

The Washington Post

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RE V1 V2 V3 V4



Partly sunny 76/55 • Tomorrow: Showers 64/56 B6

Democracy Dies in Darkness

FRIDAY, MAY 3, 2024 • \$3

U.S. says its strike killed civilian, not a terrorist

Military review affirms Post report doubting claim on al-Qaeda figure

BY ALEX HORTON AND MEG KELLY

A U.S. drone strike in Syria last year killed a 56-year-old shepherd after confusing him for a terrorist leader, an internal investigation concluded, underscoring the Pentagon's persistent struggle to avoid unintentional casualties despite the Biden administration's pledge to curb such incidents.

The new assessment by U.S. Central Command, which oversees American military activity throughout the Middle East, affirms a Washington Post investigation published a year ago that cast doubt on officials' initial public claim to have slain a senior al-Qaeda figure. A summary of the investigation's findings was released Thursday.

Lotfi Hassan Misto was tending to his animals on May 3, 2023, in Qorqanya, a rural town in northwestern Syria. Above, his movements were being tracked by an armed Predator drone. When U.S. forces fired a Hellfire missile into the rocky outcrop behind his home, commanders had confidence they were attacking a terrorist, officials said afterward. Instead, a defense official said this week, the suspected militant who had been their target slipped away and remains at

SEE SYRIA ON A16

THE DROWNING SOUTH

WHERE SEAS ARE RISING AT ALARMING SPEED

BY CHRIS MOONEY, BRADY DENNIS, KEVIN CROWE AND JOHN MUYSKENS

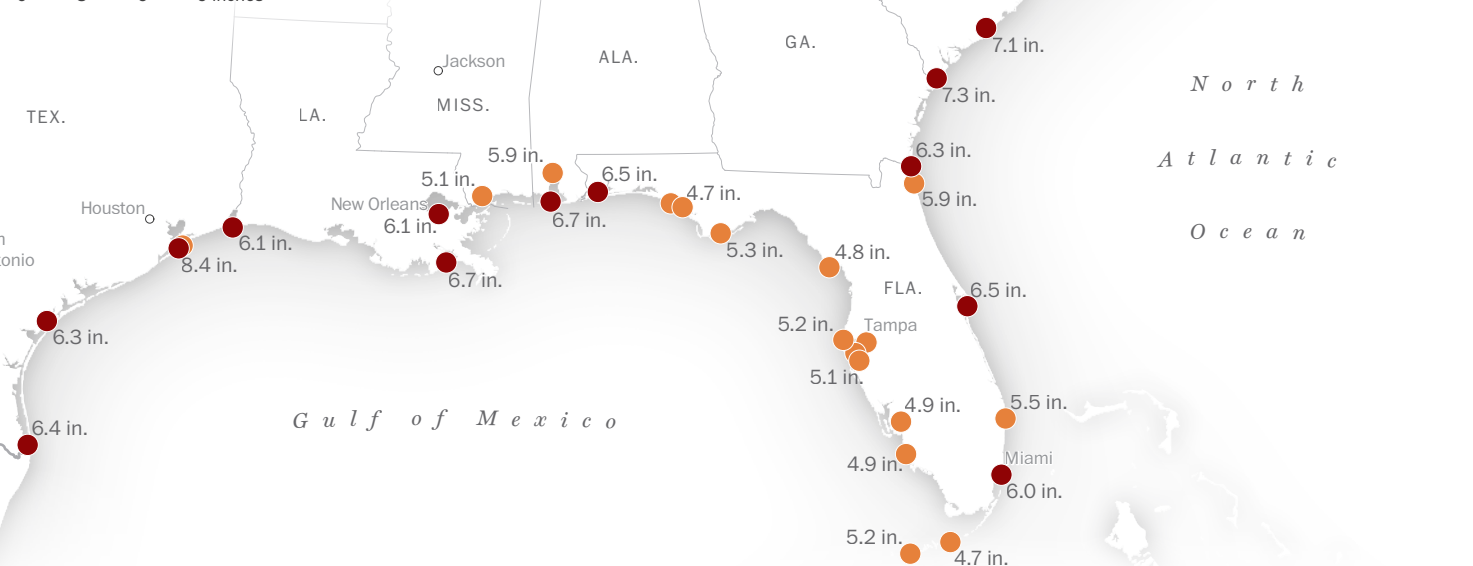
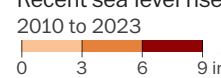
One of the most rapid sea level surges on Earth is besieging the American South, forcing a reckoning for coastal communities across eight U.S. states, a Washington Post analysis has found.

At more than a dozen tide gauges spanning from Texas to North Carolina, sea levels are at least 6 inches higher than they were in 2010 — a change similar to what occurred over the previous five decades.

Scientists are documenting a barrage of impacts — ones, they say, that will confront an even larger swath of U.S. coastal communities in the coming decades — even as they try to

SEE SEA LEVEL ON A8

Recent sea level rise 2010 to 2023



Trump's team paints him as a target

BY DEVLIN BARRETT, SHAYNA JACOBS AND MARK BERMAN

Donald Trump's defense team suggested Thursday that rather than orchestrating a hush money scheme, the former president was really the target of a shakedown attempt by unscrupulous entertainment figures who saw his 2016 presidential campaign as an opportunity for a quick payday.

In the most contentious testimony yet in the criminal trial, Los Angeles lawyer Keith Davidson denied accusations that he flirted with extortion when he negotiat-

Defense lawyers portray him as a shakedown victim, not a schemer

ed settlements with celebrities to keep potentially damaging stories out of the public eye.

By accusing him, Trump's lawyers displayed a key element of their defense strategy: getting jurors to focus on the lawyers and middlemen who negotiated hush money payments on Trump's behalf in 2016, rather than the politi-

cian who — according to prosecutors — orchestrated the payments and allegedly falsified paperwork about one of them to try to separate it from his presidential campaign.

The jury also heard a secretly recorded phone conversation between Davidson and Trump's then-lawyer, Michael Cohen, in which Cohen claimed Trump told him, "I hate the fact that we did it," in reference to the hush money payment to adult-film actress

SEE TRUMP ON A4

On the trail: When not in court, Trump relishes his rallies. A6



MARK PETERSON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

At his trial Thursday, Donald Trump's attorneys sought to focus on the actions of a lawyer they described as verging on extortion.

Bowser stands by D.C.'s downtown in year of cuts

Mayor warns of budget woes but proposes investing in area

BY MEAGAN FLYNN AND MICHAEL BRICE-SADDLER

They struggled to be heard from the back of the room, shouting as Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) tried to ignore them.

"Are you on the side of billionaires, or the working-class people of the District of Columbia?" one person yelled, as a demonstration broke out at the tail end of a budget forum Bowser held before releasing her proposal.

It was Dana White, advocacy director at Miriam's Kitchen, which aids the homeless. White and more than a dozen demonstrators had come to reject what they saw as a paradox: How could Bowser ask residents to brace for budget cuts in a time of fiscal

SEE BOWSER ON A2



ROBB HILL FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D), shown with Police Chief Pamela A. Smith and City Administrator Kevin Donahue in March, has proposed half a billion in cuts to city programs next fiscal year.

Big Tech fights plan to monitor payment apps

Scrutiny on Hill reflects a sea change in the way Americans spend money

BY TONY ROMM

The U.S. government is weighing whether to treat Apple, Google and PayPal-owned Venmo more like banks — and regularly inspect some of their operations — in a move meant to protect millions of Americans who now use their smartphones to pay at the register and send money to family and friends.

But the prospect of heightened federal oversight has sparked deep and wide-ranging unease throughout the tech industry, triggering a lobbying offensive that aims to limit the govern-

ment's power to monitor mobile wallets, accounts or other digital payment services.

The spats have occurred with little fanfare on Capitol Hill and at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which unveiled its proposal for new tech scrutiny in November. The agency seeks to subject the largest payment apps and services — from money-transferring tools like Cash App, for example, to the smartphone wallets offered by Apple and Google — to the same rigorous checkups as their brick-and-mortar predecessors.

In practice, the CFPB would gain the ability to conduct on-site reviews at these companies and examine their private documents and communications, a form of monitoring — known as supervision — meant to ensure the stewards of Americans' money have

SEE TECH ON A11

IN THE NEWS

A floating threat? China's plans for mobile nuclear reactors in the contested South China Sea have U.S. officials worried. A13

Goodbye, RFK The National Park Service approved demolition of D.C.'s aging stadium, paving the way for the city to revitalize the 190-acre property. B1

THE NATION Biden expanded two national monuments in California crucial to tribal groups. A3
The president senses opportunity in North Carolina, where he narrowly lost in 2020. A7

THE WORLD Paris unveiled a \$1.4 billion reservoir to keep the Seine clean for the Olympics. A12
Haitians are enduring poverty and violence as aid workers flee and relief funds dwindle. A14

THE ECONOMY Walmart has launched Bettergoods, a private label featuring more than 300 trendy products with prices ranging from \$2 to \$15. A17
Apple finds itself at a crossroads as it tries to revive consumer enthusiasm for its products. A18

THE REGION Dive teams recovered the body of Miguel Luna, a construction worker who was killed in the Key Bridge collapse. B1
A Texas man received a five-year prison sentence and \$200,000 fine for his role in the Jan. 6 riot. B1

STYLE When children seem to remember details of past lives, their families must decide how to cope. C1

WEEKEND Tom Sietsema's current favorite restaurants take you on an international flavor tour — all without leaving D.C.

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The Washington Post
Year 147, No. 53840

