



Partly sunny 61/43 • Tomorrow: Mostly sunny 57/41 **B6**

Democracy Dies in Darkness

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MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

A window at a convenience store on H Street NE is shattered in October. The corridor's challenges have been exacerbated by violent incidents in the past year that drew national attention, including assaults on a member of Congress and a staffer.

Chilling times for a cool district

BY PAUL SCHWARTZMAN

The red neon sign was in place over the entrance and the shelves were neatly stocked with wines, whiskeys and vodkas. Sorab Dilawri was ready to launch his new liquor store on that corridor of D.C. cool known as H Street NE.

Two days before opening in mid-September, just before dawn, burglars threw a brick through Dilawri's window. They tipped over a row of shelves, smashing \$10,000 worth of red wines and adding to the toll of crime jarring the neighborhood and city beyond.

By mid-October, a month after H Street Liquors opened, Dilawri had swept up shattered glass from two more break-ins. "I'm scared for my life," the 40-year-old owner said from behind his cash register, contemplating his options. "What are you going to do? Stay home?"

A decade ago, following years of disinvestment after the 1968 riots, H Street NE evolved into a haven of buzzworthy cuisine and nightlife, drawing visitors from across the region. As luxury high-rises went up and

H Street was once a symbol of D.C.'s rebirth. Now, it's barely holding on.

a Whole Foods Market opened, the neighborhood became, after the city's financial collapse in the 1990s, a symbol of D.C.'s rebirth.

Yet, more recently, the allure of H Street has faded as the corridor has come to reflect a more contemporary version of Washington — a city still recovering from the pandemic, buffeted by economic uncertainty and battered by violent crime.

Located northeast of the U.S. Capitol, from Second to 15th streets NE, H Street's diminished prospects are partly the result of competition from newer nightlife playgrounds at the Wharf, Navy Yard and nearby Union Market, as well as traditional standbys like U Street, Adams Morgan and Georgetown.

The corridor's challenges also are exacerbated by violent incidents over the past year that drew national attention, including assaults on a member of

Congress and a staffer. At the same time, a steady grind of burglaries, robberies and stolen cars add to a collective sense of unease. There also is the near-constant presence of aggressive panhandlers and clusters of people lingering on sidewalks, many of them appearing disheveled, disoriented and, at moments, menacing.

As October ended, a community group felt it necessary to advise a neighborhood email list that a D.C. judge had released a man with no fixed address who had been arrested on H Street after allegedly threatening two people with a machete.

"Please be alert," wrote Bobby Pittman, chair of the First District Citizens Advisory Council. (By then, the judge had issued a pretrial stay-away order, barring the suspect from being with 100 yards of the two targets.)

Days later, the owners of a restaurant with locations on H Street and Dupont Circle announced they are shutting down, citing a "spike in violent crime" among their reasons.

"I'm just done," Aaron McGovern, who closed Brine Oyster and Seafood

SEE **H STREET** ON **A18**

Israel, Hamas reach hostage release deal

4-DAY PAUSE IN EXCHANGE FOR 50 PEOPLE

Allies hope agreement will lead to more negotiations

This article is by Steve Hendrix, Sarah Dadouch, Hajar Harb, Michael Birnbaum, Liz Sly and Paul Schemm

JERUSALEM — Israel approved a deal with Hamas early Wednesday to temporarily pause fighting in the Gaza Strip in exchange for the release of at least 50 of the 240 Israeli hostages held inside the enclave, the Israeli government said in a statement announcing the deal.

The agreement, which Israeli leaders had resisted despite mounting pressure from hostage families and international allies, particularly the United States, marks the first cessation of a six-week air and ground assault that has reportedly killed more than 11,000 Gazans and displaced

hundreds of thousands more. It caps weeks of tense talks between Israel and Hamas, mediated by the Qatari government and with the heavy intercession of the Biden administration. Both of the warring sides declared that they would get something out of the deal.

"The Government of Israel is obligated to return home all of the hostages," the government said in a statement issued early Wednesday in Israel. "Tonight, the Government has approved the outline of the first stage of achieving this goal."

After a four-day pause in fighting — to be extended if Hamas

SEE **GAZA** ON **A11**

South Lebanon: An apparent strike by Israel kills two journalists. **A12**

Crypto firm Binance admits to violations

CEO's guilty plea and company's \$4.3B fine cap three-year federal probe

BY ELI TAN
AND DEVLIN BARRETT

Binance and its founder, Changpeng Zhao, pleaded guilty Tuesday to violating criminal anti-money-laundering guidelines — a staggering blow against the world's largest cryptocurrency exchange. The company will also pay a \$4.3 billion fine, one of the largest ever levied against a corporation.

The plea agreement marks the second time this month that a giant of the crypto world has been felled by federal charges. Zhao,

who appeared Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Seattle, faces as much as 18 months in prison for violating the Bank Secrecy Act, according to sentencing guidelines. He will be fined \$50 million and is barred from working with the exchange for three years, court filings show.

Zhao also agreed to step down as chief executive of Binance. He will be replaced by Richard Teng, the company's global head of regional markets.

The company pleaded guilty to violating the Bank Secrecy Act, which requires financial institutions to verify the identities of their customers and report suspicious activity that might be a sign of money laundering, tax evasion or other crimes. It also pleaded guilty to failing to register as a

SEE **ZHAO** ON **A4**

Fired CEO of OpenAI in talks to return

BY NITASHA TIKU,
PRANSHU VERMA,
GERRIT DE VYNCK
AND RACHEL LERMAN

Just four days after he was fired by the board of artificial-intelligence pioneer OpenAI, former chief executive Sam Altman was in negotiations Tuesday for his return to the company, as the board appeared to bend under pressure from investors and employees.

Talks were focused on the management structure if Altman were to return as CEO, people familiar with the discussions told The Washington Post on Tuesday.

Disagreements emerged over who would actually sit on OpenAI's board if Altman did return. One person familiar with the situation said discussions were less about specific board members and more about creating a board that

SEE **ALTMAN** ON **A14**

Under NCAA gymnastics' glow, a 'toxic' culture

College was thought to be a reprieve from intense club programs. Then athletes got to campus.

BY MOLLY HENSLEY-CLANCY
AND EMILY GIAMBALVO

After everything they went through as young gymnasts, college was supposed to be a safe haven.

The viral routines, the cheering crowds, the women swarming their teammates: NCAA gymnastics, at least as viewed from their Instagram feeds, was a world apart from the elite youth version of the sport, where injury, body-shaming and verbal abuse were expected.

Instead, they found the same toxicity.

At the University of North Carolina, gymnast Raine Gordon says, her assistant head coach, Amy Smith, pitted gymnasts against one another and made her feel ashamed of her body, once saying that Gordon's leg was bruised after a fall because it was "fat." Smith and the head coach, Derek Galvin, made Gordon sign a contract that threatened her scholarship if she didn't lose weight every week. Bu-limia, Gordon says, "became like a team activity."

At LSU, one of the country's top

SEE **GYMNASTICS** ON **A8**



ANDY HANCOCK/NCAA PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES

Utah gymnasts at the NCAA championships in April. Some Utes gymnasts accused the coach of abuse.

Judges toss Md. law on handgun licensing

BY ERIN COX
AND SALVADOR RIZZO

A federal appeals court overturned one of Maryland's toughest gun-control laws Tuesday, saying the decade-old handgun licensing statute that required fingerprinting, firearms training and a waiting period of up to a month violated the Second Amendment.

The ruling from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit is among the first to strike down handgun permit requirements under a legal test established by the Supreme Court in 2022 that requires judges to consider whether modern-day regulations mirror what was in place around the time of the country's founding.

The panel voted 2-1 to block Maryland's enforcement of a key part of a 2013 law that was passed

SEE **HANDGUNS** ON **A6**

IN THE NEWS

Student loans As repayment begins again after a three-year hiatus, people across the country described how the change is affecting their lives. **A3**

Watching the skies At an FAA command center in Virginia, round-the-clock work helps keep holiday air travel on track. **B1**

THE NATION
A judge ordered new bond terms for a Trump co-defendant over his social media posts. **A2**
House conservatives haven't gained much since ousting Kevin McCarthy as speaker. **A5**

THE WORLD
Fossil fuel lobbyists have increasingly attended U.N. climate talks, a study found. **A7**
In Niger, the junta is using anger at colonial power France to consolidate control. **A10**

THE ECONOMY
More people are getting their news from TikTok, a poll found, while fewer are turning to television, radio or print. **A13**
Shopping for deals of this Black Friday? Here's how to avoid getting duped by deceptive pricing tactics. **A14**

THE REGION
Prince George's County launched a basic-income pilot program that will pay 175 residents \$800 a month for two years. **B1**
A beaver or a group of the rodents has damaged at least 15 cherry trees at the Washington Tidal Basin. **B1**

STYLE
Fashion designer Yohji Yamamoto is a testament to the pleasures of going your own way. **C1**
SPORTS
The Commanders have new owners and a revitalized fan base, but the team hasn't reversed the tide on the field. **D1**

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