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The New York Times

THE WEATHER
Today, warm, humid, clouds and sun, a thunderstorm late, high 89. **Tonight**, a thunderstorm early, low 69. **Tomorrow**, breezy, less humid, high 85. Weather map, Page B12.

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Prices in Canada may be higher

\$4.00

Netanyahu Bet On Persuading Trump on Iran

President’s Shift Driven by Nuclear Threat

This article is by **Jonathan Swan, Maggie Haberman, Mark Mazzetti and Ronen Bergman.**

By the end of last month, American spy agencies monitoring Israel’s military activities and discussions among the country’s political leadership had come to a striking conclusion: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was planning for an imminent attack on Iran’s nuclear program, with or without the participation of the United States.

Mr. Netanyahu had spent more than a decade warning that an overwhelming military assault was necessary before Iran reached the point that it could quickly build a nuclear weapon. Yet he had always backed down after multiple American presidents, fearful of the consequences of another conflagration in the Middle East, told him the United States would not assist in an attack.

But this time, the American intelligence assessment was that Mr. Netanyahu was preparing not just a limited strike on the nuclear facilities, but a far more expansive attack that could imperil the Iranian regime itself — and that he was prepared to go it alone.

The intelligence left President Trump facing difficult choices. He had become invested in a diplomatic push to persuade Iran to give up its nuclear ambitions, and had already swatted down one attempt by Mr. Netanyahu, in April, to convince him that the time was right for a military assault on Iran. During a strained phone call in late May, Mr. Trump again warned the Israeli leader against a unilateral attack that would short-circuit the diplomacy.

But over the last several weeks, it became increasingly apparent to Trump administration officials that they might not be able to stop Mr. Netanyahu this time, according to interviews with key players in the administration’s deliberations over how to respond and others familiar with their thinking. At the same time, Mr. Trump was getting impatient with Iran over the slow pace of negotiations and beginning to conclude that the talks might go nowhere.

Contrary to Israeli claims, senior administration officials were unaware of any new intelligence showing that Iran was rushing to build a nuclear bomb — a move that would justify a pre-emptive strike. But seeing they would most likely not be able to deter Mr. Netanyahu and were no longer driving events, Mr. Trump’s advisers weighed alternatives.

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DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES



ARASH KHAMOOSHI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Words were exchanged Wednesday by President Trump, who spoke to reporters as flagpoles were installed at the White House, and Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who spoke on television. Page A8.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Trump Backers in Bitter Schism on Iran

By **JESS BIDGOOD**

Tucker Carlson set the trap, and Senator Ted Cruz of Texas walked right into it.

“How many people live in Iran, by the way?” Mr. Carlson, the former Fox News host and a longtime ally of President Trump, asked Mr. Cruz, who has become a stalwart supporter of the president’s evolving approach to the conflict between Iran and Israel.

“I don’t know the population,” Mr. Cruz said. Then Mr. Carlson went in for

Split Emerges in a Base That Abhors Foreign Entanglements

the kill: “You don’t know the population of the country you seek to topple?”

The confrontation, 97 seconds of which Mr. Carlson posted on X Tuesday night, quickly racked up tens of millions of views and came to embody a rupture that has burst into view on the right, as Mr. Trump weighs sending

American aircraft and weapons to support Israel’s efforts to demolish Iran’s nuclear program.

Such a move would represent a remarkable reversal for Mr. Trump, who just months ago opposed military action while he sought a diplomatic solution — and, according to an increasingly vocal chorus of his critics on the right, a reversal of his long-held promise to steer the nation out of, not into, foreign entanglements.

It’s erupted into a fight over the meaning of the Make Amer- Continued on Page A9

Trump’s Cuts to South Africa Threaten Global Medical Progress

By **STEPHANIE NOLEN**

CAPE TOWN — In Cape Town, one of the world’s foremost H.I.V. researchers has been spending a chunk of each day gently telling longtime workers and young doctoral students that the money is gone and so are their jobs. When the calls are done, she weeps in her empty office.

In the heart of Johannesburg, the lobby of a building that once housed hundreds of scientists is empty of people but choked with discarded office furniture and heaps of files hastily gathered from shuttered research sites.

South Africa has for decades been a medical research powerhouse, yet its stature has been little known to people outside the field. South Africa’s scientists have been responsible for key breakthroughs against major global killers, including heart disease, H.I.V. and respiratory vi-

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GULSHAN KHAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Studying antimicrobial resistance in Soweto. South Africa has had a big role in medical advances.

JUSTICES UPHOLD A TREATMENT BAN FOR TRANS MINORS

Tennessee Law Deemed Constitutional — 6-3 Ruling Shields Over 20 States

By **ADAM LIPTAK**

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld a Tennessee law that prohibits some medical treatments for transgender youths, rejecting arguments that it violated the Constitution and shielding similar laws in more than 20 other states.

The decision, which came amid the Trump administration’s fierce assaults on transgender rights, was a bitter setback for their proponents, who only five years ago celebrated a decision by the court to protect transgender people from workplace discrimination.

The vote was 6 to 3, with the court’s three liberal members in dissent. Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., writing for the majority, acknowledged the “fierce scientific and policy debates about the safety, efficacy and propriety of medical treatments in an evolving field. The voices in these debates raise sincere concerns; the implications for all are profound.”

But he said these questions should be resolved by “the people, their elected representatives and the democratic process.”

The Tennessee law, enacted in 2023, prohibits medical providers from prescribing puberty-delaying medication, offering hormone therapy or performing surgery to treat gender dysphoria, the psychological distress caused by incongruence between experienced gender and that assigned at birth. It was part of a sweeping national pushback to expanding rights for transgender people. Since then, debates about military service, athletics, bathrooms and pronouns have played a role in President Trump’s second-term agenda.

In dissent, Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote that Wednesday’s decision could have tragic consequences.

“If left untreated, gender dysphoria can lead to severe anxiety, depression, eating disorders, sub-

stance abuse, self-harm and suicidality,” she wrote in an opinion joined by Justices Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson.

In a measure of the shifting politics around transgender issues, the Biden administration had argued against the Tennessee law. After Mr. Trump returned to office, he issued an executive order directing agencies to take steps to curtail surgeries, hormone therapy and other gender transition care for youths under 19. And in February, his administration formally reversed the government’s position in the case and urged the justices to uphold the law.

The doctor and three families who sued to challenge the Tennes-



TIERNY L. CROSS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Protesting the Supreme Court’s decision issued on Wednesday.

see law said it discriminated based on both sex and transgender status in violation of the Constitution’s equal protection clause, which requires states to have a valid reason for treating similarly situated people differently. They noted that the law specified that the prohibited treatments were allowed when undertaken for reasons other than gender transition care.

Chase Strangio, a lawyer with the American Civil Liberties Un- Continued on Page A13

Her Best Sellers Are Only Icing On the Cupcake

By **ELISABETH EGAN**

A middle-aged man in a black polo shirt approached Abby Jimenez at Nadia Cakes, the bakery she owns in Maple Grove, Minn.

“Excuse me,” he said, “can I get a picture with you? My wife loves your books.”

Jimenez, the author of seven popular romance novels — her latest, “Say You’ll Remember Me,” was a No. 1 best seller — was happy to oblige. The resulting photo, in which she smiled and her reader’s husband beamed in front of a neon “Treat Yourself” sign, captured the twin worlds Jimenez has built.

Cupcakes and rom-coms, it turns out, have a lot in common.

“They’re both pleasant ways to escape and fun to share,” Jimenez said during an interview at her shop in a sprawling mall. “Writing and baking are activities for introverts.”

Jimenez values quiet time, when she isn’t dabbling in reality TV — she won an episode on Season 4 of “Cupcake Wars” — and serving as a face of the modern romance genre (bodice-ripping is out, irreverent humor is in). Indeed Jimenez appeared slightly weary, having just completed an eight-city tour for “Say You’ll Remember Me,” which came out on Continued on Page A20

Scenes of Chaos And Handcuffs For Democrats

By **KATIE GLUECK**

A United States senator forced to the floor and handcuffed by federal agents for interrupting a news conference. A mayor taken into custody by masked officials in military-style fatigues. A political candidate pushed against a wall and handcuffed in a dispute at an immigration courthouse.

With tensions rising over President Trump’s mass deportation policies, the government crackdown is extending to the political opposition.

As Democrats struggle to push back against the administration, federal agents have arrested or clashed with a growing number of the party’s elected officials. The scenes of chaos reflect the tinderbox nature of this political moment, and the expanding national battles over due process, the rule of law and the system of checks and balances.

“This is executive authority, especially in the Department of Homeland Security, running out of control,” said Senator Tina Smith, a Minnesota Democrat. “Do the members of Congress need security details to defend themselves from the executive branch? God, I hope not.”

The most recent instance came on Tuesday, when Brad Lander, Continued on Page A18

NATIONAL A12-20

Not Guilty Verdict in Retrial

A jury cleared Karen Read of a murder charge in the 2022 death of her boyfriend, a Boston police officer. PAGE A18

‘A Time of Bitter Celebrations’

Some families stayed away from graduation ceremonies out of fear of ICE raids in Los Angeles. PAGE A17



INTERNATIONAL A4-11

Astrologers See a Bad Omen

Legislation in Pakistan would impose prison time for vaguely defined occult services. Spiritual practitioners fear they could get ensnared. PAGE A10

Arab Countries Step Back

Gulf governments that had warned to Israel now see it as a destabilizing force and have reversed course. PAGE A4

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Riding His Way to the Top

The 17-year-old “How to Train Your Dragon” star Mason Thames is living out his childhood fantasy. PAGE C1

THURSDAY STYLES D1-6

Laughing Through Menopause

A Canadian TV show, with, below from left, Meredith MacNeill and Jennifer Whalen, is tackling the subject. PAGE D5



Sexy Pastries and the City

A Manhattan cafe turned itself into the Hot Fellas bakery from the “And Just Like That . . .” TV series. PAGE D1

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Fed Holds Line on Rates

The Federal Reserve held interest rates steady on Wednesday, but officials are sharply split about lowering borrowing costs this year as they brace for rising inflation and lower growth. PAGE B1

China Aims at the Dollar

The leader of China’s central bank pitched a global financial system relying on several major currencies, warning of risks in international dependence on one country’s currency. PAGE B1

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SPORTS B8-12

Panthers’ Joy Runneth Over

Thriving with a culture of toughness and togetherness, they became the third back-to-back Stanley Cup winners in the N.H.L.’s salary cap era. PAGE B8

