

The Washington Post

Prices may vary in areas outside metropolitan Washington.

SU V1 V2 V3 V4



Partly sunny 93/77 • Tomorrow: Heavy t-storms 100/74 B6

Democracy Dies in Darkness

TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 2024 • \$3

Dali departs



MICHAEL S. WILLIAMSON/THE WASHINGTON POST

The container ship Dali travels under the Chesapeake Bay Bridge in Stevensville, Md., on Monday, three months after it destroyed the Francis Scott Key Bridge. The Dali is heading to Virginia, where 1,500 containers will be offloaded. Then work will begin to repair damage from massive pieces of the bridge hitting the deck. **Story, B1**

Assange expected to plead guilty to felony charge

LONG LEGAL SAGA MAY BE NEAR AN END

WikiLeaks founder set for likely return to Australia

BY ELLEN NAKASHIMA, DEVLIN BARRETT AND RACHEL WEINER

Julian Assange, the founder of the anti-secrecy site WikiLeaks, has reached a tentative deal to plead guilty to one count of violating the Espionage Act for his role in obtaining and publishing classified military and diplomatic documents from 2009 to 2011, according to court filings.

The plea deal would end a long-running legal saga and a transatlantic tug-of-war that pitted national security against press freedom.

He is expected to be sentenced on Wednesday in the Northern

Mariana Islands, according to a letter filed by the Justice Department in the remote U.S. jurisdiction Monday evening. He will then return to his home country of Australia, the letter says, indicating he will be sentenced to the 62 months he has already spent behind bars in a London prison.

A criminal information filed alongside the letter says Assange “knowingly and unlawfully conspired” with Chelsea Manning to

SEE ASSANGE ON A6



Julian Assange

Infamous hacker a hero to some, villain to others

BY WILLIAM BOOTH

LONDON — The long legal battle over Julian Assange may finally be nearing an end. It has been a sprawling, almost surreal drama — involving the United States, Britain, Sweden, Ecuador and Australia — that saw the 52-year-old WikiLeaks founder holed up in cramped rooms and held in prison cells for a quarter of his life.

His story of hacking and leaking, flight and imprisonment, courtroom theatrics and now possibly imminent release is inspiring, chilling, depressing — de-

pending on how you view Assange.

The case raised, but never definitely answered, vital questions about what it means to be a journalist, a publisher and a whistleblower.

Was he a non-state actor threatening the national security of the United States, as then-CIA Director Mike Pompeo once alleged?

Or a hero, as his many supporters believed as they gathered time after time in front of British courthouses while Assange’s attorneys fought against his extradition to

SEE WIKILEAKS ON A6

In some states, mask-wearing may soon be a crime

BY FENIT NIRAPPI

State legislators and law enforcement are reinstating dormant laws that criminalize mask-wearing to penalize pro-Palestinian protesters who conceal their faces, raising concerns among covid-cautious Americans.

Republican lawmakers in North Carolina are poised to overturn Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper’s recent veto of legislation to

Health exceptions in bills targeting pro-Palestinian protests fail to ease fears

criminalize masking. New York Gov. Kathy Hochul (D) said this month that she supports legislative efforts to ban masks on the subway, citing an incident in

which masked protesters on a train shouted: “Raise your hands if you’re a Zionist. This is your chance to get out.” Student protesters in Ohio, Texas and Florida have been threatened with arrest for covering their faces.

Decades-old laws against masking — often crafted in response to the hooded terror of the Ku Klux Klan — are on the books in at least 18 states and D.C., according to the International Center for Not-for-

Profit Law. Lawmakers in some areas passed legislation to create health exemptions during the coronavirus pandemic while other authorities vowed not to enforce the statutes.

Immunocompromised Americans and civil libertarians who have long criticized mask bans as a cudgel against protesters of police shootings, economic inequality and environmental injustice say

SEE MASK BANS ON A5

Justices set to weigh in on teen trans care ban

Review may affect access to treatment for 100,000 transgender youths

BY ANN E. MARIMOW AND CASEY PARKS

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to review a Tennessee law that bans gender transition care for people younger than 18. The case will be the first opportunity the justices have to consider the constitutionality of such restrictions, which more than 20 states have passed since 2021.

The Biden administration urged the court to decide whether states can prevent transgender children, in consultation with their parents and doctors, from seeking treatment such as puberty blockers, which major medical associations have said lower rates of depression and suicide in transgender individuals.

More than 100,000 transgender adolescents live in one of about two dozen states that have banned gender-affirming medical care, an issue that has emerged at the forefront of the nation’s cultural and political divides in recent years.

The Supreme Court extended employment protections to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

workers in 2020, but has yet to rule on the constitutionality of lower court decisions involving transgender minors, bathroom access or athletes.

Solicitor General Elizabeth B. Prelogar, representing the Biden administration, told the justices that the uncertainty from conflicting lower-court decisions on gender-affirming care is “imposing grave consequences on families across the Nation who are being forced to make weighty decisions about whether to abandon their homes, jobs, schools, and communities in the hopes of preserving access to necessary medical care for their children without knowing whether the bans in their State and neighboring States will be upheld or enjoined.”

Lawyers defending the Tennessee ban told the court that the U.S. Constitution does not give parents the right to demand “medical interventions for children that a state has found to be unproven and excessively risky.”

“Tennessee, like many other States, acted to ensure that minors do not receive these treatments until they can fully understand the lifelong consequences or until the science is developed to the point that Tennessee might take a different view of their efficacy,” the office of Tennessee Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti (R) said in a

SEE COURT ON A14



ALLISON ROBERT/THE WASHINGTON POST

A wax sculpture melting upon itself cannot stand

BY JOE HEIM

By Monday morning his head was gone, his left leg was separated from his torso and his right foot was a blob.

Wax Abe Lincoln, it turns out, was no match for Washington’s punishing heat wave.

The six-foot-tall statue of America’s 16th president, by Richmond artist Sandy Williams IV, was installed in February on the campus of Garrison Elemen-

A wax statue of Abraham Lincoln, seen Monday, lost its head amid scorching heat in D.C.

tary School in Northwest Washington. The noble rendering, meant to draw attention to the Civil War era and its aftermath, was placed under towering trees sure to provide ample shade in summer.

That was the thinking, anyway. Instead, three consecutive days of temperatures exceeding the mid-90s laid waste to wax Lincoln. Photos of the melting president with his head tilting far backward

SEE LINCOLN ON A7

Thousands of pieces of mail under surveillance

Records reveal extent of Postal Service’s sharing with law enforcement

BY DREW HARWELL

The U.S. Postal Service has shared information from thousands of Americans’ letters and packages with law enforcement every year for the past decade, conveying the names, addresses and other details from the outside of boxes and envelopes without requiring a court order.

Postal inspectors say they fulfill such requests only when mail monitoring can help find a fugitive or investigate a crime. But a decade’s worth of records, provided exclusively to The Washington Post in response to a congressional probe, show Postal Service officials have received more than 60,000 requests from federal agents and police officers since 2015, and that they rarely say no.

Each request can cover days or weeks of mail sent to or from a person or address, and 97 percent of the requests were approved,

SEE MAIL ON A14

IN THE NEWS

A deadly Hajj After a Prince George’s County couple’s deaths during the pilgrimage, their daughter alleges they were failed by the tourist company they hired. **B1**

CNN debate President Biden’s advisers hope for a display of vigor, while aides to Donald Trump want him to rein in his excesses. **A4**

THE NATION Federal prosecutors are recommending charges against Boeing, two people said. **A3**
A State Department official has been nominated as the Pentagon’s new chief of staff. **A3**

THE WORLD The Philippines needs rice, but fewer young people are willing to go into farming. **A8**
The Biden administration’s hopes for a cease-fire and increased aid in Gaza are fading. **A10**

THE ECONOMY Social Security has eliminated many unskilled jobs from an outdated database used to decide who gets disability benefits. **A12**
Apple was accused of violating European Union rules by making it hard for app creators to “steer” consumers. **A12**

THE REGION The GOP primary in Virginia’s 5th Congressional District is too close to call, the Associated Press declared. **B1**
DNA on a water bottle at Dulles International Airport was the break police needed to solve a Maryland killing from 2001. **B1**

STYLE For people who share that they use medications that help weight loss, the comments are often judgmental. **C1**

SPORTS Bullis School student Quincy Wilson, 16, falls short of Olympic 400 meters team, but might claim a relay bid. **D1**

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