"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

Today, sunshine, some high clouds, high 72. **Tonight,** clear, light wind, low 58. **Tomorrow,** plenty of sunshine, low humidity, high 79. Weather map appears on Page B5.

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Voters Believe U.S. Can't Heal Deep Divisions

Poll Shows a Shift Even Before the Shutdown

By JEREMY W. PETERS and RUTH IGIELNIK

Americans have markedly less faith in the ability of the country's political system to solve problems than they had five years ago, with a large majority now believing that the country is incapable of overcoming its deep divisions, according to a poll by The New York Times and Siena University.

Even in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic, when the country was fighting over mask mandates and forced to reckon with questions about racial inequality, a majority of voters still agreed that the country was capable of solving its political prob-

Today, just 33 percent of voters

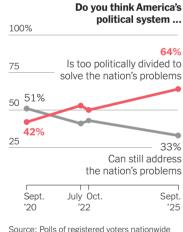
The steep rise in pessimism reflects a striking shift in the public's perceptions about what ails the country. After the economy, the poll found that Americans were most likely to point to problems in the political culture as the most urgent. They named polarization and the state of democracy more often than immigration, inflation or crime.

The Times/Siena poll of 1,313 registered voters, taken between Sept. 22 and 27, was conducted at an especially fraught moment, roughly two weeks after the assassination of the right-wing activist Charlie Kirk. And it was taken before the government shutdown that began at 12:01 a.m. Wednesday — a development likely to reinforce the negative feelings that American voters have about the division and dysfunction in politics.

"It is impossible now to have a policy discussion," said Amber Yang, 37, of Boston, who works in finance and identifies as a Democrat. She said the polarization has seeped into most aspects of life, complicating running a business and even raising a family.

"There's no consensus on the facts," she added. "And when you Continued on Page A12

THE NEW YORK TIMES/SIENA POLL



Sept. 22-24, 2020; July 5-7 and Oct. 9-12, 2022; and Sept. 22-27, 2025. The share who said they did not know or who did not respond YUHAN LIU/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Trump Eyes Deep Cuts

The president plans to meet with the White House budget chief to slash what he described as "Democrat agencies." Page A13.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2025

TRUMP DECLARES FORMAL CONFLICT **AGAINST CARTELS**

IN NOTICE TO CONGRESS

Stretch of Wartime Rules That Govern Killing, Law Experts Say

By CHARLIE SAVAGE and ERIC SCHMITT

WASHINGTON — President Trump has decided that the United States is engaged in a formal "armed conflict" with drug cartels his team has labeled terrorist organizations and that suspected smugglers for such groups are "unlawful combatants," the administration said in a confidential notice to Congress this week.

The notice was sent to several congressional committees and obtained by The New York Times. It adds new detail to the administration's thinly articulated legal rationale for why three U.S. military strikes the president ordered on boats in the Caribbean Sea last month, killing all 17 people aboard them, should be seen as lawful rather than murder.

Mr. Trump's move to formally deem his campaign against drug cartels as an active armed conflict means he is cementing his claim to extraordinary wartime powers, legal specialists said. In an armed conflict, as defined by international law, a country can lawfully kill enemy fighters even when they pose no threat, detain them indefinitely without trials and prosecute them in military courts.

Geoffrey S. Corn, a retired judge advocate general lawyer who was formerly the Army's senior adviser for law-of-war issues, said drug cartels were not engaged in "hostilities" - the standard for when there is an armed conflict for legal purposes — against the United States because selling a danger-ous product is different from an armed attack.

Noting that it is illegal for the military to deliberately target civilians who are not directly participating in hostilities — even suspected criminals — Mr. Corn called the president's move an "abuse" that crossed a major legal

"This is not stretching the envelope," he said. "This is shredding it. This is tearing it apart."

Anna Kelly, a White House spokeswoman, said in an email that "the president acted in line with the law of armed conflict to protect our country from those trying to bring deadly poison to our shores, and he is delivering on his promise to take on the cartels and eliminate these national security threats from murdering more Americans.'

The Trump administration has called the strikes "self-defense" and asserted that the laws of war permitted it to kill, rather than arrest, the people on the boats because it said the targets were smuggling drugs for cartels it has designated as terrorists. The administration has also stressed that tens of thousands of Americans die annually from overdoses.

However, the focus of the administration's attacks has been boats from Venezuela. The surge

Continued on Page A5

PETER BYRNE/PRESS ASSOCIATION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Congregants comforted one another near the Heaton Park synagogue in Manchester, England, after a deadly attack on Thursday.

Attacker Kills 2 At British Shul On Yom Kippur

This article is by Michael D. Shear, Lizzie Dearden, Stephen Castle, Emma Bubola and Thomas

LONDON — An attacker rammed a car into people outside a synagogue in Manchester, England, then went on a stabbing spree on Thursday, killing two people in what the police called an act of terrorism on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar.

The police said officers responded within minutes and shot and killed the attacker, whom they identified as Jihad al-Shamie, 35, a British citizen of Syrian descent. Though the police described the assault as a terrorist attack, they also said that counterterrorism investigators were still "working to understand the motivation.'

Three other people were arrested, the police said, on suspicion of commission, preparation and instigation of acts of terrorism in connection with the assault outside the synagogue, the Heaton Park Hebrew Congrega-

The police did not name those arrested, in accordance with privacy rules, but said they were two men in their 30s and a woman in her 60s. British officials said late Thursday that Mr. al-Shamie had entered the United Kingdom as a "very young child" and was granted British citizenship in

Stephen Watson, the chief constable of the Greater Manchester Police, said the attacker, who seriously wounded three other people, was wearing a vest the constable described as having the "appearance of an explosive device." Investigators later determined it was not capable of caus-

Continued on Page A6

Gazans Urge Hamas to Accept U.S. Peace Deal

By LIAM STACK

TEL AVIV — Palestinians in Gaza have spent almost two years longing for an end to the war that has destroyed their communities and killed tens of thousands of their neighbors. Many say their best hope yet is the latest ceasefire plan proposed by the United States — if only Hamas would ac-

"Hamas must say yes to this offer — we have been through hell already," said Mahmoud Bolbol, 43, a construction worker who has remained in Gaza City with his six children in the battered shell of their home throughout the war.

President Trump unveiled the

Amid Broad Suffering, Many in Enclave Say 'Enough Is Enough'

proposal while meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel at the White House on Monday. Mr. Trump said that if Hamas did not accept its terms, then he would give Israel the green light to "finish the job" of destroying the armed group.

Hamas has not yet given its response to the proposal, but interviews with Palestinians in Gaza on Wednesday suggested wideIt calls for an immediate end to a war that has brought immense civilian suffering. For the past two days, Mr. Bol-

spread public support for the plan.

bol said, his neighbors have talked about almost nothing but the cease-fire proposal. If Hamas rejects it, he said, his family would finally leave Gaza City and head for what he hoped would be the relative safety of the enclave's

"Hamas needs to understand: Enough is enough," Mr. Bolbol said. Most Gazans are not members of the group, he added, "so why drag us into this?"

The plan requires Hamas to re-Continued on Page A8



A Village for Wildfire Survivors

Hawaii is hoping to nurture community with a modular home development in Lahaina. Page A18.

He Raised \$300,000 for Church Shooter's Kin Mamdani's Plan Would End a Gifted Program

By SONIA A. RAO

The community of Grand Blanc Township, Mich., devastated by a deadly shooting on a Latter-day Saints congregation this week, has pulled together to help one another in the aftermath.

Neighborhood children handed out flowers and positive messages. Moms offered free hugs. And donations through multiple

Faith Spurs Man to Aid Wife and Child

fund-raising accounts popped up to cover medical costs for the wounded or funeral expenses for the deceased.

One of those donation pages was set up to benefit an unexpect-

INTERNATIONAL A4-9

ed recipient: the family of Thomas Jacob Sanford, the suspect who died in the shooting, which killed four people and wounded eight others.

Mr. Sanford, the authorities said, drove a truck into the church meetinghouse during a worship service on Sunday and opened fire with an assault-style weapon, shooting victims as young as 6. He

Continued on Page A17

By EMMA G. FITZSIMMONS and TROY CLOSSON

Zohran Mamdani, the Democratic front-runner for mayor of New York City, plans to end the gifted and talented program for kindergarten students at public schools if he is elected, calling for a major overhaul of a program that has deeply divided parents. Mr. Mamdani's campaign said

Phased Out Next Year for Kindergartners

in a statement that he would embrace former Mayor Bill de Blasio's plan, announced in 2021, to phase out the gifted program for elementary schools, which has been widely criticized for exacerbating segregation.

Students who are in gifted classes would remain in the program, but there would be no gifted program for kindergartners next fall, the campaign said on Wednesday.

Mr. Mamdani's plan would reshape education for some of the youngest children in the nation's largest school system and could

Continued on Page A16



BUSINESS B1-7

Source of Screws Hammered

Long top exporters to the U.S., Taiwan's factories are struggling under tariffs on steel and aluminum.

Fed Independence Still at Risk

A Supreme Court order keeping a board governor is "a time to exhale but not breathe easy," one expert said. PAGE B1

Deadly Wildfires on the Rise

The past decade in particular has seen an uptick in costly and devastating blazes linked to climate change, according to new research

Political Jokes on Riyadh Stage

American comics used a comedy festival in Saudi Arabia to skewer a free speech debate raging at home. PAGE A9

OBITUARIES A20-21

Trailblazer in Desegregation

Bobby Cain was the first Black graduate at a public high school in the South under a court mandate. He was 85. PAGE A20



WEEKEND ARTS C1-12

Maximally Minimalistic Larry Bell's sleek glass sculptures now stand in a Manhattan park, letting passers-by see the city anew. PAGE C1

Rock-Solid Performance

Action-hero roles made Dwayne Johnson a star. He shows a more complex side in "Smashing Machine."

NATIONAL A10-19

Military Tradition in Tension The president's remarks about using

"dangerous cities" as training for troops conflicts with a principle that the military has long sought to preserve - that it should be nonpartisan. PAGE All

Trump's Deal for Colleges

The White House sent letters to nine of the nation's top universities, urging campus leaders to pledge support for President Trump's agenda to ensure access to federal funds. PAGE A10

OPINION A22-23

Christopher Sabatini



SPORTS B8-11

Fueled by the Doubters

After an inauspicious season start, the Las Vegas Aces, led by A'ja Wilson (22), found the right gear and made it back to the W.N.B.A. finals.

