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Democracy Dies in Darkness

MONDAY, MAY 19, 2025 • \$4

Biden faces aggressive prostate cancer

His office says the disease, which spread to his bones, is manageable

BY NAFTALI BENDAVID,
MARIANA ALFARO,
JOEL ACHENBACH
AND MATT VISER

Former president Joe Biden has been diagnosed with an aggressive form of prostate cancer that has spread to his bones, his office said Sunday, adding that Biden's family is deciding on treatment options for a condition it said can be managed.

"Last week, President Joe Biden was seen for a new finding of a prostate nodule," said a statement from Biden's personal office. On Friday, Biden was diagnosed with prostate cancer that had metastasized to the bone, it continued.

The statement said the diagnosis "represents a more aggressive form of the disease," but that the cancer appears to be sensitive to hormone therapy, "which allows for effective management." It added, "The President and his family are reviewing treatment options with his physicians."

The news comes at an extraordinary moment for Biden, 82, and his party, as Democrats in recent days have been second-guessing their handling of the 2024 election, especially the aging Biden's insistence on running for reelection until a stumbling debate performance forced him from the race.

By the time he fumbled his way through that debate with now-President Donald Trump in late June of last year, other major party figures had taken a pass on challenging him, leaving Vice President Kamala Harris little time to prepare for a race she ultimately lost. The publication of

SEE BIDEN ON A4



ILAN GODFREY/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

The charity-run clinic Miracle Campus in Sidvokodvo was founded by Americans at the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Eswatini.

U.S. helped halt Africa's HIV crisis; now Trump's cuts force reckoning

As aid withdrawal upends health care in Eswatini, locals question reliance on foreign funds

BY CHICO HARLAN
AND ILAN GODFREY

SIDVOKODVO, ESWATINI — When American taxpayer money started flowing here 18 years ago, this country was the epicenter of the global HIV/AIDS crisis, with the world's highest prevalence rate, and so much death that 1 in 10 households was headed by a child.

U.S. aid unleashed a flood of lifesaving antiretroviral pediatric drugs. It funded doctors and data systems. It helped build an ultramodern medical facility in the center of the country, known as the Miracle Campus, that provided free care be-

hind an entrance sign saying: "From the American people."

To the nurses and doctors who arrived during that dire phase, this was America at its most ambitious — a superpower vowing to help solve the health crises of the developing world. In Eswatini, U.S. money helped extend the average life expectancy by more than 10 years.

But now a project that once embodied America's largesse has exposed the pitfalls of that approach, as some aid and government workers in Eswatini fear it has left the country ill-prepared to take care of its own.

Even after the HIV/AIDS emergency

eased, U.S. aid kept flowing at high volumes. The United States took steps to pass responsibility to African countries but kept its hands on crucial tasks.

"We shouldn't expect the U.S. to take care of a chronic disease to infinity," said Echo VanderWal, executive director of the Luke Commission, the charity that runs the Miracle Campus.

Eswatini, formerly known as Swaziland, is a New Jersey-size country of lush green hills wedged between Mozambique and South Africa. Relative to the country's population of 1.26 million, the U.S. investment here had been significant: roughly

SEE AID ON A9

A check on DOJ probes may end

PROSECUTIONS OF
OFFICIALS AT ISSUE

Reviews look for political motivation in cases

BY PERRY STEIN
AND JEREMY ROEBUCK

Federal prosecutors across the country may soon be able to indict members of Congress without approval from lawyers in the Justice Department's Public Integrity Section, according to three people familiar with a proposal attorneys in the section learned about this month.

Under the proposal, investigators and prosecutors would also not be required to consult with the section's attorneys during key steps of probes into public officials, altering a long-standing provision in the Justice Department's manual that outlines how investigations of elected officials should be conducted.

If adopted, the changes would remove a layer of review intended to ensure that cases against public officials are legally sound and not politically motivated. Career prosecutors in the Public Integrity Section guided and signed off on the criminal investigations into alleged corruption by New York Mayor Eric Adams (D) and then-Sen. Bob Menendez (D-New Jersey).

A Justice Department spokesman confirmed the proposal and said that no final decisions have been made. The three people familiar with the proposal spoke on the condition of anonymity because they fear reprisals.

Attorney General Pam Bondi has repeatedly accused the Biden administration of having

SEE DOJ ON A5

Israel begins 'extensive' Gaza ground operations

Airstrikes kill about 100 as Netanyahu says some food will be allowed in

This article is by Miriam Berger, Sammy Westfall, Abbie Cheeseman, Lior Soroka and Heba Farouk Mahfouz

JAFFA, ISRAEL — Israeli forces have launched "extensive" ground operations in northern and southern Gaza, the military said Sunday, as airstrikes across the territory killed about 100 people and flagging ceasefire negotiations between Israel and Hamas were underway in Qatar.

The Israel Defense Forces said in a statement that the ground maneuvers were part of Operation Gideon's Chariots, a military offensive that Israeli leaders have described as including a potential long-term occupation of the Gaza Strip.

Later Sunday, the office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his government would "introduce a basic amount of food to the population" of Gaza, after blocking all food and aid

SEE GAZA ON A11



ANDREW MEDICINI/AP

Pope Leo XIV tours St. Peter's Square at the Vatican before his inaugural Mass on Sunday.

Leo urges end to division in his first Mass as pope

Saying that 'it's the hour for love,' the pontiff calls for both 'unity' and 'diversity' in the church

BY ANTHONY FAIOLA
AND STEFANO PITRELLI

VATICAN CITY — The Catholic Church inaugurated its 267th pope in an incense-laced rite heralding the start of a novel papacy — one filled by a White Sox fan, former missionary and dual citizen of the United States and Peru who sought to position himself Sunday as a humble unifier in an age of arrogance, hatred and division.

The solemn service — in which the new pontiff was adorned with the sacred Ring of the Fisherman and pallium — on a brisk, overcast morning, anointed the first

American and second Latin American to lead the world's largest Christian faith.

Since becoming Leo XIV on May 8, the Chicago-bred pope has warned of profound societal divisions and rallied for peace in a conflict-plagued world. In words that reverberated through St. Peter's Square, Leo appeared Sunday to reach out to church conservatives, while also repeatedly invoking, and echoing, his predecessor Pope Francis, in calling for the respect of cultural and religious diversity and consideration for the marginalized. He bemoaned "an economic paradigm

SEE POPE ON A10

Trump officials find a way to evade rules they dislike: Don't enforce them

BY MAXINE JOSELOW,
HANNAH NATANSON
AND IAN DUNCAN

At the Transportation Department, enforcement of pipeline safety rules has plunged to unprecedented lows since President Donald Trump's inauguration.

Trump recently ordered Energy Department staff to stop en-

forcing water conservation standards for showerheads and other household appliances. And at one Labor Department division, his appointees have instructed employees to halt most work related to antidiscrimination laws.

Across the government, the Trump administration is trying a new tactic for gutting federal rules and policies that the presi-

dent dislikes: simply stop enforcing them.

"The conscious effort to slow down enforcement on such a broad scale is something we have never seen in previous administrations," said Donald Kettl, a professor emeritus at the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy. "It amounts to a dramatic assertion of presidential power

and authority."

This account of the Trump administration's efforts to scale back application of many laws is based on interviews with more than a dozen federal employees across seven agencies, as well as a review of internal documents and federal data. The employees spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of retribution.

Trump officials say these efforts will allow the president to swiftly scrap regulations that are burdening a variety of businesses and industries.

"When you have a new regulation, it's really, really hard on business," Kevin Hassett, who directs Trump's National Economic Council, told CNBC last Monday.

SEE TRUMP ON A6

IN THE NEWS

Johnson bullish on budget bill The speaker said he is confident that the House can pass a massive package by Memorial Day as negotiators raced to quell a GOP rebellion. A2

Scheffler wins PGA Championship The world's top-ranked golfer stumbled early but surged late to secure his third major title. D1

THE NATION

The suspect in a bombing at a fertility clinic was a "nihilistic" 25-year-old, the FBI said. A3
Vice President JD Vance met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Rome. A3

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A Pro-European centrist claimed victory in Romania's presidential election. A8
The combat debut of Chinese-made warplanes over Kashmir has roiled geopolitics. A12

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Instagram Teen Accounts recommended sexual content during tests by young users and a tech columnist. A13

THE REGION

Some Maryland colleges are cutting jobs and instituting hiring freezes in response to the state budget. B1

The three main

food banks in the region have together lost more than 1.4 million meals as a result of a pause in funding for federal programs. B1
Montgomery County will restrict middle-schoolers from having their phones out during the school day starting in the fall. B1

STYLE

Anna Wintour, the longtime Vogue editor in chief, has become an unlikely activist as Washington tries to quash DEI. C1
Ari Aster's political horror "Eddington" is a love-hate affair that's got people talking at the Cannes Film Festival. C1

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