

“All the News
That’s Fit to Print”

The New York Times

THE WEATHER
Today, dry, turning warmer, partly cloudy, high 73. **Tonight**, increasing clouds, mainly dry, low 57. **Tomorrow**, cloudy, possible late showers, high 67. Weather map, Page A24.

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Turning Point As Auto Union Eyes Alabama

Southern Leaders See Risk in U.A.W. Wins

By JACK EWING
TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — More than 5,000 Mercedes-Benz workers in Alabama are voting this week on whether to join the United Automobile Workers union, a decision both supporters and opponents say will have consequences far beyond two factories near Tuscaloosa where the German carmaker churns out luxury sport utility vehicles and batteries for electric cars.
Conservative political leaders have portrayed the union campaign to organize Mercedes workers as an assault by outsiders on the region's economy and way of life. The vote tally is expected to be released by federal officials on Friday.
Six Southern governors, including Kay Ivey, an Alabama Republican, issued a statement last month criticizing unions as “special interests looking to come into our state and threaten our jobs and the values we live by.” Alabama recently passed a law intended to discourage union organizing.

For the union, a win would add to a string of victories in the South, where organized labor has traditionally been weak, and provide momentum to the U.A.W.'s efforts to win over workers at other non-union automakers like Hyundai, Toyota, Honda and Tesla.

If the U.A.W. loses, it could sharply slow down a campaign by the union's president, Shawn Fain, to organize auto and battery plants across the country. That effort began after the union last fall reached new contracts with hefty pay raises and other benefits for workers at General Motors, Ford Motor and Stellantis, the parent company of Chrysler, Jeep and Ram.

In Alabama, which was a crucible of the civil rights movement, union organizers and supporters cast the Mercedes campaign as part of a decades-long struggle to dismantle an economic system based on the exploitation of poor

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CHARITY RACHELLE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES
At a U.A.W. organizing event in Birmingham, Ala.

Governor in Texas Pardons Man In Fatal Shooting of a Protester

By J. DAVID GOODMAN
HOUSTON — Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas on Thursday pardoned a man who was convicted of fatally shooting a protester during a Black Lives Matter demonstration in the summer of 2020, fulfilling a promise he made last year amid pressure from conservatives.
The decision immediately followed a pardon recommendation from the state's Board of Pardons and Paroles, whose members are appointed by the governor. Lawyers for the man, Daniel S. Perry, argued that he had acted in self-defense against the protester, who was carrying an AK-47-style rifle.
Mr. Perry was sentenced to 25 years in prison in an emotional hearing last year in which prosecutors presented evidence of rac-



FINBARR O'REILLY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Ukrainian police with an evacuee from Vovchansk, which was attacked. Russia's gains intensify Ukraine's need for trained recruits.

Before Attack, Slovakians Felt Political Strain

By ANDREW HIGGINS
and CASSANDRA VINOGRAD
BRATISLAVA, Slovakia — To the government that charged him, he was a “lone wolf,” an off-kilter individual representing nobody but himself when he pumped at least four bullets into Prime Minister Robert Fico of Slovakia.
The assassination attempt on Wednesday, however, has put a spotlight on a far wider collective malfunction in Slovakia. In this country in Central Europe, society and political culture are so bitterly divided that the violence attributed to a man who the authorities say acted alone has become yet another club with which each side can beat the other.

“There is a level of polarization that has never existed before in this country,” said Daniel Milo, a former government official responsible for tracking disinformation who now works for a technology company. “I’ve never seen anything like it,” he added.

The Covid-19 pandemic, he said, hardened previously fluid lines into what have since become hostile camps, with little room for nuance. Roughly half the population welcomed vaccines and half rejected them. “It became: Are you for or against? Do you believe or

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At Alito’s Home, a ‘Stop the Steal’ Symbol Flew

By JODI KANTOR
After the 2020 presidential election, as some Trump supporters falsely claimed that President Biden had stolen the office, many of them displayed a startling symbol outside their homes, on their cars and in online posts: an upside-down American flag.

One of the homes flying an inverted flag during that time was the residence of Supreme Court Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr., in Alexandria, Va., according to photographs and interviews with neighbors.
The upside-down flag was aloft on Jan. 17, 2021, the images showed. President Donald J. Trump's supporters, including some brandishing the same symbol, had rioted at the Capitol a

Sign of Trump Support While Justice Muled 2020 Election Case

week and a half before. Mr. Biden's inauguration was three days away. Alarmed neighbors snapped photographs, some of which were recently obtained by The New York Times. Word of the flag filtered back to the court, people who worked there said in interviews.

While the flag was up, the court was still contending with whether to hear a 2020 election case, with Justice Alito on the losing end of that decision. In coming weeks, the justices will rule on two cli-

matic cases involving the storming of the Capitol on Jan. 6, including whether Mr. Trump has immunity for his actions. Their decisions will shape how accountable he can be held for trying to overturn the last presidential election and his chances for re-election in the upcoming one.

“I had no involvement whatsoever in the flying of the flag,” Justice Alito said in an emailed statement to The Times. “It was briefly placed by Mrs. Alito in response to a neighbor's use of objectionable and personally insulting language on yard signs.”

Judicial experts said in interviews that the flag was a clear violation of ethics rules, which seek to avoid even the appearance of bias, and could sow doubt about

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DMITRY KOSTYUKOV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Breathing In the Art
The Louvre is celebrating the Olympics with exercise classes. Tickets sold out in a flash. Page A4.

Are Scores of Women Quitting the Pill, as Social Media Suggests?

By ALISHA HARIDASANI GUPTA

The woman in the video looks resolute, and a little sad, as she cuts up a pack of birth control pills. “These silly little pills have literally ruined me as a person,” reads the caption. The clip, which is on TikTok, has 1.1 million likes. It's one of thousands that have proliferated on social media in re-

cent years with virtually the same message: The pill causes terrible, sometimes irreversible side effects, and women should free themselves from it.

Anecdotal reports from news outlets have suggested that women are quitting the pill in large numbers because of this type of online post. “We’ve known for a long time that people really rely

Contrary to Anecdotal Reports, Usage Is Up

on their social circles to help them with medical decision making as it relates to contraception,” said Dr. Deborah Bartz, an obstetrician-gynecologist at Brigham and

Women's Hospital. Against a backdrop of increasingly restrictive abortion access, the idea that women might be giving up a reliable form of contraception because of social media hype has concerned researchers and doctors.

But, according to initial data, prescriptions for the birth control

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Nuclear Expert Turns Envoy
With atomic fears rising, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency is more like a mediator. PAGE A9

Easing Congo Sanctions
A deal to allow the Israeli billionaire Dan Gertler to cash out has angered human rights activists. PAGE A8

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The move follows a committee vote to hold the attorney general in contempt for withholding recordings. PAGE A16

Cross-Examination for Cohen
Donald J. Trump's criminal trial entered a critical and combative phase as his lawyer grilled a star witness. PAGE A14

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Katherine Porter's was an intuitive Expressionism, unique in its large scale, its unmistakably unfiltered quality and its vivid colors. She was 82. PAGE B12



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A couple who work as voice actors say an A.I. company cloned their voices without their permission. PAGE B1

Watchdog’s Funding Upheld
The Supreme Court backed the funding mechanism of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. PAGE B1

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The Catcher in the Way
In modern baseball, catchers play closer to the plate, helping them frame pitches but making them even more vulnerable to injury. As one manager said, “The risk is extreme.” PAGE B7

Mark Your Calendar
The N.F.L. released its schedule for the coming season, with all the marquee matchups, bye weeks and quick turn-arounds, and with the Jets playing six games in prime time. PAGE B9

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Margaret Renkl PAGE A23



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A Creator of Readable Art
Jenny Holzer's signboards predated by a decade the news “crawl” that runs across the bottom of the TV screen. She is continuing to bend the curve. PAGE C1

