



DANIEL BEREHULAK/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Searching documents and detritus for missing relatives at Sednaya prison on the outskirts of Damascus, Syria, on Thursday.

## Syrians Confront Horrors Inside a Torture Prison's Halls

By CHRISTINA GOLDBAUM

DAMASCUS, Syria — People came by the thousands the day after the rebels arrived in Damascus, racing down the once desolate stretch of road, up a jagged footpath cut into the limestone hillside and through the towering metal gates of Syria's most notorious prison. They flooded the halls lined with cells, searching for loved ones who had disappeared into the black hole of torture prisons under Bashar al-Assad's government.

Some tore through the offices of the prison, Sednaya, looking for

maps of the building and prisoner logs. One woman shoved a photograph of her missing son toward others walking by, hoping someone had found him. "Do you recognize him?" she pleaded. "Please, please, did you see him?"

In the entrance hall of one section, dozens of men with sledgehammers and pickaxes tore up the floors, convinced there were secret cells with more prisoners deep underground. Crowds swelled around them as people clambered to see what they found, pausing only when Israeli airstrikes landed close enough to shake the prison's walls.

"Move back, move back!" one

### Thousands Fear They Might Never Find Lost Relatives

man, Ahmad Hajani, 23, yelled. "Let them work!"

Since a rebel coalition overthrew the Assad government last week, unchaining a country ruled by the iron fist of the Assad family for over 60 years, thousands of Syrians in Damascus, the capital, have taken to the streets to revel in the city's newfound freedom.

But amid the celebrations, the

country has also found itself in the opening chapter of a nationwide reckoning over the horrors that Syrians endured under Mr. al-Assad's government as they come face to face with the network of prisons, police stations and torture chambers at the center of his family's brutal rule.

In that time, hundreds of thousands of Syrians were swallowed up by the Assad security forces' vast apparatus. Over the past 13 years, after the failed rebel uprising and subsequent civil war, Mr. al-Assad wielded the long arms of that system as never before to stamp out every inkling of dissent.

Continued on Page 8

## ABC Will Settle Trump Lawsuit For \$15 Million

By MICHAEL M. GRYNBAUM and ALAN FEUER

ABC News is set to pay \$15 million to settle a defamation lawsuit brought by President-elect Donald J. Trump.

The agreement was a significant concession by a major news organization and a rare victory for a news-media-bashing politician whose previous litigation efforts against news outlets have often ended in defeat.

Under the terms of a settlement revealed on Saturday, ABC News will donate the \$15 million to Mr. Trump's future presidential foundation and museum. The network and its star anchor George Stephanopoulos also published a statement saying they "regret" remarks made about Mr. Trump during a televised interview in March.

ABC News, which is owned by the Walt Disney Company, will pay Mr. Trump an additional \$1 million for his legal fees.

The outcome is an unusual victory for Mr. Trump, who has frequently sued news organizations for defamation and frequently lost, including in litigation against CNN, The New York Times and The Washington Post.

Several experts in media law

Continued on Page 28



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

### What Ever Happened to the Lady Jaguars?

The New York Times profiled a winless team of troubled girls in 2012 and 2013. Recently, we wondered: As adults, had they fulfilled their hopes of a better life? Special Section.

## Phones Fueling Violent Scenes At U.S. Schools

### Allure of Viral Videos Provokes Melees

By NATASHA SINGER

REVERE, Mass. — Ricardo Martinez, an 11th grader, was in his high school lunchroom in April when a mass brawl erupted.

He watched, horrified, as a dozen teenage boys rampaged through the cafeteria, pummeling and kicking one another, overturning tables and chairs. Other students jeered and jostled to film the fight on their phones.

"It was like a stampede of videos," said Mr. Martinez, now 18 and a senior. "Everyone was trying to get the best angle."

But the pandemonium at Revere High School in Revere, Mass., was just beginning.

Within minutes, students in other parts of the building began receiving text messages about the lunchroom brawl. Suddenly, teachers said, dozens of riled-up teenagers started racing down hallways and careening down stairways with their phones to get to the fight.

To stop more people from flooding into the cafeteria, Revere High posted staff members in front of the lunchroom entrances and issued a "hold" order to keep students in their classrooms. Administrators called the police to help restore calm. The school said it ultimately suspended 17 students involved in the brawl.

Across the United States, technology centered on cellphones — in the form of text messages, videos and social media — has increasingly fueled and sometimes intensified campus brawls, disrupting schools and derailing learning. The school fight videos then often spark new cycles of student cyberbullying, verbal aggression and violence.

A New York Times review of more than 400 fight videos from schools in California, Georgia, Texas and a dozen other states — as well as interviews with three dozen school leaders, teachers, police officers, pupils, parents and researchers — found a pattern of middle and high school students exploiting phones and social media to arrange, provoke, capture and spread footage of brutal beatings.

Continued on Page 26

## LAWMAKERS VOTE TO OUST LEADER IN SOUTH KOREA

### PRESIDENT VOWS FIGHT

#### Court Has Six Months to Decide Whether He Stays or Goes

This article is by Choe Sang-Hun, Jin Yu Young and Victoria Kim.

SEOUL — Eleven days ago, President Yoon Suk Yeol of South Korea made a bold power grab, putting the country under military rule for the first time in 45 years, citing frustration at the opposition for obstructing his agenda in Parliament.

His martial law decree lasted only hours, and now he finds himself locked out of power: impeached and suspended by the National Assembly after a vote on Saturday in which a dozen members of his own party turned against him.

Lawmakers sought to draw a line under Mr. Yoon's tenure after his declaration threw the country's democracy into chaos and drew outrage across the country.

Street protests turned to celebrations outside the National Assembly when news broke that the impeachment bill had passed.

Mr. Yoon's popularity has plummeted during his two and a half years in office, a term marked by deepening political polarization, scandals involving his wife, and a near-constant clash between his government and the opposition-dominated Parliament.

But the turmoil and uncertainty unleashed by his short-lived declaration of martial law are far from over. Speaking soon after the vote, Mr. Yoon vowed to fight in court to regain power, even as the police and prosecutors closed in on him with a possible criminal charge of insurrection.

The fate of Mr. Yoon, a deeply unpopular leader, rests in the hands of the country's Constitutional Court, which will decide — within the next six months — whether to reinstate or formally remove him. If he is formally removed, South Korea is then supposed to elect a new leader within two months.

Continued on Page 13

## Indigenous People in Canada Weigh Costs of a Gas Windfall

By MAX BEARAK

KITAMAAT, British Columbia — With her hair pulled back into a tight ponytail, her arms and legs covered with 20 tattoos, and her compact frame fitted out in athleisure, Crystal Smith, the elected chief of the Haisla people, looked more like the hometown basketball star she once was than the fossil fuel exporter she's about to become.

Ms. Smith, 45, lives in an apartment that overlooks a nearly 100-mile-long inlet — a fjord, really — whose densely forested shores the Haisla inhabited well before Europeans colonized what is today British Columbia. Through her kitchen window she can see a \$31 billion natural gas export project that is about to open for business. Its flare emits a glow strong enough to penetrate the thick fog that can shroud the village of Kitamaat for weeks on end.

Ms. Smith said she likes seeing the flare because it reminds her of the money it will bring her people. Shell, the fossil-fuel behemoth, op-



PAT KANE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

On Pearse Island, land has been cleared for a gas facility.

erates the facility and is helping the Haisla to open their own export terminal just a few miles away.

It will be the world's first owned by Indigenous people.

Canada's lofty ambitions to transform itself into a major gas exporter rely to a large extent on Indigenous communities that control swaths of coastal territory. The expansion, which covers British Columbia's 600-mile coastline, is contentious for a nation

Continued on Page 16

### INTERNATIONAL 4-17

#### Ukraine Courts Trump

Kyiv officials are doing everything they can to win over a president-elect eager to end the war, including nominating him for a Nobel Peace Prize. PAGE 14

### ARTS & LEISURE

#### A Year's Worth of Great Works

Our critics take a look back on 2024, and offer up their best-of lists for film, music, theater, television, art, dance and video games.

### SUNDAY STYLES

#### An Irreverent Holiday Classic

"Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer" began decades ago with a songwriter stranded on a snowy night, and it's still stuck in our heads. PAGE 8

### SUNDAY BUSINESS

#### Silicon Valley's Opposing Paths

Two powerful venture capital firms embody a debate over whether bigger is always better in an industry that fosters American innovation. PAGE 8

### SUNDAY OPINION

#### Michael Grunwald

PAGE 6

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