



THE DIABLO CANYON nuclear power plant on the San Luis Obispo County coast is slated to continue providing electricity until 2030.

Photographs by GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

Deaths linked to heat are on the rise

A new study finds a surge in recent years. Researchers say the trend may continue as the planet warms.

By HAYLEY SMITH

Heat-related mortality is on the rise in the United States, where high temperatures have caused or contributed to the deaths of more than 21,500 people since 1999, new research has found.

The last seven years in particular have been marked by a surge in heat-related deaths, including 2,325 deaths in 2023 — the planet's hottest year on record, according to a study published Monday in the medical journal JAMA.

While previous research had not portrayed a clear trend in heat-related mortality in the U.S. — and in fact showed a slight downward trend from 1975 to 2018 — the latest paper is the first to demonstrate a clear uptick from 2016 to 2023.

Researchers said the current trajectory is likely to continue due to climate change.

“The trend is what is really striking, and to me it justifies further investigation,” said Jeffrey Howard, the study's lead author and an associate professor of public health at the University of Texas at San Antonio. “It justifies further investment in surveillance, better tools and more effort at trying to understand what underlies these

[See Heat, A5]

How a mother escaped a gang plot

A Jurupa Valley woman's ordeal shows how some criminal groups are adding porn to their ventures.

By MATTHEW ORMSETH

The store in Jurupa Valley displayed dresses, blouses and shape wear. In a back room were gambling machines, a striptease pole and a bathroom where a woman told authorities she had been locked up for days under threat of being forced to film videos for OnlyFans, the subscription-based pornography service.

According to documents filed in federal court in May, the shop was controlled by a local gang, Westside Riva. The case suggests that some criminal groups have attempted to add pornography and gambling to their more traditional revenue streams of selling drugs and collecting “rent” from narcotics dealers.

The woman, identified as Jane Doe and Person 1 in court documents, said she

[See Gang, A7]

The perilous price of operating California's last nuclear plant

Diablo Canyon will remain on line past its planned retirement date despite rising costs, the earthquake risk

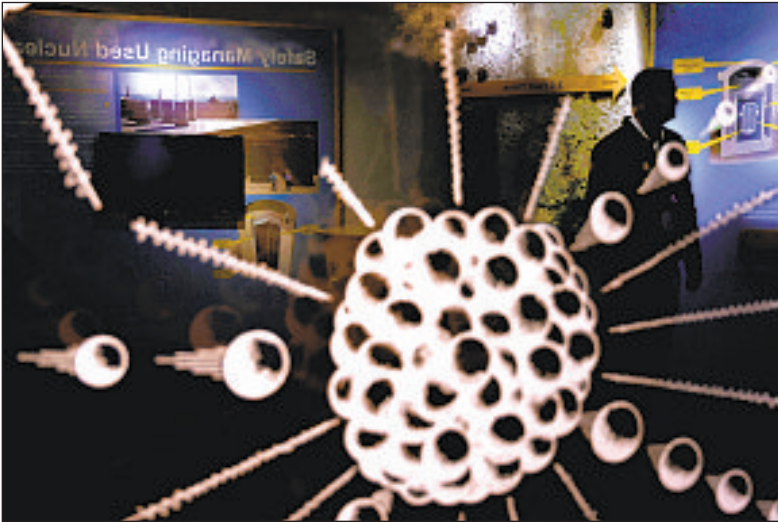
By NOAH HAGGERTY | REPORTING FROM SAN LUIS OBISPO

Under two gargantuan domes of thick concrete and steel that rise along California's rugged Central Coast, subatomic particles slam into uranium, triggering one of the most energetic reactions on Earth.

Amid coastal bluffs speckled with brush and buckwheat, the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant uses this energy to spin two massive copper coils at a blistering 30 revolutions per second. In 2022, these generators — about the size of school buses — produced 6% of Californians' power and 11% of their nonfossil energy.

Yet it comes at almost double the cost of other low-carbon energy sources and, according to the federal agency that oversees the plant, carries a roughly 1-in-25,000 chance of suffering a Chernobyl-style nuclear meltdown before its scheduled decommissioning in just five years — due primarily to nearby fault lines.

As Gov. Gavin Newsom's administration looks to the aging reactors to help ease the state's transition to renewable energy, Diablo Canyon is drawing renewed criticism from those who say the facility



A DISPLAY illustrates the nuclear fission process at Diablo Canyon, which had been expected to shut down over the next year.

is too expensive and too dangerous to continue operating.

Diablo is just the latest in a series of plants built in the atomic frenzy of the 1970s and '80s seeking an operating license renewal from the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission as the clock on their initial 40-year run ticks down. As the price of wind and solar continues to drop, the criticisms against Diablo reflect a nationwide debate.

The core of the debate lives in the quaint coastal town of San Luis Obispo, just 12 miles inland from the concrete domes, where residents expected Diablo Canyon to shut down over the next year after its license expired.

Instead, Newsom struck a deal on the last possible day of the state's 2021-22 legislative session to keep the plant running until 2030, citing worries over summer blackouts as the state transitions to clean energy. The activists who had negotiated the shutdown with Pacific Gas & Electric Co. and the state six years prior were left stunned.

Today, the plant is still buzzing [See Nuclear, A10]

Long Beach conducts sweeps of homeless sites

As the city enforces anti-camping laws, it says it's stressing compassion but also issuing citations.

By RUBEN VIVES

In a small, oil-stained alley in Long Beach, under a yellow bedsheet tied to a chain-link fence, Fernando Gonzalez sat cross-legged, fighting off sleep amid the summer heat.

Until recently, the 55-year-old had been living with about a dozen homeless people at Gumbiner Park, a

tiny green space nearby, across from the Museum of Latin American Art.

Outreach workers had visited the site for weeks, offering shelter beds and motel vouchers to people while warning them that the city would soon start enforcing its anti-camping laws.

That enforcement kicked off last week when police and city crews showed up to clear the area and fence it off for maintenance work. It was one of four parks targeted after being identified as trouble spots.

Gonzalez didn't fault the city for clearing the space. He understood residents disliked the encampment. But he was frustrated that

city workers couldn't find him a bed before he was forced to leave the park.

“Here I am, asking to go indoors while others turn the help away,” he said. “It's just unfair.”

He and two others moved to the alley to be closer to the park, hoping to make it easier for city workers to find them. But after more than a week, they said, no one had stopped by.

California cities have long struggled to regulate public camping after court rulings made it unconstitutional to enforce anti-camping laws against homeless people.

But two months ago, law-

[See Homeless, A7]



BRIAN VAN DER BRUG Los Angeles Times

POLICE WATCH at Gumbiner Park, where removal notices were posted for people who were camping.

Harris, Trump spar over mics

To mute or not to mute? Candidates' argument casts doubt over Sept. 10 debate. **NATION, A4**

Art museums to share collection

Jarl and Pamela Mohn donate works to MOCA, Hammer and LACMA. **ENTERTAINMENT, E1**

A milestone above Earth

A billionaire adventurer is expected to be first civilian to go on a space walk. **BUSINESS, A6**

Weather

Lots of sunshine. L.A. Basin: 88/64. **B6**

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