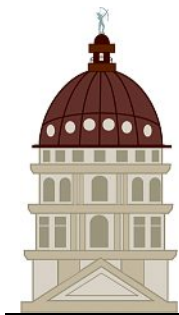




Officials link Taco Bell lettuce to outbreak

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U.S., Iran trade attacks on infrastructure



Authorities in Kuwait said one of its power generation and water desalination stations had been hit in an Iranian attack. STEPHANIE MCGEHEE/REUTERS FILE

Escalation in fighting pushes oil prices higher

Jana Choukeir and Eman Abouhassira
REUTERS

DUBAI – The United States struck bridges and an airport in Iran on July 17 and Tehran responded by hitting a power and desalination plant in Kuwait, as the warring foes risked further escalation by expanding their targets to include infrastructure.

In the contested Strait of Hormuz, where the renewed conflict has again cut off global energy supplies from the Middle East, U.S. Marines boarded a tanker, and another ship was reported to have been hit by a projectile. Another vessel was boarded by armed men off Yemen, though one maritime security source said the incident appeared to be an act of Somali piracy rather than linked to the war with Iran.

Washington and Tehran have been

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Washington and Tehran have been testing the limits of escalation since their ceasefire agreement collapsed, raising the prospect of a return to active war. MAJID ASGARIPOUR/ WEST ASIA NEWS AGENCY VIA REUTERS FILE

Trump revisits election claims

President alleges China role in 2020 elections

Phillip M. Bailey and Joey Garrison
USA TODAY

President Donald Trump in a July 16 prime-time address sought to further sow distrust in U.S. elections, claiming broad vulnerabilities with voting systems and potential for interference from other nations.

Trump specifically pointed to China, alleging it interfered with the electoral process in 2020.

“Every American deserves to know that when they cast their vote, that vote will be counted accurately in a system, and that is to make that system secure – one where cheating and interference are not just difficult, but virtually impossible,” he said. “Unfortunately, the system we have today falls catastrophically short of that standard.”

The president said newly declassified documents will show China tried to undermine the 2020 election in several ways, including compromising U.S. voter data. He also said Americans have for years been “blatantly lied to” by the government about the security of election infrastructure, such as voting machines and ballot-counting systems.

“They’re vulnerable and they’re easily compromised, and people within our government knew that,” Trump said.

Yet most of the documents released by the White House did not support the president’s sweeping assertions about “shocking vulnerabilities” in America’s elections.

Instead, much of the information Trump spoke about was from previously known reports that show voter files acquired by China – including names, addresses and political party

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Epstein accusers irked by Blanche meeting

AG nominee described as ‘intentionally noncommittal’

Aysha Bagchi
USA TODAY

Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche, who President Donald Trump nominated to be his permanent attorney general, met with women who say they were abused by the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, a Justice Department spokesperson told USA TODAY in a statement.

The meeting took place after Sen. Thom Tillis, R-North Carolina, said he wouldn’t support Blanche’s nomination until he meets with a group of Epstein accusers who have been gathering with lawmakers in recent days and pleading for a personal meeting with Blanche. Tillis’ pledge meant meeting with the women could be crucial to Blanche’s effort to be confirmed as attorney general.

“Acting Attorney General Blanche, senior DOJ officials, FBI special agents, and victim services representatives met with Epstein victims today and had a productive, initial discussion,” a DOJ

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A spokesperson said acting Attorney General Todd Blanche answered questions and encouraged Jeffery Epstein accusers to meet with FBI investigators next, adding that the DOJ “is determined to bring justice for all victims of human trafficking and sex crimes.”

JONATHAN ERNST/
REUTERS

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