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Democracy Dies in Darkness

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ELECTION 2024

## Multiple blackouts before ship hit bridge

NTSB preliminary report details several problems leading up to crash

BY MICHAEL LARIS AND KATIE METTLER

The ship that knocked down Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge suffered two electrical blackouts the day before the collision and experienced two more blackouts that disabled critical equipment, federal safety investigators said in a preliminary report released Tuesday.

The National Transportation Safety Board report provides the first detailed examination of what went wrong as the cargo ship lost power, veered off course and slammed into a critical bridge pier. It lays out a comprehensive timeline of the events leading up to and immediately after the crash, describing in technical terms a rapid-fire series of problems before the Dali struck the bridge, though it says investigators are still exploring precisely what caused some of the failures.

The cause of the crash — which killed six bridge workers, halted most trade at the Port of Baltimore, and raised questions about whether federal and state authorities are prepared to prevent similar tragic disruptions — is likely to be scrutinized for months and years.

The FBI has launched a separate criminal investigation focused on the Singapore-flagged Dali, including whether the crew knew of serious system problems before setting out in the early-SEE DALI ON A6

ALICE MUNRO 1931-2024



PETER MUHLI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Author Alice Munro receives an award in Dublin in 2009.

## Short-story master found great depth in ordinary lives

BY EMILY LANGER

Alice Munro, a towering woman of letters for the past half-century whose works of short fiction illuminated the emotional terrain of seemingly ordinary lives, and who was honored at the end of her career with the Nobel Prize in literature, died May 13 in Port Hope, Ontario. She was 92.

The Canadian writer's death was announced by her publisher, Penguin Random House Canada. The cause was not immediately available. Mrs. Munro had in recent years endured numerous health problems, including heart ailments and cancer, and in 2013 she said publicly that she was "probably not going to write any more."

Four months later — and after perennial rumors that she might be next in line for the award — she received the Nobel Prize. The SEE MUNRO ON A15



MARVIN JOSEPH/THE WASHINGTON POST

Prince George's County Executive Angela D. Alsobrooks celebrates her victory Tuesday night in Greenbelt, Md. If she defeats former Maryland governor Larry Hogan (R) in the fall Senate race, she would become the fourth Black woman elected to the upper chamber.

## Alsobrooks, Hogan to duel for Senate

Trone loses hotly fought Md. Democratic race despite spending fortune

BY ERIN COX, TEO ARMUS AND LATESHIA BEACHUM

Prince George's County Executive Angela D. Alsobrooks was projected to win Maryland's costly and barbed Democratic primary for U.S. Senate, according to the Associated Press, a come-from-behind victory over a deep-pocketed opponent that catapults her into a high-stakes general election with control of the chamber on the line.

Alsobrooks presented voters with a historic opportunity to send the state's first Black person to the U.S. Senate, where



WESLEY LAPOINTE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Hogan, twice elected statewide, and his wife, Yumi, greet supporters Tuesday after his victory in the Republican primary.

only three Black women have served. A little-known local official, she built an influential coalition of the state's top Democrats to introduce her statewide.

A mother and former prosecutor who leads a wealthy majority-Black suburb east of D.C., Alsobrooks campaigned on bedrock Democratic issues on which

she largely agreed with her chief opponent, three-term Rep. David Trone (D). Trone spent nearly \$62 million of his own fortune on the race, blanketing Maryland with political ads in the most expensive race in state history.

Three issues appeared to define the contest: identity, money and the question of who could best defend the reliably Democratic seat from Republicans hoping to flip the Senate.

Alsobrooks's emphasis on sending people with her "lived experience" to Congress distinguished her from Trone, as well as her closing argument that she would be a more effective contrast to the formidable Republican on the ballot in November, former governor Larry Hogan. SEE PRIMARY ON A9

Maryland: Delaney, Elfreth win Democratic nods for the House. B1

## Blinken declares vision for victory on visit to Kyiv

Pushes for reforms he says will help Ukraine prevail against Russia

BY MICHAEL BIRNBAUM

KYIV — Ukraine's friends are committed to helping it fortify and prevail against Russia's full-scale invasion, Secretary of State Antony Blinken declared in a speech in Ukraine's capital Tuesday, vowing to aid in the Kremlin's defeat even as Kyiv faces deepening questions about its ability to hold off an assault threatening its front lines.

In an unusually sweeping address for the chief U.S. diplomat, Blinken called for a long-term plan to further enhance the country's war machine so it would be better able to resist the Kremlin on its own, and for anti-corruption efforts and other reforms that Ukraine has struggled with ever since it broke from the Soviet Union in 1991.

Blinken's unannounced two-day trip was the first high-level visit by a Biden administration official since Congress last month approved a \$61 billion aid package for Ukraine after seven



BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Secretary of State Antony Blinken works while traveling by train to Kyiv on Monday, on the first high-level Ukraine visit by a Biden administration official since Congress approved an aid package in April.

months of obstruction by some Republicans. The visit was intended as a show of solidarity as the Pentagon speeds delivery of air defenses, artillery and other combat equipment in a bid to

stabilize Kyiv's military — and as Ukraine contends with the possibility that it may never regain all the territory it has lost to Russia.

U.S. officials have conceded that Ukraine's sizable challenges

mean it may not regain a battlefield advantage before 2025 at the earliest, fueling fears among Ukrainian officials that they could be pushed into negotiating

SEE BLINKEN ON A12

## Trump's lawyer presses Cohen

TRIES TO UNDERMINE HIS CREDIBILITY

Onetime fixer says he'd 'like to see' a conviction

BY SHAYNA JACOBS, RACHEL WEINER, PERRY STEIN AND DEVLIN BARRETT

NEW YORK — Michael Cohen, the key witness against Donald Trump, conceded under cross-examination Tuesday that he would like to see the former president become a felon and that he feels compelled to go online almost every day to attack the man he once idolized.

On Cohen's second day of testimony at Manhattan criminal court, the former Trump lawyer faced off against Todd Blanche, Trump's current lawyer. Blanche quickly tried to put Cohen on the defensive with questions aimed at showing that he was "obsessed" with Trump and is now consumed with a quest for revenge, and that means his account of Trump falsifying business records cannot be trusted.

"Yes, I would like to see" Trump convicted, Cohen said early in the cross-examination, before adding, "I would like to see accountability; it's not for me, it's for this jury or this court."

Blanche, the defense lawyer, SEE TRUMP ON A4

The Critique: Trump's "fixer" left a trail of ruin to please his boss. A2

## Niger says threats by U.S. official led to rift

Premier calls remarks a turning point as key military ties broke down

BY RACHEL CHASON

NIAMEY, NIGER — A crucial military relationship between the United States and its closest West African ally, the country of Niger, ruptured this spring after a visiting U.S. official made threats during last-ditch negotiations over whether American troops based there would be allowed to remain, according to the country's prime minister.

In an exclusive interview, Prime Minister Ali Mahaman Lamine Zeine put the blame for the breakdown squarely on the United States, accusing American officials of trying to dictate which countries Niger could partner with and failing to justify the U.S. troop presence, now scheduled to end in the coming months. Niger has been central to efforts to contain a growing Islamist insurgency in West Africa.

The rift between the former allies has created an opportunity for Russia, which has moved quickly to deepen its relationship with Niger, dispatching troops to the capital, Niamey, last month to train the Nigerian military and SEE NIGER ON A14

## IN THE NEWS

**Steeper tariffs on Chinese EVs** President Biden quadrupled levies in a move aimed at preventing Beijing from adding autos to the list of industries it dominates. A6

**Nearly 450,000 in Gaza flee** Israeli forces moved deeper into Rafah, prompting one of the largest civilian exoduses of the war. A11

**THE NATION** Columbia ended a year marked by protests with smaller commencement ceremonies. A7

**The Air Force** opened its prosecution of an airman convicted of leaking U.S. secrets. A8

**THE WORLD** Georgia's Parliament approved a divisive "foreign agent law," defying mass protests. A10

**Russian President** Vladimir Putin will travel to Beijing to reinforce ties with China. A16

**THE ECONOMY** Travelers can save money by avoiding these sneaky fees and charges when abroad. A17

**Google executives** shared their vision for a future in which artificial intelligence is part of everyday life and significantly changes the way the internet works. A18

**THE REGION** An antiabortion activist who kept fetuses got nearly five years in prison for illegally blockading a D.C. clinic. B1

**A Maryland woman** pleaded guilty to federal conspiracy charges in connection with a plot to attack the Baltimore-area power grid. B1

**STYLE** Take a seat next to Pete Buttigieg as the nation's top transportation official works on enhancing passengers' rights. C1

**FOOD** The Italian-born cook Marcella Hazan died a decade ago, but her legacy is shining anew. E1

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