



## Lego project prepared Pilgrim to be a Gator

SPORTS, 1B

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## Artemis II 10-day crewed mission will fly by Moon



NASA's Artemis II mission to fly by the moon successfully launched April 1. JOE SKIPPER/REUTERS

### Major objective to test systems, space suits

Thao Nguyen  
USA TODAY

After two major delays, NASA made history on April 1, launching a crew of four astronauts on a 10-day expedition around the Moon and back.

The Artemis II mission, which is the second under NASA's multibillion-dollar Moon program, marks a major milestone for the space agency: the first crewed deep-space flight in over 50 years. Artemis II crew members are expected to travel about 252,000 miles into space, "farther from Earth than any previous human mission," according to NASA.

"This milestone will occur during the lunar flyby phase, when the crew travels on a free-return trajectory around the Moon, which allows the spacecraft to loop around the Moon and return to Earth without entering lunar orbit," NASA said.

The distance record was set by the Apollo 13 mission in 1970, when it traveled roughly 248,000 miles from Earth, USA TODAY previously reported.

While the crew will not land on the Moon, NASA said the lunar flyby mission is designed to test life support systems and critical operations, paving the way for future Moon landings and Mars exploration. The mission is expected to last about 10 days.

During the first one to two days on the mission, the crew will be in a high Earth orbit and conduct systems checks, such as testing the Orion capsule's life support, propulsion, navigation and communications systems, to

ensure the spacecraft is ready to travel into deep space.

After the systems checks are complete, the Orion will perform its "translunar injection burn" on day two, according to the Scientific American. The translunar injection entails firing Orion's main engine, which increases the spacecraft's velocity to send it out of Earth orbit and toward the Moon.

On days three to four, the crew will continue to monitor spacecraft systems as they approach the Moon's vicinity. Mission controllers will track communications and navigation performance.

On day five, the Orion will enter the lunar sphere of influence, "marking the point at which the pull of the Moon's gravity will become stronger than the pull of the Earth's gravity," according to NASA.

See ARTEMIS, Page 2A



FHP troopers said Justin Jacob Cobb was driving this Chevy Tahoe that struck a Ford Edge killing the driver and injuring two passengers in June 2022. AUSTIN L. MILLER/OCALA STAR-BANNER

## Trial begins for man accused in fatal crash

Austin L. Miller  
Ocala Star-Banner  
USA TODAY NETWORK

When a Marion County Fire Rescue firefighter checked on Justin Jacob Cobb not long after a June 22, 2022 crash along County Road 42 near Umatilla, the official said the man's blood pressure, vital signs and mental state were normal.

The first responder testified at Cobb's DUI manslaughter trial on March 31. He told defense lawyer Mark O'Mara that Cobb's eyes were not bloodshot and his speech wasn't slurred after the crash.

Cobb had been behind the wheel of a Chevy Tahoe that crashed into a Ford Edge, killing the Edge driver and seriously injuring that vehicle's two passengers, according to Florida Highway Patrol troopers.

In his opening statement to jurors, O'Mara had told them that, according to prosecutors, his client was under the influence of methamphetamine and that is why the Chevy veered into the path of the Ford.

But the defense questions whether Cobb was legally impaired. Was Cobb's ability to control the vehicle diminished?

O'Mara cautioned jurors not to let sympathy for the victims sway their judgment. Instead, he said, they should focus on the facts, closely examine the crash, and follow the law.

About the crash

Cobb is charged with DUI

See CRASH, Page 2A

## Trump fires Bondi as U.S. attorney general

Bart Jansen and Terry Collins  
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump fired Attorney General Pam Bondi after several investigations of his perceived enemies were thwarted and her handling of files related to accused sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein came under criticism.

"Pam Bondi is a Great American Patriot and a loyal friend, who faithfully served as my Attorney General over the past year," Trump said in a social media

post. He said she would be moving to "a much needed and important new job in the private sector."

Bondi's ouster represented Trump's second removal of a Cabinet official in his second term. He fired Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem in March and replaced her with Markwayne Mullin, a former senator from Oklahoma.

Bondi will be succeeded temporarily by Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche.

Lawmakers of both parties accused

Bondi of botching the release of the Epstein files, which Congress directed in December 2025. The legislation came after Bondi refused in July 2025 to release the files, despite Trump and his supporters campaigning for the release of all federal records in the case.

The department eventually released about 3 million pages of documents but left 2.5 million additional pages sealed. Blanche said the remaining records either named women who accused

See BONDI, Page 2A



Pam Bondi – a former Florida state attorney general – represented President Donald Trump during his first impeachment trial.

ANDREW HARNIK/GETTY IMAGES

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