

The Washington Post

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Democracy Dies in Darkness

TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2025 • \$4

Hearings start GOP pushback on courts

Seeing a rare check on Trump, his allies strain to limit judges' options

BY JUSTIN JOUVENAL, THEODORIC MEYER, MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR AND CLARA ENCE MORSE

Republicans will make their case for reining in federal judges on Capitol Hill this week, amid an escalating clash between President Donald Trump and the courts that have blocked, at least temporarily, many of his key priorities.

Both the House and Senate will hold hearings on the federal judiciary, and House lawmakers are expected to vote on a bill to bar courts from issuing nationwide injunctions. The odds of the bill becoming law are long.

But the flurry of action shows how much the courts have become a threat to Trump's agenda, and highlights questions about the judicial system that for years have frustrated whichever party occupies the White House.

Trump charged into his second term issuing more executive orders — 107 to date — than any president in four decades. The push, and his administration's aggressive efforts on a variety of other fronts, has been met with an even larger wave of about 150 lawsuits.

Judges have put more than 40 holds on Trump's agenda, according to a Washington Post analysis

SEE JUDGES ON A4

Deportations: More alleged gang members sent to El Salvador. A5

Mixed feelings: Job cuts worry some feds who voted for Trump. B1

Prayers usher in Eid al-Fitr holiday



MONIRUL ALAM/EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK

Muslims attend prayers at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in Dhaka, Bangladesh, where the Eid al-Fitr holiday was celebrated Monday. Eid al-Fitr marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan, when adherents fast from dawn until dusk, and the beginning of Shawwal, the 10th month of the Islamic calendar.

Anxiety prompts curbs on spending

ALL INCOME LEVELS ARE CUTTING BACK

Savings rate rises as tariffs add to uncertainty

BY ABHA BHATTARAI

Americans are tapping the brakes on spending — pulling back on dining out, hotel stays and other expenses — ahead of new tariffs and continued economic uncertainty that continues to upend financial markets.

Consumers are increasingly anxious about the economy, and they're curbing spending habits accordingly, data released Friday shows. Consumer spending inched up by 0.1 percent in February, after adjusting for inflation, following a 0.6 percent drop the month before, according to government figures. Meanwhile, the personal savings rate — or how much of their incomes people set aside — rose to 4.6 percent.

Investors grappling with the consumer spending slowdown and mixed messages on tariffs have pulled back, erasing the short-lived rally that followed President Donald Trump's November election win. On Monday, the S&P 500 and Nasdaq composite index closed out the worst first quarter since spring 2022.

The White House in recent days has doubled down on its tariff plans, with Trump pushing for an across-the-board import tax of as high as 20 percent on all products starting Wednesday. Economists

SEE SPENDING ON A16

Sinking stocks: Markets close Q1 in the red as new tariffs loom. A16

It may be time for a towering L.A. star to bow out

BY DINO GRANDONI

It's a towering Los Angeles institution. Like the Empire State Building in New York or the Space Needle in Seattle.

The palm tree is more Hollywood than the Hollywood sign. A star with more staying power than any actor etched into the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Seeing those green leaves waving hello while weaving through traffic on

Some say wildfires make it too risky to have so many palm trees around

the 105 Freeway lets you know you've arrived in L.A.

But after many of these tall, majestic trees helped fuel the historic wildfires that ravaged

Southern California earlier this year — burning more than 16,000 structures and killing at least 29 people — some are suggesting that the icon provides too little shade and is too big of a fire risk for a region where temperatures have risen faster than in most of the rest of the world.

"I'm not of the mind that we need to eradicate palms from our cities entirely," said Bryan Vejar, a master arborist for TreePeople,

one of the main tree-planting organizations in Los Angeles.

"But when we're talking about the functional value that trees give us," he added, "it just doesn't make sense to plant these species en masse."

No palm species is native to Los Angeles. In fact, before urban development, much of the Los Angeles Basin was scrubland and grassland free of big trees.

SEE PALM TREES ON A8

Cuts cripple U.S. aid in wake of Myanmar quake

BY REBECCA TAN

Hours after a 7.7-magnitude earthquake devastated Myanmar on Friday, sending dangerous tremors across Southeast Asia, the American officials charged with responding to the disaster received their termination letters from Washington.

Most of the personnel who would have made up a U.S. response team, including security and sanitation experts, were already on indefinite leave. Many of the U.S. programs that would have provided lifesaving materials, including fuel for ambulances and medical kits, were shuttered weeks ago. U.S. planes and helicopters in nearby Thailand, which have been used before for disaster relief, never made it off the ground.

America's response to the catastrophic earthquake has been crippled by the Trump administration's sweeping cuts to the U.S. Agency for International Development, according to eight current and former USAID employees who worked on Myanmar, as well as former State Department officials and leaders of international aid agencies. Three days after the disaster, American teams had yet to be deployed to the quake zone — a marked contrast with other similar catastrophes, when U.S. personnel were on the ground within hours.

The Trump administration has promised \$2 million in aid, saying, "The United States stands with the people of Myanmar as they work to recover from the devastation." But distributing

SEE MYANMAR ON A12



REUTERS

Rescuers work Sunday at the site of a building that collapsed in an earthquake in Mandalay, Myanmar.

IDF orders Rafah evacuation; 15 first responders' bodies found

BY MIRIAM BERGER, HAJAR HARB AND HEBBA FAROUK MAHFOUZ

JAFFA, ISRAEL — Israel on Monday ordered the evacuation of most of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, warning that the military is "returning to combat in great force" in the area, a day after the bodies of more than a dozen emergency personnel, missing for a week after responding to a

strike, were recovered from a mass grave in the city.

Over the past week, the Israeli military has pushed back into Rafah, launching air and artillery strikes, sending troops into several neighborhoods and forcing Palestinians who had recently returned under a ceasefire to flee once again, according to residents who escaped the bombardments and gunfire.

The evacuation order Monday

was the largest since Israel resumed military operations in Gaza nearly three weeks ago, covering swaths of Rafah that, while mostly destroyed, hosted many families who returned during a two-month ceasefire that began in January. In a statement, Israel Defense Forces spokesman Avi-chay Adraee directed Palestinians toward Mawasi in western Gaza, an Israeli-designated "humanitarian zone" that many Ra-

fah residents had left just weeks ago.

Israel has long seen the control of Rafah, which sits on the border with Egypt, as crucial to stemming the flow of weapons and goods to Hamas, the militant group that ruled Gaza before the war. But Israeli leaders have also warned of plans to expand operations across the territory, including a much larger ground campaign that could culminate in the

long-term occupation of Gaza.

The Washington Post spoke to eight residents who recently fled Rafah and described harrowing scenes as intensive strikes began in the city late on March 22, days after Israel broke a two-month ceasefire with Hamas and unleashed strikes that killed more

SEE RAFAH ON A14

Probe over Qatar ties: Two top Netanyahu aides arrested. A14

IN THE NEWS

An outsider pick Once a relatively obscure three-star officer, Lt. Gen. Dan Caine enters a political minefield ahead of his confirmation hearing for Joint Chiefs chairman. A3

Political storm for French far right Marine Le Pen was barred from running for office for five years in an embezzlement verdict. A11

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A Pentagon memo focused on deterring China was reassuring to Taiwan. A12

THE ECONOMY **Fears are growing** in Silicon Valley's immigrant community that lives and careers could be upended by shifting immigration policies. A15
Amazon's AI-enhanced voice assistant Alexa+ launched, but users will have to wait for all features to be available. A16

THE REGION **Trayon White Sr.**, who is facing a federal bribery charge, said he plans to run for the D.C. Council seat from which he was expelled. B1
Maryland education leaders said their schools could lose millions of dollars in federal coronavirus aid. B1

STYLE **Bill Burr**, who has a new gig on Broadway and stand-up special on Hulu, continues to evolve. C1

HEALTH & SCIENCE **Deciding when** to let go of a pet suffering at the end of its life is one of the most agonizing choices for owners. E1

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