8-billion payout fund for people who claim the government wronged them, as Democrats and some Republicans sought to block the fund but fell short after they rejected each other's proposals.

The episode underscored how President Trump's plan for the fund — widely seen as a way to pay his political allies, including those who participated in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol —

has created divisions within the Republican Party. But it also revealed apparent limits on how far Republicans who are frustrated with Trump are willing to go in opposing him.

Republicans narrowly voted down a Democratic amendment to ban the payout fund. Democrats then killed a Republican proposal to prohibit the use of federal money for the fund but instead direct \$1.7 billion to the Justice Department's fraud division.

Thursday's drama in the Senate was underpinned by midterm politics, as Republican senators who are not up for reelection played key roles in the discussion and others who will face voters in November weighed whether to stay in line with the president or oppose his fund, which is unpopular with voters. [See Vote, A7]

The dueling amendments were attached to the reconciliation bill that would fund Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Border Patrol, a high priority for Republicans. They were proposed by Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.).

Schumer framed the vote as a choice for Republicans: "Do you support Donald Trump's \$2-billion taxpayer-funded slush fund, or do you want to protect the American people and their paychecks?" he said on the Senate floor before the vote.

The episode was the second effort in Congress to rebuke Trump in two days, following the successful House vote Wednesday to rein in Trump's war powers in Iran. [See Vote, A7]

Slow count leaves room for surprises

Many mail ballots are untallied. Final results in some previous races have swung left.

By GRACE TOOHEY AND HANNAH FRY

After the 2022 Los Angeles mayoral primary, developer Rick Caruso looked to have a surprising, and sizable, lead over then-U.S. Rep. Karen Bass.

The morning after the polls closed, Caruso was ahead by 5 percentage points — 42% to Bass' 37% — and the former Republican called the early results "a victory story."

But that lead did not last as the vote count continued. By the time all votes were tabulated two weeks after election day, Bass had come out on top, with 43% of the vote compared with Caruso's 36%.

Welcome to the post-

Raising hotel bed tax is out of favor

But proposal to extend a tax to short-term rentals on booking sites finds support. CALIFORNIA, B1

election vote-count slog in California, where tight races are often impossible to call even when the initial results seem clear-cut.

The California governor's race still has not been called even though Republican Steve Hilton has been the top voter-getter and Democrat Xavier Becerra has been in second place since election night. The same is true in the battle over who will face Bass in the mayoral election: reality TV personality Spencer Pratt, who is now in second place, or L.A. City Councilmember Nithya Raman, who is in third place.

At this point in the vote tally, "everybody has an [See Tallies, A8]"



CARLIN STIEHL For The Times

LANDMARKS IN DANCE

L.A. Dance Project is performing free public shows at notable sites this month. Dancers, above, rehearse at LACMA. ENTERTAINMENT, E1

Blanche likely to face challenges

President wants to make acting attorney general's leadership of the Justice Department long-term. NATION, A5

Weather
Mostly sunny.
L.A. Basin: 80/61. B6

Markets A12
Opinion Voices A13

Oakland to get coal terminal

Trump administration argues that energy is an issue of national security. NATION, A6

For the latest news, go to latimes.com.



A toxic metal stayed in air long after 2 wildfires

By TONY BRISCOE

After the Eaton and Palisades fires devastated Southern California, a highly toxic metal stayed in the air much longer and probably traveled much farther than expected, according to a new study.

More than two months after the Eaton and Palisades fires were extinguished, researchers from UCLA and UC Davis detected elevated levels of hexavalent chromium — a potent carcinogen — in the burn areas, the paper in the journal Nature Communica-



GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

JENNA ZWEIG, center, and her parents scour the ruins of their Pacific Palisades home early last year.

tions Earth & Environment says. The chrome was in ultrafine particles, more than 1,000 times smaller than width of a human hair, meaning it can more easily travel into the lungs, bloodstream and even cross cell membranes.

"When it's in this nanoparticle form, it basically invades the barrier of our lungs, going into our blood and gets into our circulation," said Michael Jerrett, environmental health professor at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. "That raises the specter that you've got a lot [See Toxic, A8]"