

A display of climate change’s fiscal risks

Disasters are growing costlier at a time when U.S. debt exceeds \$35T

BY TONY ROMM

A second catastrophic hurricane in as many weeks has forced the U.S. government to grapple with a harsh reality: Climate calamities are becoming more frequent, deadly and costly in a country already facing massive fiscal challenges.

The earliest estimates suggest the latest storm, Hurricane Milton, may have unleashed roughly \$50 billion in damage across Florida, destroying countless homes, businesses and critical infrastructure that will need to be repaired or replaced, probably with the help of urgently needed federal aid.

But Milton is only the most recent extreme weather event in a nation that experiences on average a billion-dollar climate disaster roughly every three weeks, according to some federal estimates. As these storms, droughts, wildfires and floods strike with greater frequency and intensity, the work to rebuild after them has grown more expensive, too. That has exacerbated the many financial strains on the federal government at a time when the national debt exceeds \$35 trillion.

“I think the cost of climate [change] is increasingly a threat to our already very fragile fiscal outlook,” said Mark Zandi, chief economist of Moody’s Analytics. Factoring in the prospect that the government must spend “tens of

SEE STORMS ON A4

Balancing act: Harris visits hard-hit N.C. in a final campaign sprint. A5

Study of racism, health link threatened

BY AKILAH JOHNSON

David R. Williams and Rachel Hardeman are population health researchers at different universities with one thing in common: Both have been added to a right-wing “watch list” for teaching about and researching the ways racism affects health.

At the American Academy of Dermatology, some members proposed “sunsetting all diversity, equity and inclusion programs,” arguing DEI has evolved into a political movement filled with perceived antisemitism that labels people as oppressed or oppressor — a proposal that failed at the annual meeting in March.

And grant-making organizations that awarded millions of dollars to investigate racism as a threat to public health are now asking some researchers to stop using the word “racism.”

A growing number of U.S. institutes created to explore the nexus between racism and health — and the researchers who preside over them — are finding themselves under attack, their missions and funding in peril barely four years after the nation had what many called its “racial reckoning.”

Other efforts to address systemic racism and inequality — in education and corporate America

SEE DEI ON A14

Commanders’ hot streak ends in Baltimore



PATRICK SMITH/GETTY IMAGES

The Baltimore Ravens’ Derrick Henry, center, tries to escape the grasp of the Washington Commanders’ Percy Butler on Sunday at Baltimore’s M&T Bank Stadium. The matchup for regional bragging rights was the NFL’s game of the week, and the Commanders’ four-game winning streak ended with a 30-23 loss. **More in Sports, D1**

On IDF tour, signs of Hezbollah tunnels and arms

Israel shows journalists what it says is extensive militant infrastructure

BY STEVE HENDRIX

SOUTHERN LEBANON — In a stretch of scrubby frontier less than 1,000 feet north of the concrete wall that divides Lebanon from Israel, two Israeli commanders stood in enemy territory and peered into a carved stone shaft. The hole, large enough for a man with a backpack, descended for about 25 feet before giving way to a horizontal opening, just visible in the darkness.

A few yards away, a square metal hatch revealed a similar entryway — two among dozens of

interconnected Hezbollah shafts and tunnels, along with caches of antitank missiles, explosives and body armor, that Israeli commanders say their soldiers have discovered here since storming across the Lebanese border on Sept. 30.

Down the steep slope, on the other side of the wall, sat the mostly empty Israeli town of Shlomi, evacuated more than a year ago as Hezbollah fighters began launching rockets at Israel in solidarity with Hamas in Gaza.

The Israel Defense Forces brought a small group of journalists into the southwestern corner of Lebanon on Sunday to show what commanders described as extensive and entrenched militant infrastructure.

“You can just imagine if something like what happened on

SEE IDF ON A9



STEVE HENDRIX/THE WASHINGTON POST

Israeli troops operate in Lebanese territory north of the border. The barrier that divides the countries is visible in the valley below.

Catch caps successful SpaceX launch

Upright landing marks step toward goal of full reusability for rockets

BY AARON GREGG AND CHRISTIAN DAVENPORT

A SpaceX Starship rocket successfully landed upright Sunday alongside a massive metal landing tower as it was caught by two converging “chopstick” arms — another historic engineering breakthrough for the world’s largest and most powerful rocket.

Sunday’s launch marked the fifth test flight for Starship, which stands nearly 400 feet tall and is composed of the Super Heavy booster and the Starship spacecraft. The system is central to founder Elon Musk’s hopes to eventually colonize Mars and to NASA’s plans to return astronauts to the moon. Musk has said he plans to launch about five uncrewed Starship missions to Mars in the next two years, with possible crewed missions to follow.



KAYLEE GREENLEE BEAL/REUTERS

A SpaceX rocket lands Sunday in Boca Chica, Tex.

SpaceX said the spacecraft itself also experienced a successful flight and splashed down “precisely on target.” But it was the booster’s safe landing that marked not only a historic feat of

aeronautical engineering but also a major milestone for SpaceX’s goal of full reusability for its rockets. The company hopes this innovation will enable more ambitious space missions, and with greater frequency.

“Big step toward making life multiplanetary was made today,” Musk posted on X after Sunday’s launch.

For years, SpaceX has been landing the booster of its reusable Falcon 9 rocket on barges at sea or a landing pad on land. SpaceX then transports the rocket for refurbishment before bringing it back to the launchpad. The second stage of the Falcon 9, however, is discarded. Having Starship, which is intended to be fully reusable, return to its launch site marks a significant milestone for the company.

Precise landings are also important for the missions to the moon. NASA is investing about \$4 billion into the program and intends to use Starship to return

SEE STARSHIP ON A14

ELECTION 2024

In Trump’s inner circle, corporate ties abound

Eight years after he vowed to ‘drain the swamp,’ lobbyists sit at almost every level of his campaign

BY ISAAC STANLEY-BECKER AND JOSH DAWSEY

When clients tell Mercury Public Affairs, a consulting and lobbying shop with 18 offices worldwide, that they’re concerned about Donald Trump’s possible return to office, the firm has just the person to ease their nerves: Bryan Lanza.

Lanza, a Mercury partner and longtime Republican strategist, is well-suited to the task. In between client breakfasts in far-flung parts of the world, he serves as a senior adviser to Trump’s presidential campaign. So he’s a natural person to help clients understand how Trump’s positions on tariffs and other hot-button issues might play out in a second term, according to two Mercury colleagues who spoke on

the condition of anonymity to discuss internal business dealings.

“He gives them assurances that there will be life after Nov. 5,” said one of the colleagues, referring to Election Day.

Lanza declined to comment through a Mercury spokesman. A Trump spokesman did not respond to questions.

Eight years after Trump entered politics promising to reduce the influence of Washington lobbyists — to “drain the swamp,” as he put it — advocates for corporate interests, including companies based in China and other foreign countries denounced by Trump, now sit at virtually every level of his campaign. Lobbyists are represented among high-level staff, informal advisers and party

SEE TRUMP ON A6

IN THE NEWS

Musk’s Starlink Helene’s aftermath has held opportunity and controversy for the satellite company, which is testing a groundbreaking satellite-based cell service. A11

Giant pandas Two bears from China, eagerly awaited by Washington, will arrive to renovated digs at the National Zoo. B1

THE NATION **Donald Trump** called for U.S. troops to handle “radical left lunatics” on Election Day. A2
Tim Walz attended a hunt and a football game as the Harris campaign courts male voters. A2

THE WORLD **Pakistan’s** government is accused of slowing the internet to suppress political protests. A8
The emptied city of Tyre offers a stark glimpse of what may be next for Lebanon. A10

The European Union is investing in Ukraine’s arms industry, a shift in the bloc’s approach to Russia’s war. A10

THE REGION **In deep-blue D.C.**, a ballot measure on voting changes is the biggest wild-card contest in the Nov. 5 election. B1

Early data shows enrollment at most D.C.-area school districts is relatively flat as many systems continue recovering from pandemic losses. B1
Daniel Snyder’s former homes have yet to attract buyers in an otherwise thriving “ultra luxury” market. B1

STYLE **The news start-up** Hell Gate is skewering the administration of Mayor Eric Adams and covering New York like alt-weeklies used to. C1
An “Our Town” revival on Broadway presents an inclusive vision of who’s considered ordinary in America. C1

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