



RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Nikki Haley declined to endorse Donald J. Trump, challenging him to win over the moderate Republicans who supported her.

HOPES FOR DEAL  
ON HOSTAGES DIM

Hamas Raises Demands  
as Ramadan Nears

This article is by Ronen Bergman, Edward Wong and Julian E. Barnes.

ISTANBUL — Talks between Israel and Hamas over the release of dozens of Israeli hostages held in Gaza have stalled, dimming hopes that a deal could be reached before Ramadan begins in a few days, according to several people briefed on the conversations. Negotiators had been discussing a proposal for an initial six-week cease-fire during which Hamas would release about 40 people — including women, elderly and ill hostages, and five female Israeli soldiers — for a substantial number of Palestinian prisoners. The discussions included terms for releasing at least 15 prisoners convicted of serious acts of terrorism, who would be exchanged for the female soldiers. The terms also said Israel would release hundreds of other detainees or prisoners, at an average of 10 Palestinians for every Israeli civilian freed, officials said.

American officials had said they hoped to reach an agreement to release some hostages and put in place a temporary pause in fighting before Ramadan, which is expected to start this Sunday. President Biden expressed confidence last week that a deal was within reach.

But in recent days, Hamas has backed away from the proposed agreement and made demands that Israel refuses to meet, according to officials briefed on the talks. The negotiations had been taking place in Doha, Qatar, before they recently moved to Cairo.

John F. Kirby, a National Security Council spokesman, said on Wednesday that while the United States was disappointed that an agreement had not been reached, negotiators were still confident in the parameters of the deal they had helped negotiate.

“It is just a matter of getting Hamas to sign on,” he said.

Continued on Page A7

Biden’s Vow to Bring Calm Never Stood a Chance

By PETER BAKER

WASHINGTON — During the 2020 campaign, Joseph R. Biden Jr. denounced Donald J. Trump as “an incumbent president who sows chaos rather than providing order.” After defeating Mr. Trump, Mr. Biden told the nation in his Inaugural Address that he would reverse the “state of chaos” that he had inherited.

The new president essentially promised to usher in a calmer era as the responsible grown-up to Mr. Trump’s tempestuous

NEWS ANALYSIS

Twitter bomber.

But the world has not cooperated. While Mr. Biden has restored order to the White House and generally conducted himself with the decorum common to the pre-Trump presidency, he has nonetheless presided over a turbulent period that has unsettled many Americans. Inflation, the explosion of migration at the border and the wars in Europe and the Middle East have created a sense of instability that polls

show have eroded his support.

To some extent, the impression has been fueled by conservative media outlets, which bombard viewers and readers with reports on “Biden’s border chaos,” among other regular themes. But polls show that satisfaction with the direction of the country has fallen by half since Mr. Biden took over three years ago. And paradoxically, Mr. Trump, once labeled the “chaos president” by a Republican opponent, is now marketing himself as the antidote to disorder, capitalizing on

Continued on Page A14



MATT ROURKE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jason Kelce of the Eagles choked up repeatedly while announcing his retirement from the N.F.L.

Big Boys Do Cry. Just Ask the Kelce Brothers.

By SCOTT CACCIOLA

As Jason Kelce strode to a dais on Monday to announce his retirement from the N.F.L. after 13 seasons with the Philadelphia Eagles, he appeared to be playing the role of traditional masculinity to perfection.

His face framed by his familiar Bunyan-esque beard, Mr. Kelce

Strength Through Sobs  
Rises in Men’s Sports

wore a cutoff T-shirt, sandals and a gold Rolex. Taking a seat behind a microphone, he thanked everyone for coming. And then he began to cry.

“Oh, man,” he said through tears. “This is going to be long.”

Sure enough, over the next 40 minutes, Mr. Kelce labored with his emotions as he choked out lines from his speech.

Mr. Kelce cried when he talked about his teammates. He cried when he thanked the Eagles’ owner. He cried when he reflected

Continued on Page A11

WITH HALEY’S EXIT,  
ELECTION REMATCH  
BEGINS IN EARNEST

She Tapped Rifts, but  
Rival’s Base Held

By JAZMINE ULLOA  
and JONATHAN WEISMAN

After absorbing bruising losses in the Super Tuesday primaries, Nikki Haley, the former governor of South Carolina, announced on Wednesday that she was ending her presidential campaign.

In handing the party’s nomination to former President Donald J. Trump, a rival with whom she clashed bitterly by the end, she declined to endorse him. Instead, she challenged him to win over her supporters: a cohort of more moderate Republicans who could not prevent his nomination, but could potentially hurt his prospects in the fall against President Biden.

“In all likelihood Donald Trump will be the Republican nominee when our party convention meets in July. I congratulate him and wish him well,” she said, adding that it was now “his time for choosing.”

Her decision brings to a close the latest struggle over the soul and direction of the Republican Party, a lopsided fight that has stretched back to Mr. Trump’s first presidential run in 2016. She had come to represent a small but not insignificant number of Republicans who saw her as their last, best chance to turn the page on the former president’s divisive and no-holds-barred politics.

For months and in increasingly urgent language, Ms. Haley, who was Mr. Trump’s first ambassador to the United Nations, had tried to paint her former boss as an aging, mentally unsound agent of chaos, unrepentant in his disparagement of veterans and service members and unwilling to remain faithful to the Constitution.

But she made it clear she was no member of the resistance. Nor was she able to loosen Mr. Trump’s grip sufficiently on a vast majority of the party.

If anything, her campaign revealed the extent to which she was out of touch with today’s G.O.P. — she was not a bomb-thrower or a natural culture warrior, like Mr. Trump or Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, another former rival. Her unwavering support for Ukraine’s battle against Russia and for Western alliances like NATO that Mr. Trump has

Continued on Page A13

Biden and Trump Set  
to Go on Attack

By SHANE GOLDMACHER

The exit by Nikki Haley from the Republican primary after a string of resounding losses on Super Tuesday assured former President Donald J. Trump of his party’s nomination, kicking off a general election contest with President Biden that both sides expect will be bitter, brutal and long.

The matchup that many Americans had hoped to avoid — the 2024 sequel of Biden vs. Trump — is now an inescapable reality.

It will be the country’s first presidential rematch in nearly 70 years, a consequential yet familiar collision of starkly different visions of American power, policy and democratic governance. And it will be an eight-month slog, with two nominees who polls show are deeply unpopular and who are each determined to make the race about his opponent, leaving both bent on running exceedingly negative campaigns.

“I’m not the gift of all presidents,” Mr. Biden told donors at a fund-raiser last month, “but I’m sure in hell better than the last guy.”

Mr. Biden has cast Mr. Trump as a threat to the very foundations of American democracy. He has cautiously avoided discussing the many legal threats facing the former president, including four criminal indictments and one trial set to begin later this month.

Mr. Trump, 77, has portrayed Mr. Biden, 81, as elderly, enfeebled and unable to perform the basic tasks of the presidency. “It’s the fascists and the communists that surround him — they’re making the calls,” Mr. Trump said on Fox News on Tuesday, in a sign of the caustic and conspiracy-tinged campaign to come. “They’re calling the shots. He’s not calling the shots.”

Much has changed since Mr. Biden defeated Mr. Trump four years ago.

Continued on Page A12

**COMING TO TERMS** Discontented voters are processing a Biden-Trump rematch. PAGE A14

**RUNOFF WINNER** The former baseball great Steve Garvey’s star is rising again. PAGE A15

Louisiana’s Hard Line on Crime  
Discards Once-Popular Reforms

By RICK ROJAS

BATON ROUGE, La. — In 2017, Louisiana overhauled its criminal justice system with broad bipartisan support, all in an effort to lose the distinction of having the nation’s highest incarceration rate. Sentences were reduced. Opportunities for parole were expanded. Alternatives to prison were introduced.

But seven years later, the state is sending a very different message: Those days are over.

Lawmakers, urged on by a new Republican governor, rushed through a special session last month to roll back the 2017 changes. Bills were passed to lengthen sentences for some offenses, to strictly limit access to parole, to prosecute 17-year-olds charged with any crime as adults and to allow methods of execution beyond lethal injection. The latter change is meant to allow the state to bring back capital punishment after more than a decade.

“I promised the people of this



POOL PHOTO BY MICHAEL JOHNSON

Gov. Jeff Landry of Louisiana campaigned on tackling crime.

state, if elected governor, I would do everything within my power to improve the safety of our communities,” Gov. Jeff Landry said as he declared victory when the session concluded last week. “I can proudly say we have kept that promise.”

Mr. Landry, who took office in January, and his supporters argue that the new stringent measures are necessary to crack down on violence and crime, which soared in

Continued on Page A11



INTERNATIONAL A4-8

A Harrowing Retreat

The fall of Avdiivka was brutal and fast. Ukrainian soldiers who survived it blamed a lack of ammunition.

PAGE A4

Got 217 Shots. Never Got Sick.

Accounts of a German man’s Covid vaccination history spurred doctors to study his immune system.

PAGE A8

NATIONAL A10-17

Beefing Up Subway Security

Amid a rise in violent crime, Gov. Kathy Hochul said she would deploy members of the State Police and National Guard to New York’s transit system.

PAGE A11

‘Rust’ Armorer Found Guilty

The woman who put live ammo in a gun Alec Baldwin was using was convicted of involuntary manslaughter.

PAGE A17

OBITUARIES B10-12

Architect Evoked the Desert

Antoine Predock, who created buildings that resonated with the landscape of the American Southwest, was 87.

PAGE B12

BUSINESS B1-5

Humbling of Big Tech

New laws and regulations have finally compelled giants like Apple, Google, Meta and others to make major shifts to their products and businesses.

PAGE B1

Beijing Closes a Window

China said the premier’s news conference, the only time he took questions, would no longer be held.

PAGE B1

THURSDAY STYLES D1-8

Unconventional Wisdom

In Paris, the designer Jun Takahashi said he was trying to “to illuminate the importance of daily life.”

PAGE D7



ARTS C1-6

Busy as a, Well, You Know

The makers of “Hundreds of Beavers” have been going all out promoting the film, aided by the star species.

PAGE C5

An American Maverick

In “Europeras,” the composer John Cage dismantled centuries of tradition, for musicians and audiences alike.

PAGE C1

SPORTS B6-9

Giving the Knicks a Jolt

Miles McBride is showing his value as the team tries to get healthy. He hopes his playing time continues.

PAGE B9

N.F.L. Teams’ Blueprints

A guide to how the 32 franchises are poised for the draft and free agency after the scouting combine.

PAGE B8

OPINION A18-19

Michelle Cottle

PAGE A18



0 354613 9