

Many Muslims
Find Holy Site
Out of Bounds

Chafe at Constraints by
Israel on Al Aqsa

By RAJA ABDULRAHIM
JERUSALEM — As the sermon about the Muslim holy month of Ramadan sounded over the speakers from Al Aqsa Mosque, 13-year-old Yousef al-Sideeq sat on a bench outside the compound’s gates.
“Most Fridays they prevent me from getting in, for no reason,” the young Jerusalem resident said, referring to the Israeli police.
Every Friday, Yousef visits Jerusalem’s Old City to pray at Al Aqsa, the third holiest site for Muslims and part of the compound sacred to Jewish people, who call it the Temple Mount. But since the Hamas-led Oct. 7 attacks and Israel’s ensuing bombardment of Gaza, heavily armed Israeli police forces who guard many of the Old City’s gates have stopped him from entering the compound, he said.
He has managed to get in only twice.
Muslim access to the mosque has long been a point of contention as Israel has exerted tighter control in recent years over the compound, one of many restrictions Palestinians living under decades of Israeli occupation have had to endure.

As Ramadan begins, many also fear what, if any, additional constraints Israel may impose on the religious site, which can draw 200,000 people in one day from not just Jerusalem but the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Israel as a whole.
The Israeli police said that people were “entering after enhanced security checks that are conducted due to the current reality, alongside efforts to prevent any disturbances.” But they did not answer specific questions about whether there was a policy preventing certain worshippers, especially young men, from entering the mosque on Friday.
They said they were “maintaining a balance between the freedom of worship and the imperative of ensuring security.”
Late on Sunday, Palestinian and Israeli news media reported that police officers prevented many Palestinians from entering Al Aqsa to perform prayers for the start of Ramadan. Both media cited a video that showed officers with batons chasing and beating some Palestinians.
Israel has said there has been no change to the status quo, which allows only Muslims to worship at the compound. The site is revered
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NICOLE TUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

On Patrol, Under Fire, in Command
As Ukraine struggles against Russia, there has been a surge of women enlisting, with more volunteering for combat roles. Page A6.

Getting F-16s and Training Pilots
Proves Slow Going for Ukraine

By LARA JAKES
FETESTI, Romania — The jets are ready, and the flight instructors are waiting, at a new training center in Romania that was created to teach Ukraine’s pilots to fly the F-16 warplane. But there’s a catch: The Ukrainian pilots have yet to arrive, despite declarations last summer that the center would play a crucial role in getting them into the air to defend their country from increasingly deadly Russian strikes.
It’s still unclear when Ukrainian pilots will begin training at the center, at the Fetesti air base in southeast Romania, which NATO allies also are using to get schooled on the fighter jets. But the delay is a window into the confusion and chaos that have confronted the military alliance’s rush to supply the F-16s.
That is not to say that Ukraine’s pilots are not being prepared. Twelve pilots so far — less than a full squadron — are expected to be ready to fly F-16s in combat by this summer after 10 months of train-

Chaos and Uncertainty
Result After Rush to
Supply Warplanes

ing in Denmark, Britain and the United States.
But by the time the pilots return to Ukraine, as few as six F-16s will have been delivered out of about 45 of the fighter jets that European allies have promised.
Nevertheless, their highly anticipated arrival over the battlefield will come not a moment too soon. Russia has employed more aggressive air support to gain ground in eastern Ukraine in recent weeks, using its warplanes to send guided glide bombs over long distances into the Ukrainian front lines.
And Ukraine is desperate for more weapons, of any kind, as it runs low on artillery rounds and other ammunition while Republicans in Congress hold up additional
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Watch the Way You’re Driving.
Carmakers Are Watching, Too.

By KASHMIR HILL
Kenn Dahl says he has always been a careful driver. The owner of a software company near Seattle, he drives a leased Chevrolet Bolt. He’s never been responsible for an accident.
So Mr. Dahl, 65, was surprised in 2022 when the cost of his car insurance jumped by 21 percent. Quotes from other insurance companies were also high. One insurance agent told him his LexisNexis report was a factor.
LexisNexis is a New York-based global data broker with a “Risk Solutions” division that caters to the auto insurance industry and has traditionally kept tabs on car accidents and tickets. Upon Mr. Dahl’s request, LexisNexis sent him a 258-page “consumer disclosure report,” which it must provide per the Fair Credit Reporting Act.
What it contained stunned him: more than 130 pages detailing each time he or his wife had driven the Bolt over the previous six months. It included the dates of

Drivers Say Collection
of Data Raised Their
Insurance Costs

640 trips, their start and end times, the distance driven and an accounting of any speeding, hard braking or sharp accelerations. The only thing it didn’t have is where they had driven the car.
On a Thursday morning in June for example, the car had been driven 7.33 miles in 18 minutes; there had been two rapid accelerations and two incidents of hard braking.
According to the report, the trip details had been provided by General Motors — the manufacturer of the Chevy Bolt. LexisNexis analyzed that driving data to create a risk score “for insurers to use as one factor of many to create more personalized insurance coverage,” according to a LexisNexis spokesman, Dean Carney. Eight
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BIDEN’S BUDGET
MEANT TO DRAW
LINE VS. TRUMP

LITTLE CHANCE TO PASS

Increase in Taxes on the
Rich, and Expanded
Government Aid

By JIM TANKERSLEY
WASHINGTON — President Biden proposed a \$7.3 trillion budget on Monday packed with tax increases on corporations and high earners, new spending on social programs and a wide range of efforts to combat high consumer costs like housing and college tuition.
The proposal includes only relatively small changes from the budget plan Mr. Biden submitted last year, which went nowhere in Congress, though it reiterates his call for lawmakers to spend about \$100 billion to strengthen border security and deliver aid to Israel and Ukraine.
Most of the new spending and tax increases included in the fiscal year 2025 budget again stand almost no chance of becoming law this year, given that Republicans control the House and roundly oppose Mr. Biden’s economic agenda. Last week, House Republicans passed a budget proposal outlining their priorities, which are far afield from what Democrats have called for.

Instead, the document will serve as a draft of Mr. Biden’s policy platform as he seeks re-election in November, along with a series of contrasts intended to draw a distinction with his presumptive Republican opponent, former President Donald J. Trump.
Mr. Biden has sought to reclaim strength on economic issues with voters who have given him low marks amid elevated inflation. This budget aims to portray him as a champion of increased government aid for workers, parents, manufacturers, retirees and students, as well as the fight against climate change.
Speaking in New Hampshire on Monday, Mr. Biden heralded the budget as a way to raise revenue to pay for his priorities by raising taxes on the wealthiest Americans and big corporations.
“I’m not anti-corporation,” he said. “I’m a capitalist, man. Make all the money you want. Just begin to pay your fair share in taxes.”
The budget proposes about \$5 trillion in new taxes on corporations and the wealthy over a decade. Administration officials said on Monday that those increases
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PHOTOGRAPHS BY SINNA NASSERI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Highs, Lows and Stellar ‘Kenergy’

A roundup of the Academy Awards and inside the Governors Ball, the movie stars’ after-party. From left, Sterling K. Brown, Cord Jefferson, Da’Vine Joy Randolph, the Yale acting professor Ron Van Lieu, Emma Stone and her husband, Dave McCary. Page C1.

The Rarest Birder: He’s Seen
10,000 of the 11,000 Species

By JOE TREZZA
On Feb. 9, Peter Kaestner stood in the shadow of majestic Tinuy-an Falls on the Philippine island of Mindanao, on the cusp of a record he’d spent seven decades chasing and worried that he’d arrived too late.
For years, nobody alive had seen and identified more bird species than Mr. Kaestner. A retired American diplomat, he is birding’s ultimate “big lister,” a star of the small but growing subculture of hypercompetitive bird watchers who scour the globe vying to see as many species as possible.
An obsessive birder since childhood, Mr. Kaestner woke up that morning in February with 9,997 birds on his personal “life list” — more than 90 percent of Earth’s scientifically recognized species and three away from a singular milestone. But he felt hurried. A few weeks earlier, in an essay for



PETER KAESTNER

An orange-tufted spiderhunter capped Peter Kaestner’s quest.

the American Birding Association, he had outlined his plans to become the first person to document 10,000 sightings; shortly after, new information forced him to expedite his plans.
“I realized when I was writing it that I was putting a target on my back,” Mr. Kaestner said from his
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Trying a Little Tenderness

Walmart is training its managers on how to relate to workers and customers, part of a corporate trend. PAGE B1

A.I. in the Physical World

Covariant, a robotics start-up, is designing technology that lets robots learn skills much as chatbots do. PAGE B1



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Photo Inflames a P.R. Crisis

An image meant to pour speculation about the Princess of Wales’s health did the opposite. An analysis. PAGE A8

Europe’s Far-Right Quandary

The ascent of Geert Wilders has vexed Dutch politicians. It’s a puzzle bigger than the Netherlands alone. PAGE A4

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Medal Is on Its Way, Eventually

Doping rules, legal challenges and endless appeals have left some Olympians waiting a decade or more to receive their gold medals. PAGE B6

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The 4th Anniversary of Covid

Covid ranks among the worst killers since 1900. With a confirmed death toll of seven million people, its biggest toll comes from indirect costs. PAGE A15

House Bill Targets TikTok

Bipartisan legislation was moving forward in Congress even after former President Donald J. Trump came out strongly against banning it. PAGE A13

‘Don’t Say Gay’ Settlement

The agreement on the Florida law clarifies that L.G.B.T.Q. references are allowed in class as long as they are not part of formal instruction. PAGE A12

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Looking for Treasures

At an art fair in the Netherlands, museum curators are looking for art that resonates with a new audience. PAGE C2

A Nose for the Whimsical

It’s no exaggeration to say that Frank de Ruwe has brightened up Amsterdam. Below, one of his creations. PAGE C5



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Studying Life’s Essentials

New A.I.-powered programs are combing through mounds of data concerning the fundamentals of biology. PAGE D1

Astronomical Dreams

A federal agency says a \$1.6 billion telescope is needed for America to keep a good watch on the heavens. PAGE D3

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Ezra Klein

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