

“All the News  
That’s Fit to Print”

# The New York Times

## In Mayor Race, Candidates Hit A Nerve: Rents

### Cuomo Jabs Mamdani on Apartment Cost

By NICHOLAS FANDOS

A long-running campaign fight over New York City’s soaring housing costs reignited this week around an unlikely spark: the \$2,300-a-month rent-stabilized apartment occupied by Zohran Mamdani, the Democratic nominee for mayor.

It began Friday afternoon, when his leading rival, former Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, unexpectedly attacked Mr. Mamdani, who makes \$142,000 as a state assemblyman, for occupying an affordable unit in Astoria, Queens, that he said should go to a needier New Yorker.

By Tuesday, the broadside had escalated into a multiday war of words that put Mr. Mamdani, the front-runner in the race, on the defensive and highlighted the candidates’ competing visions for how to bring down runaway costs in one of the world’s most expensive cities.

The particulars were bitterly personal. Mr. Cuomo accused Mr. Mamdani of “callous theft” and proposed a new law named after him to means-test who can live in the city’s roughly one million rent-stabilized units. Mr. Mamdani called it “petty vindictiveness” and blamed the former governor and the real estate developers who fund Mr. Cuomo’s campaigns for the city’s housing shortage.

Yet the barbs also pointed to more fundamental differences that could shape November’s general election over who should benefit from government regulation of housing costs and assistance to those in need.

A 33-year-old democratic socialist, Mr. Mamdani handily defeated Mr. Cuomo and other Democratic rivals in June’s primary with proposals to raise taxes on the rich to expand the city’s social services. He wants free universal child care, buses that are free for all riders, a rent freeze on stabilized units and new housing con-

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## To Cool, or Not, Swings Political As France Broils

By AURELIEN BREEDEN and JOSH HOLDER

PARIS — The culture wars have come for air-conditioning, at least in France.

In July, as a heat wave broiled much of Europe, feelings about air-conditioning suddenly became a political litmus test.

Marine Le Pen, the far-right leader in France, declared that she would deploy a “major air-conditioning equipment plan” around the country if her nationalist party eventually came to power. Marine Tondelier, the head of France’s Green party, scoffed at Ms. Le Pen’s idea and, instead, suggested solutions to warming temperatures that included “greening” cities and making buildings more energy efficient.

An opinion essay in Le Figaro, a conservative newspaper, defended air-conditioning because “making our fellow citizens sweat limits learning, reduces working hours and clogs up hospitals.” Libération, a left-wing daily, wrote that the technology was “an environmental aberration that must be overcome” because it blows hot air onto streets and guzzles up precious energy.

“Is air-conditioning a far-right thing?” one talk show asked, reflecting how divisive the issue had become.

While France’s heated discuss-

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FINBARR O'REILLY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Kateryna Bidnenko mourned her boyfriend, Andriy Savon, a Ukrainian sergeant who was killed in a Russian drone attack this week.

## Tranquil Neighborhood, Then Zuckerberg Came

By HEATHER KNIGHT

PALO ALTO, Calif. — For decades, the Crescent Park neighborhood of Palo Alto represented the dream of California living.

Doctors, lawyers, business executives and Stanford University professors lived in charming homes under oak, redwood and magnolia trees. The houses, an eclectic mix including Craftsman homes and bungalows, were filled with families who became fast friends. The annual block parties heaved with people. Daily life was tranquil, and the soundtrack was one of children laughing as they rode their bicycles and played in one another’s gardens.

Then Mark Zuckerberg moved in.

### A Tech Mogul Buys Up Homes to Assemble His Compound

Since his arrival 14 years ago, Crescent Park’s neighborhood tranquility and even many of its actual neighbors have vanished. Residents hardly ever see the Facebook founder, now worth about \$270 billion, but they feel his presence every day.

Mr. Zuckerberg has used Edgewood Drive and Hamilton Avenue like a Monopoly game board, spending more than \$110 million to scoop up at least 11 houses. He has offered owners as much as \$14.5 million, double or even triple

what the homes are worth, and neighbors have seen one family after another leave.

Several of his properties sit empty in a notoriously crunched housing market. He has turned five of them into a compound with a main house for him, his wife, Priscilla Chan, and their three daughters, along with guest homes, lush gardens, a nearby pickleball court and a pool that can be covered with a hydrofloor. A seven-foot statue depicting Ms. Chan in a silver, flowing robe, which Mr. Zuckerberg commissioned last year, sits on the property.

The compound is encircled by a high row of hedges, and there is no such thing as knocking on the front door to borrow a cup of sug-

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## New York City Sees Nosedive In Job Growth

By MATTHEW HAAG

Employers in New York City significantly reduced hiring in the first half of the year, adding just 956 private-sector jobs, the city’s slowest growth in payrolls outside a recession in decades.

During the same period last year, companies in the city hired 66,000 additional workers, according to data from the city’s Office of Management and Budget. But companies have since slowed their hiring, and major industries that fuel New York’s economy — finance and insurance; hospitality; and retail — have shed jobs.

Around the country, the labor market has started showing cracks as the effects of President Trump’s economic policies begin to settle in. Other large cities have also seen sluggish job growth, with metro areas like Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Jose all losing a small number of jobs so far this year.

“The New York City economy has gone sideways so far this year,” said Mark Zandi, the chief economist of Moody’s Analytics. “New York is a leading indicator, and the flattening of employment is now showing up nationally.”

The sharp slowdown in New York City’s labor market followed a resurgence last year in the local economy, which emerged slowly from the pandemic but reached a record level of employment, with record bonuses for Wall Street workers.

Now, the labor market in the largest municipal economy in the country appears notably weaker. The pace of job growth this year is

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY LOREN ELLIOTT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Security is tight around Mark Zuckerberg’s properties in the Crescent Park area of Palo Alto, Calif.

## King of Indian Street Food Gets a Warning, and the People Rebel

By ANUPREETA DAS and HARI KUMAR

NEW DELHI — Indians eat a mind-boggling array of street food.

They nosh on pakoras, or vegetable fritters; jalebis, which are deep-fried coils of fermented batter dunked in sugar syrup; and papdi chaat, a tart and spicy mélange of crunchy fried dough, yogurt and spices — to name just

a few. The snacks, often washed down with chai, are ubiquitous, filling and relatively cheap.

But the king of street food — and one of India’s most famous culinary exports — is the samosa. The deep-fried, plump and triangular piece of flaky dough has crisp edges, encasing a heavily spiced potato stuffing. Usually served with tanga and sweet condiments, they cost as little as 15 cents at food carts or stalls throughout the country.

So, when a recent government advisory put samosas — along with other deep-fried Indian snacks and Western foods such as burgers and French fries — on a list of things that should be eaten in moderation because of their high oil and sugar content, there was an unsurprising outcry. Social media erupted with memes, and Indian media chimed in to say the country’s most iconic bites were under attack.

A love of the samosa is “in-

grained in us,” said Rana Safvi, a cultural historian, who said it served as both street food and comfort food. If the government had targeted only burgers or pizza, people wouldn’t have cared, she said. “Samosa is something that is too close to them.”

Some news outlets fueled the backlash by likening the directive to health warnings on cigarettes.

The actual advisory was consid-

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**THE WEATHER**  
Today, a mix of clouds and sun, humid, a thunderstorm in spots, high 86. **Tonight**, an early thunderstorm, low 72. **Tomorrow**, not as humid, high 87. Weather map, Page B10.

## EUROPE’S LEADERS SAY TRUMP BACKS GOALS ON UKRAINE

### PLAN FOR RUSSIA TALKS

### Zelensky Must Be Part of Any Peace Deal With Putin, Allies Insist

By JIM TANKERSLEY

BERLIN — European leaders said on Wednesday that they had hammered out a strategy with President Trump for his scheduled meeting with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia on Friday in Alaska to discuss ending the war in Ukraine, including an insistence that any peace plan must start with a cease-fire and not be negotiated without Ukraine at the table.

The trans-Atlantic discussions on Wednesday were a last-minute effort by European leaders to close ranks with Mr. Trump ahead of the Friday meeting. They came in a video call arranged by Chancellor Friedrich Merz of Germany. It included Mr. Trump, Vice President JD Vance, President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine and several other European leaders with strong relationships with Mr. Trump, including Prime Minister Georgia Meloni of Italy.

Mr. Zelensky traveled to Berlin for the meeting and briefed reporters afterward with Mr. Merz.

“We had a truly exceptionally constructive and good conversation” with the president, Mr. Merz said. “There is hope for movement, there is hope for peace in Ukraine,” he added.

Mr. Trump is famously mercurial, including on the issue of Ukraine. At several points in recent weeks, his European allies have believed they were succeeding in bringing him onboard with their strategies — only for him to warm to Mr. Putin’s overtures, as he did in agreeing to the hastily scheduled bilateral meeting.

After the meeting, though, Mr. Trump sounded pleased with his allies. “We had a very good call,” he said after an event at the Kennedy Center in Washington. “I would rate it a 10. Very friendly.”

Mr. Trump said he would call Mr. Zelensky, then European leaders, after the Alaska meeting. If that meeting goes well, he said, he would like to meet soon with Mr. Putin and Mr. Zelensky together.

He said “there will be very severe consequences” for Russia if Mr. Putin does not agree to stop the war after the Friday meeting. Asked if he believed he could persuade Mr. Putin on Friday to stop targeting Ukrainian civilians, Mr. Trump said no.

“I’ve had that conversation with him,” Mr. Trump said. “I’ve had a lot of good conversations with him, and then I go home and see a rocket hit a nursing home, or a rocket hit an apartment building and people are laying dead in the streets.”

Both Mr. Merz and Mr. Zelensky told reporters that Mr. Trump had agreed to five principles for the talks with Mr. Putin. They include keeping Ukraine “at the table” for follow-up meetings on the war and refusing to discuss peace terms,

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ANINDITO MUKHERJEE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A health advisory was issued for the much-loved samosa.

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### Chief of the Chip Industry

President Trump has become the semiconductor sector’s top decision maker, even calling for a C.E.O.’s firing. PAGE B1

### Behind Aldi, Passionate Fans

The discount grocer is set to open hundreds more stores, fueled by a nearly cultlike following. PAGE B1



#### NATIONAL A11-21

### ‘They Gave Up on Us’

Employees at a Montana lumber plant were promised a “golden age” for American industry. Instead, blue-collar workers are slipping behind. PAGE A11

### Austerity Infiltrating Colleges

The nation’s universities are facing a series of financial crises — fueled in part by the White House — and uncertainty is looming for students. PAGE A15

### Trump Is Back as M.C.

The president announced a new class of honorees for the Kennedy Center in Washington, and said that he would host this year’s ceremony himself. PAGE A17

#### INTERNATIONAL A4-10

### Deadly Flood Shocks China

The deaths of 31 people in a nursing home exposed flaws in the nation’s emergency planning. PAGE A4

### Human Rights Report Edited

The U.S. trimmed or dropped criticism of countries that President Trump sees as close partners. PAGE A9

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### Halfcourt Bragging Rights

With pride and cash at stake, W.N.B.A. players fuel competitive fires in practice with deep shooting contests that date to the league’s early days. PAGE B6

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The Trump administration wants to replace “divisive” language in exhibits displayed by the institution. PAGE C1

### Creations in Concrete

The humble ramps that ease your way into the city’s bodegas often possess their own kind of beauty. PAGE C6



#### THURSDAY STYLES

### Fusion, Fission and Fashion

The model and influencer Isabelle Boemeke is doing her best to make nuclear energy seem cool. PAGE D5

### Lighting Up Martha’s Vineyard

A long list of events, and Michelle Obama and Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, drew big crowds. PAGE D1

#### OPINION A22-23

### Jennifer Weiner

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