



Flora and fauna at solar farms in Ramsey, Minn., and, top right, near Herald, Calif. Students surveying the plants in Ramsey, top left.

Cycle of Abuse by Priests Persisted in the Pacific

By PETE MCKENZIE

SUVA, Fiji — Pope Francis was expected to be welcomed by children bearing flowers, a 21-gun salute and a candlelight vigil after landing in Papua New Guinea on Friday. It would be the first papal visit in three decades to the Pacific Islands, a deeply Christian region — but one that has played a little-known role in the clergy abuse scandal that has stained the Roman Catholic Church.

Over several decades, at least 10 priests and missionaries moved to Papua New Guinea after they had allegedly sexually abused children, or had been found to do so, in the West, according to court records, government

Accused, or Convicted, and Then Shuffled to Vulnerable Islands

inquiries, survivor testimonies, news media reports and comments by church officials.

These men were part of a larger pattern: At least 34 priests and missionaries left New Zealand, Australia, Britain and the United States for Pacific Island countries like Fiji, Kiribati and Samoa under similar circumstances. In at least 13 cases, their superiors knew that these men had been accused or convicted of abuse before they

transferred to the Pacific, according to church records and survivor accounts, shielding them from scrutiny.

It has been widely documented that the church has protected scores of priests from the authorities by shuffling them to other places, sometimes in other countries. But what sets these cases apart is the remoteness of the islands the men ended up in, making it harder for the authorities to pursue them. The relocations also gave the men access to vulnerable communities where priests were considered beyond reproach.

Notably, at least three of these men, according to government inquiries and news media reports,

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Harvesting Sun While Helping Nature Thrive

By CATRIN EINHORN

RAMSEY, Minn. — It’s not your average solar farm.

The glassy panels stand in a meadow. Wildflowers sway in the breeze, bursts of purple, pink, yellow, orange and white among native grasses. A monarch butterfly flits from one blossom to the next.

WILD PLACES, CLEAN ENERGY  
Solar Farms Do Double Duty

Dragonflies zip, bees hum and goldfinches trill.

As solar projects unfurl across the United States, sites like this one in Ramsey, Minn., stand out because they offer a way to fight climate change while also tackling another ecological crisis: a global biodiversity collapse, driven in large part by habitat loss.

The sun’s clean energy is a powerful weapon in the battle against climate change. But the sites that capture that energy take up land that wildlife needs to survive and thrive. Solar farms could blanket millions of acres in the United States over the coming decades.

So developers, operators, biologists and environmentalists are teaming up with an innovative strategy.

“We have to address both challenges at the same exact time,” said Rebecca Hernandez, a professor of ecology at the University of California, Davis, whose research focuses on how to do just that.

Insects, those small animals that play a mighty role in supporting life on Earth, are facing alarming declines. Solar farms can offer them food and shelter by providing a diverse mix of native plants.

Such plants can also decrease erosion, nourish the soil and store planet-warming carbon. They can also attract insects that improve the pollination of nearby crops.

Pollinator-friendly solar can pay off for business, too, potentially saving money and giving projects an edge for approval at a time when communities are increasingly wary of vast solar farms. Developers are taking note.

But there’s a broad spectrum of

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A vigil in Winder, Ga., where a shooter killed four people Wednesday at Apalachee High School.

2023 Tip on Shooting Suspect Came Up Empty

This article is by Sean Keenan, Rick Rojas, Glenn Thrush and Michael Levenson.

JEFFERSON, Ga. — The threat posted online last year to “shoot up a middle school” was the kind that the authorities have become all too familiar with in the United States.

After receiving tips about the threat, the authorities homed in

Student’s Father Facing His Own Charges

on a 13-year-old boy in Georgia, and an investigator spoke with the teenager and his father.

During the conversation in May 2023, the boy, Colt Gray, assured the investigator, from the sheriff’s

office in Jackson County, Ga., that he had not made the threat. He said that he had not used Discord, the social media site where the threat was posted, in months, and that he had deleted his account.

“The only thing I have is TikTok, but I just go on there and watch videos,” the teenager said, according to a transcript obtained by The New York Times.

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Trump Backs Federal Panel On Efficiency

Idea Came From Musk, Who’d Lead Group

By MICHAEL GOLD and ALAN RAPPEPORT

Former President Donald J. Trump called for the creation of a government efficiency commission in an economic speech in New York on Thursday, adopting a policy idea that was pitched to him by the billionaire businessman Elon Musk.

Mr. Trump said that Mr. Musk would also lead the commission, which would conduct a sweeping audit of the federal government and recommend “drastic reforms” for cutting waste. He said the commission would save “trillions of dollars.”

In a wide-ranging and sometimes meandering speech that lasted more than an hour, Mr. Trump recast his first-term record as an economic miracle and renewed his pitch for lowering taxes and raising tariffs on imports, often disregarding some of the potential implications of his new proposals.

The trade wars that Mr. Trump started had painful consequences for American farmers, and the new tariffs that he called for would also likely trigger backlash and retaliation from other countries. Mr. Trump claimed that his new tax cuts would be paid for by spurring economic growth, but the 2017 tax cuts he enacted increased the national debt and his growth projections never panned out.

Mr. Trump’s embrace of the concept of a government efficiency commission — a favorite Washington solution for delaying dealing with hard problems — comes as he is trying to define how his stewardship of the economy would differ from that of his Democratic opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris. He has assailed her economic vision as one that would saddle the economy with wasteful spending and burdensome regulations.

During his speech, Mr. Trump also vowed to eliminate 10 existing government regulations for every new regulation added under his potential new administration. Mr. Trump — who during his

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FEDERAL AGENTS SEARCH OFFICIALS IN NEW YORK CITY

INQUIRY BASIS UNCLEAR

Among Targets: Deputy Mayors, Schools Chief and Police Leader

This article is by William K. Rashbaum, Dana Rubinstein, Jeffery C. Mays and Michael Rothfeld.

Federal agents on Wednesday zeroed in on the highest ranks of Mayor Eric Adams’s administration, searching a home and seizing the phones of the New York City police commissioner, the first deputy mayor, the schools chancellor and others, according to people with knowledge of the matter.

The actions were unrelated to a separate corruption inquiry focused on the mayor and his campaign fund-raising, some of the people said. But the revelation that not only the mayor but also many of the city’s most senior officials are embroiled in federal investigations further destabilizes an administration that is already reeling from other legal problems.

The investigations also raise questions about Mr. Adams’s ability to continue managing the nation’s largest city. And they threatened to further weaken his political standing as he faces a hotly contested Democratic primary next year in which he already was set to face several serious challengers.

Among the other officials the federal investigators sought information from were the deputy mayor for public safety and a senior adviser to the mayor, one of his closest confidants, the people said. Both men have had other legal challenges.

The agents also searched the home and seized the phone of a consultant who is the brother of both the schools chancellor and one of the deputy mayors, the people said.

The nature of the investigations is unclear, but it appears that one is focused on the senior City Hall officials and the other touches on the police commissioner, the people said.

In an interview on Fox 5 New York on Thursday evening, Mr. Adams denied that the various federal investigations were a distraction.

“Everyone has heard me from time to time: Stay focused, no distraction, and grind,” the mayor said. “My job is to make sure I’m fighting on behalf of New Yorkers, and that’s exactly what I’m doing.”

Representatives of the City Hall officials — the first deputy mayor, Sheena Wright; her partner, Schools Chancellor David C. Banks; the deputy mayor for public safety, Philip Banks III; and a

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Former President Donald J. Trump in New York Thursday.

Guilty Plea for President’s Son In U.S. Tax Case, With No Deal

By GLENN THRUSH and LAUREN HERSTIK

WASHINGTON — Hunter Biden pleaded guilty on Thursday to nine federal tax charges in Los Angeles after telling his legal team that he refused to subject his family to another round of anguish and humiliation after a gut-wrenching gun trial in Delaware three months ago.

The dramatic development signaled the final stages of a fraught investigation of more than five years into the period when Mr. Biden bankrolled his uncontrollable drug and alcohol addiction by leveraging his last name into lucrative overseas consulting contracts — and not paying taxes.

This was a plea without a deal, a unilateral decision by defense lawyers persuaded they could not prevail in the trial — and not part of a settlement that included a reduced punishment.

Mr. Biden, 54, speaking in a low and clipped voice as he sat at the defense table, repeated the word “guilty” nine times as Judge Mark C. Scarci ticked off each charge.

He will remain free on bond until his sentencing hearing in mid-December.

The plea now exposes President Biden’s son to a likely out-

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**Putin Belittles Incursion**

The Russian leader said Kyiv erred in diverting its forces from defending the east.

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**Documenting ISIS Genocide**

The Iraqi government is requiring an international team exhuming mass graves of Yazidis to leave.

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**Uproot or Stay Put?**

American citizens whose spouses have been deported face wrenching decisions on what is best for their future, especially when they have children.

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**Illegal Stops Rise in New York**

A court-appointed monitor says the city’s police officers continue to target Black and Latino men years after a legal settlement.

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**Teen Vaping Hits 10-Year Low**

The percentage of teenagers reporting they vaped tobacco products fell to about a third of the peak levels in 2019, a survey shows.

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**Making Peace With a Chatbot**

After getting on A.I.’s bad side and trying to improve a tainted reputation with chatbots, a reporter saw a new world of the technology’s manipulation come to the surface.

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**Facing a Cooler Labor Market**

A spring survey of employers found that hiring projections for this year’s college graduating class were below last year’s, with job seekers competing for fewer openings.

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**Pamela Paul**

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**Standouts at Armory Show**

Our critic finds much to savor at the art fair. Above, from left, “Arewa V” and “Arewa IV,” by Camila Falquez.

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**Another Manic ‘Beetlejuice’**

Michael Keaton and Winona Ryder and even shrunken head Bob reunite for a fun but less edgy sequel.

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**A Fix-It Shop Like No Other**

Repair technicians at the Paralympics will fix anything, from bent wheel frames to broken sunglasses. They also weld, sew and saw athletes’ assistive equipment into top shape.

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**The Best at Being Worst**

Two members of the ’62 Mets don’t want their infamous record to be broken. Being on that team is a significant part of their personal legacies.

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