

Court won't expedite a ruling on Trump

Prosecutor asked justices to settle immunity claim, keep trial on March track

BY ROBERT BARNES

The Supreme Court on Friday said it will not fast-track consideration of Donald Trump's claim that he is immune from prosecution for actions he took as president, a question crucial to whether he can be put on trial for plotting to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

The court's one-sentence order offered no explanation for turning down special counsel Jack Smith's request for an expedited review, which he said was needed to keep Trump's election-obstruction trial on track for early March. The order can be seen as, at least, a limited and temporary win for Trump, who has actively worked to delay the legal proceedings against him as he campaigns again for the Republican presidential nomination.

The issue of presidential immunity probably will return to the Supreme Court, but not before a federal appeals court in Washington reviews a district judge's ruling earlier this month that flatly rejected Trump's claims. That court has expedited its proceedings and will hold arguments on Jan. 9.

It is customary for the Supreme Court not to explain its reasoning for denying a motion for expedited review, which Smith acknowledged was an "extraordinary" request being made in an extraordinary case. There were no noted dissents and no indication that Justice Clarence Thomas had recused himself, despite calls from some congressional Democrats that he do so because of his wife's involvement in challenging the results of the 2020 election.

Smith had asked the justices to short-circuit the normal appellate process and quickly settle the

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Threats: Colorado justices face reprisals on Trump ballot ruling. A2

IMPERFECT UNION



KATHLEEN FLYNN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Dorothy Nairne with her daughter in a cemetery in Napoleonville, La., on Dec. 10. Nairne and others are suing to change Louisiana's legislative and congressional districts, alleging Republicans illegally drew them to limit the impact of minority voters.

A fight for Black representation, with a civil rights landmark on the line

NAPOLEONVILLE, LA. — When Dorothy Nairne missed an election, her mother scolded her so forcefully that it made her cry.

As a Black woman who grew up in the South, her mother had to pass a literacy test the first time she registered to vote. Nairne's grandfather served in the Army during World War I but couldn't cast a ballot until decades later.

"I don't have the right to *not* vote," Nairne, 57, said recently as trucks hauling sugar cane sped down the highway in front of her house in this rural village west of New Orleans.

Now, Nairne fears that her vote doesn't carry the full weight it should because of

Using the Voting Rights Act, Southerners sue to reverse policies diluting their power

BY PATRICK MARLEY

how Republican lawmakers have drawn the state's legislative and congressional districts.

She and other voters are suing to change those maps, joining a crush of litigation across the South that alleges Republican lawmakers illegally drew district lines to limit the power of minority voters. The outcome of the suits likely will influence which party controls the next Congress. The cases will also test how much a 58-year-old landmark of the civil rights era still matters.

Passed in 1965, the Voting Rights Act transformed who was eligible to enjoy the full rights of citizenship in the United

SEE VOTERS ON A6

The U.S. abstains in vote on Gaza

CLEARs WAY AT U.N. FOR AID RESOLUTION

Move comes as death toll in enclave hits 20,000

BY KAREN DEYOUNG AND ADAM TAYLOR

The United States abstained Friday on a painfully negotiated U.N. Security Council resolution on Gaza, allowing passage of a measure designed to rapidly expand and facilitate humanitarian aid to a Palestinian civilian population now said to be close to famine.

The measure also reiterated a council demand for "urgent and extended" pauses in the fighting, the immediate release of about 130 hostages still being held by Hamas, and creation of "conditions for a sustainable cessation of hostilities." Although it marked the first time the council had used the "cessation" language, it fell short of widespread demands for an immediate cease-fire.

The vote came on the same day the Gaza Health Ministry said the number killed in Gaza during the war between Israel and Hamas has reached 20,000, or nearly one in every 100 people living in the enclave.

The near-unanimous council vote — in which Russia also abstained after accusing the United States of "twisting arms" to weaken the measure — "was tough, but we got there," U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said. The 13 other council members all voted in favor.

The Biden administration has been under increasing global and domestic pressure to temper its strong support for Israel's air and

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Oct. 7 victim: Israel confirms the death of an Israeli American. A8

Al-Shifa Hospital: Israeli evidence falls short of claims about site. A9

Nitazenes: The newest killer in the U.S. drug crisis

The novel opioids, sometimes more potent than fentanyl, can complicate overdose revivals, treatment

BY DAVID OVALLE

After years spent addicted to heroin on the streets of North Carolina, Samantha Ross had turned her life around. She marked four years in recovery, got married and traveled last year to Miami Beach to celebrate her 34th birthday.

By then, the cravings had returned.

Ross told her husband she'd gone out and used methamphetamine and crack cocaine, according to a Miami-Dade County medical examiner's report. That morning, Ross's husband found her dead of an overdose, slumped in a bed at their Airbnb, two pipes and a baggie with powder residue at her side. Toxicology tests revealed she'd consumed cocaine and fentanyl — plus two other drugs belonging to a class of opioids known as nitazenes. One of those drugs is estimated to be 43 times more potent than fentanyl.

Ross's mother, Cathy Sheely, had never heard of nitazenes. She doubts her daughter knew she was ingesting them. "We've all heard of fentanyl but didn't know there were these other drugs out

SEE NITAZENES ON A12



KATE MEDLEY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Cathy Sheely of Kannapolis, N.C., reads letters from her daughter, Samantha Ross, who died in 2022 of a drug overdose. Ross, who had battled addiction, probably didn't know she was ingesting nitazenes.

D.C.'s deadly streets are taking a growing toll

Years after safety effort launch, crashes killed 47, injured 6,000 in 2023

BY LUZ LAZO

Forty-seven people have died in traffic crashes in the nation's capital this year, the deadliest since 2007, with a toll that has fallen disproportionately on the eastern side of the city.

Residents, advocates and health-care workers say they are worried about a rise in crashes that has taken lives, traumatized communities and left many with lifelong physical and emotional wounds. They cite growing concerns about safety amid a rise in reckless driving and a lack of accountability for drivers who repeatedly disregard traffic rules.

The increased danger on D.C. streets comes nearly nine years after the city launched Vision Zero, a multipronged strategy to reduce traffic-related injuries and deaths — actions that have done little to contain the blood-

shed. The death toll has jumped despite policies in recent years to reduce speed limits, add traffic camera enforcement and restrict right turns on red lights.

"Even one death on our roads is one too many. But the trend isn't going down. It's just getting worse," said D.C. Council member Charles Allen (D-Ward 6), chairman of the council's transportation committee. "People should be very frustrated that despite the city's stated Vision Zero goals, D.C. simply is not prioritizing safety."

Sharon Kershbaum, interim director of the District Department of Transportation, said the city remains "incredibly steadfast" in reaching its goals of reducing fatal and serious injuries.

Neighborhoods in Wards 5, 7 and 8, all on the eastern side of the city, recorded significantly more deaths than wards to their west, with the exception of downtown's Ward 2, where density and a mix of road users make it a hot spot for collisions, particularly those involving pedestrians, bicyclists and scooter riders.

Those affected by traffic collisions

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IN THE NEWS

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Somali militant killed A U.S. drone strike in the country's south took out a leader of al-Shabab accused of planning a 2020 attack that killed three Americans in Kenya. A10

THE NATION A super PAC supporting Ron DeSantis canceled ads in Iowa and New Hampshire. A5
Federal employees will receive pay raises under an order signed by President Biden this week. A5

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Czech police are still searching for a motive in the country's deadliest shooting in modern history. A10

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THE REGION President Biden pardoned people convicted of marijuana use and possession in D.C. and on some federal land. B1
The D.C. Council reversed cuts to a home-buying program that hurt lower-income residents, though its funding future is still in flux. B1

The Virginia attorney general wants a judge to drop a charge against the fired Loudoun County schools superintendent. B1

STYLE For many fans, watching Star Wars movies on television in December is a Life Day tradition. C1

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