



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES
A body of a Palestinian on Thursday in Gaza City. Officials on each side of the conflict offered differing accounts of what happened.

Political Rivals
Aim for Gains
At the Border

This article is by Zolan Kanno-Youngs, Michael Gold and Erica L. Green.

President Biden and former President Donald J. Trump made dueling visits to the U.S.-Mexico border on Thursday, with Mr. Biden challenging his predecessor to “join me” in securing the country’s southern frontier and Mr. Trump blaming the president for lawlessness at the border.

The remarks came at a moment of political peril for Mr. Biden, who has faced criticism from both parties as the number of people crossing into the United States has reached record levels, with migrant encounters more than double than in the Trump years.

In appearances some 300 miles apart in Texas, Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump tried to leverage what is likely to become the most volatile policy dispute of the 2024 campaign.

The president called on his predecessor to help pass a bipartisan bill in Congress that would significantly crack down on border crossings. Republicans, at Mr. Trump’s urging, torpedoed the bill — legislation that they themselves had demanded — saying it wasn’t strong enough.

“Instead of telling members of Congress to block this legislation, join me,” Mr. Biden said in Brownsville, a border city in the Rio Grande Valley.

“You know and I know it’s the toughest, most efficient, most effective border security bill this country has ever seen,” he said. “Instead of playing politics with the issue, why don’t we just get together and get it done.”

Mr. Biden’s words amounted to a political dare. But they were also an acknowledgment of Mr. Trump’s power over the Republican Party, particularly when it comes to the border, at a time when many Americans say that immigration is their top concern and they do not have confidence that Mr. Biden is addressing it.

In Eagle Pass, which has become a common backdrop for politicians who want to show they are tough on immigration, Mr. Trump stood near a makeshift wall of razor wire and used the language of war to describe the border crisis.

Continued on Page A13

ROADBLOCKS Immigrants may be crucial to the future economy, but they face challenges. PAGE B1



INTERNATIONAL A4-9

Life in Belize’s Brutalist Capital
Belmopan, which sits deep in the country’s interior, is bureaucratic and perhaps boring. Residents love it. PAGE A4

In Iran, an Election Boycott

The public is enraged by violent crack-downs and disaffected by the failure of elections to bring change. PAGE A7

Migrant Crisis, Hundreds of Miles to the South

By ANNIE CORREAL

BOGOTÁ, Colombia — As record numbers of people cross into the United States, the southern border is not the only place where the migration crisis is playing out.

Nearly three thousand miles to the south, inside Colombia’s main international airport, hundreds of African migrants have been pouring in every day, paying traffickers roughly \$10,000 for flight packages they hope will help them reach the United States.

The surge of African migrants in the Bogotá airport, which began last year, is a vivid example of the impact of one of the largest global movements of people in decades and how it is shifting migration patterns.

Africans Frantic to Get
to U.S. Are Stuck
in Colombia

With some African countries confronting economic crisis and political upheaval, and Europe cracking down on immigration, many more Africans are making the far longer journey to the U.S.

The migrants in Bogotá come mainly from West African countries such as Guinea, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone, though some are from as far east as Somalia.

They are bound for Nicaragua, the only country in Central America where citizens from many Afri-

can nations — and from Haiti, Cuba and Venezuela — can enter without a visa. Experts say the country’s president, Daniel Ortega, loosened visa requirements in recent years to compel the United States to lift sanctions on his authoritarian government.

To reach Nicaragua, migrants embark on a journey of several stops, flying to hubs like Istanbul, then on to Colombia, where many fly to El Salvador and then to Nicaragua. (There are no direct flights between Colombia and Nicaragua).

Once there, they head northward again, by land, toward Mexico and the U.S. border. The trip, which has been called by airline employees “the luxury route,” bypasses the dangerous jungle pass linking South and

Continued on Page A5



LAILA STEVENS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Megan Moskop-Toler and Cameron Toler of Brooklyn spend more on child care than on rent.

Cuts to Free Preschool Have Parents Scrambling

By TROY CLOSSON

In Brooklyn Heights, a couple that wanted to have a second child is reconsidering, anxious over crushing child care expenses and cutbacks to prekindergarten programs.

In Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, a mother may move to a more expensive neighborhood nearby where she would be more likely to receive no-cost child care when her daughter turned 3.

Uncertainty and Dread
Across New York City

And in Stuyvesant Town in Manhattan, a mother who lost her job worries about what the future might hold if her daughter does not get into a free program.

Their stories are signs of the fresh upheaval that families across New York City are facing,

as Mayor Eric Adams has abandoned plans to make the city’s 3-K program universal. The pullback comes as New Yorkers face an intensifying child care crisis that has helped fuel a sharp increase in poverty.

For nearly a decade, every 4-year-old in New York has been eligible for a free prekindergarten seat — and 3-year-olds were set to be next in line. The unusual program was designed to make stay-

Continued on Page A16

Scores Killed in Gaza
After Desperate Crowd
Gathers at Food Trucks

Accounts of Stampede and Israeli Gunfire

By HIBA YAZBEK and AARON BOXERMAN

JERUSALEM — Israeli forces opened fire on Thursday as a crowd gathered near a convoy of aid trucks in Gaza City in a chaotic scene in which scores were killed and injured, according to Gazan officials and the Israeli military, which attributed most of the deaths to a stampede.

Although accounts from officials on each side differed, the deaths of so many people who were surrounding a convoy carrying food in a part of Gaza where starvation is rampant reflected the desperation and spiraling lawlessness in the territory after Israel’s ground invasion and threatened to derail cease-fire talks.

The Gazan health ministry said in a statement that Israeli forces had killed more than 100 people and injured 700 others in a “massacre,” as they waited for food from the convoy.

The latest bloodshed occurred as Gaza’s health officials reported that the war’s death toll had risen above 30,000, a grim milestone that intensified pressure on Israel to end its military offensive.

An Israeli military spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said that Israeli soldiers fired warning shots in the air before firing “only in face of danger when the mob moved in a manner which endangered them.”

“We did not fire on those seeking aid, despite the accusations,” he said in a televised briefing. “We did not fire on the humanitarian convoy, either from the air or the

land. We secured it so it could reach northern Gaza.”

Gazans, especially in the north, have become increasingly desperate for food as the United Nations and other relief groups have struggled to deliver supplies amid hostilities and widespread destruction, the Israeli military’s refusal to facilitate aid deliveries and the breakdown of order inside Gaza. Gaza’s health ministry said on Thursday that 700,000 people in the north were suffering from starvation.

Kamal Adwan Hospital in Gaza City received the bodies of 12 gunshot victims, and around 100 people with gunshot wounds were brought there for treatment, according to its director, Hussam Abu Safiya.

The Gazan health ministry said that the death toll was expected to rise as wounded Palestinians also arrived at Al-Shifa Hospital, where medical workers were “unable to deal with the volume and type of injuries” amid a lack of supplies and staff.

A doctor who went to the scene, Yehia Al Masri, said he saw dozens of people with gunshot wounds, including to the head, neck and groin, as well as sacks of flour soaked in blood. He said he also saw the bodies of people who appeared to have died in a stampede or to have been hit by aid trucks.

Dr. Al Masri said he used ropes, string, pieces of wood and shreds

Continued on Page A8

Texas Fire Tops
1 Million Acres,
A Grim Record

This article is by J. David Goodman, Lucinda Holt and Anna Betts.

HOUSTON — A vast and growing wildfire, one of several burning in the Texas Panhandle, has now become the largest on record in state history, scorching more than a million acres, devastating cattle ranches, consuming homes and continuing to rage out of control.

The sparsely populated area is home to most of the state’s cattle — millions of cows and calves, steers and bulls — spread across ranches whose very size and lack of roadways can make them difficult for people to traverse and easy for fires to take hold.

Wildfires are nothing new for Panhandle ranchers, many of whom know how to transform their pickups into makeshift fire trucks in order to battle the blazes that periodically flare.

But never before had anyone seen a fire quite like the one given the name Smokehouse Creek. It ignited on Monday, and as of Thursday it was still burning uncontrolled. Two deaths have been connected to the fires so far.

Ranchers have been forced to watch as the grasslands that their cattle rely on for food have been transformed into a blackened expanse. Thousands of cattle may have already died or been so injured in the blazes that they would have to be killed, said the state agriculture commissioner, Sid Miller.

Even those whose cattle survived have been left scrambling for a place for their herds to eat. Mr. Miller said a rancher he knew had 1,500 head of steer but “no grass and no water” and was in a desperate situation.

“He’s looking for a place to relocate his cattle,” he said, using

Continued on Page A11



ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Mr. Lewis onstage in 2005.

RICHARD LEWIS, 1947-2024

Fretful Comic
With Madness
In His Method

By CLAY RISEN

Richard Lewis, the stand-up comedian who first achieved fame in the 1970s and ’80s with his trademark acerbic, dark sense of humor, and who later parlayed that quality into an acting career that included movies like “Robin Hood: Men in Tights” and a recurring role as himself on HBO’s “Curb Your Enthusiasm,” died on Tuesday at his home in Los Angeles. He was 76.

His publicist, Jeff Abraham, said the cause was a heart attack. Mr. Lewis announced last year that he had Parkinson’s disease.

Mr. Lewis was among the best-known names in a generation of comedians who came of age during the 1970s and ’80s, marked by a world-weary, sarcastic wit that mapped well onto the urban malaise in which many of them plied their trade.

After finding success as a comedian in New York nightclubs, he became a regular on late-night talk shows, favored as much for his tight routine as for his casual, open affability as an interviewee.

Continued on Page A20

BUSINESS B1-6

Disney Heirs Join Forces

Nine grandchildren of Walt and Roy Disney criticized the activist investors circling the company. PAGE B1

How Apple’s Car Plan Stalled

Internal disagreements over the direction of the Apple car led the effort to sputter before it was canceled. PAGE B1

OBITUARIES A20, B12

Former President of Tanzania

Ali Hassan Mwinyi was credited with reforms, among them permitting the sale of mobile phones, computers and televisions. He was 98. PAGE B12



NATIONAL A10-17

Nursing Home Woes Persist

Infection control lapses and staffing shortages are still affecting many sites beyond the pandemic. PAGE A17

Trump Immunity Case Timing

The electoral calendar prompts questions about the justices hearing arguments in April. News Analysis. PAGE A15

SPORTS B7-11

Clark to Enter W.N.B.A. Draft

Caitlin Clark said she would forgo a fifth season at Iowa and turn pro this year. The announcement came a day after she set two more women’s college basketball records. PAGE B10

Pogba Banned for 4 Years

Paul Pogba, a longtime France midfielder who starred for Manchester United before moving to Juventus, failed a doping test. He said he had not intentionally broken the rules. PAGE B10

OPINION A18-19

Linda Greenhouse

PAGE A19



WEEKEND ARTS C1-14

Inside the Outsider Art Fair

A Beat poet’s self-portrait, a 1930s circus poster and Georgia Russell’s three-foot dolls, above, are among the finds at this eclectic event in Manhattan. PAGE C12



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