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Democracy Dies in Darkness

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ELECTION 2024

Trump in a frenetic phase in final weeks

Impulsive and impetuous amid fading self-restraint that marked bid’s launch

BY ASHLEY PARKER, JOSH DAWSEY AND MARIANNE LEVINE

Donald Trump’s top advisers have insisted for months that his 2024 bid for the presidency is the most disciplined campaign he has ever run. They pointed to fewer leaks, less infighting and a more deliberate strategy honed by seasoned professionals and driven by data.

But with just 45 days left until the election, the past three weeks reveal whatever control and self-restraint helped launch Trump’s third presidential campaign has largely disappeared in the crucial final stretch.

On the Monday before Trump’s first debate with Vice President Kamala Harris, his running mate shared on social media, without evidence, the claim that Haitian immigrants were abducting and eating their neighbors’ pets — one Trump repeated the following night on the debate stage, in a moment that instantly went viral.

Trump’s chaotic and widely criticized debate performance coincided with an already tumultuous period for the former president. He had recently welcomed back into his orbit Corey Lewandowski — his former 2016 campaign manager who was exiled after allegations of sexual assault by a donor — and had begun traveling around the country with Laura Loomer, a far-right ally who has spread conspiracy theories. Two failed apparent assassination attempts, as well as additional threats against him, have also left

SEE TRUMP ON A5

The Sunday Take: Harris has more work to do in the battlegrounds. **A2**

Health care: JD Vance floats new plans for chronically ill people. **A10**

New research is unearthing how Indigenous tribes used the Virginia watershed to engage and outfox Bacon’s Rebellion



JAHÍ CHIKWENDIU/THE WASHINGTON POST

In the Dragon, history emerges

BY GREGORY S. SCHNEIDER NEAR CENTER CROSS, VA.

The brown waters of Dragon Run meander through shaggy banks of duckweed and arrow arum before melting into the forest. Insects clamor like city traffic. Noontime shadows are so deep, someone in a white shirt could be standing 100 yards away and you’d never see them.

Aside from a lonesome paved road, the landscape looks much as it did 348 years ago when Dragon Run played a little-known part in an important chapter of American history. Now the Native people whose ancestors lived here are finally telling their side of an event known as Bacon’s Rebellion, in which Virginia settlers rose up against the Colonial government in 1676 and tried to wipe out all the Indigenous tribes.

Allyson Gray, a member of the Pamunkey Tribal Council, strolls through Dragon Run on Aug. 23. Native tribes used the watershed to conceal themselves from settlers involved in Bacon’s Rebellion.

“We’re seeing our portion of the story, which had all been whitewashed and kept away from us,” said Chief G. Anne Richardson of the Rappahannock tribe.

Working with researchers, historians and archaeologists, the Rappahannock and Pamunkey tribes have spent the past two years piecing together details about how the Native residents of Virginia’s Middle Peninsula engaged and outfoxed the English rebels. Their efforts, led by St. Mary’s College of Maryland professor Julia King under a grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program of the National Park Service, have identified a scene of conflict that was lost to the ages and assembled an Indigenous perspective on

SEE DRAGON RUN ON A14

Tracing a trail in pager attacks

A ‘RED BUTTON’ PLOT, LYING IN WAIT

Unclear why Israel chose to press it now

This article is by Greg Miller, Cate Brown, Loveday Morris, Shira Rubin and Jon Swaine

The blackened husks of pagers and handheld radios that exploded in a colossal attack on Hezbollah this past week have become fragmentary clues to how Israel orchestrated what current and former Israeli and Western security officials said was part of an elaborate, decade-long effort to penetrate the militant group.

Markings on the mangled electronic components have left a trail leading back through a manufacturer in Taiwan to a Hungarian shell company suspected of being set up or exploited by Israeli intelligence to disguise its alleged role in delivering the lethally rigged devices to Hezbollah. Security officials in another European capital have probed whether a second shell company there was the real seller behind the pagers deal.

Current and former officials have described it as part of a multi-pronged effort by Israel over the past decade to develop what Israeli officials referred to as a “red button” capability — meaning a potentially devastating penetration of an adversary that can remain dormant for months if not years before being activated.

Israel’s reason for pressing one such “red button” this past week remains murky, though experts have speculated that Israeli officials were worried that the conversion of thousands of pagers to miniature IEDs was at risk of being detected. Such attacks are gen-

SEE LEBANON ON A20

Painful flashback: Ibrahim Aqil’s death recalls Beirut attacks. **A12**

The rise of women’s soccer in a nation that favors machismo is providing a new kind of role model

In Mexico, a new pitch to influence young girls

BY LORENA RIOS AND VERÓNICA GABRIELA CÁRDENAS IN SAN NICOLÁS DE LOS GARZA, MEXICO

There was a time not long ago when Luna Roque dreamed of becoming an influencer, like Kimberly Loaiza. The glamorous Mexican singer — she could be a fourth Kardashian sister — got her start as a teenager doing viral challenges and producing makeup videos on YouTube; she now has more than 160 million followers across her social media platforms.

Then Luna’s parents took her to see the Tigres Femenil. The women’s soccer team, one of two based here in the Monterrey metropolitan area, is the most successful team in the seven-year history of the Liga MX Femenil, Mexico’s first professional women’s soccer league. The Tigres have won six of the league’s 13 titles; they’ve opened the current season with nine wins and a draw for a share of the league lead.

It took Luna, 8, just one game with Las Amazonas, as the Tigres are known, to ditch her dream of

influencing for a new one. Now she’s training to be a professional soccer player.

The rise of the women’s game in soccer-mad Mexico is challenging traditional notions of gender in a country captured by machismo with a new kind of female role model: the athlete influencer, the strong, skilled woman who posts more about her feats on the field than her fashion choices off it.

The players, who are mostly in their 20s and 30s, are attracting millions of followers on social media with a clear message of empowerment — and turning the image of female celebrity here on its head.

The stereotypical Monterrey influencer is a light-skinned, thin and wealthy woman “who makes makeup tutorials or videos of her closet and of the jewelry she buys,” local journalist Carolina Solís says. “It’s a very aspirational thing.”

Las Amazonas, in contrast, SEE SOCCER ON A15



VERÓNICA GABRIELA CÁRDENAS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Inspired by the professional women’s soccer team Tigres Femenil, Luna Roque, 8, dreams of playing professional soccer.

Union opposition to U.S. Steel sale reflects years of mistrust

Bad blood between CEO and labor boss has cast shadow over troubled bid

BY DAVID J. LYNCH

U.S. Steel’s glory days, when its products shaped landmarks from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge to the New Orleans Superdome, lie in the past. The CEO says there is no money to modernize the outdated mills that employ thousands of union steelworkers. This would seem a perfect moment for a partner with deep pockets and industry savvy to ride to the rescue.

But it’s not working out that way.

While investors welcomed Nippon Steel of Japan’s proposed \$14.9 billion acquisition of U.S. Steel, seeing it as the once-iconic steelmaker’s best chance to survive in an increasingly unforgiving global market, the United Steelworkers immediately objected.

In any other year, union opposition might have been a problem for deal advocates, but not an insurmountable one. In an elec-

tion year, however, when working-class votes may decide the winner of the battleground state of Pennsylvania, and the winner of Pennsylvania may decide who secures 270 electoral votes and the presidency, the powerful union seems to enjoy a near veto.

In an interview, David McCall, the USW president, sounded confident of the ultimate outcome.

“At the end of the day,” he said, “U.S. Steel will remain American-owned and American-operated.”

The deal now exists in a sort of limbo. The president of the United States has publicly opposed it, as have both major-party candidates to succeed him in the White House. A government committee has identified national security problems with it. A final decision will probably come before year’s end.

The unexpected obstacles have raised alarms among foreign investors. If a corporation from Japan, one of the United States’ closest allies, can encounter such difficulties, what deals will be safe from Americans’ embrace of economic nationalism, they ask.

The union, meanwhile, holds out hope for an alternative bid from a domestic steelmaker, which most analysts say would

SEE U.S. STEEL ON A11

METRO

The FBI boarded a vessel run by same company as ship in Key Bridge strike.

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