



Partly sunny 53/38 • Tomorrow: Afternoon rain 52/50 B6

Democracy Dies in Darkness

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Companies fight U.S. to preserve ‘junk fees’

Lobbyists in high gear as Washington cracks down on the lucrative practice

BY TONY ROMM

Frustrated with airlines that charge passengers steep fees to check bags and change flights, President Biden last fall embarked on a campaign to crack down on the practice, and to force companies to show the full price of travel before people pay for their tickets.

Fliers rejoiced, flooding the Transportation Department with letters urging swift action on the policy. Airlines including American, Delta and United, however, did not seem so enthused.

It would cost too much to disclose the charges more clearly, warned Doug Mullen, the deputy general counsel at Airlines for America, an industry lobbying group representing the three carriers. Testifying at a federal hearing in March, he said the new policy would only cause “confusion and frustration” and, besides, the extra costs for bags and other services historically have resulted in “very few complaints.”

“The department should not regulate in this area,” Mullen added.

Since then, the Biden administration has broadened its efforts to expose or eliminate “junk fees” throughout the economy, touching off a groundswell of opposition from airlines, auto dealers, banks, credit card companies, cable giants, property owners and ticket sellers that hope to preserve their profits.

Behind the scenes, these corporations have fought vigorously to thwart even the most basic rules that would require them to be more transparent about hidden charges, according to a Washington Post review of federal lobbying records and thousands of filings submitted to government agencies. The fees together may cost Americans at

SEE FEES ON A10



PHOTOS BY CAROLYN VAN HOUTEN/THE WASHINGTON POST

In this bellwether, sick of politics

Wis. locality has a record of backing presidential winners, but there’s little appetite for 2024

BY DANIELLE PAQUETTE AND SABBINA RODRIGUEZ

DOOR COUNTY, WIS. — She didn’t trust the government. She didn’t trust the news. She didn’t know whom to trust, so Kathy Nichols eased into the armchair facing her psychic.

“What comes up in my future?” she asked.

Outside, the autumn sky was gray, and things at home were rough, and her television blared chatter about the House speaker drama or the New Jersey senator accused of trading influence for gold bars or the people running for president — all of whom she disliked.

In the vanilla-scented office of Abby Rose Spirit, under the glow of Turkish ceiling lights, she tapped her white Skechers on an Oriental rug and listened to a voice she found soothing.

“You know how they have those amusement park cars?” the psychic asked, leaning in. “It’s like you’re in the go-kart and you feel like something is going to smash into you.”

Yes, Nichols thought: Navigating life on Wisconsin’s northeastern thumb was stressful enough. Why did she have to worry about the country’s chaos, too?

SEE DOOR COUNTY ON A6



TOP: Kathy Nichols, left, gets a reading last month from Abby Rose Spirit in Door County, Wis. ABOVE: Phil Anderson, a Senate candidate running as a Libertarian for the fourth time, speaks with fellow Libertarian Jacob VandenPlas, a former Army infantryman seeking a seat in Congress.

Rage propels far-right victory

ARGENTINA ELECTS TRUMP-LIKE LEADER

Libertarian Javier Milei pulls off stunning upset

BY SAMANTHA SCHMIDT AND DAVID FELIBA

BUENOS AIRES — A radical libertarian and admirer of Donald Trump rode a wave of voter rage to win Argentina’s presidency on Sunday, crushing the political establishment and bringing the sharpest turn to the right in four decades of democracy in the country.

Javier Milei, a 53-year-old far-right economist and former television pundit with no governing experience, claimed nearly 56 percent of the vote, with over 80 percent of votes tallied. It was a stunning upset over Sergio Massa, the center-left economy minister who has struggled to resolve the country’s worst economic crisis in two decades. Even before the official results had been announced Sunday night, Massa acknowledged defeat and congratulated Milei on his win.

Voters in this nation of 46 million demanded a drastic change from a government that has sent the peso tumbling, inflation skyrocketing and more than 40 percent of the population into poverty. With Milei, Argentina takes a leap into the unknown — with a leader promising to shatter the entire system.

Wielding chain saws on the campaign trail, the wild-haired Milei vowed to slash public spending in a country heavily dependent on government subsidies. He pledged to dollarize the economy, shut down the central bank and cut the number of government ministries from 18 to eight. His rallying campaign cry was a take-down of the country’s political “caste” — an Argentine version of Trump’s “drain the swamp.”

SEE ARGENTINA ON A15

ROSALYNN CARTER | 1927-2023

The real ‘steel magnolia,’ ambitious and resolute

First lady sat in on husband’s Cabinet meetings, advised on policy and advocated for mental health

BY JOE HOLLEY AND KEVIN SULLIVAN

Rosalynn Carter, a close political and policy adviser to her husband, President Jimmy Carter, who created the modern Office of the First Lady and advocated for better treatment of the mentally ill during her years in the White House and for four decades afterward, died Nov. 19 at her home in Plains, Ga. She was 96.

The Carter Center in Atlanta, which announced her death, had revealed in May that she had dementia. On Friday, two days before her death, the center said she was in hospice care at home.

The Carters had been married for more than 77 years, the longest presidential marriage in U.S. history, and spent the final months of their time together at the family home in the town of Plains, in southwest Georgia. The former president decided in February to stop medical treatment for an aggressive form of melanoma skin cancer.

During her husband’s 1976 presi-

SEE CARTER ON A8



NIKKI KAHN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Former first lady Rosalynn Carter poses for a portrait in New York in September 2011. Mrs. Carter died two days after Friday’s announcement that she was in hospice care at home.

Nation mourns: Prominent figures express condolences, laud her legacy. A10

A midnight trip into Gaza reveals smoking, reeking ruin

Israel escorts journalists to see what it says is proof that Hamas uses hospitals to shield bases

BY STEVE HENDRIX

GAZA CITY — To enter Gaza now is to arrive in hell.

On Saturday night, I crossed through the broken barrier between Israel and Gaza in the back of an Israeli military jeep, going fast without lights under a crescent moon. Before the breach, I was just able to make out the bullet-riddled cars by the roadside, some of the hundreds of civilian vehicles attacked by Hamas fighters who poured through this same fence on Oct. 7.

They mark the gateway to war. Soon after we crossed into Gaza — racing over debris-covered roads — the first destroyed buildings appeared. Some were skeletal silhouettes against the stars, windowless and blackened, others mere pancaked stacks of concrete.

Further in, the ruins were more tightly packed. These were neighborhoods just weeks ago. Almost no structure was untouched.

Explosions sounded regularly. A fire burned on a nearby ridge.

Every few miles, the sour stench of decaying bodies rose with the dust. Thousands of people are still believed to be entombed in the rubble.

Before the war, even during previous wars, donkey carts and Toyotas shouldered past each other in Gaza City’s chaotic intersections. The poorest fishermen powered their boats with cooking oil and sold their catch from blankets on the sidewalk. There was a mall with flashy sneaker stores and a recently opened cat cafe.

It was an enclave of poverty and power shortages that also bore a fierce pride of place. Northern Gaza — a vital center of Palestinian culture and identity — has become a smoking, reeking ruin.

Hundreds of thousands have fled to the south, leaving a silence broken only by the pop of machine-gun fire and the heavy thrum of Israeli tanks. More than 11,000 people have been killed,

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Bound for Egypt: U.N. evacuates 31 preemies from hospital. A13

IN THE NEWS

Sam Altman to return? The former chief of OpenAI who was dramatically ousted by its board is in talks to come back amid a rift over the dangers of artificial intelligence. A2

Iranian proxy attacks Frustration is building at the Pentagon, officials say, over the failure to stem assaults on U.S. positions. A2

THE NATION Many GOP voters are not just tolerating but relishing and emulating Donald Trump’s often crass and cruel political approach, including vulgarities, insults and baseless attacks. A3

Congress may have averted a government shutdown, but the real fiscal fight lies ahead. A4
What’s happening with Trump’s trials during this Thanksgiving week — and a recap of last week. A4

THE WORLD A creeping escalation between Hezbollah and Israel on the Lebanese border is bringing the risk of a wider war. A14

THE ECONOMY Streaming discounts may mean that you pay for entertainment you don’t really want — just like cable TV. A17

THE REGION Demand is surging at food banks across the D.C. area ahead of the first Thanksgiving without pandemic aid. B1
A former inmate has sued Virginia, saying he was held too long after a 2020 law that expanded early release for good behavior. B1

STYLE RFK Jr., the fourth Kennedy to run for president, is clashing with myth and history — and his own family. C1
Mona Chalabi, who won a Pulitzer for the N.Y. Times, criticized the newspaper’s Gaza coverage as well as the Pulitzer ceremony. C1

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