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Democracy Dies in Darkness

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ELECTION 2024

Roiled by doubt and division, top Democrats renew push to replace Biden

BY **TOLUSE OLORUNNIP, ASHLEY PARKER, YASMEEN ABUTALEB AND TYLER PAGER**

President Biden faced intensifying pressure Thursday to end his reelection bid from an array of Democratic leaders, from former president Barack Obama to top leaders on Capitol Hill to powerful donors to party strategists, as he confronted the most concerted effort yet to force him out of the presidential race amid concerns

His base of support appears to dwindle as pressure mounts

over his advanced age and sluggish poll numbers.

The private but widely voiced doubts of the party's top leaders — including Obama, former House speaker Nancy Pelosi (Calif.), Senate Majority Leader Charles E.

Schumer (N.Y.) and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (N.Y.) — spilled into public view as people familiar with their thinking confirmed their growing sense of angst about Biden's candidacy. And Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) became the second sitting senator calling on Biden to withdraw, after Sen. Peter Welch (D-Vt.).

Obama, seen by many Democrats as the party's most influential figure, has told allies that Biden should think seriously about the viability of his reelection bid, The Washington Post reported. Pelosi has conveyed a similarly blunt message directly to Biden and his aides in recent days, and she has told some House Democrats she believes Biden can be persuaded fairly soon to exit the presidential race, according to three Democratic officials familiar with her private discussions.

Jeffries and Schumer, in separate private meetings with Biden last week, told him directly that his continued candidacy imperils

the Democratic Party's ability to control either chamber of Congress next year. The turmoil comes as polls suggest that Biden has slipped dangerously behind Republican nominee Donald Trump in swing states, Democratic donors signal they may start withholding support, lawmakers weigh a more public confrontation with the president next week — and Republicans put on a contrasting display of unity at their convention this week.

Taken together, the wave of

public doubt surrounding Biden suggests a new, more serious phase in his bid to save his candidacy. As he self-isolates at his Rehoboth Beach, Del., home after testing positive for the coronavirus, the president appears more politically embattled than ever.

But his team is showing no public signs of reconsidering his reelection bid.

SEE **BIDEN** ON **A4**

Harris: Vice president rallies in N.C. as president recuperates. **A5**

At Milwaukee barbershop, a tapered faith in politics

BY **DAVID MARANISS**

MILWAUKEE — The conversations went round and round at the barbershop here in the heart of the north-side neighborhood of Bronzeville.

Joe Biden is too old. But Donald Trump is too old, too. There should be an upper-age limit on presidents just like the minimum-age requirement. Young people are turned off by the two old White men to the point where they might not vote. What will it take, if anything, to grab their interest in the presidential election? Imagine if Trump gets back into the White House. The military storming into inner cities? Think about what would have happened if the rioters who stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, had been Black. Why did that homeless Black man have to be shot and killed at King Park on Tuesday afternoon by police from Ohio who were visiting for the Republican National Convention? Race, in all its permutations, is still the dilemma.

SEE **BARBERSHOP** ON **A9**

'Not the only one': Nearby event celebrates Black delegates. **A8**

Trump fires up a GOP he has transformed



RICKY CARIOTI/THE WASHINGTON POST

Screens show a photo of Donald Trump after Saturday's assassination attempt as he accepts his party's presidential nomination Thursday on the final night of the Republican National Convention. In his speech, Trump said he was "not supposed to be here tonight."

A NOD TO UNITY, SAME DARK THEMES

Recounts 'painful' story of the attempt on his life

BY **ISAAC ARNSDORF AND JOSH DAWSEY**

MILWAUKEE — Donald Trump accepted his third straight Republican nomination on Thursday by wrapping a fresh gesture toward unity around the same dark view of American decline and loathing for his political opponents and immigrants that have defined his nine-year political career and transformed the GOP.

The former president dramatically recounted the experience of narrowly missing a would-be assassin's bullet five days ago, and he opened and concluded with calls for Americans to set aside the rancorous partisan divisions he has played no small role in stoking.

In between, he rehearsed his usual themes of framing this election in catastrophic terms, characterizing the current state of affairs with doom and destruction. Trump also used the banner

SEE **CONVENTION** ON **A7**

In good spirits: Inside some of the not-so-secret RNC after-parties. **C1**

Summer sees another rise in covid cases across U.S.

Biden hit by seasonal spike that has occurred every year since 2020

BY **FENIT NIRAPPIL AND LIZETTE ORTEGA**

A summer covid wave has washed over most of the United States, bringing yet another round of gatherings turned into superspreaders, vacations foiled by illness and reminders that pandemic life has not been fully erased. Not even President Biden was spared.

Coronavirus activity in wastewater reached levels considered "high" or "very high" in 26 states, according to the most recent data reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Other metrics also suggest the virus is rising, including the prevalence of covid diagnoses in emergency rooms and the rate of tests processed at labs coming back positive, but not to the degree of the

SEE **COVID** ON **A6**

Locally: A wave in the D.C. area catches residents by surprise. **B1**

Double life: A cocaine kingpin in cleats

He built a drug pipeline to Europe, then used the riches to buy his way onto pro soccer teams

BY **KEVIN SIEFF**
IN ASUNCIÓN, PARAGUAY

The midfielder stepped up to take the penalty kick. It was a steamy, bright morning at Erico Galeano Stadium. In the stands, fans wearing yellow and blue stood up, squinting into the sun, focusing on the man with the number 10 on his back. On the sidelines, coaches crossed themselves as he ran toward the ball.

His name was Sebastián Marset. He had arrived at Deportivo Capiatá — a hardscrabble professional soccer team — out of nowhere. He drove a Lamborghini that he would career across the gravel parking lot. He was square-jawed and handsome, covered in gold jewelry, Rolexes and ornate tattoos that ran down his right arm.

Marset was a mediocre player, with the skills of someone whose career peaked in high school. But when Capiatá's coach, Jorge Nuñez, kept him on the bench, the players encircled Nuñez and told him that Marset *needed* to play.

"I kept wondering, 'Who is this guy?'" Nuñez said in an interview.

And now here was Marset taking a critical spot kick. The score was 1-1. It was May 29, 2021, halfway through a tough season. A win could be the beginning of a turnaround.

Silence fell on the stadium, quickly followed by groans,



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coaches and staff recalled in interviews. The ball blazed five feet over the goal's crossbar. Even the team's security guard couldn't hide his frustration, kicking the dirt, wondering aloud why Capiatá's fate had been put in Marset's hands.

Over the next two years, the reasons would become clear. Sebastián Marset, it turned out, was

among the most important drug traffickers in South America, and one of the key figures behind a surge of cocaine arriving in Western Europe, according to Latin American, U.S. and European investigators.

Instead of hiding from authorities, he had used his fortune to purchase and sponsor soccer teams across Latin America and

in Europe. U.S. and South American investigators would learn that he was using those teams to help launder millions in drug proceeds.

Along the way, Marset, now 33, deployed his power and wealth to

SEE **SOCCER** ON **A16**

This is the first of a two-part series.

BOB NEWHART 1929-2024

Bye, Bob: Influential comedian, TV icon

BY **MATT SCHUDEL**

Bob Newhart was still living with his parents when he was 30. He was a balding, slouch-eyed former accountant who talked in a calculated, halting stammer. He was no one's idea of a superstar.

Yet, within a year, his understated comedy routines that emphasized the absurdities of ordinary life made him a national sensation. Mr. Newhart, who died July 18 at age 94, became the first comedian



Bob Newhart

with a No. 1 record and the star of two long-running sitcoms. Regarded as one of the most influential figures in modern comedy, he helped shape the humor of Bill Cosby and Jerry Seinfeld, among others.

His debut album, "The Button-Down Mind of Bob Newhart," soared past the pop and rock

SEE **NEWHART** ON **A2**

IN THE NEWS

A divide in Mumbai A glitzy, \$500 million wedding inspired Indian pride — but unfolded half a mile from monsoon-flooded streets, a result, residents say, of the city's neglect. **A18**

D.C. passes 100 homicides Two people were killed and a child was injured in a shooting even as the pace has slowed from last year. **B1**

THE NATION
Mourners gathered to honor Corey Comperatore, who was killed at the Trump rally. **A3**
An alleged neo-Nazi "murder cult" leader was accused of a scheme to poison children. **A6**

THE WORLD
A hard-luck German city relishes its role as a stop on Taylor Swift's European tour. **A14**
Two skeletons found in Pompeii showed that earthquakes added to the volcanic disaster. **A15**

THE ECONOMY
Some power players in Silicon Valley are rallying around Donald Trump's campaign, a major shift for the tech industry. **A20**
Boeing's largest union said it will strike if contract negotiations fail, putting more pressure on the company. **A20**

THE REGION
When the days are hot and the AC goes kaput, HVAC repair technicians are there to save the day. **B1**
A unionization vote at Compass Coffee was on hold after labor organizers and the company challenged more than 100 ballots. **B1**

STYLE
Kennedy Center Honors recipients include Francis Ford Coppola, Bonnie Raitt, Arturo Sandoval, the Dead and the Apollo theater. **C1**

WEEKEND
A bucket list for your D.C. summer: Here are 25 ways to have the best possible time in the city.

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