



A PALESTINIAN girl looks out from a tent in Rafah, Gaza Strip, this week. As homes and families are torn apart by Israel's battle against Hamas, psychological damage may prove one of the war's most lasting legacies.

Beyond physical wounds in Gaza

The war shatters the strip's mental health services when people need them most.

BY A TIMES SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT WITH LAURA KING

DEIR AL BALAH, Gaza Strip — The war in Gaza is maiming minds as well as bodies.

A burgeoning mental health crisis in the tiny coastal enclave is vastly overshadowed by the scale of death and destruction caused by more than three months of Israeli bombardment. But many experts believe psychological damage may prove one of the war's most lasting legacies.

More than 25,000 people have been killed in Gaza, according to Palestinian health officials. Most of the population of 2.3 million is displaced, the United Nations says. More than half of all Gaza's structures — schools, homes, universities — are damaged or in ruins, according to satellite im-

[See Gaza, A4]



TONY DING Associated Press

Chargers get it right with hire

Nothing but applause for Harbaugh pick as coach, Bill Plaschke writes. **SPORTS, B10**

Russia accuses Kyiv in crash

Flight was reportedly carrying 65 Ukrainian POWs; all aboard perished. **WORLD, A3**

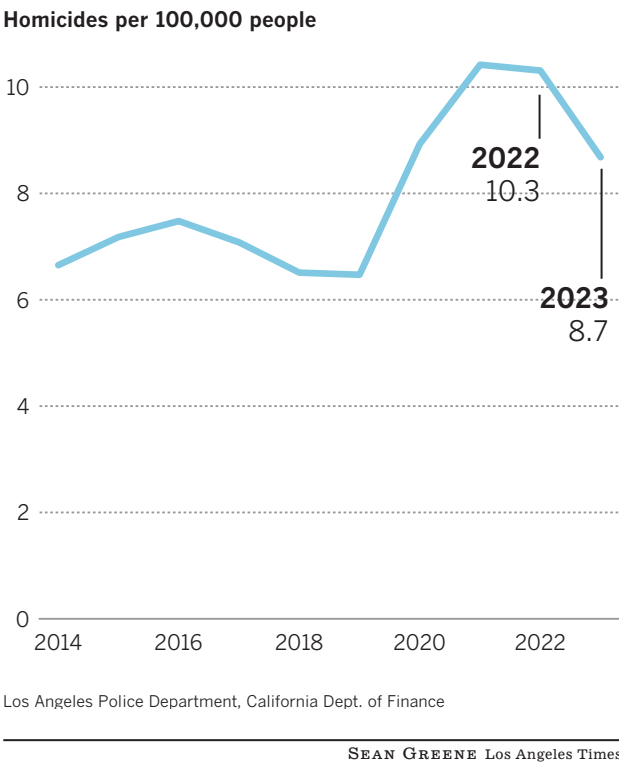
Weather

Low clouds clearing. L.A. Basin: 65/46. **B6**



In L.A., violent crime is down, property theft up

L.A.'s homicide rate fell about 16% in 2023



BY LIBOR JANY

In the latest sign that violent crime in Los Angeles is receding from a surge during the COVID-19 pandemic, LAPD officials on Wednesday released statistics showing double-digit percentage declines in both homicides and nonfatal shootings in 2023.

The decreases — killings and shootings were down 17% and 10%, respectively — contributed to a roughly overall 3% drop in reported violent crime compared with the year before. Meanwhile, property crimes were up by about 3% during the same period, driven by a rise in auto theft.

Speaking at a news conference at LAPD headquarters Wednesday, Chief Michel Moore ticked off the diminishing crime numbers, with major caveats for each category.

Homicides citywide decreased to 327 in 2023 from 392 the year before, Moore

[See Crime, A10]

Expect more 'thousand-year' extreme storms, forecasters say

Oxnard and San Diego show what damage El Niño, climate change, seasonal patterns together can do

BY HAYLEY SMITH AND GRACE TOOHEY

Weather officials had been warning Californians about the wrath of El Niño for months — even as some residents had begun to think the typically soaking climate pattern had gone AWOL.

But after an anemic start to the state's rainy season, those admonitions have come to bear in brutal fashion as fast-moving storms have inundated portions of Ventura, Los Angeles and San Diego counties, flooding neighborhoods, spurring water rescues, triggering evacuations and stunning experts with their strength and magnitude.

On Dec. 21, a storm barreled through Oxnard and delivered a month's worth of rain in less than an hour, officials said. And this week, a similarly historic event drenched San Diego with more rain in a few hours than the area typically sees in all of January.

Both were called "thousand-year events" — or events with 0.1% likelihood in a given year — and prompted Gov. Gavin Newsom to declare states of emergency. Now, as South-

ern Californians continue to recover from the buffeting, some experts warn that El Niño, climate change and seasonal patterns have made such storms more likely to occur than ever.

"At what point do we recognize that what's actually happening is essentially, in terms of extremes, what the science has been telling us we should expect?" said Marty Ralph, director of the Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego.

"The idea that climate change is causing the wet and dry periods to become more extreme for California — that's what the models have been predicting, and that's what's been happening," Ralph said.

Ralph noted that the last decade has seen some of the wettest, driest, snowiest and least-snowy years ever recorded in the state. Such swings between extremes have been referred to variously as weather whiplash, climate whiplash and hydrologic whiplash.

In San Diego on Monday, historic rainfall overwhelmed streets and

[See Storms, A7]



GREGORY BULL Associated Press

A VEHICLE is submerged in San Diego on Monday after historic rainfall overwhelmed the region.

EV charging system woes hurt climate goals

Why are so many stations in California broken? Lax state oversight of subsidies is a big reason.

By Russ Mitchell



GARY CORONADO Los Angeles Times

THE STATE did not require that charger companies meet performance standards as it doled out \$1 billion in assistance. Above, an Electrify America station.

dized public charger system end up so problematic? California's policies are at least partly to blame. The state chose not to require that charger companies meet performance standards as it doled out \$1 billion in subsidies, grants and other assistance to charger companies, with billions more on the way.

"We were just trying to get chargers out there and learning," said Patty Monahan, one of five commissioners on the California Energy Commission.

So no financial penalties for poor reliability were included in its subsidy and grant contracts, and no mechanisms for enforcement were set up.

In 2020, Gov. Gavin Newsom ordered that new cars and light trucks sold in California must be greenhouse-gas-free in increasing numbers until 2028, when more than half must fit that category, and 2035, when 100% of new cars and light trucks sold must be "zero emission." More than a million and a half EVs are on the road today in the state.

[See Chargers, A10]



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