



RONALDO SCHEMIDT/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Prayers in a Time of War
Observing the start of Eid al-Fitr in Jerusalem on Wednesday, as fighting between Israel and Hamas continued in Gaza. Page A7.

E.P.A. Targets
Six Chemicals
In Tap Water

By LISA FRIEDMAN
For the first time, the federal government is requiring municipal water systems to remove six synthetic chemicals linked to cancer and other health problems that are present in the tap water of hundreds of millions of Americans.
The extraordinary move from the Environmental Protection Agency mandates that water providers reduce perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, known collectively as PFAS, to near-zero levels. The compounds, found in everything from dental floss to firefighting foams to children’s toys, are called “forever chemicals” because they never fully degrade and can accumulate in the body and the environment.
The chemicals are so ubiquitous that they can be found in the blood of almost every person in the United States. A 2023 government study of private wells and public water systems detected PFAS chemicals in nearly half the tap water in the country.
Exposure to PFAS has been associated with metabolic disorders, decreased fertility in women, developmental delays in children and increased risk of some prostate, kidney and testicular cancers, according to the E.P.A.
Michael S. Regan, the E.P.A. administrator, called the new regulation “life-changing.”
“This action will prevent thousands of deaths and reduce tens of thousands of serious illnesses,” Mr. Regan said on a call with reporters on Tuesday. He described the rule as the most significant action the federal government has

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They’re Regrowing Forests, but Not for Lumber

By LYDIA DePILLIS
When it came to wildfires, 2021 was an increasingly common kind of year in Montana: Flames consumed 747,000 acres, an area nearly the size of Long Island.
About 2,700 of those acres were on Don Harland’s Sheep Creek Ranch, where ever-drier summers have turned lodgepole pines into matchsticks ready to ignite. After the smoke cleared, Mr. Harland found creeks running black with soot and the ground hardening more with every day that passed.
A former timber industry executive, Mr. Harland knew the forest wouldn’t grow back on its own. The land is high and dry, the

Making a New Product
From Trees: Carbon
Removal Credits

ground rocky and inhospitable — not like the rainy coastal Northwest, where trees grow thick and fast. Nor did he have the money to carry out a replanting operation, since growing for timber wouldn’t pay for itself; most of the nearby sawmills had shut down long ago anyway. The state government offered a few grants, but nothing on the scale needed to heal the scar.
Then a local forester Mr. Harland knew suggested he get in

touch with a new company out of Seattle, called Mast Reforestation. After visiting to scope out the site, Mast’s staff proposed to replant the whole acreage, free, and even pay Mr. Harland a bit at the end. Mast, in turn, was to earn money from companies that wanted to offset their carbon emissions and would put millions of dollars into planting trees that otherwise wouldn’t exist.
Mr. Harland said he had his doubts about the carbon-selling part of the plan, but he was impressed with Mast’s operations, so he said yes.
Two years later, after seeds had been collected from similar trees on nearby lands, crews of planters

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South Koreans Vote for Change
The nation’s parliamentary election is projected to be a crushing defeat for the president. Page A10.

Early Medicine’s Heavy Hand Led to Decrease in Legal Abortions

By PAM BELLUCK
The 160-year-old Arizona abortion ban that was upheld on Tuesday by the state’s highest court was among a wave of anti-abortion laws propelled by some historical twists and turns that might seem surprising.
For decades after the United States became a nation, abortion was legal until fetal movement

could be felt, usually well into the second trimester. Movement, known as quickening, was the threshold because, in a time before pregnancy tests or ultrasounds, it was the clearest sign that a woman was pregnant.
Before that point, “women could try to obtain an abortion without having to fear that it was illegal,” said Johanna Schoen, a professor of history at Rutgers University. After quickening,

Campaign in the 1800s
Shaped Today’s Bans

abortion providers could be charged with a misdemeanor.
“I don’t think it was particularly stigmatized,” Dr. Schoen said. “I think what was stigmatized was maybe this idea that you were having sex outside of marriage,

but of course, married women also ended their pregnancies.”
Women would terminate pregnancies in several different ways, such as ingesting herbs or medicinal potions that were thought to induce a miscarriage, Dr. Schoen said. The herbs commonly used included pennyroyal and tansy. Another method involved inserting an object in the cervix to try to interrupt a pregnancy or terminate it.

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Allies of Trump
Plan to Bolster
3rd-Party Runs

Candidates Are Viewed
as Threats to Biden

This article is by Jonathan Swan, Maggie Haberman, Shane Goldmacher and Rebecca Davis O’Brien.
Allies of Donald J. Trump are discussing ways to elevate third-party candidates in battleground states to divert votes away from President Biden, along with other covert tactics to diminish Democratic votes.
They plan to promote the independent candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. as a “champion for choice” to give voters for whom abortion is a top issue — and who also don’t like Mr. Biden — another option on the ballot, according to one person who is involved in the effort and who, like several others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the plans.
Trump allies also plan to amplify the progressive environmental records of Mr. Kennedy and the expected Green Party candidate, Jill Stein, in key states — contrasting their policies against the record-high oil production under Mr. Biden that has disappointed some climate activists.
A third parallel effort in Michigan is meant to diminish Democratic turnout in November by amplifying Muslim voters’ concerns about Mr. Biden’s support for Israel’s war in Gaza. Trump allies are discussing running ads in Dearborn, Mich., and other parts of the state with large Muslim populations that would thank Mr. Biden for standing with Israel, according to three people familiar with the effort, which is expected to be led by an outside group unaffiliated with the Trump campaign.
Many of these third-party-boosting efforts will probably be run out of dark-money entities that are loosely supportive of Mr. Trump. Both the Trump campaign and the main super PAC supporting the former president, MAGA Inc., are already aggressively framing Mr. Kennedy as a far-left radical to draw potential Democratic voters away from Mr. Biden.
Whatever the mechanism, the Trump team’s view is simple and is backed by public and private polling: The more candidates in the race, the better for Mr. Trump. Mr. Biden’s team agrees. And in a race that could be decided by tens of thousands of votes — as the last two presidential elections have been — even small shifts in the share of votes could change the re-

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A PUSH BY TRUMP
HELPS SINK A BILL
ON SURVEILLANCE

SETBACK FOR JOHNSON

Right-Wing Defectors in
House Halt Extension
of Intelligence Tool

By LUKE BROADWATER and CHARLIE SAVAGE
WASHINGTON — Right-wing House Republicans on Wednesday blocked legislation to extend an expiring warrantless surveillance law that national security officials call crucial to gathering intelligence and fighting terrorism, dealing Speaker Mike Johnson a stinging defeat after former President Donald J. Trump urged lawmakers to kill the bill.
In an upset on the House floor, the measure, which would extend a section of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act known as Section 702, failed what is normally a routine procedural test. On a vote of 228 to 193, 19 House Republicans, most aligned with the ultraconservative House Freedom Caucus, joined Demo-



KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

crats in opposing its consideration.
Such defections were once considered unthinkable but have become increasingly common as the hard right has rebelled against G.O.P. leaders.
It was unclear how Republicans would attempt to move forward.
“We will regroup and reformulate another plan,” Mr. Johnson said after the vote. “We cannot allow Section 702 of FISA to expire. It’s too important to national security. I think most of the members understand that.”
The setback came just hours after Mr. Trump added his powerful voice of opposition to a sizable contingent of right-wing lawmakers.

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Help Wanted: Smart Humans
To Tutor Chatbots, Part Time

By YIWEN LU
SAN FRANCISCO — After her second child was born, Chelsea Becker took an unpaid, yearlong leave from her full-time job as a flight attendant. After watching a video on TikTok, she found a side hustle: training artificial intelligence models for a website called Data Annotation Tech.
For a few hours every day, Ms. Becker, 33, who lives in Schwenksville, Pa., would sit at her laptop and interact with an A.I.-powered chatbot. For every hour of work, she was paid \$20 to \$40. From December to March, she made over \$10,000.
The boom in A.I. technology has put a more sophisticated spin on a kind of gig work that doesn’t require leaving the house. The growth of large language models like the technology powering OpenAI’s ChatGPT has fueled the need for trainers like Ms. Becker, fluent English speakers who can produce quality writing.
It is not a secret that A.I. models learn from humans. For years,

makers of A.I. systems like Google and OpenAI have relied on low-paid workers, typically contractors employed through other companies, to help computers visually identify subjects. (The New York Times has sued OpenAI and its partner, Microsoft, on claims of copyright infringement.) They might label vehicles and pedestrians for self-driving cars or identify images on photos used to train A.I. systems.
But as A.I. technology has become more sophisticated, so has the job of people who must painstakingly teach it. Yesterday’s photo tagger is today’s essay writer.
There are usually two types of work for these trainers: supervised learning, where the A.I. learns from human-generated writing, and reinforcement learning from human feedback, where the chatbot learns from how humans rate their responses.

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President Biden and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida took military and economic steps to counter China. PAGE A11

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Roger, a Labrador retriever who once failed as a drug detector, led searchers to a quake victim’s body. PAGE A12

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Jail Time for Trump Employee
Allen H. Weisselberg was sentenced to five months for lying about helping Donald J. Trump inflate his net worth to win favorable loan terms. PAGE A16

Tasty Birth Control for Rats
A New York City Council bill proposes using pellets to sterilize the millions of rodents roaming the streets. PAGE A18

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Theda Hammel wasn’t always sure her varied résumé would include “Stress Positions,” her directorial debut. PAGE D7



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The cast and crew discuss making “Sasquatch Sunset,” which provides insights into the creatures. PAGE C1

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Stanford’s Tara VanDerveer, college basketball’s career wins leader, set a coaching standard that expanded opportunities for women. PAGE B11

