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**BREAKING NEWS: SPACEX SET TO LAUNCH 46 STARLINK SATELLITES**

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No. 123 Luca Nardi upsets No. 1 Novak Djokovic at Indian Wells Page 9

**Biden to tout new \$3.3 billion infrastructure plan in Milwaukee**

By Clyde Hughes  
UPI

President Joe Biden will announce in Milwaukee on Wednesday \$3.3 billion in infrastructure grants that will be used across the country to connect communities divided by other projects.

The grants, done in conjunction with the Department of Transportation, will cover more than 130 projects in 41 states, and will attempt to give access to neighborhoods and communities cut off from transportation infrastructure years ago, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said.

"Highways and rail lines have disproportionately torn through Black and other communities of color and low-income com-



munities, displacing residents and businesses, stifling economic development and cutting communities off from essentials such as groceries, jobs, transportation and healthcare," the White House said in a statement.

While in Milwaukee, Biden will announce \$36 million for the 6th Street Complete Streets Project which aims to provide wider sidewalks, safer bike lanes, dedicated bus lanes and other changes to 6th street after it was widened following the construction of I-94/I-43 in the 1960s.

A grant given to Atlanta's Belt-Line will help complete a planned loop of a multi-use trail and light rail to reconnect a former rail-

See **PLAN**, page 5

**Massachusetts governor announces misdemeanor marijuana pardons**



By Patrick Hilsman  
UPI

Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey announced Wednesday a plan to issue sweeping pardons for all misdemeanor marijuana convictions in the state.

While cases of simple possession will be covered by the pardon, trafficking convictions will not be covered.

"We can be certain that this pardon will address some of the harm those disparities have caused in Massachusetts," Healey said.

In order to be implemented, the plan must be approved by the

eight-member Governor's Council.

"If approved, Gov. Healey's pardon will apply to all eligible convictions, and most people will not need to take any action to have their criminal records updated. It would apply to all adult Massachusetts state court misdemeanor convictions before March 13, 2024, for possession of marijuana," the governor's office said in a press release Wednesday.

An online system will be set up to help people obtain documentation to prove that they have been

See **PARDONS**, page 4

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# OPINION

## The Right and Privilege to Vote

The New York City legislature, following in the footsteps of Washington, D.C., passed a groundbreaking bill into law in 2022. The law would have allowed any lawful permanent resident or green card holder to vote in a New York City election. This law was swiftly met with legal challenges as quickly as it was passed, which is to be expected given that it flagrantly infringed upon the state's constitution.

The Constitution of New York states unequivocally, "every citizen shall be entitled to vote..." This provision's meaning is so obvious that it has been painful to see the far-left liberal New York City Council pass a law that violates it. It is evident that the New York City legislature misplaced their reading glasses, as they would not have enacted a law that contradicts the New York Constitution in such a bizarre way.

The majority opinion, authored by appellate Judge Paul Wooten, stated, "The plain language of this provision provides that the right to vote in 'every election for all officers elected by the people' is available exclusively to citizens."

Unsurprisingly, pro-immigrant organizations denounced the decision, calling it "shameful" and

saying it "disenfranchise[s] residents." Disenfranchises? Really? This remark is as illogical as it is absurd. The only people disenfranchised by this law are United States citizens. Voter disenfranchisement entails impeding an individual's ability to exercise their right to vote or diminishing the value of their vote. The reason the Electoral College is reviled by the Left is because, according



ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS

to their worldview, it confers greater value on specific votes than others, especially in smaller states.

The right to vote is sacred. However, the Left has forgotten that it must be earned, not given. Not earned in the conventional sense of passing a test to acquire, like the racist literacy tests of the past; rather, acquired through enduring the complexities and challenges associated with being a citizen. Becoming a citizen is not a simple task; individuals must either be so lucky as to be born in the United States, or endure a laborious and sometimes yearslong application process. There are discernible indicators in both processes

that demonstrate an individual is prepared and deserving of the right to vote.

A person born in the United States has lived and grown in that country. They have gone through the government-mandated educational system and complied with the laws of this country for their entire lives; they have fulfilled their responsibilities through compliance and, in the case of some, hardship brought upon by our laws. Individuals who obtain citizenship have demonstrated their readiness to undertake substantial obligations and sacrifices to integrate into a foreign nation. They have sworn allegiance to a new nation after navigating a complex legal system, and many have become proficient in a foreign language.

Nothing of the sort applies to noncitizens. There are undoubtedly many noncitizens loyal to this country, but they, like everyone else, must undergo the same process to demonstrate that they have earned the right to vote. It is inequitable to accord equal weight to the votes of transient individuals who enter the country for economic purposes, return their funds to their country of origin, or who are mere public charges, in comparison to those who have sworn allegiance to the United States and who

have gone through the process to become a citizen.

Through the news, we tragically witness the disloyal individuals who come here and commit heinous acts daily. Migrants assaulting police officers, MS-13 gangs wreaking havoc on the population, migrants stabbing innocent people in Georgia. These tragedies have become routine occurrences. Should these individuals, whose sole intention is to cause harm or act selfishly, be permitted to vote? Undoubtedly not. Should individuals who immigrate in pursuit of economic prosperity gain the right to vote? Eventually, but only after enduring the same trials and tribulations that each and every American has also endured.

The foundation of the United States is immigration. Each of us is an immigrant in some capacity. Our right to vote has been acquired through either our unwavering allegiance to the United States or our successful completion of the trials and systems established by the country. If an individual claims your vote lacks significance, you should explain the arduous journey you undertook to earn that privilege and the actions you undertook as a citizen. It just might convince someone to reconsider their position.

## Vaccine-skeptical moms say bad healthcare experiences fueled distrust of system

By Johanna Richlin  
University of Maine

Why would a mother reject safe, potentially lifesaving vaccines for her child?

Popular writing on vaccine skepticism often denigrates White and middle-class mothers who reject some or all recommended vaccines as hysterical, misinformed, zealous or ignorant. Mainstream media and medical providers increasingly dismiss vaccine refusal as a hallmark of American fringe ideology, far-right radicalization or anti-intellectualism.

But vaccine skepticism, and the broader medical mistrust and far-reaching anxieties it reflects, is not just a fringe position.

Pediatric vaccination rates had fallen sharply before the COVID-19 pandemic, ushering in the return of measles, mumps and chickenpox to the United States in 2019. Four years after the pandemic's onset, a growing number of Americans doubt the safety, efficacy and necessity of routine vaccines.

Childhood vaccination rates have declined substantially across the United States, which public health officials attribute to a "spillover" effect from pandemic-related vaccine skepticism and blame for the recent measles outbreak. Almost half of American mothers rated the risk of side effects from the MMR vaccine as medium or high in a 2023 survey by Pew Research.

Recommended vaccines go through rigorous testing and evaluation, and the most infamous charges of vaccine-induced injury have been thoroughly debunked. How do so many mothers -- primary caregivers and healthcare decision-makers for their families -- become wary of U.S. healthcare and one of its most proven preventive technologies?

I'm a cultural anthropologist who studies the ways feelings and beliefs circulate in American society. To investigate what's behind mothers' vaccine skepticism, I interviewed vaccine-skeptical mothers about their perceptions of existing and novel vaccines. What they told me complicates sweeping and overly simplified portrayals of their misgivings by pointing to the U.S. healthcare system itself. The medical system's failures and harms against women gave rise to their pervasive vaccine skepticism and generalized medical mistrust.

### Seeds of skepticism

I conducted this ethnographic research in Oregon from 2020 to 2021 with predominantly White mothers between the ages of 25 and 60. My findings reveal new insights about the origins of vaccine skepticism among this demographic. These women traced their distrust of vaccines, and of U.S. healthcare more generally, to ongoing and repeated instances of medical harm they experienced from childhood through childbirth.

As young girls in medical offices, they were touched without consent, yelled at, disbelieved or threatened. One mother, Susan, recalled her pediatrician abruptly lying her down and performing a rectal exam without her consent at the age of 12. Another mother, Luna, shared how a pediatrician once threatened to have her institutionalized when she voiced anxiety at a routine physical.

As women giving birth, they often felt managed, pressured or discounted. One mother, Meryl, told me, "I felt like I was coerced under distress into Pitocin and induction" during labor. Another mother, Hallie, shared, "I really battled with my provider" throughout the childbirth experience.

Together with the convoluted bureaucracy of for-profit healthcare, experiences of medical harm contributed to "1 million little touch points of information," in one mother's phrase, that underscored the untrustworthiness and harmful effects of U.S. healthcare writ large.

## World threatened by massive attacks of disruption, destruction

By Harlan Ullman  
UPI

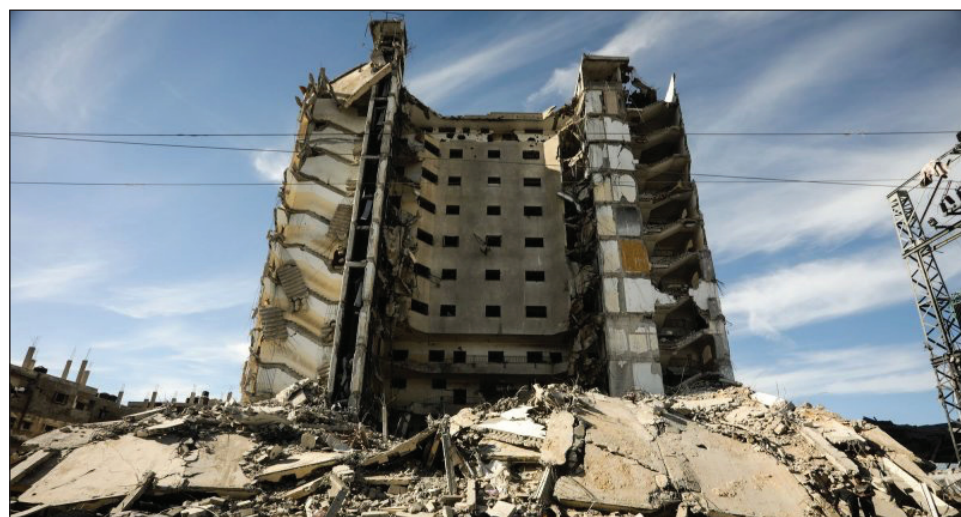
For more than a decade, I have been making the argument and sounding the alarm that the greatest existential danger to the world at large was Massive Attacks of Disruption, whether caused by man or by nature.

I would add a second D for destruction. The wars in Ukraine and Gaza reflect the first. COVID-19 and environmental catastrophes from floods and droughts to uncontrollable fires are caused by the latter.

The most recent example underscores the nature of the threats and the dangers posed by MAD. Houthis operating from a very underdeveloped Yemen are blocking and threatening the peaceful passage of global shipping in an international waterway with drones, advanced air breathing and ballistic missiles. The Red Sea has long been known as a "chokepoint" for seaborne commerce.

Scenarios for this and other chokepoints are not new. Sea mines have been used for centuries to block chokepoints. But the application of advanced and often cheap technologies has never before been used so effectively. About one-seventh of global trade sails through the Suez Canal, having to transit the Red Sea coming or going. About half that traffic recently has been rerouted around Africa's southern Cape of Good Hope, greatly increasing transit time and costs to the shippers.

Last week, several sailors were killed and the merchant ship Rubymar



was sunk, underscoring the risks. In December, the United States formed an international coalition of about 20 states to protect these civilian ships. The operation was named Prosperity Guardian. The prime purpose of the warships was to defend against Houthi air and, if they occur, surface and underwater attacks.

A secondary purpose was to target Houthi shore-based drone and missile sites, as well as command, control and surveillance systems.

Substantial numbers of Houthi drones and missiles have been shot down. But so-called "leakers" have penetrated the defenses, as no defense is perfect. And the Houthis are winning the cost-exchange battle.

A U.S. Navy SM-6 anti-air missile costs about \$6 million; a Tomahawk land attack missile about \$2 million. Some of the Houthi drones cost in the thousands of dollars. And U.S. warships cannot rearm at sea, meaning they must depart the battle zone once their magazines are empty.

The Houthis argue that their attacks are legal and

in support of Gaza in a war they claim is being illegally waged by Israel, even though it was caused by Hamas' Oct. 7 massacre of 1,200 Israelis in an unprovoked and hideous act of terror. Yet, shipping lines cannot take the risk of one of their vessels being hit or sunk and many are diverting to more expensive and time-consuming routes.

### What can be done?

Given that Yemen has minimal production facilities for ballistic and cruise missiles, the obvious supplier is Iran, although other states such as North Korea cannot be excluded. Iran's leaders have consistently denied wanting a larger war and are playing a very cynical and double game of plausibly denying any involvement. Drones are relatively cheap and Ukraine has demonstrated how effectively they can change the battlefield.

Prosperity Guardian has four basic strategic options. It can continue its present operation to protect and defend civilian shipping and attrit Houthi missile and drone attacks, hoping that at some point

the other side runs out of bullets that it otherwise needs for self-defense. Option two is to escalate air attacks to accelerate Houthi attrition.

Option three is to deploy land and special forces to destroy sufficient facilities and weapons to disarm the Houthis of these capabilities. Last is to target Iran with sanctions, blockades and even disarming strikes to cut off the source of Houthi arms. Clearly, using land forces is risky and potentially dangerous if escalation follows and more troops are needed. Physical attacks on Iran could certainly provoke a broader conflict and even a war.

At some stage, the war in Gaza will end. But that does not mean Houthis will not retain the ability to block the Red Sea or attack ships in transit for specific reasons beyond Gaza and perhaps to continue applying pressure to Israel by restricting its trade and access to the south and east. Hence, Prosperity Guardian could become a more permanent operation requiring substantial resources to sustain it.



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## House passes bill aiming to force TikTok to end Chinese ownership

By Doug Cunningham  
UPI

A bill that would ban TikTok from U.S. app stores unless it is sold off by Chinese company ByteDance was passed by the House on Wednesday.

The measure passed by a 352-65 vote.

"We are united in our concern about the national security threat posed by TikTok -- a platform with enormous power to influence and divide Americans whose parent company ByteDance remains legally required to do the bidding of the Chinese Communist Party," Senate Select Committee on Intelligence leaders Mark Warner, D-Va., and Marco Rubio, R-Fla., said in a statement.

At the heart of the bill is the belief among supportive lawmakers that it poses a national security threat to the United States because data collected by the app on roughly 170 million American users could be accessed by the Chinese government.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., has not committed to taking up the bill in the Senate.

TikTok opposed the bill and said in a statement it will now focus on the Senate.

"We are hopeful that the Senate will consider the facts, listen to their constituents and realize the impact on the economy, 7 million small businesses and the 170 million Americans who use our service," TikTok said.



President Joe Biden said he intends to sign the legislation if Congress passes it.

Rep. Nancy Mace, R-S.C., who voted against the bill, said "it is not the role of government to ban apps from the app store."

"Nowhere in the Constitution does it say that," she said.

Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., who represents parts of Silicon Valley, voted against the bill, citing a First Amendment concern. But he also

expressed concern about American data security and called for an Internet privacy bill.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, said the Senate will likely take up the House bill but amend it.

FBI Director Christopher Wray told the House Intelligence Committee on Tuesday that TikTok poses a national security threat.

"Americans need to ask themselves whether they want to give the Chinese government the

ability to control access to their data, whether they want to give the Chinese government the ability to control the information they get through the recommendation algorithm," Wray said.

Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Wis., Chair of a House select committee on China disputes that the bipartisan bill amounts to a ban. He calls it a divestiture.

"What the bill does is give TikTok a simple choice," Gallagher

wrote on X. "Either side with its users...and allow people to speak free from the fear of propaganda or censorship, or side with the Chinese Communist Party."

He said the bill addresses national security issues while still protecting Americans' free speech rights.

TikTok opposes the bill that would give ByteDance 165 days to spin off the app.

"This legislation has a predetermined outcome: a total ban of TikTok in the United States," the Chinese-owned company said in a statement on X prior to the House vote. "The government is attempting to strip 170 million Americans of their constitutional right to free expression."

TikTok CEO Shou Chew last year testified to Congress that the app doesn't share user information with the Chinese government even as he acknowledged that TikTok collected American user data in the past and some of it was still on servers ByteDance could access.

Former President Donald Trump signed an executive order during his time in office that would have banned TikTok from U.S. app stores but it was blocked by a federal judge as ByteDance sued, arguing the ban violates the First Amendment.

Trump, who is running for re-election in November, has since altered his stance, maintaining that TikTok poses a national security threat but saying banning the app would benefit Meta and its flagship Facebook platform.

## Tennessee soccer coach indicted for allegedly drugging, raping boys

By Sheri Walsh  
UPI

A former Tennessee soccer coach has been indicted by a grand jury on 31 sex-related charges for allegedly drugging and raping boys who played on his team.

According to the indictment, some of the victims were deemed "mentally incapacitated" and "physically helpless" in what Franklin police called one of the most "disturbing and egregious" child sex abuse cases.

The charges against Camilo Hurtado

Campos -- who was arrested in Franklin last summer -- include 17 counts of rape, six counts of aggravated sexual exploitation



CAMPOS

of a minor, four counts of sexual exploitation of a minor, possession of more than 50 images/videos of minors, in addition to possession of marijuana and cocaine, according to the Williamson County grand jury in the March 6 indictment.

"I think that as time goes on and we con-

tinue to scour through evidence, we're going to uncover even more horrific things," Lt. Charles Warner with the Franklin Police Department told News 2.

Warner said Campos allegedly gave his victims potent drugs that left them in a "dangerously comatose state."

"What's been described to me by the people reviewing these videos and these images is that these kids are like rag dolls," Warner said. "They're comatose and completely lethargic."

According to police, one victim told investigators he had no memory of the

assault.

The videos and images that Campos allegedly recorded on his phone of him raping unconscious boys between the ages of 9 and 17 years old, according to the Franklin Police Department, were discovered after his phone was left behind at a local restaurant.

According to police, Campos had spent time at neighborhood school playgrounds where he recruited boys to play on his team. After earning their trust, police said the 63-year-old coach would invite them to his home where he drugged and raped them.

## Hunter Biden declines to testify in public hearing on GOP impeachment inquiry

By Doug Cunningham  
UPI

Hunter Biden will not attend a public hearing on the House impeachment inquiry into his father, President Joe Biden, scheduled for next week his attorneys told lawmakers Wednesday.

Abbe Lowell, an attorney for Hunter Biden, wrote in a letter to House Oversight and Accountability Committee Chair James Comer, R-Ky., that his client "declines your invitation to this carnival side show" and will not appear at a March 20 public impeachment hearing.

"I must confess my surprise by your hasty request. After that six-plus hour deposition on February 28, 2024, along with the

realization that your inquiry was based on a patchwork of conspiracies spun by convicted liars and a charged Russian spy, I thought even you would recognize your baseless impeachment proceeding was dead," Lowell said.

He noted that Republicans wanted Biden to appear the day before he is to appear in court in California on a criminal tax charge but asserted that was "the least of the issues" with the request, citing federal charges against Alexander Smirnov, a former FBI informant who prosecutors said lied about the Bidens' involvement in Ukrainian energy company Burisma.

Smirnov, a key witness that Republicans based much of their impeachment inquiry on, was



re-arrested after prosecutors asserted there was a strong risk Smirnov would use Russian intelligence contacts to flee the United States before his trial.

"Your blatant planned-for-media event is not a proper proceeding but an obvious attempt to throw a Hail Mary pass after the game has ended," said Lowell.

Comer told NBC News the committee would move ahead with the hearing as intended, adding it had "called Hunter Biden's bluff" after he previously requested public testimony as he refused to testify privately before the committee.

"Hunter Biden for months stated he wanted a public hearing, but now that one has been offered alongside his business associates that he worked with for years, he is refusing to come," he said.

Hunter Biden ultimately complied and testified in a six-hour session on Feb. 28 after lawmakers threatened to hold him in contempt of Congress.

He said in an opening statement that he never involved his father in his businesses.

# Trillium Health Resources Partners with NCDHHS to Provide Free App to Support Individuals in Recovery

THE CHESSE HEALTH ERECOVERY SOLUTION OFFERS DAILY CHECK-INS, TRACKING, AND SUPPORT

GREENVILLE, N.C. – Trillium Health Resources announces a new recovery-focused solution available to providers and their patients.

Through a contract with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), Trillium extends the CHESSE Health eRecovery solution to behavioral health providers in our 46 county region. This evidence-based mobile app offers daily check-ins, goal setting, recovery tracking, support group meetings, and a moderated 24/7 online peer community—all provided free of charge.

“Trillium has a tradition of launching innovative programs such as our inclusive playgrounds and mobile integrated care units. We champion the use of effective technology to enhance the lives of those we serve. eRecovery will support our providers by extend-

ing their reach, while providing a bridge to continuous connection and support for those in recovery,” shared Christie Edwards, Senior Vice President of Operations at Trillium. “We are grateful to our partnership with the NCDHHS to make this resource available.”

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), substance use disorder (SUD) relapse rates range from 40-60%, emphasizing the critical need for solutions that offer consistent support. Of the individuals using the Connections app, research has shown that 85% of individuals reported improvement in several key areas.

“We know there is no one-size-fits-all model to recovery,” said Kelly Crosbie, MSW, LCSW, Director of the NCDHHS Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Use Services. “We are pleased to pro-

vide North Carolinians with an additional, evidence-based tool to support their recovery, when and where they need them.”

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis right now, help is available. Call or text the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988 or chat 988lifeline.org. People who speak Spanish can now connect directly to Spanish-speaking crisis counselors by calling 988 and pressing option 2, texting “AYUDA” to 988, or chatting online at 988lineadevida.org or 988Lifeline.org.

Any interested behavioral health providers can complete this short form for more information about using CHESSE.

### ABOUT TRILLIUM HEALTH RESOURCES

Trillium Health Resources is an innovative health plan for individuals with serious behavioral

health, intellectual/developmental disabilities, and traumatic brain injury in 46 counties in North Carolina. Through contracts with NCDHHS, we serve Medicaid members on NC Medicaid Direct, state-funded recipients who are uninsured, and members on the Innovations Waiver. Trillium’s mission is transforming lives and building community well-being through partnership and proven solutions. We take an integrated approach to health and wellbeing, coordinating care across multiple systems to achieve improved health outcomes, quality of care and efficient use of resources. Trillium is dedicated to meeting the unique needs of the individuals and communities we serve, and remains focused on delivering the right services, in the right amount, at the right time. For more information, visit [www.TrilliumHealthResources.org](http://www.TrilliumHealthResources.org).

### ABOUT CHESSE HEALTH

CHESSE Health is the leading provider of evidence-based digital health solutions addressing the individual and societal crisis of substance use disorder (SUD). Solutions are offered in partnership with healthcare providers, community organizations, state and local government, and health plans. CHESSE Health solutions span the entire lifecycle of SUD management from prevention and intervention to treatment and recovery and are proven to help more individuals enter treatment, improve patient retention, reduce the risk of relapse, and lower the overall cost of care. Through CHESSE Health’s current partnerships, statewide initiatives have been implemented across New Mexico, Oklahoma, and West Virginia. For more information, visit [chess.health](http://chess.health).

## Pardons

continued from page 1

pardoned.

“We’re taking this nation-leading action as part of our commitment to using the clemency process to advance fairness and equity in our criminal justice system,” Healey said.

Healey made marijuana pardons a part of her 2022 gubernatorial run and linked Wednesday’s announcement to national marijuana reform efforts.

During the State of the Union Address Thursday, President Joe Biden said, “No one should be jailed for using or possessing marijuana.”

“We’re grateful for President Biden’s leadership on this at the federal level and proud to answer this call to take action in the states,” Healey said.

## Judge tosses 6 charges in Ga. election case against Donald Trump, others

By Joe Fisher  
UPI

Superior Court Judge Scott McAfee dismissed six of the 41 counts against Donald Trump and other defendants in the election subversion case in Fulton County, Ga., on Wednesday.

McAfee determined that the charges related to the defendants’ soliciting Georgia officials to violate their oath of office failed to clearly state the crime those officials were asked to commit, according to Wednesday’s filing.

“The court’s concern is less that the state has failed to allege sufficient conduct of the defendants -- in fact it has alleged an abundance,” McAfee wrote. “However, the lack of

detail concerning an essential legal element is, in the undersigned’s opinion, fatal.”

McAfee goes on to explain that the six counts in question contain “all the essential elements of the crimes but fail to allege sufficient detail regarding the nature of their commission.”

He adds that the charges do not give defendants enough information to prepare their defenses.

“The defendants could have violated the Constitutions and thus the statute in dozens, if not hundreds, of distinct ways,” McAfee wrote.

Despite the dismissal of these charges, McAfee clarifies that the “overt conduct” alleged in the charges can be argued by prosecutors to

support other charges in the racketeering case.

“And even then, a defendant can be found guilty of conspiracy even after acquittal of any overt acts alleged to have been committed by that defendant, as long as at least one overt act is proven to have been committed by a co-conspirator,” McAfee wrote.

McAfee denied the defendants’ attempt to challenge overt acts charged in six other counts, citing different pleading standards.

McAfee has not ruled on an attempt by the defense to remove Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis and lead prosecutor Nathan Wade from the case. He said in a hearing on March 1 that he hopes to have a decision by Friday.



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# U.S. healthcare providers reeling from cyberattack

By Robin Foster  
HealthDay Reporter

After a cyberattack on the largest health insurer in the United States last month, health care providers continue to scramble as insurance payments and prescription orders continue to be disrupted and physicians lose an estimated \$100 million a day.

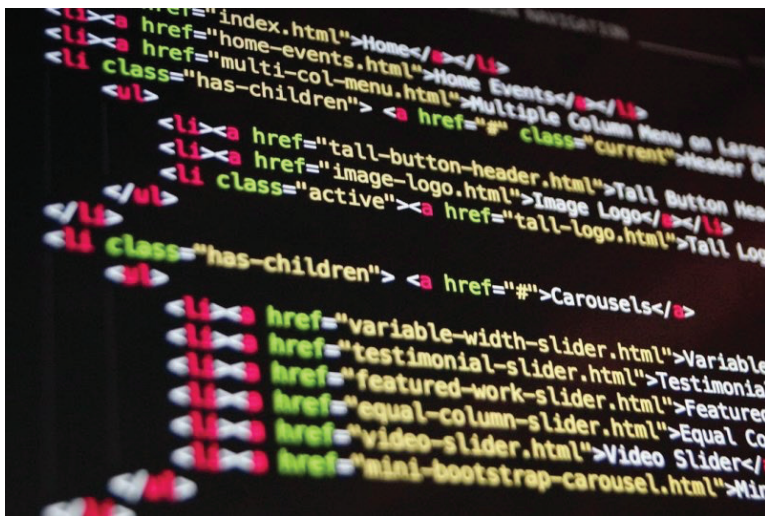
That estimate was generated by First Health Advisory, a cybersecurity firm that specializes in the health industry, according to the American Medical Association.

"This massive breach and its wide-ranging repercussions have hit physician practices across the country, risking patients' access to their doctors and straining viability of medical practices themselves," AMA President Dr. Jesse Ehrenfeld said in a news release.

"Against the backdrop of persistent Medicare cuts, rising practice costs and spiraling regulatory burdens, this unparalleled cyber-attack and disruption threatens the viability of many practices, particularly small practices and those in rural and underserved areas," he added. "This is an immense crisis demanding immediate attention."

How did the crisis begin?

The security breach was first detected Feb. 21 at Change Health-



care, part of Optum Inc., which in turn is owned by UnitedHealth Group.

In a report filed that day with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, UnitedHealth Group told government officials that it had been forced to sever some of Change Healthcare's vast digital network from its clients. It hasn't yet been able to restore all of those services.

In its latest update on the attack, Change Healthcare said the company is working to get the provider payment systems back up by the middle of March.

"UnitedHealth Group continues to make substantial progress in mitigating the impact to consumers and care providers of the unprecedented cyberattack on the

U.S. health system and the Change Healthcare claims and payment infrastructure," the company said in a statement.

"We are committed to providing relief for people affected by this malicious attack on the U.S. health system," UnitedHealth CEO Andrew Witty added in the statement.

"All of us at UnitedHealth Group feel a deep sense of responsibility for recovery and are working tirelessly to ensure that providers can care for their patients and run their practices, and that patients can get their medications. We're determined to make this right as fast as possible."

Until then, the effects on patients and doctors alike continues.

"This is by far the biggest ever cybersecurity attack on the American healthcare system ever," Dr. Céline Gounder, an editor-at-large for public health at KFF Health News and a CBS News medical contributor, said Tuesday.

"This is a system, Change Healthcare, that processes medical payments and touches one out of every three patients in this country. So the magnitude of the scope of this attack is really quite large."

Gounder explained that a provider's ability to bill and process things like prior authorizations have been hampered since the cyberattack.

"Can you get those medications? Can you get an estimate, say, on a surgery that you want to schedule? What is that going to look like in terms of your insurance coverage, and so on. All of those kinds of things are being affected," she told CBS News.

It's also affecting patients' ability to fill their prescriptions at some hospitals.

"Here, for example, we're only able to give some patients only two weeks of refill," Gounder said. "So, it means that they may need to come back over and over again. And some patients are even having to pay out of pocket for their refills."

Two weeks after the attack, the federal government stepped

in to help. On March 5, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced several assistance programs for health providers who have been affected.

"The government is trying to create some supports for health care systems -- not directly supporting patients, but the systems," Gounder explained.

"This is because without revenue coming in through the billing process, you don't have money to make payroll to be able to pay your doctors and your nurses and your janitors and all the staff that you need to run a health care system."

The attack is also interfering with the ability to order needed medications and supplies, she adds.

"So the idea is to try to help support health care systems through this, but especially Medicaid providers, those who have less of a buffer, so to speak, financially - they're really in deep trouble here," Gounder said.

Unfortunately, this cyberattack will likely not be the last: Federal officials estimate that large breaches of health care data have nearly doubled from 2018 to 2022.

More information: Visit HealthIT.gov for more on health information security.

# Biden, Trump clinch nominations for presidential election rematch

By Sheri Walsh  
UPI

Former President Donald Trump and President Joe Biden have officially clinched their parties' nominations Tuesday night with wins in Georgia, Mississippi and Washington, setting-up a November rematch in this year's presidential election.

Biden secured the 2024 Democratic presidential nomination earlier in the evening with wins in Georgia and Mississippi to secure the necessary 1,968 delegates, as former President Donald Trump clinched the 2024 Republican presidential nomination hours later with wins in Georgia, Mississippi and Washington, surpassing the required 1,215 delegates.

In a statement after winning the nomination, Trump called the milestone a "great honor."

"It is my great honor to be representing the Republican Party as its Presidential Nominee," Trump wrote Tuesday night in a post on Truth Social, before blasting his opponent.

"Our Party is UNITED and STRONG, and fully understands that we are running against the worst, most incompetent, corrupt, and destructive president in the history of the United States. Millions of people are invading our country, many from prisons and mental institutions of other countries. High interest rates and inflation are choking our great middle class," Trump wrote.

"We are now, under Crooked Joe Biden, a third world nation, which uses the injustice system to go

after his political opponent, ME! But fear not, we will not fail, we will take back our once great country, put AMERICA FIRST, and MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN," Trump added.

After locking up the Democratic nomination, the Biden campaign released a video Tuesday in a post on X, with the words "Clinched the nomination" and "Let's go."

"Despite the challenges we faced when I took office, we're in the middle of a comeback: wages are rising faster than inflation, jobs are coming back, consumer confidence has soared," Biden said in a statement Tuesday night, before taking a swipe at Trump.

"Amid this progress, we face a sobering reality: Freedom and democracy are at risk here at home in a way they have not been since the Civil War. Donald Trump is running a campaign of resentment, revenge and retribution that threatens the very idea of America," Biden added.

While Biden, 81, did not face any major opposition in any of the contests leading to his nomination, he did face a push for "uncommitted" in a protest vote over his policy toward Israel's war in Gaza.

During the primaries and caucuses, Trump, 77, faced as many as eight candidates including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, who dropped out of the race after last week's Super Tuesday contests.

Earlier Tuesday, a Republican group -- opposing the former president -- announced it would spend \$50 million in



six swing states to keep him from winning in November, calling Trump "too dangerous and too unhinged to ever be president again."

Biden is also facing opposition from within his own party with age being the biggest issue.

"He was forced on us by the establishment, but he is manifestly not the same man that he was even three years ago, and that has made him less optimally fit for the office, if not simply unfit," Liano Sharon, a Democratic National Committee member from Michigan, said in an interview. Others have touted last week's State of the Union address as proof he is ready for a second term.

"The Biden campaign got one of the most impressive opportunities at a reset with the State of the Union," said Marc Morial, president of the National Urban League.

## Plan

continued from page 1

way corridor limited by the growth of Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport and freeways.

The White House said part of the funds will go to reconnect neighborhoods divided by the busy Cross Bronx Expressway and a bridge across Shelby County Road 52 in Pel-

ham, Ala. to eliminate first responders and drivers stalled behind slow and stalled trains.

Other projects will focus on infrastructure in Idaho, Oregon and Pennsylvania.

"While the purpose of transportation is to connect, in too many communities, past infrastructure decisions have served instead to divide," Buttigieg said in a statement. "Today, we are proud to announce an

unprecedented \$3.3 billion to help 132 communities deliver better infrastructure that reconnects residents to jobs, healthcare and other essentials."

The White House said it is also planning to spend \$108 billion in public transit to help low-income communities that are more likely to use public transportation to get to jobs, schooling and medical services.

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# Four U.S. Army ships deploy for mission to construct humanitarian pier in Gaza

By Darryl Coote  
UPI

The Pentagon on Tuesday deployed four Army vessels and their crews to Gaza where they will build a temporary port for the delivery of humanitarian aid, U.S. military officials said, as the situation in the Palestinian enclave threatens to further deteriorate.

The four ships deployed from Joint Base Langley-Eustis near Newport News, Va., earlier Tuesday carrying equipment and supplies for the mission, Pentagon press secretary Air Force Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder said in a press briefing.

Ryder identified the ships as the USAV SP4 James A. Loux, USAV Monterrey, USAV Matamoros and USAV Wilson Wharf from the 7th Transportation Brigade Expeditionary. U.S. Central Command confirmed their deployment in a statement.

"Once in theater, these vessels and their crews will establish a roll-on/roll-off pier capability that allows ship-to-shore humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza," he said.

President Joe Biden announced the plan to build the temporary



pier on Thursday in his State of the Union as his administration has expressed frustration with Israel as the Palestinian death toll from its war in Gaza continues to climb. The Biden administration has also been under pressure by its own party to distance itself from the government of Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over its war against Hamas that began in October

The president in his address said the port would "enable a massive increase" in the amount of humanitarian aid reaching Gaza where fears of a deepening famine grow.

The United Nations' World Food Program said Tuesday that it was able to make its first aid delivery to northern Gaza in nearly a month, delivering enough food for only 25,000 people in Gaza City.

"If we do not exponentially increase the size of aid going into northern areas, famine is immi-

nent," WFP Executive Director Cindy McCain said Monday.

Ryder told reporters Tuesday that the pier is to be fully operational within 60 days of Biden's announcement and the facility will enable the delivery of up to 2 million meals a day.

The pier, the location of which in Gaza has yet to be disclosed, is being constructed as the United States continues with air dropping aid into the Palestinian enclave.

Since the first airdrop on March 2, U.S. Central Command has conducted eight deliveries into Gaza, dropping more than 204,000 meals, 48,000 bottles of water and more than 5,000 pounds of food items, Ryder said.

The war in Gaza began Oct. 7 with the Iran-backed Hamas launching a surprise attack on Israel, killing some 1,200 people and kidnapping another 253.

Israel has responded with a brutal offensive that has leveled much of the enclave, which is home to more than 2 million people. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health on Tuesday, the death toll has reached more than 31,000 people. It says 72% of the victims are women and children.

# Putin says he will re-deploy troops along Finland border in response to NATO accession

By Paul Godfrey  
UPI

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday he would re-deploy military forces along the border with Finland in response to the country becoming a mem-

ber of the NATO alliance in April.

Putin made the threat in an interview with state media in response to what he said was Finland and Sweden's "absolutely senseless step from the point of view of ensuring their own

national interests."

"We generally had ideal relations with Finland. Simply perfect. We did not have a single claim against each other, especially territorial, not to mention other areas. We didn't even have troops; we removed all the

troops from there, from the Russian-Finnish border," he said.

"However, it is up to them to decide. That's what they decided. But we didn't have troops there, now we will."

Finland and Sweden applied to join NATO together in 2022, shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Finland officially joined the military alliance last April, while Sweden was forced to wait until last week amid holdouts by Hungary and Turkey.

Putin's comments came as Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo told the European Parliament in Strasbourg that the rest of the bloc must follow Finland's example in ramping up security on its fringes.

He said hybrid threats to Finland, including Russia's "worrisome" weaponization of migration by funneling people from third countries toward the Finland border, had forced his country to become a preparedness superpower.

"It is a status born out of necessity and reinforced by our history and geographical position. Finland stands ready to share our experiences of resilience and readiness," Orpo told MEPs.

"We have developed comprehensive strategies that cover all sectors of society, from public to pri-

vate. Our approach to preparedness includes not only physical defenses but also societal resilience, which is critical in facing both conventional and hybrid threats."

He said he believed Finland's model could provide valuable lessons for the European Union and that adopting similar "comprehensive and forward-thinking strategies" would boost the resilience of the entire EU.

Warning that if migrant numbers at the Finland-Russia border grew it would not only threaten national security but pose an existential threat to the bloc, Orpo called for an urgent review of existing EU legislation to ensure it was sufficiently robust to tackle the challenge of hybrid attacks.

"If it is not, then we must consider updating it to better suit the time we are living in. We must send a clear message: Europe is resolute in its defense, agile in its response, and firm in its commitment to the safety of its borders."

Noting that deteriorating relations with Russia over the Ukraine war had impacted the border economy, effectively ending all tourism and cross-border trade, Orpo stressed that measures addressing the security of

borders had to focus on the people living there.

He warned that unless the decline was reversed people would begin leaving those areas, presenting a grave threat to the security and stability of the EU.

Calling for EU-level policies aimed at revitalizing these areas and making them more secure against external threats, he said the security of the EU's external border regions was "crucial" for national security and societal unity.

Finland's border with Russia remains closed through April 14, after Helsinki last month extended the total closure of its eastern frontier, which it initially shut in November, for another two months saying it saw no change in Russia's behavior.

"Finland's eastern border remains closed due to Russia's attempts to use instrumentalized migration against Finland. Russia is causing human suffering and using people as tools," the interior ministry statement said in a statement posted on X.

"Russia is responsible for the situation."

Finland's Nov. 16 closure of the border was taken under its Border Guard Act to stop Russia from transporting undocumented migrants and dropping them off at the border.



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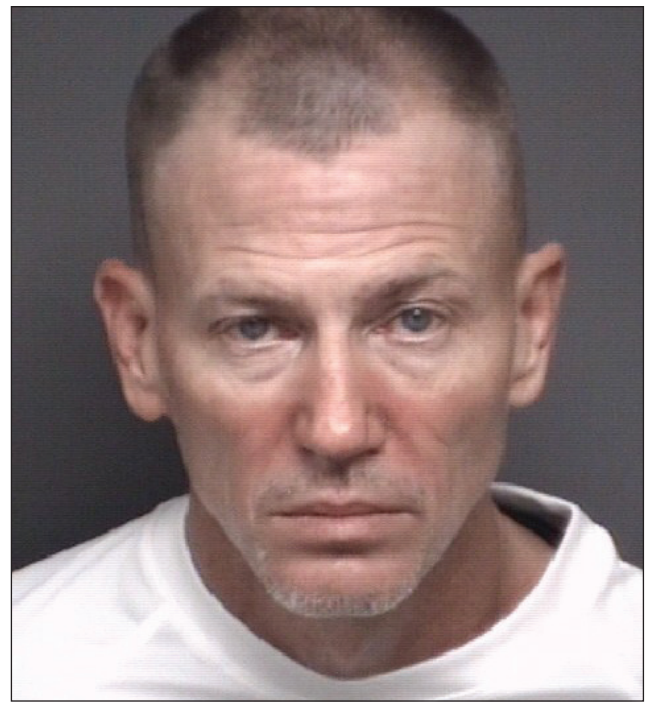
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# Raiders to release wide receiver Hunter Renfrow, quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo

By Alex Butler  
UPI

The Las Vegas Raiders are expected to release wide receiver Hunter Renfrow and quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo on Wednesday after the start of the NFL's new league year.

Sources told NFL Network, The Athletic and the Las Vegas Review-Journal that the Raiders are set to make the moves official Wednesday night.

Garoppolo, 32, completed 65.1% of his throws for 1,205 yards, seven scores and nine interceptions over seven appearances last season. He was benched in Week 9 and later suspended for two games in 2024 for violating the NFL's performance-enhancing substance policy.

The 10-year veteran signed a three-year, \$72.7 million extension with the

Raiders last March, but restructured that deal. He was set to receive \$11.2 million next season, but that can be voided because of his suspension.

Renfrow, 28, totaled career-lows with 25 catches for 255 yards and no touchdowns in 17 games last season. The five-year veteran entered the league as a fifth-round pick by the Raiders in the 2019 NFL Draft. He logged 103 catches for 1,038 yards and nine scores en route to a Pro Bowl selection in 2021.

Renfrow signed a two-year, \$32 million extension with the Raiders in 2022. His release will clear \$8.2 million off the Raiders' salary cap.

The Raiders are expected to release Garoppolo and Renfrow after 4 p.m. EDT Wednesday, which marks the start of the new league year.



## Timberwolves' Anthony Edwards hits head on rim on buzzer-beating block

By Alex Butler  
UPI

Minnesota Timberwolves star Anthony Edwards hovered in the paint before taking flight, elevating so high that he hit his head on the rim as he completed a buzzer-beating block to seal a win over the Indiana Pacers.

"I hit my head on the rim, it's hurting really bad, and I landed on my wrist," Edwards said on the Bally Sports broadcast Thursday in Indianapolis.

"I saw him in the lane. I knew he was going for the layup and I was thinking: 'I'm gonna go get this.' I've never jumped that high in my life."

Edwards scored a game-high 44 points, including 29 in the second half of the 113-111 victory at Gainbridge Fieldhouse.



The Timberwolves guard made 18 of 35 shots from the floor. Timberwolves center Rudy Gobert chipped in 18 points and 14 rebounds.

The Timberwolves were out-shot 51.2% to 46.9%, but held a 48-

39 edge in rebounding and 66-60 advantage in points in the paint. They led by as many as 17 points.

The Timberwolves made 14 of 25 shots in the first quarter and carried a 33-23 edge into the second. Edwards scored 11

in the second frame to help the Timberwolves build a 60-49 lead at halftime.

The Pacers rallied by outscoring their foes 34-23 in the third to tie the game at 83-83 heading into the final quarter. The foes exchanged the lead several times down the stretch until Edwards made a free throw with seven seconds remaining for the final advantage.

He missed his second attempt, which was rebounded by Pacers center Myles Turner and passed on to guard Tyrese Haliburton.

Haliburton then launched a pass up the court to teammate Aaron Nesmith. The guard/forward caught the feed and bounced the ball, before picking up his dribble. He then jumped toward the hoop as the final seconds

ticked off the clock.

Edwards, who trailed the play, also went airborne, using his left arm to swat the shot before hitting his head and crashing to the ground.

"I found my second wind late in that fourth and it was over," Edwards said. "Once I found that second wind, I knew there was nobody that could stop me."

Edwards is averaging a career-high 26.4 points, 5.2 rebounds and 5.1 assists per game this season. The Timberwolves (44-19) own the best record in the Western Conference and second-best mark in the NBA, trailing only the Boston Celtics (48-14).

The Timberwolves will face the Cleveland Cavaliers (40-22) at 7:30 p.m. EST Friday in Cleveland.

## Los Angeles Chargers release wide receiver Mike Williams

By Alex Butler  
UPI

The Los Angeles Chargers released wide receiver Mike Williams, the team announced Wednesday. It will save \$20 million in salary cap space.

Williams, 29, joined the Chargers as the No. 7 overall pick in the 2017 NFL Draft. The 6-foot-4 playmaker logged just 19 catches for 249 yards and one touchdown over three appearances last season. He missed the final 14 games of the campaign

because of a torn ACL.

Williams showed great ability throughout his time with the Chargers, which also was marred by injuries. The former Clemson star eclipsed 1,000 yards in two of his seven seasons. He caught a career-high 10 touchdown passes in 2018 and reached the end zone nine times in 2021.

Williams totaled 309 catches for 4,806 yards in 88 career appearances with the AFC West franchise. He reached the end zone 32 times.



## Louisville expected to fire men's basketball coach Kenny Payne

By Alex Butler  
UPI

The University of Louisville is expected to fire men's basketball coach Kenny Payne after he led the Cardinals to a 12-51 record over two seasons.

Sources told ESPN, CBS Sports and The Field of 68 about the move on Tuesday. The Cardinals hired Payne in 2022. He previously worked as an assistant for the New York Knicks and at Kentucky and Oregon.

Payne led the Cardinals to a 4-28 record in his first year. The 2023-24 Cardinals were 4-3 through their first seven games.

They went on to lose 12 of their next 14. They finished the campaign on a seven-game losing streak.

Former Cardinals coach Chris Mack led the Cardinals to a 63-36 record over four seasons before he was fired in 2022. They went 416-143 under coach Rick Pitino from 2001-02 through 2016-17.

The Cardinals achieved a No. 1 national ranking and made trips to the Division I men's basketball tournament under both Pitino and Mack. Pitino led the Cardinals to three Final Four runs, including one that ended with a national title in 2013.

North Carolina State beat Lou-

isville 94-85 in their season finale at the ACC Tournament on Tuesday in Washington, D.C. Payne told reporters at his postgame news conference that he had not been told anything at that point about his future as coach.

"When I walked into the program as the new head coach, I talked about, I needed everybody on the same page," Payne said. "We sort of forgot that. I talked about how I'm not going to let you blame me. I'm not standing up here by myself. I need all of Louisville with me. We sort of forgot that."

"I talked about, it's going to take time, and I'm going to watch and see who jumped on and



the Titanic. We sort of forgot that. I gave a specific time. I said three or four years. And I'm good with that. That's what I believed at that time, and that's what I still believe

it takes to fix this program."

The 2023-24 Cardinals ranked No. 239 of 362 teams in points per game (71.6) and 334th in points allowed per game (78.6).



# Kelly Clarkson, Peyton Manning to host Olympics opening ceremony

By Annie Martin  
UPI

Grammy-winning singer Kelly Clarkson and retired professional football player Peyton Manning will host the Olympics opening ceremony.

Clarkson, 41, and Manning, 47, announced on Tuesday's episode of The Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon that they will host the opening ceremony at the Paris Summer Olympics with Sunday Night Football announcer Mike Tirico.

"Peyton hosted the Country Music Awards, and Kelly's one of the greatest of all time. So the three of us are going to do an album," Tirico joked before sharing the news.

The opening ceremony will take place July 26 along the Seine river, with the Olympic games to run through Aug. 11.

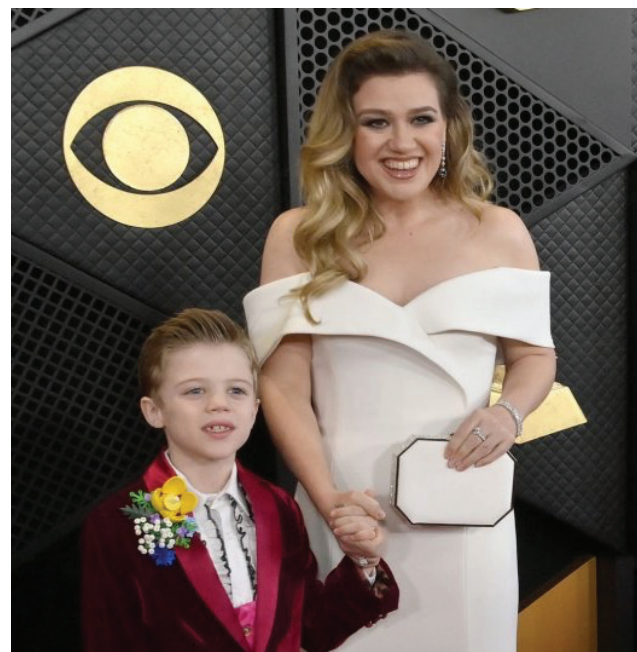
"The opening ceremony is going to be so different and unique," Tirico said. "Down the Seine, down the river with the athletes on a boat, so it's not the stadium where they walk in. It will

incorporate Paris."

In addition, Manning, the son of former NFL quarterback Archie Manning and Olivia Manning, will be taking his mom to the games.

"I took a little French in high school, and I told my mother I would take her to Paris one day. 30 years to the time I graduated, I'm taking my mom to Paris for the Olympics," he said.

Clarkson, Manning and Tirico also played a game of Olympictionary during their time on The Tonight Show.



# No. 123 Luca Nardi upsets No. 1 Novak Djokovic at Indian Wells

By Alex Butler  
UPI

Luca Nardi whipped his racket through the air and smashed an ace to his left, out of the reach of Novak Djokovic for match point, securing an upset over the top-ranked player in the world at the BNP Paribas Open.

Nardi, ranked No. 123, totaled six aces, converted 2 of 4 break point opportunities and totaled 34 winners in the 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 triumph Monday at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden in Indian Wells, Calif.

"It's an amazing feeling," Nardi, who said he has a Djokovic poster on his bedroom door, told reporters. "I couldn't even imagine playing a match against him and



now I also beat him.

"It's a dream come true for me."

Djokovic, 36, logged four aces, converted 3 of 11 break

points and fired 17 winners. The Serbian was making his first appearance in the tournament since 2019, an absence related to COVID-19

travel restrictions and his unvaccinated status. He is a five-time champion at Indian Wells.

"He really didn't have

anything to lose," Djokovic said. "He played great and deserved to win. I was more surprised with my level. My level was really, really bad."

Djokovic owns nearly 100 career titles, while Nardi, 20, is still searching for his first. The Italian made his ATP main-draw debut in 2020.

"I watched him play and knew he possessed great quality tennis from the baseline, especially for the forehand side," Djokovic said of Nardi. "He moves well and he's very talented."

Nardi is already up 28 spots in the live rankings and inside the Top 100 because of his run at the BNP Paribas Open. He will face No. 17 Tommy Paul of the United States in the Round of 16 on Wednesday at In-

dian Wells.

No. 4 Daniil Medvedev of Russia, No. 7 Holger Rune of Denmark, No. 9 Casper Ruud of Norway, No. 12 Taylor Fritz of the United States and No. 13 Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria were among the top men to win their matches Monday at the Masters 1000 event, one of the top non-Grand Slam tournaments on the ATP schedule.

No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus, No. 3 Coco Gauff of the United States, No. 9 Maria Sakkari of Greece and No. 11 Daria Kasatkina of Russia were the top women to advance through Monday's matches.

The men's and women's finals will be held Sunday and air on the Tennis Channel.

# Blood test shows 83% accuracy for detecting colorectal cancer in trial

By Susan Kreimer  
UPI

A blood test to screen for colorectal cancer in average-risk individuals without symptoms accurately detected the malignancy in 83% of people confirmed to have the disease, a study released Wednesday showed.

The study was published in The New England Journal of Medicine.

Researchers said the blood test's accuracy rate for colorectal cancer is similar to at-home stool tests. It's a promising step, they said, to developing more accessible screening tools for catching the disease early -- when it's easier to treat.

The test would improve upon low levels of colorectal cancer screening -- a major cause of cancer-related mortality in the United States that results in some 50,000 deaths each year.

That's because in certain populations, such as adults ages 45 to 49, fewer than half of people who are offered screening with a stool-based test or colonoscopy elect to do neither, the study's corresponding author, Dr. William Grady, a gastroenterologist at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center in Seattle, told UPI via email.

"Blood-based screening tests are more acceptable to people than colonoscopy and stool tests and likely will increase screening compliance," said Grady, who is the medical director of Fred Hutch's Gastrointestinal Cancer Prevention Program. "This would lead to fewer colorectal cancer-related deaths."

These findings come from the ECLIPSE study, a multisite clinical trial of nearly 8,000 people ages 45 to 84. Led and funded by Guardant Health Inc., a precision oncology company in Palo Alto, Calif., the trial validated the performance of what is called the Shield test using colonoscopy -- the gold-standard of screening -- to confirm the results.

In December, Guardant Health announced that the Food and Drug Administration is tentatively scheduled to review the premarket approval application for the Shield test March 28. Currently, the cash-pay price would be \$895.

"Once the test is FDA-approved, we expect Medicare coverage to fol-

low," Guardant Health spokesman Michael West told UPI via email. "And we will work with private and government payers to finalize pricing, with our goal being to provide the broadest access to eligible individuals with as minimal out-of-pocket costs to patients as possible."

The test detects colorectal cancer signals in the blood from DNA that tumors shed. This is called circulating tumor DNA, and it's also being used in "liquid biopsy" tests to monitor for recurrence in people treated for cancer.

Of the 7,861 people included in the report, 83.1% of those with colorectal cancer confirmed by colonoscopy had a positive blood test for circulating tumor DNA. Meanwhile 16.9% had a negative test -- in which a colonoscopy indicated colorectal cancer but the ctDNA test did not.

The test was most sensitive for colorectal cancers, including early-stage malignancies. It was less sensitive for advanced precancerous lesions, which can progress to cancer over time.

Colorectal cancer is the second most common cause of cancer mortality in adults in the United States and is expected to account for 53,010 deaths in 2024, according to the American Cancer Society.

While death rates from colorectal cancer in older adults have declined, rates among those under age 55 have increased by about 1% a year since the mid-2000s. Current guidelines recommend that people at average risk begin regular screening at age 45.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer for people under age 50, Grady said, noting that having a blood-based test available during routine doctor's visits could help more people be screened.

The blood test's sensitivity for colorectal cancer is similar to stool-based tests and lower than that of colonoscopy, which Grady still considers the most accurate screening test for colorectal cancer.

It's intended for average-risk individuals with no family history of colorectal cancer and no personal history of colorectal cancer or advanced polyps or large polyps, he said.

Grady added that the people enrolled in the trial reflected U.S. de-

mographics, including proportional enrollment of African American/Black, Hispanic and Asian Americans populations.

"This means the results of the Shield test are generally applicable to all people living in the U.S.," he said, adding that the novel and promising technology is the basis for blood-based cancer screening under investigation for breast cancer, lung cancer and other malignancies.

The blood test represents "a clear advance" to offer patients who don't want to have a colonoscopy, but it's not a substitute for the gold-standard procedure, Dr. Harshabhad Singh, an oncologist in Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's gastrointestinal program in Boston, told UPI in a telephone interview. He was not involved in the research.

"We cannot forego colonoscopy based on these data," Singh said, adding that "colonoscopy not only identifies cancers but intervenes on advanced precancerous lesions, which this test isn't sensitive enough to identify."

Dr. Alan Venook, a professor of medical oncology and translational research at the University of California-San Francisco, told UPI in a telephone interview that "this test is an early effort, but it can be built on -- it is not a sea change at this point."

Venook added that "numerically, it is not any different from stool testing. Ideally, the study should have done both stool sampling as well as the blood sampling. There will probably be better screenings down the road."

While the test appears very promising, nearly 17 out of every 100 patients who use it and have cancer will receive a negative result, Dr. Ronald Charles, program director of the colon and rectal surgery residency at University Hospitals Seidman Cancer Center in Cleveland, told UPI via email.

"The ultimate goal is to find a test that can detect polyps and colon cancer at an early stage," said Charles, who also is an assistant professor of surgery at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland. "The hope is that the test will find cancer and polyps as close as possible to 100% of the time."

# Biden administration wants better access to opioid overdose antidote

By Robin Foster  
HealthDay News

The White House on Wednesday launched a nationwide call for more training and better access to the lifesaving opioid overdose drug naloxone.

Called the Challenge to Save Lives from Overdose, the initiative urges organizations and businesses to commit to train employees on how to use opioid overdose medications, to keep naloxone in emergency kits and to distribute the drug to employees and customers so they might save a life at home, work or in their communities.

"Today, we're calling on organizations and businesses -- big and small, public and private -- across the country to help ensure all communities are ready to use this lifesaving tool to reduce opioid deaths," the White House said in a fact sheet announcing the new initiative.

"As the drug supply has gotten more dangerous and lethal, we're asking allies to join us because we all must do our part to keep communities safe."

Naloxone, sometimes sold under the brand name Narcan, is a medication that can rapidly reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. Research has shown that using the nasal spray doesn't call for medical expertise and requires only minimal training.

In March 2023, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved an over-the-counter Narcan spray, following that in July with the approval of the

first generic nasal spray. Americans can now buy the sprays at pharmacies, grocery stores and vending machines.

Still, public health officials say naloxone can be hard to find and the price can be prohibitive for some, CNN reported.

Organizations that have already answered the White House challenge include the American Library Association, which is providing libraries with overdose response training for staff members and the public, as well as supporting the distribution of naloxone and overdose aid kits to the public, the White House said.

Meanwhile, Southwest Airlines has put naloxone in emergency medical kits on 65% of its planes and plans to stock 100% of its medical kits by the end of the year.

The need for naloxone is great: Overdose deaths spiked 30% between 2019 and 2020 and another 15% between 2020 and 2021, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and synthetic opioids like fentanyl fueled the increase.

And provisional data published by the CDC in February suggests 2023 will be no different: More than 111,000 people died from a drug overdose in the 12-month period ending last September. Synthetic opioids, primarily fentanyl, were involved in more than two-thirds of those deaths.

More information The National Institute on Drug Abuse has more on naloxone.



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# La Voz Latina

## Elon Musk visits German Tesla plant as it reopens after suspected arson

By Clyde Hughes  
UPI

Tesla founder Elon Musk visited the electric car company's factory in the German state of Brandenburg on Wednesday after it was closed earlier this month after a suspected arson attack on a nearby power substation.

Musk addressed employees at the Tesla Gigafactory in Grunheide as production started again after it was connected back to the electrical grid on Monday. Musk, one of the world's richest men, also met personally with local political leaders.

Musk was seen by local German media waving to plant employees on a stage before addressing him in a tent, where they had gathered to meet them.

"Thanks to the hard work of the Tesla Giga Berlin team and support from the community, the factory is back online," Musk said on X.

Musk's visit comes as the State Office of Criminal Investigation continued to probe into the arson at the power plant. The far-left environmental organization the Volcano Group made an unproven claim of responsibility for the

suspected arson.

The factory was evacuated and had been idle until Wednesday.

"We stand firmly by our employees, the people of Grunheide and the surrounding area and all those affected by this arson attack on the public power grid aimed at Tesla," Tesla Manufacturing said on X on March 5.

"The safety of our more than 12,000 Tesla employees is our top priority and we are pleased that no one was in the attack. In addition to us, many other people in the region are affected by the power outage and we condemn this reckless attack."



## 'Arthur King': Mark Wahlberg says dog taught his character to be a better man

By Karen Butler  
UPI

Mark Wahlberg says his new feel-good film, Arthur the King, is the story of a man who selflessly risked what he thought would be his legacy to save the humblest of creatures.

The flick opens in theaters Friday.

Based on Swedish athlete Mikael Lindnord's book Arthur: The Dog Who Crossed the Jungle to Find a Home, the film follows married father and adventure racer Michael Light (Wahlberg) and his teammates played by Simu Liu, Nathalie Emmanuel and Ali Suliman on a 10-day, 435-mile trek through the Dominican Republic.

When a mangy, stray dog starts to follow them great distances over rough terrain, they need to decide whether winning is the more important than caring for their canine crew member.

"Obviously, the dog had such a drastic impact on Michael and his life. He was completely obsessed and self-absorbed. His whole goal was to become the world champion at adventure racing," Wahlberg, 52, told UPI in a recent Zoom interview with reporters.

"For him, to be so close and then be willing to give all that up just to save Arthur because of the impact he had on him in a short amount of time was such a beautiful thing," the actor said. "I thought it would make for a wonderfully inspiring film and I'm just glad I was able to be part of telling that story."

The star of The Italian Job, The Departed, The Other Guys and Uncharted said training for Arthur the King -- in which he spends a lot of time running, biking and rowing -- was grueling,



even when compared to his famous daily fitness regimens and performances in action movies.

"With those, you work out and you're ready for the explosions and the fight scenes and all of that stuff," Wahlberg said.

"To look like an endurance racer and to prepare for that training [was challenging]," he added. "I've never really done kayaking and cycling, so you want to look the part."

"These are some of the toughest athletes that I've ever seen. I really wanted to make sure that we did Michael and his team and adventure racers all over the world some justice."

Another obstacle Michael faces is learning to trust and work with his frenemy Liam (Liu). However, Wahlberg said that

screen rivalry did not bleed into his relationship with Liu, a Marvel Cinematic Universe actor who also recently appeared in the Barbie movie and hosted the People's Choice Awards.

"I was really just a big supporter and cheerleader of Simu," Wahlberg said of his 34-year-old co-star.

"I knew the exciting things he had in the pipeline and how drastic his life and career were going to change in a very short amount of time," he said. "I loved that he still had the desire to come in and not be afraid to literally get in the weeds and the mud and make something special."

Wahlberg said he understood the film was different than anything else Liu ever had done before.

"We were telling a true story and there's just more

pressure, more responsibility to get it right," Wahlberg said.

"We were definitely more of a team and a unit, which was great. Obviously, the dynamic between the two [characters] we played with quite a bit," he added. "But, look, I'm an older guy and I really like to see people coming up and creating their own lane and changing the game."

Wahlberg also played nicely with Ukai, the dog who played Arthur in the film.

"We were neighbors, so we spent quite a lot of time bonding," the actor said, adding that every time the trainer would let the dog go out in the yard, he would whistle at him, a sound Ukai interpreted as an invitation.

"He knew I'd have steaks and lots of other treats waiting for him and he could

just run right into my house and we'd hang out. It was really nice," Wahlberg said.

After his 2014 experience with the real Arthur, athlete-author Lindnord started a foundation in the dog's name that supports animal welfare.

"What Arthur meant to so many people, what he was able to do, and what Michael did for Arthur really inspired so many people," Wahlberg said. "It's an amazing cause."

The movie reunited Wahlberg with Simon Celan Jones, his director from 2023 comedy, The Family Plan.

"He's the actor's actor in a lot of ways, but he's also a filmmaker, producer and a person who empowers people. He brings the other actors into the fold and he supports them and the other

crew members. We were actor-led and very happy about it," Jones told UPI in a separate Zoom chat.

A scene in which Wahlberg, Liu, Emmanuel and Suliman had to zip line across a huge jungle gorge with their bikes wasn't all movie magic, Jones said.

"It was kind of fun, kind of frightening," he added.

"We had each one of the actors on that zip line, and ... we were careful about safety. It was a little nerve-wracking when you have your movie star hanging 500 feet above the ground and you go. All it takes is one creaky little cable and we [would be] in a difficult situation."

Lindnord, who said he enjoyed watching the film with his family in a theater, added that he felt it was truthful to the story of how they came to adopt the fearless and loyal dog in real life.

"They got so emotional and also proud to see Arthur on the big screen and also what Arthur stands for," he said.

"As a family, we were super proud and hope it makes a huge difference for all the other Arthurs that are still out there," Lindnord said. "He taught me -- and also hopefully the audience -- that we need to focus on the important stuff in our life, prioritize."

After Arthur came home to Sweden with Lindnord, the family was eager to give him the best life possible.

"We did lots of adventures with Arthur. That's what he loved the most," Lindnord said.

"It didn't matter if it was cold outside, snowy, summer, whatever. He loved it all. That was a huge thing for us as a family because I think it is the best way to grow up as a kid -- have a dog with you. For us, as a family, it has been an amazing experience."