



IN BALTIMORE, part of the Francis Scott Key Bridge sits on a ship that struck one of its supports. In California, major port bridges typically have supports and bumpers that are more substantial, one engineer said.

How California bridges would fare in direct hit

A Baltimore-type collapse is less likely at spans in the state's ports, experts say.

BY JENNY JARVIE, GRACE TOOHEY AND RACHEL URANGA

Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge stood little chance of survival Tuesday when a cargo ship rammed into it: Its vertical support structure seemed flimsy for a bridge spanning such a busy port, experts said, and did not appear to be protected by a substantial impact barrier.

Tuesday's incident happened just before 1:30 a.m., when a 948-foot-long cargo vessel dubbed Dali lost power as it was leaving Baltimore's port at a speed of 8 knots. After the ship rammed into one of the bridge's support piers, the structure began to shatter almost instantly.

Within seconds, the southern and central spans of the bridge began to collapse. Then the northern span. In 25 seconds, the entire bridge had plunged into the Patapsco River. Officials say six members of a construction crew working on the bridge were still unaccounted for as of Tuesday afternoon, and other victims could still be discovered.

But experts say the Baltimore collapse does not expose significant vulnerabilities in the major bridges near ports across California, which has the two busiest in the nation: the Port of Los Angeles and the Port of Long Beach, which handle about 40% of U.S. container imports from Asia. The Los Angeles port saw 1,712 vessels arrive in 2023.

Robert Dowell, an associate professor of structural engineering at San Diego State University, said Cali-

fornia's major bridges are less at risk of being toppled by errant cargo ships because their support columns have been retrofitted to make them withstand major earthquakes.

"If they were seismically retrofitted, they would be strengthened and you wouldn't expect as fragile vertical members as what you saw supporting the Baltimore bridge," Dowell said.

California's major bridges typically have solid supports and substantial [See Bridges, A6]

Sweeping inquiry into Combs

Sex-trafficking investigators have interviewed three women, sources say. Focus may be on rap mogul's connection to a minor, experts say.

BY RICHARD WINTON

Over the last few months, a legendary name in the music world has faced a series of shocking allegations of sexual abuse.

In civil lawsuits, four women have accused Sean "Diddy" Combs of rape, assault and other abuses, dating back three decades. One of the allegations involved a minor. The claims sent shock waves through the music industry and put Combs' entertainment empire in jeopardy.

Now, the hip-hop mogul's legal troubles have worsened considerably.

Law enforcement sources told The Times that Combs is the subject of a sweeping inquiry into sex-trafficking allegations that resulted in a federal raid Monday at his estates in Los Angeles and Miami.

Authorities have declined to comment on the case, and Combs has not [See Combs, A7]



FEDERAL AGENTS walk near an L.A. property belonging to Sean Combs on Monday. One of his lawyers called the case a "witch hunt."



TRIPOD, often seen around Joshua Tree National Park, is far too comfortable with humans, experts say.

Scrappy, cunning and overly adored

A three-legged coyote has been spoiled with handouts. Wildlife experts are concerned.

BY ALEX WIGGLESWORTH

TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. — Rachel Crabtree was visiting Joshua Tree National Park in March 2023 when she saw something that shocked her.

In the middle of a desert snowstorm, a three-legged coyote was darting back and forth across a busy road.

She whipped out her

phone and videotaped the coyote as it eyed traffic, then bounded away gracefully, with just the slightest hint of a hobble.

Only later would Crabtree, a nurse, learn that the coyote called Tripod is a local legend whose likeness graces a mural downtown and whose chance encounters with residents are quickly documented on social media. A Tripod sighting near the park entrance can bring traffic to a grinding halt as visitors snap photos, and officials say people have been seen feeding the animal.

[See Coyote, A9]

Rise in jail inmate deaths defies simple explanation

By Keri Blakinger

It was well after dark, but Tawana Hunter lingered in the hospital parking lot, watching the minutes tick by on her phone. As midnight drew closer, she ran through all the things she wished had been different.

She wished her father had been in better health. She wished he hadn't gotten arrested. She wished he hadn't spent the last few months of his life in jail. And she wished that, right now, he wasn't dying alone, handcuffed to a hospital bed.

After almost two hours of wishing and waiting, her phone rang.

"I'm sorry," the woman began. Tawana

knew what came next.

Jubal Hunter, 60, was one of 45 Los Angeles County inmates who died in custody last year, one of the deadliest years in recent history. Though the number of people in the county's lockups is roughly a third less today than what it was a decade ago, the number of fatalities has risen so much that the annual death rate has more than doubled in that time frame. Suicides are slightly down after a sharp spike in 2021, but natural deaths are up, killings are up, and overdoses are way up compared to 10 years ago.

Yet no one seems to [See Jails, A8]



TAWANA HUNTER of Lancaster holds a locket with a photo of her father, Jubal Hunter, who was one of 45 L.A. County jail inmates who died last year.

JUSTICES APPEAR WARY OF ABORTION PILL SUIT

High court questions Texas doctors' legal standing to sue over access across the U.S.

BY DAVID G. SAVAGE

WASHINGTON — U.S. Supreme Court justices sounded skeptical Tuesday about imposing new limits on the dispensing of abortion medication through pharmacies or by mail.

The justices, both conservatives and liberals, questioned whether a group of antiabortion doctors have legal standing to challenge the dispensing rules set by the federal Food and Drug Administration. That issue, not the safety of mifepristone, dominated a two-hour hearing — a likely sign of what the justices thought about the case.

"The court should put an end to this case," Solicitor Gen. Elizabeth Prelogar said on behalf of the Biden administration Tuesday. A handful of doctors who oppose all abortions do not have the right to challenge the legal use of the medication by millions of women, she argued.

If the court were to uphold new restrictions on dispensing the pills, the impact [See Abortion pill, A6]

Dodgers players stand by Ohtani

Teammates admire his composure after first comments on gambling saga. **SPORTS, B9**

NBC News cuts ex-RNC chair

Ronna McDaniel is dropped by network after an internal backlash. **BUSINESS, A10**

Student aid date extended

State moves filing deadline to May 2 amid federal FAFSA woes. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Weather

Clouds and sunshine. L.A. Basin: 70/51. **B6**

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