



A man strives to free a car as flooding hits a road on the outskirts of Boone, N.C., where Helene struck as a tropical storm on Friday.

Lethal Helene carves up Southeast

Record storm surge, high winds leave dozens dead, millions without power

BY ALLISON SALERNO, BRADY DENNIS, TIM CRAIG AND DANIELLE PAQUETTE

ATHENS, GA. — Rescue teams raced to submerged homes, scoured collapsed buildings and steered thousands from overflowing dams as Helene carved a destructive path Friday, knock-

ing out power and flooding a vast arc of communities across the southeastern United States.

At least 40 people were confirmed killed in five states since the storm made landfall late Thursday as a Category 4 behemoth, unleashing record-breaking storm surge and tree-snapping gusts. Four million homes and businesses have lost electricity across Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas, prompting concerns that outages could drag on for weeks.

Mudslides closed highways. Water swept over roofs and snapped phone lines. Houses

vanished from their foundations. Tornadoes added to the chaos. The mayor of hard-hit Canton, N.C., called the scene “apocalyptic.”

By early counts, South Carolina suffered the greatest loss of life, registering at least 19 deaths to Georgia’s 11 and Florida’s seven. North Carolina reported two deaths initially and Virginia one. The toll from the tempest is likely to rise, authorities cautioned, once flooding subsides and rescuers finish wading through the wreckage.

“I’m sure that number will go up as we have people we know

are trapped that we’re trying to get to right now,” Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp (R), who confirmed his state’s toll, told Atlanta’s WSB-TV.

President Joe Biden approved emergency declaration requests from the governors of Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Alabama. About 1,500 federal disaster response personnel will be deployed, the White House said.

Strong winds and torrential

SEE HELENE ON A7

Hurricane alley: Residents of a Florida town face a new reality. **A6**

3 Iranians charged in hacking of Trump camp

U.S. indictment details more ambitious cyber effort than was known

BY DEVLIN BARRETT

The Justice Department has charged three men with carrying out Iran’s alleged hack-and-leak attack against Donald Trump’s presidential campaign, describing a far-reaching effort to steal data from current and former government officials and to sow distrust in the presidential election.

At Justice Department headquarters on Friday, Attorney General Merrick Garland warned the public that Iran was just one of several foreign countries trying to wreak havoc in a presidential election year. He called out Iran, Russia and China for repeatedly trying to interfere with U.S. politics and elections through hacking, disinformation and surreptitious influence campaigns.

“These authoritarian regimes, which violate the human rights of their own citizens, do not get a say in our country’s democratic process,” Garland said. “The American people, and the American people alone, will decide the outcome of our country’s elections.”

The indictment charges that

SEE IRAN ON A11

MAGGIE SMITH 1934-2024

Spellbinding on stage and screen



NICK BRIGGS/CARNIVAL FILMS FOR MASTERPIECE/PBS/EVERETT COLLECTION

Maggie Smith, left, and Shirley MacLaine in a Season 3 episode of “Downton Abbey.” For critic Peter Marks, each of Ms. Smith’s roles was memorable — and one of a kind. **Appreciation, C1**

BY ADAM BERNSTEIN

Maggie Smith, a scene-stealing British actress who won Oscars for “The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie” and “California Suite,” later enchanting audiences as a professorial witch in the Harry Potter juggernaut and as a sly dowager countess on the TV series “Downton Abbey,” died Sept. 27 at a hospital in London. She was 89.

Her family announced the death in a statement released by publicist Clair Dobbs but did not provide further details.

For most of her six decades in show business,

Ms. Smith defined herself mainly as a theatrical actress, with memorable roles in London’s West End and on Broadway. A comedian of incandescent wit and a tragedian of cunning power, she portrayed both Oscar Wilde’s class-conscious Lady Bracknell and Shakespeare’s ruthlessly ambitious Lady Macbeth with spellbinding precision.

“The boundary between laughter and tears is ... where Maggie is poised always,” playwright Alan Bennett, who wrote plays and screen treatments for Ms. Smith, once told the New York Times. Critics placed her in a pantheon of

SEE SMITH ON A12

Israeli airstrike targets Hezbollah leader in Beirut

SEVERAL RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS TOPPLED

Netanyahu defies calls for cease-fire, pledges no letup

BY KAREEM FAHIM, MOHAMAD EL CHAMAA, SUZAN HAIDAMOUS AND SUSANNAH GEORGE

BEIRUT — A massive Israeli airstrike leveled several residential buildings in the southern suburbs of Beirut on Friday evening in what Israel’s military said was an attack aimed at the “central headquarters” of Hezbollah, the Lebanese militant group.

Hasan Nasrallah, Hezbollah’s secretary general, was the target of the strike, according to a person familiar with information Israel provided later to the United States, who spoke on the condition of anonymity about the sensitive matter.

Early Saturday, Israel carried out more strikes near Beirut, and spokesman Daniel Hagari warned that warplanes were monitoring the city’s international airport. “We will not allow hostile flights to land at the airport in Beirut, it is intended for civilian flights,” he said in a statement.

The strike targeting Nasrallah included several munitions that could be heard in thundering succession across the city at

about 6:15 p.m. local time, followed a short time later by the wail of ambulances. The attack left multiple craters and a mountain of debris that firefighters and other rescue workers, using heavy machinery, struggled for hours to shift. Lebanon’s Ministry of Public Health released a preliminary toll Friday evening, saying at least six people were dead and 91 others injured.

But it was too early to tell the real toll, Firass Abiad, Lebanon’s health minister, said in a text message. Four to six buildings were “completely demolished,” he added. “We expect fatalities to be high if there were people inside their apartments.” At least two children were pulled from the rubble Friday night, television footage showed, appearing conscious while being rushed to ambulances.

The strike occurred soon after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed during a bell-

SEE LEBANON ON A9

Iran holds back: As Hezbollah is hit, Tehran focuses elsewhere. **A8**

U.N. warning: Netanyahu fuels tensions with blistering speech. **A10**



IBRAHIM AMRO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Smoke rises from the rubble at the scene of Israeli airstrikes in the Haret Hreik neighborhood in Beirut’s southern suburbs.

ELECTION 2024

Vance criticized Trump in private messages

2020 conversation casts doubt on story of how he came to be a supporter

BY PETER JAMISON

Vice-presidential nominee JD Vance has a go-to explanation for his evolution from outspoken critic to impassioned defender of Donald Trump: He says he was converted by Trump’s achievements in the White House.

Vance has said watching the former president enact his populist agenda for left-behind Americans transformed him from a “Never Trump” conservative in 2016 to a Trump supporter in 2020.

But Vance privately expressed a very different verdict on Trump as the former president’s first term was nearing its end, previously unreported messages obtained by The Washington Post show.

In the direct messages — sent during Trump’s final year in office to an acquaintance over the social media platform then known as

Twitter — Vance harshly criticized his future running mate’s record of governance and said Trump had not fulfilled his economic agenda.

“Trump has just so thoroughly failed to deliver on his economic populism (excepting a disjointed China policy),” Vance wrote in February 2020.

He also offered a prediction: Joe Biden, he believed, was going to win the 2020 election.

“I think Trump will probably lose,” he wrote in a message in June 2020, a few months before ballots were cast in an election that Vance would later claim, falsely and repeatedly, was stolen by the Democrats.

The critical messages, shared with The Post by their recipient on the condition of anonymity because of concerns about retaliation, cast doubt on Vance’s oft-recited account of how and when he embraced Trumpism. They were

SEE VANCE ON A5

Border policies: Harris proposes new, tougher restrictions. **A3**

Money monitor: The former judge policing Trump’s business. **A14**

IN THE NEWS

A housing fight in Va. A judge overturned a policy that had eliminated single-family-only zoning in Arlington County, marking a win for opponents of the “missing middle” push. **B1**

An up-tempo strike After walking off the job, the National Symphony Orchestra reached a deal hours later with the Kennedy Center. **C1**

THE NATION

The U.S. executed the 1,600th person since the 1976 reinstatement of the death penalty. **A2**
New York Mayor Eric Adams pleaded not guilty to bribery and other federal charges. **A4**

THE WORLD

U.S. officials dispute Iraq’s claim of a near-total military withdrawal from that nation. **A10**
A party vote cleared the way for Shigeru Ishiba to be Japan’s next prime minister. **A11**

THE ECONOMY

A Ford plant in Michigan remains politically divided, even as the United Auto Workers union backs Vice President Kamala Harris. **A13**
The FDA approved a new drug to treat schizophrenia, a breakthrough after decades of smaller innovations. **A14**

THE REGION

In a new poll, Maryland Gov. Wes Moore sees a higher approval rating — and Bronze Star skepticism. **B1**
The bodies of two Fairfax homicide victims were repositioned, prosecutors said at a hearing where a defendant was denied bond. **B1**

OBITUARIES

William Lucy, 90, helped devise the “I Am a Man” slogan and fought apartheid. **B1**

STYLE

“The Power Broker,” Robert Caro’s 50-year-old biography of New York City planner Robert Moses, is still drawing eyes. **C1**

BUSINESS NEWS.....	A13
COMICS.....	C5
OBITUARIES.....	B4
OPINION PAGES.....	A15
TELEVISION.....	C4
WORLD NEWS.....	A8

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