



Showers 57/54 • Tomorrow: Rain 66/48 **B18**

Democracy Dies in Darkness

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2025 • \$4

U.S. kills 14 in 4 strikes on boats in the Pacific

Mexico looks for survivor as attacks on alleged drug traffickers ramp up

BY ALEX HORTON AND DAN LAMOTHE

The U.S. military struck four vessels suspected of carrying drugs in the eastern Pacific, officials said Tuesday, a significant escalation of the Trump administration's campaign against traffickers in the Western Hemisphere.

Fourteen alleged traffickers were killed in the strikes, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said on social media, bringing the total to nearly 60 killed in more than a dozen strikes since early September. The latest operation, carried out Monday, included a rescue mission of one survivor launched by Mexican authorities, Hegseth said.

Hegseth posted an announcement with video of three strikes showing the vessels exploding or bursting into flames. In one of the strikes, two boats were pulled alongside each other and seemingly stationary when they were hit. U.S. military forces have surged into the Caribbean Sea to support the military campaign, including roughly 10,000 troops, a fleet of eight warships, and an aircraft carrier and associated warships on their way from Europe.

Mexican officials said in social media posts Tuesday afternoon that the Mexican navy was conducting a search-and-rescue operation 400 miles southwest of the

SEE STRIKES ON A5

Battle over DEI roils corporate America

As some say victory is near, various firms face pushback over rollbacks

BY TAYLOR TELFORD

When the nation's largest group of HR professionals invited anti-DEI activist Robby Starbuck to a marquee conference for a talk on workplace diversity programs that he's pressured companies such as Walmart and McDonald's to abandon, scores of its members raged on social media — with many vowing to ditch the conference and sever ties with the trade group.

But Johnny C. Taylor Jr., who heads the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), said the backlash reinforces the need for human resources managers to hear from people like Starbuck. With diversity, equity and inclusion programs under more scrutiny than ever, Taylor said, "we need to armor members with the tools they need to keep themselves out of the crosshairs of the government."

The episode highlights how tensions over DEI continue to roil corporate America after five years of whiplash. Such initiatives have long faced criticism from conservatives who view them as a form

SEE DEI ON A15

Angels over Washington



KEVIN LAMARQUE/REUTERS

The U.S. Navy's elite Blue Angels squadron, which flies F/A-18 Super Hornets and is known for daredevil stunts at public air shows, performs a surprise flyover Tuesday near the Washington Monument, nearly a month into the government shutdown.

Monster Melissa hammers Jamaica at peak strength

185 MPH WINDS RIVAL ATLANTIC RECORDS

Surge from Category 5 storm poses grave risk to coast

BY LIVERN BARRETT, SAMMY WESTFALL, RUBY MELLEN AND BEN NOLL

KINGSTON, JAMAICA — Hurricane Melissa made landfall Tuesday afternoon as a Category 5 storm, tying for the strongest hurricane landfall on record in the Atlantic basin by both pressure and wind speed.

Later Tuesday, local officials noted that it was not yet possible to offer damage assessments and that there was no available information about fatalities from the storm.

The storm came ashore in southwestern Jamaica with maximum sustained winds of 185 mph, the National Hurricane Center said. The storm's eye hit the shore in New Hope, roughly 75 miles west of the capital, Kingston. It was expected to cross

the island over several hours. A few hours from landfall, its maximum winds had weakened to 145 mph — a Category 4 hurricane whose core was emerging from the northern coast of the west side of the island.

The storm was expected to move away from Jamaica on Tuesday evening, shifting closer to the southeastern side of Cuba in the coming hours before nearing Bermuda later this week, the hurricane center said in its 5 p.m. update.

Around landfall and at its peak, the storm's central air pressure reached 892 millibars, a sign of incredible intensity. Air pressure measures how much the atmosphere weighs above a given point, and in hurricanes, lower pressure means the air is rushing inward and upward with more force, driving stronger winds.

SEE MELISSA ON A12

Israel bombards Gaza, says ceasefire violated

Hamas rebuts claims related to hostage return and attack on IDF troops

BY GERRY SHIH AND HAZEM BALOUSHA

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military launched several strikes in Gaza City and other parts of the enclave late Tuesday, rescue workers and health officials said, after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered a "forceful" response to what he called a ceasefire violation by Hamas.

The bombardment, which medics said killed at least nine

people in Gaza, put additional strain on the ceasefire agreement brokered this month by President Donald Trump.

Earlier Tuesday, Hamas militants fired a rocket-propelled grenade and a sniper fired at troops in two incidents in southern Gaza, an Israeli military official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss the attack. Hamas said in a statement that it had "no connection to the shooting incident in Rafah and affirms its commitment to the ceasefire agreement."

Tensions had been escalating after Netanyahu accused Hamas of returning the remains of hostage Ofir Tzarfati; but Israel had already recovered his partial re-

SEE GAZA ON A9

A casualty of Hong Kong's shadow war in the U.K.

A former Royal Marine's life unravels after he becomes entangled in a campaign against exiles

BY GREG MILLER

LONDON — They staked out the woman's apartment for days, creeping up to her door to listen for the sound of her voice and watching her window blinds for any rustle.

As the hours ticked by, a member of the stakeout team described the unfolding events in a series of texts to a woman he was dating. He and his partners had picked up their Hong Kong "clients" the previous day at Heathrow Airport, then driven nearly 200 miles to a drab market town in northern England to stalk an alleged fugitive from the former British colony.

"We are now going to serve papers on a criminal," Matthew Trickett, a former British Royal Marine and an off-duty immigration officer, wrote in late April of last year, adding that "2 lawyers, 1 senior police officer and a military officer" were involved in a mission he said was sanctioned by the Hong Kong government.

Asked whether he was worried he might get himself arrested, Trickett, with bulging biceps and tattoos down his arms, scoffed.

"Lol im not the criminal," he wrote in texts reviewed by The Washington Post. "Im the good guy."

Those assertions, and Trickett's life, would unravel over the next 48 hours.

Even as he texted, Trickett and his partners were under surveillance by British counterterrorism police and MI5, England's domestic intelligence service, according to British officials and individuals with knowledge of the investigation. Those watching the red-brick building in a West Yorkshire town were themselves being watched as part of an expanding shadow war between the United Kingdom and Hong Kong, whose government is increasingly adopting Beijing's authoritarian playbook.

Over the past several years, U.K. officials have tracked what they describe as an escalating campaign of surveillance and intimidation against Hong Kong dissidents living in Britain. The Hong Kong government has not bothered to hide its intent, declaring its right to pursue anyone it deems subversive and offering

SEE HONG KONG ON A10



BRITISH ROYAL MARINES

Matthew Trickett's time as a British Royal Marine ended in 2013. Last year, he was charged with spying for Hong Kong.

All members of arts agency ousted amid building blitz

BY DAN DIAMOND

The White House on Tuesday fired all six members of the Commission of Fine Arts, an independent federal agency that had expected to review some of President Donald Trump's construction projects, including his planned triumphal arch and White House ballroom.

"On behalf of President Donald J. Trump, I am writing to inform you that your position as a member of the Commission of Fine Arts is terminated, effective immediately," reads an email reviewed by The Washington Post that was sent to one of the commissioners by a staffer in the White House presidential personnel office.

The commission, which was established by Congress more than a century ago and traditionally includes a mix of architects

SEE COMMISSION ON A6

Ballroom: A panel recast by Trump is set to decide project's fate. **A6**

IN THE NEWS

SNAP benefits States are suing the Agriculture Department to force it to make billions of dollars in contingency funds available amid the government shutdown. **A4**

Amazon layoffs The company is cutting 14,000 jobs, tying the downsizing to expected gains from AI and a desire to be nimbler. **A13**

THE NATION Citing autopen use, a GOP-led House panel called Joe Biden's actions "illegitimate." **A4**
The Republican House speaker said he doesn't see a "path" to a third Trump term. **A6**

THE WORLD After a year of fighting Russia, Ukrainian troops' hold on Pokrovsk seems more tenuous. **A8**
Paramilitary fighters are carrying out massacres in Sudan's Darfur region, videos show. **A9**

THE ECONOMY The Trump administration will take a stake in at least \$80 billion of new nuclear reactors in a deal with Westinghouse's parent companies. **A13**
Texas sued two companies over the sale of Tylenol, claiming they deceived consumers about autism risks. **A14**

STYLE For MAGA singles in D.C., finding the right match can prove challenging. **B1**

SPORTS The Commanders are reeling, mired in a three-game losing streak, and there's no running from their mounting problems. **B7**

THE REGION The National Park Service reinstalled a statue of a Confederate general in the District after it was toppled by protesters in 2020. **B13**
A 2.5-magnitude earthquake struck Maryland on Monday, with its epicenter in Columbia. **B15**

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