

“All the News
That’s Fit to Print”

The New York Times

THE WEATHER
Today, windy with clouds and sun, high 50. Tonight, cold, breezy with clouds, low 31. Tomorrow, windy and colder; a flurry in the afternoon, high 39. Weather map is on Page B6.

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U.S. Military Is Slow to Act On Risky Arms

Launchers That Shock Brain Remain in Use

By DAVE PHILIPPS
FORT CHAFFEE, Ark. — A blast shattered the stillness of a meadow in the Ozark Mountains on an autumn afternoon. Then another, and another, and another, until the whole meadow was in flames.
Special Operations troops were training with rocket launchers again.
Each operator held a launch tube on his shoulder, a few inches from his head, then took aim and sent a rocket flying at 500 miles an hour. And each launch sent a shock wave whipping through every cell in the operator’s brain.
For generations, the military assumed that this kind of blast exposure was safe, even as evidence mounted that repetitive blasts may do serious and lasting harm.
In recent years, Congress, pressed by veterans who were exposed to these shock waves, has ordered the military to set safety limits and start tracking troops’ exposure. In response, the Pentagon created a sprawling Warfighter Brain Health Initiative to study the issue, gather data and propose corrective strategies. And last year, for the first time, it set a threshold above which a weapon blast is considered hazardous.
Despite the order, though, things have hardly changed on the ground. Training continues largely as it did before. Troops say they see little being done to limit or track blast exposure. And weapons like shoulder-fired rockets that are known to deliver a shock wave well above the safety threshold are still in wide use.

The disconnect fits a pattern that has repeated for more than a decade: Top leaders talk of the importance of protecting troops’ brains, but the military fails to take practical steps to ensure safety.
“It’s extremely frustrating,” said Paul Scharre, a former Army Ranger and a policy expert at the Center for a New American Security who published a report in 2018, funded by the Defense Department, about the dangers of repeated blasts from firing weapons. “We’ve known for years that these weapons are dangerous. There are simple things we can do to protect people. And we’re not doing them.”
Nowhere is that disconnect more clear than on the firing range at the military training center in the Ozarks, Fort Chaffee in Arkansas.
With flames still leaping from the meadow, a few of the Special Operations troops walked to a pair of air-conditioned trailers just behind the firing line, where a research team drew blood samples, strapped sensors to their heads and ran tests, searching for evidence of brain injuries.
Measurements taken by the team from scores of troops over three years showed that in the days after firing rockets, they had worse memories and reaction times, worse coordination, lower cognitive and executive function,

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KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Troops training with rocket launchers in Fort Chaffee, Ark., last month. Repeated blasts may harm the soldiers firing the weapon.

Backing Away From Congress By the Dozens

By KAYLA GUO
WASHINGTON — Eleven are running for the Senate. Five for state or local office. One for president of the United States. Another is resigning to become a university president. And more and more say they are hanging up their hats in public office altogether.
More than three dozen members of Congress have announced they will not seek re-election next year, some to pursue other offices and many others simply to get out of Washington. Twelve have announced their plans just this month.
The wave of lawmakers across chambers and parties announcing they intend to leave Congress comes at a time of breathtaking dysfunction on Capitol Hill, primarily instigated by House Republicans. The House G.O.P. majority spent the past few months deposing its leader, waging a weekslong internal war to select a new speaker and struggling to keep federal funding flowing. Right-wing members have rejected any spending legislation that could become law and railed against their new leader for turning to Democrats, as his predecessor did, to avert a government shutdown.
The chaos has Republicans increasingly worried that they could lose their slim House majority next year, a concern that typically prompts a rash of retirements from the party in control. But it is not only G.O.P. lawmakers who are opting to leave; Democrats, too, are leaving in droves.

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As Groundwater Ebbs, Key Forces Repel Change

By CHRISTOPHER FLAVELLE and MIRA ROJANASAKUL
GARDEN CITY, Kan. — From a small brick building in Garden City, Kan., 13 men manage the use of groundwater across five million acres in the southwest corner of the state, some of the most productive farmland in America for corn, wheat and sorghum.
They serve on the board of Groundwater Management District 3, which since 1996 has overseen the pumping of 16.2 trillion gallons of groundwater — enough to fill Lake Mead, the country’s largest reservoir, twice over.
The board is elected, but not by everyone: The only people eligible to vote are large landowners, a group of less than 12,000 people in an area of roughly 130,000. And in some years, fewer than 100 people actually vote. Others — cashiers at Walmart, teachers at the community college, workers at the local St. Catherine Hospital — have no say in the management of the aquifer on which they, too, rely.
The aquifer is running out of water, fast. But the board hasn’t slowed down the pumping.
In a country where the value of land often depends on access to water, powerful interests in agriculture, heavy industry and real estate draw vast amounts of water out of the ground. For generations, that water has been treated as an unlimited resource in much of the United States, freely available to anyone who owns a piece of land and can drill a well. Entire local economies have been built around the assumption that the water will never run out.
Now it is starting to run out, not only in Kansas but across much of the country. From Maryland to Hawaii, groundwater levels are falling, often the result of overpumping and underregulation, made worse by climate change. As the planet warms, demand for water is increasing. At the same time, the world’s population is growing, and the need for water is increasing.

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KIM RAFF FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A gold mine in Nevada, where groundwater levels are sinking. Water is running out across the U.S.

Hollywood Is Wrangling Over What to Holster

By JULIA JACOBS
Scott Reeder, the head of props on “Walker,” the TV revival about a gun-toting Texas Ranger, was planning for a scene in which a woman points a revolver at a captive when a new set of orders arrived: Real guns would no longer be used in the production.
It was shortly after a cinematographer had been fatally shot on the set of the film “Rust” in New Mexico, when a gun Alec Baldwin

Killing on Set Spurs a Firearms Debate

had been rehearsing with fired a live bullet. The mood around guns on the “Walker” set had become tentative, and its producers had decided that they would stop using real firearms — which they, like many other productions, had selectively used for some close-

ups and on a few occasions for blank fire — and would start relying fully on replica guns, including rubber guns and gas-powered guns such as Airsofts.
“I took any conventional weapon that we had off the prop truck and locked it in the safe,” Reeder recalled.
In the two years since the “Rust” shooting took the life of the film’s cinematographer, Halyna Hutchins, a divide has emerged in the industry over whether to use real guns or replicas.

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X May Lose Up to \$75 Million as Advertisers Flee

By RYAN MAC and KATE CONGER
LOS ANGELES — X, the social media company formerly known as Twitter, could lose as much as \$75 million in advertising revenue by the end of the year as dozens of major brands pause their marketing campaigns after its owner, Elon Musk, endorsed an antisemitic conspiracy theory this month.
Internal documents viewed by The New York Times show that the company is in a more difficult position than previously known and that concerns about Mr. Musk and the platform have spread far beyond companies including IBM, Apple and Disney, which paused their advertising campaigns on X after Mr. Musk’s post.

Internal Reports Detail Backlash to Musk

The documents list more than 200 ad units of companies from the likes of Airbnb, Amazon, Coca-Cola and Microsoft, many of which have halted or are considering pausing their ads on the social network.
The documents come from X’s sales team and are meant to track the impact of all the advertising lapses this month, including those by companies that have already paused their advertising campaigns.

On Friday, after protracted negotiations involving Qatar and the United States, Israel and Hamas paused the fighting for four days to allow the hostages to be released.
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Therapy at the Beauty Shop
An initiative to train hairdressers in mental health counseling provides relief to hundreds in West Africa. PAGE A4

Curbing Global Outbreaks
About 60 million children have not received any vaccines. Protecting them will require a costly blitz. PAGE A10

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Three Palestinian Men Shot
The college students were walking near the University of Vermont when they were attacked. The police are investigating it as a hate crime. PAGE A17

Redress for Marijuana Arrests
A map illustrating decades of marijuana arrests will help cannabis regulators form New York’s legal market. PAGE A17

OBITUARIES

Made Fantastical Kids’ Shows
With his brother Sid, Marty Krofft, 86, produced “H.R. Pufnstuf” and variety shows like “Donny & Marie.” PAGE A20



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A Town That Airbnb Created
Airbnb turned a rural community into a boom town. But now rental home supply is outpacing demand. PAGE B1

A Child’s Costly Online Error
Google has zero tolerance for child abuse content. But the process can go awry and ensnare the innocent. PAGE B1

SPORTS D1-8

Questioning Game They Loved
The death of one daughter and the struggles of another have left a prominent New Zealand tennis family second-guessing their choices and their relationship with the sport. PAGE D1

King James vs. Father Time
As he nears his 39th birthday and plays in his 21st N.B.A. season, LeBron James is somehow as productive as ever while thriving differently and more efficiently than before. PAGE D6

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Brad Stulberg PAGE A18



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The Anime Master’s Process
Hayao Miyazaki is a creature of habit who talks every day with his longtime producer. Above, a scene from the new film “The Boy and the Heron.” PAGE C1



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