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SU V1 V2 V3 V4



A couple of showers 59/43 • Tomorrow: Mostly cloudy 58/40 B6

Democracy Dies in Darkness

MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2023 • \$3

In Israel, corrosive chaos for Netanyahu

Prime minister's political touch eludes him as a nation in crisis spirals

BY STEVE HENDRIX

JERUSALEM — Few figures have stood astride the Israeli public arena like Benjamin Netanyahu, the longest-serving prime minister in the country's history.

Over a record six terms, the leader known as "Bibi" has honed an image that is more puppet-master than politician, so often has he eluded scandal, bounced back from defeat and outwitted opponents (and more than a few allies).

But his government's move to overhaul the judicial system has created a paralyzing political crisis — setting off mass protests, sending the currency plummeting and sparking warnings of "civil war" from Israel's president.

On Sunday, the chaos began to corrode his own government. Netanyahu fired his defense minister, Yoav Gallant, one day after Gallant called for a halt to the judicial remake, saying objections to the changes within the military threatened Israel's security.

As the upheaval enters its fourth month with no sign of easing, the prime minister seems unable, or unwilling, to apply his vaunted touch.

"Where is he in all this? That's what we've all been talking about," said a former senior member of Netanyahu's government, who spoke on the condition of anonymity so he could talk candidly about his old boss.

Little about the new government's sudden push to dramatically remake the courts, or its response to the enormous international backlash, bears the hallmark of a Netanyahu production, SEE ISRAEL ON A12



'Mom is gone. House is gone. Everything is gone.'

One street in a tiny Mississippi town took a brutal beating from Friday night's twister

BY ANUMITA KAUR AND EMMANUEL FELTON

ROLLING FORK, MISS. — Damien Harris dug through the rubble on the lot where his family's mobile home once stood Sunday morning, desperate to find anything from his old life that he could hold onto.

Two days earlier, his mother had called and told him not to come home. The weather was bad and seemed to only be getting worse. He did what she told him but grew worried when he didn't hear from her hours later.

He raced back to Rolling Fork around 11 p.m. in the pouring rain, but it was too late. His

family's mobile home was gone and his mother was dead, a victim of a powerful tornado that tore through Mississippi, killing at least 25 people.

"It was a mobile home to a lot of people," he said, picking up an old baseball mitt of his that he found lying in a puddle. "But it was home."

On Sidney Alexander Street, where Harris lived, and the neighboring blocks that line Mulberry Street, destruction came quickly. The tornado was exceptionally large, carving a path measuring nearly 60 miles, according to the National Weather Service. Less than 1 percent of tornadoes in the

SEE STREET ON A6



JAHU CHIKWENDU/THE WASHINGTON POST

A.C. Warfield, top, salvages what he can of his belongings, including a childhood picture of Adrian Warfield, above, on Sunday in Rolling Fork, Miss. The powerful tornado that tore through the area on Friday night, carving a path measuring nearly 60 miles, killed 25 people in Mississippi and devastated the town of about 2,000 people in the state's Delta region.

Tornado victims face long recovery

BIDEN UNLOCKS FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Rolling Fork struggles to see beyond the wreckage

This article is by Adam Lynch, Ginny Cooper McCarley, Lauren Kaori Gurley, Ben Brasch and Brittany Shammass

ROLLING FORK, MISS. — For many of the residents of the community of Rolling Fork, the recovery is not going to be quick. In fact, it may never come.

It's not for a lack of promises or commitments from local, state and federal officials, which have come steadily over the weekend. It's just that everything that once stood for their lives is gone.

Glenn Spells was busy hurling waterlogged mattresses, clothing and broken pieces of furniture from the bare wood frame of his devastated duplex. Seven years of Rolling Fork life lay in a colorful pile around his ankles.

So few pieces of his rental unit remained upright that there was no guarantee it would not be carted off to a landfill in the coming days. Uncertain of tomorrow, he and two friends worked beneath the nonexistent roof to throw the home's contents to the lawn as his 9-year-old daughter looked on.

"We lost everything. We didn't have insurance for any of this," said Spells, who rented the property with his girlfriend. He is already looking ahead over the next few months and doesn't believe his future includes life in Rolling Fork.

President Biden approved a major disaster declaration for Mississippi early Sunday, unlocking federal aid to assist in recovery efforts

SEE TORNADO ON A4

The race to stop starfish from melting into goo

Sea star wasting syndrome is robbing the invertebrates of their limbs and upending ecosystems

BY DINO GRANDONI

NEWPORT, ORE. — In an old industrial warehouse, Tiffany Rudek leaned into a chest-high tank. Using a laminated card, she gently pried a red-speckled sea star from the enclosure's bright blue walls.

The starfish was reluctant, clinging with its tiny, tubular feet. "It's delicate to move them," said Rudek, an aquarist at the Oregon Coast Aquarium. Reaching underwater, she unstuck it for its own good.

It was bath time for the sick sea star.

This leather star, like many starfish species, is supposed to have five arms. This one has four. A tuft of pale, spongy tissue is all that is left where its limb came off.

"Sometimes animals need a little help," she said.



AMANDA LUCIER FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Sea stars at the Oregon Coast Aquarium in December. The crash of starfish populations could make climate change worse by throwing into disarray aquatic habitats that are home to hundreds of other species and crucial for keeping CO2 out of the atmosphere.

For the past decade, a mysterious illness has spread along the Pacific Coast, causing sea stars — more commonly known as starfish — to literally melt into goo. The outbreak has hit starfish from southern Alaska to Baja California in Mexico, decimating more than a dozen species. The ailment is so pervasive among the invertebrates in the region that even specimens in aquariums contract it. Some die within hours of showing symptoms.

No one is sure where the outbreak came from. And no one can agree on what exactly is causing it — whether the source is a virus, bacteria, a change in the environment or something else entirely.

But many biologists are sure of one thing: The disease, dubbed sea star wasting syndrome, threatens to drive some starfish to extinction and hints at deeper

SEE STARFISH ON A18

Latest economic tremors reveal cost of complacency

BY DAVID J. LYNCH

Each of the last four U.S. presidents has confronted an economic crisis serious enough to warrant extraordinary government intervention in the workings of the free market. Once rare, such dramatic rescues have become the norm.

The authorities' swift response this month to the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank, which until the day it failed had been regarded as of little importance beyond the technology sector, revealed a brittle system addicted to infusions of official support, according to some economists.

Now, fresh economic dangers loom, including in the largely unregulated private markets that provide more than half of all U.S. consumer and business credit.

Economic calamities in recent years have erupted in rapid suc-

cession. The SVB episode came three years after the pandemic sparked job losses and supply chain disruptions, which occurred little more than a decade after the 2008 financial crisis.

The three episodes that rocked Americans had little in common. Two originated in errors by captains of finance; one resulted from a once-in-a-century outbreak of disease. But they all emerged after periods of success had lulled investors and executives into assuming that favorable conditions would endure.

Years of ultralow interest rates preceded both the 2008 crash and the SVB affair, encouraging bankers to engage in riskier ventures. Likewise, in the years before the pandemic, a relatively placid geopolitical scene made the cost savings of ocean-spanning supply chains seem attractive.

SEE ECONOMY ON A5

IN THE NEWS

Putin's threats The United States and its European allies warned the Russian president against what they said was his "dangerous" rhetoric about nuclear weapons. A11

Men's Final Four set Miami and San Diego State join Florida Atlantic and Connecticut in the penultimate round of the tournament. D1

THE NATION
An exiled Chinese tycoon indicted in a fraud case controls the conservative social media platform Gettr, former employees say. A3

THE ECONOMY
Americans deserve a

better message than "Trust us, TikTok is bad." The Tech Friend's Shira Ovide writes. A15

THE REGION
D.C. officials plan to cancel as much as \$90 million in residents' medical debt. B1

THE WEEK AHEAD

MONDAY
Secretary of State Antony Blinken chairs a virtual discussion with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

TUESDAY
President Biden visits North Carolina to discuss job growth.

WEDNESDAY

The Supreme Court hears oral arguments.

THURSDAY

Jobless claims for the week ended March 30 are expected at 195,000.

FRIDAY

The Supreme Court meets for a conference.

STYLE

The long way

Juliette Lewis conquered Hollywood by 22. She's finally back on top. C1

Après-ski looks

As Gwyneth Paltrow faces a trial over a crash on the slopes, what does her courtroom style say about her legal strategy? C1

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