



Amami Bazzi 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

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

## 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 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



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

**By FRANCES ROBLES**

NEGRIL, Jamaica — With power still out nine days after Hurricane Melissa 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 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-

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

## 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.

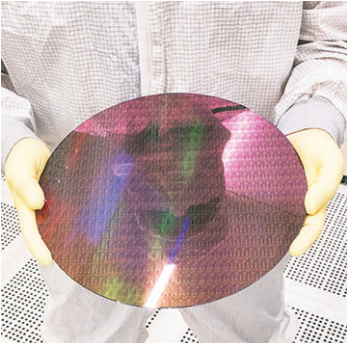
The government's growing portfolio of corporate ownership involves minority stakes, or the option to take them in the future, in at least nine companies involved in steel, minerals, nuclear energy and semiconductors, a New York Times analysis found. The deals were all struck in the past six months, with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

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 largest shareholder of Intel is the Commerce Department.

ministration's targeted equity stakes ensure that taxpayers get a good bargain and that the ball meaningfully moves forward to encourage further investment by the private sector."

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

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### More on the White House

**REJECTED** A federal court ruled Alina Habba was serving unlawfully as A.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

## New York City Near Approval For 3 Casinos

**By MATTHEW HAAG and DANA RUBINSTEIN**

More than a decade after voters in New York approved commercial casinos in the state, a state board on Monday recommended licenses for three full-fledged casinos in New York City, one in the Bronx and two in Queens.

The selections fulfill a long-held dream by the gambling industry to break into the largest city in the United States and for New York to create a potentially lucrative tax stream.

The five-person New York Gaming Facility Location Board had been considering three bids for three available licenses — the Bally's, Hard Rock Hotel & Casino and Resorts World New York City bids — but the members were not required to approve any of them.

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

## '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.

On the list of nearly 70 eligible occupations, detailed in a proposed regulation in September, were "digital content creators," "entertainers and performers" and "dancers," categories that, at first blush, seemed as if they could be a boon for America's sex workers. But the Trump administration also added that tips for prostitution or "pornographic activity" would not be entitled to the new tax break.

The exclusion came as a disappointment to people who post sexually explicit, or even just sensual, content on platforms like OnlyFans where users can leave tips.



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**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

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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

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



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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

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**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

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**Helen Ouyang** PAGE A23



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**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

