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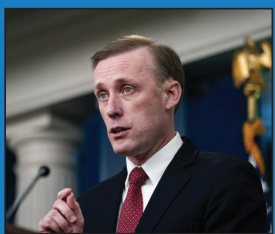
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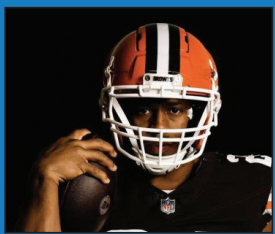
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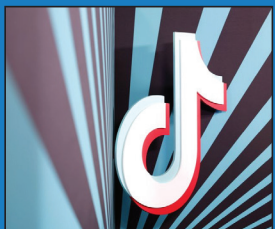
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EU questions TikTok over app that offers rewards for watching
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Trump N.Y. hush-money case: Seven jurors picked for trial that could start next week

By Chris Benson
UPI

Seven jurors were sworn in Tuesday at the end of the second day of Donald Trump's New York trial over hush-money payments he allegedly made to adult film actress Stormy Daniels.

Jury selection continued throughout the morning and into the afternoon in a Manhattan courtroom for the hush-money trial in which the former president has pleaded not guilty to all charges.

"We don't know exactly how long that will last," Judge Juan Merchan said about the ongoing jury selection, which had a fresh group of 96 other New York citizens shown into the courtroom after the first seven were seated.

Although the court is not in session on Wednesday, legal arguments could start as early as next week as court goes back into session on Thursday. Trump is required to be present at the trial, which could last as long as eight weeks.

Leaving court later Tuesday afternoon, Trump called Merchan "conflicted."

Multiple jurors have so far been dismissed over their inability to be impartial, political ideology or issues involving things they posted publicly on social media in the past.

On Monday, more than half of the 96 potential jurors that day were quickly dismissed, with many signifying that they would be unable to be "fair and



impartial" in their deliberations about Trump.

A minimum of six more jurors plus six other alternate jurors still need to be selected, with nearly 80 other individuals already having been excused since Monday the day before when the jury selection began.

Of the seven jurors who can be partially identified, the jury foreperson is being described as a West Harlem married man, with no kids, who works in sales and was born in Ireland. The second juror is an Upper East Side resident who is an oncology nurse at Memorial Sloan Kettering. The third juror is a younger male Chelsea resident and corporate lawyer originally from Oregon. Fourth, a Lower

East Side resident originally from Puerto Rico, an IT consultant and a married grandfather. Fifth, a charter school teacher from Harlem. And sixth, a Chelsea resident and software developer for Disney who is not married and has no kids.

A Facebook post by one juror over Trump's 2020 election loss had prompted a comment from the former president. Merchan told Trump's defense attorney Todd Blanche that he "will not have any jurors intimidated in this courtroom. I want to make that crystal clear."

"Mr. Blanche, your client was audibly uttering something," the judge told Trump's lawyer. "He

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Senate hearings to examine Boeing safety

Doug Cunningham
UPI

The U.S. Senate Wednesday will scrutinize Boeing's safety practices at two committee hearings.

The Senate Commerce Committee will hold a meeting at 10 a.m. EDT where it will review findings from an independent expert panel Federal Aviation Administration on safety management processes and culture at Boeing, while the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations will hear testimony on Boeing's "broken safety culture" following accusations about its 787 Dreamliner by whistleblower Sam Salephour.

Salephour, an engineer at Boeing for more than 10 years who warned that parts of Boeing's 787 Dreamliner risk breaking apart after thousands of trips due to being improperly fastened during assembly, will testify at the second hearing.

Boeing's CEO David Calhoun, was invited to testify before the subcommittee but will not attend.

"The whistleblower will have the guts to show up, and I'm hoping that Dave Calhoun will as well at some point in the future," Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., told The Hill.

Blumenthal added the hearing of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations will focus on "shocking allegations about failures and safety practices and culture" at Boeing.

Salephour claims that risk surrounding the Dreamliners was caused by assembly line changes in how dif-

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OPINION

The Lesson for Gun Owners in James and Jennifer Crumbley Convictions

Taylor Swift's songs show the introspective scrutiny of philosophy

By Jessica Flanigan
University of Richmond

Taylor Swift isn't just a billionaire songwriter and performer. She's also a philosopher.

As a Swiftie and a philosopher, I've found that this claim surprises Swifties and philosophers alike. But once her fans learn a bit more about philosophy -- and philosophers learn a bit more about Swift's work -- both groups can appreciate her songwriting in new ways.

Looking in the mirror

When one of the greatest philosophers, Socrates, famously said, "The unexamined life is not worth living," he was arguing that people cannot even know whether they are living a meaningful life unless they subject their choices and their values to scrutiny.

Like other great writers, Swift's songwriting consistently involves just the kind of introspective scrutiny about choices and values that Socrates had in mind. Several songs address the value of self-understanding, even when it's difficult.

Amid a breakup, the narrator in "Happiness" sings, "Honey, when I'm above the trees I see this for what it is." Yet she describes how it can be hard to maintain an objective perspective on a relationship while also navigating the end of it. "And in the disbelief I can't face reinvention / I haven't met the new me yet," she sings. Her partner is looking for "the green light of forgiveness," when she tells them that "You haven't met the new me yet / And I think she'll give you that."

The Swift-like narrator in "Anti-hero" makes a similar point about the challenges of self-awareness. "I'll stare directly at the sun, but never in the mirror," she sings, referencing how it's often easier to identify truths about the external world than to face facts about oneself, and that her tendency toward self-deception limits her ability to become wiser with age.

Everyone inherits a set of beliefs and assumptions from their parents, peers and culture, which can inhibit our ability to truly understand others and ourselves.

In Swift's "Daylight," she describes how she once viewed relationships as "black and white" or "burning red." Letting go of those old, reductive narratives enabled her to see her relationships -- and herself -- more clearly. She's emerged from what she describes as a "twenty-year dark night" to see the more complicated, liberating truth: daylight.

Argue toward truth

Socrates showed that the best way to scrutinize one's choices and values is through sustained, sometimes argumentative, conversation with others. To a nonphilosopher, philosophy often looks like devil's advocacy or trolling -- arguing just for the sake of it. But to philosophers, disagreeableness is a virtue that helps counteract reflexive dogmatism and conformity.

Swift, too, is argumentative in her songwriting, often making a moral argument to an imagined listener -- frequently, a romantic partner. In other lyrics, Swift rebuts unfair critics and record executives.

Recently, her lyrics have begun to address more public issues, like the promise and futility of politics. At first glance, "Miss Americana & The Heartbreak Prince," released in 2019, is a coming-of-age song about teenage relationship drama. However, Swift is also describing her own political awakening and disillusionment when she writes, "My team is losing, battered and bruising." Lyrics like, "American stories burning before me" and "You play stupid games, you win stupid prizes" further reinforce a parable about political despair.

The convictions of James Crumbley and his wife, Jennifer, for their role in their son's mass school shooting in Michigan, which resulted in the tragic murders of four and injuries of seven, tells us one thing: If you are an irresponsible gun owner, you will pay the price if a crime is committed with your gun.

It is as simple as that. Lock your gun up, keep it away from your children, and if you have a mentally unwell child, keep an even more watchful eye on your firearm. This was not done in the Crumbleys' case.

The safety of our nation and our schools depends on responsible gun owners doing the right thing and keeping their guns out of the hands of their children. There are far too many mass school shootings because there are far too many mentally unwell students and far too many parents who are careless with their firearms.

This is a precedent-setting case, the first time the parents of a school mass shooter have been charged, but the clear negligence displayed by the Crumbleys went beyond the failure to

secure the firearms; it was their clear and profound lapse in judgment despite clear warning signs that their child was troubled.

They may not have given their child the firearms and said to go and commit a heinous crime, but not taking the necessary steps to secure the firearm or get their son

the help he clearly, evidently needed makes them culpable for his actions, which could've been easily avoided if they acted differently. It's very possible that lives could have been saved were it not for parents who made excuses to excuse their son's troubling behavior even though the school took clear steps, including talking to the parents about their child. The Crumbleys missed an opportunity to intervene and potentially prevent a catastrophe.

When a child under the care of adults displays serious mental health issues, those warning signs must

not be ignored. Proactive steps and measures should be taken to get that child the help they need to avoid them harming not only other people but even themselves. Mental health is a serious problem, but with help, you can often save someone. Ignoring the glaring signs of their child's mental distress while knowing he had access to a weapon in their home certainly makes the Crumbleys liable.

It's not enough to react to warning signs without taking proactive measures. Mental health issues require serious attention, understanding and action -- within not just families but also educational institutions, health care systems and through legislative measures. The Crumbleys' oversight is a tragic example of what happens when mental distress signs are ignored or minimized, especially when combined with access to weapons.

The convictions of James and Jennifer Crumbley should set a precedent for parents who ignore the warning signs of their child's troubling behavior and their responsibility to seek help. It also serves

as a sobering reminder of the responsibility that comes with gun ownership and the safe storage of guns around children. I'm a strong believer in the Second Amendment and do not believe the government should encroach on Americans' constitutionally protected right to keep and bear arms. However, I also believe we must respect the responsibility that comes with this right.

We have seen too many young people commit heinous crimes -- smash and grabs, armed robberies in inner cities, kids in the suburbs shooting and killing their classmates -- and one question I've always asked is: Where are the parents? We cannot continue to allow parents to allow their reckless and troubled children to wreak havoc on the rest of society without any consequences. The trials and convictions of the Crumbleys should serve as a reminder for anyone out there with a troubled child and firearms in the home: Get your child the help they need and secure those firearms for the safety of you, your child and those around them.



ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS

Trump is a catastrophic fourth branch of government

By Harlan Ullman
UPI

Revolting against autocratic rule from Britain, the drafters of the Constitution purposely created three branches of government to prevent any single branch from becoming all powerful in a system based on a balance and division of power. Article I established the legislature underscoring which branch the Founding Fathers intended to be primus inter pares. Article II was the executive branch meant to carry out the laws and rules set by Congress. And Article III was judiciary. Interestingly, the judiciary was not assigned any specific authority to declare laws unconstitutional.

Without any legal or political precedent including amending the Constitution, however, seemingly out of nowhere a fourth branch materialized -- perhaps a political "big bang" that created the universe. Hence arose the Trump branch of government or TTBG. Former President Donald Trump has achieved a political masterstroke unmatched in 235 years. He is now the fourth branch.

How can this be? First, Trump appointed a majority of Supreme Court justices. Supposed to be independent, it is hard to find cases where Trump's views have not been maintained in the court's finding. The test will be when one or more of the four legal cases against Trump is appealed and that appeal reaches the high court. Some will argue presidential immunity is already beginning that test.

But unless the court completely loses all objectivity and common sense, it must conclude all presi-



dents are accountable. The only relief for presidential misconduct specified in the Constitution of impeachment and conviction is insufficient. However, as the court ended Roe vs. Wade on a woman's right to choose dealing with pregnancy and, in essence, did the president's bidding, one hopes the immunity finding will not be so influenced. If it is, God help the Republic.

About the legislature, Trump has quelled any dissent through the threat of primarying -- that is supporting an opponent -- to end the incumbency of someone who falls out of line with the president. In the Senate, Trump evicted Senate Republican Minority Leader Mitch McConnell who had the longest tenure as a GOP leader. Although Sen. Lindsey Graham may have parted company over abortion, Trump can easily tolerate minor defections. And if Republicans win the Senate in November and Trump is elected, he will control that body as no president before him has.

In the House, Speaker Mike Johnson, as some of his predecessors, made the pilgrimage to Mar-a-Lago

to gain the former president's blessings and support. Because the margin of control of the House is razor thin, any speaker can be blackmailed or threatened by a single member of his party that could shift control to Democrats. Trump however hits from both ends.

His whims become actions members must take. And by deploying right-wing firebrands such as Marjorie Taylor Green as ground troops to attack those not in line with Trump, the House is under pressure from both the top and bottom. It is hard to recall any president who had that hold on both Houses even when one party had huge majority control of Congress.

About the presidency, this may be the most sinister consequence of TTBG. When Trump took office in January 2017, to say he was ignorant of how government and the presidency worked would be understatement. The same applied to foreign policy.

Trump however is a quick learner. Armed with a handbook written by the Heritage Foundation called "Project 2025" on staffing his government if elected, make no mistake. Trump knows how to use the levers of power, legally or otherwise. His calls for retribution and revenge on those he considered enemies or opponents are not rhetoric. Facing nearly 90 specific charges in four separate cases and scrutinized in the Mueller report that was defanged to eliminate turning any of his alleged wrongdoings into criminal indictments, Trump has insights into weaponizing the legal system to his advantage.

If the Founding Fathers were to return to present day Washington and observe the condition of the system they created, predicting their reactions would not be difficult. Stunned, appalled and perplexed might represent a few. If asked about his comment that America can have a republic as long as it can keep it, Benjamin Franklin might likely confirm his belief. But he would surely conclude that the days of keeping a republic were certainly numbered.

How and where TTBG might take the country is purely speculative. Yet, that speculation is not likely to be in the nation's and the public's interest.

Harlan Ullman is UPI's Arnaud de Borchgrave Distinguished Columnist, a senior adviser at Washington's Atlantic Council, the prime author of "shock and awe" and author of "The Fifth Horseman and the New MAD: How Massive Attacks of Disruption Became the Looming Existential Danger to a Divided Nation and the World at Large." Follow him @harlankullman. The views and opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of the author.



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States' inflation varies, in part due to domestic migration

By Mike Heuer
UPI

also have states generally with the highest rates of inflation.

The nation's inflation rate rose to 3.5% in March, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, but some states are seeing higher-than-average price increases due to higher rates of population growth.

At the top of the list is Florida, which posted the nation's highest state-level inflation rate of 3.9% over the last year.

Growing populations create more demand for housing and food -- two of the primary drivers of state-level inflation, according to Moody's Analytics.

Florida also had the nation's second-highest population increase over the last year, with an influx of 365,205 residents and a growth rate of 1.6%. The Sunshine State's three-year population increase since April 1, 2020, is 1.07 million, or about 5%.

States with the highest population gains in recent years generally see higher inflation rates than those that have relatively stable or negative population growth, the U.S. Census Bureau says.

A call and email seeking comment from Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis' administration were not returned.

The bureau reported that the South and the West have had the highest population increases since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic lock-downs, and those regions

Tennessee and Virginia posted the nation's second-highest inflation rate at 3.8%.

Tennessee had an influx of 77,513

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Boeing

continued from page 1

ferent sections coming from different manufacturers lack uniformity where they are fastened together.

Unless this is corrected, Salephour said, "catastrophic failure" could result.

The whistleblower said production shortcuts were implemented to reduce production bottlenecks.

Boeing denied the assembly process puts excess pressure on the plane's joints.

Steve Chisholm, chief engineer for mechanical and structuring at Boeing, said Boeing created damage to fuselage panels in tests that were repeated in excess of what the jets would experience in service and found "the damage didn't grow," according

to Chisholm. But Salephour told reporters he saw people jumping on pieces of the 777 trying to get them to line up properly in assembly.

Boeing spokeswoman Jessica Kowal claimed allegations about the 787's structural integrity are inaccurate and the company is "fully confident in the 787 Dreamliner."

Boeing is being investigated by the U.S. Senate and the FAA following the loss of a door plug in mid-flight on an Alaskan Airlines 737 Max 9.

Boeing whistleblower John Barnett, who had also expressed concerns about quality control, was found dead of an apparent suicide last month in a South Carolina parking lot.

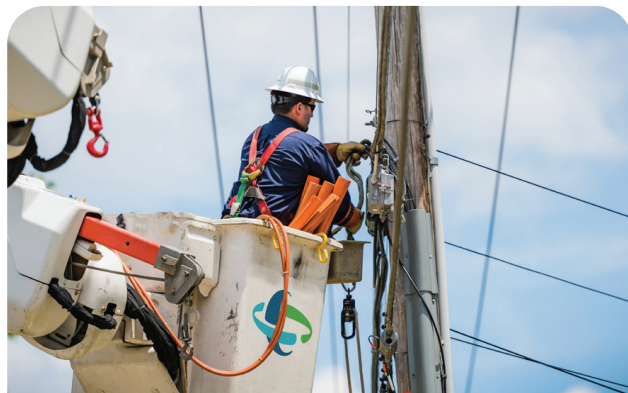
In a March 19 letter from the Senate Investigations Committee Blumenthal and

Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wisc., told Calhoun that the company's alleged treatment of Barnett and apparent handling of his allegations "raise many questions about your company's commitment to aircraft safety."

"The Subcommittee's receipt of these allegations follows several contemporaneous reports that have also called into question Boeing's safety policies and practices," they wrote.

That letter demanded Boeing turn over records relating to safety practices and whistleblower protocols and policies. That information request included all records relating to 777 and 787 aircraft safety as well as records relating to employees raising concerns about the safety and integrity of the jets.

The information request covers January 1, 2018, to the present.



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Tesla to ask board to re-approve Musk's \$56B compensation package

By Clyde Hughes
UPI

Tesla plans to ask shareholders on Wednesday to reinstate Elon Musk's compensation package of \$56 billion after a Delaware judge struck it down in January.

The electric vehicle maker announced the plan in a proxy filing Wednesday in which it said the court's decision to strike down the pay package created a "fundamental problem for the company."

Tesla noted to shareholders that the Delaware judge's decision rescinded the pay package that an "overwhelming majority" of them voted to approve.

"Corporate democracy and stockholder rights are at the heart of Tesla's values," the company said.

Delaware Chancery Court Chancellor Kathleen McCormick called Musk's compensation "unfair," agreeing with shareholder Richard Tornetta that he had too much control over setting the rules and the price. She had told Musk he must pay back what he had already been given in the compensation package.

Tesla added that the vote would also shareholders will also be asked to vote on whether to move the company's incorporation from Delaware to Texas.



The electric car giant hired proxy solicitor Innisfree M&A to lean on shareholders and secure enough votes for what is

expected to be contentious votes. Tesla had hired Innisfree M&A in 2018 when talks started about Musk's original compensation package.

Some investors suggested that Tesla may be getting ready to change its governance. The board had been condemned in the past for not putting tighter reins on Musk for fighting with regulators and advertisers.

The move by Tesla comes after Musk earlier this week announced that Tesla will lay off more than 10% of its global workforce.

Musk said the cost-cutting was needed to increase productivity and innovation.

Trump Media value falls additional 14% as new streaming platform launch announced

THE TRUMP-OWNED SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANY SAY THEY WILL BEGIN LIVE-STREAMING SERVICES.

By Chris Benson
UPI

The stock value of former President Donald Trump's media company -- the owner of app Truth Social -- on Tuesday continued to fall more than 14% as the company unveiled its intent to launch a digital live-streaming platform.

On Tuesday morning, the Nasdaq-designated DJT stock shares were selling at a total of \$25.11. By mid-afternoon trading, it went down further to \$22.85 a share.

The Sarasota, Fla.-based Trump Media & Technology Group Corporation announced Tuesday that after six months of testing on its Web and iOS platforms, it had finished the "research and development phase" of its plan to unveil a "live TV streaming platform and will begin scaling up its own content delivery network," according to a release.

TMTG's CEO Devin Nunes said the company was "excited to move forward with the next big phase for Truth Social."

The new streaming content -- which will roll out in three phases -- will include "live TV, including news networks, religious channels, family-friendly content including films and documentaries" and "other content that has been canceled, is at risk of cancellation or is being suppressed on other platforms and services."

Nunes said the goal of the streaming content will be "to provide a permanent home for high-quality news and entertainment that face discrimination by other channels and content delivery services."

"There is a lot of great content that simply can't find an audience for unjust reasons, and we want to let these creators know they'll soon have a guaranteed platform where they won't be canceled," the former Republican California congressman, said.

The Trump-owned company still struggles to turn a profit with TMTG bringing in only \$4.1 million in revenue in 2023 while it lost \$58 million the same year. It has already experienced a \$5 billion valuation decrease since going public.

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As Senate trial for Mayorkas gets underway, Schumer says he will move to dismiss

By Chris Benson
UPI

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer on Wednesday pushed for the 100-member body to dismiss the charges brought by the Republican-led House against Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas as his trial got underway.

On Wednesday, Schumer had called the Mayorkas charges "nakedly partisan" as members of the Senate were ready to be sworn in at about 1 p.m. EDT as jurors for the impeachment trial.

The House on Tuesday officially delivered the impeachment articles to the Democratic-controlled Senate, where it is believed there is enough votes to easily dismiss the House charges against Mayorkas with little fanfare.

"As they work on impeachment, I'm working on the mission of the Department of Homeland

Security," Mayorkas said Wednesday on the CBS Mornings show.

In a letter last week to Schumer, 43 GOP senators had demanded a trial be held by pointing to historical precedent.

A trial could last up to four hours, former Missouri Sen. Claire McCaskill, a Democrat, said Wednesday afternoon on MSNBC as proceedings were beginning.

Schumer said that its intent to seek an agreement with his Senate colleagues for time to debate that will allow Republicans to offer a vote on trial resolutions, points of order and then he says he will move to dismiss the charges.

"Let's not kid ourselves about what's going on today," he said. "The impeachment of Alejandro Mayorkas has nothing to do with crimes and misdemeanors and everything to do with helping Donald Trump on

the campaign trail."

Up until now, Schumer only had indicated his intent to deal with the Mayorkas trial "expeditiously," which changed Wednesday with the announcement of his move to dismiss outright.

"To validate this gross abuse by the House would be a grave mistake and could set a dangerous precedent for the future," Schumer said.

"For the sake of the Senate's integrity, and to protect impeachment for those rare cases [in which] we truly need it, senators should dismiss today's charges," the New York Democrat said.

The senate's outgoing Minority Leader, Mitch McConnell, R-K.Y., previously had stated that he believed it would be a "mistake" for the Senate not to move forward with its constitutional duty to have a full trial on Mayorkas.

On Wednesday ahead

of Senate business, House Speaker Mike Johnson took to social media to say that, if the Senate "fails to hold a trial, it is an endorsement of Biden's border catastrophe."

Earlier this year, a bipartisan immigration agreement died in the Senate after Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump voiced his opposition to it, causing fellow GOP lawmakers to fall in line and oppose it, too.

Ahead of the Senate trial, Louisiana's Republican Sen. John Kennedy told reporters in the Capitol that President Joe Biden and others "don't want to hold a trial for political reasons," he said.

However, the White House has no role in the Senate impeachment attempt and reports say President Biden hasn't even reached out to moderate Republicans in any way on the issue.



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Customs and Border Protection intercepts more than 1,000 pounds of meth, cocaine chemicals from China

By Mike Heuer
UPI

Customs and Border Protection officers in Chicago on Thursday seized a shipment from China containing methamphetamine precursor and a cocaine cutting agent, the CBP announced Tuesday.

A narcotics detection dog named Aldo helped CBP officers discover and detain 26 boxes of unknown powders that subsequent testing showed were 1,117 pounds of meth precursor and 225 pounds of cocaine cutting agent, agents said.

"Our ability to collect intelligence and

the experience and knowledge of our officers were key in stopping these shipments," said LaFonda Sutton-Burke, field operations director of the CBP's Chicago field office.

CBP spokesman Steven Bansbach told UPI the shipment from Shenzhen, China, arrived via air cargo with Wood Dale, Ill., as its destination. Wood Dale is about 25 miles northwest of Chicago.

Testing identified the powders as BMK methyl glycidate, which enables the production of methamphetamine, and benzo-caine, which is a commonly used cocaine cutting agent.

"Transnational criminals exploit dependencies and addictions to sell their illicit goods," Sutton-Burke said. "Our officers are trained to identify shipments that contain these potentially dangerous substances and will continue to work to keep private citizens and their families safe."

CBP officials say they partner with the Department of Homeland Security to obtain intelligence and align resources to disrupt transnational criminal organizations that produce, distribute and traffic fentanyl and other synthetic drugs in the United States.

The CBP's border security mission

targets 328 ports of entry in the United States.

The CBP in February intercepted more than 6 tons of meth and in November \$2.7 million worth of meth at the Texas border.

The CBP also intercepted methamphetamine shipments worth tens of millions of dollars at the California-Mexico border and 140 pounds of meth in paint containers in Cincinnati last year.

The CBP says it also seizes thousands of pounds of increasingly larger shipments of fentanyl every year, including 27,023 pounds last year, which is nearly double the 14,700 pounds seized in 2022.

Biden calls for U.S. to triple tariffs on Chinese steel, aluminum imports

Clyde Hughes
UPI

The White House on Wednesday presented plans to protect U.S. steel from "unfair" Chinese practices including a call to boost tariffs.

President Joe Biden has called for the United States Trade Representative to consider tripling the current average 7.5% tariff on certain steel and aluminum, to prevent U.S. steel prices from being undercut by "artificially low-priced Chinese alternatives produced with higher emissions," the White House said in a statement.

"American workers continue to face unfair competition from Chinese imports of steel and aluminum products, which are among the world's most emissions-intensive," the White House said.

Biden will outline the plans in a speech at the United Steelworkers headquarters in Pittsburgh as part of a three-day trip across Pennsylvania.

The White House said the Commerce Department has already conducted nearly 27 investigations into efforts by countries like China to evade trade rules and engage in other anti-competitive practices.

The administration said it is also addressing the practice of Chinese steel entering the U.S. market by going to Mexico first, essentially cloaking where it was made originally. The White House said cheap China steel



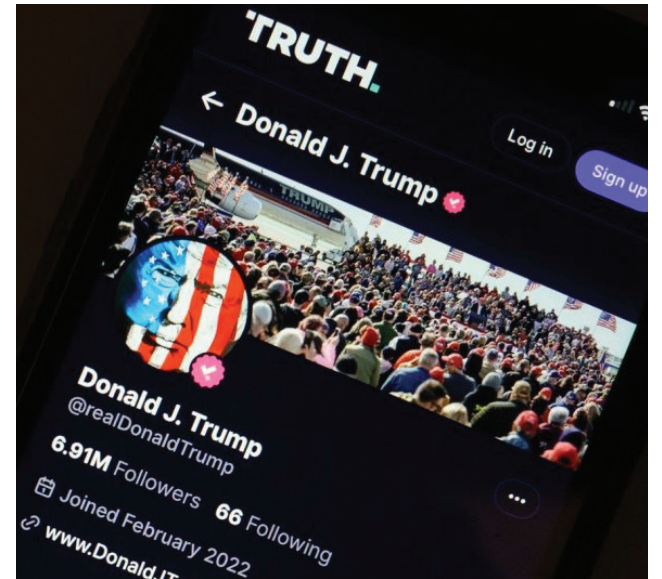
not only hurt domestic union workers but hampers the global shipbuilding, maritime and logistic sectors.

Wednesday's announcement comes after Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen visited China where she expressed concerns about "overcapacity" in which a company produces more goods than it can use or sell, which in China's case has led to attempting to offload products such as solar panels and electric vehicles onto

the U.S. market.

The new call for Chinese steel tariffs also comes amid Nippon Steel's plan to purchase U.S. Steel, something that is opposed by Biden, union workers and a score of other Democratic and Republican lawmakers.

The Japanese steel company said in December it would buy U.S. Steel for \$14.9 billion and would honor the current collective bargaining agreements with unions.



Value

continued from page 4

On Monday the day before, Trump Media stock had already dropped 18% after filing to sell more shares as the former president -- the largest shareholder with 60% of the social media company -- was in a New York court at the start of a historic criminal trial.

The value of Truth Social has consistently showed a downward trend since the stock first premiered on the Nasdaq at the end of March, before dropping somewhat by the end of that trading day.

Shares of the company,

owner of the Truth Social media app, closed Monday at \$26.61 in heavy trading of more than 6 million shares in the Nasdaq, representing an 18.3% one-day plunge.

An investigative reporter who is familiar with Trump's finances speculates that the "true value" of Truth Social is 50 cents a share or less per share.

"I have been critical of media reports stating Trump's net worth is up by billions," Progressive Source CEO Jonathan Greenberg said Wednesday on X.

"Sober analysis suggests DJT has only begin to find its floor, & that Trump's holdings' real value is under \$35M today," he wrote.

Inflation

continued from page 3

residents for a population change of 1.1% over the past year. Its population increase since April 1, 2020, was 215,703, or 3.1%.

Virginia had 36,599 new residents over the past year and 84,325 since April 1, 2020. Those are increases of 0.4% and 1%, respectively.

South Carolina has 3.6% inflation, 90,600 new residents over the past year and 32,650 since April 1, 2020. Those are changes of 1.7% and 5%, respectively, and its growth rate leads the nation.

Rounding out the Top-5 states for inflation is Alabama, which posted an inflation rate of 3.6% and gained 34,565 residents over the past year and 84,174 since April 1, 2020. Those are increases of 0.7% and 1.7%, respectively.

Lowest rate
in Pennsylvania

Contrasting the five states with the highest inflation rates, Pennsylvania posted the nation's lowest inflation rate at 1.8%. That's nearly half the national rate.

Pennsylvania also has experienced population reductions of 10,408 over the past year and 41,105 since April 1, 2020. Those are population reductions of 0.1% and 0.3%, respectively.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, the Census Bureau began conducting a periodical Household

Pulse Survey of households to gauge how they are affected by inflation and other economic and social factors.

Recent survey results show a generally high level of concern and stress about inflation and how it's affecting households. The survey shows inflation stress is highest in the South and least in the Midwest.

Inflation stress adds up to budgeting pressure on households as food and shelter costs rise faster than overall prices, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas.

Inflation stress doesn't affect all population segments equally, though. It affects low- and middle-income households the most and seniors the least.

The Federal Reserve notes low- and middle-income households are affected the most by inflation stress and budgetary pressure as they spend more of their incomes on food and shelter due to inflation.

Also affected more are Blacks, Hispanics, and younger consumers, who generally have rent, mortgages and other loans to pay.

Despite many seniors having fixed incomes, they are more insulated against inflation, because many own their homes outright. They also are exposed less to interest rates, such as for mortgages and other loans.

Boomers increase
spending

Baby Boomers, who were born before 1965, are the only U.S. population seg-



ment that has increased spending during the current economy, while younger consumers are reducing their spending.

Many seniors also have more diverse incomes, including rental properties, interest and dividends on investments. Many also can sell homes to downsize and bank the equity they obtain from home sales.

The Federal Reserve has a target of 2% inflation for the nation and is maintaining a key interest rate of 5.25% to 5.5% to lower inflation in all states.

"We continue to make good progress bringing inflation down," Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said during a March 20 news conference.

The Federal Reserve committee is confident the nation's inflation rate eventually will reach the 2% target, Powell said, but the committee won't lower the key

interest rate until economic data shows the target is within reach and likely to happen.

"We continue to make good progress bringing inflation down," he said. "Too much too soon would cause more inflation, but too late would harm employment."

Before the recent inflation surge to 3.5% nationally, nine months of about

2.5% inflation occurred, which raised hopes of a rate reduction by the Federal Reserve.

January, February and March showed the nation's economy is proceeding along a "bumpy road" and delaying an anticipated reduction in the lending rate, Powell said.

Until the economy sta-

bilizes, he said a rate reduction won't happen.

Moody's Analytics in 2017 undertook a study of population growth and inflation, which showed a "strong association between population growth" in states and municipalities.

"That population may be an important driver of inflation growth may be relatively underappreciated by economists and policymakers, but it is not unintuitive," Moody's Analytics analyst Adam Ozimek said.

He said the primary problem is the limited supply of housing and land. People need housing, and developers need land upon which to build them, but land isn't something that can be produced in large quantities.

"Land remains a relatively fixed factor in many places, which will generate a less than perfectly elastic housing supply even in the long run, let alone the short run," Ozimek wrote in the study's conclusion.

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U.S. to impose new sanctions on Iran over Israel attack

By Darryl Coote
UPI

The United States will impose new sanctions targeting Iran, the White House said late Tuesday, in response to Tehran's weekend attack on Israel.

National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan made the announcement in a statement issued by the White House, stating the punitive measures will be imposed "in the coming days."

The designations will target Iran's missile and drone programs as well as entities supporting its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Ministry of Defense, he said, adding they expect allies and partners to soon follow with their own blacklistings.

"These new sanctions and other measures will continue a steady drumbeat of pressure to contain and degrade Iran's military capacity and effectiveness and confront the full range of its problematic behaviors," Sullivan said.

Iran and Israel have for years been in a proxy conflict that exploded into the open when Israel launched a war against

Tehran-backed Hamas in October. Since then, Israel has been defending itself from attacks from Hamas and other Iran proxy militias, including Hezbollah in Lebanon and Syria, while Tehran's Houthi rebels have been striking vessels transiting the Red Sea near Yemen.

On Saturday, Iran for the first time directly attack Israel with hundreds of missiles and drones, the vast majority of which were intercepted. Iran has described its attack as retaliatory for a strike on its diplomatic complex in Damascus early this month that killed several Iranian military leaders.

Israel has said that Iran would "face the consequences" for the attack, while allies, including the United States, have called for restraint.

The United States has repeatedly stated its staunch support for Israel's defense, but their relationship has developed fissures as the war has dragged on with the Biden administration taking issue with how Israel has waged the war and its ballooning casualty toll of nearly 33,000 dead Palestinians. The Biden administration has said



it does not seek to escalate the conflict, though it has been forced further into it by Houthis attacking its warships off the coast of Yemen and Iran militia Kata'ib Hezbollah killing three U.S. soldiers in a January strike Jordan.

President Joe Biden as taken a mostly defensive military stance against Iran and its proxies but an aggressive posture from an economic perspective, turning to his fi-

nancial vises to confront the Islamic regime. His treasury has responded with a steady stream of sanctions targeting Tehran and its proxy militias in an effort to remove avenues of revenue and deplete their abilities to make war.

Sullivan added Tuesday night that the United States will also be working through the Department of Defense and U.S. Central Command to strengthen and expand integration of air and missile defense as well as early warning systems across the Middle East "to further erode the effectiveness of Iran's missile and UAV capabilities."

UAV is the initialism for unmanned aerial vehicle, meaning drone.

He also said that Biden is coordinating with allies and partners, including the Group of Seven nations, "on a comprehensive response" to the Iran attack.

"The pressure will continue," he said. "We will not hesitate to continue to take action, in coordination with allies and partners around the world, and with Congress, to hold the Iranian government accountable for its malicious and destabilizing actions."

Lyrid meteor shower to peak this weekend

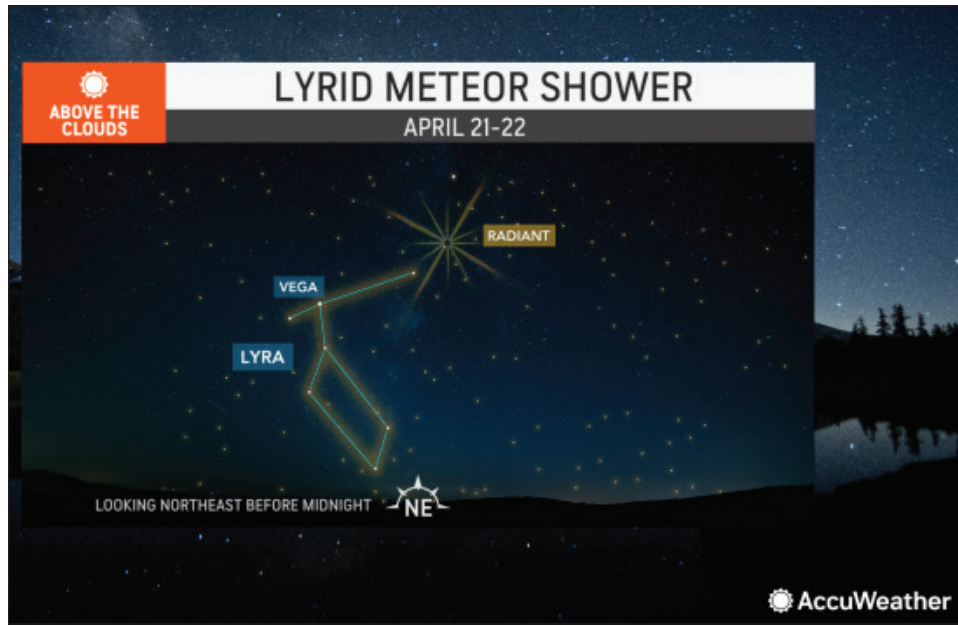
By Brian Lada
Accuweather.com

A flurry of shooting stars will flicker in the night sky as the weekend comes to a close and Earth Day kicks off, presenting the best opportunity to see a meteor shower since 2023.

The Lyrid meteor shower is predicted to peak on Sunday night into early Monday morning with 15 to 20 meteors per hour, according to the American Meteor Society. The event will bring an end to a meteor shower drought that started more than three months ago after the Quadrantids briefly peaked on a cold and, for many areas, cloudy night in early January.

The celestial show will begin not long after nightfall, but like most meteor showers, the Lyrids will be best seen after midnight as the shower's radiant point rises high in the northeastern sky.

This year's edition of the Lyrids will have some competition that could outshine



all but the brightest meteors.

Swift-moving meteors may look like a blip in the sky compared to the nearly full moon, which will glow throughout most of Sunday night. The moonlight will wash out many of the dimmer meteors, reducing the number of shooting stars onlookers will see.

For the best chance at spotting some meteors, experts recommend focusing

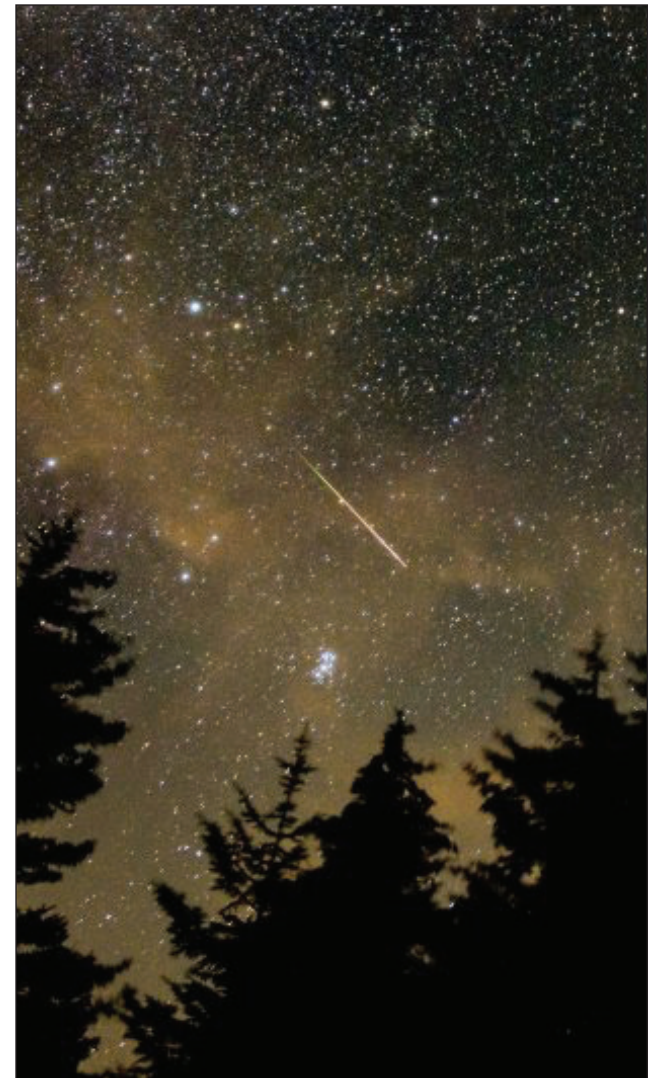
on darker areas of the sky where the moon is out of sight. Looking at the moon for a few seconds can impact your night vision and make it more difficult to see the meteors.

A full moon will rise two nights later on April 23 and will be known as the Pink Moon. It is named after phlox, one of the first wildflowers to bloom in spring.

After the Lyrids in late

April, the next meteor shower will be the Eta Aquarids, which peak on the weekend of May 4-5.

This is one of the best meteor showers of the year for the Southern Hemisphere, where around 50 meteors per hour can be seen. For areas in the Northern Hemisphere, hourly rates will likely top out around 30 per hour, slightly higher than the Lyrids.



Trump

continued from page 1

was audible, gesturing and speaking in the direction of the juror. I won't tolerate that."

Arriving at court ahead of Tuesday's trial proceedings, Trump called the trial a "disgrace" while speaking to reporters outside Merchan's courtroom.

He had, Trump said, paid "a lawyer and he

marked it down as a legal expense," saying "I didn't know" about the payment as he spoke about why he believes he did nothing wrong.

He added that, instead of being on the campaign trail in "Pennsylvania, in Florida, in many other states," he now must be in court because, he falsely said, President Joe Biden is bringing charges against him.

"This is all coming from the White House, because

the guy can't put two sentences together. He can't campaign, he's using this in order to try to win an election, and it's not working that way," Trump said.

Trump is accused of authorizing hush-money payments totaling \$130,000 to the adult film actress known as Stormy Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, in an attempt to cover up an alleged affair. He also is charged with allegedly falsifying records to hide the

payments made when he campaigned for the presidency in 2016 and into his first term as president.

According to reports, by early Tuesday afternoon Trump had signed a form to waive his own right to be present at sidebars -- which are meetings between legal teams of both the prosecution and defense to discuss non-public issues in the case.

As jury selection got underway Tuesday morning for its second day, a prosecutor from the district attorney's office told potential jurors: "Everyone and their mother has an opinion about this case, and what the right outcome should be," as he explained the court's expectation that jurors remain open-minded and not discuss details of the case with any other person.

Before 12 p.m. local time that day, nine of the 23 potential jurors had identified TikTok as a source of news during juror questioning on social media and online-related

activities, and all faced questions about their over-all thoughts and feelings about Trump, the ongoing election and the former president's multiple legal trials.

One potential juror on Tuesday was excused from jury duty when he said that his ability to be impartial was "probably going to be tough," noting his Texas roots and a circle of friends whom he said identify as registered Republican voters.

Likewise, multiple other likely jurors had given similar sentiments of possible bias on both the Democrat and Republican sides.

"A lot of people tend to intellectually slant Republican...so there could be some unconscious bias," the dismissed potential juror, an accounting firm partner who was married and had no children, said to Merchan without offering proof of his beliefs.

According to election website Ballotpedia, Democrats are the largest share of registered voters in the

United States, representing 38.35% of the electorate. Republicans make up 30.32% of registered voters.


The second day of the former president's hush-money trial also happened the same day the Supreme Court heard a separate case on a Jan. 6 rioter's obstruction challenge, and that case could have possible legal ramifications for Trump, as well.

On Monday, the prosecution had also asked Merchan to sanction Trump over an alleged gag order violation.


Next week, Merchan is expected to rule on the gag order sanction request that seeks for Trump to be fined \$1,000 for each of the three posts the prosecution claims allegedly violates Merchan's gag order. An April 24 hearing over the request was set but moved by Merchan up a day to April 23, which happens to be the same day as the Pennsylvania primary election.

Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc. filed a general rate application with the North Carolina Utilities Commission on April 1, 2024 requesting an increase in additional annual revenues of approximately \$149 million. The Utilities Commission will set a public hearing on the rate application within six months from the date of the filing and will require detailed Notice to the Public regarding the proposed rates in advance of the Hearing.

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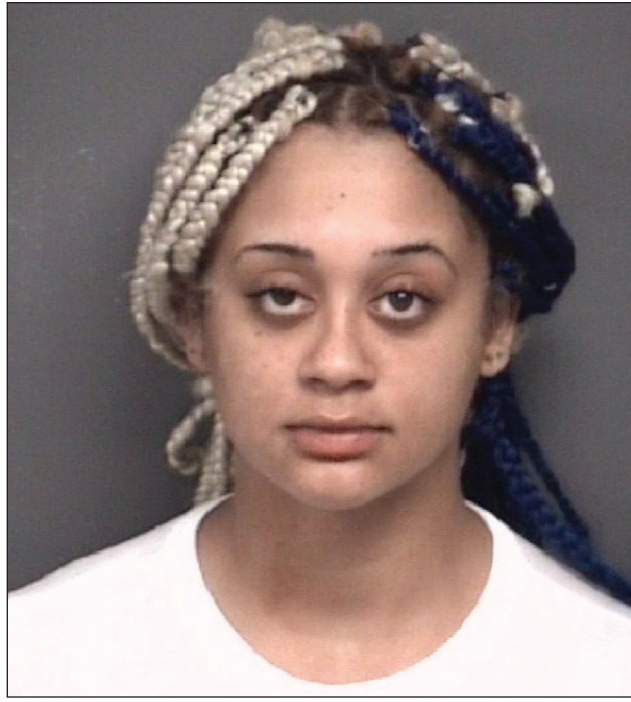
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FTA-EXTORTION — FELONY
FTA HABITUAL FELON — FELONY
FTA-DWLR NOT IMPAIRED REV — MISDEMEANOR



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Olympics: Leonard joins James, Curry, Durant, Embiid on Team USA basketball roster

Alex Butler

April 17 (UPI) -- Los Angeles Clippers forward Kawhi Leonard will fill the 12th and final spot on the Team USA men's basketball roster for the 2024 Summer Games in Paris, Team USA announced Wednesday.

The full roster was revealed on NBC's Today by basketball legend Grant Hill, the managing director of the men's national team.

"It's very exciting," Hill said. "We've got a great team, experienced guys, seven former Olympic gold medalists. We'll give ourselves a chance to win with the talent we have. It'll be exciting. It'll be tough. It won't be easy. We have great respect for all the other teams."

"But certainly, this is going to be an iconic roster."

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sOlympics pic.twitter. Basketball (@usabasket- com/QDZE4Cxvht—USA ball) April 17, 2024

Several players previously announced that

they would participate in Paris 2024. The star-filled roster features LeBron James, Stephen Curry, Kevin Durant, Joel Embiid, Anthony Davis, Devin Booker, Bam Adebayo, Anthony Edwards, Tyrese Haliburton, Jrue Holiday and Jayson Tatum, in addition to Leonard.

Team USA and NBC also released a video to reveal the team, with the rapper Common featured in the footage.

James, a 20-time All-Star, four-time MVP and four-time NBA Finals champion, will make his fourth Olympic appearance. He earned two gold medals and a bronze in his last three appearances. Curry, a 10-time All-Star, two-time MVP and four-time champion, will make his Olympic debut.

Durant and Embiid join James and Curry as the four former NBA MVPs on the Team USA roster. Durant won gold medals in his last three appearances for Team USA at the Olympics, including at Tokyo 2020.

Embiid, Leonard, Edwards and Haliburton join Curry as the first-time Olympians. Golden State Warriors coach Steve Kerr will lead the Americans at the 2024 Summer Games.

Competition for the 2024 Summer Games will be held July 25 to Aug. 11 in Paris. The Team USA men will face Serbia in the group stage at 11:15 a.m. EDT July 28 in Villeneuve-d'Ascq, France.

The Team USA women will start play against Japan at 3 p.m. July 29 in Villeneuve-d'Ascq. Cheryl Reeve of the Minnesota Lynx will coach that team. Brittney Griner, Aliyah Boston and Diana Taurasi are among the players on the Team USA training camp roster.

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NBA bans Toronto Raptors' Jontay Porter for life for gambling violations



Doug Cunningham

April 17 (UPI) -- The NBA Wednesday banned Toronto Raptors player Jontay Porter for violating league gambling rules.

The NBA said in a statement on X, "The league's investigation found that prior to the Raptors' March 20 game, Porter disclosed confidential information about his own health status to an individual he knew to be an NBA bettor. Another individual with whom

Porter associated and knew to be an NBA bettor subsequently placed an \$80,000 parlay proposition bet with an online sports book, to win \$1.1 million, wagering that Porter would underperform in the March 20 game."

Porter also limited his own game participation "to influence the outcome of one or more bets on his performance in at least one Raptors game," according to the NBA.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said in a state-

ment, "There is nothing more important than protecting the integrity of NBA competition for our fans, our teams and everyone associated with our sport, which is why Jontay Porter's blatant violations of our gaming rules are being met with the most severe punishment."

Silver also questioned "the sufficiency of the regulatory framework currently in place" for legal sports betting.

The NBA statement said

Porter placed at least 13 bets between January and March while traveling with the Raptors by using an associate's betting account. They weren't made on games that involved Porter. His winnings, according to the NBA, were \$21,965.

Porter placed over 1,000 bets on a FanDuel account that was closed after he signed a two-way contract with the Raptors in December, according to Action Network, a sports betting media site.



NFL's Cleveland Browns bring back white facemasks, introduce new logo

Alex Butler

April 17 (UPI) -- The Cleveland Browns will bring back white facemasks, which they wore on their helmets throughout the '70s, '80s, '90s and early 2000s, they announced Wednesday. They also unveiled a new logo.

"We are excited to honor our storied history through the return of the white facemask," JW Johnson, a partner in the Haslam Sports Browns ownership group, said in a news release.

"As we continue to write the next chapter of Browns' history, we reflect on different eras, such as the 'Kardiac Kids' and the return of the franchise, that led us to this place in time."

The Browns, who previously wore brown facemasks with their primary helmets, started wearing white facemasks in 1975. They kept them until 1995, when they suspended operations.

The Browns brought back the white facemasks

in 1999 when they returned as an expansion franchise and kept them on their helmets until 2005.

They sported the white facemasks twice over the last two seasons, including a Week 15 win over the Baltimore Ravens in 2022 and a Week 11 win over the Pittsburgh Steelers in 2023.

The Browns also altered their primary logo, switching their brown facemasks with the revived white version. They used running back Nick Chubb, who recently restructured his contract, as a model for the new helmet in several social media posts.

NFL teams with returning head coaches,

including the Browns, started voluntary off-season workouts on Monday. Chubb, quarterback Deshaun Watson, cornerback Denzel Ward and wide receiver Jerry Jeudy were among the players to report to the voluntary workout.

Brazil soccer legend Romario reregisters as player at 58

Alex Butler

April 17 (UPI) -- Soccer legend Romario registered himself as a player in Brazil, the 58-year-old announced. He plans to play alongside his son for Rio de Janeiro's America Football Club, for which he also serves as president.

Romario announced the move Tuesday on social media. Rio de Janeiro's Football Federation confirmed that his registration was approved.

Elected to the Brazilian senate in

2014, Romario will receive minimum wage, which he said he will donate to America Football Club.

America plays in the second division of the Carioca Championship, which starts play May 18. Romario said he does not plan to play in league games. The Rio de Janeiro Football Federation said manager Marcus Alexandre will determine how he is used.

"I'm not going to compete in the championship, but rather play a few games for the team of my heart and

make another dream come true, playing alongside my son," Romario wrote on Instagram. "What do you think?"

Romario's son, Romarinho, is a 30-year-old forward for America.

Romario retired in 2008. He earned Golden Ball honors for leading Brazil to the 1994 FIFA World Cup title.

The prolific goal scorer also was named 1994 FIFA World Player of the Year. Romario also played for Barcelona, PSV Eindhoven, Valencia and several Brazilian league teams.

Carl Erskine, one of Brooklyn Dodgers' famous 'Boys of Summer,' dies at 97

Mike Heuer

April 16 (UPI) -- Former Brooklyn Dodgers right-handed pitcher Carl Erskine, 97, died Tuesday at a hospital in his hometown of Anderson, Ind.

"The Dodgers mourn the passing of one of the team's all-time greats, Carl Erskine, at the age of 97," the Los Angeles Dodgers posted on X. "Carl was an All-Star, a World Series champion, a true ally of Jackie Robinson and more in the pursuit of equality."

Erskine also was a "pioneering advocate for those with special needs, inspired by his son, Jimmy," the Dodgers posted. "We send our sincere sympathies and best wishes to his family."

The Dodgers mourn the passing of one of the team's all-time greats, Carl Erskine, at the age of 97. Carl was an All-Star, a World Series Champion, a true ally to Jackie Robinson and more in the pursuit of equality, and a pioneering advocate for those with special needs, inspired... pic.twitter.com/1MPNDnz9HR— Los Angeles Dodgers (@Dodgers) April 16, 2024

Erskine joined the Brooklyn Dodgers on July 25, 1948, at age 21 shortly after eventual Hall-of-Famer Jackie Robinson saw Erskine pitch



five innings during an exhibition game.

Robinson, who broke Major League Baseball's color barrier a year earlier, told Erskine he would join the Dodgers soon, the New York Post reported.

Erskine spent 12 years with the Dodgers, first as a relief pitcher and then as a starter. He posted a 6-3 record in 17 appearances, mostly as a relief pitcher, during his rookie season.

Erskine was 5 feet 10 inches tall and weighed 165 pounds and had a commanding overhand curveball, the New York Times reported.

Erskine compiled a career record of 122-48 with a 4.00

ERA and 13 saves. He struck out 981 batters and walked 646 while pitching in 335 games for the Dodgers from 1948 until he retired in 1959.

He also played in five World Series, helping the Dodgers win one title, and was named to the National League All-Star team in 1954.

His best season was 1953, when he posted a 20-6 record as a starting pitcher and struck out a then-record 14 batters while winning game three of the World Series against the New York Yankees.

Erskine struck out Yankees star Mickey Mantle four times in that game, but the Yankees won the series and world

championship by beating the Dodgers 4-2 in six games.

Erskine helped the Dodgers win the 1955 World Series, which was the team's only title while in Brooklyn. The Dodgers migrated to Los Angeles following the 1957 season.

Teammates and fans affectionately referred to Erskine as "Oisk," due to the unique way in which many New Yorkers pronounced his last name as "Oiskine."

He was the last surviving member of the Dodgers' famous "Boys of Summer," which included Robinson, Gil Hodges, Pee Wee Reese, Duke Snider and Roy Campanella.

Erskine dealt with right-shoulder problems his entire professional career and pitched alongside Don Newcombe, Johnny Podres, Preacher Roe and other Dodger greats.

During his retirement years, Erskine coached the Anderson (Ind.) College baseball team and became an insurance salesman.

He also fathered his youngest son, Jimmy, in 1960. Jimmy Erskine was born with Down syndrome, which prompted his father to promote the Special Olympics while raising Jimmy in the same manner of his three older siblings.

Travis Kelce to host 'Are You Smarter Than a Celebrity?' game show

Annie Martin

April 17 (UPI) -- Professional football player Travis Kelce is making his first foray into TV.

Prime Video announced in a press release Tuesday that Kelce, a tight end for the Kansas City Chiefs, will host the new game show Are You Smarter Than a Celebrity?

Are You Smarter Than a Celebrity? is a spinoff of the series Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?

Each game will feature an adult contestant who will call on a classroom full of celebrities to help them answer 11 questions on a range of subjects, pulled from elementary school curriculum, in pursuit of a \$100,000 prize.

"They are not competing against the stars... they're enlisting their help and, in some cases, can even 'cheat' off of them. And on the final question, worth \$100,000, the contestant selects one celebrity to discuss the answer with before locking in. The

final question is always at the 6th grade level," an official synopsis reads.

Kelce is an eight-time Pro Bowler and four-time All-Pro who won Super Bowl LVIII with the Chiefs in February.

"I grew up loving game shows, and I'm excited to be following in the footsteps of so many TV icons by hosting my very first one with Are You Smarter Than a Celebrity. The original show is a great success, so to be bringing a new format with everyone's favorite celebrities to the screen, will definitely be entertaining," he said. "I'm just happy to be on the hosting side of the equation here and excited to see how these famous faces keep up?"

Are You Smarter Than a Celebrity? is produced by MGM Alternative, a division of Amazon MGM Studios. The show will stream on Prime Video.

In addition to his sports achievements, Kelce is known for his relationship with singer Taylor Swift.

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La Voz Latina

EU questions TikTok over app that offers rewards for watching

By Clyde Hughes
UPI

The European Commission on Thursday gave TikTok 24 hours to give it a risk assessment on its new app that give users "rewards" to like or watch videos.

TikTok Lite was rolled out in France and Spain, where users 18 and older can earn

points in its "Rewards Program" by liking content, watching videos, inviting friends and following creators. Users can trade in those points for rewards from Amazon, gift cards, etc.

The commission said they have expressed concerns over the protection of minors, creating addictive behaviors, especially those with mental health issues. It has

also given TikTok until April 26 to answer what it has put in place to mitigate risk.

"We have already been in direct contact with the commission regarding this product and will respond to the request for information," a TikTok representative told The Guardian.

The move comes after the commission passed the Digital Services Act, which

forces tech companies to comply with new rules to protect users against illegal content. The body started investigating TikTok in February for possibly violating the new law.

The EU fined TikTok \$372 million last September for the processing of children's personal data, a breach of the continent's privacy laws.

After Iran's attack on Israel, Biden urges Congress to act on long-stalled nat'l security bill

By Darryl Coote
UPI

President Joe Biden on Sunday urged congressional leaders to pass his long-stalled national security supplemental bill, as pressure mounts on House Speaker Mike Johnson to bring it to the floor after Iran launched a large-scale attack against Israel.

The White House said in a statement Sunday evening that the president spoke over the phone with Senate majority leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., House minority leader Hakeem Jeffries D-N.Y., and Johnson, R-La.

"On the call, the president discussed the urgent need for the House of Rep-



resentatives to pass the national security supplemental as soon as possible," the White House said.

Biden originally called on Congress for emergency funding for Ukraine's defense against Russia along with money for other national security objectives in August, but was stonewalled by Republicans who sought to try to negotiate more

funding for the border and stricter immigration policies from the White House. Following the start of the Israel-Hamas war on Oct. 7, further defense funding was included to support the U.S. ally.

In February, the Democrat-led Senate passed Biden's \$95 billion supplemental aid bill, which Johnson has yet to bring to

the floor as fissures in his party over Ukraine funding have deepened.

Far-right Republicans in the House, loyal to Donald Trump, the former president and current GOP presidential candidate, have balked at sending Kyiv more money. Trump has been skeptical of funding Ukraine, and has floated the idea of aiding them with loans.

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, one of Trump's most fervent of supporters, has repeatedly threatened to oust Johnson, including if he passes funding for the war-torn U.S. ally.

But the White House and Democrats now appear to be trying to force Johnson to act after Iran launched hundreds of drones and ballistic missiles toward Israel

on Saturday and amid fears that the Middle East conflict is expanding.

Schumer confirmed the White House call in a statement on social media, reiterating Biden's words that U.S. commitment for Israel's security "is ironclad."

"We need to help Israel stay strong against Iran," he said.

Addressing Johnson directly, Schumer informed his House counterpart that the best way to do that "is for the House to pass the bipartisan, Senate-passed national security bill."

The New Democrat Coalition of center-left House politicians renewed their calls Sunday for Johnson to bring about a vote on the Senate-approved bill.

"It's now imperative Speaker Johnson immedi-

ately allow the House to vote for the bipartisan national security package," the coalition's leadership said in a statement.

"It's long past time that House Republican Leadership live up to their responsibilities, and uphold America's ironclad commitment to defending our allies as they fight to defend themselves against oppressive powers."

Johnson, speaking earlier on Fox News' Sunday Morning Futures, remarked that he would try to bring a package to support Israel to the floor this week, but did not state if it would also include funds for Ukraine.

"The details of that package are being put together now. We're looking at the options and all the supplemental issues," he said.

House delivers Alejandro Mayorkas impeachment articles to Senate

By Mike Heuer
UPI



The House of Representatives sent articles of impeachment to the Senate on Tuesday in an effort to remove Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas over his handling of the U.S. border.

House Speaker Mike Johnson forwarded the articles of impeachment after a one-week delay, CNN and ABC News reported.

The House in February voted 214-213 to impeach Mayorkas and charged him with willfully refusing to comply with federal law to enforce the nation's borders and a breach of public trust.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck

Schumer, D-N.Y., said the Senate will expedite the impeachment proceedings.

Schumer said the Senate will swear in jurors on Wednesday and Senate President Pro Tempore Patty Murray, D-Wash., will preside over the impeachment proceedings and Senate vote.

Schumer accused the House GOP of an "abuse of process" and using impeachment to "settle a policy disagreement" regarding the Biden administration's handling of the U.S. border and the recent influx of migrants.

"This would set an awful precedent for Congress," Schumer said. "Every time there's a policy disagreement in the House, they send it over here to tie the Senate

in knots and do an impeachment trial?"

GOP members told The Hill they expect Schumer to hold a vote Wednesday to dismiss the impeachment charges or appoint a special committee to address the matter.

Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, previously said Schumer "doesn't want to hold the Mayorkas impeachment trial because it will show how bad the crisis truly is."

Sen. John Kennedy, R. La., said Schumer and Senate Democrats would prefer to ignore the matter while the "border crisis is bringing death, drugs, violence, chaos, criminals and mayhem into American neighborhoods."

'Acapulco': Maximo takes on a rival in Season 3 trailer

By Annie Martin
UPI

Apple TV+ is teasing Acapulco Season 3.

The streaming service shared a trailer for the season Wednesday featuring Eugenio Derbez and Enrique Arrizon.

Acapulco is a Spanish and English-language comedy series inspired by the 2017 film How to Be a Latin Lover.

Derbez stars as Máximo Gallardo Ramos, a successful mogul who recounts his rags-to-riches story to his nephew Hugo (Raphael Alejandro).

The Season 3 trailer shows a younger Máximo (Arrizon) take on a new rival, Memo's sister Dulce, while working at Las Colinas resort in the 1980s.

"In the present story, older Máximo (Derbez) finds himself returning to

a Las Colinas he no longer recognizes. While in 1985, younger Máximo (Arrizon) continues his climb up the ladder of success while potentially jeopardizing all the relationships he's worked so hard to build," an official synopsis reads.

Fernando Carsa, Damián Alcázar, Camila Perez, Vanessa Bauche, Regina Reynoso, Raphael Alejandro, Jessica Collins,

Rafael Cebrián, Regina Orozco and Carlos Corona also star. Jaime Camill and Cristo Fernández will appear as guest stars in Season 3.

Acapulco Season 3 will have a two-episode premiere May 1 on Apple TV+.

The series is created by Austin Winsberg, Eduardo Cisneros and Jason Shuman, with Sam Laybourne as showrunner and executive producer.

