

Joint journey

Trials, commitments to UA further bond LR Christian basketball stars. — Sports, 1C



Out of the past

Lonoke County Museum takes visitors on a tour back to 1877. — Style, 1E

Arkansas Democrat Gazette

ARKANSAS' NEWSPAPER

Copyright © 2026, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Inc.

Printed at Little Rock • February 24, 2026

ArkansasOnline.com

★ ★ 36 Pages • 6 Sections \$3.00

ELECTION 2026 ARKANSAS VOTER GUIDE. Includes voting hours and information for the March 3 election.

In the news

Nick Reiner pleaded not guilty to murder two months after his parents, actor-director Rob and Michele Reiner, were stabbed to death in their Los Angeles home and prosecutors say the death penalty is still an option.

Rob Jetten, the Netherlands' new prime minister, acknowledged "an enormous honor" as the 38-year-old former Parliament member became the youngest and first openly gay person to hold the office.

Josep Zara was clear, "We definitely do not use pineapple," as the Hungarian restaurateur spoke of his limited edition pizza made with ingredients available in the Roman Empire, including olive paste, a fermented fish sauce and confit duck leg, but none from the New World — such as tomatoes.

Mark Ofua, a Nigerian veterinarian preparing for World Pangolin Day, recalled jokingly telling curious onlookers — and later regretting it — that the scaly animals were baby dragons because, "If people do not even know what a pangolin looks like, how do you protect them?"

Lars Eidinger immediately stopped his title role performance in Shakespeare's "Richard III" in Berlin, called for the house lights and apologized to a woman in the first row hit by a sword that slipped from his hand in the play's final scene, later calling her to be sure she was all right.

Rob Oatey, fire chief in Santa Cruz, Calif., has invited Forrest Cook and Emilio Puhvel to apply as lifeguards when they're old enough after the two teenagers and other surfers used their boards to rescue four children and their parents when the family's boat capsized.



A soldier clears a roadblock on a road leading to Tapalpa, Mexico, on Monday, a day after the Mexican army killed Jalisco New Generation Cartel leader Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, known as "El Mencho." (AP/Marco Ugarte)

Arkansas natives staying safe amid cartel violence

CHRIS SWINDLE AND DOUG THOMPSON NWA DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE PUERTO VALLARTA, Mexico — Fayetteville resident and artist Misha McQuillen Gardner just wanted to show her friend a good time for her birthday. The two Arkansas natives, both originally from Van Bu-

ren, arrived in Puerto Vallarta on Wednesday and were enjoying a visit to a new place they hadn't been. Everything changed around 7 a.m. Sunday. That is when car fires started being set on the outside of the city, apparently in retaliation for the military killing a cartel leader in a shootout.

Hotels and resorts began telling guests to shelter in place. "You know, we're scared," Gardner said via an audio call on the Facebook Messenger app Monday morning. She said her phone service has not been working, but she can access the internet via her hotel's Wi-Fi. "Yesterday, See ARKANSANS, Page 5A

Mexico unrest upending life for residents Shops, businesses reopen despite violence on streets

COMPILED BY DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE STAFF FROM WIRE REPORTS TAPALPA, Mexico — Heavily armed security forces kept up their battle with cartel gunmen a day after the Mexican army killed the country's most powerful drug lord, sparking a surge in violence and putting the country on edge. Cartel fighters continued to block roads as smoke rose on the outskirts of Tapalpa, the town where the killing happened, in the state of Jalisco. Tourist shops in Tapalpa were open Monday, and workers were on the job. But gunshots also rang out, and in the street was a dead man lying beside a bullet-pocked vehicle. More than 70 people died in the attempt to capture Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes and the aftermath, authorities said Monday. Known as "El Mencho," he was the notorious leader of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel, one of the most powerful criminal organizations in Mexico. The body count taken by security officials included security forces, suspected cartel members and others. Officials did not offer details, and the circumstances of most of the deaths were unclear. Oseguera Cervantes was

the boss of one of the fastest-growing criminal networks in Mexico, known for trafficking fentanyl, methamphetamine and cocaine to the United States and staging brazen attacks against Mexican government officials. The organization responded to his death with widespread violence, including erecting more than 250 roadblocks across 20 states and setting fire to vehicles. Oseguera Cervantes died after a shootout with the Mexican military. Mexican Defense Secretary Ricardo Trevilla said Monday that authorities had followed one of his romantic partners to his hideout in Tapalpa. After Oseguera Cervantes met with the partner Friday, authorities immediately began planning an operation that they carried out Sunday morning. That handed President Claudia Sheinbaum — under intense pressure from President Donald Trump to combat the cartels — a momentous decision. Should she attempt to take out Oseguera Cervantes and potentially open a new chapter of violence across Mexico less than four months before it is to co-host soccer's World Cup? Or should she leave Oseguera Cervantes See MEXICO, Page 5A

General: US lacks weapons, support

Acute risks of attack on Iran outlined

JOHN HUDSON AND TARA COPP THE WASHINGTON POST As the Trump administration weighs an attack on Iran, the Pentagon's top general has cautioned President Donald Trump and other officials that shortfalls in critical munitions and a lack of support from allies will add significant risk to the operation and to U.S. personnel, according to people familiar with internal discussions. Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, expressed his concerns at a White House meeting last week with Trump and his

top aides, these people said, cautioning that any major operation against Iran will face challenges because the U.S. munitions stockpile has been significantly depleted by Washington's ongoing defense of Israel and support for Ukraine. Caine's remarks have not been previously reported. Separately, in Pentagon meetings this month, Caine also has raised concerns about the scale of any Iran campaign, its inherent complexity and the possibility of U.S. casualties, one person See IRAN, Page 6A

Clearing the way



A groundskeeper clears snow from the walkways inside the Trinity Church graveyard in lower Manhattan during a snowstorm in New York on Monday. (AP/Seth Wenig)

Article, 2A

District 4 hopefuls share concerns

Candidates want active Congress

ALEX THOMAS ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE WASHINGTON — The two Democrats running to represent Arkansas' 4th Congressional District shared similar concerns about Congress' willingness to support President Donald Trump without much challenge to the White House, stressing the legislative branch needs to take action and regain its power. James Russell III and Steve O'Donnell have prepared the final messages of their primary matchup. Thousands of Arkansans have already cast their ballots in this year's midterm primary elections during the early voting period. The final day of early voting is next Monday, ahead of election day on March 3. The Democratic primary winner will face U.S. Rep. Bruce Westerman, R-Ark., in the November general election. Westerman, of Hot Springs, is seeking his seventh term in the House of Representatives, hoping to build upon a legislative career that includes an ongoing tenure leading the House Natural Resources Committee. The 4th District is primarily southwest Arkansas, but the district does extend into the state's northwest corner and Pulaski County. Russell, 53, operates an outpatient mental health clinic with his wife in Little Rock. See DISTRICT 4, Page 3A

Officials try to re-create set of tariffs

ANA SWANSON THE NEW YORK TIMES WASHINGTON — The Trump administration has begun using a patchwork of trade laws to re-create the sweeping tariffs that the Supreme Court struck down as illegal last week. But the approach will require a more cumbersome set of tariffs, ones that President Donald Trump will not be able to issue quickly or on a whim. The tariffs may be levied by country, trade issue or product and will probably take months to go into effect. The question now is how closely the old structure will be reproduced — or whether the new tariffs could end up creating an entirely different set of winners and losers. See TARIFFS, Page 3A

Ending Carnival season



Revelers take part in the annual flour war on Clean Monday, marking the end of the Carnival season and the start of the 40-day Christian Lent fast leading to Easter, in Galaxidi, west of Athens. (AP/Petros Giannakouris)

WEATHER

LITTLE ROCK TODAY TONIGHT HIGH 64 LOW 49

INDEX

Table with 2 columns: Category and Page Number. Includes Arkansas, Business, Classifieds, Crossword, Editorials, Horoscopes, Obituaries, Public notices, Sports, Stocks, Style, Television, Voices, and Weather.

Home delivery (501) 378-3456 Outside Pulaski County 1-800-482-1121



0 51497 310820