

All the News  
That's Fit to Print™

# The New York Times

THE WEATHER

Today, a passing rain or snow shower, breezy, high 43. **Tonight**, mainly clear and dry, low 30. **Tomorrow**, dry, plenty of sunshine, high 45. Weather map appears on Page A20.

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2023

Prices in Canada may be higher

\$4.00



TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

**Assessing an Underground Network**  
The Israeli military showed part of what it says is the biggest Hamas tunnel it has found since invading the Gaza Strip. Page A6.

## How Putin Turned a Western Boycott Into a War Chest Bonanza

**By PAUL SONNE and REBECCA R. RUIZ**

Soon after Russian troops invaded his country, the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky, made a plea to Western companies: “Leave Russia,” he said. “Make sure that the Russians do not receive a single penny.”

Hundreds of companies answered the call. Politicians and activists predicted that it would help strangle the Russian economy and undermine the Kremlin’s war effort.

President Vladimir V. Putin had other plans.

Mr. Putin has turned the exits of major Western companies into a windfall for Russia’s loyal elite and the state itself. He has forced companies wishing to sell to do so at fire-sale prices. He has limited sales to buyers anointed by Moscow. Sometimes he has seized firms outright.

A New York Times investigation traced how Mr. Putin has turned an expected misfortune into an enrichment scheme. Western companies that have an-

**Forced Companies Into Fire Sales, Enriching His Loyal Elite**

nounced departures have declared more than \$103 billion in losses since the start of the war, according to a Times analysis of financial reports.

Mr. Putin has squeezed companies for as much of that wealth as possible by dictating the terms of their departure.

He has also subjected those exits to ever-increasing taxes, generating at least \$1.25 billion in the last year for Russia’s war chest.

No private deal is safe. The Dutch beer company Heineken, for example, found a buyer this spring and set a price.

But the Russian government unilaterally rejected the deal, people close to the negotiations said, and put the company’s Russian holdings in the hands of an aerosol-packaging titan married

*Continued on Page A8*

## Same-Sex Pairs Can Be Blessed, Francis Affirms

**By JASON HOROWITZ**

ROME — The Vatican said Monday that Pope Francis had allowed priests to bless same-sex couples, his most definitive step yet to make the Roman Catholic Church more welcoming to L.G.B.T.Q. Catholics and more reflective of his vision of a more pastoral, and less rigid, church.

The Vatican had long said it could not bless same-sex couples because it would undermine church doctrine that marriage is only between a man and a woman.

But the new rule made clear that a blessing of a same-sex couple was not the same as a marriage sacrament, a formal ceremonial rite. It also stressed that it was not blessing the relationship, and that, to avoid confusion, blessings should not be imparted during or connected to the ceremony of a civil or same-sex union, or when there are “any clothing, gestures or words that are proper to a wedding.”

Blessings instead are better imparted, the Vatican says, during a meeting with a priest, a visit to a shrine, during a pilgrimage or as a prayer recited in a group.

The new rule was issued in a declaration, a rare and important Vatican document, by the church’s office on doctrine and introduced by its head, Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, who said that the declaration did not amend “the traditional doctrine of the church about marriage,” because it allowed no liturgical rite that could be confused with the sacrament of marriage.

*Continued on Page A11*



GERARDO GOMEZ/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Researchers found that chimps were drawn to photos of former companions over unfamiliar apes.

## With Chimps, Gone Might Not Mean Forgotten

**By CARL ZIMMER**

In 2015, while working as an undergraduate researcher at the North Carolina Zoo, Laura Lewis became friends with a male chimpanzee named Kendall. Whenever she visited the chimps, Kendall would gently take her hands and inspect her fingernails.

Then she disappeared for the summer to study baboons in Africa. When she returned to North Carolina, she wondered if Kendall would still remember her face. Sure enough, as soon as she stepped into his enclosure, Kendall raced up and gestured to look at her hands.

**Memory for Faces Lasts Decades, Study Hints**

“The feeling I got was that he clearly remembered me after four months away,” said Dr. Lewis, now a comparative psychologist at the University of California, Berkeley. “But I didn’t have the data to prove it.”

Now she believes that she does. In a study published on Monday, Dr. Lewis and her colleagues have demonstrated that chimpanzees and bonobos can recall faces of other apes that they have not seen

for years. One bonobo recognized a face after 26 years — a record for facial memory beyond our species.

Dr. Lewis and her colleagues carried out the study on 26 apes kept at the Edinburgh Zoo in Scotland, the Kumamoto Sanctuary in Japan and the Planckendael Zoo in Belgium. At each facility, the researchers rolled up a computer to the apes’ enclosure fence and displayed images of animals on the monitor. A straw attached to the fence allowed the apes to drink juice as they gazed at the photos.

After giving the apes a few months to acclimate to the un-

*Continued on Page A16*

## U.S. Officials Press Israelis Face to Face

### Urging Civilian Rights and Hostage Talks

This article is by **Eric Schmitt, Julian E. Barnes and Michael Levenson.**

TEL AVIV — Top United States officials prodded Israel on Monday to do more to protect civilians in the Gaza Strip and sought to restart talks aimed at releasing hostages as international pressure mounted on Israel to scale back its war against Hamas.

Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III, making his second trip to Israel since the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks, declared that U.S. support for Israeli security “remains unshakable.” But he also said that “democracies are stronger and more secure when we uphold the law of war.”

“As I’ve said, protecting Palestinian civilians in Gaza is both a moral duty and a strategic imperative,” Mr. Austin said at a news conference with Israel’s defense minister, Yoav Gallant. “So we will continue to stand up for Israel’s bedrock right to defend itself. And we will also continue to urge the protection of civilians during conflict and to increase the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza.”

Though Mr. Gallant said “there is no clock that is running,” he acknowledged that Israeli officials were discussing the next part of the conflict, as the Biden administration tries to persuade Israel to shift to more targeted operations after more than two months of heavy airstrikes.

“Soon, we will be able to distinguish between different areas in Gaza,” Mr. Gallant said. “In every area where we achieve our mission, we will be able to transition gradually to the next phase and start working on bringing back the local population.”

That could “be achieved maybe sooner in the north than in the south,” he said, adding that he was trying to convey only “an idea of what we are discussing.”

It is unclear what returning home might look like for Gazans. More than 60 percent of the housing units in the territory have been damaged or destroyed, according to the United Nations. The vast majority of Gaza’s 2.2 million residents have been displaced, with many packing into crowded shelters or living on the streets near the Egyptian border.

The Biden administration envisions Israel moving into a new phase of the war that would involve smaller groups of elite forces piercing in and out of population centers, conducting more precise missions to find and kill Hamas leaders, rescue the hostages seized in Israel on Oct. 7 and destroy the tunnels that the militants use to conceal their

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## MOST DISAPPROVE OF BIDEN ON GAZA, SURVEY INDICATES

### A GENERATIONAL RIFT

### Results Leave President With Few Politically Palatable Options

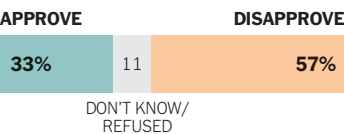
This article is by **Jonathan Weisman, Ruth Igielnik and Alyce McFadden.**

Voters broadly disapprove of the way President Biden is handling the bloody strife between Israelis and Palestinians, a New York Times/Siena College poll has found, with younger Americans far more critical than older voters of both Israel’s conduct and of the administration’s response to the war in Gaza.

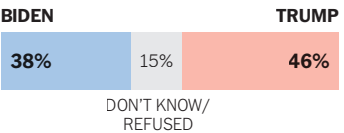
Voters are also sending mixed signals about the direction U.S. policymaking should take as the war in Gaza grinds into its third month, with Israelis still reeling from the Oct. 7 terrorist attack, thousands of Palestinian deaths in Gaza and the Biden administration trying to pressure Israel to scale back its military campaign. Nearly as many Americans want Israel to continue its military cam-

### Views on Biden and the War

Do you approve of President Biden’s handling of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?



Who do you trust to do a better job on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?



Source: New York Times/Siena College poll of 1,016 registered voters nationwide, Dec. 10-14. Values rounded. THE NEW YORK TIMES

paign as want it to stop now to avoid further civilian casualties.

That split appears to leave the president with few politically palatable options.

The findings of the Times/Siena poll hold portents not only for Mr. Biden as he enters the 2024 reelection year but also for long-term relations between the Jewish state and its most powerful benefactor, the United States.

The fractured views on the conflict among traditionally Democratic voter groups show the continued difficulty Mr. Biden faces of holding together the coalition he built in 2020 — a challenge that is likely to persist even as economic indicators grow more positive and

*Continued on Page A13*

## Passing Law to Arrest Migrants, Texas Challenges Federal Power

**By J. DAVID GOODMAN**

BROWNSVILLE, Texas — Gov. Greg Abbott on Monday escalated his challenge of President Biden’s border policies by signing a measure that allows Texas law enforcement officials to arrest migrants who enter the state from Mexico without legal authorization, setting the stage for a showdown with the federal government.

Mr. Abbott pushed for the legislation, which passed in a special session of the Republican-dominated State Legislature last month over the strong objections of Democrats, immigrant-rights groups and Hispanic organizations that argued that the measure violated the U.S. Constitution and would encourage racial profiling.

Some border sheriffs have also opposed the legislation, expressing concern that it could rapidly overwhelm the local jails and courts if even a fraction of those who come over the border every day are arrested. In just one section of the 1,254-mile Texas border with Mexico, around the cities of Eagle Pass and Del Rio, federal agents encountered 38,000 migrants in October.

The surge of migrants has become a political liability for Mr. Biden, who has been criticized by

*Continued on Page A14*

**IN CONGRESS** As border talks dragged on, hopes for a quick Ukraine aid bill dimmed. PAGE A14

INTERNATIONAL A4-11

### Fear and Suspicion in Latvia

In response to the war in Ukraine, the country is requiring residents with Russian passports to take loyalty tests to remain in the country. PAGE A4

### Ruling Egypt for 6 More Years

Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, starting his third term as president, presents himself as a beacon of stability. PAGE A10

OBITUARIES A17

### A Transgender Trailblazer

Jeanne Hoff, a psychiatrist, appeared in a documentary to inspire her patients to live openly and confidently. She was 85.



SCIENCE TIMES D1-8

### It's Christmas in the Cosmos

Astronomers have a tradition of finding holiday cheer, like the Christmas Tree Galaxy Cluster, in outer space. PAGE D8

### When Chemo Drugs Run Out

Key medications are increasingly in scarce supply, revealing a deep crisis in the generics industry. PAGE D1

NATIONAL A12-16, A20

### New Unions on Campus

Resident assistants in dorms help crime victims, enforce rules and handle mental health crises. They want more pay, and say they’ll strike to get it. PAGE A12

### Actor Found Guilty of Assault

Jonathan Majors’s conviction led Marvel to drop him from its lucrative superhero movie franchise. PAGE A13

SPORTS B7-10

### A Challenge at Villanova

Kyle Neptune, the men’s basketball coach, looks to step out of the shadow of Jay Wright’s success. PAGE B7

BUSINESS B1-6

### X Under Scrutiny in Europe

The European Union inquiry is perhaps the most substantial regulatory move to date against Elon Musk’s social media platform, which has had a rise in incendiary content. PAGE B1

### U.S. Fines Southwest Airlines

The \$140 million penalty by the Transportation Department is for the carrier’s meltdown that disrupted travel for about two million people during the 2022 holiday season. PAGE B1

OPINION A18-19

### Paul Krugman

PAGE A18



ARTS C1-6

### Revisiting Legacies of Hate

Making a blistering Broadway debut, the 2014 play “Appropriate” feels like a new work entirely. A review by Jesse Green. PAGE C1

