

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

DOW JONES | News Corp

FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2026 - VOL. CCLXXXVII NO. 136

WSJ.com

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What's News

Business & Finance

◆ **BlackRock put in an order** to buy at least \$5 billion worth of SpaceX shares ahead of the company's IPO, and other large asset managers are coming up with similarly big commitments. **B1**

◆ **Citigroup is establishing** a way for its wealthy and institutional clients to trade shares of private companies through a blockchain, a venture it hopes will be adopted by other banks across Wall Street. **B1**

◆ **The European Central Bank** raised interest rates, leading the charge among central banks in the developed world in tackling inflation driven by the war in Iran. **A7**

◆ **Volatility in major U.S.** stock indexes continued, with the S&P 500, Nasdaq and Dow industrials gaining 1.8%, 2.5% and 1.9%, respectively, in Thursday's session. **B8**

◆ **U.S. jobless claims** rose last week but remained in a range that suggests a healthy labor market. **A2**

◆ **The practice of giving tiny** loans to shoestring entrepreneurs—microfinance, pioneered by economist Muhammad Yunus—doesn't improve the economic conditions of most borrowers, academic studies found. **A1**

◆ **Novo Nordisk said its** Wegovy weight-loss pill was approved in the U.K. as the Danish drugmaker seeks to regain its lead in the obesity-treatment market. **B3**

◆ **KKR, Kuwait Investment** Authority, Nvidia and Vista are collaborating to launch Helix Digital, a company designed to provide infrastructure for AI hyperscalers. **B4**

Worldwide

◆ **Trump pulled back** from his threats just hours earlier to launch more military strikes on Iran and seize its oil infrastructure, saying the U.S. was nearing a deal on peace talks with Tehran. **A1**

◆ **Three Indian sailors** were killed in a U.S. operation to enforce the American blockade of Iran, an Indian official said. **A6**

◆ **Trump and his allies** have discussed pushing lawmakers to pass a resolution aimed at voiding a pair of impeachments over the president's actions during his first term. **A1**

◆ **Trump said he would** nominate Jay Clayton, a former SEC chairman, to be the next Director of National Intelligence. **A4**

◆ **Outgoing intelligence** chief Tulsi Gabbard revoked two Biden-era reports on the mysterious illness known as Havana Syndrome, saying they didn't meet analytic standards. **A4**

◆ **Medicare insurers** had widely varying rejection rates for patients seeking nursing-home stays and other services, two reports from the Office of Inspector General for HHS found. **A3**

◆ **The U.K. defense** secretary quit in protest over what he said was the government's refusal to materially increase military spending to ensure the country's readiness. **A7**

◆ **The Minnesota man** charged with shooting two state Democratic lawmakers, killing one of them and her husband, pleaded guilty to federal murder and stalking charges. **A3**

◆ **The El Niño warming** cycle has formed in the Pacific Ocean and is expected to grow to historic strength. **A4**

CONTENTS Mansion..... M1-16 Arts in Review A11-12 Markets..... B8 Business & Finance... B2 Opinion..... A13-15 Business News... B3 Sports..... A16 Capital Account... A2 Technology..... B4 Crossword..... A12 U.S. News..... A2-4 Heard on Street... B9 World News..... A6-8



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North America's World Cup Kicks Off in Mexico



GOLDEN GOAL: A splashy ceremony before Thursday's Group A match in Mexico City between Mexico and South Africa launched soccer's World Cup. The tournament features 48 teams playing in 16 stadiums in the U.S., Mexico and Canada. **Journal Report, R1-10**

President Backs Off Attacks On Iran, Eyes Deal

Trump says last points resolved for pact; Tehran denies 'final conclusion'

President Trump on Thursday pulled back from his threats just hours earlier to launch more military strikes on Iran and seize its oil infrastructure, saying the U.S. was nearing a deal on peace talks with Tehran.

By Lara Seligman, Alexander Ward and Benoit Faucon

Trump said Iranian Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei had signed off on the plan, which he said would be completed in coming days, paving the way for additional talks on Iran's nuclear program.

Tehran said it hadn't decided.

"Iran hasn't reached a final conclusion about the agreement," foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said, according to state media. "We will announce it when we reach a conclusion."

One major hurdle to advancing peace negotiations has been Iran's demands that it access immediately tens of billions of dollars frozen by U.S. sanctions, which would offer relief to its deeply damaged economy.

Some people familiar with the negotiations expressed hope that differences between

Please turn to page A6

◆ **China's oil-import cuts** ease pressure..... A6
◆ **U.S. attack on tanker kills** three Indian sailors..... A6

Hundreds of Billions in Loans Fail to Dent Global Poverty

Microfinance aimed to foster prosperity but stoked hardship for many borrowers

By Gabriele Steinhauser

BATTAMBANG, Cambodia—Giving tiny loans to shoestring entrepreneurs was meant to be capitalism's cure for global poverty.

Microfinance, loans issued in communities not served by traditional banks, would help poor people in developing countries start businesses and

work their way toward prosperity. That was the goal of Muhammad Yunus, a U.S.-trained economist, who pioneered the practice in Bangladesh during the 1970s.

"In a poverty-free world, the only place you would be able to see poverty is in the poverty museums," Yunus told his audience in Oslo in 2006 when he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize for his work.

Led by the adage of "doing good while doing well," microfinance lenders have since advanced hundreds of billions of dollars to poor people in countries from Albania to Zimba-

bwe. Prominent voices including Hillary Clinton and Natalie Portman told inspiring tales of women entrepreneurs lifting the fortunes of their communities. Along with easing poverty, microfinance aimed to expand access to education and end gender inequality.

Yet two decades after Yunus's Nobel win, few of those aspirations have come to pass.

Academic studies, including randomized controlled trials, have found that microfinance doesn't improve the economic conditions of most borrowers. Economists found excessive

microfinance lending has set off repayment crises for borrowers in half a dozen countries, including Bosnia, India and Cambodia.

High interest rates, which can top 100% in some Latin American countries, and pressure tactics by loan officers have been tied to suicides, homelessness and children pulled from school to work. Rather than using the loans to invest in small businesses, many borrowers spend the money on medical expenses and other necessities.

Today, most microfinance Please turn to page A10

Knicks' Historic Miracle

New York was trailing the San Antonio Spurs by 29 points in Game 4 Wednesday night—then they pulled off a comeback never before seen in NBA Finals history, to win 107-106 and take a 3-1 lead in the series. **A16**



Trump Is Angling For a Vote to Void His Impeachments

WASHINGTON—President Trump and his allies have discussed pushing lawmakers to pass a resolution aimed at voiding his first-term impeachments, according to people familiar with the matter.

The resolution would allow Trump to claim a symbolic

By Annie Linskey, Olivia Beavers and Natalie Andrews

victory on a matter that has dogged him since his first term, part of a broader effort to burnish his presidential legacy. But it would have little legal significance, according to experts, because the Constitu-

tion provides no procedure for undoing an impeachment.

"It should be done because I did nothing wrong," Trump said when asked about the resolution in a phone call with The Wall Street Journal this week. "It was a rigged deal—it was a whole rigged situation."

Any move to attempt to erase the impeachments would open up a contentious debate about Trump's past behavior in office, forcing GOP lawmakers to relitigate charges of abuse of power, obstruction of Congress and inciting an insurrection. Facing the prospect of losing their majority in the House, Repub-

Please turn to page A4

Musk Ally Set for \$68 Billion Win

By Becky Peterson

SpaceX's initial public offering is set to make Elon Musk a trillionaire. The second-biggest payday will go to Antonio Gracias, his close friend and longtime investor who made a career out of backing Musk.

SpaceX stock is set to begin trading on Friday, with Gracias and his firm Valor Equity Part-

ners owning 6.7% of Class A shares, according to the company's IPO prospectus. The \$68 billion stake makes Gracias the second-largest SpaceX shareholder after Musk.

Gracias, 55 years old, started Valor as a private-equity firm mainly focused on distressed assets. He found success investing early in Tesla and SpaceX, and he has

stayed close to Musk since.

"I have worked closely with Elon for over 20 years. His heart is pure, and his sole mission is to help humanity," Gracias wrote on X last year, after Musk stirred controversy with a salute at President Please turn to page A2

◆ **BlackRock orders up \$5 billion of SpaceX stock.... B1**

Rent Is So High in New York, People Are Living With Nuns

Convents are cheap, but there are rules; curfews, chores and sisters who vet boyfriends

By Anvee Bhutani

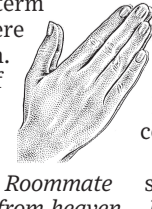
Katie Rettig arrived in the Big Apple with two 50-pound suitcases, a job starting the next morning and no place to live. Furnished short-term rentals in Manhattan were running \$5,000 a month. Then, on the 15th page of Google search results, she found a convent.

A few days later, Rettig was settling into a furnished room

at the Sacred Heart Residence in the Chelsea neighborhood as a nun showed her around. The place was clean, the price was right and a hot dinner was on the table every night.

She figured she could manage the 11 p.m. curfew with the nighttime events for her job at a whiskey company.

"Nuns are awesome," Rettig said. Please turn to page A10



INSIDE



MANSION
The 5-mile Hamptons street driving hundreds of millions in home sales. **M1**

Kushner Gets \$5 Billion Albanian Reality Check

For over three years, Jared Kushner has striven to build a set of luxury hotels and resorts in a corner of Eastern Europe that U.S. investors typically overlook. It isn't going well.

By Eliot Brown in London and Vladimir Karaj in Tirana, Albania

In the past two weeks, a proposed Kushner development on an environmentally protected beach in Albania has exploded as a political issue in the country. Thousands of protesters have been marching daily, a special prosecutor has opened an investigation into land sales, and even the European Union's executive arm

has voiced concerns to Albania about the project, sparking worries it could imperil the country's bid to join the bloc.

On the streets of the capital Tirana, protesters have cited the project to air grievances about unchecked power, environmental degradation and real-estate development, putting the country's prime minister, Edi Rama, on the defensive. He has vowed to press ahead, characterizing the luxury development as an economic boon for one of Europe's poorest countries.

Asher Abbersera, one of Kushner's partners leading the development, said in an interview that he respects the will of Albanians to protest, adding that many of the concerns Please turn to page A8

USA TODAY WEEKEND

THE NATION'S NEWS | \$3 | JUNE 12-14, 2026

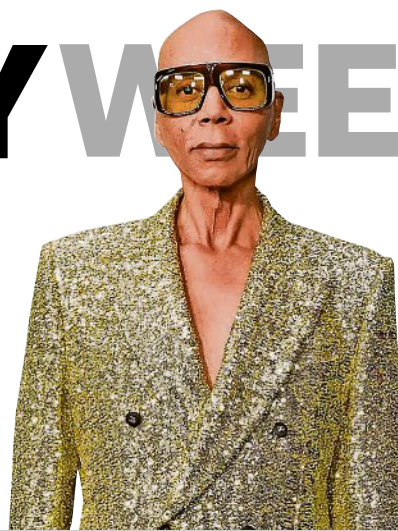
RODIN ECKENROTH/GETTY IMAGES

Perspectives on World Cup 2026

U.S. star Christian Pulisic, pope, President Trump, Nancy Armour chime in on soccer. **In Sports**

A second chance at justice for worker

He cleaned up PCB-polluted river at site with lax safety rules. Then he got cancer. **In Weekend Extra**



RuPaul: 'Laughter is our beacon'

Drag icon explains why movie spoof "Stop! That! Train!" is a political statement. **In Life**

UFC set to rumble at White House

Event mirrors Trump's no-holds-barred style

Zac Anderson and Chris Kenning
USA TODAY

It was 2001, and mixed martial arts fighting was on the ropes.

Banned in 36 states, booted from cable operators, derided as "human cockfighting" – it was such an outcast sport that it traded hands for \$2 million – a song.

And the new owners of Ultimate Fighting Championship faced a big challenge. Nobody wanted to host the fights.

"When UFC started, people were like, 'Oh my God, this is disgusting and horrible. Oh my God, this is brutal,'" Dana White, who would become UFC president, told USA TODAY.



Ultimate Fighting Championship President and CEO Dana White, left, says President Donald Trump "was the first guy to give us a shot."
FRANK FRANKLIN II/POOL VIA REUTERS

In came Donald Trump. Long a fan of boxing and often seen ringside in Vegas, he agreed to showcase UFC matches at his Taj Mahal casino in Atlantic City. It was the opening White said he needed when few others would touch it.

"Trump was the first guy to give us a shot," White said.

Now, a quarter century later, Trump is set to host one of the most unlikely and controversial UFC fighting events in history: The UFC Freedom 250, a six-fight event on June 14 timed to Trump's 80th birthday and the nation's 250th, fought on the White House's South Lawn.

The \$60 million spectacle is the culmination of a decades-long relationship between a president and a

See **UFC EVENT**, Page 3A

Trump to become second president to reach 80

He faces questions about his health as he joins Biden in exclusive club. **2A**

Follow live UFC coverage at sports.usatoday.com

Get real-time updates as six-fight spectacle unfolds on June 14.

Trump cites progress toward deal with Iran

For the latest developments in the Middle East, visit [usatoday.com](https://www.usatoday.com).

At this flag factory, every stitch is a tribute to freedom



Annin Flagmakers in South Boston, Virginia, has seen the United States through tragedy and triumph since 1847. Its flags draped Abraham Lincoln's casket and flew to the moon on Apollo 11. PHOTOS BY JACK GRUBER/USA TODAY

'One rule' for 179 years: Patriotism, not politics



Karissa Waddick
USA TODAY

SOUTH BOSTON, VA – Inside this cavernous warehouse off U.S. Route 58, thin strips of red and white cotton cascade over nearly every surface.

The strips are piled high in plastic bins, sprawled over tables and fed underneath bobbing needles. The whir of dozens of sewing machines working at once fills the stark, concrete room.

Here at this 200,000-square-foot factory, seamstresses work eight and sometimes 12 hours a day weaving together the American flag.

Their company, Annin Flagmakers, bills itself as the oldest and largest manufacturer of the star-spangled banner in the United States. It is one of few companies still making the flag in America.

Since the company's founding in 1847, Annin flags have marked the country's highest highs and lowest lows. Its flags hung at President Abraham Lincoln's inauguration and draped his casket. They flew atop

See **FLAG FACTORY**, Page 6A

USA250

About this series

USA 250 is our nationwide initiative to celebrate America's 250th anniversary – the nation's history, its meaningful places and its people. Read more at [usatoday.com/usa250](https://www.usatoday.com/usa250).

At Annin, employees work eight and sometimes 12 hours a day weaving together American flags. This year the company has partnered with the nonpartisan organization America250 to weave together hundreds of thousands of handheld flags for events across the nation in an initiative called "America Waves" to help celebrate the semiquincentennial.



Matthew Hall, 25, buys "surprise" bags of surplus food to stretch his budget. "It's a win-win," he says. PROVIDED BY MATTHEW HALL

One answer to high prices: 'Surprise' grocery bags

Apps let savvy shoppers fight waste, save money

Betty Lin-Fisher
USA TODAY

Matthew Hall is trying to stretch his grocery budget and save up to replace his aging car amid rising food prices and overall inflation.

Hall regularly uses an app called Too Good to Go to find steep discounts on food.

Hall and other shoppers are using these services, which connect grocery

stores, cafes and restaurants with consumers, to find more inexpensive food and encourage sustainability by reducing food waste.

"In the interest of sustainability and keeping things out of landfills, I use it for things that I can use to meal-prep to keep costs low," Hall, 25, of Durham, North Carolina, told USA TODAY. "It's a win-win for me and for the business."

Too Good to Go started in Europe in 2016 and now is in 21 countries with 120 million users and 180,000 partners, said Chris MacAulay, vice president of

See **SURPRISE BAGS**, Page 6A



24
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The New York Times

THE WEATHER

Today, hot and humid, a heavy afternoon thunderstorm, high 93. Tonight, cloudy, an evening thunderstorm, low 71. Tomorrow, sunny, high 88. Weather map, Page A16.

“All the News That’s Fit to Print”

VOL. CLXXV . . . No. 60,913

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FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2026

Prices in Canada may be higher

\$4.00



LUIS ANTONIO ROJAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Global Spectacle Unfolds

Mexico opened the 2026 World Cup against South Africa at Estadio Azteca in Mexico City on Thursday. More at nytimes.com.

Trump, Pivoting Again, Calls Off New Barrage, Claiming Deal Is Near

Reversal After Threatening Oil Takeover

This article is by Max Bearak, Anupreeta Das, Michael Levenson and Jonathan Swan.

President Trump began Thursday by threatening to bomb Iran for a third consecutive night and then seize Kharg Island, Iran's main oil export hub in the Persian Gulf, an escalation that risked opening a deadly new chapter in the monthslong war.

Hours later, he abruptly reversed course. In a post on social media, he said he had called off the strikes planned for Thursday night based “on the fact that discussions with the Islamic Republic of Iran have been brought to the highest level of Iranian leadership and approved.”

At an event in the Oval Office on Thursday afternoon, Mr. Trump said the United States and Iran had agreed to a deal, “subject to finalization of documents,” and that it could be signed in Europe as soon as this weekend, at a ceremony with Vice President JD Vance.

“It’s a very strong memorandum of understanding that is a little conceptual,” Mr. Trump said.

But a spokesman for Iran’s foreign ministry, Esmail Baghaei, pushed back on Mr. Trump’s assertion that both sides had reached an agreement.

“The claims which have been made regarding the agreement are speculative and nothing has been finalized,” Mr. Baghaei said, according to Iran’s state broadcaster.

Mr. Trump’s pivot was the latest in a dizzying pattern, alternating between threats to escalate the war and claims that Iran is close to signing a peace deal.

Shortly before he called off the strikes on Thursday, Mr. Trump spoke to Pakistani officials, who have been mediating between Washington and Tehran. The Pakistani told Mr. Trump that “we have a deal” with Iran, according to a senior administration official.

Mr. Trump also spoke to his partner in the war, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, “about the emerging memorandum of understanding with Iran to enter negotiations,” Mr. Netanyahu’s office said in a statement.

Israel is not a party to the agreement, the statement said, but Mr. Netanyahu thanked Mr. Trump for promising that once a final deal is reached, it would compel Iran to give up its highly enriched uranium, dismantle its nuclear program, limit its missile production and end its support of militias in the Middle East.

Mr. Trump said that once the deal was signed, Iran would reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the critical oil shipping route, and the U.S. military would lift its blockade on ships entering and leaving Iranian ports.

Mr. Trump added: “They will not have a nuclear weapon — they have agreed to that.” It was not clear, however, if Iran had agreed to any changes in its nuclear program.

Multiple rounds of talks over the past two months have failed to produce an agreement to end the war, restrain Iran’s nuclear program and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, and Mr. Trump did not offer any details to support his claims of a breakthrough.

Continued on Page A6

Banned Drugs Aid U.F.C. Star’s Stunning Return

By MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT

When the Ultimate Fighting Championship star Conor McGregor was battling his opponent during a bout in Las Vegas in July 2021, he snapped his own left leg in two — a gruesome spectacle that shocked the national pay-per-view audience and threatened the career of the U.F.C.’s biggest draw.

Almost five years later, having made a seemingly miraculous recovery, McGregor is returning to the octagon for the first time. He is bigger and more chiseled, flexing and preening for cameras as he prepares for his highly awaited bout next month, again in Las Vegas.

McGregor’s startling physical transformation has been the subject of speculation among U.F.C.

Injury Led McGregor to Famous Doctor and Doping Dispute

fans, fighters and commentators like Joe Rogan, who have repeatedly claimed that he skirted the U.F.C.’s antidoping rules to use performance-enhancing drugs while recovering.

McGregor has never been tied directly to the substances. But a New York Times investigation reveals that he did take powerful, banned drugs, according to two people with direct knowledge of the matter. And he did so with the support of one of the most prominent sports doctors in the world,

according to the doctor himself. McGregor then engaged in an active effort to evade scrutiny from antidoping officials, the two people said. They spoke on the condition of anonymity because they did not want to be identified discussing matters that were supposed to remain confidential.

The doctor, Neal ElAttrache, oversaw the surgery to repair McGregor’s leg. He is a widely celebrated figure and has treated a litany of Hollywood actors and baseball and football stars. He is also the head physician for the Los Angeles Dodgers and the Los Angeles Rams.

In response to questions from The Times, ElAttrache said by text that after he had repaired McGregor’s broken leg he sent him to

Continued on Page A11

Trump to Pick New Nominee Of Intelligence

This article is by Julian E. Barnes, Jonah E. Bromwich, Devlin Barrett and Benjamin Weiser.

WASHINGTON — President Trump said on Thursday that he would nominate Jay Clayton, the U.S. attorney in Manhattan, to be the next director of national intelligence, after the president faced a revolt from lawmakers over his choice for an interim director without any relevant experience.

Mr. Trump had been under pressure to move on from his decision to appoint Bill Pulte, a top housing official, as the acting director, replacing Tulsi Gabbard, who announced last month that she would step down from the post.

Mr. Pulte, who has used his current job to attack Mr. Trump’s enemies, had come under withering criticism from Capitol Hill. Both Republicans and Democrats have argued he was unqualified to lead the nation’s intelligence agencies.

Mr. Trump, in a social media post, encouraged the Senate to confirm Mr. Clayton “as soon as possible.”

“Few people anywhere in the Legal Community are respected at the level of Jay,” Mr. Trump wrote.

Mr. Clayton, 59, was recommended for the post by John Ratcliffe, the C.I.A. director, according to a person familiar with the conversation. The current plan is for Mr. Pulte to take over from Ms. Gabbard on June 19 and serve as the acting director until Mr. Clayton’s nomination is reviewed by the Senate.

Mr. Pulte, the person said, will seek to shrink the office beyond the cuts Ms. Gabbard had made. Mr. Trump wants Mr. Clayton to lead a smaller office, more narrowly focused on coordination among the 18 intelligence agencies.

Senator John Thune, the Senate majority leader, got no warning about the announcement but spoke positively about Mr. Clayton’s nomination.

“I think he’s considered to be a very qualified professional with a great skill set for managing a complex problem set,” Mr. Thune said. “We will try to get him up and considered as soon as possible.”

Representative Jim Himes of Maryland said he would support Mr. Clayton’s nomination.

Continued on Page A10



SALWAN GEORGES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Shimmering Again, but Will It Last?

Repair work on the Reflecting Pool is complete, but the real issue is whether longstanding problems have been resolved. Page A9.

Knicks Snap to Life, and Their City Doesn’t Sleep

By SANTUL NERKAR

The evening at Madison Square Garden began with a canceled party, a spat between New York City’s mayor and the owner of the arena, and many, many missed shots by the Knicks. In other words, it looked like yet another disappointing chapter for the team’s long-suffering fans.

But after the Knicks rallied to secure the biggest comeback win in N.B.A. finals history, the director Spike Lee danced on the court while the pop star Taylor Swift waved a Knicks towel in the air. On the nearby streets of Midtown Manhattan, roars filled the air and some revelers stood on cars, food carts and scaffolding.

The Knicks are now one win away from delivering basketball glory to a city starved for a championship. And the party is back on.

The day began ominously when James L. Dolan, the Knicks owner, escalated a dispute with Mayor Zohran Mamdani.

In a radio interview, he blamed Mr. Mamdani and the police commissioner, Jessica S. Tisch, for heightened security around the arena. He canceled a watch party outside the Garden, declining to use a permit granted by the city.

Continued on Page A15



VINCENT ALBAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

After a remarkable comeback, the Knicks are one win from a title.



VICTOR J. BLUE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Delirium replaced despair on Wednesday night across New York.

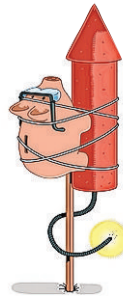
BUSINESS B1-8

Warning From World Bank

The war and soaring energy prices are slowing global economic growth to its weakest pace since the pandemic, according to a report. PAGE B3

Strapping In As SpaceX Goes Public

A guide to Elon Musk’s rocket company, which is on the cusp of the largest I.P.O. ever, and what it means for investors. PAGES B4-7



INTERNATIONAL A4-8

Australia’s Social Media Ban

Six months in, many teens are already back on platforms they were supposed to be blocked from. The ban’s benefits may fall to the next generation. PAGE A4

U.K. Defense Secretary Resigns

John Healey unexpectedly announced his departure, saying Prime Minister Keir Starmer was failing to invest enough in the British military. PAGE A7

Trump Cools on Trade Deal

The president said he may not want to renew the U.S.-Canada-Mexico agreement, which in 2020 he forged and praised as the best ever. PAGE A8

NATIONAL A9-17

Leaning In on Election Fraud

The Justice Dept. seeks to assert more control over elections and challenge how states conduct them, as President Trump revives his fraud claims. PAGE A10

House Rejects Spy Power Bill

Lawmakers left the capital without extending one of the government’s most powerful surveillance tools, all but assuring the law will expire. PAGE A10

Guilty Plea in Assassination

Federal prosecutors said they would not seek the death penalty for Vance Boelter, who killed a Minnesota legislator and her husband in 2025. PAGE A17

WEEKEND ARTS C1-10

Contradictory Visions

Gerhard Richter grew up surrounded by propaganda, first from Nazis, then from Communists. So his paintings reflect a sense of permanent doubt. PAGE C1

Spielberg Plays His Catalog Of Cosmic Hits

In “Disclosure Day,” with Emily Blunt, infused with epic intentions, the filmmaker tries to bring the rest of us home. PAGE C1



SPORTS B9-15

Washington’s Young Naturals

The Nationals never asked C.J. Abrams and James Wood to fill a leadership vacuum. It just happened. PAGE B15

Rooting for the Home Team

They are few. They are enthused. They are the die-hard fans of the U.S. men’s national soccer team. PAGE B9

OPINION A20-21

Jessica Grose

PAGE A20





Heavy t-storm 96/69 • Mostly sunny 87/68

Democracy Dies in Darkness

FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2026 • \$4

After Pulte rift, Trump pivots on intel pick

Jay Clayton has garnered praise from both sides of the aisle

BY MAEGAN VAZQUEZ, WARREN P. STROBEL AND PERRY STEIN

President Donald Trump said Thursday that he plans to nominate Jay Clayton, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, to serve as the next director of national intelligence.

"Few people anywhere in the Legal Community are respected at the level of Jay," Trump wrote on Truth Social. "I encourage the United States Senate to confirm Jay as soon as possible."

The Cabinet position oversees and coordinates 18 U.S. intelligence agencies but does not have a role in spying operations.

The president's decision to appoint a federal prosecutor to the intel role comes after his acting pick for the position — a Trump loyalist who lacked intelligence experience — caused an immediate rift in Washington.

Less than two weeks ago, Trump said he would appoint Bill Pulte, who leads a federal mortgage regulation agency, to replace outgoing Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard on an acting basis. But even some Republicans voiced concerns over the pick. And earlier Thursday, the House of Representatives rejected a last-minute attempt to extend a controversial warrantless-surveillance law, with Democrats pinning their no votes to Pulte's appointment to the sensitive national security role.

Clayton, the chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission during Trump's first

SEE DNI ON A6

World Cup kicks off at a Mexico City stadium of soccer legend



RODRIGO OROPEZA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

For the next 39 days, billions of people around the world will tune in to the largest sporting event ever staged, with an expanded 48 countries competing in 104 games in cities across the United States, Mexico and Canada. Story, B7

Trump calls off planned attacks

HE CITES PROGRESS ON POSSIBLE DEAL

'Different group' calling shots in Iran, he says

BY VICTORIA CRAW, SIHAM SHAMALAKH AND DAN DIAMOND

President Donald Trump said Thursday that he had canceled scheduled attacks on Iran after progress on a potential peace deal, his latest reversal in a months-long pattern of threatening attacks and walking them back.

Speaking in the Oval Office, Trump asserted that an agreement to end hostilities would be signed "maybe this weekend," after which the United States would immediately lift its naval blockade of the country.

The deal would bar Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, Trump said, an objective he has named as key in deciding to strike the country. It was not immediately clear whether Iran's leaders had formally signed off on the agreement, although Trump asserted that they had.

Pressed by reporters on whether an agreement was truly close after weeks of false starts, Trump said Iran's current leaders were "much more rational" than their predecessors and were worn out by the U.S. military's attacks.

"We knocked out the first team of leadership," Trump said. "The second team of leadership, this is a different group. It's a different level. And I think it's, frankly, a smarter level."

The White House declined to

SEE IRAN ON A13

Midlife habits that could make or break your brain

Researchers say the 40s, 50s and 60s represent a critical window for protecting cognitive health later in life

BY ARIANA EUNJUNG CHA

Neuroscientist Miia Kivipelto's life's work has been about preventing dementia. Now, at 52, she has begun thinking more about her own vulnerability.

"Midlife is the time," said Kivipelto, a neuroscientist who recently joined the Yale School of Nursing as the inaugural director of its Center for Aging Well

in New Haven, Connecticut. "It's the last best chance to lower risk."

The idea that dementia prevention may hinge on what people do in their mid-30s to their 60s is rapidly reshaping the field. Scientists increasingly believe the disease is driven not only by changes in the aging brain, but also by years of metabolic stress, inflammation and vascular

damage accumulating across the body. Many researchers now think the biological process that leads to dementia begins 15 to 20 years before the first memory problems emerge. By the time symptoms become noticeable, the disease likely will already be well established.

Neuroscientists now see midlife as a critical window when the brain becomes especially vul-

nerable to aging — but also more responsive to intervention.

The implications are profound: The ordinary habits of middle age may matter far more than scientists once realized, and cognitive decline may not be inevitable.

Last year, a large study in JAMA Network Open found that people who remained physically

SEE BRAIN ON A11

House rejects extension of expiring wiretap law

Critical post-9/11 spy tool is all but certain to lapse for the first time

BY NOAH ROBERTSON AND MARIANA ALFARO

The House of Representatives on Thursday rejected a last-minute attempt to extend a controversial warrantless-surveillance law, as Democrats protested President Donald Trump's decision to temporarily place Bill Pulte, a mortgage agency director and MAGA loyalist, atop the U.S. intelligence community.

The vote failed 218-198, with 19 Republicans joining nearly all Democrats in opposing the bill. It would have required a two-

thirds majority to advance under the parliamentary tool House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-Louisiana) used to quickly bring the legislation to the floor.

The result all but ensures that Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, a post-9/11 spy tool that both parties have argued is critical to U.S. national security, will lapse for the first time.

Republicans said the FISA lapse endangers national security, but Democrats argued Pulte's appointment as acting head of U.S. intelligence was a bigger danger to Americans' safety.

A few hours after the failed vote, Trump nominated former Securities and Exchange Commission chair Jay Clayton to be the next full-time director of national intelligence, a posting that

SEE FISA ON A5



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

The House went on a week-long recess after the failed vote. When reporters asked House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-Louisiana), above, if he would call the chamber back, he said, "What would be the point?"

El Niño is here, and its domino disruptions

The warm eastern Pacific will induce a chain reaction

BY MATTHEW CAPPUCCI AND BEN NOLL

El Niño is here, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The agency issued an El Niño Advisory on Thursday morning, signifying that Earth has crossed a key threshold into El Niño territory. A chain-reaction process in the atmosphere is underway and will influence global weather patterns in the months ahead.

While El Niño begins as a warming of water temperatures in the eastern tropical Pacific, there are domino effects globally. And this installment of El Niño looks to be particularly intense and could develop into a highly anticipated super El Niño.

"There is a 63% chance of a very strong El Niño during November-January ... that would rank among the largest El Niño events in the historical record going back to 1950," NOAA wrote

SEE EL NIÑO ON A14

With SpaceX IPO, Elon Musk will become the first trillionaire — on paper

BY SHIRA OVIDE AND FAIZ SIDDIQUI

Welcome to history's first trillionaire. Sort of.

Elon Musk's SpaceX, a rocket, satellite internet and artificial intelligence company that's bleeding cash and has puny sales compared to established technology giants, announced Thursday the price for its initial public offering

of \$135 per share. The step sets up a blockbuster IPO that ranks as the largest in history, at about \$75 billion.

Musk was already the richest person in the world, according to lists from Bloomberg and Forbes. He's also in line to receive a trillion-dollar pay package if he hits certain milestones at the automaker Tesla. But the SpaceX IPO pushes him into trillionaire status, depending on how you count his wealth.

According to SpaceX's disclosures, Musk holds roughly half of the company's stock, including shares that he might earn far in the future tied to accomplishments such as shooting computer data centers into space and creating a human settlement on Mars. Those Musk shares in SpaceX are worth about \$867 bil-

lion at Thursday's IPO price.

Combined with the chunk of the automaker Tesla that also belongs to Musk, his stock in the two companies is valued at more than \$1.1 trillion combined, according to Washington Post calculations from SpaceX and Tesla securities filings.

As with nearly everything about Musk, his trillionaire status requires explanation. SpaceX

has granted big slugs of company stock that only pay off if he drives his company's value to monumental heights and if SpaceX achieves Musk's goal of establishing a populated human colony on Mars. Excluding those shares, Musk is just shy of trillionaire status, for now.

But based on SpaceX's report of Musk's holdings, the value of

SEE MUSK ON A11

IN THE NEWS

Trump's checkup The president appears to have set a new bar: 22 medical specialists assessed him, according to a report recently released by the White House. A10

ICE facility protest Brad Lander, a former NYC comptroller and a Democratic candidate for the U.S. House, was found not guilty. A9

THE NATION These seniors needed long-term care and rehab. Private Medicare plans denied them. A8
The DOJ charged pro-Palestinian activists in Michigan with threatening officials. A10

THE WORLD The global economy, tested by years of war, pandemic and trade tension, is beginning to fray, as fallout from the war on Iran dents prospects for growth, the World Bank said. A13

THE ECONOMY Oil and gas executives warned the White House that gasoline prices could surge in coming months as inventories fall to critical lows, complicating the Trump administration's efforts to contain inflation that has already rattled consumers. A18

STYLE A pop-up exhibit in D.C. features more than 3 million pages of files related to sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. B1
SPORTS Some of the top tennis talent in the U.S. will be on display this summer as the DC Open returns for its 57th year. B7

THE REGION A majority of D.C. residents are unhappy about the direction of the city, a poll found. We asked them why. B12
WEEKEND The premiere of "CrazySexyCool," now at Arena Stage, delves into the complex camaraderie of 1990s trio TLC.

BUSINESS NEWS.....A18
COMICS.....B4
OBITUARIES.....B14
OPINION PAGES.....A15
TELEVISION.....B6
WORLD NEWS.....A12

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The Washington Post
Year 149, No. 54610



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TRUMP CALLS OFF NEW STRIKES ON IRAN

Hours after threats that the U.S. would escalate the war, he cites progress in talks.

By JON GAMBRELL AND AAMER MADHANI

DUBAI — President Trump said Thursday he had called off new military strikes on Iran, claiming a breakthrough in negotiations to end the war just hours after the American leader threatened to escalate the conflict by seizing control of Iran's oil industry.

Trump has said multiple times in recent weeks that the warring parties have been on the cusp of a deal without anything coming to fruition. There was no immediate comment from officials in Iran, which the U.S. and Israel jointly attacked on Feb. 28, or from mediators taking part in negotiations.

Trump opened an Oval Office event Thursday afternoon saying: "We just made a great settlement of the war with Iran." He offered scant details, other than to say he expects an agreement to extend the ceasefire to be finalized "over the next few days."

Extending the terms of the ceasefire gives U.S. leaders more time to negotiate over Iran's nuclear program, the main reason Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu used to justify launching the war.

The announcement came after two days of back-and-forth attacks between the U.S. and Iran had pushed the Middle East closer to the resumption of a full-scale war.

Trump had threatened further escalation earlier Thursday, posting on social media that the U.S. would hit Iran "VERY HARD TONIGHT" and take "total control" of its oil and gas industries.

A few hours later, Trump posted on social media that significant points in the negotiations "have been brought to the highest level of Iranian leadership and approved." He also wrote that "discussions and final points have been, in both

[See Iran, A4]



SEAN M. HAFFEY/FIFA



KAYLA BARTKOWSKI/LOS ANGELES TIMES

PERFORMERS, top, dance during the opening ceremony before a match between Mexico and South Africa. Above, Mexico fans in Lynwood cheer. Their team won.

Soccer vs. angst as World Cup begins

Controversies threaten to overshadow the playing and cloud the tournament's legacy

By Kevin Baxter

In many ways, the most ambitious World Cup in history — which kicked off Thursday in Mexico City — has inspired more angst than anticipation, more fear than fervor.

The competition, returning to North America for the first time in more than three decades, has expanded to 48 teams and 104 matches, to be played over 39 days in 16 cities in the U.S., Mexico and Canada. The complex planning was eight years in the making.

Yet even before the competition opened with Mexico facing South Africa at the iconic Estadio Azteca, it has been marred by a number of controversies that threaten to overshadow the soccer and cloud the tournament's legacy.

"I view this World Cup as the most politically combustible World Cup in recent history. And that's saying something," said Jules Boykoff, a political science professor at the University of Portland and author of eight books on the politics of international sport.

"We're in uncharted territory in many ways."

Relations among the host countries, once strong, have been strained by the Trump administration's tariff policies and disagreements over border security. Travel bans have barred potential World Cup visitors — and even support staff and match officials — from entering the U.S., and others are fearful of making the

[See World Cup, A8]

U.S. HOPES: National team, hosting for the first time since 1994, has historic ambitions as it begins play against Paraguay at SoFi. **SPORTS, B10**

Most cases in L.A. abuse payout may be fake, D.A. says

Hochman seeks pause, says he needs more time to track fraud in \$4-billion settlement.

By REBECCA ELLIS

Los Angeles County's district attorney says he believes 4 in 5 claims in the largest sex abuse settlement in U.S. history may be fake — a claim that dwarfs previous assumptions over the scale of fraud within the \$4-billion payout.

Dist. Atty. Nathan Hochman has asked the judge overseeing the bulk of the sex abuse cases to pause payments for six months while he continues his sprawling criminal investigation into the plaintiffs, lawyers and therapists behind the claims.

Distributing the money now, he argues, will hamper his investigation "by complicating witness cooperation [and] obscuring financial trails."

The county agreed in April 2025 to pay \$4 billion to settle more than 11,000 claims of sexual abuse arising from county-run juvenile halls, foster homes and a notorious children's shelter. The claims, many of which

dated back decades, came after California changed the statute of limitations to give victims who were sexually abused as children a new window to sue.

Seven months after the payout was announced, the district attorney's office opened an inquiry, spurred by claims that some plaintiffs made up stories of abuse and were never in county custody. Times investigations found nine people who said they were paid small amounts of cash by recruiters to sue the county for sex abuse in juvenile halls. Four of them said they fabricated the claims.

Hochman's pause, if granted, would apply only to the abuse cases stemming from juvenile halls, which make up the bulk of the lawsuits, and not the cases arising from foster care or the children's shelter. Lawyers in the case are expected to go before Superior Court Judge Lawrence Riff on Monday for a hearing on the request.

The district attorney's request on Wednesday for another six-month delay unleashed an immediate backlash among victims, who had expected to receive their payments earlier this year and have grown weary of re-

[See L.A. County, A6]

UC may return to SAT, ACT tests

Faculty say math skills fell after campuses ditched standardized exams in admissions.

By JAWEED KALEEM

Six years after dropping SAT and ACT test requirements, members of an influential University of California admissions board said Thursday that the group will reconsider requiring the standardized tests, a major move favored by faculty who have complained that many students are severely deficient in math.

The potential reversal thrusts the nation's most prestigious public university system back into a contentious national debate over standardized testing, fairness and college readiness, and follows a wave of elite campuses — including Yale and Caltech — that have already brought the assessments back.

The move, announced by the UC-wide Academic Senate's Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools, comes amid mounting pressure from UC faculty and outside activists over the test-free approach. More

than 1,400 UC professors — many of them in math, science, technology and engineering — last month signed an open letter calling on UC to reinstate the admissions tests, setting off intense public advocacy and private lobbying of UC leaders from faculty, parents and students on different sides of the debate.

In their letter, the professors bemoaned that "we now observe preparation gaps so severe that instructors must reteach middle-school mathematics."

The plea followed a remarkable fall 2025 report from a UC San Diego Academic Senate group, which found a roughly 30-fold increase between 2020 and 2025 in incoming first-year students whose math skills tested below high school level, with 70% of those students falling below middle school levels.

Then last March, the UC-wide Academic Senate launched a process to further study the admissions process, including high school course requirements.

The decision to revisit standardized testing ultimately rests with the UC Board of Regents. If the tests are reinstated, the

[See Tests, A6]

Prop. 50 tactic paying off for Dems

By KEVIN RECTOR

California Democrats made it out of last week's primary election having kept the promise of Proposition 50 alive by advancing candidates to November runoff in all five Republican-held congressional districts that last year's redistricting measure targeted.

They now head toward November bullish about turning those districts blue, wresting control of the U.S. House from Republicans and delivering their party important leverage to challenge President Trump



MYUNG J. CHUN/LOS ANGELES TIMES

CANDIDATE Randy Villegas canvasses in Bakersfield, where he hopes to flip a Republican House seat.

through the remainder of his second term.

"As Democrats, we are united in our fight to flip this seat and to take back the House for Democrats here in '26," progressive college professor Randy Villegas told The Times after besting his Democratic challenger to advance and take on Rep. David Valadao (R-Hanford) in the redrawn 22nd Congressional District. "We know the path to taking back the House runs through the Central Valley."

Robert Jones, a Valadao campaign strategist, said Valadao "is always humbled

[See House seats, A8]

El Niño is here and looks to be a doozy

Forecasters say the climate pattern could bring the Southland lots of winter rain.

By RONG-GONG LIN II

El Niño has officially arrived, the National Weather Service declared Thursday, bringing with it a greater chance of lots of rain in

Southern California this winter.

The climate pattern developed over the last month and is expected to continue to strengthen, with the weather service's Climate Prediction Center assessing a 63% chance of a "very strong" El Niño later this year that would rank among the most powerful on record since 1950.

A very strong El Niño "more significantly tilts the

odds towards wetter-than-normal conditions here in Southern California," Ariel Cohen, a meteorologist at the weather service's Oxnard office, said during a briefing Thursday at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach.

Oceanic conditions have rapidly changed in recent months, giving scientists greater confidence of a strong or very strong El Niño later this year — particularly

from November through January. Among them are temperatures increasing deep beneath the ocean's surface, as warmer water from the western Pacific Ocean moves east.

Those deeper, warmer waters "are the fuel, if you will, for the development and strengthening of the upcoming El Niño event," which is one reason why scientists are expecting

[See El Niño, A12]

Key spy tool on verge of expiring

Congress fails to extend FISA's surveillance powers in wake of a controversial Trump pick. **NATION, A5**

Damages climb in boys' deaths

A civil jury finds Rebecca Grossman and another motorist should pay nearly \$200 million. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

L.A. drivers feel pain at the pump

Residents scramble to cut back on other expenses as the high price of gas hits California hard. **BUSINESS, A10**

Weather Partly sunny. L.A. Basin: 83/64. **B6**

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ROBERT GAUTHIER/L.A. Times
A VINTAGE poster from "This Land Is..."

The Huntington's 250th salute

The San Marino museum marks America's anniversary with a retrospective exhibition. **ENTERTAINMENT, E1**

Markets **A12**
Opinion Voices **A13**