

“All the News  
That’s Fit to Print”

# The New York Times

**THE WEATHER**  
Today, cloudy, humid, afternoon thunderstorms, high 84. **Tonight**, cloudy, humid, thunderstorms, low 72. **Tomorrow**, thunderstorms, high 84. Weather map is on Page B12.

VOL. CLXXIII . . . No. 60,213      © 2024 The New York Times Company      FRIDAY, JULY 12, 2024      Prices in Canada may be higher      \$4.00



President Biden at the NATO summit in Washington on Thursday. The people closest to him are adamant he will stay in the race. DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

## Senator’s Case Shows Access Is Easy to Get

**By TRACEY TULLY**

It was a shocking charge against one of the highest-ranking members of Congress: acting as an agent of a foreign government. Senator Robert Menendez, prosecutors said, had steered millions of dollars in aid to Egypt and toned down his rhetoric about the country’s human rights violations to lock in a lucrative side hustle for his soon-to-be wife, who had reinvented herself as an international consultant.

After a two-month bribery trial in Manhattan, jurors are expected to begin deliberating Friday on whether prosecutors have proved a complex web of conspiracy charges. But regardless of whether they render a guilty verdict, the messages and photos extracted from phones seized by the F.B.I. and introduced as evidence have revealed how Egyptian intelligence officials were able to cultivate casual access to one of the most powerful Democrats in Washington.

Mr. Menendez, the New Jersey senator who at the time led the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and had broad authority over foreign military aid, was often only a text message away from some of Egypt’s most powerful leaders. His intermediary was not a trained committee expert but his unemployed wife, who holds a master’s degree in French language and civilization but had last worked as a restaurant hostess.

The electronic exchanges have shown the degree to which modern communication methods have altered criminal prosecutions. They have also exposed potential risks to U.S. national security, ac-

Continued on Page A22

## Record Heat Persists, Stunning Even Forecasters

**By ALAN BLINDER and ISABELLE TAFT**

LAS VEGAS — For their anniversary road trip through the West, an escape from the humid misery of a Louisiana summer, Tyson and Adeline Maddox rented a glimmering convertible.

They have kept the top on. It has been too hot to do anything else.

“Reminds me of the engine room,” Mr. Maddox grumbled of the weather as he left the “Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas” sign on Wednesday evening, when temperatures were still well into triple digits.

“The heat, it’s just constantly coming,” Ms. Maddox added later. “It’s like being in front of an exhaust pipe.”

So it has been around the Las

### Las Vegas Hits 118, and Millions Are Under Weather Alerts

Vegas area this week. Pedestrians sometimes felt scarcer than jackpots. Playgrounds stood empty and silent. Merely walking through a parking lot meant squinting — not at the sunlight blanketing the region, but at a heat so punishing that eyes hurt without ever actually watering.

At times, the mercury’s ticks upward have come so fast that forecasters, at once awe-struck and unnerved, could hardly keep up.

“Remember 20 minutes ago when hitting 117°F was a big deal?” the local National Weather

Service office wrote on social media on Wednesday. “Well, the airport hit 118°F.”

Thursday was not shaping up to be much of a reprieve, at all.

More than 60 million Americans were under heat alerts from the National Weather Service on Thursday, as a searing heat wave that has engulfed the West for more than a week continued to blister the region. Dangerously high temperatures are forecast to last there through Saturday, and shift east to the central and eastern U.S. by Sunday.

In southeast Texas, where Hurricane Beryl left millions of residents without power on Monday, people sweltered without air-conditioning and Houston-area hospitals were “backed up” because doctors were wary of discharging

Continued on Page A13



WADE VANDERVORT/LAS VEGAS SUN, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

“It’s like being in front of an exhaust pipe,” said a visitor to Las Vegas, where temperatures soared.

## A Long Island Suburb Is Training an Armed Force. Is It a Militia?

**By COREY KILGANNON**

The leader of a New York City suburb is recruiting 75 armed citizens, many of them former police officers, for a force of “special deputies” to be activated whenever he chooses.

Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman, a Republican who has allied himself with former President Donald J. Trump and thrust himself into the culture

wars, posted a call in March for residents with gun permits and an interest in becoming “provisional emergency special deputy sheriffs.”

The posting called the initiative a strategy to assist in the “protection of human life and property during an emergency” such as a hurricane or blackout — and perhaps, Mr. Blakeman later added, “a riot.”

The new force has drawn vocal opposition in this well-to-do Long

### Critics Say Trump Ally’s Effort Poses Dangers

Island county, which is one of the country’s safest, protected by one of the largest police departments. It has plunged Nassau into a national debate about authoritarianism in an election season that some see as a fork in the road for

American democracy.

Mr. Blakeman said in an interview that the program was about “providing another layer of protection” for residents. “I didn’t want to be in a situation where we had a major emergency and we needed help and people were not properly vetted or trained,” he said.

But critics have accused him of creating, with little notice or ex-

Continued on Page A21

## Biden’s Isolation Deepens As Doubters’ Ranks Grow

### Even Some of His Own Aides Are Weighing How to Persuade Him to Drop Out

*This article is by Michael S. Schmidt, Katie Rogers and Peter Baker.*

WASHINGTON — President Biden found himself increasingly isolated on Thursday as a small group of his longtime aides and advisers have become convinced that he will have to make what they see as the painful but inevitable decision to abandon his campaign for re-election, according to three people who have been briefed on the matter.

In recent days, the group has been trying to come up with ways to persuade Mr. Biden to step aside from the campaign. Those discussions were recounted by three people familiar with them who, like others in this article, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive situation. There is no indication that any of the discussions have reached Mr. Biden himself, one of the informed people said.

The effort comes after a disastrous debate performance in Atlanta two weeks ago plunged Mr. Biden’s candidacy into crisis. He is facing pressure from all sides: Lawmakers on Capitol Hill are vacillating between tepid support and outright calls for him to drop out, and those calls were being echoed by some of the wealthiest donors in the party.

At the center of it all is Mr. Biden, who is convinced that he is the only one who can beat former President Donald J. Trump, ac-

cording to people familiar with this thinking, and who is unlikely to be persuaded otherwise by people outside his insular inner circle, which includes his family.

Mr. Biden was hoping to put some concerns to rest in a high-stakes news conference on Thursday night after the NATO summit in Washington. In an early stumble before it even got underway, he flubbed his introduction of President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine, saying, “Ladies and gentlemen, President Putin.”

After a moment, Mr. Biden realized his mistake, came back to the microphone and quickly said: “President Putin? We’re going to beat President Putin. President Zelensky. I’m so focused on beating Putin, we got to worry about it.”

The small group of Mr. Biden’s advisers in the administration and the campaign — at least two of whom have told allies that they do not believe he should keep trying to run for a second term — said they would need to convince the president of several things for him to leave the race.

They said they would have to make the case that he cannot win against Mr. Trump. They would have to convince him that another candidate, like Vice President Kamala Harris, could beat Mr. Trump. And they would have to assure Mr. Biden that, should he step aside, the process to choose

Continued on Page A18

## In Milwaukee, Foil for G.O.P. Is Party’s Host

**By JULIE BOSMAN and DAN SIMMONS**

MILWAUKEE — Mayor Cavalier Johnson was zipping in and out of Milwaukee’s City Hall this week, shuttling his children around town, meeting with his chief of staff and watching excitedly outside as tents sprang up near the site of the Republican National Convention.

“It’s becoming real,” said Mr. Johnson, Milwaukee’s first elected Black mayor, who sailed to a second term earlier this year.

Mr. Johnson, 37, is preparing for his biggest and trickiest role yet. He was one of the major supporters of bringing the Republican convention to Milwaukee, and next week, the crush of tens of thousands of visitors will arrive. Milwaukee, a city of about 560,000, has rarely hosted a convention of this size and is not accustomed to showing off on the national stage.

It’s a delicate juggling act for Mr. Johnson, who for a few days could also be the most visible face of the opposing party: blasting Republican policies and the rhetoric of former President Donald J. Trump, as Mr. Trump arrives in Milwaukee to accept the Republican nomination. Mr. Johnson has already shown his willingness to spar with Mr. Trump, knocking the former president for reportedly calling Milwaukee a “horrible city” in a recent meeting with House Republicans.

“I’m a host, and I want people to have a great time here,” Mr. Johnson said in an interview. “At the same time, on the political end, I am a Democrat.”

The convention is a major test for Mr. Johnson, a popular young mayor who grew up in Milwaukee and attended its public schools. Before he took office in 2021, he was a member of the City Council,

Continued on Page A14



STANLEY BIELECKI COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES

Starring in “3 Women” (1977).

SHELLEY DUVALL, 1949-2024

## Queen of Quirk Who Put Dread In ‘The Shining’

**By CLAY RISEN**

Shelley Duvall, whose lithe-some features and quirky screen personality made her one of the biggest film stars of the 1970s and early ’80s, appearing in a string of movies by the director Robert Altman and, perhaps most memorably, opposite Jack Nicholson in “The Shining,” died on Thursday at her home in Blanco, Texas. She was 75.

A family spokesman said the cause was complications of diabetes.

Ms. Duvall wasn’t planning on a film career when she met Mr. Altman while he was filming “Brewster McCloud” (1970); she had thrown a party to sell her husband’s artwork, and members of his film crew were in attendance. Taken with her, they introduced her to Mr. Altman, a director with his own reputation for oddball movies and offbeat casting. He immediately asked her to join the cast, despite her lack of training.

She said yes — and went on to appear in an unbroken string of five more Altman movies: “McCabe and Mrs. Miller” (1971), “Thieves Like Us” (1974), “Nashville” (1975), “Buffalo Bill and the Indians, or Sitting Bull’s History

Continued on Page A23



NATIONAL A12-22

### Die-Ins, Drums and Song

Activists of all ages are braving rising temperatures to protest companies that support fossil fuel projects. PAGE A12

### Executive Branch Overhaul?

Project 2025 and its ties to the Trump campaign have become hotly debated questions in the 2024 race. PAGE A15

INTERNATIONAL A4-11

### Homeless Shipped Out of Paris

The French have put thousands of homeless immigrants on buses, promising them housing elsewhere. But many end up back on the street. PAGE A9

### A Refuge, but It’s Not Home

Cairo now houses tens of thousands of Palestinians who fled Gaza, with few job prospects, dwindling savings and no schools for their children. PAGE A8

### Missile Sites Anger Russians

Moscow said it was preparing military countermeasures in response to the planned deployment of longer-range rockets in Germany. PAGE A7



BUSINESS B1-7

### Free Electric Bus Tests Town

In tiny Wymore, Neb., a sleek new battery-powered school bus became a surrogate for far bigger issues. PAGE B1

### Inflation Keeps Cooling

The Consumer Price Index climbed at a moderate pace in June and fell on a monthly basis. PAGE B1

SPORTS B8-11

### A Quick Comeback

Playing in Wimbledon this year seemed doubtful for Novak Djokovic after the 37-year-old had knee surgery on June 5. Now he’s in the semifinals. PAGE B11

OBITUARIES A23, 26

### A Cookie Innovator

David Liederman redefined the chocolate chip cookie, and his company, David’s Cookies, grew to more than 100 stores nationwide. He was 75. PAGE A26

OPINION A24-25

### David Brooks

PAGE A24



WEEKEND ARTS C1-12

### Funny First Lady on Broadway

“Oh, Mary!” asks the immortal question: Besides that, Mrs. Lincoln, how was the play? Above, Cole Escola, left, with Conrad Ricamora. PAGE C1

