



BRIAN VAN DER BRUG Los Angeles Times

**AN ICE** fisherman prepares a line at Crowley Lake in April. Many snow-dependent watersheds are nearing a threshold at which marginal temperature increases imply larger and larger snow losses to come.

# Spring snowpack has shrunk significantly over 40 years

On the heels of the planet's hottest year on record, new research out of Dartmouth has found that seasonal snowpack across the Northern Hemisphere has shrunk significantly over the last 40 years due to global warming — potentially putting millions of people at risk of worsening water instability.

Between 1981 and 2020, dozens of river basins have seen a significant decline in snow water equivalent, or the amount of water contained in the snow, due to human-caused climate change, according to a study published Wednesday in the journal Nature.

The sharpest drops — between 10% and 20% per decade — were in the Southwestern and Northeastern United States,

Many areas of the Northern Hemisphere are approaching a 'snow-loss cliff' due to warming, researchers say

By Hayley Smith

as well as Central and Eastern Europe.

That includes the Colorado River basin, a key source of water for California and the Southwest, which dwindled to dangerous lows during the most recent drought. The basin has seen spring snowpack declines of about 7% per decade over the last 40 years due to climate change, the study found — or roughly 25% to 30%.

"What we are looking at is a longer-term aggregate pattern, and the question is, is snow a reliable source of water availability for places like California going forward? And the answer, absolutely, is no, it is not," said Justin Mankin, an associate professor of geography at Dartmouth College and one of the study's authors.

[See **Snowpack**, A7]

# Newsom aims to tap rainy-day fund to address larger deficit

An emergency may be declared as weak state revenues point to a \$379-billion shortfall.

By TARYN LUNA

Gov. Gavin Newsom asked California lawmakers on Wednesday to dip into the state's rainy-day reserves, and signaled his desire to potentially delay a minimum wage increase for healthcare workers as part of his plan to offset an expected \$379-billion deficit.

A confluence of weaker-than-expected state revenues, delayed tax deadlines and overspending based on inaccurate budget projections created the budget shortfall. Newsom's new deficit estimate is more than double the shortfall he and lawmakers anticipated last June, a tacit admission of how badly the state underestimated the size and scope of the budget hole, and marks

substantial disagreement within California government about the depth of the financial problem.

Newsom described his plan as an example of resilience as he outlined the \$291.5-billion budget proposal for fiscal year 2024-25 during a presentation Wednesday in Sacramento. His proposal to offset the shortfall includes declaring a budget emergency in order to dip into reserves; cutting \$8.5 billion in spending from programs that support climate change efforts, housing and other services; and reconsidering the healthcare wage increase.

"This is a story of correction and normalcy, and one that we in some respects anticipated — the acuity perhaps not — and one we're certainly prepared to work through," Newsom said.

The deficit deepens the state government's economic challenges and could pose political problems for Newsom this year as he

[See **Budget**, A12]



RICH PEDRONCELLI Associated Press

**THE GOVERNOR** outlines his proposed budget on Wednesday, including cuts and delays in funding.



ASHRAF AMRA Anadolu Agency

**AN INJURED** Palestinian man is helped after Israeli attacks in Deir al Balah, Gaza Strip. Israel vows to continue its invasion of Gaza until Hamas is destroyed.

# How apartheid came to be associated with the Israelis

By Tracy Wilkinson

The era of apartheid in South Africa is one of the darkest chapters of the 20th century. ¶ The word itself has become shorthand for systems of oppressive rule around the world — and even before the current war in Gaza unleashed a massive wave of demonstrations, it was an increasingly popular refrain of pro-Palestinian activists. ¶ But does the term "apartheid" accurately describe how Israel has treated Palestinians? ¶ Here's a look at the issue, a long-running debate among human rights experts.

**What is the origin of the word "apartheid"?**

In 1948, the newly empowered National Party in South Africa instituted a racial hierarchy to ensure dominance of the white

descendants of Dutch colonizers. The party named the system apartheid, which in the Afrikaans language means "the state of being separate."

A litany of laws and

regulations enforced rigid divisions among whites, Blacks, Indians and mixed-race "coloreds," dictating where people could live, work, go to school and even whether they could interact.

At the bottom of the hierarchy was the Black majority, which was relegated to geographically small "townships" away from city centers. Black South Africans were banned from owning property, voting and attending certain schools.

The government did not hesitate to use force to brutally and sometimes

[See **Apartheid**, A4]

# Cineplexes weigh captions

Words on the screen, an old-fashioned accessibility function, have become the default in streaming age

By Sonja Sharp

Nine-year-old actor Oceana Matsumoto signed emphatically to her father, posing for a snapshot in the lobby of Westwood's Regency Village Theater, where hundreds of fans had come to catch a special screening of "Barbie" in ASL — American Sign Language.

The Dec. 14 event, which debuted Deaf performer Leila Hanaumi's interpretation of the bubblegum blockbuster, showcased the cutting edge of accessibility for the Deaf, with the dialogue

relayed to viewers through both on-screen captions and sign language.

"It feels good," Oceana said. "They typically don't even have captions [in theaters]."

Though common at news conferences and concerts, ASL is rare in theaters and on streaming services, where the sign language interpreter can be included within the picture. Captions, by contrast, are old school — an accessibility function that first hit the movies in the Eisenhower era.

In recent years there's been a twist: Words on the

screen have become the default for many television viewers.

According to recent studies, roughly half of all viewers use captions most or all of the time, including 53% of millennials and some 70% of boomers.

That's about double the percentage of Gen Xers and baby boomers who use them, despite the fact older people are between two and three times more likely to have difficulty hearing, according to CDC data.

"Captioning is not only for Deaf people, it's for everyone," said CDC.

[See **Captions**, A9]



ANDY BARRON Associated Press

## DEADLY AVALANCHE

Placer County sheriff's vehicles are parked near a Lake Tahoe-area resort where an avalanche killed a skier on Wednesday. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

## Momentum from SAG nominations

Glenn Whipp evaluates who's up and who's down in the Oscars race based on actors guild's picks. **CALENDAR, E1**

## Disruption ahead for air travelers

What to know as United and Alaska cancel flights and some 737 Max 9s are grounded. **BUSINESS, A8**

## Weather

Mostly sunny and cool. L.A. Basin: 64/43. **B6**



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