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**Battle Brews Over Northwest Passage**  
A gathering on King William Island in Canada. As global warming makes the Arctic more accessible, a rivalry has emerged. Page A6.

## Trump Razing The East Wing Despite Pledge

**By LUKE BROADWATER**  
WASHINGTON — As roaring machinery tore down one side of the White House, President Trump acknowledged on Wednesday that he was having the entire East Wing demolished to make way for his 90,000-square-foot ballroom, a striking expansion of a project that is remaking the profile of one of the nation's most iconic buildings.

Mr. Trump was unsentimental as news of the demolition spread. “It was never thought of as being much,” he said of the East Wing, which was home to the first lady’s office and spaces used for ceremonial purposes. “It was a very small building.”

The process of tearing down the East Wing was expected to be completed as soon as this week-end, two senior administration officials said, as Mr. Trump moved rapidly to carry out a passion project that he said was necessary to host state dinners and other events.

But the previously un-announced decision to demolish the East Wing was at odds with Mr. Trump’s previous statements about the project, and underscored his intention to blast through the sensibilities of many in Washington to continue putting a lasting imprint on the White House.

The president also said on Wednesday that the ballroom would cost \$300 million, \$100 million more than initially estimated.

“In order to do it properly, we had to take down the existing structure,” Mr. Trump said. He also said — somewhat cryptically

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## Pro-Palestinian Activists Lament the Steep Cost

**By JEREMY W. PETERS**  
Harry Campbell was a few weeks from graduating in the spring of 2024 when he decided to join hundreds of demonstrators at the encampments at Washington University in St. Louis. He wanted to support the Palestinians suffering under Israel’s bombardment of Gaza — a cause that he and other students linked to the global struggle for the oppressed.

Today, he’s not convinced the protests did much good, even now with a cease-fire agreement that has brought a fragile peace to the region.

For young pro-Palestinian ac-

### Worried That Backlash Could Doom Future Political Dissent

tivists like Mr. Campbell, the truce is welcome, if bittersweet and long overdue.

But some of them recalled the boisterous protests on campuses and in the streets — and the often overwhelming backlash — with a certain ruefulness, saying that they had absorbed sobering lessons about power and politics. More Americans have come to

agree with the activists about Israel’s war conduct. But some of those protesters worry the blow-back has been so severe — and the criticism against them so resonant — that the American belief in the concept of civil disobedience to achieve political ends has been eroded.

In interviews with a dozen activists and academics across the country, they described a pro-Palestinian movement that is chastened, wary and worried about the future of political dissent. If they still demonstrate, most continue to wear masks to conceal their identities, fearing they might

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VICTOR J. BLUE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

**Protesting a Crackdown on Canal Street**  
The arrest of nine migrant vendors by federal agents on Tuesday in Manhattan drew ire. Page A17.

## Prince’s Ties to Epstein Provoke Constitutional Debate in Britain

**By MARK LANDLER**  
LONDON — Britain has been one of the world’s most durable constitutional monarchies, in part because its two pillars — the crown and Parliament — stay out of each other’s business. King Charles III steers clear of politics, while Prime Minister Keir Starmer leaves the affairs of the royal family to the monarch.

That longstanding arrangement has come under rare stress in the last week, following scandalous new disclosures about Prince Andrew, the king’s young-er brother, and his ties to the convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

The details were outlined in a newly published email between Andrew and Mr. Epstein, and in a memoir by Virginia Roberts Giuf-

### Would King Act First to Strip Brother’s Title?

fre, an Epstein victim who accused Andrew of raping her when she was a teenager — an accusation he denies. They have led to calls for him to be stripped of his most familiar title, prince. This

would likely require an act of parliament.

That, in turn, has set off a chicken-and-egg debate. The government says the decision of whether to deprive Andrew of his titles is one for the king, not for Mr. Starmer. Officials at Buckingham Palace say it would be improper for the king to take any position on a parliamentary act that might

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## Elevating 2020 Deniers, Trump Fuels 2026 Fears

### Backers of False Election Claims Get Power and Could Erode Security Measures

**By ALEXANDRA BERZON and NICK CORASANITI**

Election officials from nearly all 50 states gathered on a call last month with the Homeland Security Department’s point person on “election integrity,” eager to hear how the woman filling a newly created Trump administration position might help safeguard the vote ahead of next year’s midterms.

But many of them left alarmed. Rather than offering assurances that the federal government’s election protection programs would continue uninterrupted, the new official, Heather Honey, instead used portions of the meeting to echo rhetoric that has infused the right-wing election activist movement that emerged since President Trump falsely claimed that his 2020 defeat was the result of widespread fraud, according to five people with knowledge of the call.

Ms. Honey, a leader in that movement until her appointment in August as deputy assistant secretary for election integrity, complained that her department’s cybersecurity experts tasked with combating misinformation about elections had “strayed from their mission.”

The remark echoed a widespread view on the right that the agency had sought to silence supporters of Mr. Trump’s fraud claims. Ms. Honey also repeatedly mentioned a report often cited by

election conspiracists to support their claims that voting machines were rigged to favor Democrats, according to the people familiar with the call.

The ascent of Ms. Honey reflects how Mr. Trump and his allies, despite a clear victory last year, remain consumed with the belief that the 2020 election was stolen — and how the president is using the powers of the government to upend an electoral system that he insists helped Joseph R. Biden Jr. take the White House.

In the past few months, Mr. Trump has elevated multiple proponents of his fraud claims into high-level administration jobs. Now, as government insiders, these activists could wield their newfound power to discredit future results or rekindle old claims to argue for a federal intrusion into locally administered voting systems.

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### More on the White House

**EXTREMISM** The withdrawn nomination of Paul Ingrassia shows how hateful rhetoric has been explained away. PAGE A13

**OVERSIGHT CONCERNS** The firing of the Export-Import Bank’s inspector general adds to the sidelining of watchdogs. PAGE A15

## An Elite School Gave Mamdani Political Instinct

**By MATT FLEGENHEIMER and BENJAMIN ORESKES**

Zohran Mamdani needed supporters, numbers, live bodies.

His bid for student vice president at the elite Bronx High School of Science would ultimately crater, with its wayward pledge of fresh juice for all, squeezed from locally sourced fruit. (“I promised things that were simply impossible,” he conceded years later.)

But through a blitz of frantic campus recruitment, inveterate bluffing and cajoling internet posts, a campaign much dearer to a teenage Mr. Mamdani — and much more resonant to him now — was hurtling ahead.

Cricket had never been recognized as an official sport in New York City’s public schools. Mr. Mamdani, like many South Asian schoolmates who had grown up around the game, wanted in anyway.

And so, he and a friend effectively created a team themselves, with all the logistical fortitude available to distractible adolescents, amassing a cache of bats, pads and player sign-ups (“brown ain’t no requirement to play this game,” Mr. Mamdani urged on Facebook) and working to persuade enough students and adults that they were fronting a legitimate operation.

“He was sort of campaigning,” Avneet Singh, an eventual teammate, said in an interview. “I saw Zohran on campus running around with this group of kids saying, ‘We’re going to be the cricket team.’ So before it was even a team, I think he had to pretend that it was a team.”

For most politicians — for most people — high school is a formative time. Awkwardness is overcome (or not). Mistakes are made (and repeated). Personas congeal into personalities.

For Mr. Mamdani — for most people who went to his very par-

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EMILY KASK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A robot at Amazon’s warehouse in Shreveport, La.

## Amazon Wants Robots to Take 600,000 Jobs

**By KAREN WEISE**

SHREVEPORT, La. — Over the past two decades, no company has done more to shape the American workplace than Amazon. In its ascent to become the nation’s second-largest employer, it has hired hundreds of thousands of warehouse workers, built an army of contract drivers and pioneered using technology to hire, monitor and manage employees.

Now, interviews and a cache of internal strategy documents viewed by The New York Times reveal that Amazon executives believe the company is on the cusp of its next big workplace shift: replacing more than half a million jobs with robots.

Amazon’s U.S. work force has more than tripled since 2018 to almost 1.2 million. But Amazon’s automation team expects the company can avoid hiring more than 160,000 people in the United States it would otherwise need by 2027. That would save about 30 cents on each item that Amazon picks, packs and delivers to customers.

Executives told Amazon’s board last year that they hoped robotic automation would allow the company to continue to avoid adding to its U.S. work force in the

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### A Looming Coffee Crisis

A new report adds to evidence that deforestation lessens rainfall and makes crops more likely to fail. PAGE A7

### Putin’s New Super App

It is the latest step by the Kremlin to tighten control over what can be seen and said online in Russia. PAGE A4

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### Colleges Focus on Relevance

As doubts about higher education grow, many institutions are tailoring programs, recruiting adult students and cutting red tape. PAGE A11

### Inside Trump’s Chicago ‘Blitz’

Those most affected by violence have concluded the president isn’t focused on protecting them from crime. PAGE A17

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### Architect and Urban Designer

Terry Farrell, who designed attention-getting buildings like the headquarters of Britain’s MI6, was 87. PAGE B12



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### Superstar in the Making

The Florida rapper DoeChii made a triumphant stop in Manhattan on her Live From the Swamp Tour. PAGE C1

### Workers Make Up Her Works

Karimah Ashadu, a Nigerian British artist, uses her films to showcase laborers in her homeland. PAGE C1

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### Beijing Still Has Cards Left

China hawks say its economy is too weak to withstand a tariff shock. In Yiwu, factories are showing why that may be a miscalculation. PAGE B1

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Coaches, players and video crews can unlock secrets about opponents — legally — with meticulous work on and off the field. We break it down. PAGE B6

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### A Quick Rise in Fashion

Emily Dawn Long designed things for friends. Then she hit it big with “A Hat Named Wanda.” Now she’s succeeding on the industry’s margins. PAGE D4

