



T-storms 85/71 • Tomorrow: Partly sunny 89/69 **B6**

Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, JULY 25, 2024 • **\$3**

‘Carbon cowboys’ cash in on rainforest

Post investigation shows ventures profit from public lands in Amazon

BY **TERRENCE MCCOY, JÚLIA LEDUR AND MARINA DIAS**

PORTEL, BRAZIL — Over the past two decades, a new financial commodity known as carbon credits has become one of the world’s most important tools in the fight against climate change. Companies and organizations seeking to offset their emission of carbon have spent billions of dollars on them.

The Amazon rainforest, because of its size and global environmental importance, has increasingly drawn those pursuing carbon credits. Here, these people are called “carbon cowboys.”

They’ve launched preservation projects across the region, generating carbon credits worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Those credits, in turn, have been purchased by some of the world’s largest corporations. The projects have helped transform the Brazilian Amazon into an epicenter of a largely unaccountable global industry with sales, according to market research, of nearly \$11 billion.

But a six-month Washington Post investigation shows that many of the private ventures have repeatedly and, authorities say, illegally laid claim to publicly protected lands, generating enormous profits from territory they have no legal right to and then failing to share the revenue with those who protected or lived on the land. The use of such lands to sell credits also contributes little to reducing carbon emissions.

The frequency with which these projects make use of public property, the amount of land involved and the value of the credits generated have not been previously reported.

The Post found that more than half of all carbon credit forest preservation projects in the Brazilian Amazon overlapped with public territories. The amount of public land claimed by these private ventures was more than 78,000 square miles, six times the size of Maryland. The businesses that purchased the carbon credits from the private land ventures to offset emissions included major international companies: Netflix, Air France, Delta Air Lines, Salesforce, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Airbnb, Takeda Pharmaceutical Co., Boston Consulting Group, Spotify, Boeing.

SEE **CARBON** ON **A14**

Biden seeks to define legacy in speech

BY **TOLUSE OLORUNNIPA**

President Biden delivered a somber, reflective address from the Oval Office on Wednesday evening, extolling democracy and decrying dictators during his first remarks to the nation since his monumental decision to end both his reelection campaign and political career.

“The defense of democracy, which is at stake, is more important than any title,” Biden said in remarks that were designed to have the gravitas of a presidential farewell speech. “I draw strength, and find joy, in working for the American people. But this sacred task of perfecting our union is not about me. It’s about you. Your

EXPLAINS HIS EXIT IN PRIME-TIME ADDRESS

‘A time and place for new voices, fresh voices’

families. Your futures. It’s about ‘We the People.’”

With less than six months left in his presidency, Biden used the prime-time address to defend his record, define his legacy and describe his vision for the rest of his term. He repeatedly called on Americans to take up the mantle of safeguarding the nation’s principles, asserting that as he prepares to exit public life, he was passing the baton to the public.

“The American people will choose the course of America’s

future,” he said at one point.

“Whether we keep our republic is now in your hands,” he said at another.

With much of the country’s focus shifted to Vice President Harris’s rapid ascent as the Democrats’ likely presidential nominee, Biden cast himself as a bridge to the next generation of leadership.

SEE **BIDEN** ON **A10**

‘Really energized’: Americans react to historic moment. **A6**



EVAN VUCCI/POOL/EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK

President Biden addresses the nation Wednesday night from behind the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office.



ALLISON ROBERT/THE WASHINGTON POST

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrives to deliver an address to a joint meeting of Congress at the Capitol on Wednesday. Dozens of Democratic lawmakers and at least one Republican boycotted the speech in protest of Israel’s conduct of the war in Gaza.

Defiant Netanyahu thunders at war’s critics

BY **ABIGAIL HAUSLOHNER, STEVE HENDRIX AND LOUISA LOVELUX**

A defiant Benjamin Netanyahu, in an address to a joint meeting of Congress on Wednesday, dismissed as “utter nonsense” criticisms by the United Nations, human rights groups and the International Criminal Court that Israel’s government has committed war crimes in Gaza, and he derided pro-Palestinian protesters as “idiots” and tools of Iran.

The Israeli prime minister told U.S. lawmakers that Israel will

Calls protesters ‘idiots,’ vows to beat ‘barbarism’ in address to Congress

settle for “nothing less” than total victory over Hamas, and he described a vision for postwar Gaza seemingly at odds with the terms of a peace deal advocated by the Biden administration. The fate of Israel and the United States are inextricably linked, he asserted, arguing that U.S. investment in

Israel’s war aims also serves to defend the United States and “all democracies.”

“We help keep Americans’ boots off the ground,” Netanyahu thundered, imploring Congress to expedite the transfer to Israel of billions of dollars in U.S. weapons. “Give us the tools faster, and we’ll finish the job faster,” he said.

Netanyahu’s address, spanning nearly an hour, occurred as his far-right government nears the start of its 10th month of war in Gaza, where local authorities say 39,000 Palestinians have been killed amid daily bombardment

and famine, and as a majority of Israelis say they want him to leave office. He encountered a Congress sharply at odds over the conflict, with Republican leaders upbraiding the dozens of Democrats who boycotted his appearance, and many Democrats appalled by the decision to platform a foreign leader accused of war crimes.

Netanyahu arrived on Capitol Hill in a bulletproof motorcade, passing through a phalanx of se-

SEE **NETANYAHU** ON **A11**

D.C. protests: Thousands march in opposition to Netanyahu’s visit. **B1**

Shooter looked up killing of Kennedy

New details emerge as FBI director testifies, but a motive remains elusive

BY **DEVLIN BARRETT**

The gunman who tried to assassinate former president Donald Trump had searched online days earlier for information about the assassination of John F. Kennedy, and used a rifle with a collapsible stock that may have made it easier for him to disguise the weapon before climbing onto a roof, FBI Director Christopher A. Wray said Wednesday.

Wray’s testimony before the House Judiciary Committee offered the most detailed account to date of the actions of Thomas Matthew Crooks, the 20-year-old gunman who was fatally shot by a Secret Service sniper after opening fire during the July 13 campaign rally in Butler, Pa. One rallygoer was killed, two others were critically injured, and Trump suffered a graze wound to his ear.

The rally shooting, two days before the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, rattled elected officials across the country and raised new fears about political violence in a tumultuous presidential election year. Wray sought to reassure lawmakers that his agency was doing everything possible to understand the gunman’s actions, while also cautioning that other

SEE **SHOOTER** ON **A11**

PARIS OLYMPICS

Israeli athletes take the field to protests in politically charged Games

BY **RICK NOACK AND CLAIRE PARKER**

PARIS — The Opening Ceremonies aren’t until Friday night, but already the 2024 Summer Olympics are mired in politics, with frictions over Israel’s war in Gaza and Russia’s war in Ukraine on full display.

Amid protests and heightened security, the Israeli soccer team took the field Wednesday against Mali, a country that doesn’t recognize Israel, playing to a draw in one of the first events of what is shaping up to be an extremely tense Summer Olympics.

French police appeared nervous in the lead-up to the match, cordoning off areas near the Parc



TERESA SUAREZ/EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK

Police patrol in Paris ahead of a soccer match between Israel and Mali, which does not recognize its competitors’ country.

des Princes stadium amid a bomb scare. Israeli President Isaac Herzog was prevented from leaving his plane amid another false alarm — an airport staffer without the requisite safety vest.

Some match spectators waved Palestinian flags, and some sections booed the Israelis. Sporadic chants of “free Palestine” drew attention from security. Outside the venue came choruses of “free the hostages.”

The Paris Olympics “are the most geopolitically charged Olympics that we have seen in

SEE **OLYMPICS** ON **A13**

Packed house: At rugby sevens, the hottest of tickets, it’s a party. **D1**

ELECTION 2024

High stakes for the District’s future as national GOP seeks local control

BY **MEAGAN FLYNN AND JENNY GATHRIGHT**

On a sweltering Saturday in D.C.’s Lincoln Park, at a 50th-anniversary celebration for the bronze statue of pioneering civil rights activist and educator Mary McLeod Bethune, Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) took the stage with a plea for the crowd.

Amid D.C.’s “ongoing push for statehood,” Bethune’s legacy on voting rights remains particularly resonant in the city today, Bowser said. “And more than that, what we anticipate is many months to come of an assault on our very autonomy and home

rule.”

The out-of-towners in the crowd could do something about it, she said — by voting. “Can we count on you to stand shoulder to shoulder with us to defend our autonomy?”

The mayor’s message was clear: For D.C., the stakes of the 2024 election are as high as they’ve ever been. Former president Donald Trump has threatened to “take over” the city, which he denigrated as a “horrible killing field” at the Republican National Convention. And Republicans have promised in their national platform to “reassert greater Federal

SEE **DISTRICT** ON **A7**

IN THE NEWS

Vance halted bipartisan plan As Trump’s VP search ramped up, the senator stopped talks on legislation targeting childbirth costs. **A8**

Questionable evidence A police detective and a federal prosecutor who oversaw arrests of anti-Trump demonstrators in 2017 have been accused of misconduct. **B1**

THE NATION
Smoke from wildfires in the Pacific Northwest and Canada have compromised air quality. **A2**
As illnesses mount, lawsuits target chemical plants in Charleston, W.Va. **A3**

THE WORLD
Nicolás Maduro has led Venezuela for years, but Sunday’s vote may pose a challenge. **A12**
A plane crashed during takeoff in Nepal, killing 18 people. Only the pilot survived. **A13**

THE ECONOMY
Wall Street worries are surfacing that all the money being poured into AI by Big Tech could lead to a financial bubble. **A16**
CrowdStrike blamed the global IT outage on a bug in its system for checking software updates. **A17**

THE REGION
William & Mary received a \$100 million donation to help expand coastal and marine sciences research efforts. **B1**
A Prince George’s County school board member resigned after starting a job in Missouri and missing meetings in Maryland. **B1**

STYLE
Chappell Roan became a megawatt pop star seemingly overnight — but it took longer than people think. Here’s how it happened. **C1**

LOCAL LIVING
In the goth garden, dark plants and sad statues embrace the gloomy vibe.

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