

TRUMP REIGNITES
QUESTION OF AGE
WITH RAMBLINGS

INCREASING STRIDENCY

Analysis and Observers
Note Changes in His
Speech Patterns

By PETER BAKER
and DYLAN FREEDMAN

WASHINGTON — Former President Donald J. Trump vividly recounted how the audience at his climactic debate with Vice President Kamala Harris was on his side. Except that there was no audience. The debate was held in an empty hall. No one “went crazy,” as Mr. Trump put it, because no one was there.

Anyone can misremember, of course. But the debate had been just a week earlier and a fairly memorable moment. And it was hardly the only time Mr. Trump has seemed confused, forgetful, incoherent or disconnected from reality lately. In fact, it happens so often these days that it no longer even generates much attention.

He rambles, he repeats himself, he roams from thought to thought — some of them hard to understand, some of them unfinished, some of them factually fantastical. He voices outlandish claims that seem to be made up out of whole cloth. He digresses into bizarre tangents about golf, about sharks, about his own “beautiful” body. He relishes “a great day in Louisiana” after spending the day in Georgia. He expresses fear that North Korea is “trying to kill me” when he presumably means Iran. As late as last month, Mr. Trump was still speaking as if he were running against President Biden, five weeks after his withdrawal from the race.

With Mr. Biden out, Mr. Trump, at 78, is now the oldest major party nominee for president in history and would be the oldest president ever if he wins and finishes another term at 82. A review of Mr. Trump’s rallies, interviews, statements and social media posts finds signs of change since he first

Continued on Page A18



DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES
Former President Donald J. Trump campaigning Friday.

Bribery Inquiry Mars the Rise
Of New York’s Banks Brothers

This article is by Joseph Goldstein, Eliza Shapiro and Jan Ransom.

It was an ordinary Friday at City Hall, and Mayor Eric Adams was at the microphone, flanked by two men who each commanded his own vast corner of New York City government.

One was the deputy mayor for public safety, Philip B. Banks III, who had wide influence over the city’s police and fire agencies. The other was his brother, the schools chancellor, David C. Banks, the leader of the largest school system in the United States.

The brothers bantered back and forth about the upcoming school year in a scene that underscored the power that, under Mr. Adams, had been concentrated in the

For Now, Term
Is Shaping Up
As a Mild One

But Justices Could Be
Thrust Into Election

By ADAM LIPTAK

WASHINGTON — The new Supreme Court term, which starts as the justices return to the bench on Monday, already features cases on transgender rights, untraceable “ghost guns” and whether Mexico may sue American firearms manufacturers. The coming months may also bring voting disputes that could decide the presidential election.

Still, after three momentous terms in which the court eliminated abortion rights, did away with race-conscious college admissions and created substantial immunity for presidential crimes, the docket is, for now at least, back to a sort of normalcy, promising decisions that will produce sharp divisions among the justices and ripple through American life but fall short of producing the titanic societal shocks of recent years.

The court’s lower profile, however brief, may come as a relief to the justices, who are bruised from the aftershocks of the recent decisions, from internal tensions over whether to give teeth to ethics guidelines announced last year and from approval ratings that continue to test modern lows.

In addition to the marquee cases on transgender rights and guns, the court will take on an array of notable matters.

One will decide a First Amendment challenge to a Texas law aimed at shielding minors from online pornography. Another will take a close look at a case in which Oklahoma is poised to execute a death row inmate over the objections of its own attorney general.

Others will scrutinize, yet again, the power of regulatory agencies, now in the context of the Food and Drug Administration’s efforts to discourage young people from using flavored e-cigarettes. The court will also hear a pair of major securities fraud cases against the tech giants Facebook and Nvidia.

The court added more than a dozen cases to its docket on Friday, including ones on DNA testing for death row inmates, the disposal of nuclear waste and police use of deadly force. In the coming months, the justices are likely to agree to hear perhaps 20 more cases. They could include ones on the Second Amendment and further attacks on the power of administrative agencies.

Much could still change, said Jaime Santos, a lawyer with Goodwin Procter who specializes in appellate and Supreme Court litigation.

“Recall that the fall was pretty sparse, collegial and relatively

Continued on Page A17

A Year-Old War Endures, and Threatens to Spread



SERGEY PONOMAREV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A vigil in Tel Aviv on Sunday. Millions of Israelis and Palestinians have been left in an unending state of limbo during the last year.

In Towns Attacked on Oct. 7, a Ghostly Existence

By JOHNATAN REISS
and AMIT ELKAYAM

NETIV HA’ASARA, Israel — Before Oct. 7, Naama Giller let her children roam freely through her Israeli village on the border with Gaza. Her front door was rarely locked. She liked living in a place animated by communal festivities, outdoor life, the din of boys and girls playing.

Now, she darkens her home at night to avoid being targeted in strikes from Gaza. Most of the children in the village, Netiv Ha’asara, left and have not returned. Military patrols and the thud of bombs are the soundtrack to a spartan and ghostly life.

“Our village now is empty, de-

Few Residents Return,
and Are Surrounded
by Harsh Realities

serted,” Ms. Giller said.

“I live here,” she said, “but I’m scared.”

One year ago, Hamas-led assailants raided Netiv Ha’asara and at least a dozen other villages, setting fire to them, killing residents in their homes and dragging hostages back to Gaza in a terrorist attack that the Israeli authorities said killed roughly 1,200 people and led to the displacement of thousands more. About 250 peo-

ple in all were taken hostage.

Most of the residents from the worst-affected villages are still living elsewhere, in hotels or government-funded temporary housing. And for the few like Ms. Giller who have dared to come back, they are surrounded by the hard realities of war, and daily reminders of the trauma of Oct. 7.

The Giller family bought an extra refrigerator to stock up on supplies because there is now no grocery shop nearby and no neighbors to borrow from. Their youngest child, who is 8, sleeps in a room with fortified walls so he does not have to rush for shelter in the middle of the night during strikes. Any trip in or out of the village requires

Continued on Page A8



MIKE BELLEME FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Capturing Devastation at Home

After years of documenting climate change in North Carolina, and living in an area where people move to escape its effects, a photographer found himself in the path of a hurricane. Page A12.

Disinformation Is Hampering Helene Recovery

This article is by Emily Cochrane, Christopher Flavelle, Michael D. Shear and Tiffany Hsu.

SWANNANOVA, N.C. — In the aftermath of Hurricane Helene’s devastation in western North Carolina, the public meeting in Rutherford County last Wednesday was essential business.

Officials from several shell-shocked communities convened to talk about the extensive damage and ongoing search-and-res-

Officials Wasting Time
Fighting Falsehoods

cue efforts.

But within hours, a conspiracy theory took hold. The meeting, social media posts claimed, was a secret discussion about bulldozing, confiscating or even selling land for profit or to mine lithium.

“The only lithium for sale in

Rutherford County is at the local Lowes stores in a 9-volt battery,” said Bryan King, the chairman of the county commission, who was at the meeting. The power of the conspiracy theory, he added, “is just disheartening.”

As thousands across the Southeast grieve the deaths and damage left by the Category 4 hurricane that made landfall on Sept. 26, a torrent of conspiracy theories, rumors and lies threatens to

Continued on Page A14

Israel and Hamas
Dash Hopes for
Compromise

This article is by Patrick Kingsley, Ronen Bergman and Bilal Shbair.

JERUSALEM — Yaniv Hegyi, an Israeli community organizer, fled his home last Oct. 7, after terrorists from Gaza overran his village in southern Israel. “I was sure that by January we would go back,” Mr. Hegyi said.

Mohammed Shakib Hassan, a Palestinian civil servant, fled his home on Oct. 12, after the Israeli Air Force responded by striking his city in northern Gaza. “We thought it would be two months — at most,” Mr. Hassan said.

Instead, the war in Gaza has dragged on for a year, with no end in sight.

It is the longest war between Israelis and Arabs since the end of the conflict that set the boundaries of the Israeli state in 1949. It is also by far the deadliest. More than 1,500 Israelis have been killed, mostly during Hamas’s attack on Oct. 7, and roughly 250 others were abducted. More than 40,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel’s counterattack, which began with one of the most intense bombardments ever recorded in modern warfare.

A wider, multifront war between Israel and Hamas’s regional allies is now unfolding — most recently with Israel’s invasion of Lebanon and Iran’s bombardment of Israel — but the core of the conflict remains the original battle between Hamas and Israel, and the almost Sisyphean challenge of ending it.

Inside a deeply traumatized Israel, that conflict has magnified long-running social schisms and set off bitter debate about whether to prioritize Hamas’s destruction or a deal to free the hostages. Outside Israel, it has spurred horror at the Israeli military response to Hamas’s atrocities, accusations of genocide and war crimes, and widespread protests in the United States and beyond.

The war in Gaza has also highlighted the limits of American influence, with the Biden administration unable or unwilling to exert the pressure needed to broker a truce. And on the ground, it has displaced millions of people, mostly in Gaza but also in Israel.

Mr. Hegyi is living in a stranger’s house, 100 miles from his

Continued on Page A6



INTERNATIONAL A4-9

Keeping the Amazon Flowing

As a drought dries up the river, Brazil is resorting to an extraordinary measure: dredging it to make it deeper. PAGE A4

Chief of Staff Resigns in U.K.

Sue Gray said scrutiny over her role “risked becoming a distraction” to the new Labour government. PAGE A9

NATIONAL A10-19

Tiny Edens in the Cornfields

Farmers are aiming to reduce nutrient runoff from cropland, and help birds and bees, by restoring swaths of the prairie with government help. PAGE A10

Flipping the Gun Conversation

Vice President Kamala Harris is talking about firearms in a new way, co-opting the language of Republicans. PAGE A19

ARTS C1-6

Atlanta Opera Bucks Trends

The city’s opera company powered through the pandemic, tripled its budget and produced ambitious work. PAGE C1



SPORTS D1-8

N.H.L. 2024-25 Preview

A look at the coming season as the quest to lift the Stanley Cup as champion gets underway. PAGES D3-6

Williamson Earns Trust

The Pelicans and their star are finally working together after an injury-filled start to his N.B.A. career. PAGE D1

BUSINESS B1-4

Pizza Order Foils Injury Suit

A New Jersey couple sued Uber after a crash left them severely injured. An appeals court ruled they had agreed to settle disputes out of court when they used the Uber Eats app. PAGE B1

Shutting Out Social Apps?

Some creators worry that Apple’s subtle change to the iPhone’s contact-sharing permissions could make it hard for them to get the fast growth they need to compete. PAGE B1

OPINION A20-21

Thomas L. Friedman

PAGE A20



OBITUARIES B5-6

Painter of Abstract Landscapes

Richard Mayhew drew from his Black and Native American heritage to find the emotions behind the beauty of nature. He was 100. PAGE B6



0 354613 9