

# Voters Believe U.S. Can't Heal Deep Divisions

## Poll Shows a Shift Even Before the Shutdown

By JEREMY W. PETERS and RUTH IGIELNIK

Americans have markedly less faith in the ability of the country's political system to solve problems than they had five years ago, with a large majority now believing that the country is incapable of overcoming its deep divisions, according to a poll by The New York Times and Siena University.

Even in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic, when the country was fighting over mask mandates and forced to reckon with questions about racial inequality, a majority of voters still agreed that the country was capable of solving its political problems.

Today, just 33 percent of voters feel the same.

The steep rise in pessimism reflects a striking shift in the public's perceptions about what ails the country. After the economy, the poll found that Americans were most likely to point to problems in the political culture as the most urgent. They named polarization and the state of democracy more often than immigration, inflation or crime.

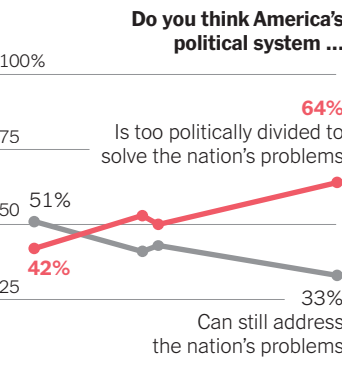
The Times/Siena poll of 1,313 registered voters, taken between Sept. 22 and 27, was conducted at an especially fraught moment, roughly two weeks after the assassination of the right-wing activist Charlie Kirk. And it was taken before the government shutdown that began at 12:01 a.m. Wednesday — a development likely to reinforce the negative feelings that American voters have about the division and dysfunction in politics.

"It is impossible now to have a policy discussion," said Amber Yang, 37, of Boston, who works in finance and identifies as a Democrat. She said the polarization has seeped into most aspects of life, complicating running a business and even raising a family.

"There's no consensus on the facts," she added. "And when you

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THE NEW YORK TIMES/SIENA POLL  
September 2020 to September 2025



Source: Polls of registered voters nationwide Sept. 22-24, 2020; July 5-7 and Oct. 9-12, 2022; and Sept. 22-27, 2025. The share who said they did not know or who did not respond is not shown. YUHAN LIU/THE NEW YORK TIMES

### Trump Eyes Deep Cuts

The president plans to meet with the White House budget chief to slash what he described as "Democrat agencies." Page A13.



Congregants comforted one another near the Heaton Park synagogue in Manchester, England, after a deadly attack on Thursday.

## Attacker Kills 2 At British Shul On Yom Kippur

This article is by Michael D. Shear, Lizzie Dearden, Stephen Castle, Emma Bubola and Thomas Fuller.

LONDON — An attacker rammed a car into people outside a synagogue in Manchester, England, then went on a stabbing spree on Thursday, killing two people in what the police called an act of terrorism on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar.

The police said officers responded within minutes and shot and killed the attacker, whom they identified as Jihad al-Shamie, 35, a British citizen of Syrian descent. Though the police described the assault as a terrorist attack, they also said that counterterrorism investigators were still "working to understand the motivation."

Three other people were arrested, the police said, on suspicion of commission, preparation and instigation of acts of terrorism in connection with the assault outside the synagogue, the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation.

The police did not name those arrested, in accordance with privacy rules, but said they were two men in their 30s and a woman in her 60s. British officials said late Thursday that Mr. al-Shamie had entered the United Kingdom as a "very young child" and was granted British citizenship in 2006.

Stephen Watson, the chief constable of the Greater Manchester Police, said the attacker, who seriously wounded three other people, was wearing a vest the constable described as having the "appearance of an explosive device." Investigators later determined it was not capable of causing

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## Gazans Urge Hamas to Accept U.S. Peace Deal

By LIAM STACK

TEL AVIV — Palestinians in Gaza have spent almost two years longing for an end to the war that has destroyed their communities and killed tens of thousands of their neighbors. Many say their best hope yet is the latest cease-fire plan proposed by the United States — if only Hamas would accept it.

"Hamas must say yes to this offer — we have been through hell already," said Mahmoud Bolbol, 43, a construction worker who has remained in Gaza City with his six children in the battered shell of their home throughout the war.

President Trump unveiled the

### Amid Broad Suffering, Many in Enclave Say 'Enough Is Enough'

proposal while meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel at the White House on Monday. Mr. Trump said that if Hamas did not accept its terms, then he would give Israel the green light to "finish the job" of destroying the armed group.

Hamas has not yet given its response to the proposal, but interviews with Palestinians in Gaza on Wednesday suggested wide-

spread public support for the plan. It calls for an immediate end to a war that has brought immense civilian suffering.

For the past two days, Mr. Bolbol said, his neighbors have talked about almost nothing but the cease-fire proposal. If Hamas rejects it, he said, his family would finally leave Gaza City and head for what he hoped would be the relative safety of the enclave's south.

"Hamas needs to understand: Enough is enough," Mr. Bolbol said. Most Gazans are not members of the group, he added, "so why drag us into this?"

The plan requires Hamas to re-

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### A Village for Wildfire Survivors

Hawaii is hoping to nurture community with a modular home development in Lahaina. Page A18.

## He Raised \$300,000 for Church Shooter's Kin

By SONIA A. RAO

The community of Grand Blanc Township, Mich., devastated by a deadly shooting on a Latter-day Saints congregation this week, has pulled together to help one another in the aftermath.

Neighborhood children handed out flowers and positive messages. Moms offered free hugs. And donations through multiple

### Faith Spurs Man to Aid Wife and Child

fund-raising accounts popped up to cover medical costs for the wounded or funeral expenses for the deceased.

One of those donation pages was set up to benefit an unexpect-

ed recipient: the family of Thomas Jacob Sanford, the suspect who died in the shooting, which killed four people and wounded eight others.

Mr. Sanford, the authorities said, drove a truck into the church meetinghouse during a worship service on Sunday and opened fire with an assault-style weapon, shooting victims as young as 6. He

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## Mamdani's Plan Would End a Gifted Program

By EMMA G. FITZSIMMONS and TROY CLOSSON

Zohran Mamdani, the Democratic front-runner for mayor of New York City, plans to end the gifted and talented program for kindergarten students at public schools if he is elected, calling for a major overhaul of a program that has deeply divided parents. Mr. Mamdani's campaign said

### Phased Out Next Year for Kindergartners

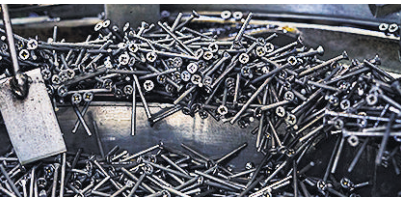
in a statement that he would embrace former Mayor Bill de Blasio's plan, announced in 2021, to phase out the gifted program for elementary schools, which has been widely criticized for exacer-

bating segregation.

Students who are in gifted classes would remain in the program, but there would be no gifted program for kindergartners next fall, the campaign said on Wednesday.

Mr. Mamdani's plan would reshape education for some of the youngest children in the nation's largest school system and could

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BUSINESS B1-7

### Source of Screws Hammered

Long top exporters to the U.S., Taiwan's factories are struggling under tariffs on steel and aluminum. PAGE B1

### Fed Independence Still at Risk

A Supreme Court order keeping a board governor is "a time to exhale but not breathe easy," one expert said. PAGE B1

INTERNATIONAL A4-9

### Deadly Wildfires on the Rise

The past decade in particular has seen an uptick in costly and devastating blazes linked to climate change, according to new research. PAGE A7

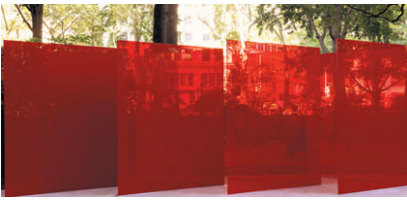
### Political Jokes on Riyadh Stage

American comics used a comedy festival in Saudi Arabia to skewer a free speech debate raging at home. PAGE A9

OBITUARIES A20-21

### Trailblazer in Desegregation

Bobby Cain was the first Black graduate at a public high school in the South under a court mandate. He was 85. PAGE A20



WEEKEND ARTS C1-12

### Maximally Minimalistic

Larry Bell's sleek glass sculptures now stand in a Manhattan park, letting passers-by see the city anew. PAGE C1

### Rock-Solid Performance

Action-hero roles made Dwayne Johnson a star. He shows a more complex side in "Smashing Machine." PAGE C1

NATIONAL A10-19

### Military Tradition in Tension

The president's remarks about using "dangerous cities" as training for troops conflicts with a principle that the military has long sought to preserve — that it should be nonpartisan. PAGE A11

### Trump's Deal for Colleges

The White House sent letters to nine of the nation's top universities, urging campus leaders to pledge support for President Trump's agenda to ensure access to federal funds. PAGE A10

OPINION A22-23

### Christopher Sabatini

PAGE A22



SPORTS B8-11

### Fueled by the Doubters

After an inauspicious season start, the Las Vegas Aces, led by A'ja Wilson (22), found the right gear and made it back to the W.N.B.A. finals. PAGE B8

