



Mostly sunny 90/70 • Tomorrow: Partly cloudy 88/72 B6

Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2024 • \$3

ELECTION 2024

Campaigns magnify America's schisms

Trump and Harris rallies embody striking cultural, generational differences

BY HANNAH KNOWLES AND DYLAN WELLS

Donald Trump walks onstage to the 1984 Lee Greenwood song “God Bless the USA,” cheered on by a roaring crowd that skews older and White.

“We will make America great again!” he promises.

Kamala Harris walks out to Beyoncé’s 2016 hit “Freedom” and leans into internet memes — addressing more racially diverse audiences dotted with char- treuse shirts and pins that pay homage to a 2024 pop album called “Brat.”

“We are not going back,” she says.

The split screen reflects two presidential campaigns that embody two very different cultural, generational and social identities, setting up a stark contrast for voters. The divide is clearer than ever since President Joe Biden quit the race — upending a campaign that had long featured two White men born in the 1940s and allowing a younger, multi-racial woman to take his place.

Now the candidates, their rallies and their movements are showcasing two sides of America split by demographics and cultural touchstones, not just party and policy.

Trump’s grievance-fueled movement is full of nostalgia for past generations and his own term in office — and fear and anger about how undocumented

SEE ELECTION ON A6

12 years in captivity: White House presses Syria to free Austin Tice. **A7**

Virginia: Some Trump policies put GOP governor in a tough spot. **B1**



SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

The Bureau of Labor Statistics's July consumer price index report, released Wednesday, showed inflation under 3 percent for the first time since March 2021, when price increases took off on the heels of the pandemic.

Inflation hits three-year low

Drop tees up the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates and reduce pressure on the economy

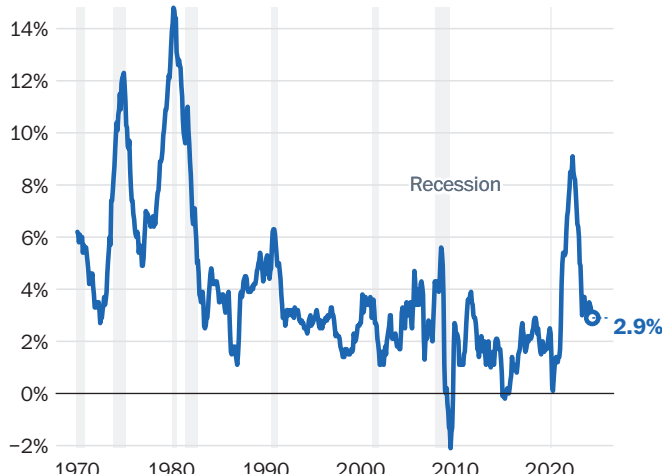
BY RACHEL SIEGEL

Inflation dropped in July to its lowest level in three years on an annual basis, setting up the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates soon to take pressure off the economy.

The snapshot was the clearest indication yet that inflation is heading back to normal levels from 40-year highs — without a recession. Central bankers won’t be caught celebrating, scarred by years of unexpected twists that repeatedly upended the Fed’s inflation fight. But officials will close out the summer with the surest sense yet that it’s time to ease up on the economic brakes, possibly starting next month.

That would mean some breath-

Annual inflation rate



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

ing room for households and businesses trying to get mortgages or auto loans, or grow their businesses. For two years, high interest rates have been an added strain for those also struggling under the weight of high prices, especially for basics like food and gas. Now, more relief is in sight — even though the run-up in inflation means prices are still significantly higher than they were just a few years ago.

“This is pretty much in line with what the Fed expected and hoped,” said Douglas Holtz-Eakin, president of the conservative American Action Forum. “I had always felt the [Fed’s] language had pretty much locked them into a rate cut in September. This es-

SEE INFLATION ON A14

Vietnam cracks down on rights as U.S. deepens ties with Hanoi

BY REBECCA TAN

SINGAPORE — Vietnam’s government has been carrying out its most intense crackdown on critics in decades, jailing droves of activists, lawyers and journalists and driving even more into exile, according to human rights groups and security analysts.

This heightened repression comes as the United States elevates relations with Vietnam to the highest levels since the two countries ended their war in the 1970s, with the Biden administration providing hundreds of millions of dollars in security assistance and American companies ramping up investment in Vietnam’s tech and manufacturing sectors.

Now, rights activists say they fear the repression could grow even worse with the ascension this summer of To Lam, the security chief who presided over much of the crackdown, to the post of general secretary of the Communist Party, the country’s most powerful position.

In the 11 months since Vietnam and the United States upgraded bilateral ties last September,

SEE VIETNAM ON A9

Stumpy, the tree that persevered, is beating the odds again

National Arboretum horticulturists had little to work with but have successfully created clones

BY KYLE SWENSON

Yes, we lost Stumpy. But we might now see multiple Stumpy clones ... Stumpettes?

Washington’s most iconic cherry blossom tree — gnarled yet beloved — could see a comeback, a 2.0 reboot, second life.

This week the National Arboretum announced that cuttings from the late Stumpy have been successfully cloned — yes, that is the technical term — and five new Stumpettes might one day be planted at the Tidal Basin. The process is not only a testament to the OG Stumpy’s viral popularity, but also a victory for advanced horticulture science. It was not an easy task.

“One of the aspects that made this project so challenging was that Stumpy’s growth was so stumpy,” said Piper Zettel, a horticulturist at the National Arboretum. “We didn’t have that many branches to work with. The material that we did have available was not elongated to an ideal length.”

Zettel said the National Arboretum was called in by the National Park Service last December because of its expertise propagating many types of plants. A long-planned sea wall repair project at the Tidal Basin and West Poto-

SEE STUMPY ON A2



U.S. NATIONAL ARBORETUM

The progress of root formation is checked on one of the cuttings taken from Stumpy, the beloved cherry blossom tree cut down in May. If all goes well, clones could one day be planted at the Tidal Basin.

Mpox again a global danger as new form rapidly spreads

BY FENIT NIRAPPIL AND RACHEL CHASON

The World Health Organization on Wednesday again declared mpox an international health emergency in response to a growing outbreak in Africa, renewing deep concerns about a virus that seized global attention two years ago.

The declaration comes after Africa recorded more than 15,000 suspected and confirmed cases and 537 deaths this year, exceeding the toll in all of 2023. Infections reached record highs in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the virus has been endemic for decades and where the vast majority of African cases are concentrated.

A new form of the virus, known as clade 1b, has spilled into eastern parts of the central African nation and has been reported in other countries for the first time, including Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. Viruses from the clade 1 classes tend to result in more deaths than another form that spread globally in 2022 and 2023.

“The detection and rapid spread of a new clade of mpox in

SEE MPOX ON A10

IN THE NEWS

Ernesto batters Puerto Rico More than 700,000 were without power after a tropical storm brought wind and heavy rains. **A4**

Not a stone’s throw Researchers found that the six-ton slab of rock in the heart of Stonehenge came from Scotland — but how it traveled so far remains a mystery. **A12**

THE NATION

The president of Columbia University resigned after outcry over Gaza protests. **A4**
An Ohio police officer was charged with murder in the shooting of a pregnant woman. **A4**

THE WORLD

Ukraine attacked four airfields deep inside Russia as its offensive in Kursk continues. **A8**
Japan’s prime minister, who enhanced his nation’s U.S. ties, said he will step down. **A9**

THE ECONOMY

Mars agreed to buy Kellanova, the maker of brands such as Pringles and Pop-Tarts, in a \$36 billion snack food megadeal. **A14**
Smartphone overuse has the potential to harm your career, but you can take steps to break your habit. **A14**

THE REGION

A former D.C. Housing Authority director is suing the agency, its board and a D.C. Council member, alleging she was forced to resign. **B1**
The FTC will allow employees to work from home after the discovery of Legionella bacteria at its D.C. headquarters. **B1**

STYLE

Zyn nicotine pouches became a social media sensation and a culture war symbol. Here’s how it happened. **C1**

LOCAL LIVING

Moving to a new home can be stressful for pets, but foresight, planning and patience can ease the transition.

BUSINESS NEWS.....	A13
COMICS.....	C5
OBITUARIES.....	B4
OPINION PAGES.....	A15
TELEVISION.....	C3
WORLD NEWS.....	A8

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