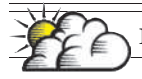


# The Washington Post

Prices may vary in areas outside metropolitan Washington.

RE V1 V2 V3 V4



Partly sunny 89/68 • Tomorrow: T-storm 73/45 B16

Democracy Dies in Darkness

SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 2026 • \$4

## Flyover is followed by a walkover



SCOTT TAETSCH/GETTY IMAGES

Four F-16 fighter jets streak over Nationals Park before the Nationals' home opener Friday. After CJ Abrams clubbed a three-run homer for the hosts in the first inning, Dodgers star Shohei Ohtani answered in the third with the first of five home runs by the visitors, and first-year Nats manager Blake Butera was left apologizing after a 13-6 loss. **Story, B7**

## Two U.S. aircraft shot down during combat missions

RESCUE EFFORT ONGOING FOR CREW MEMBER

Separate incidents undercut claims of air superiority

BY TARA COPP AND ALEX HORTON

Two U.S. military aircraft were shot down in separate incidents Friday while conducting combat operations against Iran, setting off a frantic search-and-rescue effort that remains ongoing for one missing crew member, U.S. officials said.

The F-15E fighter jet and the A-10 attack plane both were hit by incoming fire, U.S. officials said. One of two crew members aboard the F-15, which crashed inside Iran, was rescued, though their condition was not immediately clear, the officials said. The A-10 pilot navigated the damaged plane to Kuwaiti airspace before ejecting and was subsequently rescued, they added.

Two U.S. search-and-rescue helicopters also were hit by Iranian fire that injured U.S. personnel on

board, though both aircraft have safely returned to their base, the officials said.

The developments, confirmed by three U.S. officials speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss an evolving situation, belied earlier assertions by the Trump administration that U.S. forces had obtained air superiority over Iran and raised immediate questions about how much of the country's arsenal remained after a month of targeted strikes on the regime's weapons facilities.

Spokespeople for the Pentagon did not respond to requests for comment.

The search-and-rescue effort for the missing F-15 crew member marked the most perilous moment yet for U.S. troops in the war, putting the missing airman and the rescuers more directly in the line of Iranian fire. It is the

SEE AIRCRAFT ON A11

## Hard-liners holding on, dimming hopes for talks

Surviving leaders in Iran are emboldened and laying out steep demands

BY SUSANNAH GEORGE

The assassinations of Iran's senior leaders by Israel and the United States have triggered unprecedented churn within Tehran's political and military establishment, eliminating the supreme leader and some of the most powerful men in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, but have left in place a hard-line government and little hope of a diplomatic breakthrough, according to regional and Western officials.

Rather than usher in what President Donald Trump has

called "more reasonable" leadership, the surviving Iranian regime is newly emboldened to inflict economic pain, pushing Tehran and Washington further apart in negotiations, according to the officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity to share sensitive details.

"Discussions are ongoing," Trump said Wednesday in an address outlining his administration's achievements a month into the war, saying operations would conclude in the next two or three weeks.

"If during this period of time no deal is made, we have our eyes on key targets," Trump said. "If there is no deal, we are going to hit each and every one of their electric-generating plants very hard and probably simultaneously." Trump also threatened to strike oil infrastructure.

SEE IRAN ON A11

## Trump seeks a record \$1.5 trillion for Pentagon

BY RILEY BEGGIN

President Donald Trump on Friday officially requested \$1.5 trillion in spending for the Pentagon next fiscal year, which would be the largest defense budget in U.S. history.

Trump also outlined some \$73 billion in cuts to nondefense federal spending, including cuts to health research, K-12 and higher education, renewable energy and climate grants, a low-income housing energy program, and community development block grants. The cuts to nondefense spending represent a 10 percent reduction from the current fiscal year.

Blueprint also would cut \$73 billion for education, health and environment

The request comes as Congress grapples with the ballooning costs of the war in Iran, a persistent shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security and the mid-term elections ahead.

The White House's 2027 fiscal year budget proposes a 44 percent increase in defense spending and asks Congress to approve another \$350 billion for military weapons and an expansion of the "defense

industrial base," according to a summary of the request released Friday morning.

The request invests "in the foundations of American military power — from defense industrial capacity to the readiness and health of the force" and ensures the "United States maintains the world's most powerful and capable military," the administration wrote in documents from the White House Office of Management and Budget announcing the proposal.

The summary also urged Congress to approve a 13 percent increase, or \$40.8 billion total, focused on the Justice Department's efforts to "bring violent criminals

to justice" related to immigration, gangs and drug cartels.

The influx of funding for the Pentagon would include more money for the "Golden Dome" missile defense system, a 7 percent pay raise for troops, tens of billions for shipbuilding and the development of new artificial intelligence capabilities in the military, according to the full budget released later Friday.

It also includes massive proposed cuts to federal agencies and programs that the administration argued represented wasteful government spending. OMB requested that lawmakers reduce funding for the Environmental Protection

SEE BUDGET ON A7

## ICE agents still arrest many immigrants with no record

Despite assurances from White House of a more targeted approach

BY EMMANUEL MARTINEZ AND MARIANNE LEVINE

Federal immigration officers continued to target large numbers of immigrants with no criminal record in the weeks after two U.S. citizens were shot and killed in Minneapolis, newly released government data shows, despite statements from Trump administration leaders indicating they wanted to take a more targeted approach.

White House border czar Tom Homan said in late January that "all operations will be targeted" and prioritize "criminal aliens, public safety threats and national security threats." President Donald Trump said he wanted to see "a softer touch" following the unrest in Minneapolis. The shift in rhetoric came as polls indicated that a growing majority of

Americans thought the administration had gone too far in deporting undocumented immigrants.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement data obtained through a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit filed by the Deportation Data Project indicates that arrest numbers have dropped. ICE averaged about 7,000 arrests a week in the six weeks since Alex Pretti was shot and killed on Jan. 24 — down from 9,000 earlier in January.

But a Washington Post analysis of the data shows that people with no criminal record still make up the largest share of those detained. In all, 42 percent of those detained in the six weeks after Pretti's death had no criminal record. That is a slight drop from the six weeks that preceded his death, when that figure was 46 percent. Thirty percent had prior convictions and 29 percent had pending charges in the latter weeks.

Julia Gelatt, associate director of the U.S. immigration policy program at the Migration Policy

SEE ICE ON A7

## For Gen Z men, Catholic Church has its attractions

In New York, they are flocking to Sunday mass — looking for faith, community and girlfriends



BRYAN ANSELM/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Anthony Gross, left, and Kate DePetro walk with friends toward a Catholic Mass at St. Joseph's Church.

BY SHANE O'NEILL

NEW YORK — About 100 young adults dressed in business casual were packed into a pizza shop.

"Come to church with us!" they shouted in unison. "In New York City!" added Anthony Gross. He flashed a wide, white grin and raised the roof.

Gross had helped organize this meetup at the Pizza Box in Greenwich Village. Soon, he would lead these Catholic and Catholic-curious young people to a Mass at St. Joseph's Church a few blocks away.

After Gross moved to New York last summer, he started documenting his search for "The best Catholic church in NYC."

His criteria included the beauty of the church, a community of young people and "no whack political stuff." He declined to elaborate what constituted "whack political stuff."

"I'm not a political influencer at all," he said. "And I wouldn't even say I'm a Catholic influencer. Catholicism and my faith is just one part of my personal brand."

SEE CATHOLICISM ON A6

## IN THE NEWS

**AI in courtrooms** Judges are increasingly using the tool to draft rulings and prepare for hearings, even as experts say its unreliability could compromise judicial authority. **A5**

**Admonition from Vatican** With the Mideast in conflict, Pope Leo says God "does not listen to the prayers of those who wage war." **A10**

**THE NATION** The president restored his endorsement to a congressman he ditched in a tiff over tariffs. **A3**  
**A Tennessee** librarian was fired for refusing to move LGBTQ+ books to the adult section. **A4**

**THE WORLD** At least five people were killed across Ukraine in drone and missile attacks. **A12**  
**Cuba** will release 2,000 prisoners as the U.S. ramps up pressure amid an energy crisis. **A12**

**THE ECONOMY** Amazon has been ordered by the federal labor board to recognize and bargain with the Teamsters at a Staten Island warehouse. **A13**  
**Employers** added 178,000 jobs in March, notching a robust gain and blowing past analysts' expectations. **A13**

**STYLE** Easter lamb cakes, meant to be adorable and fluffy, sometimes turn out to be repulsive and nightmarish. **B1**

**SPORTS** Arizona vs. Michigan in the men's NCAA tournament could be a Final Four matchup for the ages. **B7**

**THE REGION** A Virginia man accused of planting pipe bombs on Jan. 5, 2021, signaled that his defense might rely on a debunked conspiracy theory. **B12**  
**A dog and a cat** both lost limbs at a Maryland clinic after their rescues. Blueberry and Meadow are now fast friends. **B12**

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