

“All the News
That’s Fit to Print”

The New York Times

VOL. CLXXIV . . . No. 60,326 © 2024 The New York Times Company SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2024 Prices in Canada may be higher \$4.00



MAHMOUD ISSA/REUTERS

A FIGHT TO FEED GAZA Farmers like Youssef Abu Rabie have lost land and equipment in the war. Some have lost their lives. Page A6.

Legal Sparring On Chokehold As Trial Opens

By HURUBIE MEKO and ANUSHA BAYYA
Prosecutors and defense lawyers agreed on a couple of points as they opened a closely watched trial in Manhattan on Friday: Jordan Neely, a 30-year-old homeless man, had been menacing passengers in a subway car. And Daniel Penny, a former Marine, put him in a chokehold to subdue him. On whether Mr. Penny was guilty of manslaughter after Mr. Neely died, they very much disagreed.

Prosecutors argued that Mr. Penny’s actions during the altercation, on May 1, 2023, became “unnecessarily reckless” and criminal when he refused to let go of Mr. Neely long after he had gone limp, after the train doors had opened and after passengers were able to leave the subway car. As a former Marine with a green belt in martial arts, Mr. Penny should have known when his chokehold had become deadly, prosecutors said.

Mr. Penny’s legal team told the jury that he had stepped in to protect his fellow riders and that he did not squeeze Mr. Neely’s neck hard enough to kill him.

Mr. Penny, 26, is charged with manslaughter and criminally negligent homicide. He told detectives at the time that he had stepped in to restrain Mr. Neely, who had a history of mental illness, after he started threatening passengers on the train.

The former Marine’s behavior doesn’t “have to make him a hero,” Thomas A. Kenniff, Mr. Penny’s lawyer, said. “But it sure doesn’t make him a killer.”

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Russian Advances Leave Ukraine in a Dim Place

This article is by **Julian E. Barnes, Eric Schmitt, Helene Cooper and Kim Barker.**

WASHINGTON — American military and intelligence officials have concluded that the war in Ukraine is no longer a stalemate as Russia makes steady gains, and the sense of pessimism in Kyiv and Washington is deepening.

The dip in morale and questions about whether American support will continue pose their own threat to Ukraine’s war effort. Ukraine is losing territory in the east, and its forces inside Russia have been partially pushed back.

Kyiv Loses Territory in East and Struggles to Find New Recruits

The Ukrainian military is struggling to recruit soldiers and equip new units. The number of its soldiers killed in action, about 57,000, is half of Russia’s losses but still significant for the much smaller country.

Russia’s shortages of soldiers and supplies have also grown worse, Western officials and other experts said. And its gains in the war have come at great cost.

If U.S. support for Ukraine remains strong until next summer, Kyiv could have an opportunity to take advantage of Russia’s weaknesses and expected shortfalls in soldiers and tanks, American officials say.

U.S. government analysts concluded this summer that Russia was unlikely to make significant gains in Ukraine in the coming months, as its poorly trained forces struggled to break through Ukrainian defenses. But that assessment proved wrong.

Russian troops have advanced in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine. They have clawed back more than a third of the territory

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KIYOSHI MIO/IMAGN IMAGES

Painting the Town (Dodger) Blue and White

The Dodgers and their fans took to the streets Friday to celebrate the team’s eighth World Series title.

How Election Conspiracists Torpedoed Tabletop Security Exercise

By STUART A. THOMPSON
Since 2021, a security conference in Atlanta had played host to a simple tabletop exercise in which attendees talked about how they would respond to fictional disasters like plane crashes or water treatment issues. Sitting around a big table, participants from federal agencies or local departments devoted to emergency preparedness shared how their crews would react.

Round and round they went, role-playing, sometimes for hours, as the scenario got more complex. This year’s meeting was scheduled on Nov. 5 — Election Day — with the fictional scenario expected to focus on transportation, or possibly the chemical industry. For conspiracy theorists who have fixated on falsehoods about widespread election fraud, though, the timing alone was enough to transform the event into something far more sinister.

A Calendar Coincidence Fuels Falsehoods

They spread claims that the conference was a secret meeting of top federal security experts in a bid to hack or steal the presidential election — though it was neither of those things. As news about the conference spread online, conspiracy theo-

rists painted the event as cover for a “cyberattack” on election infrastructure or a fallback plan to somehow flip Georgia to Democrats should former President Donald J. Trump lead in early voting.

The Republican National Committee and Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky joined in on the criticism, issuing letters asking for more details about potential involvement by federal security

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Working Class Proves Elusive For Democrats

Economic Fears Swing Support to Trump

By JEANNA SMIALEK
Bernadette Daywalt had yet to decide whom to vote for in the presidential election. But the 69-year-old retiree said her decision would probably come down to economics.

She and her 82-year-old sister have struggled to keep up with rising grocery prices over the past few years, and they now frequent a food pantry in the Philadelphia suburb where they live.

“I think we’re headed downhill right now, with the cost of food, the cost of everything,” Ms. Daywalt said as she checked on her voter registration at an outreach van parked outside the Elmwood Park Zoo on a crisp October afternoon. She voted for Mr. Trump in 2016, and she felt better economically when he was president.

Ms. Daywalt’s perceptions underscore a tough reality facing Democrats, who have been trying to recapture a working-class vote that has been slipping away from them.

Many economists say Vice President Kamala Harris’s economic proposals would do more to help everyday Americans than the agenda put forward by former President Donald J. Trump. One model suggests that her package would boost post-tax income for the poorest Americans by 18 percent by 2026, much more than the 1.4 percent bump Mr. Trump’s ideas would offer.

Yet America’s recent burst of inflation has put a serious dent in the nation’s economic confidence, and it has been especially tough for those on a tight budget. After decades of economic backsliding, many working-class voters are eager to hear that significant changes are coming — and are skeptical of the experts who say Mr. Trump’s promises to remake America might do little to benefit them.

The upshot is that Ms. Harris’s targeted economic proposals, many of which aim at the working class, may not be enough to change political reality. America’s blue-collar voters have been turning increasingly red in recent years, and they seem to be leaning in that direction once again.

“Concrete, specific political promises are often not as powerful in the electorate as emotional appeals that tap into fears and anxieties,” said Julian Zelizer, a professor of political history at Princeton University.

Working-class voters have been moving their support toward Re-

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FIGHT FOR HOUSE WILL BE DECIDED BY NARROW SLICE

2 DOZEN SEATS IN PLAY

Close Races in California and New York Could Be Key to Control

By CATIE EDMONDSON
WASHINGTON — Control of the House is on a knife’s edge, with Democrats and Republicans from the liberal coasts to the nation’s heartland running neck and neck in the key races that will decide which party will hold the majority in the next Congress.

Public and private polls, as well as interviews with strategists and operatives in both parties, point to one of the tightest contests yet for the House majority, which Republicans now hold by a mere four seats. While the vast majority of the 435 seats in the House are not in play, the roughly two dozen that are being contested are truly up for grabs. Of the 22 races rated most competitive by the nonpartisan Cook Political Report, 20 are within the margin of error in internal Democratic polling.

“We started with a narrow margin; we’re ending with a narrow margin,” said Ian Russell, a former deputy executive director of the House Democrats’ campaign arm who this year is advising Representative Jared Golden of Maine, one of the party’s most vulnerable incumbents. “It’s close because it’s a presidential year and it’s going to be close at the presidential level.”

The battlefield includes centrist Democratic incumbents in Maine, Washington, Alaska and Pennsylvania who are trying to hang on in their rural districts that favor former President Donald J. Trump and Midwestern Republicans facing unexpectedly steep challenges in Nebraska, Iowa and Wisconsin.

But control of the House may ultimately come down to about nine competitive races in blue states on the East and West Coasts, where Republicans in liberal-leaning districts are trying to stave off Democratic challenges and protect five seats in California and four in New York.

Democrats have run aggressively on protecting reproductive rights, and especially in more conservative districts where incumbents are at risk, have emphasized measures passed in President Biden’s landmark Inflation Reduction Act, including slashing the price of insulin.

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CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOK

His ‘Staff’ Warns, Don’t Say It. Of Course, He Says It Anyway.

By SHAWN McCREESH
At a rally this week in Wisconsin, Donald Trump launched into an imitation of his own staff, pleading with him to behave differently. The performance was a classic of the genre.

It came during a riff about how he wants to “protect the women,” a formulation his advisers apparently do not appreciate. “‘Sir, please don’t say that,’” he said in the tone of voice a child uses to imitate an adult. “They said, ‘We think it’s very inappropriate for you to say.’ I said, ‘Why, I’m president? I want to protect the women of our country.’ They said, ‘Sir, I just think it’s inappropriate for you to say.’”

He added, “I pay these guys a lot of money. Can you believe it?” But then he told the audience not to worry, for he had stood up to



DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Donald J. Trump carefully casts himself as a transgressor.

the grown-ups on his payroll. “I said, ‘Well, I’m going to do it. Whether the women like it or not, I’m going to protect them.’” Since the beginning of Mr. Trump’s political rise, this sort of

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Spanish Town Razed by Flood
Rescuers in Paiporta, where more than 60 people died, were still pulling bodies from the mud. PAGE A7

Arrests Before Climate Talks
Human rights groups say Azerbaijan, host of COP29, is in the midst of a vicious campaign of repression. PAGE A4

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The ex-president and his allies envision a second term that would try to eliminate climate protections. PAGE A10

Another Use for Obesity Drug?
A large trial showed semaglutide was better than current medications for knee osteoporosis symptoms. PAGE A21

Not Just Lounging by the Pool
All-inclusive retreats aim to cultivate health and longevity through high-tech tests, “biohacking” treatments, meditation, breath work and more. PAGE C7



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The 1998 musical “Ragtime,” set amid social upheaval at the turn of the 20th century, is back onstage. PAGE C1

Together Again, and Younger
With the help of de-aging technology, Tom Hanks and Robin Wright play a couple over decades in “Here.” PAGE C1

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The mother of a Florida teenager says he became obsessed with a Character.AI chatbot before his death. PAGE B1

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Job growth slowed in October, creating uncertainty in the labor market even as the overall economy is strong. PAGE B1

She Papered Fashion History
Isabelle de Borchgrave transformed simple craft paper into elaborate life-size reproductions of period garments. She was 78. PAGE B12

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Conference consolidation means college athletes are dealing with far-flung travel more than ever before. PAGE B7

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The goal-oriented Shohei Ohtani sees a run of success ahead in the remaining years of his Dodgers deal. PAGE B9

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