

The New York Times

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

THE WEATHER
Today, clouds, some sun, breezy, high 71. Tonight, cloudy, a shower or two, low 50. Tomorrow, showers and a thunderstorm, breezy, warm, high 68. Weather map is on Page B8.

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Prices in Canada may be higher \$4.00



A.U.S. strike on a bridge intended to connect Tehran to the Caspian Sea left eight dead on Thursday, according to Iran state media.

American Combat Jet Shot Down Above Iran; One in Crew Is Rescued

For Military, Trump Seeks \$1.5 Trillion Another From Plane Unaccounted For

By TONY ROMM
WASHINGTON — With the United States at war with Iran and embroiled in conflicts around the world, the White House asked Congress on Friday to approve about \$1.5 trillion for defense in the 2027 fiscal year. If enacted, that amount would set military spending at its highest level in modern history.
The request, which arrived as part of President Trump's new budget, would amount to a roughly 40 percent increase from what the United States spent on the Pentagon this fiscal year. The administration coupled the proposal with a call for \$73 billion in cuts spread across many domestic agencies, including the elimination of key federal health, housing and education programs, some of which serve minority groups and the poor.
The ideas sum to a fiscal blueprint that could add trillions of dollars to the brimming federal debt, if Congress opts to translate the president's full vision into law without other changes to the nation's balance sheet. But such an outcome seemed highly unlikely, given that Republicans united with Democrats only months earlier to reject the president's last proposal for dramatic spending cuts.
This year, Mr. Trump urged Congress to approve most of the new defense money — more than \$1.1 trillion — as part of its regular work to fund the government and to enact the remaining \$350 billion using the same special legislative tactic that allowed Republicans to clinch their tax cuts in 2025. Such a move could also enable G.O.P. leaders to boost funding for the president's mass deportations despite Democrats' objections.
In the days before releasing his plan, the president and his aides framed the proposed increase for defense in urgent terms, citing a need to restock munitions and other supplies as the war with Iran continued. At one point, Mr. Trump indicated at a private lunch that military spending needed to be a national priority, even at the expense of federal safety-net programs and other

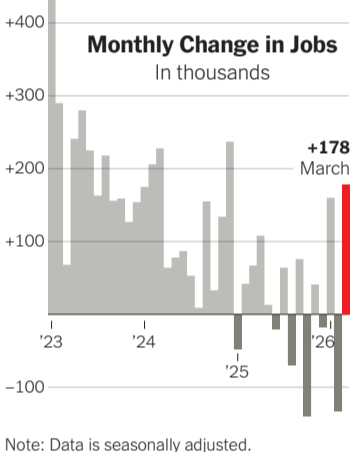
This article is by Eric Schmitt, Helene Cooper and Thomas Fuller.
WASHINGTON — American forces rescued an airman whose warplane was shot down over Iran on Friday, but the uncertain fate of a second crew member prompted a risky search operation on Iranian soil, U.S. and Israeli officials said.
The loss of the warplane, an F-15E Strike Eagle, is the first known instance of an American combat aircraft going down over Iran since the war began more than a month ago.
Iran's ability to shoot down the fast and agile F-15E came three days after the leaders of the Pentagon claimed "an increase in air superiority" over the skies in Iran. The downing of the jet suggested that Iran, whose military and air defenses have been heavily bombed, still had some command of its airspace. An American helicopter was hit during the search-and-rescue operation but managed to escape safely.
A second U.S. Air Force combat plane crashed near the Strait of Hormuz about the same time the F-15E was shot down over Iran, according to two U.S. officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss operational matters. The lone pilot in the second plane, an A-10 Warthog, was rescued.
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A photo provided by Iran state media claims to show part of a downed F-15E Strike Eagle. The red tail stripe is consistent with the tail section of an F-15E.

U.S. Reports Strong Job Growth For March, Beating Predictions

By LYDIA DePILLIS
The labor market put in a strong showing in March, as wintry weather receded, strikes concluded and businesses started looking beyond the huge changes of President Trump's first year in office.
The Labor Department reported on Friday that employers had added 178,000 jobs last month, substantially more than economists had expected, bringing the average over the past three volatile months to a healthy 68,000 positions. The unemployment rate dropped to 4.3 percent, leveling off after a gradual rise, as the work force contracted slightly.
The numbers were collected before the energy price shock caused by the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran tightened its grip on the global economy, however. Forecasters have estimated that persistently higher oil prices will slow job creation and raise unemployment in a year when they had expected the economy to regain



some vigor.
"A lot of people thought this was going to be the year that finally we put political uncertainty behind us and the labor market was going to reaccelerate," said Guy Berger, chief economist at Homebase, a scheduling and payroll platform. "And it's still too early for gas"
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Bondi Wanted a Graceful Exit, But Trump Wanted Her Gone

By GLENN THURSH and TYLER PAGER
WASHINGTON — Attorney General Pam Bondi had a pretty good idea her days were numbered.
President Trump had complained too freely, too frequently, to too many people about her inability to prosecute the people he hates. She was falling short of Mr. Trump's unyielding, unrealistic demands for retribution against his enemies. She had made mistake upon mistake in her handling of the Epstein files. Her critics were in the president's ear.
Last month, Ms. Bondi told a friend that Mr. Trump's willingness to fire Kristi Noem from her post as homeland security secretary meant she might be in jeopardy too.
But Ms. Bondi had not expected Mr. Trump, the man responsible for elevating her to one of the most powerful positions in the country, to drop the curtain quite so soon, according to four people familiar

Fealty and Flattery Are No Guarantees of Job Security

with the situation.
On Wednesday, the 60-year-old Ms. Bondi, downcast but determined, joined Mr. Trump for a glum crosstown drive to the Supreme Court, where they watched arguments in the birthright citizenship case. In the car, Mr. Trump told her it was time for a change at the top of the Justice Department.
Ms. Bondi hoped to save her job or, at the very least, buy a little more time — until the summer — to give herself a graceful exit.
She ended up with neither, and grew emotional Wednesday in conversations with friends and colleagues after she realized she was out. The next morning, Mr. Trump made it official, and fired
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The Mystifying Drunken Episodes of Teetotalers

By KATE MORGAN
In 2019, Mark Mongiardo, then a high school athletic director, was pulled over in Sullivan County, N.Y., after a dinner with the boys' golf team. He'd eaten a hot dog and some fries, washed down with a soda.
He hadn't had a sip of alcohol, but the officer who stopped Mr. Mongiardo for using his phone while driving smelled it anyway. A breathalyzer test showed Mr. Mongiardo's blood alcohol content was .18 percent, more than twice

A Rare Condition That Uperds People's Lives and Reputations

the legal driving limit.
It was his second drunken driving offense in two years, but these episodes of unexplained intoxication had begun decades earlier.
Ever since the start of his career as a gym teacher and coach in the early 2000s, Mr. Mongiardo, now 43, had been repeatedly

pulled aside and warned that playmates and colleagues smelled alcohol on him. In 2016, he failed a surprise urine test and was required to attend counseling. He left that school district because he "could feel a reputation starting to form," he said. Two weeks into another job, he got his first D.W.I.
Problems began to arise at home, too. He recalled one Christmas dinner where he struggled to piece together a full sentence or even pick up his fork. "There was no alcohol being served, and suddenly Mark's drunk," he said. "My"
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China Aims for the Moon as NASA Takes Note

By SELAM GEBREKIDAN and JOY DONG
HONG KONG — More than half a century after the United States put humans on the moon, it is once again locked in a space race. This one is with China.
NASA sent astronauts toward the moon's orbit this week, a milestone toward grander ambitions. Both the United States and China

A Rival for Artemis in a New Space Race

want to build outposts around the moon's south pole and hope to tap frozen water, hydrogen and helium there. Both countries plan to build nuclear reactors to power lunar bases from which they can

launch missions into deep space. It is a new frontier, and whoever gets there first will have a big say in setting the rules.
NASA's program, known as Artemis, has hit repeated snags. The United States wants to be back on the moon by 2028, two years ahead of China's target, but even NASA acknowledges that it may not win.
"They may be early," Jared Isaacman, the NASA administrator, said last week. "And recent history suggests we might be late."
China is pursuing its lunar ambitions with a singular, formidable focus. Its program has several advantages over its American rivals.
Experts say China's edge lies in its centralized control, which allows it to plan and fund projects for decades at a time. Its robotic space missions have already gone where the United States has not.
China is the only nation to land on and retrieve samples from the far side of the moon, the hemisphere that always faces away from Earth. This summer, China's seventh robotic mission, Chang'e 7, will explore the lunar south pole. It helps China that its immedi-



A board featuring China's astronauts at a launch center in the Gobi Desert. The program's first goal is a moonwalk by 2030.

A New Approach for the Magazine

You'll find a collection of new content this weekend in The New York Times Magazine, which has been redesigned for a more dynamic presentation. Even as it retains its commitment to deep reporting, the magazine will feature more visual journalism, more history and humor, more essays and photography. The new approach is intended to create an environment of experimentation rather than imposing a fixed editorial lineup each week.

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Kidnapping Syrian Minority
A Times investigation found that abductions of Alawite women and girls were more common and more brutal than the government has said. PAGE A7

Foreign Aid Eviscerated
President Trump clawed back money Congress had approved for programs that had bipartisan backing. PAGE A9

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An influx of fans who want to follow March Madness from a gambler's paradise is a lift for the city. PAGE B6

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36 Hours in Raleigh, N.C.
This Southern capital has plenty to entertain weekend visitors. PAGE C9

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A Champion of Orangutans
Birutė Galdikas, 79, was a prominent researcher of great apes. PAGE B12



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An Exodus From the House
As the midterm election cycle gets underway, lawmakers, particularly Republicans, are departing at one of the highest rates since the 1930s. PAGE A11

Fight to Fund Muslim Schools
As Islamic private schools try to join Texas' new voucher program, top Republicans have vowed to stop what they call "radical" indoctrination. PAGE A14

E.P.A. Targets Microplastics
The agency said that it would try to curb levels of microplastics and drugs in the drinking water of hundreds of millions of Americans. PAGE A16

BUSINESS B1-5
Rethinking the A.I. Job Threat
Artificial intelligence hasn't disrupted the labor market, economists say, but they are increasingly convinced that it will — and that policymakers are not prepared to respond. PAGE B1

Remarks Haunt Trump in Court
Judges have cited attacks on the news media made by the president and his appointees when ruling against the government in at least three lawsuits involving news organizations. PAGE B1

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Michelle Goldberg PAGE A19

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16 Strangers Reading Aloud
What happens when you shrink down a book club to two days and then each person takes turns narrating the story? Welcome to Page Break. PAGE C1



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