

Trump relents, debate is set

Amid insults and wild claims before media, he agrees to Sept. 10 face-off with Harris.

By JENNY JARVIE

Slipping in the polls, Donald Trump agreed Thursday to a Sept. 10 debate with Vice President Kamala Harris and upped the pressure on his Democratic opponent to answer questions from the media.

“She’s barely competent,” Trump said of the vice president at a news conference at Mar-a-Lago, his Palm Beach, Fla., estate. “She’s not smart enough to do a news conference.”

In a rambling 65-minute exchange with reporters, the former president lobbed a string of insults at Harris, repeated wild and misleading claims and portrayed the U.S. in stark, apocalyptic terms: “We could literally be on the throes of the Depression,” he said. “We are in great danger of being in World War III.”

Trump accused Harris of destroying California and San Francisco. “Everything she’s touched,” he said, “has turned to bad things.”

The GOP nominee — who has long engaged in a contentious relationship with mainstream media outlets he dubs “fake news” — challenged reporters to do a more thorough job of interrogating Harris.

“I just hope that the media becomes more diligent, more honest, frankly — because if they’re not going to be honest, it’s going to be much tougher to bring our country back,” Trump said. “We have a very, very sick country right now.”

As Trump answered [See Trump, A5]

Early alerts shaking up earthquake responses

By RONG-GONG LIN II

Most Californians know that sinking feeling.

The ground shakes, jolting you to attention. For a split second, your mind considers the possibilities. A truck driving by? Someone dropping a heavy object on the ground?

The truth, though, quickly becomes obvious: EARTHQUAKE!

For centuries, this is how people living in quake country have experienced seismic movement. But over the last few years, technological innovation has created another option: an alarm on your smartphone that gives you a precious few seconds to prepare for the shaking.

California began rolling out free earthquake early-warning apps about five years ago. In 2024, after various improvements, a string of moderate earthquakes and wider use, the network is finally coming into its own.

On Tuesday, early-warning alerts went out to an estimated 5.4 million people for the magnitude 5.2 quake [See Quake alerts, A10]



THE CLIMBING CABLES on Half Dome in Yosemite National Park have been around for more than a century. The crude and dangerous cables have fascinated adventurous souls since their inception.

After fatal fall, safety on Half Dome scrutinized

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK — Clinging for life to a cold steel cable, high on a nearly vertical rock face in the Sierra Nevada, the soles of my hiking shoes simply could not find traction.

Again and again, as my forearms trembled and my fingers ached, my feet slipped on the mercilessly smooth granite.

A fall from that height — on the climbing cables that mark the final 400-foot ascent to the summit of Yosemite’s Half Dome — could easily be fatal. So I clenched my fists tighter and inched toward the top. The only relief came from irregularly spaced wooden slats drilled into the rock that provided desperately needed footholds.

Victim’s father says request for upgrades on cables leading to summit was met by Yosemite officials’ ‘deafening’ silence

By Jack Dolan

I was right to be nervous. The wide stretches between some of those wooden slats, particularly on the steepest parts of the final ascent, are notoriously treacherous.

Last month, while descending the same stretch in a sudden rainstorm, 20-year-old Grace Rohloff slipped on the slick rock and lost her grip on the cables. In a flash, she slid past her father’s outstretched hand, and he watched helplessly as she plummeted hundreds of feet to her death.

She wasn’t the first: At least 10 others have died in falls from that stretch, usually when the rock is wet.

In a phone interview last week from his home in Phoenix, Jonathan Rohloff said he kept asking himself [See Half Dome, A5]

A \$9-billion example of cable TV woes

Media giant’s steep write-down after loss of NBA deal shows industry’s challenges.

By MEG JAMES

Warner Bros. Discovery ripped off a Band-Aid this week, giving investors an alarming look at the plummeting value of the cable television business.

During its second-quarter earnings report, the company said that its networks, including CNN, TNT, HGTV, Food Network and Animal



DAVID ZASLAV is CEO of Warner Bros. Discovery, which restated the value of its cable TV business.

Planet — were worth \$9 billion less than they were just two years ago. The new valuation comes as the company prepares to lose its key NBA contract after next season — a change that has shaken the David Zaslav-led company.

The massive write-down brought into sharp focus the collateral damage of the entertainment industry’s shift to streaming. Warner Bros. Discovery’s channels have long been popular destinations for viewers, particularly during an earlier era of channel surfing. But no more.

[See Cable, A7]

July was hottest in state history

Records fell across California, data show. It’s a climate ‘wake-up call,’ one official says.

By GRACE TOOHEY

The month of July kicked off with a dire warning: An unusual long-duration heat event was forecast to bring extreme heat risk across the West, with triple-digit temperatures and dangerous fire conditions expected in much of California for days on end.

That outlook quickly proved accurate — and would end up defining almost the entire month in the Golden State, which would see little relief from unrelenting heat.

As the first heat wave kicked off, utility officials on July 2 initiated the year’s first planned power shutoffs in some Northern California counties, trying to avoid fire starts in the scorching weather.

Then, record after record across the state shattered. Palm Springs saw its hottest day ever, hitting 124 degrees July 5. Redding hit an all-time high of 119 degrees July 6. Palmdale and Lancaster had almost a week straight of days at or above 110 degrees, more than doubling the cities’ previous streaks.

Tragic outcomes also began to mount. Several wildfires that erupted in the extreme heat destroyed homes and sent families fleeing. A motorcyclist died while touring Death Valley.

Without much of a reprieve, a second heat wave then boiled the state’s interior. While not as intense or as long as the first, it would still fuel the Park fire’s explosive growth across Butte and Tehama counties. Within a matter of days, the blaze would become one of the largest wildfires in California history.

It was a historic month for extreme heat, and now climate data have confirmed [See Heat, A10]

Suspects sought mass casualties

Authorities say a foiled plot to attack Taylor Swift shows in Vienna was inspired by militant groups. **WORLD, A3**

Lyles slowed in 200 by COVID

American sprinter says he tested positive, yet still manages to capture bronze in his specialty. **SPORTS, B10**

Back-to-school spending jumps

Costs have increased dramatically this year, putting more stress on families trying to save pennies. **BUSINESS, A6**

Weather

Partly sunny.
L.A. Basin: 85/64. **B6**

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