

## Migrant shifts upend strategy

Biden administration's 'root causes' approach failed to anticipate realities, experts say.

BY NOAH BIERMAN

WASHINGTON — President Biden, facing a political crisis at the U.S.-Mexico border in the early days of his administration, tapped Vice President Kamala Harris to lead a high-profile response that would bet heavily on improving conditions in three Central American countries.

It was known as the "root causes" strategy. The border, administration officials argued, was only a symptom. If the United States could improve economic, security and political conditions in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, fewer people would risk the perilous journey and much of the problem could be solved, they reasoned.

Three years later, the border crisis has only deepened, with record numbers of migrants from all over the hemisphere overwhelming the border, and a president on the defense as Republicans make immigration a key issue in his reelection campaign.

Specialists in migration say the administration miscalculated, choosing a narrow and time-consuming strategy that failed to anticipate the shifting nature of migration.

"It was focused on a long- [See Immigration, A12]

## UCLA ethnic studies to grow

Couple who fought for program in the 1960s donate \$10 million for endowments, research.

BY TERESA WATANABE

More than five decades ago, Morgan Chu was taught a version of American history that all but ignored the experiences of Asian Americans like him.

Chu, an attorney who grew up in New York and moved to Los Angeles to attend UCLA, never learned that the U.S. government barred Chinese people from immigrating to the United States in the 19th century and incarcerated tens of thousands of American citizens of Japanese ancestry without charges during World War II.

He was not taught about state laws in the early 1900s that prevented Asians from owning land or, even earlier, marrying outside their race. Nor did any of his classes recognize the contributions Asian Americans have made in shaping the nation beyond a scant mention of Chinese laborers who helped build the transcontinental railroad.

But in 1969, Chu and his wife, Helen, then a fellow Bruin, helped push UCLA to create some of the first ethnic studies programs in the nation, after joining scores of other students in pro- [See UCLA, A9]



RINGO CHIU For The Times

**A WOMAN** walks by a Hollywood Hills home that was damaged during the rainstorm Monday. The slow-moving weather system parked itself over Los Angeles for more than 24 hours and delivered record-setting precipitation Sunday with no signs of letting up.

# Forces behind monster storm

El Niño, climate change, regular winter weather patterns fed the 'bomb cyclone.'

BY HAYLEY SMITH

It appeared like a swirling specter off the coast of California.

For days, forecasters warned of life-threatening effects as an atmospheric river prepared to unleash a fire hose of moisture from Northern California to the Mexican border.

By Monday, those warnings had largely come to pass as the storm lashed the state — damaging homes, crumbling hillsides, flooding neighborhoods and knocking out power to more than 875,000 people. At least three people were killed by falling trees in Northern California, state officials said.

The hazards were also acute in Los Angeles, where the slow-moving system parked itself for more than 24 hours and delivered record-setting precipitation with no signs of letting up. It prompted a state of emergency declaration from Gov.

Gavin Newsom, as well as a local emergency declaration from Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass.

Experts said the monster storm was the culmination of a variety of factors, including El Niño, climate change and regular winter weather patterns. California typically receives the bulk of its rainfall between January and March, so by that metric, the storm was right on schedule.

But it also fed off unusually warm ocean waters as it grew, which added more moisture to its swelling payload. And as it zeroed in on

the coast, the storm reached bombogenesis — or "bomb cyclone" — status, indicating a sustained drop in pressure and a rapid strengthening.

"It did bomb out," said Alison Bridger, an atmospheric scientist with the Department of Meteorology and Climate Science at San Jose State.

The distinction is significant, Bridger said, as a drop in central pressure helps drive blustery winds. Some parts of the San Francisco Bay Area recorded peak gusts of nearly 100 mph dur- [See Causes, A7]

**6 in 10 L.A. pupils brave the rain**

All but two campuses stay open, with most employees present. **A5**

**How the weather system blew up**

A phenomenon known as a "bomb cyclone" is making things worse. **A6**

**Will insurance cover damage?**

Homeowners with standard policies are probably out of luck. **BUSINESS, A8**

## A victory for flood control system

County infrastructure withstands rains so far, but climate change poses a challenge.

BY LOUIS SAHAGÚN

Amid hammering rainfall, viscous mud flows and multiple state emergency declarations, Los Angeles County's byzantine flood control system has thus far absorbed near-record precipitation — a feat that officials say was made possible by extensive preparations, including the massive dredging of key debris basins and clearing of storm drains in areas deemed most susceptible to flooding.

But as the most intense period of rain passed into history Monday, the concern among local engineers and officials was whether flood infrastructure built over the last 100 years and based on 20th century hydrologic re- [See System, A5]



CARLIN STIEHL For The Times



RINGO CHIU For The Times

**TOP**, a fallen tree abuts a car on Lockridge Road in Studio City, where a resident said a mudslide "sounded like a plane crashing." Above, the swollen L.A. River.

## A torrent of damage and debris

Atmospheric river causes devastating flows in the region's canyons and hillsides.

BY ANGIE ORELLANA HERNANDEZ, CAROLINE PETROW-COHEN, NATHAN SOLIS, MELISSA GOMEZ AND HAILEY BRANSON-POTTS

Enriqueta Lima stood beside her car in Studio City, holding a puffer jacket over her head as a cold, steady rain fell Monday morning.

Lima, 49, had parked near Fryman Road, a street in a wooded canyon lined with million-dollar homes. She cleans a house there and was trying to figure out if it was safe to keep driving. She had not heard from the homeowners Sunday night, as the slow-moving storm poured down, so she decided to risk the drive to Studio City on Monday after drop- [See Damage, A6]

**211 hotline may pinpoint next major crisis in U.S.**

A social service system you've never heard of helps connect people in need of food, housing and other aid. **PERSPECTIVES, A2**

**L.A. County to redact racist housing records**

A contractor is hired for about \$8 million to seek out restrictive covenants that are "a stain on our history." **CALIFORNIA, B1**

**Jay-Z keeps Grammys from seeming stale**

Critic Lorraine Ali writes that the rap star's truth-telling was just the chaos this awards show needed. **CALENDAR, E1**

**Weather**  
Rain and thunder.  
L.A. Basin: 56/46. **B6**



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