

“All the News  
That’s Fit to Print”

# The New York Times

**THE WEATHER**  
Today, morning fog, partly sunny, warm, humid, high 80. **Tonight**, partly cloudy, warm, low 67. **Tomorrow**, morning sun, afternoon clouds, high 77. Weather map, Page A22.

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Prices in Canada may be higher

\$4.00



A construction class at Texas State Technical College, where some students have to take basic math along with their career courses.

## Shooter’s Notes Show Hostility To ICE Agents

By J. DAVID GOODMAN and CHRISTINA MORALES

Federal officials said Thursday that the gunman who shot three detainees at an Immigration and Customs Enforcement field office in Dallas had been aiming for immigration agents, pointing to notes that they said he had left at his home that showed a hatred of the federal government and a desire to cause immigration agents “real terror.”

Nancy Larson, the acting U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Texas, said at a news conference in Dallas that the actions of the gunman were the “very definition of terrorism.”

The briefing appeared to try to resolve what had been a lingering question of a motive behind the shooting on Wednesday, in which no law enforcement officers were hurt but one detainee was killed and two others were injured. The gunman, identified by the authorities as Joshua Jahn, 29, killed himself.

Ms. Larson said that Mr. Jahn “very likely acted alone” and had left many notes, which investigators found while searching his home. One read, “‘Yes, it was just me,” and another referred to ICE agents as “people showing up to collect a dirty paycheck,” according to Ms. Larson.

Ms. Larson said that the notes indicated that he did not intend to harm or kill any detainees, saying that it was a “tragic irony” that detainees were struck. Officials on Thursday said the detainees who were shot had been restrained in a transport van and could not escape the gunfire, though Marcos Charles, who leads enforcement and removal operations for ICE, hailed the efforts of agents at ICE

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## Students Are Ill Prepared for College and Beyond

By SARAH MERVOSH

The U.S. military is seeing lower scores on its Armed Forces Qualification Test.

At Texas State Technical College, a two-year college based in Waco, students increasingly have to take a basic math class alongside their college-level courses to get ready for careers in welding, heating and air conditioning, and manufacturing.

And at selective four-year colleges, professors complain that students have lost their reading and writing stamina.

New national test results for 12th graders, released this month, showed significant declines in students’ math and reading abilities

### Declining Reading and Math Skills Affecting the Work Force

since 2019, results that are now being felt in college and the labor market.

“My students now, they leave high school and don’t have the capacity to read a lengthy 25-page article. They don’t know what to do with it,” said Deepak Sarma, a humanities professor at Case Western Reserve University, where the average reported SAT score is between 1440 and 1520. Dr. Sarma recently counseled a stu-

dent daunted by a dense academic article, suggesting basic tactics like printing it out in order to highlight and underline key passages.

On the national test, students’ reading scores were the worst in three decades, and math scores were the lowest since 2005.

The scores are at least partially explained by the pandemic and school closures. But they also reflect broader societal changes, including an increase in time spent in front of screens for both young people and adults. The decline was primarily driven by lower-scoring students, who have been losing ground for a decade.

The results have vast consequences for a generation of stu-

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CHRISTOPHE ENA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

### French Ex-President Guilty in Libyan Funds Case

Nicolas Sarkozy vowed on Thursday to appeal a five-year sentence over a plot to fund his 2007 bid with Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi’s help. It was not his first conviction since leaving office. Page A6.

## L.A. Fire Efforts Slowed by Poor Visibility and Aging Equipment

By SHAWN HUBLER

LOS ANGELES — The first official review of the Los Angeles wildfires found that the county’s emergency systems were not only overmatched by hurricane-force winds, but also hampered by outdated equipment and a lack of aerial surveillance that kept firefighters from clearly seeing the path of the flames.

The 133-page report, released on Thursday, found no “single point of failure” in the county’s efforts to warn and evacuate residents.

But with winds gusting up to nearly 100 miles per hour, firefighting fixed-wing planes, helicopters and other aircraft were grounded, depriving fire officials of any aerial view for several critical hours. A nearly four-decade-

### No ‘Single Point’ Failed, Official Report Finds

old dispatch system hampered communications. Emergency workers were spread thin by staff shortages that included more than 900 sheriff’s department vacancies. Digital warnings had to

go through a cumbersome approval process, and failed to get through to many people’s cell phones, possibly impeded by power shut-offs and spotty cellular coverage in mountain areas.

The effectiveness of the county systems that alert residents and order evacuations was impacted by “a series of weaknesses, including outdated policies, incon-

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## A Grand Jury Indicts Comey, A Trump Target

### Charges Tied to Senate Testimony on Russia

This article is by Devlin Barrett, Glenn Thrush and Alan Feuer.

WASHINGTON — A federal grand jury on Thursday indicted James B. Comey, the former F.B.I. director, a culmination of President Trump’s relentless demand to exact retribution against him for investigating his 2016 presidential campaign over possible ties to Russia.

The grand jury indicted Mr. Comey on charges of making a false statement and obstruction of a congressional proceeding in connection with his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Sept. 30, 2020.

The indictment by a grand jury in Alexandria, Va., came over the objection of career prosecutors in the Eastern District of Virginia who found insufficient evidence to support charges but were overruled by Lindsey Halligan, a former Trump defense lawyer hand-picked by Mr. Trump to run the office a few days ago.

The charges are the most significant move yet taken by a federal law enforcement establishment, increasingly directed by Mr. Trump and his top advisers, to target the president’s enemies — at the expense of procedural and legal safeguards intended to insulate the Justice Department from political interference.

Mr. Trump, who claims his actions are motivated by the weaponization of government against him when he was out of office, has greatly intensified his public pressure campaign on the Justice Department in recent days. He has demanded that top officials prosecute Mr. Comey and Letitia James, the New York attorney general who sued Mr. Trump for inflating the value of his assets while out of office.

“JUSTICE IN AMERICA!” Mr. Trump posted on Truth Social shortly after the indictment was announced.

If convicted, Mr. Comey faces up to five years in prison. “Any intent to avoid, evade, prevent, or obstruct compliance is a violation of professional responsibility and, most importantly, the law,” Ms. Halligan said in a statement.

Pam Bondi, the attorney general, appeared to post about the case without mentioning Mr. Comey by name, writing on social media: “No one is above the law. Today’s indictment reflects this Department of Justice’s commitment to holding those who abuse positions of power accountable for misleading the American people.”

Many current and former Jus-

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## AMAZON WILL PAY UP TO \$2.5 BILLION TO END F.T.C. SUIT

### ACCUSED OF TRICKERY

#### One of Agency’s Largest Settlements Benefits Prime Customers

By KAREN WEISE and CECILIA KANG

SEATTLE — Amazon agreed to pay up to \$2.5 billion to settle claims that it tricked tens of millions of people into signing up for its Prime membership program, and then made it hard for customers to cancel when they wanted out.

The settlement announced on Thursday came days into a jury trial that began in Seattle this week over the issue, which stemmed from a lawsuit filed by the Federal Trade Commission in 2023.

The lawsuit cut to the heart of how Amazon defines itself as a champion for the hundreds of millions of consumers who regularly use its online shopping service. Though less sweeping than an antitrust case that the F.T.C. has filed against Amazon, the suit targeted the company for the way it runs a popular subscription program central to its business and ubiquitous in the lives of many of its customers.

An estimated 200 million people in the United States use Prime to shop on Amazon. Subscriptions, primarily Prime, brought in more than \$44 billion last year, but Prime’s value to Amazon goes far beyond the monthly fees. Prime members are the company’s best customers: They buy more things, and buy more frequently, than people who are not signed up for the service. And the settlement will not fundamentally change how Amazon interacts with those customers.

“Nobody likes a trial,” said Josh Lowitz, a partner at Consumer Intelligence Research Partners, a

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HILARY SWIFT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

In the settlement, Amazon did not admit or deny wrongdoing.

## Parties Barrel Toward Shutdown As Trump Threatens Big Layoffs

By TONY ROMM and CATIE EDMONDSON

WASHINGTON — With only five days remaining to fund the government, the White House is threatening to use a shutdown to conduct mass federal firings, hoping to pressure Democrats into caving and accepting a short-term deal.

The threat underscored the intransigence gripping the two parties as they barrel, with no negotiations underway, toward a highly disruptive shutdown on Wednesday driven by opposing political incentives and policy motivations.

Democrats on Thursday condemned the threat by Mr. Trump and his top aides to fire droves of federal employees during a federal closure, and said they would not be cowed into dropping their demands for health care spending concessions because of it.

“We will not be intimidated by

your threat to engage in mass firings,” said Representative Hakeem Jeffries of New York, the House Democrats’ leader.

Hours later, Mr. Trump, who has declined to negotiate with Democrats he has accused of being not “realistic” in their demands, said a lapse in funding would be their fault.

“This is all caused by the Democrats,” he told reporters in the Oval Office.

The White House began its campaign of fiscal brinkmanship earlier in the week, after Mr. Trump set, then abruptly canceled, a meeting with Democratic leaders to discuss the terms of a spending deal. The president instead attacked Democrats for blocking a Republican-written plan to fund the government into

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### Friday Night Robot Fight

The A.I. boom, which has brought techies back to San Francisco, has fueled a rise of live, futuristic events. PAGE B1

### Princess Awesome vs. U.S.A.

A children’s clothing company has become the face of a legal battle over President Trump’s trade policy. PAGE B1

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### No-Show at Climate Summit

The U.S. was notably absent at a U.N. climate gathering where 121 countries pledged to accelerate their efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions. PAGE A7

### Trump’s Pivot on Ukraine

No policy change was evident in the president’s claim that Russia’s gains may be reversed. News Analysis. PAGE A8

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### He Turned a Lens on Rockers

Joe Stevens, 87, captured enduring images of David Bowie, John Lennon, the Sex Pistols and others. PAGE B12

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### Chemicals Cleanup Delayed

The Defense Department’s new timeline could slow cleanup in some areas by nearly a decade, adding to health risks from “forever chemicals.” PAGE A10

### Marines’ Father vs. ICE

A landscaper living in California for over 30 years raised three Marines and is married to a U.S. citizen. Now he is fighting efforts to deport him. PAGE A14

### Mamdani’s Crucial Alliance

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez was the “big sister” Zohran Mamdani hoped to impress. She had doubts. Now, they’re faces of a political movement. PAGE A13



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### O Say Can You Scream?

The Ryder Cup, which starts Friday on Long Island, could be the rowdiest golf tournament ever. PAGE B7

### Pitch-Framing Still Sought

For catchers, the saving grace of an automated ball-strike system is that M.L.B. isn’t going full robot. PAGE B8

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### Revolutionary Foolishness

Leonardo DiCaprio plays a washed-up radical and doting dad in a film directed by Paul Thomas Anderson. PAGE C1

### Blending Fact and Fiction

A survey of films and other works of the Cuban American artist Coco Fusco looks at her takes on political culture. PAGE C1

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### Benny Gantz

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