TEMPLE DAILY TELEGRAM

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Tourney time
Big 12 event begins today in Kansas City
– 1B

More coverage online
More state, national and world stories are available on www.tdtnews.com.

Middle East wars
State Department orders drawdown at more diplomatic missions
– 5A

Today's Outlook
High: 82
Low: 63
40% chance of showers

MIDDLE EAST WARS

'It's going to be a short-term excursion'

Trump says Iran war could be over soon, but oil disruption would trigger harsher US strikes

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump said Monday that the war against Iran could be short-lived, but he left open the possibility of an escalation in fighting if global oil supplies are disrupted by the Islamic Republic, which chose a new hard-line supreme leader.

Oil prices briefly shot to their highest level since 2022 a day after Iran selected Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei to succeed his late father as Iran's supreme leader. Investors saw it as a signal that Iran was digging in 10 days into the war launched by the United States and Israel.

But prices later fell and U.S. stocks rose on hopes that the war with Iran may not last much longer.

"We took a little excursion" to the Middle East "to get rid of some evil. And, I think you'll see it's going to be a short-term excursion," Trump told Republican lawmakers at his golf club near Miami.

Hours later, Trump posted on social media: "If Iran does anything that stops the flow of Oil within the Strait of Hormuz, they will be hit by the United States of America TWENTY TIMES HARDER than they have been hit thus far."

In an apparent response to Trump's remarks published in Iranian state media, a spokesperson for the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, Ali Mohammad Naini, said "Iran will determine when the war ends."

The war has choked off major supplies of oil and gas to world markets and sent fuel prices rising across the U.S.

Please see IRAN, 3A

Literary criticism

Nan Dickson/Special to the Telegram

A boy reacts Saturday during an interactive event with writer and poet Tonee B. Shelton, who read her book "The Scared Frog Takes a Leap" during Temple Tales at the Temple Public Library.

CONGRESS

Personal views

Lawmakers who served in combat have mixed feelings about US-Iran conflict

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

WASHINGTON — As Congress responds to President Donald Trump's attack on Iran, lawmakers who served on the front lines of Iraq and Afghanistan are making their voices heard in a war debate that has taken on intensely personal meaning.

Many admit mixed feelings, taking satisfaction in seeing vengeance taken on the leadership of an Iranian regime that has targeted U.S. service members for decades, yet fearful that another generation of soldiers could soon face the same combat experiences that they did.

"Do I take gratification? You know there's the Marine side of me: Yeah, of course," said Arizona Democratic Sen. Ruben Gallego, whose company suffered some of the heaviest losses on the U.S. side during the Iraq War. "I know they killed a lot of American soldiers, American Marines. But do I also understand that I have a responsibility not to let my lust for revenge drive my country into another war?"

Experiences in the post 9/11 wars are coloring the decisions of the Trump administration, given that top officials, including Vice President JD Vance and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, were once deployed to Iraq.

Two Republican members of Congress who are veterans of those wars told taskandpurpose.com that Iran was finally being held accountable.

Please see CONGRESS, 3A

BELL COUNTY

'Sticker shock'

Salado faces $30 million infrastructure bill amid leadership shakeup

BY IAN CAMACHO
TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

SALADO — Village officials face a staggering potential $30 million in infrastructure costs as they dramatically overhaul leadership.

Solomon Thomas from the engineering firm MRB presented a draft identifying several road issues, calling them "in really bad shape" due to a lack of prior maintenance.

Thomas recommended implementing a maintenance program to prioritize safety and traffic while focusing on functionality and maintenance before addressing flooding, including prior low-water crossing estimates. He also suggested seeking pedestrian and safety grants from representatives such as U.S. Rep. John Carter, R-Round Rock.

Interim Village Administrator Uryan Nelson said this would come as "sticker

Please see SALADO, 3A

BELTON ISD

BISD expands STEM learning initiative across campuses through Meta grant

STAFF REPORT

BELTON – A nearly $45,000 Meta grant is expanding a science, technology, math and engineering program across Belton Independent School District elementary school campuses, school officials announced Monday.

The program, "K-5 Code, Collaborate, Create," was implemented in elementary school campuses — with the exception of Charter Oak Elementary School, Lakewood Elementary School and Leon Heights Elementary School — prior to this year.

Belton ISD educators Camille Hicks, Yvonne Malmstrom and Dee Frazier developed the $44,050.97 science, technology, engineering, art and math grant, according to a news release.

The trio of educators' vision included helping students move from passive technology use to active creation and innovation.

Courtesy

Belton Independent School District is expanding science, math and technology opportunities for elementary school students through a $44,050.97 Meta grant.

The initiative creates STEM learning spaces, STEAM lesson materials (which includes art) and the Junior Tech Ambassador program, a chance for fourth- and fifth-grade students to mentor younger students through demonstrations, project assistance and troubleshoot technology help.

"The level of student curiosity, engagement and wonder I experience while facilitating STEAM lessons is incredibly inspiring," Hicks, innovation specialist at Leon Heights Elementary School, stated. "I pursued this grant because I am committed to ensuring our students have every possible opportunity to experience this type of learning."

The grant will expand makerspaces, which are hands-on, collaborative learning spaces, to every elementary school campus.

Please see BISD, 3A

BELTON ISD

Two BISD students named National Merit Scholarship finalists

STAFF REPORT

BELTON — Two Belton Independent School District students advanced to the final standing in one of the most prestigious academic competitions in the nation.

The Lake Belton High School seniors earned semifinalist recognition this fall after meeting the rigorous academic, testing and application program requirements.

Dhruv Bhat and Alex Yuen are now in the final round of evaluation for the 2025 National Merit Scholarship, school officials announced. The distinction grants them eligibility to compete for approximately 6,870 National Merit Scholarships that will be awarded later this year.

"This shows that when you put in the work, you can reach the top," Bhat stated. "But it's just the beginning. As you move into college and beyond, you have to keep pushing yourself."

Bhat, who credited his older sister for shaping his work ethic, is involved in tennis, UIL Academics, HOSA-Future Health Professionals, Student Council and National Honor Society.

He has been accepted to The University of Texas at Austin, where he plans to major in biology with the goal of entering the medical field, according to a news release.

Yuen is a member of National Honor Society, HOSA-Future Health Professionals, student council and University Interscholastic League Academics and previously competed in tennis.

He has also been accepted at The University of Texas at Austin, where he plans to pursue a premedical pathway.

"This recognition helps ease the financial burden on my parents and strengthens my college applications," Yuen stated. "It gives me an opportunity to stand out and continue working toward medical school."

Lake Belton High School Principal Steele Hantgin stated the pair's achievement reflects years of commitment, sacrifice and academic excellence.

"Dhruv and Alex represent the very best of Lake Belton High School, and this is a proud moment for our entire Broncos community," Hantgin stated.

Superintendent Malinda Golden also commended their achievement, saying the honor reflects their discipline, drive and commitment to excellence.

"Achievements like this do not happen by accident," Golden stated. "They happen when students embrace challenge, teachers pour into them and a community believes in their potential."

National Merit Scholarship winners will be announced later this spring and summer.

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TODAY'S BIBLE VERSE

"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."
— Hebrews 2:18

GOD BLESS AMERICA

MARKET REPORT
Complete coverage Page 4B

Dow Jones industrials	239.25	47,740.80
Nasdaq composite	308.27	22,695.95

INSIDE TODAY

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Comics....6A
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Editorial....4A
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Obituaries....5A
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