



Partly sunny 56/42 • Tomorrow: Rain 56/51 B6

Democracy Dies in Darkness

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2023 • \$3

Israeli forces kill 3 hostages by mistake

IDF announces civilian deaths just hours after U.S. reaffirms its support

BY LIZ SLY
AND BRYAN PIETSCH

Israeli forces shot and killed three hostages in Gaza on Friday after mistakenly identifying them as a threat, authorities said, more civilian deaths in a campaign that has killed over 18,700 people in the besieged enclave.

The Israel Defense Forces expressed “deep remorse” for the deaths of Yotam Haim, Samer Al-Talalka and Alon Shamriz, who had been held captive in Gaza for more than two months. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he was mourning the men in what he called an “unbearable tragedy.”

Their killings in the Shejaiya neighborhood of Gaza City illustrated the unrelenting intensity of the fighting in northern Gaza in the third month of Israel’s war to eradicate Hamas as a political and military force.

The deaths were announced by the IDF hours after White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan reaffirmed U.S.

SEE GAZA ON A9

Life in Rafah: Palestinian families struggle in Gaza’s last refuge. **A8**

Imperiled work: Al Jazeera journalist killed in drone strike. **A9**

Va. arena deal calls for record subsidy

Entertainment facility would put taxpayers on the hook for \$1.35 billion

BY JONATHAN O’CONNELL,
TEO ARMUS,
LAURA VOZZELLA
AND SAM FORTIER

A Northern Virginia sports arena that would move the Washington Capitals and Wizards out of downtown D.C. would receive the largest-ever public subsidy for a project of its kind, an estimated \$1.35 billion in state and local funds, if it goes forward.

To build the \$2.2-billion project, Virginia would need to create a sports and entertainment authority that would issue two bond offerings and would need to contribute an additional \$300 million from existing city and state funds, according to a 37-page study produced by investment bank JPMorgan for the state, a copy of which was obtained by The Washington Post.

The plan would require significant investment from the teams’ ownership group, Monumental Sports & Entertainment, which would provide a total of \$403 million up front and sign a 40-year lease with rent beginning at

SEE ARENA ON A14

Kevin B. Blackstone: Wizards exit would be a blow to Black D.C. **D1**



PHOTOS BY JAHÍ CHIKWENDU/THE WASHINGTON POST

After losing a baby, she found purpose

As a birth worker, protecting Black women from poor maternal outcomes is her life’s mission

BY AKILAH JOHNSON

HOUSTON — The first encounter Mimi Bingham had with the untoward experiences Black women face giving birth was her own pregnancy, 18 years ago.

That was long before she knew what a doula was — let alone considered becoming one.

Long before years of research and hundreds of encounters with women giving birth taught her that the loneliness, disrespect and neglect she recalled experiencing were not isolated to the West Virginia hospital where she delivered.

Long before she joined a coalition of Black birth workers in Texas who decided they must confront the national crisis of rising maternal deaths and critical complications because the price of waiting on government and medical systems is too high.

At seven months pregnant, Bingham said, she started leaking fluid and went to the doctor. Her blood pressure was through the roof, and an ultrasound showed the placenta was detaching from her uterus. “I was sent home and basically told to just wait for her to come,” Bingham recalled, but not before being asked, repeatedly, if she was doing meth.

She wasn’t. “In hindsight, I know for sure it was due



Mimi Bingham keeps a framed picture of her daughter, Kaiyia Marie Bingham, who died minutes after being born in 2005. Years after the traumatic birth, Bingham became a doula, and she is in the process of becoming a midwife.

to stress. No proper nutrition. I didn’t have a regular OB,” Bingham said. She was uninsured and couch-surfing with friends in an unfamiliar state after her relationship soured.

Two weeks later, Bingham was back at the hospital. “I just sat there, in labor, by myself,” she remembers. “When she came out, no one was in the room.”

Scared and afraid to touch her tiny daughter who was struggling to breathe, Bingham said she pushed the call button and waited for help. Hospital staff arrived and whisked the newborn away.

Minutes later, her friend Detria Waller walked into the room and found Bingham dazed and alone. Waller received a phone call from Bingham just before she delivered, asking her to come to the hospital. “I knew it wasn’t time for her to have the baby, so I threw on clothes and flew up there,” Waller recalled recently through tears.

Soon after she arrived, Kaiyia Marie Bingham was placed in her mother’s arms, wrapped in a baby blanket and deceased. “She just cried and held her for hours,” said Waller, now a mother of three. Except for the occasional whisper from Bingham about the infant’s beauty, Waller said, the two sat in silence until the next morning when she left for work.

Waller never asked Bingham about the

SEE DOULA ON A4

Antagonisms flare as red states try to dictate how blue cities are run

Many Democrats say such preemption is a punitive ploy to limit home rule

BY MOLLY HENNESSY-FISCHE



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

Glenda Starke wears a transgender flag at the Missouri Capitol in March to protest legislation to ban gender-affirming health care.

Despite long advocating small government and local control, Republican governors and legislators across a significant swath of the country are increasingly overriding the actions of Democratic cities — removing elected district attorneys or threatening to strip them of power, taking over election offices and otherwise limiting local independence.

State lawmakers proposed nearly 700 bills this year to circumscribe what cities and counties can do, according to Katie Belanger, lead consultant for the Local Solutions Support Center, a national organization focused in part on ending the overreach it calls “abusive state preemption.”

The group’s tracking mostly found “conservative state legisla-

SEE BLUE CITIES ON A12

In push against Harvard leader, some see racism

Criticism of testimony on Hill widens to her credentials, research

BY HANNAH NATANSON,
JACK STRIPLING
AND SUSAN SVRLUGA

Not long after Harvard President Claudine Gay testified before Congress about antisemitism, spurring widespread outrage and calls for her resignation, someone sent Monica Clark a social media post.

Clark, president of the Harvard Black Alumni Society, opened the message and read the words of Bill Ackman, a fellow alum and a billionaire hedge fund manager. Ackman wrote that he had inside information that Harvard chose Gay — who in July became the

first Black person and second woman to lead the nearly 400-year-old school — partly because a selection committee would not consider anyone “who did not meet the DEI [diversity, equity and inclusion] office’s criteria.”

It is “not good,” he wrote on X, formerly Twitter, “for those awarded the office of president who find themselves in a role that they would likely not have obtained were it not for a fat finger on the scale.”

Clark had followed Gay’s responses during her congressional testimony, which came two months after Hamas attacked Israel and as Israel waged war in Gaza. She thought Gay’s remarks, including her refusal to say that calling for the genocide of Jews violated campus policies, “genuinely hurt some people.” But the questioning of Gay’s credentials reminded Clark of the time a high

SEE HARVARD ON A13

IN THE NEWS

Knowledge is power Members of a Florida task force that implemented Black history standards talk about Gov. Ron DeSantis’s efforts to remake teaching of the subject. **A3**

Development issues About half of properties auctioned off for a D.C. affordable housing program remain vacant. **B1**

THE NATION

The families of Michigan State students killed in a campus shooting will get \$15 million. **A2**
In Texas, Attorney General Ken Paxton has revenge, and maybe higher office, on his mind. **A6**

THE WORLD

Ukraine’s entry into the E.U. would usher in sweeping changes to the bloc’s dynamics. **A10**
President Biden won’t visit India in January because of “scheduling” needs, his staff said. **A10**

THE ECONOMY

As the holidays and a shutdown deadline loom, the House GOP is trying to negotiate a spending deal. **A11**
A panel of higher education experts could not agree on key elements of the Biden administration’s latest student loan forgiveness plan. **A14**

THE REGION

A woman whose 6-year-old son shot his teacher at a Newport News school was sentenced to two years in prison. **B1**
D.C. jail inmates for the first time elected a woman to serve as an advisory neighborhood commissioner. **B1**

STYLE

“Suits,” the USA Network series that’s now a hit on Netflix, is tailored for casual viewing. **C1**

SPORTS

Detroit Lions fans, who have largely suffered the team’s long history of futility in silence, are finally rooting for a winner. **D1**

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| BUSINESS NEWS..... | A11 |
| COMICS..... | C5 |
| OPINION PAGES..... | A16 |
| OBITUARIES..... | B4 |
| TELEVISION..... | C3 |
| WORLD NEWS..... | A8 |

CONTENT © 2023
The Washington Post
Year 147, No. 53701

