



T-storms 56/40 • Tomorrow: Partly sunny, breezy 53/39 B6

Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2024 • \$3

## Gazans go hungry as aid groups step back

Israel's war has wrecked Hamas civilian rule, with no alternative in place

BY MIRIAM BERGER, HAJAR HARB AND HAZEM BALOUSHA

JERUSALEM — There is no drought in northern Gaza. No natural disaster or crop failure. Yet in less than six months of war it has been pushed to the cusp of famine, a process that usually unfolds over years.

“Never before have we seen such rapid deterioration into widespread starvation,” Sally Abi Khalil, Oxfam’s regional director for the Middle East and North Africa, said last month.

The enclave’s headlong descent into hunger has happened in tandem with Israel’s destruction of Hamas’s de facto state. Israel’s inability to institute an alternative system of civilian rule — as well as its attacks on local grass-roots initiatives — has resulted in the breakdown of Gaza’s typically tightknit society, making it virtually impossible for aid groups to safely carry out their work.

International aid efforts were dealt a further blow this week when an Israeli airstrike killed seven workers from World Central Kitchen. Israel said the attack was “a mistake” and vowed a swift investigation. WCK and at least two other humanitarian groups have now suspended their operations in Gaza.

The Washington Post spoke to Palestinian businessmen, residents, clan leaders and aid officials about the deepening security crisis — which has left Israel with few options to restore order, aid groups unable to protect their workers, and desperate families to fend for themselves.

More than 1 million people face catastrophic levels of hunger and starvation between now and July, according to the world’s leading body on food emergencies. Doctors and health officials say children have already begun to die of malnutrition.

Israel has denied restricting the

SEE GAZA ON A7

**Biden response:** Sharp words for Israel, but no policy change. A8

**Aid workers:** Attack highlights risks for humanitarian groups. C1

## Bill from D.C. mayor targets youth violence and truancy

BY LAUREN LUMPKIN, EMILY DAVIES AND MEAGAN FLYNN

D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) unveiled legislation Wednesday that would require the Office of the Attorney General in D.C. to more aggressively prosecute children and teens who commit certain crimes and take action to resolve all truancy cases — a proposal that would limit prosecutorial discretion as local leaders try to address a crisis among young people in the District.

In a move decried by some advocates and attorneys, the bill would restrict prosecutors from using plea agreements for youths charged with violent offenses and ban diversion programs for those facing gun charges. The District’s deputy mayor for public safety and justice said she was “okay” if the bill meant more youths would be locked behind bars, continuing



ANNABELLE CHIH/GETTY IMAGES

A pedestrian walks near a leaning building in Hualien, on Taiwan’s east coast, where the quake was centered. After a 7.6-magnitude quake killed 2,400 people in 1999, Taiwan approved stricter building codes, an effort that may explain Wednesday’s relatively low death toll.

## Taiwan hit by 7.4-magnitude quake

This article is by Lily Kuo, Vic Chiang, Julia Mio Inuma, Pei-Lin Wu and Julia Ledur

TAIPEI, TAIWAN — A 7.4-magnitude earthquake struck the east coast of Taiwan on Wednesday, killing nine people and leaving at least 143 trapped by rubble and debris, as the temblor triggered tsunami warnings as far away as Japan and the Philippines.

More than 70 quarry workers remained trapped overnight, authorities said.

The earthquake, the strongest

Island’s largest temblor since 1999 leaves 9 dead, more than 140 trapped

to hit Taiwan in 25 years, struck in Hualien county — a scenic, sparsely populated coastal region — just before 8 a.m. The quake, which the U.S. Geological Survey measured at 7.4 in magnitude, was felt in Shanghai and China’s southeastern provinces. Taiwan’s Central

Weather Administration recorded the quake at 7.2 in magnitude.

Taiwan sits on the Ring of Fire, a region of the Pacific Ocean that is the world’s most seismically active zone. The quake was felt across the island, as far as 200 miles from the epicenter. In Taipei, shaking that lasted more than a minute sent panicked residents out of their homes. Students were evacuated from schools and sat in rows along sidewalks and playgrounds.

More than 900 people were injured, mostly by falling objects, according to Taiwan’s National

Fire Agency.

Officials said the quake was the strongest to hit the island since 1999, when a 7.6-magnitude tremor struck central Taiwan, killing more than 2,400 people. After that earthquake, one of the worst in the island’s recent history, authorities mandated stricter building codes.

Those efforts could explain Wednesday’s relatively low death

SEE TAIWAN ON A9

**Danger zone:** Taiwan is situated in a seismically fraught area. A9

## A push for more rules amid the rise of robot trucks

BY TRISHA THADANI

PALMER, TEX. — Perched in the cab of a 35,000-pound semi-truck lumbering south on Interstate 45, AJ Jenkins watched the road while the big rig’s steering wheel slid through his hands. Jenkins was in the driver’s seat, but he wasn’t driving. The gigantic 18-wheeler was guiding itself.

Over several miles on the popular trucking route between Dallas and Houston, the truck navigated

As tech begins to roll out, U.S. lawmakers grapple with safety and job loss

tire debris, maneuvered around a raggedy-looking flatbed and slowed for an emergency vehicle. Exiting the highway, it came to an abrupt stop as a pickup jumped its turn at a four-way intersection.

“You need to be ready for anything,” said Jenkins, 64, a former FedEx driver whose job is to take control if anything goes wrong. “People do some crazy stuff around trucks.”

Operated by Aurora Innovation, the truck is part of a new class of autonomous big rigs plying the nation’s highways. By the end of this year, the trucks will for the first time start traveling alone, without human minders like Jenkins, as two major companies —

Aurora and Kodiak Robotics — launch fully autonomous trucks in Texas.

The advent of robot trucks could have a massive impact on America’s supply chain, dramatically reducing the time it takes to transport goods from place to place and unbinding the trucking industry from the costs and physical limitations of human labor. But the technology’s advancement has sparked concerns about

SEE TRUCKS ON A13



CRAIG HUDSON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Jet-setting bird whose dad was a gift to Reagan arrives in D.C.

Clark, a 21-year-old bald eagle who travels across the country for performances, relaxes at the Darcy hotel with handler Daniel Cone ahead of a ceremony he’ll attend Friday. Story, B1

## Duel with the bench in Trump Fla. case

PROSECUTOR PANS ‘FLAWED’ PREMISE

Smith warns he’d appeal order on jury instruction

BY PERRY STEIN AND DEVLIN BARRETT

Special counsel Jack Smith warned the judge overseeing Donald Trump’s classified documents case that she is pursuing a legal premise that “is wrong” and said he would probably appeal to a higher court if she rules that a federal records law can protect the former president from prosecution.

In a late-night legal filing Tuesday, Smith’s office pushed back hard against an unusual instruction from U.S. District Judge Aileen M. Cannon — one that veteran national security lawyers and former judges have said badly misinterprets the Presidential Records Act and laws related to classified documents.

Smith’s filing represents the most stark and high-stakes confrontation yet between the judge and the prosecutor, illustrating the extent to which a ruling by Cannon that legitimizes the PRA as a defense could eviscerate the historic case, one of four Trump is facing as he again runs for president. The special counsel repeatedly said that he probably would appeal such a ruling, potentially delaying the classified documents trial well beyond November’s presidential election.

Last month, Cannon ordered defense lawyers and prosecutors in the case to submit hypothetical jury instructions based on two different, and very much contested, readings of the PRA.

In response, Smith said Cannon was pursuing a “fundamentally flawed legal premise” that

SEE TRUMP ON A5

ELECTION 2024

## Rematch is fueled by immigration vs. abortion

BY HANNAH KNOWLES

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. — Donald Trump planned his campaign schedule this week to spotlight what he calls “Biden’s border bloodbath” — which he recently labeled “the biggest” issue of the election, even more pressing than the economy. When a reporter shouted a question about abortion at Trump’s event here, the audience drowned it out with boos and yelled “fake news!”

But abortion was top of mind for President Biden’s campaign and its allies, with a six-week ban newly cleared to take effect in Florida.

In a new ad, Biden blitzed battleground states with footage of Trump declaring he was “proud” to have helped overturn *Roe v. Wade*. In a news conference, Democratic leaders in states with bans said Trump was to blame. Scores of other Democrats added their voice in cable news interviews, social media posts and statements putting it at the heart of their election year case to the country.

SEE ELECTION ON A4

### IN THE NEWS

**Coerced into spying** Russia, which is finding few sympathizers after two years of fighting, is using threats, extortion and torture to force Ukrainians to aid Moscow’s war effort. A10

**Police academy dispute** After a Virginia chief criticized the director for signing his name in Chinese, the town’s trainees will be barred. B1

**THE NATION** Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is attracting fed-up voters from across the political spectrum. A3  
**Sen. Bernie Sanders** (I-Vt.) joined President Biden in his campaign to lower drug prices. A4

**THE WORLD** Mexico’s bishops are brokering peace pacts with cartel bosses to quell violence. A6  
**Russian officials** blame Ukraine and the West for last month’s attack on a concert venue. A11

**THE ECONOMY** Here’s how to prepare in case cellular service flakes out in an eclipse-viewing hot spot next week. A12  
**The federal** Minority Business Development Agency, to comply with a court order, is letting White people claim social disadvantage. A13

**THE REGION** D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) announced a \$21 billion budget with significant program cuts and some tax hikes. B1  
**A Virginia company** that posts bonds for jailed immigrants was ordered to pay more than \$800 million over fraudulent practices. B1

**STYLE** President Biden’s campaign manager, Julie Chavez Rodriguez, seems pretty calm, all things considered. C1  
**LOCAL LIVING** An architect renovated her parents’ home in Potomac, Md., to make it suitable for them to age in place.

BUSINESS NEWS.....A12  
COMICS.....C6  
OBITUARIES.....B4  
OPINION PAGES.....A15  
TELEVISION.....C3  
WORLD NEWS.....A6

CONTENT © 2024  
The Washington Post  
Year 147, No. 53811

