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Democracy Dies in Darkness

SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2026 • \$6

DOJ's case on Comey is feeding disruption

Several prosecutors are out as agency's workload gets tangled in tumult

BY PERRY STEIN

More than a half-dozen prosecutors have been demoted or pushed out of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia due to fallout from the Justice Department's push to prosecute former FBI director James B. Comey, leaving a key prosecutorial office understaffed and weakened.

Other prosecutors have voluntarily decamped or scrambled to find new jobs, fearful they could be asked to work on cases that violate their principles, according to 10 current and former prosecutors familiar with the office and the case. Major cases, including one involving a terrorist attack in Afghanistan, have been hobbled by the turmoil.

That's not to mention the money and investigative resources spent on the two indictments of Comey, which most legal analysts say have little merit and stem primarily from President Donald Trump's animus toward the former FBI chief.

As the Justice Department gears up for the second prosecution of Comey, the costs to the department of the president's crusade are mounting. The shock

SEE COMEY ON A13

Ethical concerns: Trump official's grazing policy role in question. A2



KEVIN BARTRAM/REUTERS

Hundreds of people attend Saturday's funeral for eight children shot "execution style" last month in a mass killing in Louisiana.

Eight children mourned in La. funeral

BY MOLLY HENNESSY-FISKE

SHREVEPORT, LA. — Seven hearses pulled up to the church under gray skies Saturday morning, and workers unloaded the eight caskets, two of them so small they could ride together.

It was a moment the battered city in northwest Louisiana had been girding itself for ever since the frantic morning last month when the despondent father of seven of the children methodically shot them in their bedrooms.

Three mothers see their slain sons and daughters for first time since attack

The killings of so many children — the youngest just 3 and the oldest 11 — shocked the country and brought attention to the plight of the three mothers badly injured in the attack who survived only to face the agony of losing nearly

every one of their children.

In the days after the attack on April 19, the mothers decided to hold one funeral for all of their children. They chose the Saturday of Mother's Day weekend and posted fliers with the faces of the children they now call "the Eternal Eight."

Hundreds of people lined up hours early to pay their respects, filing into the sanctuary of Summer Grove Baptist Church, past the open caskets and framed images of the children waving, curt-

syng and riding motorbikes.

Grandmothers came on walkers, mothers with babies in their arms and clutching children's hands. Many, including grown men, wiped away tears as they sat in the pews of the spacious sanctuary. There were so many people that officials provided three city buses to take the mourners to the cemetery after the service.

The three mothers of the victims sat in the front row with female relatives wearing white,

SEE FUNERAL ON A12

Midterm House math is upended

DEMOCRATS NOW FACE STEEPER CLIMB

With redistricting wins, GOP builds 8-seat buffer

BY ISAAC ARNSDORF AND PATRICK MARLEY

Republicans are eight seats closer to keeping control of the House since President Donald Trump pushed state lawmakers to redraw congressional maps, steepening the Democrats' climb toward reclaiming any hold on federal power in November.

Democrats are still exploring whether any long-shot legal moves could save their redistricting attempt in Virginia after the state's high court on Friday overturned last month's referendum to approve it. Democrats and their allies are still challenging new maps in Florida and Missouri. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-New York) insisted Friday his party will still win the chamber.

But Democrats were confronting the reality that Trump succeeded in tilting the playing field to the GOP's advantage. Eric Holder, a former attorney general leading the Democrats' redistricting drive, said Republicans were trying "to steal the 2026 midterm election."

Just two weeks ago, Democrats

SEE DEMOCRATS ON A6

Shapiro sees once-dominant MAGA machine melt down

His 'anti-woke' media juggernaut faces turmoil, tumbling online relevance

BY DREW HARWELL

The conservative media company Daily Wire was once a star of the MAGA digital universe, dominating social media feeds and podcast apps with a blend of "anti-woke" commentary, viral Facebook posts and culture-war stunts.

In the run-up to the 2020 presidential election, the company co-founded by conservative pundit Ben Shapiro ranked as Facebook's top English-language publisher for three straight months. Its sarcastic news items on then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's salon visits gained millions more views than the websites of Fox News, CNN and the

New York Times.

But the company now faces sweeping layoffs and heavy skepticism over its online future, with some critics — including former employees, such as Candace Owens — arguing its relevance to the right has irrevocably collapsed.

Its YouTube channel's subscriber base has plateaued or shrunk in 15 of the 16 months since the start of 2025, according to data from the analytics firm Social Blade. And in an analysis of 20 conservative news sites, the Daily Wire has consistently ranked among the biggest year-over-year traffic losers since last summer, according to estimates from the market intelligence firm Similarweb that were compiled by the media newsletter TheRighting. In March, the website's traffic was half of what it was the year before.

The Daily Wire's fall from grace reflects the fragmentation

SEE SHAPIRO ON A8



SIRACHAI ARUNRUGSTICHAU/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Asia's farmers are getting crushed

Panida Srithong, 54, of Thailand will devote less land to rice this year. Surging prices for fuel and fertilizer are leading to irreversible changes and threatening the global food supply. Story, A15

Americans returning from hantavirus ship face quarantine

BY MAEGAN VAZQUEZ

Public health officials in the United States outlined their plans to transport and monitor the 17 American passengers set to disembark from a cruise ship at the center of a hantavirus outbreak, indicating on Saturday that the goal is to send them home to self-isolate after an initial assessment at a federal quarantine facility in Nebraska.

Three cruise passengers who were recently aboard the polar expedition ship Hondius, which is now docked in Tenerife — part of the Canary Islands, have died in recent weeks. As of Saturday, eight cases of the hantavirus linked to the ship are suspected, with five cases confirmed by testing. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

SEE HANTAVIRUS ON A9

SPORTS

Bobby Cox, Hall of Fame manager of the Atlanta Braves, dies at 84. B1

THE REGION

A probe has 13 top D.C. police officials fighting for their jobs. B13

ARTS & STYLE

Adam Scott flashes his surly side in the Irish horror film "Hokum."

TRAVEL

Border collies Hercules and Ned help protect planes and passengers.

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SUNDAY COUPON INSERTS

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