"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

Today, breezy, partly cloudy, high 71. **Tonight,** overcast, breezy, some rain, low 61. **Tomorrow,** clouds and sun, breezy, cooler, a few showers, high 64. Weather map, Page 34.

\$6.00

THE WEATHER

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Ghassan Abbas

Jawdat Mawas

Shafiq Masa

Badi al-Mualla

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2025

Aous Aslan

Samir Dabul

Yassin Dah

Tawfiq Younes

Saii Darwish

Ghassan

Ghannam

Saleh al-Abdullah

Mohammad

Mahalla

Prices in Canada may be higher

Thousands of Syrians lost loved ones or were imprisoned by Bashar al-Assad's regime, and their homeland became a crime scene from which the top suspects disappeared.

Issam Hallag

Yusuf Ajeeb

Mohammed

Abdul Fatah

Jayyiz al-Musa

Mohammad

al-Rahmoun

Amr al-Armanazi

Ali Wanous

Rafig Shahadah

Malik Aliaa

Current Status of Assad's **Enforcers**



Location known





Louay al-Ali



Abdul Salam

Jamal Younes

Tahir Khalil

Mohammad

Mahmoud



Jawdat Safi



Jamal Ismail

Muhammad



Adnan Hilweh





Nasser al-Ali



Ali Abbas





Asef al-Deker







Kamal al-Hassan



Kaniou al-Hassan





Abdul Karim







Kifah Moulhem



Zaitoun

THE VANISHING ACT

Triebert, Haley Willis, Ahmad Mhidi and Danny Makki.

Not long after midnight on Dec. 8, 2024, dozens of people gathered in the darkness outside the military section of the Damascus International Airport. Carrying whatever they could pack, they piled into a small Syrian Air jet.

Only an hour earlier, they were part of an responsible for one of the bloodiest massa-This article is by Erika Solomon, Christiaan elite cadre that formed the backbone of one cres of the country's 13-year civil war. of the world's most brutal regimes. Now, in the wake of President Bashar al-Assad's sudden fall and escape from the country, they were fugitives, scrambling with their families to flee.

Among the passengers was Qahtan Khalil, director of Syria's air force intelligence, who was accused of being directly

He was joined by Ali Abbas and Ali Ayyoub, two former ministers of defense facing sanctions for human rights violations and atrocities carried out during the conflict.

There was also the military chief of staff, Abdul Karim Ibrahim, accused of facilitating torture and sexual violence against civilians. Continued on Page 13

THE ACCOMPLICES A continuing investigation by The Times into the roles and locations of those who powered a brutal reign. PAGES 14-17





'No Kings' Rallies Oppose Trump

Demonstrators gathered on an overpass in Golden, Colo., left, in Boise, Idaho, right, and in cities around the nation Saturday. Page 23.

The Spritzes and Spaghettis That Slurped Up the Streets of Italy

By EMMA BUBOLA and MOTOKO RICH

PALERMO, Sicily - There seemed to be no end to the sprawl of Italian delicacies. Deep-fried arancine rice balls, cannoli and fluorescent Aperol spritzes spilled across the red-and-green checkered tablecloths of the 31 restaurants packed in a single street in Palermo, feeding a polyglot and ecstatic crowd.

"This stretch here is magnificent, it is - bang! Just restaurant after restaurant," said Mark Smith, 55, an Australian tourist sipping an Aperol spritz on the street, Via Maqueda.

For Palermo's mayor, that was one spritz too many. He banned the opening of new eateries on Via Maqueda and surrounding streets this year, conceding that even the holy Italian grail of food had reached its saturation point.

"Too much sugar spoils the coffee," said the mayor, Roberto Lagalla, occasionally chewing on an unlit cigar during an interview in a palazzo inside the historic center of Palermo, Sicily's capital. Central Palermo "must not turn

Continued on Page 8

NEWS ANALYSIS

Little Urgency From Trump On Shutdown

Using the Impasse to Carry Out His Agenda

By LUKE BROADWATER

WASHINGTON — President Trump has repurposed money to fund military salaries during the government shutdown. He has pledged to find ways to make sure many in law enforcement get paid. He has used the fiscal impasse to halt funding to Democratic jurisdictions, and is trying to lay off thousands of federal

Government shutdowns are usually resolved only after the pain they inflict on everyday Americans forces elected officials in Washington to come to an agreement. But as the shutdown nears a fourth week, Mr. Trump's actions have instead reduced the pressure for an immediate resolution and pushed his political opponents to further dig in.

'We're not going to bend," Representative Hakeem Jeffries, Democrat of New York and the minority leader, said on Friday, the 17th day of the shutdown. "We're not going to break." He added: "All of these efforts to try to intimidate Democratic members of the House and the Senate are not going to work."

Unlike past presidents, Mr. Trump appears to feel little urgency to strike a deal to reopen the government. Instead, he has used the shutdown, which began Oct. 1, as an opportunity to further remake the federal bureaucracy and jettison programs he does not like, seizing on unorthodox budgetary maneuvers that some have called illegal.

Administration officials appear undaunted by the criticism, even after a federal judge temporarily blocked their efforts to conduct mass firings. On Friday, some agencies indicated in court filings that they might proceed with layoffs that officials suggested were not covered by the Russell T. Vought, the director

of the Office of Management and Budget and the architect of the effort to remake the government, has pledged to "stay on offense" throughout the shutdown. "He now has this cover for

doing what at least Russ Vought and that coalition has wanted to do all along," Sarah Binder, a political science professor at George Washington University,

Continued on Page 21

DEMOCRATS' ADS MAKE OLD PITCH: STOPPING TRUMP

WELL-WORN PLAYBOOK

Some See It as a Missed Chance to Advance a Positive Message

By SHANE GOLDMACHER

In New Jersey, the most expensive attack ad in the governor's race so far this fall accuses the Republican nominee, Jack Ciattarelli, of wanting to be "the Trump of Trenton."

In Virginia, Abigail Spanberger, the Democratic nominee for governor, has spent millions of dollars casting her Republican rival, Lt. Gov. Winsome Earle-Sears, as an acolyte of President Trump and supporter of his policies. "Sears speaks for Trump," the narrator warns in one recent ad-

And in California, a blizzard of TV ads has urged voters to fight against Mr. Trump - by backing a ballot measure to redraw the state's congressional lines. "We can stop Trump cold," Gavin Newsom, the state's Democratic governor, says in that campaign's most-aired ad.

After a year of soul-searching and introspection by Democrats about what they should stand for after losing the White House and Senate in 2024, the party is largely coalescing behind the same message that has united it for the past decade: stopping Donald J.

From coast to coast, the tactical decision to continue centering Mr. Trump in advertising in the closing stretch of 2025 contests has left some party strategists concerned about a missed opportunity to forge a more forward-looking vision.

"I worry that Donald Trump is like crack cocaine for our party," said Celinda Lake, a veteran Democratic pollster.

Ms. Lake acknowledged that running against an unpopular president could prove smart politics in the short term, revving up the Democratic base in states he lost last year, such as California, New Jersey and Virginia. But she warned it was urgent for Democrats to begin rebuilding their own beleaguered brand. The party's standing notably has not improved in polls, even as Mr. Trump's own image has sunk.

"Trump is very seductive because when you put up an ad Continued on Page 24

An 'Obamalisk' and Basketball In Chicago's Presidential Center

By SAM LUBELL

CHICAGO — It is visible from almost anywhere on Chicago's South Side, a 225-foot-tall chunky obelisk that some have nicknamed "the Obamalisk."

The structure is the centerpiece of what will

DESIGN be by far the most NOTEBOOK expensive presidential center ever

constructed and, like the president whose vision shaped it, it is setting off intense and often conflicting reactions.

The Obama Presidential Center is taking shape in Jackson Park, as four buildings rise around a new landscape where workers are busily rolling out sod and planting saplings along man-made hills. The goal is to finish this unusual, ambitious project by next spring.

Whether they will meet that deadline — left intentionally vague — is not a sure thing. Nor is the success of this effort to redefine the concept of a presi-



EVAN JENKINS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES The centerpiece of a sprawling campus of community spaces.

dential library, from a quiet archive to a bustling community anchor.

The plan has courted controversy since it was announced a decade ago. Local groups protested, and filed lawsuits, over its potential impact both on their

Continued on Page 19

INTERNATIONAL 4-17

Challenging Taliban With Song After living for decades in exile, chased by war and religious bans, the popular singer known as Naghma is still inspiriting her people.

U.S. Repatriating 2 Survivors

Two men who were on a suspected drug boat in the Caribbean Sea during a U.S. strike are being sent home.

NATIONAL 18-26

Cleaning Up a Smelly Mess

A restored cave running under the tiny town of Horse Cave, Ky., has become a tourist attraction.



SPORTS 27-30

Ohtani Is Otherworldly

On Friday, the Dodgers' slugging pitcher turned in a performance never before seen in baseball's long history. PAGE 30

Fliers Are Everywhere

SUNDAY STYLES

They are not just for missing pets or yard sales. These days they are for internet memes, self-promotion and esoteric messages.

Political Trolling at Play

President Trump's long, avid embrace of social media has been eagerly adopted by his top aides.

METROPOLITAN

Cracks on Billionaires' Row

There is a battle over how bad the defects are at a supertall luxury tower and what to do about them.



ARTS & LEISURE

Meher Ahmad

The Reckoning of Ben Stiller

The actor and director discusses his documentary about his comedian parents, a film that is part family history and perhaps part therapy.

SUNDAY OPINION

SUNDAY BUSINESS Courting Constant Clicks

In-game sports betting is expected to

grow to more than \$14 billion by decade's end, and public health experts worry that faster, continuous gambling is increasing the risks.

SPECIAL SECTION

Creativity Can Still Inspire

The Fine Arts & Exhibits section highlights museums and institutions where art still seeks to define the world.

