

"All the News  
That's Fit to Print"

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Prices in Canada may be higher

\$4.00



Amani Bazza holding her young daughter, encased in flowers and wrapping, after she was killed in an Israeli drone strike in Lebanon.

## Israel Targets Foes at Will, Even in Cease-Fires

By ROGER COHEN

NEAR THE ISRAEL-LEBANON BORDER — Beaufort Castle, atop a towering cliff that rises from the Litani River in southern Lebanon, is a 900-year-old Crusader fortification offering a magnificent panorama. These days, it may also be a place from which to view a killing.

The sky was a cloudless blue on a late September afternoon as the hum of an Israeli drone disturbed the beguiling beauty of the surrounding olive groves and vineyards. Steadily it drew closer.

Then, with a screeching whistle, the drone fired a missile that turned a white car on the highway hundreds of feet below the stone

### Journey to Strife-Torn Border Shows Effect of a Strategy

castle into a ball of fire. The explosion reverberated in the valley. Other cars careened to a helter-skelter halt.

About a half-hour later, a New York Times photographer, David Guttenfelder, and I reached the incinerated carcass of the car. The driver's seat was blown to oblivion. Two distraught young men, dressed in black, picked up small pieces of charred flesh, one by one. They dropped them into plastic bags to be buried the next day.

So goes the cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah, reached a year ago this past Thursday. Almost daily Israeli strikes against Hezbollah, including the killing last week in Beirut of one of the militant group's top commanders, punctuate a fraying peace. Lebanon exists in a gray zone between war and peace, which could also be the fate of Gaza as Hamas resists disarming and Israel strikes selected targets.

In effect, the war that spilled into Lebanon after the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel has slowed but never stopped.

"The Israelis say they can't leave unless Hezbollah disarms, and Hezbollah says how can we

*Continued on Page A12*

The lethal attack was the first in President Trump's legally disputed campaign of killing people suspected of smuggling drugs at sea as if they were combatants in a war. It has started coming under intense bipartisan scrutiny in recent days amid questions about the decision to kill the initial survivors and what orders were issued by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth.

At the White House on Monday, Karoline Leavitt, the press secretary, read a statement that said Mr. Hegseth had authorized the Special Operations commander overseeing the attack, Adm. Frank M. Bradley, "to conduct these kinetic strikes."

She said that Admiral Bradley had "worked well within his authority and the law directing the engagement to ensure the boat was destroyed and the threat to the United States of America was eliminated."

According to five U.S. officials, who spoke separately and on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive matter that is under investigation, Mr. Hegseth, ahead of the Sept. 2 attack, ordered a strike that would kill the people on the boat and destroy the vessel and its purported cargo of drugs.

But, each official said, Mr. Hegseth's directive did not specify

## Officials Deny Hegseth Order Of Boat Deaths

This article is by Charlie Savage, Julian E. Barnes, Eric Schmitt and John Ismay.

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration on Monday defended the legality of a Sept. 2 attack on a boat in the Caribbean Sea as calls grew in Congress to examine whether a follow-up missile strike that killed survivors amounted to a crime.

The unusual government intervention into the private market is fueling some concerns, including the opacity of the process and the potential for favoritism, corruption and market distortions, along with the possible loss of taxpayer funds should the investments fail.

Aaron Bartnick, a fellow at Columbia University and a former Biden White House official, said there were serious questions about whether the government role in private industry would address national security vulnerabilities and deliver a return on taxpayer dollars.

"In the absence of a clearly articulated strategy," he said, the concern was that "this could just

**THE WEATHER**  
Today, rain, mixed with snow at the onset, cloudy, high 40. Tonight, breezy, a shower early, cloudy, low 31. Tomorrow, sunny, dry, high 40. Weather map appears on Page A24.

## Government Pours Billions Into Private Equity Stakes

### Trump Officials Cite National Security — Unusual Ties to Firms Raise Worries

By ANA SWANSON

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration is snapping up ownership shares of private companies it deems essential to national security. It is an unusual new strategy that has already committed more than \$10 billion in taxpayer funds and shows little sign of slowing.

The government's growing portfolio of corporate ownership involves minority stakes, or the option to take them in the future, in at least nine companies involved in steel, minerals, nuclear energy and semiconductors, a New York Times analysis found. The deals were all struck in the past six months, with the bulk made in October and November.

The effort appears mostly driven by national security concerns, particularly a desire for the government to prop up strategic industries and reduce America's reliance on foreign countries like China for key resources. Some officials are hopeful the equity stakes will generate a windfall for taxpayers, but the likelihood of that is unclear. Many of the companies are facing financial headwinds, and some could take years to become profitable.

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Prior administrations have tried to speed the development of sectors like semiconductors and clean energy with grants, loans, tariffs and other policies. But tak-

Continued on Page A16

### More on the White House

**REJECTED** A federal court ruled Alina Habba was serving unlawfully as U.S. attorney. PAGE A17

**TIGHT RACE** The speaker and the president help in a fight to hold a G.O.P. seat in Tennessee. PAGE A15

## 'No Tax on Tips' Tricky to Define At First Blush

By ANDREW DUEHREN

WASHINGTON — President Trump's promise for "no tax on tips" has raised important practical questions for the Internal Revenue Service. What is the exact definition of a tip? Who typically receives them? Are photos of bare feet a type of pornography?

Maybe we should back up.

A sweeping tax cut that Republicans passed this summer created a new deduction for tips. While the tax break does not exempt tips from taxes entirely, it is still an incentive for people to earn more of them. To avoid any economywide shift of earnings into tips, the I.R.S. and the Treasury have had to impose some limits. Only people who work jobs that have "customarily and regularly" received tips can claim the deduction.

The board issued its recommendations on Monday and sent them to the state's gaming commission for final approval. The commission will vote on them by the end of the month. Absent some unexpected and highly unusual circumstance, the commission is expected to follow the board's recommendations.

The selection of Bally's could benefit President Trump, whose company, the Trump Organization, had leased the city-owned land at Ferry Point on which the proposed facility would rise, next to a public golf course that the company used to operate. When

*Continued on Page A19*



Cyclone Turns Sri Lanka Into 'a Disaster Zone'

The nation's leader called the flooding the most challenging natural disaster in its history. Page A8.

## After Storm and Ahead of High Season, Jamaica Rushes to Reset

tourism.

"From a scale of one to 10? Ten," she said. "Or maybe 100, because that's what we use here to survive."

Ms. Kerr is one of the more than half a million Jamaicans whose jobs depend directly or indirectly on tourism in the Caribbean country, that, in October, was battered by its first Category 5 hurricane.

The storm killed at least 45 people, damaged about 150,000 build-

By FRANCES ROBLES

NEGRIL, Jamaica — With power still out nine days after Hurricane Melinda swept through western Jamaica, Kellanie Kerr stood in the dark at the stifling hot souvenir shop in Negril where she works, waving a fan at her sole customer.

She tried to "guesstimate" how dependent Negril, a beach town on Jamaica's far west coast, is on

### Shoring Up an Island's Intact Tourist Hubs

ings and homes and crippled the tourism industry, which the island nation relies on for nearly a third of its economy.

With dozens of hotels wrecked by the storm's extraordinarily fierce winds and deluges of water,

authorities are rushing to reopen tens of thousands of hotel rooms in time for the crucial winter travel season. Tourism authorities announced that the country would be back in business for visitors by Dec. 15, which the government considers the start of the season, an ambitious goal that many hotels said they would not meet.

Some hotels still do not have electricity and water. Others were

*Continued on Page A5*

*Continued on Page A5*

*Continued on Page A19*

### INTERNATIONAL A4-13

#### Razor-Thin Honduras Election

Just 515 votes separate two candidates to be the country's next president in a race that bears President Trump's fingerprints. News Analysis. PAGE A9

#### Held for Two Years in Gaza

Segev Kalfon said he endured physical abuse and mind games during 738 days in the hands of Hamas. PAGE A4

#### NATIONAL A14-19

#### Mangione Hearings Begin

Lawyers for Luigi Mangione, who is accused of killing a health C.E.O., sought to exclude some evidence. PAGE A19

#### SCIENCE TIMES D1-8

#### A Handsome Trade-Off

Males of two species of pheasants seem to swap attractiveness for the ability to get a good look at predators. PAGE D2

#### Guarding the Michigan Sky

Industrialization in the state's Upper Peninsula is fueling a push to protect the area's celestial splendor. PAGE D1

### BUSINESS B1-7

#### Stars at Lifting College Rolls

Tulane and the University of Chicago attract many early applicants. The enrollment chiefs behind that success earn their keep by landing just a few more of those each year. PAGE B1

#### Surprise Tariffs for Shoppers

The end of an exemption on goods worth \$800 or less has left buyers with an extra shipping bill that must be paid before delivery. President Trump closed the loophole this year. PAGE B1

#### OPINION A22-23

#### Helen Ouyang

PAGE A23

### SPORTS B8-11

#### Agents of Serendipity

There are myriad basketball stars from France, like Victor Wembanyama. Two best friends saw the trend coming and are reaping the benefits. PAGE B8



ARTS C1-6

**Bringing 'The Artist' to Life**  
A show created by Aram Rappaport, right, and starring Mandy Patinkin, left, explores art and commerce. PAGE C1

#### Jitters at an Art Fair

Fourteen galleries pulled out of Art Basel Miami Beach this year, but others chose to embrace the fray. PAGE C1



SCIENCE TIMES D1-8

#### A Handsome Trade-Off

Males of two species of pheasants seem to swap attractiveness for the ability to get a good look at predators. PAGE D2



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