



GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times

TOURISTS walk under cooling misters Monday in Palm Springs as the temperature reaches 118. The heat is forecast to last another week.

Record highs keep coming

The long-duration heat wave continues, causing deaths and compounding wildfire concerns.

BY GRACE TOOHEY

The intense, early-season heat wave broiling much of the Western U.S. has already set many records and contributed to several deaths, yet it's far from over: The heat is forecast to continue for another week, bringing triple-digit temperatures and compounding health and wildfire concerns across California and surrounding states.

"It's unprecedented heat — take this very seriously," said Dan Berc, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Las Vegas. "It's not normal, this is excessive heat. ... We're talking 10 to 12 degrees above normal for the hottest part of the year."

Officials have attributed several deaths to the severe heat.

Among them are a motorcyclist who died Saturday in Death Valley National Park and four suspected heat-related deaths in the Portland, Ore., area. In Grand Canyon National Park, as temperatures rose to the mid-90s, a hiker was found dead Sunday, according to the National Park Service; the cause of death was not immediately clear.

Extreme heat has become the nation's deadliest weather-related hazard, according to the National Weather Service, which has continued to beef up its warning systems to encourage people, especially vulnerable populations, to take precautions.

The extreme heat was also credited for a massive fish die-off in Lake Elizabeth in Northern California, according to the National Park Service. [See Heat, A5]

Lake fire rages over 20,000 acres

Michael Jackson's former home is among those at risk in Santa Barbara County. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Tough challenges await new Paramount CEO



BRIAN VANDER BRUG Los Angeles Times

THE ICONIC Melrose Gate at the Paramount Pictures lot in L.A. The studio is one of the oldest in Hollywood and has been producing films for over 100 years.

With merger, an uncertain new chapter in studio's storied history

BY JOSH ROTTENBERG

Legend has it that the iconic star-crested mountain logo of Paramount Pictures was born in 1914 from a simple napkin doodle by co-founder W.W. Hodkinson, inspired by his childhood memories of the majestic peaks in Utah. The fledgling company's name, the story goes, was taken from a sign on the side of an apartment

building. From such humble origins, the film studio — one of the oldest in Hollywood — would come to be known as the Mountain.

In recent years, this once-grand peak has seen more than its share of erosion, as Paramount has fallen behind its studio rivals and struggled to adapt to the advent of streaming.

Still, with a historic lot in the heart of Los Angeles and a stable of hit franchises, in-

cluding "Mission: Impossible," "Transformers" and "Star Trek," the Mountain remains a vital piece of Hollywood real estate worth billions, part of a media empire that also includes CBS and such cable networks as MTV and Nickelodeon.

In an era of increasing consolidation, the question was not so much whether Paramount would be sold but when and to whom.

[See History, A7]

David Ellison's acquisition is just the start of a long journey to turn around the entertainment giant.

BY SAMANTHA MASUNAGA

Tech scion David Ellison battled hard to get Paramount Global.

The Skydance Media chief executive first made overtures last summer to Paramount's nonexecutive chair, Shari Redstone, then spent months negotiating and renegotiating a deal acceptable to Redstone, Paramount's board and the company's shareholders.

Now that he's clinched the company through a complicated, multipronged transaction valued at more than \$8 billion, the real work begins. Ellison is set to become the company's chief executive, while former NBCUniversal Chief Executive Jeff Shell will be president. (Shell left his old job after acknowledging an "inappropriate relationship" with a colleague.)

The legacy media and entertainment company has major challenges Ellison will need to address quickly to get Paramount back on the right footing, once the deal closes during the first half of next year.

Like many entertainment companies, Paramount is facing a decline in theatrical box office revenue [See Paramount, A7]

How Alec Baldwin's 'Rust' case reached trial phase

The actor has pleaded not guilty in the shooting that killed Halyna Hutchins. A jury will now decide.

BY MEG JAMES

ALBUQUERQUE — Nearly three years ago, Alec Baldwin pointed a loaded gun at the cinematographer of the low-budget western movie "Rust." He thought the Colt .45 was empty; it wasn't, and the gun fired, killing Halyna Hutchins.

The Oct. 21, 2021, tragedy in New Mexico has led to multiple civil lawsuits, in-

cluding two brought by Hutchins' family members (one of which has settled). And this week, Baldwin is scheduled to go on trial in a Santa Fe courtroom after being indicted in January on a charge of involuntary manslaughter in Hutchins' accidental death.

Jury selection begins Tuesday, kicking off an eight-day trial that experts predict will be the most-publicized criminal prosecution in New Mexico's 112-year history.

Baldwin has pleaded not guilty. If convicted, the 66-year-old actor-producer could spend up to 18 months in prison.

How did Baldwin's case [See Baldwin, A10]



Santa Fe County Sheriff's Office

BALDWIN, in an image from video, talks with law enforcement after the 2021 shooting outside Santa Fe.

ANGRY BIDEN SHOVES BACK AT 'ELITES'

'Go ahead. Challenge me at the convention,' the president dares his Democratic doubters as pressure mounts.

BY NOAH BIERMAN

As angry Democrats pile criticism on President Biden, he has a message: He's angry too.

"I'm getting so frustrated by the elites ... the elites in the party who — they know so much more," Biden said sarcastically, calling in Monday to MSNBC's "Morning Joe," his favorite cable news show. "Any of these guys don't think I should, run against me: Go ahead. Challenge me at the convention."

Pressure has been mounting on Biden to drop out of the race since his poor debate performance last month. The televised call was part of a larger effort to push back against the internal pressure by rallying his party's base and channeling national anger with elites that cuts across both parties.

Hours after he railed against the party's insiders, Biden received an important boost from one of its heaviest hitters, Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer of New York, who told reporters "I'm for Joe" as he returned to the Capitol on Monday afternoon.

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York also reaffirmed his support, telling a CNN reporter his position has not changed.

Other Democratic lawmakers were more circumspect, including Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, who called for "conversations about the strongest path forward" and for Biden "to more aggressively make his case to the American people."

Biden's tone in the brief call to "Morning Joe" was intended to convey a fighting spirit, to reassure Democrats who worry he is not up to prosecuting the case against former President [See Biden, A5]

Mounjaro bests Ozempic in study

Patients taking Mounjaro lost more weight in the first direct comparison of the drugs. **PERSPECTIVES, A2**

Walloped by COVID illness

FLiRT variants continue to spread, bringing worst-ever symptoms for some. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Boeing accepts plea agreement

The firm would plead guilty to fraud, avoid trial over fatal crashes of 737 Max jets if judge OKs deal. **BUSINESS, A6**

Weather
Sunny and warm.
L.A. Basin: 89/65. **B6**

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