



Very hot 100/81 • Tomorrow: Very hot 101/78 **B6**

Democracy Dies in Darkness

SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 2024 • **\$3**

Ukrainians laud new U.S. policy — in part

Ability to fire into Russia has helped, they say, but range is too limited

BY SIOBHÁN O'GRADY, ROBYN DIXON, SERHIY MORGUNOV AND KOSTIANTYN KHUDOV

KHARKIV, UKRAINE — A new U.S. policy allowing Ukraine to fire certain American weapons at Russian territory has led to a reduction in some Russian attacks but still restricts the range enough that it prevents Ukraine from hitting key airfields, two Ukrainian officials said. Those airfields are used by Russian jets that drop the deadly glide bombs now inflicting the greatest damage on military positions and civilians.

The Ukrainian officials said the United States has restricted Ukraine to firing less than 100 kilometers, or about 62 miles, from the border. Both spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the rule. U.S. officials declined to specify the limitation but said the Ukrainians' assertion of less than 100 kilometers was incorrect.

"The U.S. has agreed to allow Ukraine to fire U.S.-provided weapons into Russia across where Russian forces are coming to attempt to take Ukrainian territory," said a Pentagon spokesman, Maj. Charlie Dietz. "This is not about geography or a certain radius, but if Russia is attacking or about to attack from its territory

SEE UKRAINE ON A9

ELECTION 2024

Biden to assail rival as worse than before

Campaign attack strategy will frame a 'snapped' Trump as a larger threat

BY MICHAEL SCHERER

President Biden quietly revealed his campaign's master strategy to defeat Donald Trump last month at a private fundraiser outside Seattle.

"Let's get to the message of the campaign," Biden told a crowd of about 100 who had gathered in a sprawling lakeside mansion. Reading from a teleprompter, the president declared that Trump is now a greater threat to the country than during his time in office.

"When he lost in 2020, something snapped in him," Biden said, a bumper sticker slogan he has been repeating ever since.

The notion that the former president changed — becoming more self-obsessed, more dangerous and more extreme — has since been seeded throughout Biden's campaign, the result of months of polling, focus groups and ad testing, his advisers say. Independent Democratic groups that plan to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to help reelect Biden have come to similar con-

SEE BIDEN ON A6

In the middle of a bruising heat wave, a brief respite



MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Richard Adams, 9, visiting from the San Francisco Bay Area, cools off at the Yards Park before a Washington Nationals game Thursday. Richard's father, Ryan Adams, said temperatures soaring into the 90s were welcomed. Then he's really going to love this weekend, because it's going to get even hotter. **Story, A3**

China backed criminal clans before a crackdown

Brutally run compounds turned Myanmar border area into cyberscam hub

BY SHIBANI MAHTANI, CHRISTIAN SHEPHERD AND PEI-LIN WU

For the scion of a crime family linked to human trafficking and enslavement, money laundering and global cyberscams, Wei Qingtao was brazenly public. His Douyin account, the Chinese-language version of TikTok, flaunted the excesses of his life in a remote corner of Myanmar by the border with China: Bentleys and Lamborghinis, rare cigars

and private jets.

When the 27-year-old partied at the multistory glass-walled nightclub he owned in a region called Kokang, he'd throw crisp Chinese yuan bills into the crowd as international techno DJs, chauffeured in along dirt roads, performed their sets.

In November, the good times rolled to a stop. Wei's social media presence vanished. He soon appeared in a different kind of video: reading a scripted confession while in Chinese custody.

"The money we make from cyberscams comes from the pensions of everyday Chinese people," Wei said, a baggy gray sweater replacing his bespoke blazers. "This time, the Chinese government has made up its mind. ... We must not cling to any

illusions." Within weeks, his uncle was in cuffs on a plane to China, flanked by dozens of police officers.

The detention of Wei and at least 15 other alleged senior crime family members and their associates was lavishly covered by Chinese media, designed to showcase Beijing's reach. This was proof, Chinese officials said, of their determination to crush transnational criminals victimizing their citizens, no matter where they are based.

The official Chinese Communist Party news outlet called the arrests a "death knell" for the scams, which tried to dupe people into giving up their money, including through bogus investments schemes and fake online romances. "No matter how ... big

you become," the People's Daily wrote, "you cannot escape the severe punishment of the law."

That crusading narrative is incomplete, however.

A Washington Post investigation found that Kokang's criminal networks — principally led by the Wei, Bai and Liu families, according to U.N. officials, Chinese court records and analysts — had for more than a decade enjoyed close relations with Chinese officials, primarily in neighboring Yunnan province, along with support from Beijing and the military government in Myanmar. The Myanmar military chief, Min Aung Hlaing, further solidified the families as political and economic brokers after taking power in a 2021

SEE MYANMAR ON A8

Finally, answers in her mother's killing

A daughter gets news of an arrest after waiting 23 years. Now she's enraged.

BY EMILY DAVIES

For 23 years, she lived in the shadow of a question. In her waking hours, she turned to God and Montgomery County detectives. In her sleep, she looked for her mother.

"Mama," Lauren Preer would say, "we need to find out what happened."

Then another day would go by without Leslie J. Preer, or answers. So she carried on — living with the fact that her mother, then 50, had been beaten to death in an upstairs bedroom of her home in Chevy Chase, Md.

Now she was 46 years old with good friends and a good career. She had a 9mm Taurus pistol at home and pepper spray in her purse. And she had hope, still, that one day there would be an arrest and that closure — or something like it — might follow.

On Tuesday, like in the movies, the call finally came. On the other side was not freedom, but shock — then betrayal and rage.

"We have evidence," she recalled a detective telling her. "It's



FAMILY PHOTO

Lauren Preer and her parents at her graduation from Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School in Maryland in 1995.

Eugene Gligor."

He was the boy she had fallen in love with at 16.

"No," Preer said. "No."

The Gligor she knew was sensitive and warm. Now he is charged

with first-degree murder and facing arraignment in Montgomery County, where court records show he has yet to enter a plea. His lawyers did not respond to

SEE COLD CASE ON A4

After days of chaos, Winnett bows out as The Post editor

British journalist accused of unethical practices will stay at Daily Telegraph

BY ELAHE IZADI AND ISAAC STANLEY-BECKER

Robert Winnett, the British journalist recently tapped to become editor of The Washington Post later this year, will not take the job and will remain at the Daily Telegraph in London, according to a company email sent to Post employees Friday morning.

The change of plans comes after days of turmoil surrounding The Post, triggered by the abrupt exit of executive editor Sally Buzbee on June 2 and questions about past journalistic practices of both Winnett and William Lewis, The Post's CEO and publisher.

Lewis had announced Winnett's hiring when Buzbee departed 2½ weeks ago, along with plans for a "third newsroom" that would

be tasked with attracting new audiences. Under the plan, former Wall Street Journal editor Matt Murray came on board to run news coverage until Winnett's arrival, at which point Murray would have handed the reins to Winnett and run the new division in November after the election.

Murray took over June 3 and was introduced to the newsroom; Winnett, who oversees news coverage at the Telegraph as a deputy editor, had not yet met The Post staff and was almost entirely unknown in American media circles.

Lewis and Winnett have faced accusations in recent days of using unethical newsgathering practices in Britain, where they previously worked together at the Telegraph and the Sunday Times — London newsrooms that sometimes operate by different rules than their American counterparts.

Telegraph editor Chris Evans announced in a memo to his staff Friday that Winnett had pulled out of The Post job and would remain his deputy at the London

SEE WINNETT ON A12

IN THE NEWS

Documents case U.S. District Judge Aileen M. Cannon heard arguments after Donald Trump's lawyers claimed special counsel Jack Smith was improperly appointed. **A3**

Middle East unrest The Israel-Hezbollah fight has upended life for Syrian refugees in southern Lebanon. **A7**

THE NATION The FDA approved the first menthol-flavored vapes, stating the benefits "outweigh" risks. **A2**
A Texas family of taekwondo black belts stopped an attempted sexual assault. **A2**

THE WORLD A State Department expert on Israeli-Palestinian affairs resigned, citing family needs. **A10**
Benjamin Netanyahu, a political survivor, now faces fights from all factions. **A10**

THE ECONOMY The IRS said it will deny most claims for the pandemic-era Employee Retention Credit program because of "red flags." **A4**
Democrats are working on plans to raise tax rates on corporations and wealthy individuals next year. **A11**

THE REGION Stephen K. Bannon failed in his bid to delay his prison term and appealed to the Supreme Court for a ruling. **B1**
The head of the Maryland agency that regulates nursing home safety resigned weeks after a lawsuit revealed a backlog in inspections. **B1**

J.D. Spain Sr. won a five-way Democratic primary for an open seat on the Arlington County Board. **B1**

STYLE A new "Black Barbie" documentary on Netflix tells the story of a doll that has become so much more. **C1**

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