

“All the News  
That’s Fit to Print”

# The New York Times

**THE WEATHER**  
Today, cloudy, mild, periodic rain, high 53. **Tonight**, cloudy, mild, rain at times, low 45. **Tomorrow**, early rain, still cloudy, very mild, high 55. Weather map appears on Page B12.

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY ATUL LOKE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES  
The opening of a Hindu temple in Ayodhya, in northern India, on Monday. Narendra Modi, the prime minister, led the inauguration.

## A New Temple Embodies Modi’s Merger of Religion and Politics

**By MUJIB MASHAL and HARI KUMAR**  
AYODHYA, India — They fanned out across the vast country, knocking on doors in the name of a cause that would redefine India.  
These foot soldiers and organizers, including a young Narendra Modi, collected millions of dollars to be socked away for a long fight to build a grand Hindu temple in Ayodhya, in northern India. Across 200,000 villages, ceremonies were arranged to bless individual bricks that would be sent to that sacred city, believed by Hindus to be the birthplace of the deity Ram.  
The bricks, the campaign’s leaders declared, would not just be used for the temple’s construction on land occupied for centuries by a mosque. They would be the foundation for a Hindu rashtra, or Hindu nation, that would correct what right-wing Hindus saw as the injustice of India’s birth as a secular republic.  
Nearly four decades later, the cornerstone of that sweeping vision has been laid.  
Mr. Modi, now the country’s prime minister, inaugurated the Ram temple in Ayodhya on Monday — the crowning achievement

**For Hindu Nationalists, a Moment of Glory**  
of a national movement aimed at establishing Hindu supremacy in India by rallying the country’s Hindu majority across castes and tribes.  
“Today, our Ram has come. After centuries of patience and sacrifice, our Lord Ram has come,” Mr. Modi said during the ceremony. “It is the beginning of a new era.”  
The moment is both one of triumph for Hindu nationalists and one of jubilation for many others who care little for politics. Ram Muslims, the Ram temple has reinforced a sense of despair and dislocation.  
The Babri Mosque, which the Hindu side argued was built after Muslim rulers destroyed an earlier Hindu temple in the spot, was brought down in 1992 by Hindu activists, unleashing waves of sectarian violence that left thousands dead. The manner in which the mosque was razed set a precedent of impunity that reverberates today: lynchings of Muslim men across the country.  
But for the country’s 200 million



Prayers outside the temple, which was built on the site of a mosque destroyed by a Hindu mob.

## Inside Capitol, G.O.P. Rushes To Fall in Line

### Coalescing for Trump Faster Than in 2016

**By ANNIE KARNI**  
WASHINGTON — Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, the Georgia Republican and die-hard ally of former President Donald J. Trump, was exasperated with her colleagues as she left the House floor last Thursday evening.  
“I don’t know if it’s sunk in this place around here,” Ms. Greene vented as she headed for the elevators and then for Manchester, N.H., where she was stumping for the former president. “I’ve been telling everyone that President Trump is the leader of the Republican Party; he’s going to be our presidential nominee. It’s time for all Republicans to get behind his policies.”  
If it hadn’t sunk in yet, it has now.

After Mr. Trump won the New Hampshire primary by 11 percentage points on Tuesday night following his steamrolling victory in the Iowa caucuses, the small segment of Republicans in Congress who had tried to distance themselves from him, ignore him, cast doubt on his staying power or condemn him have begun swiftly falling into line behind him. And this time, it is happening even faster than it did in 2016, when Mr. Trump first subsumed his party.  
In the Senate, at least 29 Republicans — more than half the conference — have now endorsed Mr. Trump, compared with zero for the lone Republican challenger still standing, former Gov. Nikki Haley of South Carolina, who vowed on Tuesday night to carry on with her campaign despite outlining no clear path to victory.

In the Republican-controlled House, which has acted as Mr. Trump’s sword and shield, vulnerable Republicans who represent districts President Biden won in 2020 are speed walking to the Trump bandwagon, where their MAGA-loving colleagues are greeting them with an “I told you so.”

Two of them, Representatives Brandon Williams and Nick LaLota of New York, said that Mr. Trump was the party’s inevitable nominee and that they fully supported the voters’ choice. Representative John Duarte, a California Republican whose district Mr. Biden won in 2020 by almost 11 points, told Axios that he expected

## Why Trump Is Vulnerable Despite Wins

### Voters Outside Base Signal Tougher Road

**By MICHAEL C. BENDER and LISA LERER**  
For weeks, Donald J. Trump has romped through Iowa and New Hampshire without breaking a sweat, muscling out rivals for the Republican nomination and soaking up adoration from crowds convinced he will be the next president of the United States.  
But as Mr. Trump marches steadily toward his party’s nomination, a harsher reality awaits him.

Outside the soft bubble of Republican primaries, Mr. Trump’s campaign is confronting enduring vulnerabilities that make his nomination a considerable risk for his party. Those weaknesses were laid bare in New Hampshire on Tuesday, where independents, college-educated voters and Republicans unwilling to dismiss his legal jeopardy voted in large numbers for his rival, Nikki Haley.  
Mr. Trump still won easily. The voters opposed to his bid didn’t outnumber the many Republicans clamoring to see him return to power. But the results, delivered by more than 310,000 voters in a politically divided state, pointed to the trouble ahead for Mr. Trump as the presidential race leaves MAGA world and enters a broader electorate, one that rejected him less than four years ago.

“When I have people come up to me who voted for Reagan in ’76 and have been conservative their whole life say that they don’t want to vote for Trump again, that’s a problem,” Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida said Tuesday in an interview with Blaze TV, a conservative media company, just a couple of days after he ended his own campaign and endorsed Mr. Trump. “So he’s got to figure out a way to solve that.”

President Biden would face his own challenges in a rematch of the 2020 contest. Unlike four

*Continued on Page A15*  
**ENDORSEMENT** President Biden received the United Automobile Workers’ backing. PAGE A13

## Biden Officials Poised to Delay Big Gas Project

**By CORAL DAVENPORT**  
WASHINGTON — The Biden administration is pausing a decision on whether to approve what would be the largest natural gas export terminal in the United States, a delay that could stretch past the November election and spell trouble for that project and 16 other proposed terminals, according to three people with knowledge of the matter.  
The White House is directing the Energy Department to expand its evaluation of the project to consider its impact on climate change, as well as the economy and national security, said these people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss internal deliberations. The Energy Department has never rejected a proposed natural gas project because of its expected environmental impact.  
The move comes as President Biden gears up for what is likely to

## In the U.K., a Weighty Ruling On What Makes a Chip a Chip

**By ALI WATKINS**  
LONDON — No profit grows, Shakespeare once wrote, where no pleasure is taken. And so in the tedious march of life, we find joy in small things: The rising of the sun. A fine glass of wine. The greasy snap of a well-dressed potato crisp.  
But soft! Not so fast. Life affords no simple pleasures, and even that delectable crunch comes with a weighty debate: How much potato doth a true crisp — chip, to the Americans — contain?  
This — and several other probing questions of the crisp aficionado — was immortalized by a British tax appeals court last week, which ruled that Walkers Sensations Poppadoms, the fluffy, non-crisp-appearing potato medallions, are, in fact, the same as potato crisps.  
Thus, we add to the hallowed roster of existential food debates, the moral implications of which far surpass their subjects’ consumable utility. Among them: Is a Jaffa Cake a cake, or a biscuit? Does a Chicago-style pie count as



JEREMIE SOUTEYRAT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES  
Walkers poppadoms, or chips?

## Russia Blames Kyiv for Crash of Military Plane

**By ANDREW E. KRAMER and IVAN NECHEPURENKO**

KYIV, Ukraine — A large Russian military transport plane crashed on Wednesday near the border with Ukraine killing everyone onboard, the Russian Defense Ministry said, accusing Ukraine of shooting down the plane with missiles.  
The ministry said in a statement that the plane had been carrying 65 Ukrainian prisoners of war who were being transferred to the Belgorod region to be exchanged for Russian service personnel. It accused Ukrainian forces of launching two missiles from the nearby Kharkiv region of Ukraine that struck the aircraft. The plane was also carrying six crew members and three other individuals, the ministry said.  
The Russian claims could not be independently verified.  
Officials in Kyiv did not comment directly on Moscow’s accusations that Ukraine shot down the plane, or its claims that Ukrainian prisoners of war died in the crash. The military’s general staff headquarters issued a statement Wednesday afternoon asserting a right to target Russian

### Claims Transport Held Ukrainian P.O.W.s

military transport airplanes in the border region.  
But later Wednesday, Ukraine’s military intelligence agency hinted that the episode might have been a tragic mistake, saying that Russia had not informed it that prisoners would be flown to Belgorod’s airport, as was the case in previous exchanges. The airport is within range of Ukrainian



UGC, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Video posted to Telegram showed a crash in the Belgorod region.

#### INTERNATIONAL A4-11

**Hungary Stalls on Sweden**  
Viktor Orban appears to be exploiting Sweden’s bid to join NATO for his own gains. News Analysis. PAGE A9

**6-Day Rail Strike in Germany**  
The walkout, over pay and hours, caused the cancellation of most intercity and commuter trains. PAGE A5



#### NATIONAL A12-17, 20

**Safe Haven Under Threat**  
More than a million people have entered the U.S. temporarily under a program that the G.O.P. wants to limit. PAGE A12

**New York Called ‘Far Stronger’**  
In his State of the City speech, Mayor Eric Adams focused on how “crime is down” and “jobs are up.” PAGE A17

**Confirmed Big Bang Theory**  
Dr. Arno A. Penzias, whose 1964 discovery with Dr. Robert W. Wilson settled a debate over the origin and evolution of the universe, was 90. PAGE B11

#### BUSINESS B1-5

**Fading Power of S.I.’s Cover**  
Once a definer of sports discourse, Sports Illustrated and its cover have lost influence, and much more. PAGE B1

**Quality Control at Boeing**  
New details are emerging about the preparation of the 737 Max 9 plane that blew out a door plug midflight. PAGE B1

**A Star Stays in Hollywood**  
JuJu Watkins turned down top basketball programs to play for Southern California and try to lift a school in her hometown. PAGE B6

#### THURSDAY STYLES D1-6

**Fashion Way Forward**  
Iris Van Herpen displays otherworldly designs in a show at a Paris museum, Vanessa Friedman writes. PAGE D4

**A View From the Front Row**  
Projecting himself into the latest styles in Paris, our critic poses the question: “Could I pull that off?” PAGE D1



#### ARTS C1-6

**A Politically Charged Show**  
The Whitney Biennial will feature a “dissonant chorus” of artists presenting their views of turbulent times. PAGE C1

**An Actress’s Breakout Year**  
Ji-young Yoo, starring with Nicole Kidman in “Expats” on Amazon, still can’t believe she landed the role. PAGE C1

**OPINION A18-19**  
**Nicholas Kristof** PAGE A18

