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USA TODAY WEEKEND

THE NATION'S NEWS | \$3 | JUNE 27-29, 2025

Best, worst times for July 4th travel

Whether driving or flying, how travelers can beat the rush around the long weekend. **In Money**

Fork in the road: Fix car or buy new?

Experts share repair experiences, rank dealers and talk maintenance costs. **In Weekend Extra**

GETTY IMAGES FOR TRIBECA FESTIVAL



Mariska Hargitay at peace in film

"Law & Order: SVU" star talks famous mom and once secret biological dad in HBO doc. **In Life**

Brad Pitt helps F1 conquer U.S. fans

His foot's heavy on the gas, but movie part of bigger plan

Marco della Cava USA TODAY

Natalia Whitaker appreciates the full menu of American sports, from the NBA to the NHL. Now, she's added another competitive event to her list of favorites: F1, or Formula 1, largely considered the world's most ferocious and high-tech form of auto racing. • "I went to the Miami Grand Prix recently and, oh my, it was the best weekend ever," says Whitaker, 25, who works for a wealth management firm in Los Angeles. "The emotion, the speed, the noise – fantastic. But there was so much going on that it would have been fun even without the races."

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"If you find your way to F1, no one cares that you didn't grow up watching it."

Natalia Whitaker

Brad Pitt plays racer Sonny Hayes in "F1 The Movie," the story of a washed up prodigy who gets another shot at glory. PROVIDED BY WARNER BROS. PICTURES/APPLE ORIGINAL FILMS



Iranians in U.S. fear for family

Some stay hopeful, but worry about kin abroad

Marc Ramirez and Terry Collins USA TODAY

The texts began coming late one night from somewhere outside Tehran, shaking Shaghayegh Cyrus from her sleep. For more than two weeks, the Los Angeles-based artist had tried in vain to reach her parents, retired designers who live near the capital city of Iran, the country from which she had left 14 years ago.

Israeli bombs had been hitting oil depots, military installations and nuclear facilities. The United States had just launched its own attack and worries were rising about a full-blown Middle East war.

Cyrus frantically made a video call. Her parents kept saying they were OK, but the internet signal was so weak, she could barely see them.

"It's very terrifying," said Cyrus, 38, who left for America in 2011 and declined to provide her parents' names, fearing for their safety. "We're just trying to send prayers for peace. Sometimes, I feel both helpless and hopeless. ... I don't want them to be in danger."

As the conflict between Israel and Iran rests on a fragile ceasefire, Cyrus and other Iranian Americans expressed dismay at American involvement and fear for loved ones still in

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Iranians celebrate a ceasefire between Iran and Israel at Enghlab Square in the capital Tehran on June 24. ATTA KENARE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

From Diddy case, a 'circle of love and strength' emerges



Diddy on Trial newsletter: Step inside the courtroom with USA TODAY as Sean "Diddy" Combs faces sex crimes and trafficking charges. Scan the QR code to sign up to receive the newsletter.



Cassie Ventura, with her husband, Alex Fine, is the star witness in the sex trafficking trial of Sean "Diddy" Combs. JOE MAHER/GETTY IMAGES FOR PARAMOUNT PLUS

Cassie Ventura's journey forges an unlikely bond

Laura Trujillo USA TODAY

Pamela Parker Fine joined hands with Casandra Ventura Fine – the singer and model she had met 48 hours earlier. Pam's family and friends gathered in the courthouse in Broomfield, Colorado, just outside Boulder, in April 2019. Both stood side by side minutes before Fine would confront her abuser one last time. "Our Father, who art in heaven ..." Pam's older sister began. All of them – Pam's son Alex, her

mother, her brother and sister-in-law, her sister, her attorney and supporters – held hands and formed a circle.

"Hallowed be thy name," they said in unison.

"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done ..." They pulled closer, the circle growing tighter.

"... And forgive us our trespasses," Pam said in her breaking voice, a sequela of his choking. "As we forgive those who trespass against us ..."

Pam didn't know much about the woman, best known as Cassie, who later that year would become her daughter-in-law. She knew only that her son

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