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Democracy Dies in Darkness

SATURDAY, MAY 4, 2024 • \$3

## Cuellar indicted on charges of bribery

Texas Democrat and wife accused of schemes with Azerbaijan, Mexico bank

BY PERRY STEIN AND MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR

Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-Tex.) and his wife allegedly accepted \$600,000 in bribes from an oil company controlled by the Azerbaijan government and a bank headquartered in Mexico, according to a federal indictment unsealed in Texas on Friday.

The 68-year-old congressman and his wife, Imelda Cuellar, are accused of setting up front companies that entered into sham



Rep. Cuellar

contracts with the bank and the Azerbaijan government, the indictment said. Through their lawyer, they denied wrongdoing. The 54-page indictment details a bold corruption scheme in which Cuellar — who co-chairs the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus — allegedly promised to wield his power as a U.S. congressman to advocate for his benefactors.

To Azerbaijan, he pledged to influence legislation related to the country's conflict with neighboring Armenia, insert favorable language into committee reports on economic aid programs and deliver a pro-Azerbaijan speech on the House floor, the indictment says. To the Mexican bank, Cuellar allegedly promised to pressure executive branch officials to back off money laundering enforcement practices that threatened the bank's business

SEE CHARGES ON A2



TORBjørn WESTER

## The battle for Bougainville

On a warm morning in November, a barrel-chested and battle-scarred man arrived to Capitol Hill for a meeting he hoped would help save his struggling homeland.

Ishmael Toroama was introduced to two members of the U.S. House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party as the president of Bougainville, an autonomous region of Papua New Guinea in the South Pacific. But his previous occupation was evident in the arm that hung limply at his left side as he shook the lawmakers' hands.

Twice he'd nearly died while leading the fight for Bougainville's independence in the 1990s. Now he had come to Washington to try to finish the job.

The man in a pinstripe suit who

China, U.S. compete for influence in the Pacific region — and its \$100 billion mine

BY MICHAEL E. MILLER  
IN ARAWA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The Panguna Mine could be the autonomous area's ticket to independence from Papua New Guinea.

introduced Toroama was no revolutionary, however. His name was John D. Kuhns, a Wall Street investment banker turned novelist and entrepreneur who had made Bougainville his last big bet.

Together, the two men had a story to tell: of a would-be nation in a strategic location starving for freedom, and of a long-shuttered mine still containing as much as \$100 billion in copper and gold that could be used in the world's energy transition — an energy transition where China, with its insatiable thirst for natural resources, is at the forefront.

Toroama had set a 2027 deadline for full independence from Papua New Guinea, after a 2019 referendum in which nearly 98 percent of the popula-

SEE MINE ON A8

## New tactic in battle to stop out-of-state abortions: Civil litigation

BY CAROLINE KITCHENER

As soon as Collin Davis found out his ex-partner was planning to travel to Colorado to have an abortion in late February, the Texas man retained a high-powered antiabortion attorney — who court records show immediately issued a legal threat.

If the woman proceeded with

the abortion, even in a state where the procedure remains legal, Davis would seek a full investigation into the circumstances surrounding the abortion and “pursue wrongful-death claims against anyone involved in the killing of his unborn child,” the lawyer wrote in a letter, according to records. Now, Davis has disclosed his

former partner's abortion to a state district court in Texas, asking for the power to investigate what his lawyer characterizes as potentially illegal activity in a state where almost all abortions are banned.

The previously unreported petition was submitted under an unusual legal mechanism often used in Texas to investigate sus-

pected illegal actions before a lawsuit is filed. The petition claims Davis could sue either under the state's wrongful-death statute or the novel Texas law known as Senate Bill 8 that allows private citizens to file suit against anyone who “aids or abets” an illegal abortion.

The decision to target an abortion that occurred outside of Tex-

as represents a potential new strategy by antiabortion activists to achieve a goal many in the movement have been working toward since *Roe v. Wade* was overturned: stopping women from traveling out of state to end their pregnancies. Crossing state lines for abortion care remains legal nationwide.

SEE TEXAS ON A5

Hicks: Trusted ally back in Trump's orbit in a role she didn't want. A6

## An uneasy calm falls on campuses after protests

Arrests and deals to end demonstrations have led to the dramatic lull

BY EMILY WAX-THIBODEAUX, LAURA MECKLER, DAN ROSENZWEIG-ZIFF AND JUSTIN JOUVENAL

An edgy calm held on many college campuses Friday after more than two weeks of chaotic protests, following police crackdowns on encampments of demonstrators and a growing number of deals between students and administrators to defuse tensions peacefully.

The scenes of clashes between police and pro-Palestinian protesters that had played out on

campuses nationwide in recent days were far fewer, even as police launched fresh moves to clear tents and signs at a handful of schools, including New York University.

Whether the lull was temporary or signaled the beginning of a return to normalcy was unclear, but the concerted efforts of school officials and law enforcement to quell the protests seemed to be having an effect on one of the largest campus movements in decades.

Noam Emerson-Fleming, a 20-year-old sophomore at American University who has closely monitored

SEE PROTESTS ON A4

Summer: Optimism that the end of classes could bring a reprieve. A3

Philip Kennicott: The power of putting Washington in a kaffiyeh. C1

## Parents in Gaza face wounds seen and unseen

BY LOUISA LOVELUCK AND HAJAR HARB



GHAZAL FATOLLAHI FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

The Washington Post commissioned sketches to illustrate the words of the children it spoke with in Gaza. In many cases, families were unable to share photos because they had lost their phones or faced connectivity issues.

After more than six months of war, the children of the Gaza Strip have many questions their parents cannot answer. When will the war stop? How many more nights will they sleep on the floor? When can they go back to school? Some still ask after classmates who have been killed.

The adults don't know what to say. They feel helpless, desperate and exhausted, they say — worn out by the challenge of tending to visible wounds and those their children try to hide.

To report this story, Washington Post journalists spoke by telephone with 21 parents and children from 15 families in Gaza between January and April. While each situation is unique, the men, women and children all described strikingly similar experiences, with the war exacting a punishing toll on their loved ones and their mental health.

“The feeling of helplessness kills mothers and fathers,” said Muhammad al-Nabahin, a father of

SEE PARENTS ON A10

ICC: Court warns against outside pressure. A9

## IN THE NEWS

**Federal tax credit** A final rule excludes electric vehicles made with Chinese parts, limiting eligibility to 22 of 110 models. A14

**Losing their stability** Young mothers are at risk of homelessness after a nonprofit that runs two group homes in Southwest Washington was denied federal funding. B1

**THE WORLD**  
**Secretary of State** Antony Blinken urged Qatar's prime minister to expel Hamas's political leaders if the group continues to reject Israel's latest cease-fire proposal. A5

**U.K. local election** results could spell doom for the Conservatives as the country looks poised to vote for Labour. A7  
**David Cameron**, U.K. foreign secretary, said Ukraine can use British arms to strike Russia. A9

**THE ECONOMY**  
**Starlink's** satellites will probably fill gaps in the Biden administration's \$42 billion push to hook every U.S. home up to high-speed internet. A12  
**Job growth** slowed in April as employers added 175,000 positions, but the rate stayed below 4 percent. A13

**THE REGION**  
**A weekly furlough** of 250 lawyers at the Public Defender Service this summer may exacerbate delays at D.C. Superior Court. B1  
**A D.C. student** was grazed in the head by an errant bullet that had been fired outside Dunbar High School. B1

**STYLE**  
**David Dastmalchian** is scaring up attention for his roles in horror films, including “Late Night With the Devil.” C1

**SPORTS**  
**While the 149th** Kentucky Derby was marked by tragedy, the 150th has dawned without woe across its week. D1

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The Washington Post  
Year 147, No. 53841

