

Beijing Worries
U.S. May Force
Trade Squeeze

Fearing Partners Will
Have to Pick a Side

By KEITH BRADSHER
BEIJING — Officials in Beijing are increasingly worried that President Trump’s tariffs on Mexico may be the start of a broad campaign to force developing countries around the world to choose between trade with the United States and with China.
Ever since Mr. Trump imposed extensive tariffs on goods from China during his first term, companies have been investing heavily in countries like Mexico, Vietnam and Thailand to assemble Chinese components into goods for shipment to the United States. Doing final assembly in these countries offered a back door to the U.S. market regardless of trade frictions between Washington and Beijing.
China’s trade surplus with the United States has shrunk by almost a third since 2018. But Chinese exports to developing countries have skyrocketed. China now sells 11 times as much to Mexico as China buys from it. Those sales include Chinese auto parts assembled in Mexico in cars destined for dealerships in the United States.

The concern now in Beijing is that Washington’s pressure could force Mexico to close its market to Chinese goods in exchange for a reprieve from American tariffs on trade with Mexico. At stake for Mexico, among other things, are the jobs created by its abundant trade with the United States.

Mr. Trump could then use Mexico as a model to demand other countries take sides in the trade war between the United States and China. That would further limit Chinese access to the huge American market by disrupting other routes to the United States.

Because Mr. Trump renegotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement during his first term, very few businesspeople or officials in China expected him to start his second term by threat-

Continued on Page 8

Death and Ruin
From Wildfires
And Tornadoes

By ISABELLE TAFT
and DANA GOLDSTEIN

An intense storm system moving across the country left devastation and heartbreak in several states on Saturday, with many homes destroyed by tornadoes in the South and Midwest and by wildfires in Oklahoma. More than a dozen people were killed.

Gov. Kevin Stitt of Oklahoma said at a news conference that nearly 300 homes and other structures were destroyed in his state. Much of the damage was in and around the city of Stillwater, home to Oklahoma State University.

He described visiting neighborhoods where just a few houses had been spared, while the rest were reduced to rubble. He added, almost as an aside, that his family had lost a farmhouse, near the town of Luther.

Firefighting crews were scrambling to keep up with all the blazes popping up across the state. They had been hampered on Friday by poor conditions, which had grounded aerial firefighting tools, including the “super scooper” planes that can drop thousands of gallons of water onto a blaze. About 170,000 acres had burned in the state, the governor said on Saturday.

He reported one death related to the fires, from a car accident.

Continued on Page 16



KIANA HAYERI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Feith Shimila Murunga was beaten and raped as a domestic worker before fleeing back to Kenya.

A Kingdom’s Deadly Trade

The Powerful Profit Off the Lives of Maids in Saudi Arabia

By ABDI LATIF DAHIR
and JUSTIN SCHECK

NAIROBI, Kenya — On any given day in Kenya, dozens, if not hundreds of women buzz around the Nairobi international airport’s departures area. They huddle for selfies in matching T-shirts, discussing how they’ll spend the money from their new jobs in Saudi Arabia.

Lured by company recruiters and encouraged by Kenya’s government, the women have reason for optimism. Spend two years in

Saudi Arabia as a housekeeper or nanny, the pitch goes, and you can earn enough to build a house, educate your children and save for the future.

While the departure terminal hums with anticipation, the arrivals area is where hope meets grim reality. Hollow-cheeked women return, often ground down by unpaid wages, beatings, starvation and sexual assault. Some are broke. Others are in coffins.

At least 274 Kenyan workers, mostly women, have died in Saudi Arabia in the past five years — an extraordinary figure for a young

work force doing jobs that, in most countries, are considered extremely safe. More than 60 Kenyan workers died last year, twice as many as the previous year.

Autopsy reports are vague and contradictory. They describe women with evidence of trauma, including burns and electric shocks, all labeled natural deaths. One woman’s cause of death was simply “brain dead.” An untold number of Ugandans have died, too, but their government releases no data.

Continued on Page 11

Adams Case Is Blueprint
For Courting a President

After a Charm Offensive From City Hall,
Both Politicians Came Out Ahead

This article is by Maggie Haberman, Ben Protess, Jonah E. Bromwich, William K. Rashbaum and Dana Rubinstein.

Donald J. Trump’s electoral victory alarmed most New York Democrats — but not Eric Adams. For Mr. Adams, the mayor of New York City who had been criminally indicted and faced political isolation, it was a golden opportunity.

In the weeks before the presidential inauguration, Mr. Adams cozied up to Mr. Trump, his political allies and his family.

The mayor called the president-elect on multiple occasions, congratulating him on his election victory and discussing city affairs. He met at a luxury Manhattan hotel with Stephen K. Bannon, Mr. Trump’s ally and former top aide. And he contacted the president’s second son, Eric Trump, who runs the Trump family business.

The previously unreported extent of the charm campaign was recounted in interviews with more than a dozen people knowledgeable about the effort, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the nature of the communications.

The effort culminated in Mr. Adams receiving an in-person meeting with Mr. Trump in Florida just days before the inauguration.

While Mr. Adams did not explicitly raise his corruption case at the

Florida meeting, the people said, Mr. Trump appeared sympathetic to the mayor’s legal plight. The president-elect, on the verge of attaining the power to make the mayor’s case disappear, lamented that the Justice Department under President Joseph R. Biden Jr. was “weaponized.”

Mr. Adams has said that he was there on city business, and that his outreach to Mr. Trump was normal political bridge-building, irrelevant to his criminal case. A City Hall spokeswoman noted he was not the only Democrat who has sought to find some common ground with Mr. Trump.

“Mayor Adams wants to work with the new president, and not war with him, to better the lives of New Yorkers,” Liz Garcia, the city hall spokeswoman, said in a statement. “There is no difference between how the mayor has approached his relationship with President Trump and how he approached his relationship with former President Biden. Any claim that he has anything but a professional relationship with President Trump is based in false-

Continued on Page 18

Upstart Democrats’ Anger Rises
Over Old Guard’s Grip on Party

By SHANE GOLDMACHER

Senator Chuck Schumer’s sudden decision on Thursday to support a Republican-written bill to avert a government shutdown so enraged his fellow Democrats that some were already talking about primary challenges to the 74-year-old Democratic leader from New York.

The eruption of anger about Mr. Schumer’s seeming surrender thrust into public view a generational divide that has emerged as one of the Democratic Party’s deepest and most consequential rifts.

Younger Democrats are chafing at and increasingly complaining about what they see as the feebleness of the old guard’s efforts to push back against President Trump. They are second-guessing how the party’s leaders — like Mr.

Schumer, who brandishes his flip phone as a point of pride — are communicating their message in the TikTok era, as Republicans dominate the digital town square.

And they are demanding that the party develop a bolder policy agenda that can answer the desperation of tens of millions of people who are struggling financially at a time when belief in the American dream is dimming.

In other words, the younger generation is done with deference.

Some who argue for more militancy in opposing Mr. Trump say the party’s elders tend to be less comfortable with the type of unbending political warfare that is called for.

“Our party needs more of a fighting spirit,” said Representative

Continued on Page 20

About That Sword. The Subway Ninja Explains.

By MICHAEL WILSON

The man wore a dark long-sleeve shirt and ball cap over his mirrored sunglasses. Strapped to his back was a long sword in a sheath. He quietly entered a subway car and stood near a pole, as still as a shadow.

Minutes later — chaos. A panhandler had provoked him, and the man punched him and pulled the sword from its sheath. Passengers screamed and fled the subway car at the next stop, Chambers Street in Lower Manhattan. The man with the sword, Selwyn Bernardez, struck the panhandler and was arrested and charged with assault.

In the tabloids, he was given a new name. The Subway Ninja.

It was 2022, and the city was emerging tentatively from the depths of the pandemic. Mr. Bernardez seemed like another dangerous menace in the crowded trains below ground, further rattling passengers already on guard. People like him instill fear, then get caught, and the police



NATALIE KEYSSAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Selwyn Bernardez was charged with the kind of violent attack in 2022 that stokes public fears. He found purpose in his recovery.

and city leaders promise more officers, more programs for the mentally ill.

They wind up in jail or institutionalized, often for the rest of their lives. Any questions about their actions go unanswered.

They are rarely heard from again. But the Subway Ninja? He would like to explain.

The year 2022 had begun on a high note for Mr. Bernardez. He had repaired his troubled relationship

Continued on Page 16

INTERNATIONAL 4-13

South Africa as a Warning

President Trump and his allies accuse the nation of discriminating against and killing white people, and caution that it could happen in America. PAGE 4

Starmer ‘On the Tightrope’

Five years after Brexit, Britain’s prime minister is attempting to bridge a widening divide between Europe and the United States. PAGE 10

U.S. Bombs Houthi Targets

The military strikes in Yemen on areas controlled by the Iranian-backed militia were intended to free up international shipping lanes in the Red Sea. PAGE 6

SPORTS 27-29

Looking for an Assist in China

Social media surrogates for N.B.A. players expand their reach and create business opportunities. PAGE 29

Learning to Take a Punch

Sean O’Bradaigh, a son of New York’s elite, will make his professional boxing debut on Sunday. PAGE 27



SUNDAY STYLES

Reflections of a Glossy Career

Graydon Carter, who was the editor of Vanity Fair for 25 years, dishes about Anna Wintour and recounts his long-time feud with Donald J. Trump. PAGE 8

ARTS & LEISURE

He Steps Up, and Stands Out

Brian Tyree Henry, who has been a dependable Hollywood side man, now takes the lead in the new crime drama “Dope Thief.” PAGE 9

SUNDAY OPINION

Meghan O’Rourke

PAGE 6



NATIONAL 14-23

Canadian Tourists Feel the Chill

Snowbirds have long flocked to Myrtle Beach, S.C. But politics have complicated a once-simple alliance. PAGE 14

Human Smuggling Trial

As legal avenues into the United States are closed off, dangers to undocumented migrants may be rising. PAGE 15

SUNDAY BUSINESS

Corporate Retreat on D.E.I.

The number of S&P 500 companies that used the phrase “diversity, equity and inclusion” in annual reports has fallen by nearly 60 percent from 2024, a New York Times analysis shows. PAGE 4

A.I. as Smart as Humans?

Artificial general intelligence is coming soon, and it is the time to take it seriously, no matter if you’re an optimist or a pessimist, Kevin Roose writes. PAGE 1

