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Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2024 • \$3

For Cohen, testimony is proof of penance

Despite saying he is reformed, former Trump loyalist remains divisive

BY PETER JAMISON

When Michael Cohen takes the stand in the coming days as the star witness in his former boss's criminal trial, it will mark the climax of his transformation from Donald Trump's bullying defender to one of his loudest public enemies.

As Cohen tells and retells the story — in congressional testimony, television interviews, two books, a popular podcast and assertions to the judge in his own criminal case — he is a man on a quest for redemption. After years spent serving Trump, he says he's ready to serve his country. A confessed liar, he says he's now willing to risk everything for the truth.

"I am the canary in the coal mine for millions of Americans mesmerized by Trump," Cohen said on the debut episode of his podcast, "Mea Culpa," expressing his hope that speaking out would be a "way to right some of the many wrongs I committed at his behest."

Cohen's penance goes beyond his weekly podcast or his anti-Trump memoirs, "Disloyal" and "Revenge." He testified against the former president before multiple

SEE COHEN ON A9

Supreme Court arguments

Immunity examination may delay D.C. trial past the fall. A8

See live coverage of the hearing at 9:30 a.m. at [washingtonpost.com](https://www.washingtonpost.com).

Deepfakes threaten elections worldwide

AI-powered trickery no longer easy to debunk

BY PRANSHU VERMA AND CAT ZAKRZEWSKI

Divyendra Singh Jadoun's phone is ringing off the hook. Known as the "Indian Deepfaker," Jadoun is famous for using artificial intelligence to create Bollywood sequences and TV commercials.

But as staggered voting in India's election begins, Jadoun says hundreds of politicians have been clamoring for his services, with more than half asking for "unethical" things. Candidates asked him to fake audio of competitors making gaffes on the campaign trail or to superimpose challengers' faces onto pornographic images. Some campaigns have requested low-quality fake videos of their own candidate, which could be released to cast doubt on any damning real videos that emerge during the election.

Jadoun, 31, says he declines jobs meant to defame or deceive. But he expects plenty of consultants will oblige, bending reality in the world's largest election, as more than half a billion Indian voters head to the polls.

"The only thing stopping us from creating unethical deepfakes

SEE AI ON A22



MICHAEL ROBINSON CHÁVEZ/THE WASHINGTON POST

RIISING THREAT AT THE WATER'S EDGE

Along the mighty Bay of Bengal, the forces unleashed by climate change are overwhelming lives and livelihoods

BY MICHAEL ROBINSON CHÁVEZ AND KARISHMA MEHROTRA

Along the Bay of Bengal, where nearly 1.4 billion people live, water has become perilously unpredictable. On the coast of India's Odisha state, repeated floods swallow villages. In Sri Lanka, a scarcity of water is carving cracks where ponds once formed and drying out paddy fields. In the mangrove swamps of the Sundarbans forest that straddles the border between India and Bangladesh, rising seas and cyclones are driving people inland, to congested cities like Kolkata for work.

Climate change is warming waters, shifting ocean patterns and transforming the region's yearly monsoon from a reliable lifeline into a menace.

The water in the bay is rising faster than in other major bodies of water. The challenges confronting nations adjacent to it, densely populated along their coasts, probably foreshadow the struggles ahead

elsewhere on Earth.

To explore these consequences, photographer Michael Robinson Chávez and reporter Karishma Mehrotra journeyed along the bay, documenting the myriad effects wrought on Indian and Sri Lankan communities by climate change.

In the Indian state of Odisha, they found that coastal communities that had relied for generations on fishing were being forced to rethink their livelihoods and look for new ways to eke out an existence. In the Indian megacity of Kolkata, climate refugees from coastal and island villages have crowded into teeming slums, desperate to find work as laborers. And in Sri Lanka's Trincomalee district, the journalists discovered that climate change has confounded the monsoons, producing droughts that have ravaged rice paddies and drained reservoirs.

SEE BAY OF BENGAL ON A10

Only two families — including that of Chandragiri Paindi, pictured above — remain in the deserted and mostly destroyed fishing village of Podompetta, India.

Speaker visit escalates tension at Columbia

Johnson decries ongoing antiwar protests, calls for school's leader to resign

BY HANNAH KNOWLES AND MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR

NEW YORK CITY — House Speaker Mike Johnson and his Republican colleagues were met with boos, laughs and pro-Palestinian chants after parachuting into one center of the roiling protest movement against Israel's war against Hamas: Columbia University in New York City.

Johnson and a group of GOP lawmakers landed on campus — where tensions are high between the university administration and students who have erected pro-Palestinian encampments — and demanded that Columbia's president, Nemat "Minouche" Shafiq, resign for failing to quickly dismantle the encampments and, in their view, for not doing enough to ensure that Jewish people on campus feel safe.

Around 4 p.m. Wednesday, the

SEE COLUMBIA ON A4



JAY JANNER/USA TODAY NETWORK/REUTERS

Texas state troopers in riot gear try to break up a pro-Palestinian protest at the University of Texas on Wednesday. Clashes between student protesters and police intensified at colleges across the nation, leading to several arrests and tense standoffs with authorities. Story, A4

Trump allies charged in Ariz.

AFTER FAILED BID TO SWAP 2020 ELECTORS

Meadows and Giuliani among those indicted

BY YVONNE WINGETT SANCHEZ

PHOENIX — An Arizona grand jury on Wednesday indicted seven attorneys or aides affiliated with Donald Trump's 2020 presidential campaign as well as 11 Arizona Republicans on felony charges related to their alleged efforts to subvert Joe Biden's 2020 victory in the state, according to an announcement by the state attorney general.

Those indicted include former Trump White House chief of staff Mark Meadows, attorneys Rudy Giuliani, Jenna Ellis, John Eastman and Christina Bobb, top campaign adviser Boris Epshteyn and former campaign aide Mike Roman. They are accused of allegedly aiding an unsuccessful strategy to award the state's electoral votes to Trump instead of Biden after the 2020 election. Also charged are the Republicans who signed paperwork on Dec. 14, 2020, that falsely purported Trump was the rightful winner, including former state party chair Kelli Ward, state Sens. Jake Hoffman and Anthony Kern, and Tyler Bowyer, a GOP national committeeman and chief operating officer of Turning Point Action, the campaign arm of the pro-Trump conservative group Turning Point USA.

Trump was not charged, but he

SEE ARIZONA ON A22

Justices are split on abortion in Idaho case

State's strict ban may clash with federal law on emergency-room care

BY ANN E. MARIMOW AND CAROLINE KITCHENER

Conservative Supreme Court justices expressed skepticism Wednesday that federal law can require hospitals to provide emergency abortion care in states with strict bans on the procedure, marking the latest legal battle over abortion access since the high court overturned *Roe v. Wade* nearly two years ago.

The sharply divided court appeared to split largely along ideological lines with only the three liberals strongly backing the Biden administration's view that a 40-year-old emergency-care law conflicts with a strict state ban in Idaho, which imposes penalties of up to five years in prison on doctors who perform the procedure.

At issue is the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act, which requires hospitals receiving federal funds to provide

SEE ABORTION ON A6

In Arizona: House votes to repeal Civil War-era abortion ban. A7

IN THE NEWS

Air quality report Nearly 40 percent of Americans live in areas with unhealthy levels of air pollution, according to the American Lung Association. A19

Strained path from homelessness A D.C. woman received a housing voucher but, after accusations, now faces an eviction threat. B1

THE NATION

The United States unveiled a \$1 billion weapons package to resupply Ukraine. A2
Bird flu testing will be required for dairy cows before they are moved across state lines. A2

THE WORLD

Five military horses spooked and galloped through London during morning rush hour. A13
Hamas released a video appearing to show an Israeli American hostage alive. A14

THE ECONOMY

Learn how legislation signed into law Wednesday that could ban TikTok might affect users of the platform. A20
The FCC is preparing to reinstate Obama-era "net neutrality" rules but faces a challenge in defining exactly what is the modern internet. A21

THE REGION

Students at D.C.'s Jackson-Reed High School are suing over censorship allegations involving pro-Palestinian activities. B1
Dozens of D.C.'s "gift-ing" shops have applied for licenses to become legal dispensaries of medical marijuana. B1

STYLE

Brides are increasingly casting off wedding conventions and opting for gowns worthy of the red carpet. C1

LOCAL LIVING

With wallpaper, you can create a big impact by using just a little bit instead of covering a whole room.

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The Washington Post
Year 147, No. 53832

