



Partly sunny, windy 40/26 • Tomorrow: Partly sunny 43/32 B6

Democracy Dies in Darkness

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2023 • \$3

Menendez associate's Egypt ties ran deep

Entrepreneur charged with bribery is linked to 2015 military shipment

BY SHAWN BOBURG, CLAIRE PARKER, TERRENCE MCCOY AND MARINA DIAS

In late 2015, cranes at a seaport in Jacksonville, Fla., carefully hoisted U.S. military helicopters worth up to \$40 million each onto a massive cargo ship set to deliver the equipment to the Egyptian government.

Egypt's Defense Ministry had turned to an unusual figure to help arrange transport of the prized hardware: Wael Hana, an Egyptian American businessman who had previously run a trucking business, a gas station and a truck stop along a gritty, industrial strip in northern New Jersey.

"I don't know how he got involved with shipping aid for the Egyptian military," said Essam Youssef, a former Hana associate who runs a marine transport company in New Jersey and said he helped Hana arrange the November 2015 shipment. "It was strange. The way he was coming to me, he didn't have a clue about shipping. But it was clear the Egyptian government trusted him."

Eight years later, Hana's ties to the Egyptian government are under a bright spotlight.

After a years-long investigation, U.S. authorities charged him

SEE EGYPT ON A7

High court case could disrupt tax system

Challenge to 2017 law attacks legal basis for billions in U.S. revenue

BY ANN E. MARIMOW AND JULIE ZAUZMER WEIL

The fate of an obscure provision of President Donald Trump's 2017 tax package, which will be reviewed by the Supreme Court next week, has many experts panicked over the potential to destabilize the nation's tax system. In addition, some say the outcome could preemptively block Congress from creating a wealth tax.

But the case has also exposed questions about the accuracy of the personal story a Washington state couple presented to the court in making their constitutional challenge to the tax, a one-time levy on offshore earnings.

Charles and Kathleen Moore appear to have closer ties to the company central to the case than they disclosed in court filings. Among other things, Charles Moore served on its board for five years and made a significant cash contribution to the company, records show.

Legal advocacy groups often rely on individuals to humanize their efforts in court, and it is not the first time that those on the other side have pointed to incon-

SEE TAX ON A4

The town was "going to dry up and blow away. I had no idea how the heck I was going to save it."

Bill Thek, mayor of Kemmerer, Wyo., on the town's prospects before the Gates project



KIM RAFF FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Mayor Bill Thek took office in 2020 with a mission to save this small coal town in southwest Wyoming, where high desert hills are rich in fossils and the fuels derived from them. The local power plant was scheduled to stop burning the carbon-emitting rock that had provided jobs for more than a century. The mine seemed likely to close along with it.

"We're going to dry up and blow away," Thek recalled thinking at the time. "I had no idea how the heck I was going to save it."

Three years later, he and many others in this deep-red corner of the nation's top coal-producing state have pinned hopes on unlikely saviors: tech mogul Bill Gates and the Biden administration, co-funders of a \$4 billion, first-of-its-kind nuclear project expected to employ locals and position Kemmerer as a pioneer in a clean-energy movement powered by small

A fading Wyoming coal town hitches its hopes to Bill Gates's clean-energy dream

BY KARIN BRULLIARD IN KEMMERER, WYO.

A worker arrives at Kemmerer's Naughton Power Plant, which is set to stop burning coal in 2026, a shift that imperils the town's mine. Kemmerer, in deep-red southwest Wyoming, hopes to survive with a \$4 billion, first-of-its-kind nuclear project.

reactors.

That is the idea, anyway. The projected start date has already been delayed two years to 2030 because the sole source of the special fuel needed is Russia, and required environmental reviews have pushed back groundbreaking to at least next spring. A similar federally backed project in Idaho folded this month amid spiraling costs. The setbacks have stirred doubts among industry analysts, as well as some Kemmerer residents who stop Thek at the town's lone grocery to ask whether Gates and the feds can be trusted to deliver.

But in a community idling in the latter half of its latest boom-bust cycle, misgivings have taken a back seat to optimism — and a dawning acceptance that a region built on coal, oil and gas may have little choice but to embrace a new identity. Amid empty

SEE WYOMING ON A6

Texas raid shows views of hemp aren't so relaxed

Legal battles erupt over plant that itself is not intoxicating but can generate items that are

BY DAVID OVALLE AND FENIT NIRAPPII

The Bee Hippy Hemp Dispensary offers customers gummies and oils derived from hemp, the cannabis plant that — unlike marijuana — is legal under Texas and federal law. One of the most popular items: earthy greenish-brown nuggets known as THCA hemp flower, which some customers smoke.

"It helps them go to sleep," dispensary owner Chris Fagan said. "And they use it for anxiety."

For nearly two years, the Dallas-area shop operated out of an old 1950s gas station with nary a problem. So Fagan said he was stunned when Garland, Tex., police in June raided his home and the dispensary, even as he insisted that his products qualified as hemp, not marijuana. Still, Fagan was jailed briefly on suspicion of selling marijuana — which remains illegal for recreational use in Texas — and police issued a public safety warning that his products "can be dangerous."

SEE HEMP ON A8



SERGIO FLORES FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Dallas-area dispensary owner Chris Fagan, right, was jailed briefly on suspicion of selling marijuana, even as he insisted it was hemp. Here, he and lawyer Mark T. Lassiter display hemp's legal definition.

Details of Gaza captivity emerge

EX-HOSTAGES RELAY SEVEN-WEEK ORDEAL

Families tell of isolation, darkness, meager meals

BY LOUISA LOVELUCK AND LIOR SOROKA

JERUSALEM — They survived on rice and bread and slept as best they could on chairs and benches. At least one man tried to escape his captors when an Israeli airstrike caused the building he was in to collapse. A young boy kept a diary of his experience.

The stories of hostages kidnapped by Hamas on Oct. 7 are emerging, slowly and in fragments, as dozens of Israeli women and children, as well as foreign workers, are released from Gaza as part of a humanitarian pause in the fighting.

Israel and Hamas agreed Monday to extend the pause for two additional days, under a deal brokered by Qatar and Egypt that will allow more hostages to be exchanged for Palestinian women and teenagers in Israeli prisons. Eleven Israelis and 33 Palestinians were released later Monday.

SEE ISRAEL ON A15

Fighting pause: Two days added to allow more releases. **A12**

Among the freed: Grandmothers, children and a caregiver. **A14**

Worries escalate over GOP's finances

Donations to the party committee are down, but leaders urge calm

BY ISAAC ARNSDORF AND JOSH DAWSEY

The Republican Party's finances are increasingly worrisome to party members, advisers to former president Donald Trump, and other operatives involved in the 2024 election effort, according to 10 people familiar with the matter.

The Republican National Committee disclosed that it had \$9.1 million in cash on hand as of Oct. 30, the lowest amount for the RNC in any Federal Election Commission report since February 2015. That compares with about \$20 million at the same point in the 2016 election cycle and about \$61 million four years ago, when Trump was in the White House.

The Democratic National Committee reported having \$17.7 million as of Oct. 30, almost twice as much as the Republican Party, with one year before the election.

"It's a revenue problem," Tennessee RNC member Oscar Brock said. "We're going through the same efforts we always go through to raise money: the same donor meetings, retreats, digital advertising, direct mail. But the return is much lower this year. If you know the answer, I'd love to

SEE RNC ON A2

IN THE NEWS

Celebration of life Funeral tributes for former first lady Rosalynn Carter in her home state of Georgia highlighted the touchstones of her work. **A9**

Tiny trash Researchers are hunting for microplastics in the Anacostia and Potomac rivers, hoping to aid cleanup efforts. **B1**

THE NATION

A Vermont man pleaded not guilty to attempted second-degree murder charges in the shootings of three men of Palestinian descent, all age 20, over the Thanksgiving weekend. **A3**

THE WORLD

Russia opened a criminal case against Russian American journalist Masha Gessen. **A10**
What to know as the United Arab Emirates hosts the COP28 climate summit. **A16**

THE ECONOMY

Your kids are probably using AI apps. Learn how to talk to them about the technology in a productive way. **A17**
Four experts in romance and relationships share advice on the changing rules of dating etiquette in the digital age. **A18**

THE REGION

Virginia schools are searching for ways to encourage student attendance as chronic absences remain high nationwide. **B1**
A murder trial began for a Prince George's County police officer accused of shooting a handcuffed man. **B1**

STYLE

First lady Jill Biden unveiled the theme for this year's holiday display at the White House: "Magic, Wonder, and Joy." **C1**

HEALTH & SCIENCE

Doctors searched for the cause of a real estate broker's balance, memory and urinary tract problems. **E1**

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