



DIEGO IBARRA SANCHEZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Hezbollah supporters in Beirut, Lebanon, on Wednesday mourned four people killed in coordinated explosions of pagers on Tuesday.

BIG FED RATE CUT
SHOWS OPTIMISM

Turning From Inflation to
Protecting Jobs

By JEANNA SMIALEK
WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve cut interest rates on Wednesday by half a percentage point, an unusually large move and a clear signal that central bankers think they are winning their war against inflation and are turning their attention to protecting the job market.
“Our patient approach over the past year has paid dividends,” Jerome H. Powell, the Fed chair, said during his news conference. But now “the upside risks to inflation have diminished, and the downside risks to unemployment have increased.”

The Fed’s decision lowers rates to about 4.9 percent, down from a more than two-decade high.
The pivot is a response to months of fading inflation, and it is meant to prevent the economy from slowing so much that the job market begins to weaken more painfully. Officials have been keeping a careful eye on a recent uptick in the unemployment rate, and by starting off with a big cut, the Fed is in effect taking out insurance against a bigger employment slowdown.
Reinforcing that cautious message, the decisive reduction came alongside economic projections that suggested a more rapid pace of rate cuts than officials had envisioned just a few months ago. Officials now expect to make another half-point reduction before the end of the year.
“We’re going to take it meeting by meeting,” Mr. Powell said. “We made a good, strong start to this, and that is frankly a sign of our confidence, confidence that inflation is coming down.”
While Mr. Powell said that the Fed was not yet ready to declare “mission accomplished” on taming inflation, he added that officials were “encouraged” by the progress that they had seen.
Wednesday’s rate cut marks a preliminary victory. So far, Fed officials have managed to slow inflation notably without causing major economic problems. The unemployment rate has crept up, but it hasn’t jumped painfully. Hiring persists, though it has slowed. Consumer spending remains strong. Overall growth is still robust.

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Trump’s Post-Election Threats Unnerve Officials

By NICK CORASANTINI
and ALEXANDRA BERZON

DETROIT — Donald J. Trump’s escalating calls to investigate and prosecute election officials he sees as “corrupt” are sounding alarms among democracy experts and the local and state workers preparing to run elections and tally millions of votes across the country.
In recent social media posts, Mr. Trump has said that election officials “involved in unscrupulous behavior will be sought out, caught, and prosecuted at levels, unfortunately, never seen before in our Country.” The November election, he added, “will be under the closest professional scrutiny

False Claim of Corrupt
Votes Fuels Promise
of Prosecution

and, WHEN I WIN, those people that CHEATED will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the Law, which will include long term prison sentences so that this Depravity of Justice does not happen again.”
On its face, the statements are promises to enforce the law. But coming from Mr. Trump, a politician who has repeatedly claimed to see corruption and fraud where there is no evidence of either and who as president pressured law

enforcement officials to act on his complaints, the words raise the prospect that government officials could be investigated and prosecuted for conducting a fair election.
In his refusal to accept his defeat in 2020, Mr. Trump already has accused election officials of working against him, calling them out by name on social media and spreading falsehoods about their work.
Democracy experts said the talk of prosecution had troubling parallels. Such threats are far more likely in new nations, post-communist states or places that are “struggling in the shadows between democracy and authoritarianism,” said Larry Diamond, who

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KYLE GRILLOT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A home destroyed by the Line fire in Running Springs, Calif., a market underwriters have left.

California Mountain Town Residents Defy Risks

By SOUMYA KARLAMANGLA

BIG BEAR LAKE, Calif. — The snow-blanketed peaks, fishing holes and cool alpine air of the San Bernardino Mountains have beckoned Southern Californians for generations. As far back as the 1880s, travelers braved a 6,000-foot climb in horse-drawn carriages to reach the pine forests that now surround the resort towns of Lake Arrowhead and Big Bear.
High in “the Alps of Southern

Locals Stay as Insurers
Flee Over Wildfires

California,” about 60 miles east of Los Angeles, vacationers would bathe in hot springs, hunt deer, hike to waterfalls and, primarily, escape the troubles of city life. In 1909, The San Bernardino County Sun observed that in the mountains, where the sky is a clear azure and songbirds never quiet,

“all is peace and beauty.”
Not so in the 2020s.
The San Bernardino Mountains still draw millions of tourists annually, but the 50,000 full-time residents are increasingly besieged by crises.
This week, locals are returning home after a fast-moving wildfire forced widespread evacuations and scorched 61 square miles of the landscape. Some fleeing residents took refuge in the same hostels where they had stayed last

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NEWS ANALYSIS

For Militants,
Toll Is Mental
And Physical

Blasts Puncture Image
as Powerful Israeli Foe

By BEN HUBBARD

ISTANBUL — First, hundreds of pagers blew up, killing and injuring members of Lebanon’s most effective military organization and filling the country’s hospitals with wounded patients.
Next, during mass funerals on Wednesday for people killed in the previous day’s blasts, more wireless devices exploded, adding to the human toll and spreading terror that any portable gadget in people’s hands or pockets could suddenly become a weapon.
Lebanese and American officials said Israel had remotely detonated devices carried by Hezbollah members. The attacks marked one of the largest security failures in Hezbollah’s history and sowed chaos inside one of the Middle East’s most sophisticated anti-Israel forces.
“This operation is basically Hezbollah’s Oct. 7,” said Mohanad Hage Ali, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut, comparing the group’s security failures to those that allowed its ally, Hamas, to strike Israel last year, starting the war in Gaza. “It is a huge slap.”

The attacks, carried out in two waves of simultaneous explosions, blew off fingers, bloodied faces and damaged eyes. The target was clearly Hezbollah, although many of the victims were civilians, including a medic killed in the hospital where he worked and a girl who picked up her father’s beeping pager to take it to him.
The Lebanese health authorities said that the first wave of explosions, on Tuesday, killed 12 people, including two children, and wounded more than 2,700. The second wave of blasts on Wednesday killed at least another 20 and injured 450.
Israel has not confirmed or denied involvement in the attacks.
For Hezbollah, experts said, the blows were both physical and psychological.
“It is a serious attack,” Mr. Hage Ali said, adding that during 11 months of aerial attacks across the Lebanon-Israel border, Hezbollah had lost many leaders and cadres, some in targeted assassinations.
“And now this blow cuts

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NEW EXPLOSIONS
ROCK HEZBOLLAH,
LEAVING 20 DEAD

WALKIE-TALKIES ERUPT

Beirut Buildings Burn in
Second Coordinated
Attack in 2 Days

This article is by Euan Ward, Aaron Boxerman, Hwaida Saad and Michael Levenson.

BEIRUT, Lebanon — A second wave of deadly blasts rocked Lebanon on Wednesday, as hand-held radios that had been covertly turned into explosive devices and carried by Hezbollah members blew up across the country, killing at least 20 people, wounding more than 450 others and shocking the nation.

It was the second coordinated attack against Hezbollah, the Lebanese armed group backed by Iran, and the explosions came as the country was burying its dead from the day before, when pagers exploded, killing at least 12 people and injuring 2,700 more, officials said.

Hezbollah blamed Israel for the pager attack, and American and other officials said Israel had hidden tiny explosives in a shipment of Taiwanese-made pagers imported into Lebanon.

The Israeli military neither claimed nor denied responsibility for the pager explosions, and it did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the latest attack. But Israeli officials issued statements on Wednesday signaling their intent to take more aggressive action to push Hezbollah forces away from Israel’s northern border.

Hezbollah has been exchanging cross-border strikes with Israel for 11 months, even as Israel battles Hezbollah’s ally, Hamas, in the Gaza Strip. Hezbollah began firing missiles and drones at Israel after the Hamas-led attacks on Oct. 7, prompting Israel to strike across Lebanon. For months, both sides have avoided all-out war.

But Israel’s defense minister, Yoav Gallant, said that Israel was “at the outset of a new period in this war, and we must adapt.”

“The center of gravity is moving north, which means we are diverting forces, resources and energy toward the north,” Mr. Gallant said in a statement on Wednesday that did not explicitly refer to the explosions in Lebanon.

The pagers blew up in people’s

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How Failures by Secret Service
Let Gunman Near Trump Rally

By EILEEN SULLIVAN
and KATE KELLY

WASHINGTON — Disorganized communications. Security threats identified but dropped. Vague instructions. Lack of follow-through.
These lapses are emerging as key reasons the U.S. Secret Service failed to protect former President Donald J. Trump from an assassination attempt at a campaign rally on July 13 in Butler, Pa., a New York Times investigation has found.
The agency’s failures at the Butler Farm Show grounds — where a gunman’s bullets grazed Mr. Trump’s ear, wounded two rally attendees and killed another — are expected to be laid bare in coming weeks in an internal assessment delivered by the Secret Service itself and in a report from an independent Senate investigation. The pressures on the agency have taken on even greater urgency in light of what the F.B.I. identified as another attempt on Mr.



DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES
Former President Donald J. Trump in Butler, Pa., in July.

Trump’s life at his golf course in West Palm Beach, Fla., on Sunday. Senator Richard Blumenthal, Democrat of Connecticut and the chairman of a Senate subcommittee investigating the security failures in Butler, said that what happened on July 13 was clearly preventable. “Some of the lapses,” he said, “are so egregious as to be almost unbelievable.”

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Pavel Kushnir, a pianist and an aspiring novelist, died in a Siberian jail after he criticized the war in Ukraine. PAGE A6

In the Shadow of India
An election for Kashmir’s legislature will restore some self-rule that the Modi government took away in 2019. PAGE A4

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Ex-Officer Implicates Police
A former Memphis officer said he had been angry about a lack of arrests even before he began a pursuit that led to a fatal beating of a Black man. PAGE A12

Linking Alcohol and Cancer
As cases of breast cancer and colorectal cancer rise in adults under 50, scientists are rethinking the idea that moderate drinking offers health benefits. PAGE A19

Lawsuit in Bridge Collapse
The Justice Department said the owner of the container ship that collapsed the Francis Scott Key Bridge was “grossly negligent” and “reckless.” PAGE A18



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Energy businesses and farmers in Pennsylvania brace as drilling slows and thousands of jobs vanish. PAGE B1

France Faces Budget Crisis
The nation is struggling to meet E.U. requirements, a situation the prime minister called “very serious.” PAGE B1

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Kaitlin Olson, the longtime star of “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia,” plays a crime-solving cleaning woman with savant-like tendencies in “High Potential,” a new series on ABC. PAGE C1

Discordant Notes at Orchestra
The New York Philharmonic’s labor agreement between management and the musicians expires soon, just days before the orchestra’s opening gala, a major fund-raising event. PAGE C1

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Sharing Recipes, and Laughs
A new cookbook from Stephen Colbert and Evie McGee Colbert puts them together in the kitchen, with plenty of love, and just the right utensils. PAGE D1

