



## Pundits questioning Trump's health

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# War negotiations on shaky ground



People walk near an anti-U.S. billboard in Tehran, Iran, on April 20. A two-week ceasefire between the United States and Iran is set to expire on April 22. MAJID ASGARIPOUR/WEST ASIA NEWS AGENCY VIA REUTERS

## Talks uncertain after U.S. seizes Iranian ship

**Kathryn Palmer, Adrianna Rodriguez and Francesca Chambers**  
USA TODAY

Iran is considering attending peace talks with the United States in Pakistan, a senior Iranian official told Reuters on April 20, following moves by Islamabad to end a U.S. blockade of Iran's ports, a major hurdle for Iran to rejoin peace efforts. However, the official stressed that no decision had been

made. With a two-week ceasefire set to expire on April 22, a senior Iranian official said Tehran was "positively reviewing" its participation but no final decision had been made. The comments conveyed a clear change of tone from earlier statements ruling out attendance and pledging to retaliate for U.S. aggression. The Iranian official said mediator Pakistan was making positive efforts

to end the U.S. blockade and ensure Iran's participation.

The ceasefire had appeared in jeopardy after the United States said it had seized an Iranian cargo ship on April 19 that tried to evade its blockade in the Strait of Hormuz and Tehran vowed to retaliate.

The U.S. military said it had fired on the Iranian-flagged cargo ship headed toward Iran's Bandar Abbas port after a six-hour standoff, disabling its engines. U.S. Central Command released

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## Analysts: Economic shift may blunt Fed's moves

**Andrea Riquier**  
USA TODAY

Ahead of Senate Banking Committee hearings for Kevin Warsh to take the helm of the Federal Reserve, interest rate policy has grabbed headlines.

President Donald Trump nominated Warsh with the assumption that the former Fed governor would be more likely to cut rates than outgoing chair Jerome Powell has been. Trump has repeatedly said borrowing costs should be much lower than they are

now. But many of the president's own policies, from taxes to tariffs to the war in the Middle East, have driven inflation higher – so much so that the Fed's next step could just as easily be hiking rates as cutting them.

Meanwhile, many analysts believe the economy has changed so much that the steps the Fed has taken in the past may no longer be relevant. Moving rates up or down might well be the least of Warsh's concerns if he becomes chair.

Inflation fell throughout the late 20th century as the world globalized, said Steve Blitz, chief U.S. economist at GlobalData. But now, countries are pulling back and moving inward, with most developed economies, including the United States, wanting to produce goods domestically, not abroad.

In fact, the Trump administration is content with a slightly weaker dollar, which helps make U.S. producers more competitive with global counterparts, and to try to bring manufacturing back to the United States.

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## Answers sought after Louisiana massacre

**Christopher Cann, Makenzie Boucher and N'dea Yancey-Bragg**  
USA TODAY NETWORK

SHREVEPORT, LA – Residents of this historic riverfront city remained shaken a day after a gunman opened fire April 19 and killed eight children in the nation's deadliest mass shooting since January 2024.

They were looking for explanations – and authorities were trying to provide them, piecing together information on the tragedy.

Police said the suspect, identified as Shamar Elkins, also shot the mother of his children and another woman, both of whom survived with serious injuries. Elkins then fled the scene on foot and stole a car at gunpoint, leading to a police chase that ended with officers shooting him dead, according to police.

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The Pugh and Elkins families gather while grieving the shooting deaths of family members on April 19 in Shreveport, Louisiana. Eight children were killed and two women injured.

BRANDON BELL/GETTY IMAGES

## Patel sues The Atlantic, claiming false reporting

**Jana Winter**  
REUTERS

FBI Director Kash Patel filed a defamation lawsuit against The Atlantic and its reporter Sarah Fitzpatrick following the publication of an article on April 17 alleging the director had a drinking problem that could pose a threat to national security.

The magazine's story, initially titled "Kash Patel's Erratic Behavior Could Cost Him His Job," cited more than two dozen anonymous sources expressing concern at Patel's "conspicuous inebriation and unexplained absences" that "alarmed officials at the FBI and the Department of Justice."

The article, which The Atlantic subsequently titled "The FBI Director Is MIA" in its online version, reported that during Patel's tenure, the FBI had to reschedule early meetings "as a result of his alcohol-fueled nights" and that Pa-



The lawsuit filed by FBI Director Kash Patel seeks \$250 million in damages.

KEVIN LAMARQUE/REUTERS FILE

tel "is often away or unreachable, delaying time-sensitive decisions needed to advance investigations."

In The Atlantic's story, the White House, the Department of Justice and Patel denied the allegations.

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