

# HIGH COURT CHECKS TRUMP’S POWER

Justices rule president lacked the authority to deploy National Guard to Chicago.

By DAVID G. SAVAGE

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court ruled against President Trump on Tuesday and said he did not have legal authority to deploy the National Guard in Chicago to protect federal immigration agents.

Acting on a 6-3 vote, the justices denied Trump’s appeal and upheld orders from a federal district judge and the U.S. 7th Circuit Court of Appeals that said the president had exaggerated the threat and overstepped his authority.

The decision is a major defeat for Trump and his broad claim that he had the power to deploy militia troops in U.S. cities.

In an unsigned order, the court said the Militia Act allows the president to deploy the National Guard only if the regular U.S. armed forces were unable to quell violence.

The law dating to 1903 says the president may call up and deploy the National Guard if he faces the threat of an invasion or a rebellion or is “unable with the regular forces to execute the laws of the United States.”

That phrase turned out to be crucial.

Trump’s lawyers assumed it referred to the police and federal agents. But after taking a close look, the justices concluded it referred to the regular U.S. military, not civilian law enforcement or the National Guard.

“To call the Guard into active federal service under the [Militia Act], the President must be ‘unable’ with the regular military ‘to execute the laws of the United States,’” the court said in Trump vs. Illinois.

That standard will rarely be met, the court added.

“Under the Posse Comitatus Act, the military is prohibited from execut[ing] the laws except in cases and under circumstances expressly authorized by the Constitution or Act of Congress,” the court said. “So before the President can federalize the Guard ... he likely must have statutory or constitutional authority to execute the laws with the regular military and must be ‘un-”

[See Justices, A6]



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

**SWEET AND SOUR**

Volunteers decorate Sierra Madre’s Rose Parade float, “Pancake Breakfast,” meant to honor firefighters. Some say it’s a painful reminder of hydrants that ran dry during the Eaton blaze. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

## L.A. restaurants’ year of misery

Owners sound off on issues straining an already struggling industry, from fires to tariffs to raids

By Stephanie Breijo



JULIANA YAMADA Los Angeles Times

**KYM ESTRADA** says tariffs are a worry at San & Wolves Bakeshop.

In late October the owners of one of the city’s best pizzerias took to social media, begging for help: Ronan needed an immediate influx of customers to stay afloat, and even ordering one cocktail or piece of merch could help.

“I’m a COVID baby as a restaurant owner, but this is no less serious than that, and it’s probably harder because the relief isn’t there,” co-owner Caitlin Cutler said in an interview. “In 2025 versus 2024, when you think it couldn’t get worse, it got worse.”

Last year restaurateurs said that the state of the hospitality industry was untenable due to the loss of business from the entertainment-industry strikes, cost-of-labor increases and repayment of COVID-era back rent and loans. In 2025 fires, ICE raids, neighborhood curfews and tariffs added to the strain on Los Angeles restaurants.

In early 2025 Cutler and her husband, Daniel, received a \$10,000 grant and a \$50,000 loan with deferred payments, which they figured would

[See Restaurants, A9]

## Feds dismiss Trump’s links to Epstein

Justice Department says claims about the president in released files are ‘untrue.’

By MICHAEL WILNER

WASHINGTON — Tips provided to federal investigators about Donald Trump’s alleged involvement in Jeffrey Epstein’s schemes with young women and girls are “sensationalist” and “untrue,” the Justice Department said on Tues-

day, after a new tranche of files released from the probe featured multiple references to the president.

The documents include a limousine driver reportedly overhearing Trump discussing a man named Jeffrey “abusing” a girl, and an alleged victim accusing Trump and Epstein of rape. It is unclear whether the FBI followed up on the tips. The alleged rape victim died from a gunshot wound to the head after reporting the incident.

Nowhere in the newly released files do federal law en-

forcement agents or prosecutors indicate that Trump was suspected of wrongdoing, or that Trump — whose friendship with Epstein lasted through the mid-2000s — was investigating himself.

But one unidentified federal prosecutor noted in a 2020 email that Trump had flown on Epstein’s private jet “many more times than previously has been reported,” including over a time period when Ghislaine Maxwell, Epstein’s top confidant who would ultimately be convicted on five federal counts

of sex trafficking and abuse, was being investigated for criminal activity.

The Justice Department released an unusual statement unequivocally defending the president.

“Some of these documents contain untrue and sensationalist claims made against President Trump that were submitted to the FBI right before the 2020 election,” the Justice Department statement read. “To be clear: the claims are unfounded and false, and if they had a shred of credibility”

[See Epstein files, A6]

## Biggest storm of season hits Southland

Forecaster warns of potential for ‘life-threatening flooding’ over several days

By GRACE TOOHEY AND GAVIN J. QUINTON

A major atmospheric river storm walloping the state with heavy rains, strong winds and major snow is making its way to Southern California, bringing what forecasters say is likely to become the region’s worst Christmas storm in recent memory.

“This is a long-duration event, so we’re going to be having the cumulative effects of rain,” said Ariel Cohen, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service’s Oxnard office. He said there

was a high potential for widespread, life-threatening flooding as well as dangerous rock and mudslides, among other risks.

“It might be best to stay indoors during this event,” Cohen said. “This is a lot of rain that’s going to stack up over multiple days.”

Although rains are expected to intensify throughout the day Tuesday and into the night, concerns over serious flooding are focused on Wednesday — Christmas Eve — as rainfall totals increase, he said. Flooding risks could even stretch through Saturday, as the

[See Storm, A8]



JESSICA CHRISTIAN Associated Press

**HEAVY** rains cause flooding Monday in San Francisco. The storm has spread to Southern California.

## Key issues for defense in Reiner murder case

Assessment of mental health could influence whether prosecutors seek death penalty.

By RICHARD WINTON

The slayings of Hollywood legend Rob Reiner and his photographer wife, Michele, have given rise to a complex and intensely watched legal struggle involving their accused son, prosecutors and defense attorneys, who all face key strategic decisions in the coming weeks and months.

Prosecutors allege Nick Reiner fatally stabbed his parents inside the master bedroom of their Brentwood home early on a Sunday morning, then fled the area.

They have offered no motive for the Dec. 14 attack, but Reiner struggled with addiction for years, and he had been prescribed medi-

cation for schizophrenia at some point before the killings, according to two sources with knowledge of the criminal investigation. Sources have also said he got into some type of argument with Rob Reiner at a Christmas party hours before the slaying.

Legal experts say Nick Reiner’s mental health and the details of what happened at the party could be important elements in the case.

A complete assessment of his mental health will probably take months, and the results of that could influence how both sides proceed and whether prosecutors seek the death penalty.

Reiner, 32, was charged with two counts of murder and could face life in prison without parole, or the death penalty if convicted of the special circumstance allegation of multiple murders.

[See Reiner, A8]

### Girl’s body ID’d; mother arrested

Missing for weeks, Melodee Buzzard, 9, is found dead with gunshot wounds in rural Utah. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

### James back to old self for Lakers

After missing start of season with injury, star shows he’s rounding into form before his 41st birthday. **SPORTS, B10**

### States sue to save consumer agency

Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta joins others in seeking to prevent defunding of the financial protection bureau. **BUSINESS, A10**

**Weather**  
Rain and thunderstorm. L.A. Basin: 62/55. **B6**

