

As Israel's war rages, so do its 5 arbiters

Netanyahu-led team of rivals, frayed by distrust, steers policy in Gaza

BY STEVE HENDRIX

JERUSALEM — As Israel mulled a response to Iran's massive drone and missile attack, the decision to hit back with a carefully calibrated strike early Friday was made by just five men.

They are the sole members of Israel's fractious "war cabinet," a pop-up body of rival politicians charged with steering the country through its worst security crisis in half a century.

The tiny group, led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, wields supreme authority over the most consequential war matters: military operations in Gaza, hostage talks with Hamas and whether to open a second front against Hezbollah in Lebanon.

In recent days, the quintet, which meets without cellphones in "the Pit," an ultra-secure section of the military's headquarters in Tel Aviv, also apparently decided that a limited response is the best next step in the conflict with Iran, a burgeoning nuclear power committed to Israel's destruction. The two countries have fought a shadow war for years.

"The five people in that room were faced with a decision that could be one of the three or four most crucial decisions since Israel's founding in 1948," said Nadav Shtrachler, an Israeli political analyst.

And they did it with no love lost for each other. It is, by all accounts, a group riven by political animosities, rancor that was be-

SEE ISRAEL ON A22

Qatar: Role as mediator imperiled as Hamas relations draw fire. **A21**



TONI L. SANDYS/THE WASHINGTON POST

A legendary cowboy's last ride

The black bull stands in an upper pasture on J.B. Mauney's ranch like a blot on the green ryegrass horizon. His dark hulk presides over a hilly rise looking down on the tin-roofed hay sheds and iron chutes where Mauney is hard at work. Mauney moves to a dissonant music of creaking gates, unceasing wind and snorting animal exhalations, punctuated by the laconic cussing of the cowboy himself as he pours feed into buckets. The bull watches as Mauney makes his way up the hill and steps into the pasture to fill a trough. "A--hole," he mutters with something like fondness.

Mauney, too, cuts a black outline. From under a black felt cowboy hat, hair blacker than coffee runs to the collar of his black shirt. The impression of severity is relieved by blue eyes

Battling the baddest bulls made J.B. Mauney a hero unlike any other in rodeo. Then one broke his neck.

BY SALLY JENKINS
IN STEPHENVILLE, TEX.

J.B. Mauney set the record for career prize money with more than \$7.4 million and tied for most event victories on the Professional Bull Riders circuit with 32.

the color of his jeans and a smile crease from the habit of grinning around a Marlboro. It's an arresting face, burnished by years of outdoor chores, smoke, roistering humor and pain soothed by shots of Jägermeister. It befits arguably the greatest rodeo bull rider who ever lived and certainly the hardest-bodied, a man who never conceded to any power. Until a bull broke his neck.

"I always knew something like this was going to have to happen," he says.

It had been less than six months since *something like this* happened. On Sept. 6, during an event in Lewiston, Idaho, a bull named Arctic Assassin sling-shotted Mauney (pronounced Mooney) into the dirt squarely on top of his hat, summarily

SEE RODEO ON A15

U.S. aid for allies clears House

FAR RIGHT REBUFFED IN BIPARTISAN VOTE

Speaker defiant amid threats to take his gavel

BY MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR
AND MAEGAN VAZQUEZ

The House passed a sweeping \$95 billion package Saturday to aid foreign allies amid global threats, showcasing broad support for America's role in the world in a risky push by Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.), whose far-right flank is threatening to oust him for the action.

In the vote's immediate aftermath, Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) — who had pledged to eject Johnson from the speakership if he advanced Ukraine aid — did not take action. She told reporters she hopes colleagues face backlash from constituents while they're on recess this week and consider joining the effort to oust the speaker on their return to Washington.

The Senate is expected to consider the foreign aid measures early this week, and President Biden is expected to sign the package.

In a statement after Saturday's votes, Biden credited the House for coming together "to answer history's call, passing urgently needed national security legislation that I have fought for months to secure."

With chants of "Ukraine!" and blue and yellow flags waving on the House floor, all Democrats

SEE AID ON A12

TikTok: Crackdown hitches ride on aid package to likely passage. **A13**

Bridge safety rules stuck in a bygone era, experts warn

BY MICHAEL LARIS,
DAN KEATING
AND JÚLIA LEDUR

U.S. standards for keeping bridges from collapsing when hit by ships hail from a different era.

They rely on half-century-old West German experiments on model ships for a key mathematical formula. Their minimum specifications cite the danger of empty 195-foot barges breaking loose from their moorings and drifting into bridges, a threat that seems quaint compared with the hulking 985-foot container ship that strayed off course after an electrical failure and toppled the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore last month.

And in 2020, international researchers warned that the standards sharply underestimate the impact of a head-on collision by a big ship into a bridge.

As federal investigators probe what caused the Baltimore collapse that killed six workers and shut down a vital U.S. port, some experts say the tragedy is shining a light on the need to bring bridge safety requirements into the modern era.

"The design standards take a while to update," said Mark Gaines, who oversees bridges as Washington state's design engi-

SEE BRIDGE ON A8



MELINA MARA/THE WASHINGTON POST

Homeless advocates Jessica Meller, left, and Cassidy Leach help Timothy James "TJ" Wood move his campsite after police in Grants Pass, Ore., told him he must move his tent or be fined.

Supreme Court mulls camping ban, and a city's unhoused feel rejected

BY REIS THEBAULT AND ANN E. MARIMOW
IN GRANTS PASS, ORE.

Laura Gutowski pitches her tent in the same park where her son grew up playing Little League Baseball. Johnaton Babb's favorite place to sleep is a few feet from the river where his twin brother died when they were teenagers.

They are two among hundreds of people living outside in this small, conservative city in Southern Oregon's Rogue Valley, wedged between the Siskiyou and Coast mountains, and their experiences are part of an escalating humanitarian crisis.

That fact does not make Grants Pass exceptional, especially in the American West, where soaring housing costs and a collage of other causes have driven a growing number of vulnerable residents into homelessness. Even so, Grants Pass finds itself in a unique position: This city of 40,000 will have a chance to shape policy decisions countrywide when it defends its anti-camping regulations in front of the U.S. Supreme Court on Monday.

The case will decide whether governments can enforce laws against people sleeping outside

SEE GRANTS PASS ON A6

ELECTION 2024

Trump, Biden upended as Meta sours on politics

Campaigns revisit digital outreach after company's retreat from posts, ads

BY NAOMI NIX,
MICHAEL SCHERER
AND JEREMY B. MERRILL

Days after President Donald Trump clinched a surprise victory in the 2016 presidential election, Mark Zuckerberg touted his company's influence in politics. The CEO proclaimed he was "proud" Facebook had given many "a voice in this election."

"We helped millions of people connect with candidates so they could hear from them directly and be better informed," Zuckerberg wrote on Facebook.

Now, on the eve of a matchup between Trump and President Biden, Meta is changing course.

After years of pitching its suite of social media apps as the lifeblood of campaigns, Meta is breaking up with politics. The company has decreased the visibility of politics-focused posts and accounts on Facebook and Instagram as well as imposed new rules on political advertisers, kneecapping the targeting system long used by politicians to reach potential voters.

Waves of layoffs have eviscer-

ated the team responsible for coordinating with politicians and campaigns, according to people familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private personnel matters. This includes foreign-based workers and U.S. employees who promoted the company's products to politicians and fielded questions from campaigns about their services.

An advertising sales team, which once embedded with the Trump team during the 2016 election, is now responsible for many of their previous responsibilities, the people said.

Meta's shift away from current events is forcing campaigns to upend their digital outreach in a move that could transform the 2024 election. Comparing March 2020 to March 2024, both the Biden and Trump campaigns saw 60 percent declines in their average engagement per Facebook post, a Washington Post review found, with double-digit declines on Instagram.

The Trump team has cast Meta's moves as an effort to tip the scales in favor of Biden. The Biden campaign, meanwhile, had

SEE META ON A14

New York: Trump's trial deepens the schism with his beloved city. **A3**

Pennsylvania: Biden grapples with protests from both sides in state. **A5**

METRO

A Virginia militia member raised suspicion, then alarm, talking of bombs.

BUSINESS

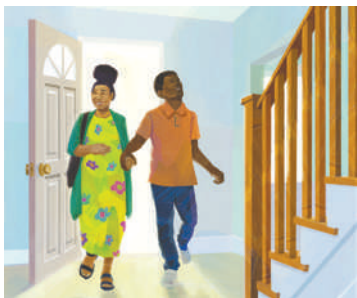
SpaceX could finally face competition in the rocket sector. It may be too late.

ARTS & STYLE

🎧 Drag queen champion Sasha Velour sashays into the culture wars.

BOOK WORLD

"Everest, Inc." tells the story of the big business of a very tall mountain.



SPRING HOME BUYING GUIDE

🎧 In this uncertain market, buyers still have a wealth of tactics.

TRAVEL

A magical full bloom of cherry blossoms drapes Tokyo in a pink blanket.

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