



In a little over five years, 2,000 laborers have prepared Notre-Dame Cathedral for its grand reopening. Coverage begins on Page 10.

AL-ASSAD AT RISK AS REBELS SURGE

A Strategic City Is Said to Be Under Attack

By RAJA ABDURAHIM

President Bashar al-Assad's political survival was under threat on Saturday as the Syrian government battled rebels around the country and the strategic city of Homs was breached by the main rebel coalition, according to the fighters and a war monitor.

The rebels then declared early on Sunday that they had fully captured the city, not long after the Syrian defense ministry denied that rebels had entered Homs, which is about 100 miles from the seat of Mr. al-Assad's power in the capital, Damascus. The ministry said in a statement that the situation remained "stable and secure."

Antigovernment protests took place near Damascus on Saturday, and Mr. al-Assad's forces withdrew from several of its suburbs, according to war monitoring groups.

The Syrian military denied that its forces had withdrawn from the suburbs. Yet Mr. al-Assad's autocratic government, which had until about a week ago appeared to have a firm grip over much of the country, now seemed to be facing a possible breach of the capital.

The new uprisings present the gravest challenge in years to Mr. al-Assad. It is unclear what resources he can marshal to defend the rapidly shrinking territory under his control, especially without the help of one of his staunchest allies, Iran, which began to evacuate its military commanders and personnel on Friday. Russia, his other important ally through nearly 14 years of civil war, has offered limited aid.

The British-based war monitor Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said government forces had pulled out of a number of suburbs of the capital, including Moadamia al-Sham and Daraya, and the nearby Mezzeh military airport. That could not immedi-

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How a Centuries-Old Parisian Jewel Was Reborn

By AURELIEN BREEDEN

PARIS — The embers of Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris were still hot when President Emmanuel Macron vowed that France would rebuild it to be "more beautiful than ever."

Then the French leader gave a deadline so ambitious it took many aback: "I want this to be finished in five years," Mr. Macron said.

It was April 2019, and flames had just torn through the 860-year-old Gothic monument, obliterating its ancient wood and lead roofing and sending the tip of its

A Daunting Deadline to Save Notre-Dame

spire crashing through the stone vaults below. Some called the deadline feasible. Others said it was wildly unrealistic.

Now, after five and a half years and about \$900 million in donations, France is on the verge of success.

Renovations to the cathedral's exterior will continue, but the bulk of what was destroyed has been restored. Following a ceremony

on Saturday, Notre-Dame was prepared to reopen its doors Sunday for the millions of tourists and pilgrims who annually visit.

The tight deadline was "necessary," Philippe Jost, the head of the reconstruction task force, told us during a tour of the work in progress in June. The daunting goal served to unite over 250 companies and 2,000 workers and artisans from all over France who knew the world was watching, and drove them to give their all for the project of a lifetime.

The day of the tour, after taking a clanging elevator to the top of a

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Making Sweet, Sweet Memories

Lemony turmeric and boozy almond add to the flavor of our Cookie Week recipes. Special Section.

Influencer v. Influencer: Can a Vibe Be Stolen?

By SANDRA E. GARCIA

The oversize beige cable-knit sweater. The center-parted hair. The right knee pointed out, creating a curve at her left hip.

Practically every detail in the photo — right down to the matching short set — looked familiar to Sydney Gifford.

So did the woman posed in front of the nondescript white wall.

Days earlier, Ms. Gifford, a 24-year-old lifestyle influencer, had

shared a photo with her thousands of followers that was virtually identical. The woman in this new photo was a fellow influencer, Alyssa Sheil, with whom she had gone shopping and done a photo shoot months earlier.

At the time, she thought their interactions had been merely awkward. But as she scrolled through Ms. Sheil's photos on Instagram for the first time in nearly a year, she said, Ms. Gifford suspected those meetings had been some kind of aesthetic espionage.

Ms. Gifford claims that Ms. Sheil, 21, not only started to mimic her online persona but also appropriated her entire look.

And now Ms. Gifford is suing. Ms. Gifford copyrighted several of her social media posts in January after noticing the similarity between Ms. Sheil's posts and her own. Several photos were submitted as evidence in the lawsuit. Ms. Gifford filed this year in a federal court in Texas accusing Ms. Sheil of copyright infringement.

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National Chain Of Drug Clinics Deals in Deceit

Acadia Fakes Records, Times Inquiry Finds

By KATIE THOMAS and JESSICA SILVER-GREENBERG

Every day at dawn, tens of thousands of people begin lining up at Acadia Healthcare's addiction clinics to get a cup of methadone. The daily dose staves off opioid withdrawal and keeps many from turning to dangerous street drugs like fentanyl.

The for-profit chain of 165 methadone clinics — the country's largest — has generated more than \$1.3 billion in revenue since 2022. It is "a business that we continue to feel great about," Acadia's chief executive told investors this year.

That business has been built in part on deception, a New York Times investigation found.

Methadone is a narcotic, and the clinics are heavily regulated by federal and state governments. In addition to handing out methadone, the clinics are required to provide counseling and other services, like drug testing.

But Acadia often fails to provide that counseling, according to five dozen current and former employees in 22 of the 33 states where the company has clinics. Instead, employees at times falsify the medical records that Acadia uses to bill insurers, according to the employees and internal emails.

Sometimes a counseling session recorded in a patient's medical chart is simply a chance encounter. For example, medical records for a patient in Iowa show she had a 40-minute counseling session in December 2023, but the patient said in an interview that it was actually a hallway chat that lasted less than five minutes.

Acadia's business is built on volume. Its counselors carry caseloads that are sometimes more than double the limit set by state regulators, according to employees and inspection records. With so many patients, the clinics can become assembly lines, offering little more than a cup of methadone.

Clinic directors can get bonuses when their patient enrollment goes up, an incentive that has led Acadia to treat people who do not have opioid addictions but are dependent on other drugs, accord-

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TYCOONS OF TECH STEER TRANSITION FOR TRUMP TEAM

MANY CONFLICTS SEEN

Touching Nearly Every Department, Despite Little Experience

This article is by Theodore Schleifer, Maggie Haberman and Jonathan Swan.

The week after the November election, President-elect Donald J. Trump gathered his top advisers in the tearoom at his Florida resort, Mar-a-Lago, to plan the transition to his second-term government.

Mr. Trump had brought two of his most valued houseguests to the meeting: the billionaire Tesla boss Elon Musk and the billionaire co-founder of Oracle, Larry Ellison. The president-elect looked around the conference table and issued a joking-not-joking challenge.

"I brought the two richest people in the world today," Mr. Trump told his advisers, according to a person who was in the room. "What did you bring?"

Mr. Trump has delighted in a critical addition to his transition team: the Silicon Valley billionaires and millionaires who have been all over the transition, shaping hiring decisions and even conducting interviews for senior-level jobs. Many of those who are not formally involved, like Mr. Ellison, have been happy to sit in on the meetings.

Their involvement, to a degree far deeper than previously reported, has made this one of the most potentially conflict-ridden presidential transitions in modern history. It also carries what could be vast implications for the Trump administration's policies on issues including taxes and the regulation of artificial intelligence, not to mention clashing mightily with the notion that Mr. Trump's brand of populism is all about helping the working man.

The presence of the Silicon Valley crew during critical moments also reflects something larger. Silicon Valley was once seen as a Democratic stronghold, but the new generation of tech leaders — epitomized by Mr. Musk — often

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South Korean Leader Survives Impeachment Vote in Assembly

By VICTORIA KIM

South Korean lawmakers' attempt to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol ended in failure on Saturday night, prolonging the political upheaval and uncertainty that has roiled the country since his short-lived imposition of martial law last week.

The failed vote was a reversion to political deadlock in the deeply divided country, despite large-scale protests calling for the president's removal. It was a contrast to the brief moment early Wednesday when lawmakers across the political spectrum came together to vote swiftly and unanimously against the president's martial law declaration.

Saturday's move by the opposition to impeach Mr. Yoon was foiled by his conservative People Power Party, which boycotted the vote and prevented the necessary quorum. All but one member of the party walked out of the room before the impeachment motion



Protesters after the impeachment vote failed on Saturday.

was put to a vote, making the effort moot even before the first ballot was cast.

The opposition drew out the vote over several hours, urging lawmakers to return to the chamber to participate in the democratic process, in the very building that had been stormed days earlier by hundreds of soldiers acting under martial law orders.

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An Ancient Answer in Athens

Faced with a water shortage, the Greek capital is reviving Hadrian's Aqueduct, over 1,800 years old and largely abandoned.

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Harris Staffers Went Rogue

Worried that the campaign was neglecting voters of color in Philadelphia and other battleground cities, organizers launched a covert initiative.

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METROPOLITAN

The City's Housing Crisis

Soaring rents and few options have made it hard for average people to live in New York. Even "affordable" units often cost too much.

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SUNDAY BUSINESS

Easy Rawlins on Real Estate

A fictional character — in this case, Walter Mosley's private investigator — has more than a little to teach readers about landlordship.

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SUNDAY OPINION

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