THE WEATHER

Today, plenty of sunshine, dry, a **Tonight,** clear, low 36. **Tomorrow,** sunny, dry, a north wind, high 43.

RED SEA ATTACKS

IMPERIL SHIPPING

AND THE ECONOMY

IRAN-BACKED FIGHTERS

Vessels Avoid Suez Canal

— U.S. Tries to Blunt

Global Trade Risk

By PETER EAVIS

The wave of attacks against

merchant ships in the Red Sea is

forcing companies to send ships

on longer routes and threatens to

hurt an already wobbly global

The Houthis, an armed group

backed by Iran that controls much

of northern Yemen, have been us-

ing drones and missiles to target

ships since Hamas attacked Israel

on Oct. 7. That has forced some

shipping giants and oil companies

to avoid the Suez Canal, a develop-

ment that could hamper global

trade and push up the cost of im-

The Suez is a vital artery for

container ships and fuel tankers.

Goods and fuel from Asia and the

Middle East have made their way

to Europe and the United States

through the passage since it

opened in 1869. Britain and other

world powers have fought wars

and engaged in geopolitical in-

trigue over the canal, controlled

by Egypt now, for more than a

About 50 vessels go through the

Suez Canal a day, and recent data suggested that, as of Monday, at

least 32 had been diverted, said

Chris Rogers, head of supply

chain research at S&P Global

Market Intelligence. He noted

that nearly 15 percent of Euro-

pean imports were transported by

sea from Asia and the Persian

Gulf, most of which go through the

Peter Sand, chief analyst at

Xeneta, a shipping market analyt-

ics company, described the prob-

lems in the Red Sea and the canal as "a slow-burning disaster that

really blew up on the weekend."

He added, "Everybody involved in global shipping, especially with

supply chains connected by the Suez Canal, is trying to find out

Continued on Page A8

Duped, Trapped

Then Tortured

In Scam Camp

By ISABELLE QIAN

He had been promised a gener-

ous salary. A better work-life bal-

ance. A chance to live in the vi-

brant metropolis of Bangkok. His

fluency in English would be put to

good use as a translator for an e-

commerce company, the recruiter

More than anything else, Neo

Lu, a 28-year-old Chinese office

worker, believed the gig would be

the new start he needed to save

money for his dream of emigrat-

ing to the West. So in June of last

year, he said his goodbyes, flew to

Thailand and headed for his new

But when he arrived, his head

was spinning from the scorching

sun — and the feeling that some-

thing was very wrong. Instead of

an office building in a city, Mr. Lu

had been dumped at what looked

like a labor camp haphazardly

built on a patch of jungle and

Within the compound were

spartan, low-rise concrete buildings with barred windows and

doors. Two men in combat fa-

tigues, carrying rifles, guarded

the main entrance. High walls and

fences topped with razor wire sur-

rounded the compound, clearly

Continued on Page A12

muddy fields.

had said.

economy.

ported goods.

century.

\$4.00

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2023

Prices in Canada may be higher

Many Voters See Criminality **But Support Trump Anyway**

Indictments No Obstacle Among G.O.P., Poll Shows

This article is by Shane Goldmacher, Ruth Igielnik and Camille

Donald J. Trump continues to march to the 2024 Republican presidential nomination with a commanding lead over his primary rivals, even as a strong majority of voters nationwide believe he has committed serious federal crimes, including a growing faction of Republicans, according to a new poll from The New York Times and Siena College.

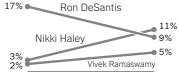
The results show the remarkable degree to which Republican voters are willing to look past Mr. Trump's legal jeopardy — the former president has been indicted four times in 2023 and faces 91 felony counts - and line up behind his potential return to power. Overall, 58 percent of voters na-

tionwide believe Mr. Trump com-

G.O.P. Primary Voters' Choices

If the election for the Republican nominee for president were held today, which candidate would you be most likely to vote for?





Source: New York Times/Siena College polls conducted nationwide July 23-27 (932 likely Republican primary voters) and Dec. 10-14 (380 likely Republican primary voters)

LAZARO GAMIO/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Colorado Court Deems Trump Unfit for Ballot

By MAGGIE ASTOR

Colorado's top court ruled on Tuesday that former President Donald J. Trump is disqualified from holding office again because he engaged in insurrection with his actions leading up to the Jan. 6 storming of the Capitol, an explosive ruling that is likely to put the basic contours of the 2024 election in the hands of the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Colorado Supreme Court was the first in the nation to find that Section 3 of the 14th Amendment — which disqualifies people who engage in insurrection against the Constitution after taking an oath to support it — applies to Mr. Trump, an argument that his opponents have been making around the country.

The ruling directs the Colorado secretary of state to exclude Mr. Trump's name from the state's Republican primary ballot. It does

not address the general election. "We do not reach these conclusions lightly," a four-justice majority wrote, with three justices dissenting. "We are mindful of the magnitude and weight of the questions now before us. We are likewise mindful of our solemn duty to apply the law, without fear or favor, and without being swayed by public reaction to the decisions

Mr. Trump's campaign said immediately that it would appeal the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court, a likelihood that the Colorado justices anticipated by putting their ruling on hold until January. And while Tuesday's rul-

that the law mandates we reach."

Continued on Page A18

mitted serious federal crimes, ac-

cording to the survey, including 66

percent of independent voters. Yet Mr. Trump continues to clobber his closest Republican competitors in the primary by more than 50 percentage points, pulling in the support of 64 percent of Republican primary voters nationwide. Nikki Haley, the former United Nations ambassador, is now in a distant second place, with 11 percent, followed by Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, who has fallen to third, with 9 percent.

The poll was conducted before a court ruling on Tuesday injected more legal uncertainty into the 2024 presidential race. The Colorado Supreme Court ruled that Mr. Trump is disqualified from holding office again because he engaged in insurrection leading up to the Jan. 6 storming of the Capitol, a decision the former president plans to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Mr. Trump's primary lead has swelled since the summer, even though the share of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents who believe he engaged in criminality rose to 27 percent from 17 percent in July. Mr. Trump is leading not only because he dominates among the large share of Republicans who see him as innocent, but also because he is winning one in three Republican voters who think he engaged in serious criminality.

Support for Mr. Trump in the Times/Siena poll is so thorough that 62 percent of Republicans think that if the former president wins the primary he should remain the Republican Party's nominee — even if he is subsequently convicted of a federal crime.

"What they're doing to the man is a crime," James Howe, 81, a retired airline worker in Phoenix, said of Mr. Trump. "There's been nobody in the history of this coun-

Continued on Page A17

Gay Catholics Hear History: 'God Bless You'

This article is by Amy Harmon, Ruth Graham and Sarah Maslin

As a Jesuit priest for more than two decades, the Rev. James Martin has bestowed thousands of blessings - on rosary beads, on babies, on homes, boats, and meals, on statues of saints, on the sick, on brides and on grooms.

Never before, though, was he permitted to bless a same-sex couple - not until Monday, when the pope said he would allow such blessings, an announcement that reverberated through the church.

On Tuesday morning, Damian Steidl Jack, 44, and his husband, Jason Steidl Jack, 38, stood before Father Martin in a living room on Manhattan's West Side. The couple, running a bit late because of subway delays, dressed casually, Damian, a floral designer, complimented Father Martin on the pine smell of the Christmas tree.

In keeping with the Vatican's admonition that such a blessing should not be performed with "any clothing, gestures or words that are proper to a wedding," Father Martin wore no robes, and read from no text. There is no blessing for same-sex couples in the thick book of blessings published by the U.S. Conference of Bishops. Instead he selected a favorite of his own from the Old Tes-

"May the Lord bless and keep you," Father Martin began, touching the two men's shoulders. They bowed their heads slightly, and

Continued on Page A18



Local residents witnessing the volcanic eruption on Iceland's Reykjanes Peninsula on Tuesday.

After Weeks of Buildup, a Must-See Nature Show

By EGILL BJARNASON and JENNY GROSS

HUSAVIK, Iceland — Pall Viggosson, a tour guide in Iceland, was driving a van carrying nine British tourists on Monday night in search of the northern lights. But instead of the greenish glow of the aurora borealis, he saw red flames and smoke from a volcanic eruption that Iceland had been uneasily awaiting.

The area, the Reykjanes Peninsula, had been experiencing strong seismic activity since October, a harbinger of an imminent It Took Some Time, but an Icelandic Volcano Finally Awakens

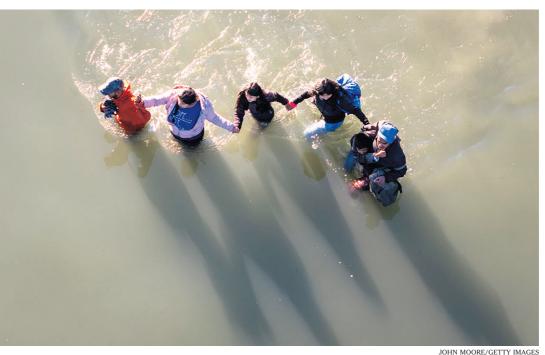
eruption. The earthquakes there were as many as 1,400 in a single 24-hour period in November - prompted the evacuation of the town of Grindavik and the temporary closing of the Blue Lagoon, a top tourist attraction. With these shaky warnings, Icelanders were girding for the eruption that

came Monday night.

"I realized quickly this was no ordinary light pollution," Mr. Vig gosson said. He pulled over on the highway so the tourists could take photos.

Soon, the highway, which connects the capital to Keflavik International Airport, became busy, as other curious spectators drove from Reykjavik and nearby towns to catch a glimpse of the spectacle for themselves: reddish and orange skies, billowing smoke and lava fountains reaching over 300 feet into the air.

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Texas Sued Over Migrant Law

Officials in El Paso County argued that the sweeping new law violated the Constitution. Page A16.

FOOD D1-10

Future Told in Cookie Cutters

From Barbie to unicorns to presidential candidates, the shape-shifting baking tools mirror America's culture. PAGE D1

It's Really All About the Mess

The Feast of the Seven Fishes is meaningful for the time spent cooking together as much as the eating



ARTS C1-6

In an Attic, Satirizing Nazis

Curt Bloch created 95 issues of a magazine, now drawing attention, in the crawl space of a Dutch home. PAGE C1

'Coppelia' Awakens With Joy

As with his "Swan Lake" and "Giselle," Alexei Ratmansky enlivens a staging of the Romantic ballet, at La Scala. PAGE C5

OPINION A22-23

Michelle Goldberg



NATIONAL A14-20

New York Weighs Reparations

Gov. Kathy Hochul signed a bill that will create a task force to examine the lasting impact of slavery.

Tributes for a Trailblazer

President Biden was among those honoring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor at her funeral. PAGE A15



INTERNATIONAL A4-13

How Russia Flouts Tech Bans

Using shipping workarounds and middlemen, Moscow has obtained the technology it needs to keep its economy and its war in Ukraine going. PAGE A10

Kidnapped in Myanmar

The ruling military, which is struggling with recruitment, denies abductions. But five men say it happened. PAGE A4

OBITUARIES A21

A Towering Sculptor

Richard Hunt, who was at Emmett Till's funeral, transformed public spaces with works that exuded freedom. He was 88.

BUSINESS B1-7

'Bond Vigilantes' Are Back

The financial world is debating if market appetite for U.S. debt is nearing a limit. Not everyone agrees that this is something to panic about. PAGE B1

Antigay Law Hurts Uganda

Passed in May, the Anti-Homosexuality Act is harming businesses that rely on foreign travelers and trade. PAGE B1

SPORTS B8-11

Unprecedented Recruitment Twenty years ago, college football

coaches did things they had never done before to sign Adrian Peterson. PAGE B8