



Partly sunny 55/46 • Tomorrow: Heavy rain 57/32 **B6**

Democracy Dies in Darkness

FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2024 • **\$3**

## Israeli war aims likely to outlast elections

Netanyahu's strategy remains popular, despite calls in U.S. for new vote

BY WILLIAM BOOTH  
AND JUDITH SUDILOVSKY

JERUSALEM — In the United States, even Israel's closest friends have begun to say out loud that Benjamin Netanyahu stands as an obstacle to peace.

The Israeli prime minister has pushed back on pressure from the White House and congressional Democrats, insisting that his government's prosecution of the war in Gaza has mainstream backing in Israel — and there is polling to suggest he's right.

"The majority of Israelis support the policies of my government," Netanyahu told CNN on Sunday. That does not mean they support the man himself.

The popularity of Israel's longest-serving prime minister is at a historic low among Israeli voters. But the reasons are mostly tied to domestic politics and have less to do with how Israel's military is waging war in Gaza.

Netanyahu's governing coalition is the most right-wing in Israel's history, bolstered by ultranationalists and extremist settlers. But the idea in Washington — expressed most clearly last week by Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) — that new elections, and Netanyahu's possible ouster, would dramatically shift Israel's approach to Gaza and the Palestinians may be wishful thinking.

International alarm over the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza has mounted sharply this year, as the civilian death toll

SEE NETANYAHU ON A11

## Cannabis shops split Md. after legalization

Residents are torn over dispensaries opening near them, poll finds

BY KATIE SHEPHERD,  
LATESHIA BEACHUM  
AND SCOTT CLEMENT

Maryland voters resoundingly approved legalizing recreational marijuana but are divided over the impact as recreational use approaches the one-year mark, according to a Washington Post-University of Maryland poll.

Hailed at the time as a reflection of shifting public sentiment on a substance that is still federally illegal, 2 in 3 Maryland voters approved legalization in 2022. Now, about 1 in 3 say it has been good for the state. Another 1 in 3 say it has been bad and the remainder say it's been "neither good nor bad," the poll found.

The results illuminate heated local debates over where cannabis businesses can open up shop. The poll found that 50 percent of voters oppose a marijuana dispensary or store in their community, including 35 percent who are "strongly" opposed.

That reluctance is most pronounced

SEE CANNABIS ON A2

## Fleeing Rohingya find respite as refugee crisis barrels on



ZAH LUL AKBAR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Dozens of Rohingya refugees, among them women and children, wait to be rescued from the hull of their capsized boat Thursday as a search-and-rescue vessel approaches in waters off the coast of West Aceh, Indonesia. Aid groups have expressed alarm as increasing numbers of people from Myanmar's persecuted Muslim minority, including unaccompanied minors, flee overcrowded camps in Bangladesh on dangerous sea journeys. **Story, A9**



JOSHUA MELLIN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

All eyes were on Shohei Ohtani on Thursday in Seoul after the Dodgers abruptly fired their star signing's longtime interpreter.

**Dodgers mum:** In Seoul, Ohtani's new team keeps the star walled off. **D1**

## As sports betting surges, so do the controversies

BY ADAM KILGORE

As millions of Americans raced to fill out brackets and place wagers on teenage basketball players Thursday, another scandal amplified calls for the country's booming sports-betting industry to be restrained — and reformed.

The Los Angeles Dodgers fired Shohei Ohtani's interpreter, Ippei Mizuhara, on Wednesday night after Mizuhara told ESPN that Ohtani paid off the interpreter's offshore gambling debts. Ohtani's lawyer told another story, accusing Mizuhara of stealing roughly \$4.5 million.

Amid March Madness wagers, Ohtani scandal amplifies calls for reform

While fans sorted through the ramifications and Ohtani played on in the Dodgers' season-opening series in Seoul, experts and amateurs alike joined office pools and placed wagers on the first round of the NCAA men's basketball tournament, the country's closest thing to an official sports betting holiday.

SEE BETTING ON A14

## Women quitting birth control amid wave of misinformation

Doctors worry exhortations of influencers, conservative pundits will lead to unwanted pregnancies

BY LAUREN WEBER  
AND SABRINA MALHI

Search for "birth control" on TikTok or Instagram and a cascade of misleading videos vilifying hormonal contraception appear: Young women blaming their weight gain on the pill. Right-wing commentators claiming that some birth control can lead to infertility. Testimonials complaining of depression and anxiety.

Instead, many social media influencers recommend "natural" alternatives, such as timing sex to menstrual cycles — a less effective birth-control method that doctors warn could result in unwanted pregnancies in a country where abortion is now banned or restricted in nearly half the states.

Physicians say they're seeing an explosion of birth-control misinformation online targeting a vulnerable demographic: people in their teens and early 20s who are more likely to believe what

SEE BIRTH CONTROL ON A6



ILLUSTRATION BY MIKI KIM FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## DOJ swipes at Apple iPhone

ANTITRUST LAWSUIT ALLEGES MONOPOLY

Tech giant accused of suffocating competitors

BY CRISTIANO LIMA-STRONG  
AND PERRY STEIN

The Justice Department and 16 state and district attorneys general accused Apple of breaking federal antitrust law in a sprawling lawsuit unveiled Thursday, plunging the tech giant into another high-stakes showdown over its alleged abuse of power.

The civil complaint, filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey, alleges the company has illegally wielded a monopoly over the smartphone market by cutting off developers and stifling competitors with punitive restrictions. The lawsuit squarely takes aim at the company's most popular and lucrative product, the iPhone, which has helped catapult Apple's valuation to over \$2.7 trillion and sell its devices to billions of users.

Instead of competing with rivals by offering more affordable services, federal and state enforcers claim Apple imposed "a series of shapeshifting rules and restrictions" to "extract higher fees, thwart innovation, offer a less secure or degraded user experience, and throttle competitive alternatives."

Through that conduct, the Justice Department and states allege in the complaint, Apple "built and reinforced the moat around its smartphone monopoly." Enforcement

SEE APPLE ON A13

## Litigation snarls deal for Trump's media firm

As he tries to come up with cash, lawsuits pose risks to a possible lifeline

BY DREW HARWELL

When former president Donald Trump's Trump Media & Technology Group and its proposed merger partner, Digital World Acquisition, announced last month a shareholder vote on their long-delayed deal, it marked a final step for the owner of Truth Social to become a public company potentially worth billions of dollars — most of which is owned by Trump himself.

But in the lead-up to Friday's vote, both companies have been rocked by legal warfare. Their leaders, past and present, have traded heated accusations of deception and impropriety across four lawsuits in three states. And the cases threaten to erode Trump's grasp on a stake in the post-merger company potentially worth hundreds of millions of dollars — a possible financial

SEE TRUTH SOCIAL ON A5

**Hush money trial:** Prosecutor says no need for further delay. **A5**

## IN THE NEWS

**Another online leak?** An Air Force analyst shared classified U.S. intelligence on the chat platform Discord, according to an FBI affidavit unsealed this week. **A4**

**Wildfires rage** Some of the blazes that hurt D.C.'s air quality earlier in the week continue to burn in Virginia and West Virginia. **B1**

### THE NATION

**A gene-edited pig kidney** was transplanted into a living person for the first time ever. **A2**  
**The House GOP's** impeachment probe, lacking support and evidence, is sputtering. **A4**

### THE WORLD

**Before Princess Kate**, the British royal family had long retouched official portraits. **A8**  
**Stranded Americans** are being airlifted out of Haiti as gang violence worsens. **A9**

### THE ECONOMY

**Turning to refurbished products** when it's time to update your tech allows for a focus on function rather than the price tag. **A12**  
**Congressional leaders** unveiled a spending package they are racing to pass before the shutdown deadline. **A13**

### THE REGION

**Virginia Gov.** Glenn Youngkin announced that he was vetoing 22 criminal justice bills passed by the Democratic-led legislature. **B1**  
**Stumpy**, a now-beloved cherry tree along the Tidal Basin, got its moment of fame but will get the ax this spring. **B1**

### STYLE

**A Hulu film** examines the rise and fall of Freaknik, a Black celebration that became one of the biggest parties in the United States. **C1**

### WEEKEND

**As the cherry trees bloom**, some advice on how not to be that annoying tourist.

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The Washington Post  
Year 147, No. 53798

