



**A ROAD** is blocked in Twentynine Palms as officials investigate the home of the suspect in Saturday’s attack.

# Salvadorans are divided over ruler

APOPA, El Salvador — Victor Barahona was grateful when soldiers started rounding up gang members who had long terrorized this working-class city. No longer would his grandchildren pass drug deals or be startled from sleep by the crack of gunfire.

But when El Salvador’s military started hauling away neighbors Barahona knew had no connection to the gangs, he spoke out, criticizing the arrests on his community radio program.

Soon after, police rapped on his door. Barahona said he was handcuffed and sent to prison, with no access to lawyers, no contact with family and no clear sense of the charges against him.

He recalls seeing inmates being tortured and guards hauling dead from cells while he lived on meager portions of noodles and beans. He would later lodge a complaint with the Office of the United Nations High

Most support but also fear President Bukele. Critics say he’s just an old-school dictator.

By Kate Lintheum



**PRESIDENT** Nayib Bukele presents himself like a tech CEO: a disrupter in chief willing to break norms.

Commissioner for Human Rights.

When he was released almost a year later — 70 pounds lighter, and with no explanation — Barahona was alarmed to see that President Nayib Bukele was winning global praise for bringing peace and prosperity to El Salvador, with his iron-fist security strategy heralded by American conservatives such as President Trump.

A 43-year-old former ad-man first elected in a landslide in 2019, Bukele has been largely successful in re-branding El Salvador — a poor backwater beset by murderous gangs — as an innovative and safe nation that he compares to Singapore. In prolific social media posts, he presents himself like a tech chief executive: a disrupter in chief willing to break norms and create what he terms a “new history.”

[See Bukele, A4]

# Edison bonuses went up despite safety issues

Utility is supposed to lower executive payout when its wires spark fires

By MELODY PETERSEN

The state law that shielded Southern California Edison and other utilities from liability for wildfires sparked by their equipment came with a catch: Top utility executives would be forced to take a pay cut if their company’s safety record declined.

Edison’s safety record did decline last year. The number of fires sparked by its equipment soared to 178 from 90 the year before and 39% above the five-year average.

Serious injuries suffered by employees jumped by 56% over the average. Five contractors working on its electric system died.

As a result of that performance, the utility’s parent company, Edison International, cut executive bonuses.



**AN EDISON** worker fixes power lines damaged by fire in Altadena in January.

**Israel will allow limited Gaza aid**  
Decision to permit “basic” amount of food aims to avert a hunger crisis amid a new military offensive. **WORLD, A3**

**Mexico vessel hits Brooklyn Bridge**  
The navy sailing ship on a global goodwill tour snaps its three masts, killing two crew members. **NATION, A6**

**Ways to defend climate progress**  
The state can use lawsuits and legislation to counter Trump’s environmental actions, experts say. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

**Weather**  
Mostly sunny.  
L.A. Basin: 78/61. **B5**

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# Manifesto threatened an attack on a fertility clinic

Authorities identify a suspect in the Palm Springs bombing, a 25-year-old with ‘nihilistic ideations.’

**An uneasy Sunday in a resort town**  
Palm Springs’ police chief urges calm as residents find comfort in community. **A7**

By LIBOR JANY, PAIGE ST. JOHN, JENNY JARVIE, RICHARD WINTON AND JULIA WICK

**PALM SPRINGS** — The suspect in the bombing of a Palm Springs fertility clinic that injured four people was tentatively identified Sunday by the FBI as Guy Edward Bartkus, a 25-year-old “with nihilistic ideations.”

Bartkus appears to have been killed in the Saturday morning explosion at American Reproductive Centers, according to FBI officials who are investigating the incident as an “act of intentional terrorism.”

“We believe he was the subject found by the vehicle,” said Akil Davis, assistant director in charge of the FBI’s Los Angeles Field Office, referencing a 2010 silver Ford Fusion sedan near the explosion site.

Davis said investigators believed the suspect was attempting to livestream the attack, which he described as “the largest bombing ever investigated in Southern California.”

Law enforcement sources told The Times that the bomber used a very large amount of explosives — so many the bomb shredded his remains — and may not

[See Bombing, A7]

# Biden is diagnosed with prostate cancer

Former president, 82, has an ‘aggressive form’ of the disease, with metastasis to the bone, his office says.

By MICHAEL WILNER

**WASHINGTON** — Former President Biden has been diagnosed with an “aggressive form” of prostate cancer, his office said Sunday, a devastating development after he dropped his bid for reelection last summer over widespread concerns over his age and health.

Biden’s personal office said he was examined last week after the president reported a series of concerning symptoms.

“Last week, President Joe Biden was seen for a new

finding of a prostate nodule after experiencing increasing urinary symptoms. On Friday, he was diagnosed with prostate cancer, characterized by a Gleason score of 9 (Grade Group 5) with metastasis to the bone,” the office said in a statement.

“While this represents a more aggressive form of the disease, the cancer appears to be hormone-sensitive, which allows for effective management. The President and his family are reviewing treatment options with his physicians,” the statement added.

The former president, 82, had been making his first public appearances since leaving office in recent weeks, including a public address and a lengthy sit-down on ABC’s “The View,” and also hired a communications strategist to help bur-

[See Biden, A6]

# Hope for housing in Coachella Valley

After years of scarcity, affordable units are planned or being constructed in all nine of its desert cities.

By REBECCA PLEVIN

**PALM SPRINGS** — Along the main thoroughfare of this desert city, just a block from a vibey, adults-only hotel and a gastropub serving boozy brunches, a new apartment building with a butterfly-wing roof inspired by Midcentury Modern design is nearing completion.

The property, called Aloe Palm Canyon, features 71 one-bedroom units with tall windows offering natural light and sweeping views of Mt. San Jacinto, plus a fitness room and laundry fa-

cilities. When it opens this summer, serving lower-income seniors over age 55, the complex will become the latest addition to the Coachella Valley’s growing stock of affordable housing.

A decade ago, this desert region known for its winter resorts, lush golf courses and annual music festivals produced just 38 units of affordable housing a year, while the low-wage workers powering the valley’s lavish service industry faced soaring housing costs and food insecurity. Fast-forward to this year, and affordable housing units are planned or under construction in all nine Coachella Valley cities, including the most exclusive, and in many unincorporated areas.

At least some of that momentum can be credited to a Palm Desert-based nonprofit that in 2018 set an am-

[See Housing, A8]



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