



Mostly sunny 81/62 • Tomorrow: Partly sunny 84/63 B6

Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2024 • \$3

Iran signals strike on Israel may not be soon

New leadership fears a hasty retaliation would imperil a Gaza cease-fire

BY SUSANNAH GEORGE,
KAREN DEYOUNG
AND LEO SANDS

Iranian officials are signaling this week that an attack against Israel may not be imminent, tamping down some of the more urgent rhetoric around threats to avenge Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, who was killed last month in a blast at his guesthouse in Tehran.

Iran had warned early on of a “devastating” reprisal to “punish” Israel for the assassination — but it later adjusted its language, and, in a statement Wednesday, the Iranian mission to the United Nations reinforced the government’s position that any response “must be carefully calibrated” to avoid affecting a potential cease-fire in the Gaza Strip.

Even Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the country’s most powerful security force, said that an attack might not come right away. “Time is at our disposal,” Brig. Gen. Ali Mohammad Naeini, the IRGC spokesman, said Tuesday, according to local media. “And the waiting period for this response could be long.”

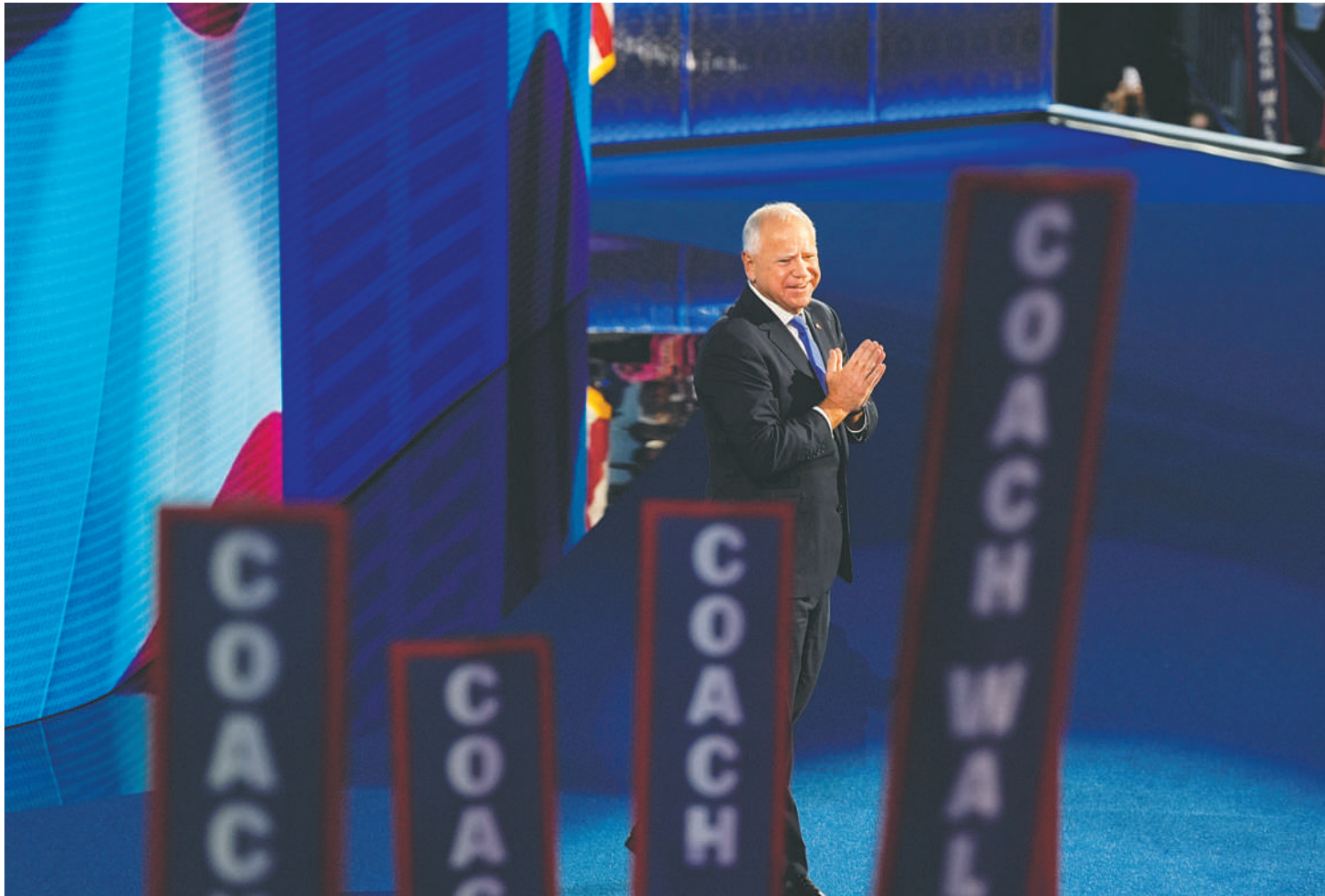
The remarks appeared to reflect Iran’s desire to avoid a wider war as it deals with economic strife and a delicate political situation at home. Haniyeh’s killing, at a secure compound on July 31, was a stunning embarrassment for Iran’s security forces — but the country’s new reformist president just formed his government, and a conflict with Israel threatens to distract from his central campaign pledge of improving the economy.

On Wednesday, Iran’s hard-line parliament approved President Masoud Pezeshkian’s 19-member cabinet, which includes both reformists and conservatives, a move that the new leader said represents his “consensus” approach to governing.

During his campaign this
SEE IRAN ON A19

ELECTION 2024

Walz makes his national introduction



DEMETRIUS FREEMAN/THE WASHINGTON POST

After harrowing first year as VP, a political reset

BY CLEVE R. WOOTSON JR.

CHICAGO — Fifteen months after her inauguration, Vice President Kamala Harris’s chief of staff had resigned, part of a dispiriting drumbeat of staff departures. A stumbling television interview on immigration was routinely featured in Republican attacks. Her often-tentative public appearances were reminding Democrats all too clearly of her recent presidential campaign, which had collapsed before a single vote was cast.

Now Harris is barnstorming the country, electrifying rally audiences with one energetic speech after another. Voters are lining up for blocks for a chance to hear her speak. Her crowd
SEE HARRIS ON A14



JOEL ANGEL JUAREZ FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

TOP: Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz takes the stage at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago on Wednesday night. “It’s the honor of my life to accept your nomination for vice president of the United States,” Walz said as he opened his remarks. **ABOVE:** Delegates cheer during Wednesday’s proceedings.

Progressives: Many in left wing are embracing party’s ticket. **A9**

Wes Moore: Md. governor garners a prime-time speaking slot. **B1**

Gaza divide: Democrats avoid big disruptions from protesters. **A11**

Uncommitted: A “ceasefire delegate” works to be heard. **C1**

Childhood friend sees influence of Harris’s mother

BY DAVID MARANISS

CHICAGO — Doris Johnson and Stacey Johnson-Batiste huddled backstage at the United Center on Monday night, preparing to deliver their mother-daughter duet of a convention speech, when Kamala Harris strode toward them, the hall still resounding with cheers from the Democratic presidential nominee’s brief introductory appearance.

Johnson, at age 88, a close friend of Shyamala Gopalan Harris, the vice president’s late mother, had developed a sudden chill from a blast of air conditioning. Her mouth went dry and she fretted that it would make her voice raspy. Johnson-Batiste, who first met Harris in kinder-
SEE FRIENDS ON A10

GOVERNOR HAILED AS COACH, VETERAN

Bill Clinton, Pelosi and Winfrey among speakers

BY MATT VISER
AND CLEVE R. WOOTSON JR.

CHICAGO — Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz formally accepted the vice-presidential nomination on Wednesday, in a night that was designed to introduce him to the country as a teacher and a football coach, a father and a husband, a former congressman and current governor who now could be the nation’s No. 2.

The third day of the Democratic National Convention featured reproductive rights as a top issue that the party hopes will motivate voters in November, and later in the evening included boisterous speeches from former House speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), former president Bill Clinton and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.) — and a surprise appearance from Oprah Winfrey. They used Trump’s age against him, and they spoke more pointedly of his role in the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection. They fixed their attention on GOP vice-presidential nominee JD Vance. And they insisted their ticket is the one focusing on joy and uplifting the nation.

“Let’s cut to the chase. I am too old to gild the lily,” Clinton said, in a thin and raspy voice. “Two days ago I turned 78. ... And the only personal vanity I want to assert is I’m still younger than Donald Trump.”

Following nights that were centered around an emotional celebration of President Joe Biden’s record and decision to drop out of the race on Monday, and then an exuberant set of speeches from Michelle and Barack Obama on Tuesday, the lineup on Wednesday at times was more geared at promoting a running mate who has been in the national spotlight for just more than two weeks.

But while Walz was the headliner of the night, speakers did just as much to promote Harris. And there was a focus on Trump throughout, with several Republicans and a former Trump administration official addressing the convention, and speakers
SEE CONVENTION ON A6

Revised data shows shakier ground for U.S. labor market

818,000 fewer new jobs than earlier reported for year ending in March

BY LAUREN KAORI GURLEY
AND RACHEL SIEGEL

Job growth in the United States in the year ending in March was far less robust than previously reported by the federal government, giving ammunition to critics who suggest the Federal Reserve may be late to cutting interest rates.

The government reported Wednesday that the economy created 818,000 fewer jobs from April 2023 through March 2024, in the biggest revision to federal jobs data in 15 years, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The revisions add to arguments that the Fed has been overly focused on curbing inflation, to the detriment of the labor market. The data offers a more dour snapshot of a labor market that had appeared incredibly strong, espe-

cially last summer and earlier this year, underscoring the case for rate cuts at the Fed’s next board meeting, in September. The Fed was already signaling such a move, but now officials will face calls to trim rates more aggressively.

“We already knew we had been living the best of consumers being discerning but not defeated. That narrative is contingent on the labor market holding up and layoffs remaining in check,” said Diane Swonk, chief economist at KPMG. “The Fed needs to cut if they want to sustain the Goldilocks scenario.”

To be sure, other labor market benchmarks for April 2023 through March 2024 still looked pretty strong. For example, the unemployment rate during this period was still at historic lows, under 4 percent. And weekly requests for unemployment benefits also remained near longtime lows.

The Biden administration was
SEE JOBS ON A22

Trump’s baseless claim: He says jobs data was manipulated. **A4**



CHLOE SHARROCK FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Jesse Dufton, 38, who gradually lost his sight starting in childhood, climbs in Morocco as Molly Thompson, 40, guides him from below.

A blind climber’s story of diligence — and love

He needed his partner to guide him up the rock. It was a bond of trust that grew into much more.

BY KEVIN SIEFF
IN TAFRAOUTE, MOROCCO

Molly Thompson craned her neck so she could make out the man climbing the tower of red rock. Squinting into the desert sun, she tried to identify a crack he could grab on to or a ledge wide enough for his foot.

The climber, struggling to keep his grip, was her husband, Jesse Dufton. His left arm trembled from the effort. His foot probed for a more secure hold, but found nothing.

“A little bit higher there should be a foothold,” Molly said into a headset.

When Jesse extended his foot again, it missed the tiny outcropping. He returned his foot to its original position and tiptoed on three millimeters of quartzite, 200 feet above the ground. He did not look down. He did not look anywhere.

Jesse has advanced rod-cone

dystrophy. Put another way: He is completely blind. And another: He is one of the world’s few elite blind rock-climbers.

Jesse, 38, is a “trad climber,” which means he ascends bare rock faces without permanent bolts. Instead, he places removable metal anchors into cracks in the mountain and attaches his rope to them. If he places those anchors poorly and falls, he could die. It is a sport in which one’s vision — the ability to spot minor fractures or grooves in the rock — is considered vital.

Molly’s words were meant to conjure the smallest nooks from the darkness so that Jesse’s hands and feet could find them.

During his climb in Morocco, bits of debris came loose under his fingers, ricocheting down the mountain. Molly could hear him struggling to catch his breath.

If he fell, she knew, it would be partly her fault.

SEE CLIMBER ON A16

IN THE NEWS

The last wild red wolves A renewed push in eastern North Carolina to save the endangered animals from extinction has brought cautious optimism. **A20**

First-grade teacher arrested A Montgomery County educator faces charges in the fentanyl-related death of a man. **B1**

THE NATION **Hunter Biden’s** lawyers sparred with prosecutors over evidence in his coming tax trial. **A3** **A jury** awarded \$1 million to a teen sexually assaulted by a New Orleans police officer. **A4**

THE WORLD **Several hostages** recovered from Gaza were laid to rest amid grief and anger in Israel. **A15** **Italian officials** identified four bodies pulled from a yacht that sank off Sicily. **A18**

THE ECONOMY **Using a careful** business approach, Cinemark has emerged as a relative success story in the struggling industry of movie theaters. **A21** **Ford** will prioritize the development of cars for the hybrid market after disappointing sales of electric vehicles. **A22**

THE REGION **Convicting** D.C. Council member Trayan White Sr. in an alleged bribery scheme might be hard after recent court rulings. **B1** **In a new contract,** Metro workers will have to take at least 10 hours off between shifts and see some raise caps. **B1**

SPORTS **The NFL** redesigned its kickoff format to generate more action and fewer injuries. As preseason winds down, the early returns are strong. **D1**

LOCAL LIVING **People are hosting** concerts in their homes, bringing a new level of intimacy to live music.

BUSINESS NEWS.....A21
COMICS.....C6
OBITUARIES.....B4
OPINION PAGES.....A23
TELEVISION.....C4
WORLD NEWS.....A15

CONTENT © 2024
The Washington Post
Year 147, No. 53951

