

All the News  
That's Fit to Print

# The New York Times

THE WEATHER

Today, warm, partly cloudy, high 85. Tonight, cloudy, warm, low 68. Tomorrow, a severe afternoon thunderstorm, clouds and sun, humid, high 85. Weather map, Page B12.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2024

Prices in Canada may be higher

\$4.00

## Biden's Truce With Big Oil Is Collapsing

### A Pause on Gas Exports Rankles Executives

By LISA FRIEDMAN and REBECCA ELLIOTT

Early in his term, President Biden seemed to have struck an uneasy truce with the oil and gas industry.

Mr. Biden had imposed restrictions on drilling as part of his ambitious climate agenda, but he also approved an enormous \$8 billion oil project in Alaska. The United States had become the world's leading exporter of natural gas, and no other country in history was pumping more crude. The industry was enjoying record profits.

Then, in January, Mr. Biden paused new permits for export facilities for liquefied natural gas.

That decision galvanized oil and gas companies against Mr. Biden, according to industry lobbyists, and will be an undercurrent at a fund-raising lunch set for Wednesday in Houston. The luncheon, organized by three oil executives, will benefit former President Donald J. Trump, who is running to unseat Mr. Biden and is expected to attend, according to several people who have seen the invitation.

To the industry, Mr. Biden's pause on new gas export permits "was a wake-up call," said Thomas J. Pyle, president of the American Energy Alliance, which supports the fossil fuel industry. "He could be potentially icing billions of dollars in long-term L.N.G. contracts. That's real. That's tangible."

One of the luncheon hosts is the billionaire Kelcy Lee Warren, who, as executive chairman of Energy Transfer, has built a national network of pipelines, including those serving L.N.G. export facilities. His Dallas-based company, which exports oil and gas products to about 50 countries, tangled with the Biden administration last year when it refused to extend a permit for a proposed export terminal that had run into delays. An indefinite pause on new permits complicates plans by Energy Transfer to continue an international expansion.

Another host, Harold G. Hamm, the executive chairman and founder of Continental Resources, is one of the pioneers of the shale oil boom that turned the United States into the world's largest crude exporter. Also expected to join is Vicki Hollub, the chief executive of Occidental Petroleum, one of the top U.S. oil producers.

The private luncheon to benefit MAGA Inc., a pro-Trump super PAC, comes about a month after Mr. Trump hosted energy executives over dinner at Mar-a-Lago, his resort in Florida. He asked them to donate \$1 billion to his campaign so that he could retake the White House and dismantle Mr. Biden's climate regulations,

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RALPH TEDY EROL/REUTERS

An armed gang member in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. A Kenyan-led multinational force will soon deploy to Haiti to combat gang violence.

## Haitian Gangs Expand Power And Influence

By MARIA ABI-HABIB

They have a stranglehold on the country's infrastructure, from police stations to seaports. They have chased hundreds of thousands of people from the capital. And they are suspected of having ties to the 2021 assassination of Haiti's president.

Western diplomats and officials say the influence and capability of many Haitian gangs are evolving, making them ever more threatening to the Kenyan-led multinational police force soon deploying to Haiti as well as the fragile transitional council trying to set a path for elections.

With their arrival just days away, the 2,500 police officers will confront a better equipped, funded, trained and unified gang force than any mission previously deployed to the Caribbean nation, security experts say.

Once largely reliant on Haiti's political and business elite for money, some gangs have found independent financial lifelines since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021 and the collapse of the state that ensued.

"The gangs had been making their money from kidnappings and extortion and from payouts from politicians during elections and the business elites in between," said William O'Neill, the United Nations-appointed human

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## Homeowners Feel Pinch as Insurers' Losses Rise

By CHRISTOPHER FLAVELLE and MIRA ROJANASAKUL

At first glance, Dave Langston's predicament seems similar to headaches facing homeowners in coastal states vulnerable to catastrophic hurricanes: As disasters became more frequent and severe, his insurance company had been losing money. Then, it canceled his coverage and left the state.

But Mr. Langston lives in Iowa. Relatively consistent weather once made Iowa a good bet for insurance companies. But now, as a warming planet makes events like hail and wind storms worse, insurers are fleeing.

Mr. Langston spent months trying to find another company to in-

### With Climate Disasters Increasing, Coverage Is Tougher to Get

sure the townhouses, on a quiet cul-de-sac at the edge of Cedar Rapids, that belong to members of his homeowners association. Without coverage, "if we were to have damage that hit all 17 units, we're looking at bankruptcy for all of us," he said.

The insurance turmoil caused by climate change — which had been concentrated in Florida, California and Louisiana — is fast becoming a contagion, spreading to states like Iowa, Arkansas, Ohio,

Utah and Washington. Even in the Northeast, where homeowners insurance was still generally profitable last year, the trends are worsening.

In 2023, insurers lost money on homeowners coverage in 18 states, more than a third of the country, according to a New York Times analysis of newly available financial data. That's up from 12 states five years ago, and eight states in 2013. The result is that insurance companies are raising premiums by as much as 50 percent or more, cutting back on coverage or leaving entire states altogether. Nationally, over the last decade, insurers paid out more in claims than they received in premiums, according to the ratings

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JAMIE KELTER DAVIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

'Instead of doing what they're supposed to do, which is serve their customers, they are cutting them loose by the droves.'

ELDON NEIGHBOR, an insurance agent in Iowa, who lost his own home insurance when his carrier left the state.

## Solving for X in Middle Schools Has Become a National Problem

By TROY CLOSSON

From suburbs in the Northeast to major cities on the West Coast, a surprising subject is prompting ballot measures, lawsuits and bitter fights among parents: algebra.

Students have been required for decades to learn to solve for the variable x, and to find the slope of a line. Most complete the course in their first year of high school. But top-achievers are sometimes allowed to enroll earlier, typically in eighth grade.

The dual pathways inspire some of the most fiery debates over equity and academic opportunity in American education.

Do bias and inequality keep Black and Latino children off the

fast track? Should middle schools eliminate algebra to level the playing field? What if standout pupils lose the chance to challenge themselves?

The questions are so fraught because algebra functions as a crucial crossroads in the education system.

Students who fail it are far less likely to graduate. Those who take it early can take calculus by 12th grade, giving them a potential edge when applying to elite universities and lifting them toward society's most high-status and lucrative professions.

But racial and economic gaps in

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## Kennedy's Sister Is Leading Her Family's Rallying Cry for Biden

By ADAM NAGOURNEY

When members of the Kennedy family joined President Biden in Philadelphia to endorse his reelection — and denounce the presidential candidacy of the best-known Kennedy of this generation, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. — one person stepped forward to make the family's case: his younger sister Kerry.

"Nearly every single grandchild of Joe and Rose Kennedy supports Joe Biden," Ms. Kennedy said as her siblings, and Mr. Biden, flanked her onstage. "That's right: The Kennedy family endorses Joe Biden for president."

That was not the first time that Ms. Kennedy, the seventh child of Robert and Ethel Kennedy, had been the face of the family's pushback against her brother. As Mr.

### Says Opposing Brother Is 'Heart-Wrenching'

Kennedy has emerged as a skeptic of Covid-19 vaccines and a purveyor of conspiratorial theories on the assassination of his father, it has fallen to Ms. Kennedy to distance her family from the brother

she has long held close and to guard the legacy of a proud and private family as it fades from the political stage.

To a large extent, Ms. Kennedy's siblings say, her outside role is an outgrowth of the affection she has displayed toward her brother since they were children playing on the grounds of the family estate in Hickory Hill, Va. —

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INTERNATIONAL A4-10

### Zelenskyy Challenges West

"Shoot down what's in the sky over Ukraine," he said in a wide-ranging interview with The Times.

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### Election Will Test Iran's Rulers

Tehran must either allow moderate rivals to run for president or limit candidates and risk low turnout.

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BUSINESS B1-5

### Skimming Off Food Stamps

Thieves are using skimmers on electronic benefits cards issued to the neediest Americans to drain millions in public welfare funds.

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### Johansson Turned Down A.I.

OpenAI released a chatbot with a voice that sounded like hers, though she had twice refused to license it.

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SPORTS B6-9, 12

### A Tough, Impactful Rehab

Blake Wheeler's effort to return after a serious injury in February has inspired the New York Rangers.

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### Hauling Pathogens All Over

Millions of farm animals cross state lines each year, traveling in conditions that can spread disease.

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### Jail Death Lawsuit Settled

A violent encounter captured on video helped spur an inquiry into a California sheriff's department.

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ARTS C1-6

### Finding Their Own Answers

Emma Stone, Jesse Plemons and Willem Dafoe, stars of Yorgos Lanthimos's new film, "Kinds of Kindness," say that when working with the director, the less you know, the better.

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### An Attempt to Free Up Cash

In the wake of its failed, "fake" Basquiat exhibition and amid a financial crisis, the Orlando Museum of Art asked a Florida court to modify restrictions placed on a donor's bequest.

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OPINION A20-21

### Thomas L. Friedman

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FOOD D1-8

### Singularly Delicious

Preparing a meal just for yourself can feel like a real burden night after night, but we have some suggestions on how to make it less of a chore.

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