



Photographs by MARCUS YAM Los Angeles Times

**AMAL ABU AWAD** picks olives in Turmus Ayya, West Bank, in early December, a task made difficult by expanding Israeli settlements.

## Another Palestinian war casualty

Olive farmers fear extinction in the West Bank as Israeli settlers block harvest

BY NABIH BULOS

TURMUS AYYA, West Bank — Abdullah abu Awad first harvested his family's olive grove decades ago with his father and grandfather. He knows the trees as well as he knows his own children.

But he hesitated before driving across the field one morning in December, unsure what the nearby Israeli settlers might do. The settlement of Shiloh sits just beyond the fence of his 12-acre property.

"Do you see anyone coming?" the 45-year-old farmer asked his son, who sat beside him in their SUV, scanning the road ahead.

"It seems OK," replied Judeh, 25, his voice tense.

They proceeded into the olive grove. The plan for that early December day was to harvest olives — an annual job that expanding Isra-



**ABDULLAH** abu Awad, far left, jokes with Iyad Naasan, center, after doing construction at the Abu Awad home in Turmus Ayya.

eli settlements have made increasingly difficult over the years for the more than 100,000 Palestinian families in the West Bank who rely on the crop for their livelihood.

Since the start of the war in the Gaza Strip in October, collecting olives had turned dangerous. Abu Awad and his family say they have been beaten up and repeatedly threatened with expulsion from their land. Their house has been vandalized, and some of their farm equipment has been confiscated or destroyed.

Farmers throughout the region worry that their way of life may be on the verge of extinction — as settlers and Israeli forces use the war as a pretext to shut them down.

"The last season, they allowed us to get only a part of this grove," Abu Awad explained. "This time it's even less."

[See **Palestinians**, A4]

## Newsom pressed to close more prisons

He could save the state \$1 billion a year, analysts say, but he's in tough political spot.

BY ANABEL SOSA

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Gavin Newsom went far beyond the promise he made in his first year in office to close at least one California state prison. But now, he is resisting calls from criminal justice advocates and liberal state lawmakers to shutter five more penitentiaries.

Shortly after taking office, Newsom placed a moratorium on the death penalty and has approved the closure of three prisons since 2019, but his administration appears to be pulling back from a 2022 budget proposal that considered "right-sizing California's prison system" by possibly closing even more facilities. The administration fears that operating the state's existing 31 prisons remains necessary to accommodate California's fluctuating inmate population, enhance rehabilitation programs and avoid a repeat of the overcrowding that led to federal court intervention over a decade ago.

"The governor has a long track record of being on the progressive side of criminal justice. His belief that we can reduce prison populations and improve public safety is achievable. That's the core

[See **Prisons**, A7]

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

## 'Clean' is a dirty word for Trump

His vow to abandon renewable energy programs clashes with California's ideology.

DOYLE McMANUS

Donald Trump says he isn't worried about climate change.

Before he was a presidential candidate, he said global warming was "a hoax" invented by China to kneecap the American economy.

"The climate has always been changing," he shrugged more recently.

If he's elected president, Trump says, one of his "Day One" priorities will be increasing oil and gas production — or, as he puts it: "Drill, baby, drill!"

With more fossil fuels, he promises, "we will be rich again and happy again."

Those positions are at the heart of Trump's campaign to regain the White House. And they put him on a collision course

[See **McManus**, A8]

## Two sides of L.A.'s 'mansion tax' coins

Measure has raised millions to tackle housing crisis. Critics say it hurts market.

BY JACK FLEMMING

One year ago, Los Angeles' "mansion tax" took effect. It has either been a godsend or an absolute disaster, depending on who you ask.

The transfer tax, formally known as Measure ULA, levies a 4% charge on all property sales above \$5 million and a 5.5% charge on sales above \$10 million, with proceeds funding affordable housing and homelessness initiatives.

When L.A. voters approved the measure in November 2022, it quickly became the dominating story line in L.A. real estate.

Proponents say the tax generates crucial funding to address L.A.'s housing crisis, and they're right. In its first year, Measure ULA has raised roughly \$215 million, according to the L.A. Hous-

[See **Tax**, A8]

## A dispute over Skid Row housing

State officials object to L.A.-based charity as sites' prospective buyer

BY LIAM DILLON

The world's largest AIDS charity has emerged as the leading bidder to take over a portfolio of homeless housing developments on Skid Row, a move that's drawn the opposition of state housing officials who've called attention to the charity's troubled tenure as a landlord.

The Hollywood-based AIDS Healthcare Foundation is looking to acquire properties, mostly old single-room occupancy hotels, owned by the Skid Row Housing Trust. The trust collapsed financially a year ago and is in receivership.

Seventeen trust buildings, totaling 1,200 units, are up for sale or are expected to be shortly. The foundation has proposed paying \$53 million for the first dozen of the buildings made avail-

[See **Housing**, A7]



FRANCINE ORR Los Angeles Times

**THE AIDS** Healthcare Foundation is looking to purchase 17 properties owned by the Skid Row Housing Trust. Above, a foundation office in Hollywood last year.

### USC, Connecticut in a game for ages

UConn coach says that it's a matchup between teams, not one between JuJu Watkins and Paige Bueckers. **SPORTS, D1**

### Brace for updates to Bowl parking

Two lots are closing to make way for alternative forms of transportation to the popular site in Hollywood. **CALENDAR, E1**

### Sit, stay, show cognitive ability

Pet dogs can understand that certain words refer to specific objects, brain-wave evidence shows. **PERSPECTIVES, A2**

**Weather**  
Mostly sunny.  
L.A. Basin: 67/50. **B6**

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