



Draft prospects, college teams with most riding on scouting combine

SPORTS, 1B

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026

BARTLESVILLE, OKLAHOMA

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Hegseth: U.S. has fiscal plan in Iran

Pentagon indicates cost of war is rising

Joey Garrison and Michael Loria
USA TODAY

The Pentagon revised the cost of the war in Iran upward on May 12.

A week before, the Trump administration estimated the price tag at \$25 billion.

“Now we think it’s closer to \$29 billion,” Jules Hurst III, the Pentagon’s acting comptroller, told a House Appropriations subcommittee.

The figure reflects the cost of the nine-week war so far and does not include projected future expenditures. Hurst said the revision came from updated figures on operational costs and equipment repair and replacement. He said \$24 billion has gone toward munitions and equipment.

The Pentagon is seeking \$1.5 trillion in the next federal budget and more than \$200 billion in supplemental funding from Congress.

Minnesota Rep. Betty McCollum, the subcommittee’s Democratic ranking member, asked whether the Pentagon has a “plan B” if Congress does not authorize the budget request. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, formally known as the Secretary of Defense, responded that the Trump administration has “a plan” for shifting the approach in Iran, depending on how events unfold.

“We have a plan to escalate if necessary. We have a plan to retrograde if necessary. We have a plan to shift assets. Certainly in this setting, we wouldn’t reveal what the next steps may be,” he said.

A day before, President Donald Trump rejected an offer from Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, slamming the Islamic country’s peace proposal as “TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE”

See IRAN, Page 3A

INFLATION REPORT



A 5.4% rise in gas prices over the month again drove the increase, following a record 21.2% spike in March. Over the year, gas prices are up 28.4%. MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES

SURGING FUEL COSTS LIFT PRICES IN APRIL

Rachel Barber
USA TODAY

Americans already struggling with affordability saw prices rise again in April as surging oil costs stemming from the Iran war kept driving up prices at the gas pump and affected supply chains for other goods.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Consumer Price Index, its measure of inflation, revealed prices rose 0.6% from March to April and were up 3.8% from a year ago. Those readings came in above forecasters’ expectations and mark inflation’s highest level in nearly three years.

A 5.4% rise in gas prices over the month again drove the increase, following a record 21.2% spike in March. Over the year, gas prices are up 28.4%.

“American households continue to feel the brunt of surging energy costs, adding to the deluge of inflation they have weathered since the pandemic,” James McCann, a senior economist of investment strategy at Edward Jones said in a note to USA TODAY. “Moreover, with the Strait of Hormuz still effectively shuttered, the risk that we are not past the peak of these price

pressures is rising.”

The cost of energy, shelter and food also increased over the month, while the price of new vehicles and medical care declined, the agency said.

While elevated gas prices are one of the fastest and most noticeable impacts of the war, John Gronon, a sector lead for energy, materials and utilities at Thrivent, said supply chain disruptions for fertilizers, metals and freight also risk driving up the cost of groceries, housing and other consumer goods.

Core inflation, the metric excluding more volatile energy and food costs, rose 0.4% in April, a bit more than it did in March or February and a surprise to Principal Asset Management Chief Global Strategist Seema Shah.

“While the pickup in headline inflation was expected, the upside surprise in core is more consequential,” Shah said in a note to USA TODAY. “It tentatively hints at broadening price pressures, something the Fed will be reluctant to dismiss.”

See FUEL COSTS, Page 2A

Push for Trump to free ailing Americans in China

Antoni Slodkowski
REUTERS

BEIJING – The families of two Americans imprisoned in China for more than a decade are urging President Donald Trump to seek their release during his summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping this week.

The cases involve Dawn Michelle Hunt, 54, a Chicago-area artist and former flight attendant, and Nelson Wells Jr., 52, a Louisiana native and father of three, who were convicted on drug charges after what their families say were separate “blind mule” scams in which they were unknowingly used to carry narcotics.

For Trump, who has cast himself as a dealmaker who brings Americans

home, securing the release of two ailing U.S. prisoners would offer a gain from a summit expected to be short on outcomes amid tensions over trade, Iran and Taiwan. For Beijing, a humanitarian release of two Americans would be a low-cost gesture that could buy goodwill with a mercurial U.S. president at a sensitive moment in the relationship.

“With President Trump meeting President Xi, our two families are writing letters – we’re asking, ‘Can you please ask for the release of our loved ones?’” said Tim Hunt, Dawn Michelle’s older brother.

“Hopefully, we can get those letters delivered and read.”

Hunt said his sister is an artistic “brainiac,” a highly intelligent person, and former flight attendant with a

See CHINA, Page 7A



Cynthia and Nelson Wells Sr. hold a photo of Nelson Sr. with their son Nelson Wells Jr., who has been imprisoned in China since 2014. EVAN GARCIA/REUTERS

Subscriber-only eNewspaper

The eNewspaper is an electronic copy of your print newspaper. Enjoy every page by going to examiner-enterprise.com/enewspaper or scan this code on your mobile device. You will also find late news and sports in the bonus sections. Check it out today!



Volume 130 | No. 75
Subscribe 1-888-598-3207
©2026 \$2.50

