



Mostly sunny 49/32 • Tomorrow: Mostly cloudy 56/42 **B6**

Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2024 • **\$3**

## Justices to weigh Trump immunity

Arguments set for April, further delaying trial in D.C. over 2020 election

BY ANN E. MARIMOW

The Supreme Court will review Donald Trump's unprecedented claim that he is shielded from prosecution for actions taken while in office, further delaying the former president's federal trial in the nation's capital on charges of conspiring to overturn his 2020 election loss to remain in power.

The justices set arguments for the week of April 22 to consider a unanimous ruling from a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, which early this month rejected Trump's sweeping assertion of immunity from prosecution.

Trump's pretrial proceedings in D.C. will remain on hold until a ruling is issued, putting the Supreme Court in the politically fraught position of influencing the timing of an election obstruction trial for the leading Republican presidential candidate. The high court could rule at any time after argument and almost certainly will do so before its term ends in late June or early July, potentially pushing any D.C. trial well into the presidential election season.

Some legal experts had predicted that at least the required four justices would want to

SEE **TRUMP** ON **A5**

**No delay in N.Y.:** Trump's financial penalty request is rejected. **A2**

**A classified case:** Trump blocked from viewing prosecutors' filings. **A5**

## Johnson in a corner as shutdown clock ticks

Nascent speaker juggles his conference's opposite poles in bid to strike deal

BY MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR

The House returned to Washington on Wednesday with the goal of averting a partial government shutdown — a looming deadline that has become routine in the past several months as the notoriously fractious House Republican conference has fought against a Democratic Senate and the White House.

Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.), the conference's nascent leader who has spent the past four months learning on the job while being pulled by opposite poles in his party, is once again days away from a government shutdown and staring down competing demands from his members. The conference is split almost down the middle on two pressing issues that Senate leaders and President Biden largely agree on: how to fund the government and sending aid to foreign democracies, particularly Ukraine.

As he faces two government

SEE **SHUTDOWN** ON **A6**

## McConnell's historic reign nears end



CRAIG HUDSON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (Ky.) on Wednesday, after announcing that he will step down from Republican leadership.

### EXITING LEADERSHIP ROLE IN NOVEMBER

Decision draws surprise and tears in Senate

BY LIZ GOODWIN  
AND AMY B. WANG

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) plans to step down from his leadership position in November, he announced Wednesday, a move that would mark the end of his tenure as the longest-serving Senate leader in American history.

The announcement marks the beginning of the end of an era in American politics. McConnell has been a towering force over his decades in the Senate, enraging Democrats by using hardball tactics to reshape the federal judiciary and later serving as an occasional voice of rebuke to former president Donald Trump, whom he excoriated publicly for his role in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Recently, McConnell has been the loudest voice in his party pushing for the United States to aid Ukraine in its fight against Russia, and he has faced sharp criticism

SEE **MCCONNELL** ON **A4**

@**PKCapitol**: GOP's Trumpian wing itching for fight over next leader. **A4**

Among Israel's war dead, nearly a tenth are U.S. citizens



PHOTOS BY OFIR BERMAN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## The Americans fighting and giving their lives in Gaza

BY STEVE HENDRIX  
AND SHIRA RUBIN

JERUSALEM — Amichai Oster was in Salt Lake City when Hamas attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7. Within days, the 24-year-old was on a plane, among thousands of Americans and American Israelis who rushed to join the fight in Gaza. Three months later, he was dead.

Oster was killed when an explosion hit his combat unit in northern Gaza on New Year's Day, one of at least 23 American citizens to be killed in recent months while serving in the Israeli military or police, according to the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem. Though U.S. citizens make up less than 2 percent of Israel's population, they account for almost 10 percent of the country's war dead since the

SEE **AMERICANS** ON **A9**



**TOP: Pesi Gordon with daughter Livi at home in Jerusalem. Naftali Yonah Gordon, Pesi's husband, died after a missile hit his tank in Gaza on Dec. 7. He was born in Queens. "Being American is part of our identity," she said. "But he was very, very connected to Israel. He gave his life for it." ABOVE: Howard Oster's son Amichai was killed Jan. 1.**

**ELECTION 2024**

## For Biden, is Michigan a mountain or molehill?

Democrats debate the impact of 'uncommitted' votes over war in Gaza

BY YASMEEN ABUTALEB,  
TYLER PAGER  
AND MICHAEL SCHERER

The unexpectedly large number of "uncommitted" votes in Michigan's Democratic primary Tuesday is igniting a debate in the Democratic Party over the magnitude of the challenge President Biden faces from an energized pro-Palestinian movement, which is challenging his handling of Israel's war in Gaza and plans to mount similar efforts in other upcoming primaries.

Biden campaign officials and allies noted that the percentage of those who voted uncommitted in

Michigan, rather than pulling the lever for Biden, was about 13 percent, not necessarily out of line with past results. And while about 101,000 people voted "uncommitted," roughly 620,000 voted for Biden, reflecting strong Democratic turnout that they said bodes well for November.

Former president Donald Trump, the leading Republican nominee, faced his own challenges in Michigan, as former South Carolina governor Nikki Haley garnered about 27 percent of the GOP vote Tuesday night. For Trump, far and away the dominant figure in the GOP, that suggested potential trouble ahead, Democrats and Haley supporters contended. Trump has won all of the Republican primary contests so far, but he has often performed worse than polls suggested he would.

Still, some Democrats argued

SEE **BIDEN** ON **A7**

## Hunter Biden says he never involved father in business

In testimony, president's son assails GOP-led impeachment inquiry

BY MATT VISER  
AND JACQUELINE ALEMANY

Hunter Biden, delivering his long-awaited deposition before a GOP-led congressional impeachment inquiry, testified Wednesday that he never involved his father in any of his business decisions, and he accused House Republicans of having "built your entire partisan house of cards on lies."

At the start of what was seven hours of contentious questioning and adamant rebuttals, President Biden's son gave a statement that was defiant, emotional and com-

bative. "I am here today to provide the Committees with the one uncontested fact that should end the false premise of this inquiry: I did not involve my father in my business," he said, according to a copy of the statement obtained by The Washington Post. "Not while I was a practicing lawyer, not in my investments or transactions domestic or international, not as a board member, and not as an artist. Never."

House Republicans have not been able to uncover firm evidence that Joe Biden benefited from — or played a role in — the business pursuits of his family members, the assertion that is at the heart of their investigation of the president. The testimony from Hunter Biden followed an appearance from the president's younger brother James, who also

SEE **TESTIMONY** ON **A7**

### IN THE NEWS

**Weather-related disaster** In just two days, a wildfire fueled by extreme winter heat became the second-largest in Texas's history, and other blazes also were burning. **A3**

**Richmond's role in slavery** The Virginia capital will build a memorial to mark its prominent place in the pre-Civil War trade. **B1**

#### THE NATION

**The CDC** recommended people 65 and older get a second coronavirus vaccine dose. **A2**  
**Its imperfect arrival** aside, NASA calls Intuitive Machines's lunar landing a success. **A6**

#### THE WORLD

**In Cape Town**, South Africa, invasive trees are being felled to fight climate change. **A8**  
**France is poised** to become the first nation to enshrine abortion as a constitutional right. **A10**

#### THE ECONOMY

**A hasty Google** search for airline phone numbers could expose you to a scam that parts you with your money. **A13**  
**Elon Musk's X** is fighting to keep its federal lawsuit against a group that has criticized hate speech and racism on the platform. **A14**

#### THE REGION

**A bipartisan bill** to allow D.C. to redevelop the RFK Stadium site passed the House — but must clear the Senate. **B1**  
**A suspect** in a Maryland toddler's killing was released multiple times despite a request he be held for immigration proceedings. **B1**

#### OBITUARIES

**Richard Lewis**, a comedian known for dark humor and his role on "Curb Your Enthusiasm," died at 76. **B4**

#### LOCAL LIVING

**A pest's reputation** has stained the everyday squirrel, which actually does humans and nature a lot of neighborly good.

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