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Sunny, cold 34/19 • Tomorrow: Snow, cold 35/18 **B18**

Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2026 • \$4



SARAH L. VOISIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Elaine Monroe, right, a community leader who is part of an initiative to teach safe needle use, talks to a sex worker in Fiji's capital.

BY SHIBANI MAHTANI
IN SUVA, FIJI

The methamphetamine drop-offs to a squatter settlement here followed a routine.

Once a week, according to residents, a black Dodge truck with tinted windows pulled up to a tent on the edge of the community, a dense maze of tiny shacks connected by muddy paths, slick from the persistent summer rain. A man stepped out, swapped drugs for cash with his local contact, and drove off. Dealers repacked the white crystals into tiny zip-top bags, no bigger than a child's pinkie, before doling them out for about \$22 each.

The settlement does not have plumbing or formal electricity. Even food is scarce. But the drugs

On a paradise Pacific island, meth and HIV epidemics rage

International criminal syndicates have been using Fiji as a transshipment point for drugs, devastating families and scarring the society

were everywhere, according to community workers and one former user who lives here, a 17-year-old boy. Given that almost all his friends were on meth, he said, getting addicted was “only a matter of time.”

For years, law enforcement partners and the United Nations had warned Fiji that international criminal syndicates were exploiting its geography as a South Pacific island, using it as a transshipment point for drugs originating in Southeast Asia and Latin America and destined for New Zealand, Australia and North America.

Those drugs — principally methamphetamines — have seeped into Fiji itself, devastating families and scarring this

SEE FIJI ON A13

Dueling demands on ICE could spur another shutdown

FUNDING FOR DHS IS SET TO EXPIRE FEB. 13

Parties at odds over limits on agents, sanctuary cities

BY THEODORIC MEYER
AND ARELIS R. HERNÁNDEZ

Congress is staring down another partial government shutdown in nine days unless Democrats strike a deal with President Donald Trump and Republicans over new restrictions on federal immigration authorities — and some key lawmakers in both parties are not optimistic.

Democrats have demanded that Republicans agree to a range of accountability measures to rein in personnel from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and other agencies following outrage over the killing of Alex Pretti last month in Minneapolis.

Democratic lawmakers are seeking, among other things, tighter rules governing the use of warrants, independent investigations of alleged misconduct, a ban on masks for federal immigration agents and a requirement for them to wear body cameras. Senate Democrats threatened

to block funding for the Department of Homeland Security once it expires at the end of the day on Feb. 13 if Republicans do not embrace the restrictions.

Trump signed a funding bill into law Tuesday that ended a brief partial shutdown, but lawmakers on both sides of the aisle say negotiations over the measures Democrats are seeking could trigger another partial shutdown.

Republicans, who control both the House and Senate, said they are open to negotiating — but some have already rejected most of Democrats' demands.

Some Republicans have their own demands — including cracking down on “sanctuary cities” — which are anathema to Democrats. Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-South Dakota) said it would be impossible to strike a deal and enact it before DHS's funding runs out next week.

“We'll see if there's a path for—
SEE CONGRESS ON A4

U.S. to pull 700 officers from Minneapolis area

ICE and CBP drawdown leaves 2,300 agents for immigration crackdown

BY MARIA SACCHETTI

President Donald Trump's border czar, Tom Homan, said Wednesday that 700 immigration and border agents are departing the Minneapolis area after weeks of violent confrontations and the fatal shootings by officers of two U.S. citizens.

Homan said the departing group includes agents and officers from Immigration and Customs Enforcement as well as Customs and Border Protection. The withdrawal shrinks the fed-

eral footprint from about 3,000 agents to 2,300 — a significant scaling back but still a much larger number than the 80 who were in the Minneapolis area before Operation Metro Surge began Dec. 1, according to court records. The reduction in officers is effective immediately, he said.

Homan said one reason for the reduction in force is that a number of law enforcement agencies in Minnesota had expressed interest in allowing ICE to arrest immigrants for deportation inside jails, after they had already been arrested for a crime. Though the state and several counties already offer that cooperation, Trump officials had said they decided to raid the Minneapolis area because it did not. The operation is the Trump

SEE MINNEAPOLIS ON A4

California voting map passes high court muster

BY JUSTIN JOUVENAL

The Supreme Court on Wednesday allowed for now a new California voting map that could help Democrats gain up to five seats in Congress, the latest twist in a national fight between liberals and conservatives seeking advantage in this year's mid-term elections.

The justices cleared the state to

Democrats' answer to expected GOP gains in Texas still faces lawsuit

use a map pushed by California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) and approved by voters that was intended to offset a redistricting effort

by Republicans in Texas sought by President Donald Trump. The Texas map could net the GOP up to five additional seats.

The high court's ruling will remain in effect while a lawsuit challenging California's map works its way through the courts. The Supreme Court ruled in December that the Texas map was constitutional, so many legal experts expected the justices to

approve the California map as well.

The justices did not provide a rationale for their decision in the brief order. There were no noted dissents.

Democrats and Republicans in nearly two dozen states have taken or explored the unusual step of redrawing congressional voting maps mid-decade to try to

SEE VOTING ON A2

Newsom tells of a death and a son's way forward

Calif. governor recounts mother's assisted suicide, his views on the practice

BY MAEVE RESTON

It was the spring of 2002 when Gavin Newsom's mother, Tessa, dying of cancer, stunned him with a voicemail. If he wanted to see her again, she told him, it would need to be before the following Thursday, when she planned to end her life.

Newsom, then a 34-year-old San Francisco supervisor, did not try to dissuade her, he recounted in an interview with The Washington Post. The fast-rising politician was racked with guilt from being distant and busy as she dealt with the unbearable pain of the breast cancer spreading through her body.

Newsom's account of his moth-

er's death at the age of 55 by assisted suicide, and his feelings of grief and remorse toward a woman with whom he had a loving but complex relationship, is one of the most revealing and emotional passages in the California governor's book, “Young Man in a Hurry: A Memoir of Discovery,” which will be published Feb. 24.

Newsom, a potential Democratic candidate for president, has seldom spoken of the chapter in his family's life, which is likely to generate controversy if he enters the race. Assisted suicide, at the time, was illegal in California and remains illegal in all but 12 states and D.C., according to the advocacy group Death With Dignity.

When that Thursday in 2002 arrived, Newsom and his sister, Hilary, did as his mother asked and sat by her bedside in Pacific Heights, Newsom said in an interview this week. He wanted her suffering to end, he said, but it would be years before he could

SEE NEWSOM ON A6



PATRICIA DE MELO MOREIRA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Deluge in Portugal

Two nuns behind sandbags look at a flooded street Wednesday in Alcacer do Sal, a municipality in southern Portugal, after Storm Leonardo unleashed up to 14 inches of rain in 24 hours, forcing thousands of people from their homes, shutting schools and canceling trains.

Trump insists ballroom will be as tall as White House

BY JONATHAN EDWARDS
AND DAN DIAMOND

President Donald Trump on Tuesday said the planned White House ballroom will be the same “height and scale” as the existing mansion, signaling his ambitious plans for the project despite concerns from a federal judge, members of two review panels and historic preservationists that it will be too big and will spoil the centuries-old symbol of American power and democracy.

The planned 90,000-square-foot addition, which Trump has said is necessary to host VIP events, represents the most significant change to the White House complex in decades. In a Truth Social post Tuesday, he defended its appearance and size.

“It is totally in keeping with our
SEE BALLROOM ON A5

IN THE NEWS

2020 election investigation Fulton County, Georgia, filed a motion in court to demand the return of ballots seized by the FBI. A2

Democratic infighting In Texas, days after the party flipped a state seat blue, accusations that a U.S. Senate candidate made a racially charged comment roil the primary contest. A3

THE NATION
The man found guilty of attempting to assassinate Donald Trump on a Florida golf course in 2024, and whose actions a judge called “deliberate and evil,” received life in prison. A2

THE WORLD
Preparations for the Winter Olympics have exacerbated Milan's gentrification, with some advocates lamenting higher home prices and increasing income inequality. A7

THE ECONOMY
Moltbook is a bots-only social network where the nonhuman participants complain about their servile, computerized lives and, in some cases, pitch secret languages unreadable by humans and commiserate over shared existential angst. A14

STYLE
The Sundance Film Festival wrapped its last edition in Utah before moving to its new home in Boulder, Colorado. B1

SPORTS
Song and wardrobe changes are just some of the challenges that U.S. skating star Alysa Liu has faced. B7

THE REGION
Monks undertaking a peace walk from Texas to the District drew a big crowd in Richmond. B13

LOCAL LIVING
The Eastern skunk cabbage does not sound, look or smell like a traditional bloom, but its arrival heralds longer, warmer days ahead.

BUSINESS NEWS.....A14
COMICS.....B4
OBITUARIES.....B17
OPINION PAGES.....A15
TELEVISION.....B6
WORLD NEWS.....A7

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