

“All the News  
That’s Fit to Print”

# The New York Times

VOL. CLXXIII . . . . No. 60,248 © 2024 The New York Times Company FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 2024 Prices in Canada may be higher \$4.00

## Biden Felt He Could Win, But the Cost Was Too Dear

*In Final Hours, President Came to See Risk  
of Tearing Democratic Party Apart*

This article is by **Michael D. Shear, Katie Rogers and Adam Entous.**

WASHINGTON — In the end, he was alone.

Confined to a spare bedroom in his vacation home and fighting off bouts of coughing from Covid, President Biden was exhausted when he turned in for the night on Saturday, July 20. Whether he slept soundly or fitfully or not at all, people close to him said he took the long hours by himself to mull over the historic decision he was about to make.

He had just been through a brutal two days in Rehoboth Beach, Del., as he huddled with his wife, Jill Biden, and his closest aides, who rotated from a screened-in porch to a sitting area off the dining room.

Steve Ricchetti, the president’s eyes and ears on Capitol Hill, and Mike Donilon, his chief strategist, had shared internal polling with the president that Saturday that mirrored what Americans had been seeing for weeks: Mr. Biden was falling behind, nationally and in key battleground states.

There was still a path to victory, they advised him, but the fight would be ugly. The president would be pitted against his donors, half of his party in Congress and Democratic voters who had concluded that he was too old to win.

For more than three weeks, Mr. Biden had insisted he would stay in the race. Only the “Lord Almighty,” he said, could get him to

drop out.

But by that Saturday evening, something had shifted.

It was not just about the polls, people close to Mr. Biden say. Despite everything, Mr. Biden believed he could still claim the Democratic nomination and beat former President Donald J. Trump. Aides say that he still believes that.

What began to change the president’s mind, people familiar with his thinking say, was the realization that if he stayed in the race, he was in for a lonely battle that would rip apart the Democratic Party, the cause he had served nearly his entire life. Would a man who views himself as the ultimate consensus builder in Washington want to wage an intraparty war that would run counter to the fabric of who he is?

That day, Mr. Biden asked a key question.

“If we were going to do it,” Mr. Biden asked his two advisers, “what would we say?”

A statement was drafted, known only to four other people: the first lady and her closest aide, Anthony Bernal; the president’s son Hunter; and Annie Tomasini, the gatekeeper at the White House and the president’s deputy chief of staff.

But first, he wanted a few hours to think.

At 9 p.m. that evening, the president excused himself. It was time to call it a night.

To many outsiders, it seemed almost

*Continued on Page A13*



President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris on Thursday in Largo, Md., their first rally together since he dropped out.

## U.S. Shares Prices of First Drugs Picked for Medicare Negotiation

By **NOAH WEILAND and REBECCA ROBBINS**

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration on Thursday unveiled the results of landmark drug price negotiations between Medicare and pharmaceutical companies, allowing President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris to cast themselves as confronting the drug industry on behalf of older Americans at a critical moment in the presidential campaign.

The negotiated prices, which take effect in 2026, are expected to save billions of dollars for Medicare, which is funded by taxpayers. But they will lead to direct out-of-pocket savings for only a subset of the millions of older Americans who take the drugs subject to negotiations.

Other provisions of the law that created the drug negotiation program, such as capping patients’ expenses for insulin and their

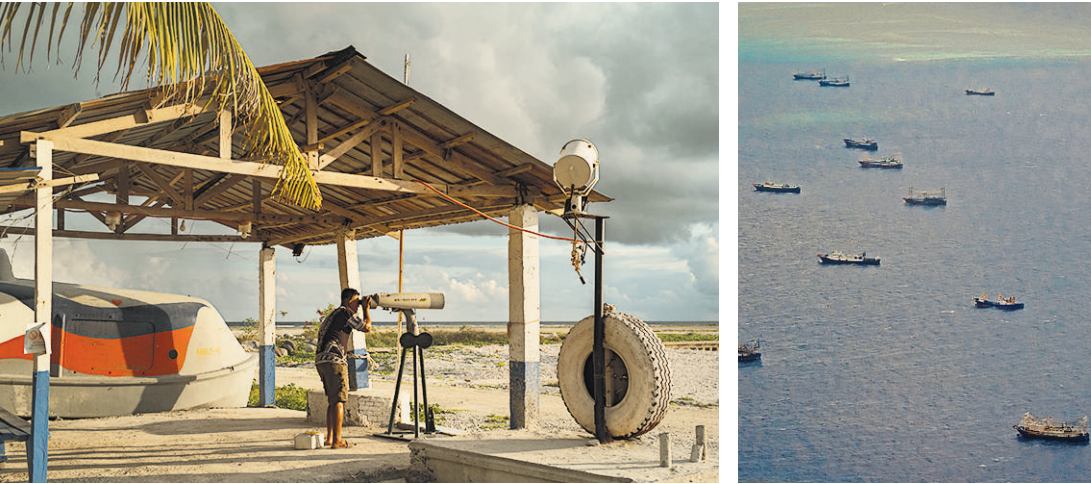
### List of 10 Medications Is Expected to Save Program Billions

yearly out-of-pocket drug costs, will do more to save older Americans money at the pharmacy counter.

The 10 drugs subject to negotiations include widely used blood thinners and arthritis medications. Had the new prices been in effect last year, administration officials said, Medicare would have saved \$6 billion, which would have reduced its spending on those drugs by 22 percent.

“This is a fight all of us have been fighting for a long time: taking on Big Pharma,” Mr. Biden said at an event in Maryland celebrating the announcement, where he and Ms. Harris had their first

*Continued on Page A17*



More than 200 people on Thitu Island, part of a contested section of the South China Sea, find themselves on the frontier of a possible conflict with China. Top, children play near an old fortification on Thitu; an off-duty soldier with binoculars; and Chinese ships in the Spratly archipelago.

### THITU ISLAND DISPATCH

## Island Idyll in Shadow of China’s Military Might

By **CAMILLE ELEMIA**

THITU, Spratly Islands — For travelers flying into the tiny island of Thitu, the reality of China’s territorial ambition becomes instantly clear. There they are: dozens of Chinese ships surrounding a speck of land that a few hundred Filipinos call home.

For now though, life is mostly peaceful and slow on the island. Small wooden fishing boats line a white sand beach on the eastern shore. Rough houses pieced together from plywood, scrap lumber and tarps are the main form of shelter. On a recent evening, a few people gathered near the beach to debone fish, while others waded into tide pools with fishing spears.

But the calm belies the fact

its claim to Thitu, which it calls Pag-asa, or hope, and reduce hostilities with China.

These civilians are the only ones in the Spratly Islands — a chain of 100 or so atolls, reefs and cays in the South China Sea that may have significant oil reserves and is claimed by six countries. And they find themselves in the middle of a tense geopolitical dispute.

Marjorie Ganizo and her husband, Junie Antonio Ganizo, moved here with their eight children in November despite what they saw as the risk of a Chinese invasion.

“In the end, we had to ask ourselves: hunger or fear?” Ms. Ganizo, 36, said. “No matter where you are, if it’s your time to die, it’s your time to die.”

Tensions have flared between

*Continued on Page A6*

### It’s ‘Hunger or Fear’ for Filipinos Settling in Contested Waters

## Walz’s Policy on Guns Shifted In Transition to Governorship

By **MIKE MCINTIRE**

In a tight primary for governor in 2018, Tim Walz, then a congressman from a conservative pro-gun district in Minnesota, was rebuked for his A ratings from the National Rifle Association. After a school shooting in Parkland, Fla., he went on the offensive.

Mr. Walz wrote an opinion piece asserting that he had “repeatedly voted in favor” of tougher background checks, federal gun violence research and firearm bans for people on no-fly lists. He had “voted for universal background checks more than anybody in this race,” he told an interviewer. And he posted a video in which he said he had voted “dozens of times” in Congress for stronger gun laws.

Gun advocates, however, had never questioned his loyalty as a legislator. The N.R.A. kept giving him high marks until he ran for governor, and Guns & Ammo magazine in 2016 named him one of its



Gov. Tim Walz signing a gun control bill last year in St. Paul.

top 20 lawmakers.

“While most congressional Democrats have jumped on the gun control train with both feet,” the magazine said, “Tim Walz and a few others have stuck to their guns.”

Which version of Mr. Walz, now running for vice president, was

*Continued on Page A13*

## Cautious Optimism at Columbia As President Departs the Chaos

This article is by **Sharon Otterman, Stephanie Saul and Wesley Parnell.**

Columbia University students and faculty confronted a tangle of emotions on Thursday morning after the sudden departure of the school’s president, Nemat Shafik.

Some protesters and politicians who had harried her for months celebrated and claimed victory. Other students and faculty members contemplating her departure were saddened. But there was also cautious optimism that the new interim president, Katrina Armstrong, could better manage a chaotic campus situation that in many ways had become ungovernable for Dr. Shafik.

As a newcomer to Columbia, Dr. Shafik had limited experience to help her navigate tensions among different factions on campus and manage a pro-Palestinian movement undeterred by suspensions, arrests and locked campus gates.



Nemat Shafik resigned her post as Columbia’s president.

She was criticized by both those who thought she did too much to crack down on protesters and those who thought she did not do enough.

But Dr. Shafik’s departure still left some students and faculty members with a sense of sadness that the university had become so

*Continued on Page A19*



INTERNATIONAL A4-11

**Erasing Sign of Racist Past**

Rooms in older apartment buildings for maids, a relic of Brazil’s history of slavery, are vanishing. PAGE A4

**The Taliban Celebrate**

Afghanistan is exulting in the third anniversary of the U.S. pullout with a renewed embrace of jihad. PAGE A5

NATIONAL A12-19, 22

**Mar-a-Lago Attracts Far Right**

Former President Donald J. Trump’s Florida resort has become the center of gravity for the MAGA wing of the Republican Party. PAGE A14

**5 Indicted in Actor’s Death**

Three people are pleading guilty to conspiring to distribute the powerful anesthetic that led to the death of the “Friends” star Matthew Perry. PAGE A19

**Bronx Rezoning Moves Ahead**

The New York City Council approved a plan to add about 7,000 housing units near four new rail stations, radically reshaping the East Bronx. PAGE A17

SPORTS B6-9

**A Core N.F.L. Workout**

Pilates is gaining devoted practitioners in part because of an explosion of video posts featuring athletes’ sweating and shaking workouts. PAGE B6

OBITUARIES B10-11

**Creator of Famous Amos**

With a family recipe and a bit of charisma, Wally Amos, 88, built one of the best-known cookie brands. PAGE B10

**Oscar-Nominated Actress**

Gena Rowlands often played intoxicated, deranged or otherwise on-the-verge characters. She was 94. PAGE B11



BUSINESS B1-5

**A Big Move on Housing**

Reviving an idea from the ’40s, Britain aims to overcome development hurdles and build new towns. PAGE B1

**Flagging Fake News Again**

The Justice Department set new rules for F.B.I. agents to share tips with Big Tech after dialogue ceased. PAGE B1

WEEKEND ARTS C1-10

**A Collaboration With Nature**

The ocean plays a big role in a dance celebrating Beach Sessions, a performance series at Rockaway Beach. PAGE C6

**Acclaimed on Broadway**

Sydney Lemmon has won praise for her role in “Job,” about a content moderator having a mental breakdown. PAGE C1

OPINION A20-21

**David Brooks** PAGE A21

