

“All the News
That’s Fit to Print”

The New York Times

THE WEATHER
Today, some sun, then increasing cloudiness, high 78. **Tonight**, partly to mostly cloudy, low 67. **Tomorrow**, cloudy, a little rain in the afternoon, high 74. Weather map, Page B8.

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DANIEL BEREHULAK/THE NEW YORK TIMES

An underground garage in Kharkiv served as the arena for a summer concert by Mélovin, a singer and songwriter popular in Ukraine.

Savoring Life While Russia Pummels City

By CONSTANT MÉHEUT and OLEKSANDRA MYKOLYSHYN

KHARKIV, Ukraine — In the war-ravaged city of Kharkiv, where the echoes of air-raid alerts are commonplace, an unlikely sound filled a dimly lit underground garage on a recent morning: the soaring voices of soprano and baritone singers.

Every few moments, the singers were interrupted by the impassioned commands of their director, Oleksii Duhinov, as he paced a makeshift stage during a rehearsal for Mozart’s “Marriage of Figaro.”

“You’re standing like a stone!” he shouted at a baritone, grabbing his shoulders as he urged him to gesticulate more while singing. Nearby, fellow performers watched with amusement, seated on rows of black plastic chairs on a gray concrete floor.

This was the new stage of Kharkiv’s National Academic Opera and Ballet Theater, now operating dozens of feet underground in a garage where trucks once delivered costumes and scenery. The grand auditorium several floors above, which once held 1,500 people, has been largely empty since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

When the opera reopened in April this year, it moved all performances to the garage, which has the advantage of doubling as a bomb shelter. The adaptation is necessary for survival amid relentless Russian assaults on Kharkiv, which is just 25 miles from the border with Russia.

“This is our new reality,” Veronika Koval, a mezzo-soprano who plays in “The Marriage of Figaro,” said outside the opera house as air-raid sirens blared in the background. “It’s war, but no one is going to stop us from living because of that.”

More than 30 months of fighting have taught Kharkiv how to live amid the constant threat of bombings. In the latest attack, on Sunday, at least 41 people were wounded when a missile struck an apartment building in the city, according to the regional authorities. They also said that a 94-year-old woman was killed in the attack.

The city’s resilience is manifested in a curious blend of life above and below ground. On the surface, dance shows continue in public squares, and skateboard-

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Walz Sees if ‘Minnesota Nice’ Plays in Sun Belt

By KELLEN BROWNING and JAZMINE ULLOA

When Vice President Kamala Harris selected Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota as her running mate, many Democrats hoped that his folksy charm, quick-witted jabs at Republican opponents and “Minnesota nice” values would draw in white, working-class voters from across the Midwest — and potentially beyond.

That theory has been put to the test in recent weeks as Mr. Walz has hit the campaign trail, embracing his role as a retail politician and attack dog against former President Donald J. Trump at stops not only in the blue wall states of Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, but also in Sun Belt battleground states like Ari-

Aiming for Moderates Skeptical of a Ticket’s Lean to the Left

zona and Nevada. This week, he will head south to campaign in Georgia and North Carolina.

“I feel a bit like a snowman melting,” Mr. Walz said at several stops during a sweltering campaign swing in the Southwest last week, a line that drew chuckles from college students in Tempe, Ariz., and wealthy donors in Las Vegas alike.

As he has traveled through the nation’s battlegrounds, Mr. Walz has worked to overcome skepticism from moderate voters about

Minnesota’s leftward shift by presenting liberal policy priorities like student debt relief and housing tax credits as common-sense, neighborly goals. And across the Sun Belt in particular, he has had to try to shore up support among a much younger and more racially diverse electorate — traditionally Democratic groups with whom Republicans have been making inroads in recent elections.

On the trail, where he has worked to pump up the Democratic base at events and to rally the faithful with visits to campaign offices, he often works to forge connections with his audiences, and individual voters, with a down-to-earth demeanor and a dose of humor.

At a campaign office in Phoenix, Continued on Page A15

Vanguard of Sickle Cell-Free Patients Finds a Long, Hard Road

By GINA KOLATA

WASHINGTON — There was supposed to be a special party for Kendric Cromer, 12, last Wednesday, but it had to be postponed because he was too groggy to celebrate.

It was meant to mark the first day of his new life — the day he became one of the first children ever to be treated with a newly approved gene therapy that will free him from the sickle cell disease that has stolen his childhood.

On Sept. 11, despite the excitement of the moment, Kendric was unable to keep his eyes open as he lay in his hospital bed at Children’s National Hospital in Washington because of the drugs he had been given in preparation for his treatment.

His life with the disease has been punctuated by episodes of excruciating pain, requiring days in the hospital as doctors tried to control it. Sickle cell eroded his hip bones. It prevented him from riding a bike or playing soccer or even going outside when the temperature was below 55 degrees Fahrenheit because cold often brought on intense pain.

Now he could see a future — in a month or so — without pain from sickle cell.

“I can’t wait to start my new life,” he told his mother, Deborah Cromer.

His disease is caused by an inherited genetic mutation that leads to blood cells that form crescent shapes — sickles — instead of discs. Trapped in blood vessels and organs, the cells cause dam-



KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Kendric Cromer, 12, undergoing gene therapy for sickle cell disease in Washington last week.

age and pain. Gene therapy fixes that problem by giving the patient’s blood-forming cells a new, normal hemoglobin gene.

An estimated 100,000 people in the United States, most of them Black, have sickle cell disease.

Gene therapy dangles the prospect of normalcy for the estimated 20,000 people in the United States with the most severe forms of the disease — lives without constant pain and continuing damage

to organs and bones and joints.

But all is not well in the world of sickle cell gene therapy.

Last December, the Food and Drug Administration gave approval to two companies, Bluebird Bio of Somerville, Mass., and Vertex Pharmaceuticals of Boston, to sell the first gene therapies approved for sickle cell disease. After nine months, Kendric remains the first Bluebird patient to progress this far, with at least a

few others advancing toward his pace.

Doctors say that it is agonizingly slow to actually start treating patients.

The first step is for Vertex or Bluebird to approve a medical center to deliver the treatment — a process that involves negotiating complex contracts. Bluebird, which sells its therapy only in the United States, declined to disclose

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N.Y. Case Tied To a Way China Seeks Influence

By DAVID PIERSON

A prominent lawyer in Britain, accused of trying to advance Beijing’s interests in Parliament.

An aide to a far-right politician in Germany, suspected of passing information about the inner workings of the European Parliament to China.

A politician in Canada, accused of receiving help from the Chinese Consulate organizing busloads of international students from China to vote for him in party elections.

Even before Linda Sun, a former senior aide in the New York governor’s office, was charged this month with using her position to benefit the Chinese government, suspected cases of Chinese foreign meddling had been on the rise in Western democracies.

Allegations of Chinese political interference have also surfaced in Australia, New Zealand, France, Belgium and the Netherlands in recent years.

The clandestine activity usually follows a pattern, analysts said. China recruits members of Chinese diaspora communities to infiltrate halls of power, or to silence Chinese dissidents and other critics of Beijing.

Covert Chinese operations abroad have long centered on seizing industrial secrets and technology in sensitive sectors such as the military, aviation or

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Central Europe’s Deadly Floods

At least 17 people have died and thousands have been displaced as heavy rains continue in the region. PAGE A10

Is Moscow Owed an Apology?

A leader in Georgia set off an uproar by saying the country bears responsibility for a 2008 war with Russia. PAGE A4

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Resistance to a Bible Mandate

Concerns about public schools’ mission have led even some conservative Christians to push back against teaching the Bible in Oklahoma. PAGE A12

2 Fire Chiefs Are Arrested

The officials, who oversaw safety inspections in New York City, are accused of taking thousands in bribes in connection with building projects. PAGE A17

Seeking to Dismiss Charges

Pete Arredondo, ex-police chief of the school district in Uvalde, Texas, was in court in a case related to the response to the 2022 mass shooting. PAGE A12



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A Not-Too-Predictable Emmys

The show managed to provide a few surprises. Above, the “Hacks” team, which won best comedy. PAGE C1

At 89, Releasing Album No. 50

The trumpeter Herb Alpert shows no signs of slowing down. “I don’t look back,” he said. “I go forward.” PAGE C1

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Offshore Wind Farm Delays

Breakage of GE Vernova’s blades has upset projects off the coasts of Massachusetts and England and could imperil climate goals. PAGE B1

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Less Glitz, More Accessibility

Formula 1 is reshaping the next Las Vegas Grand Prix to offer “something for everybody versus something for just the high end.” PAGE B6

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Gabrielle Giffords

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Offering a Hand

Researchers say they have found several promising ways to thwart a fungus that is causing the deadly white-nose syndrome in American bats. PAGE D5

