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CESAR RODRIGUEZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Distributing containers to collect water in Mexico City, where scores of neighborhoods are rationing the dwindling supply.

For Millions in Mexico City, Water Is Disappearing

This article is by James Wagner, Emiliano Rodriguez Mega and Somini Sengupta.

MEXICO CITY — A collision of climate change, urban sprawl and poor infrastructure has pushed Mexico City to the brink of a profound water crisis.

The groundwater is quickly vanishing. A key reservoir got so low that it is no longer used to supply water. Last year was Mexico's hottest and driest in at least 70 years. And one of the city's main water systems faces a potential "Day Zero" this summer when levels dip so much that it, too, will no longer provide water.

"We're suffering because the city is growing immeasurably and it cannot be stopped," said Gabriel Martinez, 64, who lives in an apartment complex that strug-

Drought and Sprawl Push Resource to the Brink

gles to get enough water for its roughly 600 residents. "There aren't enough resources."

Mexico City, once a water-rich valley that was drained to make way for a vast city, has a metropolitan population of 23 million, among the top 10 largest in the world and up from 15 million in 1990. It is one of several major cities facing severe water shortages, including Cape Town; São Paulo, Brazil; and Chennai, India. Many are the consequence of years of

poor water management compounded by scarce rains.

And while Mexico City's problems are worsening, they are not new. Some neighborhoods have lacked adequate piped water for years, but today, communities that have never had shortages are suddenly facing them.

Experts were warning about dwindling water supplies almost two decades ago to little avail. If the capital's water network was already held together by a thread then, now "some parts of the system are falling apart," said Manuel Perló Cohen, an urban planning researcher who studies Mexico City's water system.

"Mexico is the biggest market in the world for bottled water," said Roberto Con-

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New Centrism Is on the Rise In U.S. Politics

Common Ground Over Mistrust of Free Market

By DAVID LEONHARDT

WASHINGTON — It may be the most discussed fact about American politics today: The country is deeply polarized. The Republican Party has moved to the right by many

measures, and the Democratic Party has moved to the left. Each party sees the other as an existential threat. One consequence of this polarization, politicians and pundits often say, is gridlock in Washington.

But in a country that is supposed to have a gridlocked federal government, the past four years are hard to explain. These years have been arguably the most productive period of Washington bipartisanship in decades.

During the Covid pandemic, Democrats and Republicans in Congress came together to pass emergency responses. Under President Biden, bipartisan majorities have passed major laws on infrastructure and semiconductor chips, as well as laws on veterans' health, gun violence, the Postal Service, the aviation system, same-sex marriage, anti-Asian hate crimes and the electoral process. On trade, the Biden administration has kept some of the Trump administration's signature policies and even expanded them.

The trend has continued over the past month, first with the passage of a bipartisan bill to aid Ukraine and other allies and to force a sale of TikTok by its Chinese owner. After the bill's passage, far-right House Republicans tried to oust Speaker Mike Johnson because he did not block it — and House Democrats voted to save his job. There is no precedent for House members of one party to rescue a speaker from the other. Last week, the House advanced another bipartisan bill, on disaster relief, using a rare procedural technique to get

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NETANYAHU FACES A WAR COALITION THAT IS FRAYING

ANGER OVER HOSTAGES

Top Official Wants Plan for Gaza by June 8 or Says He'll Resign

This article is by Aaron Boxerman, Ephrat Livni and Kayla Guo.

JERUSALEM — Benny Gantz, a centrist member of Israel's war cabinet, presented Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with an ultimatum on Saturday, saying he would leave the government if it did not soon develop a plan for the future of the war in Gaza.

While Mr. Gantz's departure would not topple the country's emergency wartime government, the move would further strain a fragile coalition that has provided Mr. Netanyahu's far-right government with a boost of international legitimacy, and it would make the prime minister even more reliant on his hard-line partners.

"If you choose the path of zealots, dragging the country into the abyss, we will be forced to leave the government," Mr. Gantz said in a televised news conference. "We will turn to the people and build a government that will earn the people's trust."

Mr. Gantz, who leads the National Unity party, said he would give Mr. Netanyahu until June 8 — three weeks' time — to develop a plan that would aim to secure the release of hostages taken to Gaza by Hamas-led militants on Oct. 7, address the future governance of the territory, return displaced Israelis to their homes and advance normalization with Saudi Arabia, among other issues.

Mr. Gantz's ultimatum was the latest sign of pressure building on Mr. Netanyahu to develop a post-war plan. The prime minister is increasingly being squeezed — externally from Israel's closest ally, the United States, and from within his own war cabinet — to clarify a strategy for Gaza. Just days earlier

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U.S. Preparing To Fight Rivals In Outer Space

By ERIC LIPTON

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is rushing to expand its capacity to wage war in space, convinced that rapid advances by China and Russia in space-based operations pose a growing threat to U.S. troops and other military assets on the ground and American satellites in orbit.

Details of the push by the Pentagon remain highly classified. But Defense Department officials have acknowledged that the initiative reflects a major shift in military operations as space increasingly becomes a battleground.

No longer will the United States simply rely on military satellites to communicate, navigate and track and target terrestrial threats, tools that for decades have given the Pentagon a major advantage in conflicts.

Instead, the Defense Department is looking to acquire a new generation of ground- and space-based tools that will allow it to defend its satellite network from attack and, if necessary, to disrupt or disable enemy spacecraft in orbit, Pentagon officials have said in a series of interviews, speeches and recent statements.

The strategy differs fundamentally from previous military programs in space by expanding the range of offensive capabilities — a

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The Jungle homeless encampment in Ithaca, N.Y. "Just a very dark place," said a former resident.

When Tommy Rath Vanished From Ithaca's Squalid 'Jungle'

By DAN BARRY

ITHACA, N.Y. — The sprawling homeless encampment behind a stand of big-box stores has been around so long that people in the upstate New York city of Ithaca call it by name, as if referring to a neighborhood or historic district.

Police dispatchers use the term as a geographic point of reference: "There's a very large fire coming from the Jungle behind Carpet Warehouse . . ."

The Jungle.

Tucked beside railroad tracks that course through gnarly woods, the encampment harbors the disenchanted and distrustful, the addicted and the unwell, the vulnerable and the predatory. It is an off-the-grid community, a hideout, a drug den, a home for people

with nowhere else to go. A place of freedom and fire, overdose and escape, where the police are uncertain of their role and first responders enter with caution.

But the Jungle reflects more than the often-intertwined plagues of drug addiction, mental illness and homelessness. It is also a manifestation of the policies of a proudly progressive city of 33,000 people that, like

so many other communities around the country, is struggling to find a solution to its island of misery.

Recent walks into the Jungle were journeys through the detritus of desperation: discarded shopping carts, soggy plush toys, used needles, pilfered building

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Are Those Street Mimes Actually Government Spies? Pakistanis Don't Doubt It.

By CHRISTINA GOLDBAUM

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — The street performers first appeared a few years ago along busy intersections of Islamabad. Coated head to toe in eye-catching gold paint, they stood perfectly still, leaning on glimmering canes and tipping their top hats open. Some

cracked a smile or offered a slow nod when they earned tips from passers-by.

Perhaps in a different place, the emergence of mimes on the street looking to earn a few dollars might go unnoticed. But this is Pakistan, where things under the security state often are not as simple as they seem. So as the number of

golden performers grew, so, too, did the intrigue around them. Could they be informants for the country's intelligence agency? Lookouts for powerful politicians? Maybe spies for the C.I.A.?

"In any other country, if you see a beggar, it's clear he's a beggar," said Habib Kareem, 26, a lawyer in

Islamabad, the capital. "But here, you see a beggar and you think to yourself, 'He's working for them,'" he added, referring to Pakistan's powerful intelligence services.

Today, the "golden men" of Islamabad have been added to the ranks of the conspiracy theories sprouted, knocked down and rehashed every day across the city.

In Pakistan, where the hand of the security services is seen everywhere, conspiracy theories have been embraced in the mainstream for decades, driving conversations among street vendors, politicians and everyone in between.

Suspicion has become so universal that wild tales take root af-

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Screening a Cautionary Tale

When the movie "Io Capitano," about some of the perils of migration, was shown in Senegal, audiences responded with their life stories.

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Move Over, Moon Pies

Hot cabbage slaw became Tennessee's first official state food. Then everyone had to learn what it was.

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A Different Georgia for Biden

Four years after the state's emergence as a battleground, the president is facing new challenges.

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Tens of thousands of readers told us where their New York neighborhoods start and end. We mapped them all.

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Teenage boys' spending on fragrance rose significantly this past year, according to a survey, with luxury brands like Valentino gaining popularity.

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As nominations for the Tony Awards approached, shows opened aplenty. We talk with actors, while our chief critic evaluates the nominees.

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Maureen Dowd

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Rising Respect for Lowriders

The flashy, customized cars are more than just a way to get around. They are also rolling works of art.

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In New York, walkers, drivers and riders on two wheels fight for dwindling space in a 200-year-old grid.

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The End of a Trade Era

New tariffs on Chinese goods, including a 100 percent tax on electric vehicles, may help America's economy, but consumers may not like the costs.

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Extremist Takeover of Israel

After 50 years of failure to stop violence and terrorism against Palestinians by Jewish ultranationalists, lawlessness has become the law.



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