

Biden opened pro-union playbook in dock strike

In deal to reopen ports, White House had pushed to boost pay for workers

BY JEFF STEIN, IAN DUNCAN AND LAUREN KAORI GURLEY

It was a stark ultimatum, delivered by President Joe Biden's most senior aide. At 5:30 a.m. Thursday, before the sun had risen above his Washington home, White House Chief of Staff Jeff Zients was on a Zoom call with two Cabinet secretaries and the executives of the shipping companies negotiating with workers who had gone on strike at critical docks along the East and Gulf coasts, according to two people familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe

private conversations. With the nation's economy — and much of the president's legacy — hanging in the balance just weeks before the election, White House chief economist Lael Brainard told management that it needed to come up with a new offer to the striking longshoremen. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg stressed that Hurricane Helene magnified the importance of a deal. Labor Secretary Julie Su expressed optimism that the union would agree to a temporary extension if raises were included. Then in a surprising move, as the call was wrapping up, Zients told the board members of the U.S. Maritime Alliance that he was going to tell Biden in about an hour that they had agreed to propose a new offer to the union. SEE STRIKE ON A13

Baltimore: Deal dispels region's fear of another blow from strike. B1

ELECTION 2024

In final stretch, Republicans try to soften abortion stances

Issue has been a political albatross for the GOP since Roe's 2022 reversal

BY ASHLEY PARKER

In the final stretch before Election Day, Republicans are ramping up efforts to distance themselves from the restrictive abortion positions that have defined their party since the 2022 overturning of *Roe v. Wade* — scrambling to soften, or appear to soften, their hard-line positions. The group includes former president Donald Trump and his running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, and House members and

gubernatorial candidates, and the efforts come as nearly two-thirds of Americans say they believe abortion should be legal in all or most cases. In Tuesday evening's vice-presidential debate, Vance — who during his 2022 Senate run described himself as "100 percent pro-life" and ran on a platform promising to "end abortion" — said he and Trump were working to earn "the American people's trust back on this issue" and implied that he supported the decision by an unnamed friend in an abusive relationship to terminate her pregnancy. "I know she's watching tonight, SEE ABORTION ON A4

Trump rallies: Attendees making early exits explain why. A5



A bridge seen on Friday along Interstate 26 in Erwin, Tenn., that was destroyed in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

Terrain and misinformation complicate FEMA's response

BY MOLLY HENNESSY-FISKE, MAXINE JOSELOW, CLARA ENCE MORSE AND WILL OREMUS

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has deployed more than a thousand personnel and millions of meals and liters of water to the communities hard hit by Helene, but is struggling to reach some communities deep in mountainous and remote areas of North Carolina that were most affected by the storm. FEMA has deployed more than 1,500 personnel to respond to Helene. As of Friday, the agency had

shipped more than 11.5 million meals, more than 12.6 million liters of water, more than 400,000 tarps and 150 generators to the affected region. The agency sent a similar number of personnel — roughly 2,000 — to Florida and the Southeast a week after Hurricane Ian struck there in 2022, according to a news release. About 6,700 National Guard SEE HELENE ON A7

'Poison': White House reacts to Trump's false claims about aid. A4

Help from above: Aircraft deliver lifesaving aid in ravaged N.C. A6

Women who watch Israel's borders say their warnings fell on deaf ears among top brass, allowing Hamas's rampage



COURTESY OF GILI SHRIVIT

Disregard that allowed Oct. 7 remains, female sentries say

BY SHIRA RUBIN IN KIRYAT TIVON, NORTHERN ISRAEL

For the past year, Israeli soldiers stationed atop a windswept mountain abutting the border with Lebanon have watched the enemy deploy men and missiles. The members of this female-only army unit, known as field observers, have tracked Hezbollah fighters as they drove through narrow alleyways and green valleys, setting and resetting launchers, approaching the border fence and pulling back. The observers, most between 18 and 20 years old, have been responsible for identifying and reporting many of the 10,000 drones, mortar rounds, rockets and antitank missiles that have streaked across Israel's northern skies since October.

They are the eyes of the military along Israel's embattled borders, monitoring multiple screens around-the-clock to supply reconnaissance that guides forces on the ground. They flag changes in routines of the men they observe and investigate intelligence alerts sent from above. But a year after the Hamas-led Oct. 7 attack, these young women say Israel is still not doing enough to reckon with the kind of threats that exploded across its southern frontier on that awful morning, when gunmen streamed SEE ISRAEL ON A10

Displacement dangers: Lebanese fleeing war await another risk in their destination: Syria. A11

Israeli soldier Gili Shrivit at her workstation at the Kissufim military base, along the frontier with Gaza, on Oct. 6, a day before Hamas stormed the border.

Young doctor's final words offer a mental health warning for others

BY JENNA PORTNOY

David West barely slept the night his older brother, William Ballantyne West Jr., called him from his D.C. apartment, sounding worried. His brother had earned the nickname "Iron Will" for the tenacity he showed when faced with challenges. He had rock-climbed, gone on a religious mission to Italy and competed in overnight relay races. But during that call earlier this year, Will talked about how his problems felt too big to solve: He was not getting the training he needed to



Will West, seen here in 2021, was in his final year of residency when he died by suicide.

prepare him to practice medicine. He was not getting enough time to sleep or recharge after long shifts. Happiness, he felt, would elude him always. Will was a doctor in his third year of ophthalmology surgical training at George Washington University School of Medicine

and Health Sciences in D.C., and David, six years younger and following the same path, was in his first year of medical school in Utah. David considered asking someone to check on his brother, but during their next two phone calls, Will eased his concerns. He laughed and seemed lighter. After a call in late February, David hung up feeling relieved. Days later, Will was gone. He died by suicide at the age of 33. There is no way to know for certain what led Will to end his life. But what is known, interviews with Will's family, George

Washington residents and national experts show, is that despite a growing acceptance nationwide of the benefits of mental health care, barriers persist in residency programs that keep doctors from seeking help during a time when many need it. Many factors, experts say, make doctors at that high-stress, high-stakes stage in their careers vulnerable. Residents — medical school graduates who spend three to seven years training in their specialty under the supervision of attending physicians — can face grueling 80-hour work- SEE DOCTOR ON A14

IN THE NEWS

Election violence Amid increasing threats against officials overseeing voting, the Justice Department says restrictions prevent it from taking a more aggressive approach. A3

Probe widens in D.C. A government contractor made illicit offers to city officials for at least five years, prosecutors said. B1

THE NATION The Supreme Court declined to block the Biden administration's far-reaching rules that limit emissions of mercury from power plants and methane from oil and gas companies. A2

THE WORLD A Ukrainian family waiting for a POW to return home received only his broken body. A8

At least 70 are dead after an attack in an area of Haiti plagued by gang violence. A5

THE ECONOMY Sen. JD Vance blamed rising home prices on illegal immigration, but housing analysts say migrants have scant effect on the market. A12

The IRS doubled, from 12 to 24, the number of states eligible for its free income tax filing software. A12

THE REGION A Virginia jury acquitted a former state psychiatric hospital worker of involuntary manslaughter in the death of a man in custody. B1

A mother who was shot holding her baby reflects a spike in domestic violence crime in Prince George's County. B1

STYLE Nitrous oxide whips up attention on social media platforms. C1

SPORTS Mookie Betts, part of a stacked Dodgers lineup heading into the next round of the playoffs, knows he can't save baseball. But he sure plays like he can. D1

BUSINESS NEWS.....	A12
COMICS.....	C7
OBITUARIES.....	B4
OPINION PAGES.....	A15
TELEVISION.....	C6
WORLD NEWS.....	A8

CONTENT © 2024 The Washington Post Year 147, No. 53995

