46. Tonight, clear sky, brisk, low 32.

Tomorrow, plenty of sunshine, nearaverage temperatures, high 43. Weather map appears on Page 22.

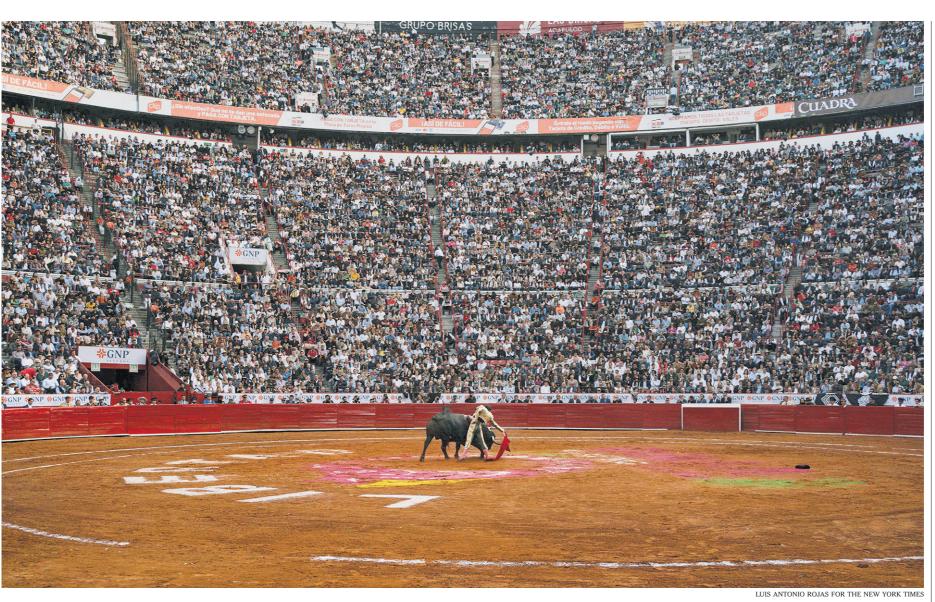
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Prices in Canada may be higher

\$6.00



Joselito Adame, a Mexican bullfighter, performing at La Plaza México in Mexico City last Sunday. Bullfights have resumed after two years of legal challenges.

CHINA BUILDS UP **NUCLEAR ARSENAL**

Xi's Fear and Ambition Shape His Strategy

By CHRIS BUCKLEY

TAIPEI, Taiwan - Nineteen days after taking power as China's leader, Xi Jinping convened the generals overseeing the country's nuclear missiles and issued a blunt demand. China had to be ready for possible confrontation with a formidable adversary, he said, signaling that he wanted a more potent nuclear capability to counter the threat.

Their force, he told the generals, was a "pillar of our status as a great power." They must, Mr. Xi said, advance "strategic plans for responding under the most complicated and difficult conditions to military intervention by a powerful enemy," according an official internal summary of his speech in December 2012 to China's nuclear and conventional missile arm, then called the Second Artillery Corps, which was verified by The New York Times.

Publicly, Mr. Xi's remarks on nuclear matters have been sparse and formulaic. But his comments behind closed doors, revealed in the speech, show that anxiety and ambition have driven his transformative buildup of China's nuclear weapons arsenal in the past dec-

From those early days, Mr. Xi signaled that a robust nuclear force was needed to mark China's ascent as a great power. He also reflected fears that China's relatively modest nuclear weaponry

Continued on Page 12

After 500 Years, Mexican Bullfighting Faces a Mortal Challenge

By JAMES WAGNER

MEXICO CITY — At 4:30 p.m., the near-capacity crowd of 42,000 people at La Plaza México started restlessly whistling. They had waited since May 15, 2022 - a period of 624 days of legal challenges — for bulls to return to the world's largest bullfighting arena, only to face another delay because of the hundreds of protesters outside.

When the parade of the after- plunged into their spines.

Uber driver in Arizona, said he

quit drinking alcohol more than a

decade ago when his roommates

got so fed up with his unruly be-

havior that they threatened to

Sobriety became such a core

part of Mr. Reed's identity that he

launched an online dating website

called "Single & Sober," but in

2020, Mr. Reed, a Navy veteran,

said he found himself struggling

as his sister, who had Down syn-

Mr. Reed, 43, began smoking

marijuana. More recently, he went

to a clinic for infusions of ke-

tamine, and tried tiny doses of

psychoactive mushrooms. Mr.

Reed said those substances im-

proved his mood — and he still re-

gards himself as sober, because he

Notions of what constitutes so-

briety and problematic substance

use have grown more flexible in

recent years as younger Ameri-

remains alcohol free

drome, was dying of cancer.

kick him out.

As Views Shift on Substance Use,

So Does the Meaning of 'Sober'

BV ERNESTO LONDOÑO

Mike Reed, a musician and cans have shunned alcohol in in-

noon's three matadors and their bullfighting entourage finally emerged to salute the fans, the arena in Mexico City erupted. Then, at 4:58 p.m., the first bull charged out and raced around the

Over the next two and a half hours last Sunday, fans cheered and jeered, shouted "olé," smoked cigars, ate grilled meats and chips, drank beer and mezcal, and watched five bulls die with swords

creasing numbers while embrac-

ing cannabis and psychedelics —

a phenomenon that alarms some

Not long ago, sobriety was

broadly understood to mean ab-

staining from all intoxicating sub-

stances, and the term was often

associated with people who had

overcome severe forms of addic-

tion. These days, it is used more

expansively, including by people

who have quit drinking alcohol

but consume what they deem

moderate amounts of other sub-

stances, including marijuana and

drinking problem doesn't mean

they have a problem with every

viewed as wellness boosters by

those who use them, adherence to

the full abstinence model favored

Continued on Page 19

As some drugs come to be

single thing," Mr. Reed said.

"Just because someone has a

addiction experts.

mushrooms.

Ethical and Legal Battle Over Animal Rights

"To see it here, the 'olé' and how the plaza rumbles, it's indescribable," said Erik Reyes, 30, a Mexico City resident who was in the

throughout its colonies in Latin America in the 1500s, has been at the center of a major legal fight over its return to the largest bullfighting city in the largest bullfighting country in the world. That battle has come to symbolize a larger war between tradition and evolving views on animal cruelty.

The legal whiplash continued on Wednesday, when a judge tem-

porarily suspended bullfighting at La Plaza México — only days after it had resumed. La Plaza México Bullfighting, spread by Spain officials challenged the decision Continued on Page 10



Grieving her husband's overdose death, Tiffany Fede began using magic mushrooms and her view on full abstinence changed.

U.S. AND THE U.K. **CARRY OUT BLITZ AGAINST HOUTHIS**

A 2ND DAY OF REPRISAL

Large-Scale Airstrikes on Iran-Backed Rebels in Yemen's North

By ERIC SCHMITT and HELENE COOPER

WASHINGTON — The United States and Britain carried out large-scale military strikes on Saturday against multiple sites in Yemen controlled by Houthi militants, according to a statement from the two countries and six allies, as the Biden administration continued its reprisal campaign in the Middle East targeting Iranbacked militias.

The attacks against 36 Houthi targets at 13 sites in northern Yemen came barely 24 hours after the United States carried out a series of military strikes against Iranian forces and the militias they support at seven sites in Syria and Iraq.

American and British warplanes, as well as Navy Tomahawk cruise missiles, hit deeply buried weapons storage facilities; missile systems and launchers; air defense systems; and radars in Yemen, the statement said. Australia, Bahrain, Denmark, Canada, the Netherlands and New Zealand provided support, which officials said included intelligence and logistics assistance.

"These precision strikes are intended to disrupt and degrade the capabilities that the Houthis use to threaten global trade and the lives of innocent mariners, and are in response to a series of illegal, dangerous and destabilizing Houthi actions since previous coalition strikes," the statement said, referring to major attacks by the United States and Britain last

The attacks were the secondlargest salvo since the allies first struck Houthi targets on Jan. 11. They came after a week in which the Houthis had been particularly defiant, launching several attack drones and cruise and ballistic missiles at merchant vessels and U.S. Navy warships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

The American-led air and naval strikes began last month in response to dozens of Houthi drone and missile attacks against commercial shipping in the Red Sea since November. The Houthis claim their attacks are in protest of Israel's military campaign against Hamas in Gaza.

The United States and several allies had repeatedly warned the Houthis of serious consequences if the salvos did not stop. But the U.S.-led strikes have so far failed to deter the Houthis from attacking shipping lanes to and from the Suez Canal that are critical for global trade. Hundreds of ships have been forced to take a lengthy detour around southern Africa, driving up costs.

military operations "Our against the Zionist entity will continue until the aggression against Gaza stops, no matter what sacrifices it demands from us," a senior Houthi official said in response to

Continued on Page 8

'Curb' Spun Gold Out of Gripes and Grievances

By JAMES PONIEWOZIK

At the end of his 1999 HBO special, "Larry David: Curb Your Enthusiasm," David wraps up a

stand-up comedy set by telling his audience he has no more material for

them. "This is what happens when you run out of nothing," he

The joke refers to the famous

description of "Seinfeld," the sitcom that David created with Jerry Seinfeld, as "a show about nothing." It is also a bit of a lie.

For starters, it was always misleading to say that "Seinfeld" was about nothing. Yes, it was militantly anti-message, building small-bore farces around four single, child-free New Yorkers who had an inordinate amount of time to sit in a diner. But its allergy to making statements

was a statement in itself; it made the show emblematic of the sanguine, end-of-history 1990s.

Second, David hadn't really run out of anything. "Curb Your Enthusiasm," the comedy of ill manners that emerged from David's special, began on HBO in 2000. It has run off and on for nearly a quarter-century, and Season 12, beginning on Sunday, will be its last.

Continued on Page 15

Outcry Over a Cat? The Kremlin Will Allow It.

By ANATOLY KURMANAEV

The tragedy gripped Russia for days. Federal lawmakers convened a special committee and an investigation was launched, as hundreds of volunteers searched for the victim in subzero temperatures, and state news media ran live updates on the fallout. Eventually, the victim — Twix

the cat — was found dead. A national outcry over the de-

PAGE 2

mise of a pet who was mistakenly thrown from a long-distance train by an attendant has highlighted both the limits of and the demand for an emotional outlet in wartime

A national poll found that about two out of three Russians were familiar with Twix, a very high proportion in a country where people increasingly tune out negative news, like the war in Ukraine, according to Denis Volkov, director of the country's largest independent pollster, the Levada Center, which conducted the survey.

A combination of propaganda, a crackdown on dissent and public fatigue with the inconclusive war has turned internet curiosities into a focus of national attention for days, even weeks. Last month, a video of a Russian influencer tossing his 2-month-old baby in a snowbank in an apparent stunt re-

Continued on Page 11

INTERNATIONAL 4-12

Indian TV's One-Man Show

The inauguration of a temple in Ayodhva was both religious ritual and madefor-television spectacle for Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Milestone in Northern Ireland

The new leader in Belfast is a member of Sinn Fein, a party that was once the political arm of the I.R.A. PAGE 6

SPORTS 28-31

Greatest Show on Turf II

The San Francisco 49ers come into the Super Bowl with a passing explosiveness that rivals the 1999 Rams. PAGE 28



NATIONAL 13-24

New York's Special Election

Mazi Pilip, an Israeli military veteran vying for George Santos's seat, makes Gaza a campaign cornerstone. PAGE 21

They Watched Him Die

Most of those who witnessed the first U.S. execution by nitrogen gas agreed: It didn't go as Alabama promised. PAGE 13

ARTS & LEISURE

Envious of Netflix's Gay Land

Watching queer coming-of-age movies and TV series has helped heal a heart still stuck in the past, when the world was less welcoming. PAGE 6

METROPOLITAN

Raptor on the Lam

Flaco the Owl fled the Central Park Zoo, and then made the rest of Manhattan his new home. So, just what has he been up to for the past year? PAGE 1

SUNDAY OPINION

Ross Douthat

SUNDAY STYLES

Beauty Contestant, Baby in Tow

Two weeks after giving birth to her eighth child, a social media star competed in the Mrs. World pageant. PAGE 1

A Bohemian Haven Remade

A timeline shows how the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn transformed into a big-money destination. PAGE 10 **SUNDAY BUSINESS**

He Lost the Lamborghini, Too

Ben Armstrong, better known as BitBoy, was once the most popular cryptocurrency YouTuber in the world. Now his empire, and his marriage, have collapsed.

The A.I. Whisperers

Many feared artificial intelligence would kill jobs. But hospitals, insurance companies and others are creating roles to navigate the technology.

