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Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2026 • \$4

President vows to fire Powell if he won't leave

Trump also declines to end a criminal probe into Fed's office renovation

BY ANDREW ACKERMAN

President Donald Trump on Wednesday threatened to fire Federal Reserve Chair Jerome H. Powell if he does not step down from the central bank, renewing his attacks on a Fed chief he has long accused of keeping interest rates too high.

"Well then I'll have to fire him, okay?" Trump said on Fox Business about Powell's tenure as chairman, which ends May 15. "If he's not leaving on time."

Trump also refused to distance himself from the Justice Department's criminal probe into the Fed's \$2.5 billion office renovation, which prosecutors have used to ratchet up pressure on the Fed even as the department's legal case has faced legal and political headwinds. Trump declined to direct the Justice Department to stand down from the investigation, which a federal judge last month found to be part of a broader White House pressure campaign against the Fed.

"Whether it's incompetence, corruption or both I think you have to find out," he said, referring to the renovation inquiry. "I have to find out."

The comments came a day after prosecutors from the U.S. attorney's office in Washington appeared without warning at the Fed's headquarters seeking a tour of an active construction site, The Washington Post previously reported — the latest escalation in a pressure campaign that has raised alarm among central bank

SEE TRUMP ON A14



BAKR ALKASEM/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Along Syria's Tartus-Baniyas highway, Iraqi trucks wait to unload their cargo Wednesday at the Baniyas port refinery on the Mediterranean Sea. Iraq has begun exporting crude using tanker trucks through Syria amid the ongoing saga at the Strait of Hormuz.

Measure to block further Iran strikes fails in Senate

BY THEODORIC MEYER AND NOAH ROBERTSON

The Senate rejected a resolution Wednesday to block President Donald Trump from ordering further strikes on Iran, even as some Republicans raised increasing concerns about Congress's lack of input on the war.

The vote was the latest test of lawmakers' support for the unpopular conflict since Trump threatened last week to destroy Iran's "whole civilization" then hours later agreed to a two-week ceasefire. Democrats have forced votes on three other war powers resolutions since the war's start,

War powers resolution is the fourth to falter in the chamber since war's start

all of which have failed.

Wednesday's procedural vote failed 47-52, with Sen. Rand Paul (R-Kentucky) joining Democrats to support the resolution and Sen. John Fetterman (D-Pennsylvania) voting against it. Sen. Jim Justice (R-West Virginia) did not vote.

Some Republicans who opposed the resolution said they

nevertheless want Trump to consult Congress as the war approaches the two-month mark — an important legal deadline.

The War Powers Resolution of 1973 — the law Democrats are using to force the votes — requires presidents to remove U.S. forces from any conflict that Congress has not authorized within 60 days. Trump can obtain a 30-day extension if he certifies that it is an "unavoidable military necessity."

Trump predicted shortly after the war started that it would be over within four or five weeks, but the 60-day deadline, which arrives May 1, is rapidly ap-

proaching. He has sent mixed signals about how long the conflict will go on, telling Maria Bartiromo of Fox Business on Tuesday that he the war was "very close to over" even as he imposed a naval blockade on Iran and sent thousands more troops to the Middle East.

"The president recognized ahead of time when he first went into Iran that this was going to be a short-term thing, right?" Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) said. "We're probably not going to be dealing with 60 days. Well, here we are."

Senate Majority Leader John

SEE POWERS ON A11

Trump tightens vise on Tehran

THOUSANDS MORE TROOPS EN ROUTE

Infusion of firepower as clock ticks down on truce

BY DAN LAMOTHE

The Pentagon is sending thousands of additional troops into the Middle East in the coming days, as President Donald Trump attempts to pressure Iran into a deal that could end the weeks-long conflict there while considering the possibility of additional strikes or ground operations if a fragile ceasefire does not hold, U.S. officials said.

The forces moving into the region include about 6,000 troops aboard the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush and several warships escorting it, said current and former officials, who like some others spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss military movements. About 4,200 others with the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group and its embarked Marine Corps task force, the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, are expected to arrive near the end of the month.

The infusion of firepower appears likely to coalesce with warships already in the Middle East just as the two-week ceasefire is set to expire April 22 — and as the U.S. military enforces a naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. The personnel will join the estimated 50,000 troops that the Pentagon has said are involved globally in operations to counter Iran.

SEE IRAN ON A11

Americans get bigger refunds as new deductions take hold

BY JULIE Z. WEIL

This Tax Day, more people might be celebrating their refunds than usual.

The Internal Revenue Service is sending more money back: The average refund for the almost 100 million households who had already filed their returns as of April 3 was \$3,462, more than 10 percent above last year's average of \$3,116 for similarly early filers.

The bigger refund checks reflect the major tax cut passed by Congress in July, which reduced many households' tax bills. Because the law went into effect midyear, it also meant that many

companies ended up withholding too much from workers' paychecks, based on previous formulations.

As of April 3, the most recent data published by the IRS, the number of returns filed was below the number at the same point last year: a little under 100 million, compared to more than 101 million. But the IRS sent out much more money than at the same point last year: more than \$241 billion in refunds, a 14 percent increase compared to \$211 billion last year.

The portion of people who get a refund, rather than owing money

SEE REFUNDS ON A14

Voters in a Virginia data hub sour against centers

BY EVAN HALPER, SCOTT CLEMENT, OMARI DANIELS AND ISABELLE GIBSON

Voters in Virginia, a global hub for the hulking warehouses of computers known as data centers, have turned sharply against the facilities after previously welcoming them, a Washington Post-Schar School poll has found.

The share of Virginian voters

who would be comfortable with construction of a new data center in their community has plunged to 35 percent, according to the Post-Schar School poll conducted late last month, as worries mount in the state and across the nation that the projects are a scourge on the environment and household utility bills.

In a sign of the growing resistance, Prince William County on Tuesday abandoned plans for one

of the country's biggest and most controversial data center projects: a 1,700-acre campus on the edge of Manassas National Battlefield Park that would have hosted as many as 37 of the compute warehouses. The county board of supervisors dropped a years-long legal effort to defend zoning changes that would have allowed it to proceed.

Data centers enjoyed bipartisan support from Virginians as

recently as 2023, but that has flipped to dismay throughout the state, including in regions that are far from the dense cluster of hundreds of facilities outside Washington known as "Data Center Alley."

The poll shows a striking drop since the same question was asked in 2023, when 69 percent of voters said they would be comfortable with a new data center in

SEE DATA CENTER ON A6

Swalwell rose to top political tier even as rumors followed

BY LIZ GOODWIN

When Cheyenne Hunt first arrived on Capitol Hill as a staffer in 2020, several other young women working there warned her privately: Stay away from Rep. Eric Swalwell.

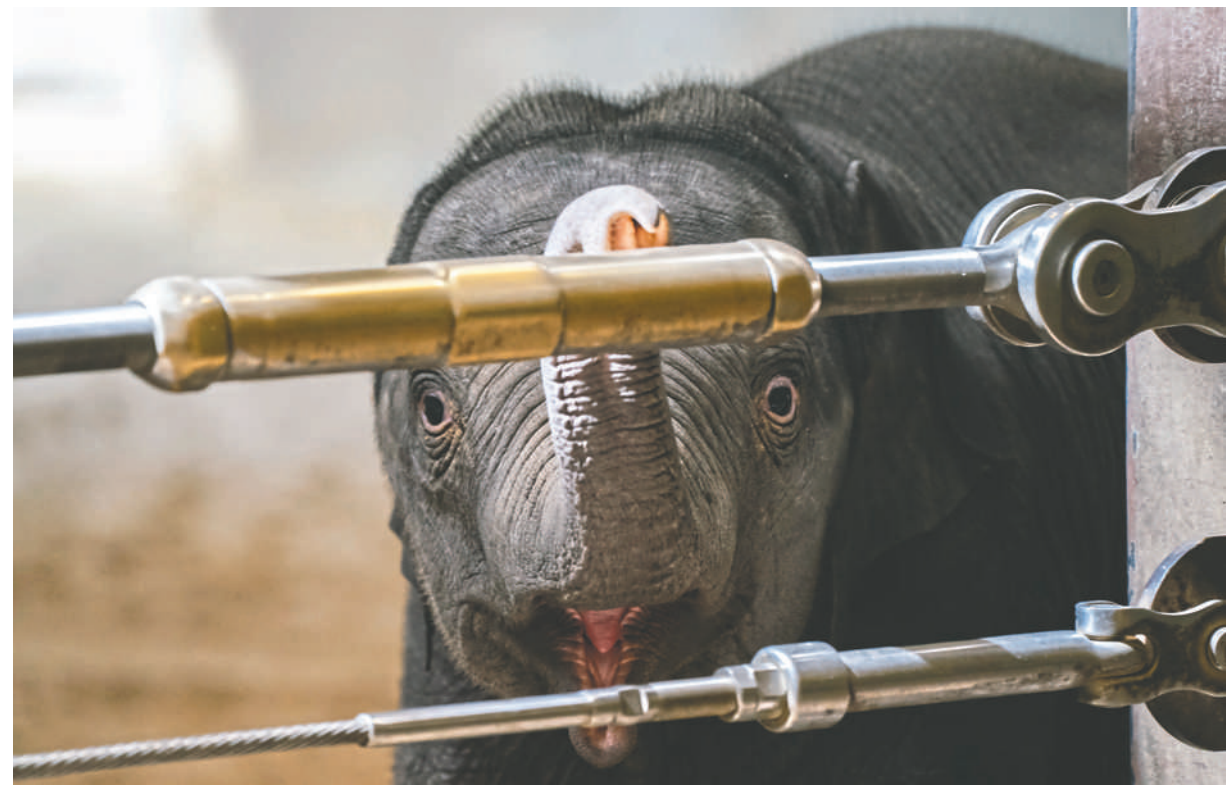
Swalwell could be "creepy," Hunt said other women told her, especially over social media.

Six years later, Hunt is one of several women who have leveraged their large followings online to go after Swalwell, enlisting women to come forward with their stories and connecting them with reporters at CNN and

other outlets. Late last week, allegations that include sexual assault of a former staffer and sending unsolicited explicit messages to young women came to light in investigations published by CNN and the San Francisco Chronicle. On Tuesday, a woman accused Swalwell of raping her in 2018.

Swalwell's attorney Sara Azari said Swalwell denies "each and every allegation of sexual misconduct and assault" made against him, calling them "false, fabricated, and deeply offensive." "This is a ruthless and shameless attempt

SEE SWALWELL ON A18



MAXINE WALLACE/THE WASHINGTON POST

Adorable adoptee

Linh Mai, a 2-month-old elephant calf spurned by her mother, makes an appearance at the National Zoo, where a female Asian elephant is acting as a stand-in mom. Story, B12

IN THE NEWS

Vance in Georgia The vice president, speaking to conservative college students, praised the president while subtly differentiating himself ahead of a potential 2028 presidential run. A2

Immigration policy Six House Republicans joined Democrats to force a vote on temporary protections for Haitians living in the U.S. A3

THE NATION The FDA weighs lifting restrictions on peptides as they gain popularity in the wellness craze. A4
In letters, families of girls who died at Camp Mystic urge the state to deny it a license. A5

THE WORLD China has agreed not to send weapons to Iran, President Donald Trump claimed ahead of talks with Beijing, and is "very happy" with U.S. efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. A10

THE ECONOMY The stock market hit a record, built on rising optimism that the war with Iran will avoid worst-case results. A13
The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, a 240-year-old newspaper set to close, was sold to a nonprofit that promises to keep the paper running. A14

STYLE 'Faces of Death' was a 1978 cult hit of a fake documentary. A modern remake is aimed at the TikTok era. B1

SPORTS A new uniform for the Commanders has a spear on the helmet, which could reignite debate over imagery. B7

THE REGION Republicans keep criticizing Virginia Gov. Abigail Spanberger over proposed tax hikes that never passed and that she never endorsed. B12

LOCAL LIVING Here are 11 decluttering jobs to consider adding to your list as you're tackling spring cleaning.

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