

"All the News
That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

THE WEATHER

Today, foggy areas this morning, overcast, high 50. Tonight, low clouds, fog, low 46. Tomorrow, fog early, periodic rain, high 54. Weather map appears on Page A16.

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Prices in Canada may be higher

\$4.00



PHOTOGRAPHS BY KIRSTEN LUCE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Once Again, Christmas Snow Is a No-Show in New York
It has not snowed more than an inch in New York City in a long time — 680 days, to be exact. And it has not snowed on Christmas in 14 years. But at Lincoln Center, on Central Park's Wollman Rink and in a shop display, ice and flurries were all around. Page A11.

A Crypto Mine Brings Secrets To the Surface

By **MICHAEL FORSYTHE** and **GABRIEL J.X. DANCE**

Jerry Yu has the trappings of what the Chinese call second-generation rich. He boasts a Connecticut prep-school education. He lives in a Manhattan condominium bought for \$8 million from Jeffrey R. Immelt, a former General Electric chief executive. And he is the majority owner of a Bitcoin mine in Texas, acquired last year for more than \$6 million.

Mr. Yu, a 23-year-old student at New York University, has also become — quite unintentionally — a case study in how Chinese nationals can move money from China to the United States without drawing the attention of the authorities in either country.

The Texas facility, a large computing center, was not purchased with dollars. Instead, it was bought with cryptocurrency, which offers anonymity, with the transaction routed through an offshore exchange, preventing anyone from knowing the origin of the financing.

Such secrecy allows Chinese investors to avoid the U.S. banking system, and the accompanying oversight of federal regulators, as well as sidestep Chinese restrictions on money leaving China. In a more traditional transaction, a bank receiving the funds would know where they were coming from and would be required by law to report any suspicious activity to the U.S. Treasury.

None of this would be known had Mr. Yu's company — BitRush Inc., also known as BytesRush — not run into troubles in the tiny

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Netanyahu Visits Gaza After Deadly Airstrikes

This article is by **Vivian Yee**, **Ameera Harouda**, **Nadav Gavrielov** and **Abu Bakr Bashir**.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Israeli troops fighting in the Gaza Strip on Monday, vowing to stay the course of the war even with the death toll mounting. His trip came hours after Gazan health officials reported that a devastating overnight strike on a crowded neighborhood had killed dozens.

It was the Israeli leader's second known visit to Gaza since the war began. Mr. Netanyahu has been facing increasing pressure from the United States to lower the intensity of the war, but he said on Monday that Israel would “deepen” the fighting in coming days.

The strike late Sunday in central Gaza underscored the risk to

Israel Says an Episode That Killed Dozens Is Under Review

civilians as fighting intensifies. Gazans were mourning the victims in the neighborhood, Al Maghazi, where many who have fled fighting in other parts of the enclave have sought shelter.

Photos of the aftermath on Monday showed a gray concrete building gaping with dark holes where rooms used to be. At the foot of the building was a mound of debris, where men appeared to be digging for survivors, or bodies, without the aid of any heavy equipment.

The Gaza Health Ministry initially said 70 people had died in

Sunday's attacks on Al Maghazi, with many others still buried. But the difficulty of reaching residents in Gaza, where electricity shortages and communications blackouts have frequently obscured the picture of the war's fallout, meant the details were blurry.

Gazan Health Ministry officials blamed Israeli airstrikes for the deadly attack on Al Maghazi. Israel's military said Monday it was reviewing the episode.

Mohammed Abed, 36, a journalist from Al Maghazi, said he saw bodies among the collapsed buildings. He said he had been told there were about seven strikes on the area, including four on residential buildings. The damage, he said, strewn the entrances to the neighborhood with so much debris that people could not easily enter or exit.

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SHADI TABATIBI/REUTERS

Mourners gathered on Monday next to the bodies of those killed in Gaza by an overnight attack.

Drilling Into the Earth, China Quietly Rebuilds A Base for Nuclear Tests

Goal Unclear Amid Fragile U.S. Relations

This article is by **William J. Broad**, **Chris Buckley** and **Jonathan Corum**.

In the remote desert where China detonated its first atom bomb nearly 60 years ago, a drilling rig recently bored a deep vertical shaft that is estimated to plunge down at least a third of a mile. It is the strongest evidence yet that Beijing is weighing whether to test a new generation of nuclear arms that could increase the lethality of its rapidly expanding missile force.

For years, U.S. government reports and independent experts have expressed vague concerns about the old base, Lop Nur. The reports point to possible preparations for year-round operations and a “lack of transparency.”

Now, however, waves of satellite images reveal that the military base has newly drilled boreholes — ideal for bottling up firestorms of deadly radiation from large nuclear blasts — as well as hundreds of other upgrades and expansions.

“All the evidence points to China making preparations that would let it resume nuclear tests,” said Tong Zhao, a nuclear expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Siegfried S. Hecker, a former director of the Los Alamos weapons laboratory in New Mexico, described Lop Nur's rebuilding as unusual. “The Russians and Americans have continued activity at their test sites,” he said, “but nothing like this.”

Analysts say the activity at Lop Nur signals a wide modernization of China's nuclear establishment, warning that it could speed arms

buildups and spark a new age of atomic rivalry.

They add that China's moves, along with those of other nuclear powers, could undermine the global test ban that began in 1996. The world's atomic powers signed it after the Cold War as a way to curb a costly nuclear arms race that was spinning out of control.

The new evidence at Lop Nur was uncovered by Renny Babiarz, a former analyst at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, an arm of the Pentagon. An expert on satellite reconnaissance as well as Beijing's nuclear program, Dr. Babiarz says that detonations in the deep shafts could accelerate an effort to perfect new types of nuclear arms for the country's fast-growing arsenal. Independent experts who have examined the satellite imagery and Dr. Babiarz's analyses share his concerns.

The activity at Lop Nur comes at one of the most sensitive moments in U.S.-China relations. President Biden has said he's trying to “stabilize” an increasingly contentious relationship and, at a summit meeting last month with Xi Jinping, China's leader, sought a measure of accord.

American intelligence officials say they've followed Lop Nur's revival for years. While the construction is obvious, they say, its purpose is not. China could be preparing for a nuclear test, they concede. But they add that Mr. Xi may not intend to move ahead unless the United States or Russia goes first. The officials say Mr. Xi could be hedging his bets, drilling the deep vertical shafts so that, if necessary, China can act quickly.

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College Protests Over Gaza Echo Vietnam Strife

By **MICHAEL WINES**

Richard Flacks remembers the challenges of building a protest movement during the Vietnam War as a pillar of the left-wing political and antiwar group Students for a Democratic Society during the 1960s.

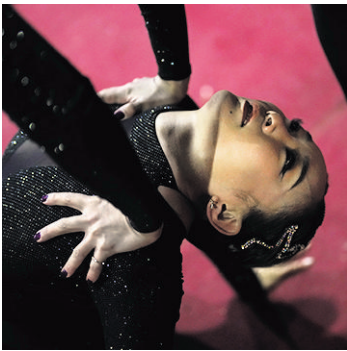
“The whole idea of S.D.S. began with the idea of, ‘We need a new way of being on the left, a new vocabulary, a new strategy,’” said Mr. Flacks, who helped write the group's manifesto, the Port Huron Statement, in 1962. “We knew we were right, and I don't think we were arrogant about it.”

Sixty years later, Iman Abid sees similar challenges in the war in Gaza between Israel and Hamas. “For so long, we couldn't get Palestine to be that issue for people to care about,” said Ms. Abid, the organizing and advocacy director at the U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights, which works with pro-Palestinian campus organizations. “But now people care about it because they're seeing it. They're watching it on their social media. They're watching it on the news.”

It is too early to know whether the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will define this generation as opposition to the Vietnam War did for many young people more than a half century ago.

But to many who have studied or lived through the Vietnam era, the parallels to the Gaza protests are compelling: a powerful military raining aerial destruction on a small, underdeveloped non-white land; a generational divide over the morality of the conflict; a

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CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

A circus contortionist in Mongolia's capital, Ulaanbaatar.

Training Stars For the Big Top Far From Home

By **DAVID PIERSON**

ULAANBAATAR, Mongolia — It's cold as a walk-in refrigerator at the Mongolian Circus School, housed in a once-proud edifice now on the verge of collapse, with cracked walls, moldy ceilings and the stale smell of decades of cigarette smoke embedded to the venue's wooden frame.

A group of teenage acrobats shrug off the frigid, fraying surroundings to practice leaping and somersaulting through the air, kicking up dust as they land and enduring the bark of a gruff instructor needling them after each imperfection.

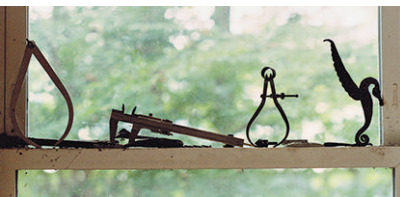
Outside on an unpaved driveway, a pair of girls in leotards, one 11 and the other 13, tiptoe around puddles of muddy water to practice one of the most difficult and dangerous contortionist poses, the Marinelli bend. They

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The former governor of South Carolina has fresh backing, but she has less than a month to catch up in Iowa. PAGE A12

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A growing number of hobbyists are embracing blacksmithing, pounding steel into tools. PAGE A11



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News that the Russian opposition leader Aleksei Navalny was moved to a remote prison ended weeks of mystery over his whereabouts. PAGE A7

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Irwin Cohen transformed an abandoned Nabisco plant in Manhattan into Chelsea Market. He was 90.

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