

# ICE intends to detain migrants in warehouses

Documents reveal plans to renovate industrial spaces to hold 80,000

BY DOUGLAS MACMILLAN AND JONATHAN O'CONNELL

The Trump administration is seeking contractors to help it overhaul the United States' immigrant detention system in a plan that includes renovating industrial warehouses to hold more than 80,000 immigrant detainees at a time, according to a draft solicitation reviewed by The Washington Post.

Rather than shuttling detainees around the country to wherever detention space is available, as happens now, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement aims to speed up deportations by establishing a deliberate feeder system, the document says. Newly arrested detainees would be booked into processing sites for a few weeks before being funneled into one of seven large-scale warehouses holding 5,000 to 10,000 people each, where they would be staged for deportation.

The large warehouses would be located close to major logistics hubs in Virginia, Texas, Louisiana, Arizona, Georgia and Missouri. Sixteen smaller warehouses would hold up to 1,500 people each.

The draft solicitation is not final and is subject to changes. ICE plans to share it with private detention companies this week to gauge interest and refine the plan, according to an internal email reviewed by The Post. A formal request for bids could follow soon after that.

Tricia McLaughlin, a spokeswoman for the Department of Homeland Security, said she "cannot confirm" The Post's reporting and declined to answer questions about the warehouse plan.

NBC and Bloomberg News previously reported on ICE's internal discussions about using warehouses as detention centers. The full scope of the project, the

SEE ICE ON A7

## A respite for Ukraine's war-weary



ROSEM MORTON/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Ukrainian children, many of them internally displaced by the war, rest on a mountaintop in Hutsulshchyna National Park during a hike as part of an adventure-based camp. A growing number of organizations in the country are turning to nature as an alternative path toward healing. **Story and photos, A10-A11**

## With arms and cash, Israel aims to sap Sharaa-led Syria

BY GERRY SHIH, ARI FLANZRAICH, ADAM CHAMSEDDINE AND ILAN BEN ZION

JERUSALEM — Under the cover of darkness, the helicopters from Israel began to arrive in southern Syria on Dec. 17, 2024, nine days after the ouster of President Bashar al-Assad.

Packed alongside pallets of humanitarian aid were 500 rifles, ammunition and body armor — all discreetly airdropped by Israel to arm a Druze militia called the Military Council, according to two former Israeli officials direct-

ly involved in the effort.

The weapon shipments came in response to the sudden rise of Ahmed al-Sharaa, an Islamist militant who had overthrown Assad. Israel viewed Sharaa with profound suspicion because he had led an armed group formally linked, until a decade ago, to al-Qaeda, which is vehemently opposed to Israel's existence. Sharaa continues even now to have extremist fighters in the ranks of his supporters.

An increasingly dominant force in the Middle East, Israel has been seeking to shape developments in

SEE ISRAEL ON A13

## New U-Va. leader's past DEI efforts draw conservative ire

BY DAN ROSENZWEIG-ZIFF

Scott C. Beardsley's public CV once highlighted that he hired a chief diversity officer, launched a racial equity and inclusion group, and oversaw initiatives that increased the share of women and minorities as dean of the University of Virginia's business school.

Those references were quietly removed from an updated version of his curriculum vitae this year, months before the Republican-led U-Va. governing board appointed Beardsley as the university's next president. An earlier section called "Global DEI" was replaced

with a trimmed-down one with the header "Global Excellence," and nine explicit references to diversity were gone, a review of the two documents found.

In response to an email to Beardsley, the board's rector and the university press office, a spokesperson said the changes came as part of a review of policies after a 2023 Supreme Court ruling overturning race-conscious college admissions, as well as Trump administration guidance that said any consideration of race — including in initiatives that expand access for underrepresented

SEE U-VA. ON A5

# Epstein trove a big slog for DOJ

BEHIND SCHEDULE, MOUNTAINS TO GO

Choppy rollout as agency says it's shielding victims

BY PERRY STEIN

On Dec. 22 — three days past the congressionally mandated deadline for the Justice Department to release the entire trove of Epstein files — a top prosecutor in Florida sent an emergency request to employees in the Miami U.S. attorneys office.

The Justice Department immediately needed prosecutors over Christmas week to volunteer to review and redact information on documents from the sex-trafficking investigation of Jeffrey Epstein so the materials could be released to the public.

"We have an obligation to the public to release these documents and before we can do so, certain redactions must be made to protect the identity of victims, among other things," the email read, according to a copy obtained by The Washington Post. "I am aware that the timing could not be worse."

That urgent request reflects the Justice Department's choppy and often frenetic rollout of the massive Epstein investigatory files. In mid-November, Congress passed the Epstein Files Transparency Act, which ordered the release of nearly all unclassified government files on Epstein by Dec. 19, with necessary redactions to ensure that the identities of victims are protected.

Nearly a week past the deadline, the department appears to still be struggling to get its arms around the massive project and find an orderly way to make the files available to the public.

Officials announced on Wednesday that the FBI and prosecutors in New York had dis-

SEE EPSTEIN ON A6

**What's in the trove:** A primer on what we know and don't know. **A6**



TONI L. SANDYS/THE WASHINGTON POST

### Best of the best

Volleyball Player of the Year Caycee Chhum (Georgetown Day) is one of the stars of the fall featured on our All-Met teams. **B7**

## An impossible balance of mourning, moving on

Those who lost daughters in Camp Mystic tragedy try to preserve normalcy for surviving children

BY MOLLY HENNESSY-FISKE

HOUSTON — Lainey Landry's parents hung the stocking embroidered with her name on the mantel beside her older brothers' even though the 9-year-old is gone. She's still in the family Christmas card photo, but they added a message: "There's a brighter star in the Texas sky." And they placed two new ornaments on the tree, etched with lines from letters Lainey wrote home from Camp Mystic.

"There's a lot of those firsts that are happening," Natalie Landry, 42, said as she sat in the sunroom of her Houston ranch house. Behind her, Lainey's name, scrawled in marker, was on the family chore chart, her tasks forever blank.

For the Landrys, life since Lainey and 26 other girls died in the rising waters of the Guadalupe River nearly six months ago has been a succession of choices: What to preserve, what to change? What to remember? What to do with her bedroom, her

SEE CAMP MYSTIC ON A14



DANIELLE VILLASANA/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**A cutout of Lainey Landry at her parents' home in Houston. Lainey was one of 27 girls to die in rising floodwaters at Camp Mystic in Texas's Hill Country this summer.**

## IN THE NEWS

**'60 Minutes'** The editor in chief at CBS News defended the shelving of a recent segment in a staff email, saying the move was "necessary" to uphold the newsroom's standards. **A7**

**Joy to the world** Embassy chef and culinary evangelists lean on their nations' holiday traditions to provide warmth this year. **B15**

**THE NATION** **Nineteen states** and D.C. sued HHS over plans to limit gender transition care. **A4**  
**A lawsuit** by a national pediatrics association claims that HHS grant cuts were retaliatory. **A7**

**THE WORLD** **Kyiv** signaled openness to withdrawing troops to withdrawing troops in its first move toward compromise. **A9**  
**Europe** rebuked a U.S. move to bar several people for allegedly censoring digital speech. **A12**

**THE ECONOMY** **Attacks on** climate science by the White House through work-force and funding cuts are eliminating decades of knowledge. **A12**  
**Take time** this holiday season to make sure you aren't overpaying for your phone, internet and other services. **A16**

**STYLE** **At holiday** markets, patrons experience the stink, stank, stunk of the gooey raclette. **B1**

**SPORTS** **Josh Johnson**, 39, who has played for 14 NFL teams, will step in for Marcus Mariota in Washington's Christmas game against Dallas. **B7**

**THE REGION** **A D.C. police** officer who was aiding a motorist is in critical condition after being struck by a vehicle traveling at high speed Tuesday night on Interstate 695. **B15**

**LOCAL LIVING** **The section** is taking a break this week. It will return on Jan. 1.

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