



AARON PESKIN is the only San Francisco mayoral candidate running on a progressive agenda, putting him at odds with voters and tech titans who want to see a more hard-core approach to crime and homelessness.

In this S.F. mayoral race, the underdog is a progressive

SAN FRANCISCO — After 17 years wielding power and influence on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Aaron Peskin is facing a rather existential moment.

Has this famously liberal city moved too far right to embrace an old-school progressive like him for mayor?

Peskin, a slight man of 60 with a full beard and glasses, has spent his political career fighting for liberal causes. He's taken on large corporations, wringing substantial money from them to bolster community services. He's a vocal proponent of rent control and neighborhood preservation. As a recovering

The shift in dynamics reflects the city's tilt to the center in recent years

By Hannah Wiley

alcoholic, he thinks the city's homelessness issues should be addressed through a mix of compassion, affordable housing and services, rather than a punitive approach utilizing encampment sweeps and criminal citations.

Despite his experience, Peskin entered the mayor's contest against incumbent Mayor London Breed and three other Democrats — venture capitalist and former interim Mayor Mark Farrell, Levi Strauss heir and nonprofit executive Daniel Lurie, and fellow Supervisor Ahsha Safai — as an underdog.

Peskin joined the race in April, [See San Francisco, A7]

Rap mogul remains in custody in federal case

Sean 'Diddy' Combs pleads not guilty to sex trafficking, other charges, is denied bail.

By RICHARD WINTON AND HANNAH FRY

Sean "Diddy" Combs, a hip-hop music mogul whose career catapulted him to global stardom in the 1990s, has been indicted as the leader of what prosecutors say was a years-long criminal enterprise that preyed on women, plied them with drugs and forced them to participate in sex performances.

An indictment unsealed Tuesday charged Combs, 54, with sex trafficking, racketeering and transportation to engage in prostitution. Combs has been the subject of a sweeping federal inquiry into sex-trafficking allegations since at least the beginning of the year.

The charges, which he denies, mark a stunning fall from grace for the global superstar. The indictment caps years of allegations against Combs made by women that have tarnished his image.

The charges are likely to amplify questions around the culture of the music industry because authorities allege his employees were

key to facilitating his criminal behavior and covering it up.

"This office is determined to investigate and prosecute anyone who engages in sex trafficking, no matter how powerful or wealthy or famous you may be," Damian Williams, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, said during a news conference Tuesday. "A year ago, Sean Combs stood in Times Square and received a key to New York City. Today, he has been indicted and will face justice in the Southern District of New York."

The rapper and producer, who was arrested Monday in New York, pleaded not guilty to all charges in a Manhattan federal court.

[See Combs, A9]



RICHARD SHOTWELL Invision/AP
SEAN Combs faces at least 15 years in federal prison if found guilty.

O.C. pastor returns to U.S. after years in Chinese prison

By THOMAS CURWEN

After nearly 20 years in Chinese custody, Orange County pastor David Lin was released over the weekend and has returned to the United States.

Lin, 68, had been sentenced to life in prison after being found guilty of contract fraud related to his efforts raising money to build a church in China. Lin's family and the State Department denied the charge.

"We welcome David Lin's release from prison in the People's Republic of China," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said at a news briefing Monday,

adding that the Biden administration is continuing to push for the release of other Americans wrongfully detained by foreign governments.

For the last year, Lin has been at the center of an intense diplomatic campaign.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom brought up the case during a visit to Beijing in October. This summer, U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken pressed for Lin's release during a diplomatic meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Last month, national security advisor Jake Sullivan also met with Wang and discussed Lin's situation.

[See Pastor, A12]



BASSAM MASRI Associated Press
HUNDREDS were taken to American University Hospital in Beirut. Most suffered injuries to the face, hands or stomach, a Lebanese official said.

Lebanon pager explosions appear to target Hezbollah

Militant group blames Israel for attack that left nine people dead and nearly 3,000 hurt.

By NABIH BULOS AND LAURA KING

BEIRUT — In what appears to be a first-of-its-kind attack, nearly 3,000 people were wounded across Lebanon on Tuesday — including at least nine fatally — after hundreds of electronic pagers used by Hezbollah members and others suddenly and mysteriously exploded.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency called it "an unprecedented security

incident," with pagers blowing up in Beirut's Hezbollah-dominated southern suburbs and several other areas.

More than 2,750 people were wounded, 180 of them critically, according to Firas Abiad, Lebanon's acting health minister. Most of the injuries were to the face, hands or stomach — near where the pager would be held, Abiad said.

Hezbollah blamed Israel for the attack. "We hold the Israeli enemy fully responsible for this criminal aggression," the militant group said Tuesday in a statement.

Israeli officials and its military made no comment Tuesday about the exploding pagers. Israel has in the past shown itself capable of

mounting sophisticated remote attacks.

Hezbollah said that pagers used by its members, employees and operatives blew up around 3:30 p.m. Among the dead were one child and two of the group's members, the statement said. Iran's ambassador was also wounded in the attack, its embassy said.

"Hezbollah's specialized agencies are currently conducting a wide-ranging security and scientific investigation to determine the reasons that led to these simultaneous explosions," the militant group's statement said.

The bizarre and unprecedented attacks came hours

[See Lebanon, A4]

State puts focus on lowering maternal mortality

Surgeon general says the goal is to cut the rate of deaths in half by the end of 2026.

By EMILY ALPERT REYES

California's surgeon general has unveiled a new initiative to reduce maternal mortality and set a goal of halving the rate of deaths related to pregnancy and birth by December 2026.

Health officials say that more than 80% of maternal deaths nationwide are preventable. California has achieved a much lower rate of such deaths than the U.S., but maternal mortality resurged in recent years amid the COVID-19 pandemic, state data show.

"We have the lowest rate in the country. Now we can do better," the surgeon general, Dr. Diana E. Ramos, said in an interview.

Ramos was joined in announcing the effort Tuesday by First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom, the wife of Gov. Gavin Newsom.

In California, leading causes of such deaths include heart disease, bleeding, "behavioral health" issues such as mental illness and substance use, and infection. More than a fifth of pregnancy-related deaths in

[See Maternal, A7]

Harris decries Trump remarks on Haitians

In an interview with Black journalists, she calls attacks on immigrants in Ohio "a crying shame." NATION, A5

Law seeks return of Nazi-stolen art

State legislation aims to put a Picasso painting back in the hands of the family that lost it in 1939. CALIFORNIA, B1

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