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U.S., ISRAEL ATTACK, IRAN RETALIATES

TEHRAN CONFIRMS SUPREME LEADER AYATOLLAH ALI KHAMENEI IS DEAD



Iranians take to the streets of Tehran in protest against attacks by Israel and the United States that killed the Islamic Republic's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and several of his top advisers on Saturday. Iran launched a wave of missiles at Israel and regional U.S. military sites in response to the attacks. MAJID SAEEDI / GETTY IMAGES

Members of Islamic Republic's leadership targeted

By Jon Gambrell, Melanie Lidman, Josh Boak & Eric Tucker
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed in a major attack by Israel and the United States, Iranian state media confirmed early today, throwing the future of the Islamic Republic into doubt and raising the risk of regional instability.

President Donald Trump announced the death hours earlier, saying it gave Iranians their "greatest chance" to "take back" their country.

State media reported that

the 86-year-old was killed in an airstrike targeting his compound in downtown Tehran. Satellite photos from Airbus showed that the site was heavily bombed.

His death at his office "showed that he consistently stood among the people and at the forefront of his responsibilities, confronting what officials call global arrogance," state TV said.

"Khamenei, one of the most evil people in history, is dead," Trump wrote in a social media post. He warned of "heavy and pinpoint bombing" that he said would continue throughout the week and even beyond, part of a lethal assault the U.S. has justified

as necessary to disable the country's nuclear capabilities.

Iran, which responded to the strikes with its own counterassault, warned of retribution, with the Cabinet saying that this "great crime will never go unanswered." The paramilitary Revolutionary Guard threatened to launch its "most intense offensive operation" ever targeting Israeli and American bases.

The attack opened a stunning new chapter in U.S. intervention in Iran, carried the potential for retaliatory violence and a wider war, and represented a startling flex of military might for an American president who swept into office

on an "America First" platform and vowed to keep out of "forever wars."

The killing of Khamenei in the second Trump administration assault on Iran in eight months appeared certain to create a leadership vacuum given the absence of a known successor and because the supreme leader had final say on all major policies during his decades in power. He led Iran's clerical establishment and the Revolutionary Guard, the two main centers of power in the governing theocracy.

As reports trickled out about

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ADDITIONAL COVERAGE

- The San Diego-based aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and its strike group are key players in the operation. **A8**
- Lawmakers on Capitol Hill escalated their demands Saturday for Congress to weigh in on the president's war powers. **A9**
- World leaders react to the attack with questions and caution. **A9**
- Shipments of oil and other goods in the Persian Gulf disrupted. **A9**

With drug kingpin dead, will violent battle for control follow in Tijuana?

By Alexandra Mendoza & Alex Riggins
UNION-TRIBUNE

The recent death of the leader of the Jalisco New Generation cartel has been hailed as a major blow to organized crime in Mexico and the United States. Now, many are questioning whether the ramifications could lead to an escalation of violence.

In Baja California, state officials said this past week that they are considering all possibilities as they assess the risk. Similar concerns have been raised in many Mexican states following the killing of cartel kingpin Nemesio Rubén Oseguera Cervantes, also known as "El Mencho," in a Mexican military operation in Tapalpa, Jalisco, one week ago.

The cartel's response was immediate last weekend, playing out across 20 Mexican states. In Baja California, the turmoil lasted nearly 30 hours. On Feb. 22, reports of burned vehicles and stores emerged



A car burns in Tijuana Feb. 22 after the death of cartel leader Nemesio Rubén Oseguera Cervantes. TIJUANA PUBLIC SAFETY SECRETARIAT

statewide, prompting a security alert from U.S. authorities and forcing many residents to stay home and businesses to close early.

Although state officials said the situation has calmed down, the inevitable question remains:

What effect will the loss of the ultra-violent cartel's feared leader have on the Tijuana border, a key drug-smuggling route into the U.S.?

Despite its control in other parts

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Sales-tax backers eye program to get health care to poor

Two supervisors join call to expand access to little-utilized entity

By Lucas Robinson
UNION-TRIBUNE

Every year, San Diego County spends about a million dollars paying for the health care of a narrow group of people who don't qualify for other government health care programs.

All California counties have a program like this for people deemed medically indigent, as required under state law. But after the passage of the Affordable Care Act and the expansion of Medi-Cal, California's Medicaid program, many county programs became mostly obsolete.

In San Diego County, its

County Medical Services paid for the health care of about 19,000 people in 2009, the year before the ACA became law. In its most recent fiscal year, it served a total of fewer than 40. At any given time, it has only about two people enrolled.

But with cuts and new work requirements for Medicaid passed by Congress last summer, the medically indigent program is getting renewed focus.

Labor unions promoting a countywide sales-tax ballot measure have been looking to use some of the revenue from such a tax hike to boost funding for County Medical Services.

And now two Democratic county supervisors are calling for a comprehensive review of the program to identify reforms

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DIGITAL ACTIVATION

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A PATH FORWARD STEVEN P. DINKIN

At Winter Olympics, women prevail in competition and life

About halfway through the 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy, my wife turned to me and asked if I knew the games were underway. Sheepishly, I told her I didn't know, but neither did she until that very moment. I chalked it up to the daily onslaught of news — most of it not good. I decided to tune in, hoping to blunt my weariness.

The Olympics, after all, represent one of the last outlets for the expression of national pride. We all cheer for Team USA, even as our daily lives have become hyper-politicized. We unite in our desire to see American athletes prevail.

My own watch party got off to a discouraging start. Ilia Malinin, known as “Quadgod,” was highly favored to win figure skating gold. Instead, he placed eighth overall, blaming the “dark thoughts and doubts” that spilled into his head as he skated onto the ice.

Malinin told *The Guardian* that he faced “vile online hatred” and intense pressure that severely impacted his performance, causing an “inevitable crash” in the free skate. His mind had

switched to survival mode — a typical response when someone is attacked.

It wasn't the break from hatred and incivility I had hoped for. Ultimately, Team USA did not disappoint, with a record number of medals — 33 in all, including 12 gold medals. And it was U.S. women who carried the team, winning eight of the golds (67%) and 20 of the medals overall (61%).

Beyond awesome displays of athleticism, the Winter Games delivered compelling storylines, some political. As *Axios'* writer Ina Fried observed, “Olympic athletes in Milan used their fleeting global spotlight to weigh in on some of America's most contentious political topics.” They showed more willingness this year to be part of political conversation.

But the moments that stood out for me weren't about politics at all. Two athletes — both women, born to immigrants — gave us the Games' most poignant and memorable stories.

Alysa Liu became the first American woman in 24 years to

win Olympic figure skating gold. What captivated me — beyond Liu's command of the ice — was her infectious sense of joy. After a two-year retirement at age 16, Liu returned to skating on her own terms. Personal happiness and creative freedom, her top priorities, shone in her performances.

Liu's triumph is inextricably linked to her unique backstory. Her father, Arthur Liu, immigrated to the U.S. from China as a political refugee. He worked his way through law school to become a successful attorney, raising five children as a single father. According to Chinese media outlet *Vision Times*, he was a steadfast supporter of “American loyalty” who declined efforts by the Chinese government to recruit his daughter.

Chloe Kim stood out for her incredible display of sportsmanship during the Games. A snowboarder, Kim was the favorite to win a historic third consecutive gold, but she dislocated her shoulder in a fall just one month prior to the Olympic competition. Kim managed to secure the silver

medal, but it was her protégé, 17-year-old Gaon Choi of South Korea, who ultimately took the gold.

When Choi crashed in her opening run, Kim responded with words of encouragement. When Choi surged into the lead with a high-scoring final run, Kim rushed to celebrate with her. For Kim, seeing her mentee win was “so much more special” than her own individual success.

Certainly, men delivered some compelling stories of their own. The U.S. men's hockey team won the gold, defeating Canada, their first victory since the 1980 “Miracle on Ice.” Team USA's Jack Hughes, who netted the game-winning goal, was captured in a brilliant photo, wearing a bloody smile and an American flag.

President Donald Trump called the team in the locker room to offer his congratulations and invite them to the White House. He said, “I must tell you, we're going to have to bring the women's team; you do know that.” (The women also won a gold medal.)

Otherwise, he added, “I do believe I probably would be impeached.”

The team laughed. At the National Conflict Resolution Center, we've trained thousands of people across the country to speak up when they see or hear something hurtful (like the president's remarks). A couple of my colleagues wish there had been an “upstander” in the team's midst.

I'm not excusing the laughter, but upstanding isn't easy. The men's hockey team had been loudly supportive of the women's team; in the moment, they likely felt trapped — unable to do anything but laugh at the president's “joke.”

In my book, they are still winners.

Steven P. Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC), a San Diego-based organization that is working to create innovative solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. To learn about NCRC's programming, visit www.ncrconline.com.

Pink to headline Curebound Concert for Cures at Petco

By George Varga
UNION-TRIBUNE

Cancer is personal for pop-music vocal dynamo Pink, whose Vietnam War veteran father died of the disease in 2021. That should give added purpose and poignancy to her May 15 performance at San Diego's Petco Park, where Pink's only scheduled U.S. concert performance of 2026 so far will be as the headliner of Curebound's 2026 Concert for Cures fundraiser.

Pink's performance will benefit Curebound, whose 2025 Concert for Cures at Petco Park was headlined by Elton John and raised \$11.5 million for the San Diego nonprofit. To date, Curebound has invested \$51.5 million in cancer research, supporting 170 innovative studies across 23 types of adult and pediatric cancers. That in turn has generated \$161 million in follow-on funding.

Alicia Keys and Ed Sheeran were the first two artists to perform Curebound benefit concerts, both at The Rady Shell at Jacobs Park.

“At a time when national research funding remains uncertain, Curebound's Concert for Cures plays a critical role in sustaining the tremendous momentum cancer research has achieved in recent years,” said Curebound CEO Robin Toft said in a statement released Monday.

“We are thrilled to welcome Pink to San Diego



Pink's upcoming Curebound Concert for Cures performance at Petco Park is her only scheduled U.S. concert date. HELEN H. RICHARDSON / THE DENVER POST

and honored that she is lending her extraordinary talent to help Curebound fight this disease that has touched us all.”

Pink's worldwide album sales over the past 26 years now top 60 million, buoyed by such hit singles as “So What,” “Raise Your Glass” and “Get the Party Started.” Her May Curebound concert at Petco Park will be an encore for her at the park. She first performed there in 2024, a year after headlining seven miles away at Snapdragon Stadium. Both concerts featured her acrobatic stage shows, during which she at times literally flew over much of her audience in a wire harness.

Her enduring popularity helped the 2023-24 world tour by Pink — born Alecia

Beth Moore — earn \$693.8 million and sell more than 4.8 million tickets to her 128 stadium and arena shows. On Wednesday, Pink was announced as one of the 2026 Rock & Roll Hall of Fame nominees.

Apart from her May 15 Curebound benefit concert at Petco Park, Pink's only confirmed 2026 performances thus far are April 26 and 27 at Mexico City's 65,000-capacity Estadio GNP Seguros.

Tickets for her Petco Park concert are priced from \$39.95 to \$289.95, plus service fees, at curebound.org and ticketmaster.com. Multiple-seat table packages, for which prices have not yet been announced, will also be available through the Curebound website.

what we anticipate with be the final guidance to ensure our shared interpretation follows all regulations related to charitable assets. Since reaching our shared understanding, we have paused the use of gift funds until that final guidance is confirmed,” he added.

That includes pausing the \$350,000 annual payments from the gift that the Center's board had previously directed to help pay for seniors' housing stability and related services each year for a decade.

Community members first publicly sounded the alarm about the Center's handling of the donation last July, after the nonprofit filed a notice warning of potential mass layoffs — a preemptive move, it said, in case it lost federal funding.

No date was set for layoffs, and the Center ultimately did not lay anyone off, Hernandez said. It also has not lost any funding so far in the current fiscal year.

“Today, mass layoffs are

not under consideration, but we remain vigilant to mitigate the impact of any future potential federal funding cuts on the Center's programs, services and staff,” Hernandez wrote.

The Center currently has no chief financial officer to manage its \$32 million in assets after the last CFO left in May 2024. Hernandez says it is working with a consultant to provide financial strategy and has hired a vice president of accounting.

The Center says it appreciates that its space matters to the seniors who are raising concerns and points out that its services visits for seniors were up 70% in the last year.

Its senior programming includes a daily meal program and wellness and fitness activities, case management and housing support, such as helping seniors navigate housing and eviction prevention.

Hernandez added that the Center has put additional staff support behind its senior services and is making an effort to improve

also included where the San Diego Zoo Wild Animal Park is now. Tribal leadership has no plans to ask for the land where the animal park is now, largely because they consider the zoo to be good stewards, Cope said.

“We have a good working relationship,” he said. “We don't want to do anything to disrupt that. We're proud of what they're doing.”

Though tribal leaders have

wanted to petition for the return of the sites for years, they were inspired by moves Gov. Gavin Newsom has made in the last few years to make grants available for tribal land projects, including the return of ancestral lands, Cope said.

When he announced the grants in 2023, Newsom said they were an effort to right historical wrongs and address climate concerns.

THEATER REVIEW

Old Globe's well-staged ‘Bartleby’ a timely and cautionary tale

By Pam Kragen
UNION-TRIBUNE

In Herman Melville's 1851 short story “Bartleby, the Scrivener,” a hyper-efficient Wall Street clerk up-ends office norms by saying he'd “prefer not to” do any of the additional tasks his boss tries to add to his plate.

Is Bartleby a hero for fighting worker exploitation? Is he an absurdist figure whose passive resistance collapses the fragile workplace construct? Or is he a tragic nonconformist crushed by 19th-century capitalist society?

In Fiasco Theater's new stage version of the story co-written by Noah Brody and Paul L. Coffey, Bartleby is all three. The Old Globe commissioned the New York-based ensemble company to adapt Melville's 30-page tale for the stage in a production that premiered Thursday in the Globe's Sheryl & Harvey White Theatre.

Fiasco company members Brody and Coffey perfectly re-create Melville's characters and story onstage, using significant portions of the story text. But they also crafted new scenes to amplify the most dehumanizing aspects of the story.

This includes a comic scene about proofreading the monotonous legal documents that clerks like Bartleby were paid pennies to copy, and a scene at the

FIASCO THEATER'S ‘BARTLEBY’

When: 7 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays; 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays; 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays. Through March 22
Where: Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre at The Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park, San Diego
Tickets: \$44 and up
Phone: 619-234-5623
Online: theoldglobe.org

end where a jail cook rattles off all the former occupations of its now-nameless inmates.

Melville's “Bartleby” critiqued the repetitious and soul-destroying office jobs of his era. But his story is still relevant in 21st-century America, where many workers communicate only via Zoom and the growing presence of AI has become a threat to high-paying tech jobs.

Yet while Fiasco Theater's “Bartleby” is set in a workplace, it's really about human compassion. Although the clerk Bartleby works quietly at twice the rate of his colleagues, his boss demands more. And in a further act of dehumanizing isolation, the boss erects a green screen between their desks so he doesn't have to look at Bartleby's face.

Staged in the round by Fiasco's Emily Young on Lawrence E. Moten III's revolving stage, the 80-minute play moves swiftly and poignantly to its

sad, yet oddly serene, conclusion.

Andy Grotelueschen wonderfully meets the challenge as the play's seemingly amiable narrator and Bartleby's employer, who considers himself a kind and generous man, even when his actions (or inactions) lead to tragedy.

As Bartleby, the soft-spoken, expressionless and enigmatic Michael Crane becomes a cipher, gradually disappearing from the world in plain sight. Matt Dallal brings humor and bouyancy to the story as the alcoholic clerk Turkey and the prison cook who pulls off an impressively delivered monologue near the finale.

Devine E. Haqq is also a bright comic force as the temperamental clerk Nippers, whose fiery outbursts liven up the office scenes. And Myka Cue gives a perky and funny performance as Ginger Snap, the office's insightful 12-year-old errand boy.

“Bartleby” marks Fiasco Theater's third visit to the Old Globe, following their stripped-down adaptations of Molière's “The Imaginary Invalid” in 2017 and the Stephen Sondheim-James Lapine musical “Into the Woods” in 2013. Like those shows, “Bartleby” has a fluidity of movement, feats of fine acting and humor, but it's a more melancholy and cautionary tale.

CENTER

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Elaine Lewis, who served on the previous incarnation of the Center's senior advisory committee for nine years before it was disbanded last year, said going public with the letter revealed that a growing number of people want clarity.

“People have been feeling this way for a long time,” she said.

In responding to questions from *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, the Center declined to share the language of the donors' intent or any restrictions. It did not say how much of the donation has been spent and what on.

“The Center, our attorneys, and auditor have come to a shared understanding that the gift will be used toward LGBTQ+ senior housing and related services,” spokesperson Gus Hernandez said in an email.

“We are currently seeking

senior services at the organization go beyond the gift. More recently, the Center established a new senior advisory committee after disbanding the former one last April. The new group's meetings aren't open to the public, which the community members say heightens their concerns about transparency.

They also question why the Center's board meetings allow a total of only four minutes for public comment. “Time limits help us manage meetings with many participants,” Hernandez said in an email. “In past meetings, we have had community members who refused to stop speaking, and we did not have a mechanism in place to ensure equity in speaking time.”

Some community concerns have been brewing for a while and made some seniors feel less welcome at the Center.

For decades, memorial tiles honoring late community members adorned the walls inside the Center's lobby. In recent years they

were moved outside near the front of the building.

The Center says that brought them closer to its memorial garden and made them more accessible to the public, especially when the Center is closed. But for Lewis it felt “incredibly disrespectful.”

For some community members, the calls for transparency and accountability at the Center are reminiscent of similar calls to San Diego Pride last year. A group of LGBTQ+ leaders and community members issued a public letter of their own to that nonprofit asking for reforms.

Bob Leyh, a former San Diego Pride staffer and one of the key organizers of that effort, also signed last week's open letter to the Center.

“While they're both two different organizations with two different boards and two different missions, they both seem at times to forget who their customer is, and that they're community organizations,” Leyh said.

FIELD

From Page 1

to tribal leadership at no cost and encourages San Diego to transfer the remaining land to the tribe, in which case the state would relinquish its lease on the land.

The land being discussed is only a small part of the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians' original land, which

tribe in 1835, 13 years before California became a territory of the United States. In 1870, the U.S. government granted the land to the tribe as a reservation, but that was rescinded a year later. In 1891, Congress passed a law that established a reservation for the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians. However, the reservation was sited incorrectly, and the tribe was forced

to be removed from the San Pasqual Valley to where the reservation is currently located.

Cope said he has been pleased to see the amount of support the effort has gotten from San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria, the Escondido City Council, and other local agencies.

“We have a lot of support, and it goes a long way,” he said.