

# Carroll County Times

Weather 91/73 Mostly sunny Page 12 THURSDAY, JULY 24, 2025 www.carrollcountytimes.com Price \$3.50

## TRUMP WATCH

### Fla. judge won't unseal Epstein jury records

A judge on Wednesday rejected a Trump administration request to unseal transcripts from grand jury investigations of Jeffrey Epstein years ago in Florida, though a similar request for the work of a different grand jury is pending in New York.

U.S. District Judge Robin Rosenberg in West Palm Beach said the request to release grand jury documents from 2005 and 2007 did not meet any of the extraordinary exceptions under federal law that could make them public.

The Justice Department last week asked the judge to release records to quell a storm among supporters of President Donald Trump who believe there was a conspiracy to protect Epstein's clients, conceal videos of crimes being committed and other evidence. In 2008, Epstein cut a deal with federal prosecutors in Florida that allowed him to escape more severe federal charges and instead plead guilty to state charges of procuring a person under 18 for prostitution and solicitation of prostitution.

*Here are more Trump administration headlines from Wednesday:*

**Obama allegations:** White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said former President Barack Obama went to "great and nefarious lengths" to delegitimize Trump's 2016 presidential win. "This is truly one of the greatest scandals in American history," she said Wednesday during a news briefing. Leavitt's comments came after Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard and Trump accused Obama of pushing a false conspiracy about Russia's involvement in the election nearly a decade ago. Gabbard said Obama directed members of the Intelligence Community to create an assessment detailing "significant" Russian election meddling, even though it contradicted several other intelligence assessments that had been released.

**AI leader:** Trump shared some views Wednesday on the technology that industry lobbyists are sure to appreciate. Saying he wants the U.S. to do "whatever it takes to lead the world" on AI, he argued that AI firms can't be successful if they must pay for all the work they use to train their models. Publishers, authors, musicians and others have raised alarm about AI models using their works without permission, arguing it violates copyright law.

**Ukraine aid:** The State Department sent a congressional notification Wednesday that it had approved a new slate of arms to Ukraine as it fends off escalating attacks from Russia. The sales include \$150 million for the supply, maintenance, repair and overhaul of U.S. armored vehicles, and \$172 million for surface-to-air missile systems.

— From wire and Sinclair National Desk reports



Barnes & Noble will open in Westminster at 402 Englar Road Suite C. JEFFREY F. BILL/STAFF

## Barnes & Noble's 1st store in county opens next week

By Bryna Zumer

Carroll County's first Barnes & Noble bookstore will open its doors next week after months of anticipation on social media.

The company announced its Westminster location will hold a grand opening at 9 a.m. on July 30 in the Westminster Crossing West shopping center. It's taking over the former Gavigan's Furniture space.

New York Times bestselling romance novelist B.K. Borison, who is based in Baltimore, will be on hand for the ribbon-cutting and will sign books.

The 20,000-square-foot store's design will "marry the best traditions of independent bookselling with the resources of the historic chain," the company said in

a news release.

It will include a B&N Cafe, books and a range of toys, games, paper and gift items.

"The enthusiastic response from the community has been very encouraging, and our Westminster book-sellers have been hard at work preparing a bookstore curated with their new customers in mind," James Daunt, CEO of Barnes & Noble, said in a statement.

Barnes & Noble is opening seven new bookstores nationwide in July, as part of an ambitious corporate strategy.

The company expects to open more than 60 new bookstores this year, and opened more stores last year than it had in the decade between 2009 and 2019, according to the news release.

Barnes & Noble remodeled its two Baltimore County stores in White Marsh and Pikesville in recent years, and also downsized the Pikesville store, moving it across the street.

The stores in Bel Air and Ellicott City are among those that retain the company's previous 1990s-style format.

The past decade has seen big changes for Barnes & Noble locally, as the company closed its high-profile, longtime stores at Towson Circle and at the Power Plant in the Inner Harbor. It also opened a new location in The Mall in Columbia.

*Have a news tip? Contact Bryna Zumer at bzumer@baltsun.com, or on X as @brynazumer.*

## THE INTERVIEW

### State's relationship with Trump's HHS 'being challenged'

So says state's health secretary, passing her 100th day on job

By Brooke Conrad

Dr. Meena Seshamani says she's focused on behavioral health and other priorities as she passes her 100th day heading the state's Department of Health, though she avoided direct answers to many of The Baltimore Sun's questions on major health topics during a wide-ranging interview Wednesday.

Seshamani acknowledged that the state's relationship with the federal government is "being challenged right now." Some recent changes include Medicaid cuts recently passed by Congress and new policies being implemented by Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy. She also said she's working on regaining "trust" with the disability community after funding cuts during the last legislative session.

Seshamani replaced Laura Herrera Scott, who left the position in February. Seshamani assumed the role in April, after serving as deputy administrator for the

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services under the Biden administration.

### Treating drug overdoses

Maryland ranked 15th on overdose fatality rates nationwide in 2022, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Baltimore is a national hotspot for drug overdoses and recently made national headlines for a mass overdose event involving 27 people who were hospitalized.

Asked what the state can do to improve drug treatment, beyond merely preventing overdose deaths, Seshamani said behavioral health is "absolutely a priority" for her and that it's important for substance use disorder to be "incorporated into the full spectrum of behavioral health care."

"My behavioral health team has been working on that continuum of care to start with prevention, going all the way to post-acute (care), and how does substance use fit in there,"

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Maryland Del. Gabe Acevero talks about a bill he has named after Anton Black, a 19-year-old who died in 2019. Black's father, Antone, is standing at left, and Anton Black's mother, Jennell, stands at right with then-Del. Nick Mosby. FILE

## Democratic socialist in Maryland legislature ready to 'fight like hell'

Acevero, 34, says party is moving in his direction

By Carson Swick and Hannah Gaskill

As self-described "Democratic socialist" candidates are seeing greater success in races around the country, one Maryland lawmaker who embraces the label believes Democratic Party voters are shifting in his direction.

Del. Gabe Acevero, a 34-year-old member of the Democratic Socialists of America, represents Montgomery County in the Maryland General Assem-

## Trump: No FEMA funds for Md. floods

President wants states to 'invest in their own resilience'

By Hannah Gaskill and Jonathan M. Pitts

President Donald Trump on Wednesday denied disaster assistance for Western Maryland that Gov. Wes Moore had requested following massive floods that hit the region in May.

In a statement Wednesday, Moore, a Democrat, said that the flooding, which caused evacuations in Garret and Allegany counties after Georges Creek overflowed following three days of extreme rainfall, "clearly met disaster assistance criteria" under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The floods occurred between May 12 and May 14. Moore requested disaster assistance June 13.

In an email to The Baltimore Sun on Wednesday, White House spokeswoman Abigail Jackson said that Trump responds to each request for assistance under the Stafford Act with "great care and consideration, ensuring American tax dollars are used appropriately and efficiently by the states to supplement — not substitute, their obligation to respond to and recover from disasters."

"While the President's decisions are communicated directly to the Governor of an affected State, the Trump administration remains committed to empowering and working with State and local governments to invest in their own resilience before disaster strikes, making response less urgent and recovery less prolonged," Jackson wrote.

FEMA did not return requests for comment Wednesday.

Since Trump was inaugurated Jan. 20, FEMA has denied eight requests for disaster declarations. That does not include Maryland's request that Trump denied on Wednesday.

Upon returning to office, Trump said that FEMA should be eliminated and that states should be more responsible for their own disaster relief. In January, he issued an executive order establishing a committee to assess the recommended structural changes for the agency.

The Washington Post reported earlier this month that the president is retreating from the idea of abolishing FEMA after he visited Texas, which was ravaged by floods that killed more than 130 people, including dozens of children at a religious summer camp.

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## GOP seeks applicants for seat in District 5

Spot on board of commissioners will be vacant Aug. 1

By K. Mauser

Carroll County's Republican Central Committee is accepting applications for District 5 commissioner on the Board of Carroll County Commissioners in light of Ed Rothstein's early departure.

The District 5 seat will be left vacant starting Aug. 1, when Rothstein will begin his new position leading the Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families.

The central committee will accept applications through Aug. 2 for candidates interested in filling the final 17 months of Rothstein's term.

All seats on the Board of County Commissioners are up for election in 2026.

Republican Alan Grasley is the only candidate who has filed to be on the 2026 ballot for the District 5 seat. He said he's notified the central committee of his interest in filling the

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### 2 killed, 4 wounded in shootings

One man and one woman were killed and three teens and a man were wounded in four separate shootings overnight, according to Baltimore Police. **Page 4**

### Baltimore Co. teachers to get 1% raises in fall

Baltimore County Public Schools will provide all union and non-union employees with 1% cost-of-living adjustments after striking a deal with teachers' union last week. **Page 5**

### 18-year-old arrested on child porn charges

An 18-year-old employee of St. John's Parish Day School in Ellicott City has been arrested and charged with 10 counts of possession of child pornography. **Page 5**

## READER POLL

Do you support expanding nuclear energy to meet rising power demand?

Vote at [baltimoresun.com/cctpoll](https://baltimoresun.com/cctpoll) or by scanning this QR code with your phone. The Carroll County Times reader poll is an unscientific survey in which website users volunteer their opinions on the subject of the poll.



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