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Democracy Dies in Darkness

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## A fragile Lebanon now faces calamity

Humanitarian disaster as Israeli offensive against Hezbollah intensifies

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

BEIRUT — Reports of new casualties streamed in across Lebanon on Sunday, from the south to the far north. Families displaced by Israeli strikes found shelter where they could. The gloomy capital smelled of sulfur and drones buzzed overhead, one resident wrote.

“War is here, in every aspect of our lives,” Mona Fawaz, a professor at the American University of Beirut, said in a post on X, capturing the mood of a country used to uncertainty but now settling into dread.

Israel’s escalating military offensive, including Friday’s assassination of Hezbollah leader Hasan Nasrallah, has set off a sprawling humanitarian disaster here, with fears of a possible ground invasion still to come.

After years of economic and political crisis, Lebanon now faces catastrophe. More than 1,000 people have been killed in the last two weeks and hundreds of thousands have been displaced. The hospitals are filled with the wounded and shelters are over capacity.

Israel dramatically expanded the scope and pace of its operations over the last week — largely contained to the south over the last 11 months — pummeling

SEE **LEBANON** ON A12

## Illusion of Hezbollah might has evaporated

BY LIZ SLY

The massive Israeli airstrike that killed Hezbollah leader Hasan Nasrallah also eviscerated decades of myths and assumptions about Hezbollah’s military might, along with the stature of the organization as a regional powerhouse.

In the space of 10 days, a militia that had boasted one of the Middle East’s most formidable arsenals and broadest strategic reach was brought to its knees by Israeli attacks against its communications network, its top commanders and now its leader as he hunkered in the presumed safety of a bunker in Beirut’s southern suburbs.

The scale and severity of the attacks has called into question the very reason for the organization’s existence, which was predicated on its ability to deter Israeli attacks against Lebanon and also Iran, its sponsor and creator, analysts say. In the years since Hezbollah fought Israel to a draw in their last war in 2006, Hezbollah accumulated such a vast arsenal of weapons, including precision missiles capable of striking deep into Israel, that it was widely assumed by its supporters that

SEE **HEZBOLLAH** ON A12

**Emotions in Israel:** Joy and wariness follow assassination. **A13**



People surround a water distribution truck outside First Baptist Church in Swannanoa, N.C., on Sunday.

JESSE BARBER/THE WASHINGTON POST

### ELECTION 2024

## For VP picks, key debate audiences may diverge

BY MERYL KORNFELD, MARIANNE LEVINE AND TYLER PAGER

When Republican vice-presidential candidate JD Vance takes the debate stage Tuesday, it may be the first time millions of Americans hear directly from the senator from Ohio. But one person in particular could be his most important viewer: his running mate, Donald Trump.

Trump, a former pitchman, voracious television watcher

and skilled showman, is known to focus intensely on television performances, and his appreciation of Vance’s forceful defenses of him in interviews played a significant role in his selection as the No. 2. As Vance prepares to face Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, strategists expect he will reprise the combative posture he has taken on the campaign trail.

“Trump likes that he’s able to go into the lion’s den and communicate on policy issues,” said

one person familiar with Vance’s debate preparations, speaking on the condition of anonymity to describe internal strategy. “That’s probably going to be a big scene that will please him.” Vance’s aides say privately that his experience facing skeptical interviewers could help him at Tuesday’s debate.

Walz, the Democrats’ vice-presidential pick, faces a different challenge Tuesday. A little-known governor until a few weeks ago, he is not a best-selling

author or high-profile senator like Vance, and he faces the task of introducing himself to millions of Americans who may have little sense of his record or what he stands for.

Vice-presidential debates often have a limited effect, if any, on the outcome of a presidential contest, because by definition they involve secondary figures.

SEE **DEBATE** ON A5

**Feline fury:** At a cat cafe, derision for “childless cat ladies” remark. **A4**

## A strike looms, with disruption to Eastern ports

BY IAN DUNCAN AND DAVID J. LYNCH

Thousands of longshoremen at ports from New England to Texas are set to strike early Tuesday in the first walkout of its kind in almost half a century, freezing commercial shipping on a massive scale and disrupting the national economy weeks before the presidential election.

A strike would be the biggest

disruption to the flow of goods in and out of the country since the height of the pandemic. Even a short-lived work stoppage would snarl shipping and create havoc in supply chains for weeks. Cargo ranging from cars to electronics, from food to furniture, would be stuck on ships offshore. Each day a strike lasts could cost the U.S. economy up to \$1 billion, according to analysts.

Beginning five weeks before

the election, a strike could also inject new uncertainty into the presidential campaign. Fearful of the impacts, business groups and congressional Republicans have lined up to press the White House to invoke emergency powers and seek to block a strike, although so far President Joe Biden’s administration has not shown a willingness to intervene.

Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic presidential

nominee, and Donald Trump, the Republican nominee, have not weighed in on the potential strike, but the port shutdowns would begin the same day as Tuesday night’s televised vice-presidential debate.

Talks between the International Longshoremen’s Association, which has 47,000 members, and the U.S. Maritime Alliance, representing container carriers and

SEE **STRIKE** ON A14

## This photo captured the nation’s attention decades ago

But the real story behind it remained a mystery — until now

BY MARISSA J. LANG

The table was set. The pastries arranged. A white tablecloth dangled placidly in the early morning mist, surrounded by 12 golden-hued high-backed chairs.

Five decades ago, a dozen friends gathered here, on the National Mall, for breakfast. They wore morning coats and floor-length dresses, dined on oysters, drank champagne, and danced together as a string quartet played in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial.

The extravagant scene on July 19, 1974, drew in a Washington Post photographer, who captured the moment in an image that would ricochet around the country in newspaper reprints.

But the people and circum-

stances at the center of that famous picture remained a mystery to those who admired it, bought it, hung it on their office walls. They didn’t know who those young people were or why they had gathered for such an ornate affair near the Reflecting Pool. They didn’t know that the specter of death had loomed over the rousing celebration or that the people at its center would go on to have a hand in many pivotal facets of American life — the civil rights movement, gender equity in schools, advocacy for blind and disabled people.

That is until Joyce Naltchayan Boghosian — the daughter of late Post photographer Harry Naltchayan, who captured the original image — met one of the participants a year ago and began to put the pieces together.

SEE **PHOTO** ON A6

### IN THE NEWS

**Harris courts Republicans** The Democratic nominee’s team is using anti-Trump conservatives as emissaries in hopes of landing prominent GOP endorsements. **A4**

**Jayden Daniels does it again** The Washington Commanders’ rookie quarterback shines in a 42-14 victory over the Arizona Cardinals. **D1**

**THE NATION**  
**In Erie, Pa.,** Donald Trump repeated false claims about migrants and the 2020 vote. **A2**  
**Taking on** a Mississippi town’s abusive police force required a leap of faith from residents. **A3**

**THE WORLD**  
**In a postwar first,** Austria’s far right was on track to win the parliamentary election. **A10**  
**A Catholic university** criticized the pope’s views about the role of women in society. **A11**

**THE ECONOMY**  
**Better privacy** could be one click away, but Google and Apple won’t allow it, Shira Ovide writes. **A15**

**THE REGION**  
**Ninety Circulator** employees are set to be laid off Tuesday as the bus service begins to be wound down. **B1**

**A surge in** threats of violence has unsettled D.C.-area schools. **B1**  
**A long-awaited** review of D.C. police staffing found that the number of officers patrolling the city’s streets is sufficient, but its conclusions have been met with silence from some key decision-makers. **B1**

**STYLE**  
**Among female voters,** there’s evidence that Gen X women may mind Trump the least. Monica Hesse investigates. **C1**  
**The romance genre’s** readership has blossomed into a loud-and-proud community of consumers. **C1**

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