

TERRAIN, CLIMATE PROPEL PARK BLAZE

Wildfire surpasses 370,000 acres as heat, wind and topography work against efforts to bring it under control.

By Grace Toohey

As the Park fire marches into history books — becoming California’s sixth largest on record — experts say it still has much life left, with several challenges hindering firefighting as the blaze continues to chew up remote wilderness at an astonishing clip.

Burning across mostly rural areas of Butte and Tehama counties, the Park fire surpassed 370,000 acres Monday, with a shift in weather forcing firefighters to react to new hot spots and unpredictable flare-ups.

“There’s more to be seen from this fire,” said Don Hankins, a Chico State University professor of geography who has expertise in pyrogeography and fire management. “As soon as those conditions change, [fire growth is] back on again.”

Almost 5,000 personnel are now responding to the wildfire, and they have been able to secure 12% containment as of Monday. Much of the fire’s future, however, rests with factors beyond human control: weather and terrain.

“I definitely see the potential for it to be a much larger fire,” said Hankins, whose family has been evacuated from their home in Forest Ranch, northeast of Chico. Their house hasn’t been damaged, he said, but he worries about what this fire could do — and where it could reach — if it continues to burn into the autumn months, which he said could happen unless there is a dramatic change in conditions. He noted it wasn’t until rain hit the deadly Camp fire in 2018 that it fizzled out.

“The topography and the landscape there makes it difficult [for firefighters] to work in,” Hankins said of the Park fire, which is burning throughout the rugged Ishi Wilderness.

After a weekend of lower temperatures and increased humidity, which aided fire suppression, increased heat and winds are starting to again fuel fire activity, officials said. Last week, the explosive wildfire more than doubled in size several times

[See Fire, A5]



JASON ARMOND Los Angeles Times

SOLUNA LORA and her children console one another after they unveiled the gravestone this month of 2-year-old Ezekiel Rivera, who died from a fentanyl overdose. Among the states, California has the most deaths overall from fentanyl, with 6,473 in 2022.

Competing concepts of gender roles also on ballot

In reframed election, Harris leans hard into her vision of female empowerment as Trump stresses physical strength

By Noah Bierman

INDIANAPOLIS — Less than two days after she in effect clinched the Democratic presidential nomination, Vice President Kamala Harris was introduced to a crowd of 6,000 Black women, all dressed in their sorority colors, as “America’s No. 1 lady.”

“When I was a United States senator, I would see this group of powerful leaders walk through the halls of Congress in white and blue,” Harris said at the national meeting of Zeta Phi Beta in Indianapolis. “I always knew I was looking at some of the most powerful advocates for justice in America.”

That night, former President Trump’s rally in Charlotte, N.C., was full of testosterone as he recalled “the Hulkster” and Kid Rock speaking at his party convention and the night he overcame bullets “flying” at him during this month’s assassination attempt.

“They said, ‘Sir, we have a stretcher for you,’” Trump recounted. “I said, ‘That’s not going to look very good if I get carried out on a stretcher.’”

[See Gender, A5]



DARRON CUMMINGS Associated Press

KAMALA HARRIS is introduced to 6,000 Black sorority sisters as “America’s No. 1 lady” last week in Indianapolis.

Infants, toddlers among fentanyl victims

In Bakersfield, a 2-year-old died from acute toxicity from the drug. His father is charged with murder.

By Melissa Gomez

BAKERSFIELD — Ezekiel Xavier Rivera idolized his father.

The 2-year-old loved to follow Raul Rivera around the house and ride in the car with him, said Soluna Lora, Ezekiel’s mother.

On June 3, 2023, Lora left the little boy with his father in Bakersfield while she took his older brother for a haircut. She and Rivera, who have three children together, are separated. When she returned to drop Ermias off too, Lora said, she spotted a bulge in Rivera’s sock. It was a roll of cash and what she said she later learned was a baggie of drugs.

She demanded that Rivera let her take the children home with her, but he refused. She never saw Ezekiel alive again.

Two days later, the toddler was dead from acute fentanyl toxicity; Ermias — who was 3 — had tested positive for the drug. Rivera now faces a first-degree murder charge in connection with one son’s death and a felony count of child cruelty, accused of exposing his other son.

“They didn’t only lose their brother, they lost their father as well,” Lora said of Ermias, now 5, and his sister, EvaRose, 7. “They loved being with him. ... Ezekiel loved [Rivera] so, so much.”

As the fentanyl crisis ravages communities across the country, toddlers and infants increasingly are becoming unsuspecting victims of an opioid that is 50 times more potent than heroin. Adults make up the vast

[See Fentanyl, A10]

Biden ideas for Supreme Court

The president endorses term limits, but experts say a constitutional amendment would be needed. **NATION, A4**

Restaurant gear, dreams recycled

As the industry ails, Fred Bush’s company is doing well buying, restoring and reselling equipment. **BUSINESS, A6**

Weather

Sunny.
L.A. Basin: 83/61. **B6**

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WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

CAST IN BRONZE

American skateboarder Nyjah Huston performs Monday at the Paris Olympics with an effort that won him a satisfying bronze medal. **SPORTS, B10**

Legal drama embroils COVID test startup

Innova founder and former executives are battling in court over the Pasadena firm’s \$2 billion in profits.

By Laurence Darmiento

A script for a biopic called “Overnight Billionaire” recounts the extraordinary life of Charles Huang, a Chinese villager who overcomes long odds to educate himself and become a Hong Kong corpo-

rate analyst.

After immigrating to Los Angeles, Huang builds a COVID-testing company that is key to the United Kingdom weathering the pandemic.

The draft concludes on a high note, with a TV host acknowledging to the now-fabulously wealthy Huang that his story is “one in a billion.”

Reality has been less rosy for the real-life Huang.

After securing a lucrative testing deal with the British government, Huang and his partners have become em-

[See Innova, A7]



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