

“All the News
That’s Fit to Print”

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The Pajaro Valley of California is a case study in groundwater conservation, with an unusual system born of a berry-growing disaster.

NATHAN WEYLAND FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

What if Farmers Were Taxed on Water? In California, Some Are.

By CORAL DAVENPORT

WATSONVILLE, Calif. — The strawberry, blackberry and raspberry fields of the Pajaro Valley stretch for 10 miles along the coast of California’s Monterey Bay, jeweled with fruit from April through early December. The valley’s 30,000 acres of farmland are also ruffled with emerald lettuces, brussels sprouts and varieties of kale, bringing in roughly \$1 billion in revenue to the region each year.

All that abundance doesn’t come cheap.

While American farmers elsewhere have watered their crops

by freely pumping the groundwater beneath their land, growers in Pajaro must pay hefty fees for irrigation water — making it one of the most expensive places to grow food in the country, if not the world. The cost: Up to \$400 per acre-foot, a standard measurement equal to water covering one acre, one foot deep. The fees bring in \$12 million a year, which is used to recycle, restore and conserve the region’s groundwater.

The Pajaro Valley’s unusual system — essentially a tax on water — was born of a berry-growing disaster some 40 years ago that forced farmers to act. Today, as the nation faces a spreading crisis

UNCHARTED WATERS *Conserving a Vital Resource*

of dwindling groundwater, stemming from a combination of climate change, agricultural over-pumping and other issues, some experts say the Pajaro Valley is a case study in how to save the vital resource.

“What they are doing is cutting edge,” said Felicia Marcus, a former chair of the California State Water Resources Control Board and now a fellow at Stanford University’s Water in the West Program. While a few other regions

have imposed fees on groundwater for farming, Pajaro Valley has been one of the most aggressive and effective. “They are way ahead of the curve,” she said.

Experts from as far away as China and Egypt are traveling to the valley to study the system. But replicating it elsewhere could face major challenges. For one thing, “People don’t like taxes,” said Nicholas Brozovic, an agricultural economist at the University of Nebraska. “There’s nothing mysterious about that.”

New research on the program revealed a direct connection between paying for the groundwater

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Order Prevailed Aboard Jetliner Bathed in Fire

By MOTOKO RICH and HISAKO UENO

TOKYO — As smoke filled the cabin of Japan Airlines Flight 516 after its fiery landing in Tokyo on Tuesday, the sound of a child’s voice rose above the din of confusion onboard. “Please, let us off quickly!” the child pleaded, using a polite form of Japanese despite the fear washing over the passengers as flight attendants began shouting instructions.

In the minutes that followed, even as the flames that would eventually engulf the JAL plane flickered outside the windows, order held. The attendants evacuated all 367 passengers through the three exit doors deemed safest, sending them down the emergency slides one by one, with no major injuries. Most left behind everything but the phones that would capture the harrowing scenes for the world.

While a number of factors aided what many have called a miracle at Haneda Airport — a well-trained crew of 12; a veteran pilot with 12,000 hours of flight experience; advanced aircraft design and materials — the relative absence of panic onboard during the emergency procedure perhaps helped the most.

“Even though I heard screams, mostly people were calm and didn’t stand up from their seats but kept sitting and waiting,” said Aruto Iwama, a passenger who gave a video interview to the newspaper The Guardian. “That’s

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VIA DAVID AARON

Paleontologists are arguing over how to classify Chomper, a specimen that is listed at \$20 million.

A Controversy With Legs, and Very Short Arms

By JULIA JACOBS and ZACHARY SMALL

When fossil hunters unearthed the remains of a dinosaur from the hills of eastern Montana five years ago, they carried several key characteristics of a *Tyrannosaurus rex*: a pair of giant legs for walking, a much smaller pair of arms for slashing prey, and a long tail stretching behind it.

But unlike a full-grown T. rex, which would be about the size of a city bus, this dinosaur was more like the size of a pickup truck.

The specimen, which is now

Is a Fossil a Baby T. Rex or a Nanotyrannus?

listed for sale for \$20 million at an art gallery in London, raises a question that has come to obsess paleontologists: Is it simply a young T. rex that died before reaching maturity, or does it represent a different but related species of dinosaur known as a *Nanotyrannus*?

The dispute has produced reams of scientific research and

decades of debate, polarizing paleontologists along the way. Now, with dinosaur fossils increasingly fetching eye-popping prices at auction, the once-esoteric dispute has begun to ripple through auction houses and galleries, where some see the T. rex name as a valuable brand that can more easily command high prices.

“It’s ultimately a quite in-the-weeds question of the taxonomy and the classification of one very particular type of dinosaur,” said Steve Brusatte, a paleontologist at the University of Edinburgh.

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Scores Killed As Blasts Rock Iran Memorial

No Group Immediately Takes Responsibility

By VIVIAN YEE and FARNAZ FASSIHI

A pair of explosions on Wednesday at a memorial for Iran’s former top general, Qassim Soleimani, killed at least 103 people and wounded an additional 211, according to Iranian officials, sowing fear in a country where domestic unrest and the prospect of a spiraling regional war have left many on edge.

Iranian officials told state media that two bombs had been placed in bags along the road to a cemetery in the city of Kerman, and exploded as a vast procession of people made their way there to commemorate the fourth anniversary of General Soleimani’s death. The architect of the axis of regional militias backed by Iran’s hard-line government, he was killed in an American drone strike.

The attack in Iran on Wednesday led to finger-pointing, confusion and speculation after no group took responsibility.

Many Iranians, already disenchanted by their leaders, were outraged that the authorities had failed to provide adequate security for an event attended by thousands of people. Officials in the government blamed the two countries Tehran has long cast as arch-enemies, Israel and the United States. International intelligence experts and analysts said the attack bore the hallmarks of terrorist groups, not of Israel.

Iranian officials said the roadside bombs appeared to have been detonated via remote control.

“I heard the explosion 25 meters away from me,” a male witness to the bombing told the local Rah-e-Arman-e-Kerman News Agency. “On the ground, there were all women and children like withered flowers.”

Videos posted on social media and verified by The New York Times show people screaming and running away as smoke rises southwest of the cemetery. Videos also show civilians carrying injured people on stretchers and ambulances driving through the crowds that had gathered along a road near the site.

“God help us — everyone is killed,” some of the wounded, bloodied in the attack, can be heard screaming.

The attack came at a time of heightened anxiety in Iran and across the region.

For years, Sunni terrorist organizations including the Islamic State have conducted attacks on civilians across the Middle East, from Iraq to Lebanon to Afghanistan, but in Iran, there have been only a handful over the last 20

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LOSS OF TACTICIAN WEAKENS HAMAS AT CRITICAL TIME

REBUILDING YET AGAIN

Leader Would Have Had Key Role in Seeking Foreign Help

By BEN HUBBARD

The killing of Saleh al-Arouri, a top Hamas leader, on Tuesday deprives the group of one of its most skilled tacticians, who helped route money and weapons to its operatives in the Gaza Strip and elsewhere in the Middle East and integrated Hamas more tightly into Iran’s network of forces committed to fighting Israel, according to analysts.

But it was far from clear on Wednesday that his death would be a debilitating blow to the organization, which has rebuilt again and again after assassinations of its leaders, and remained agile enough to plot the Oct. 7 terrorist attacks in southern Israel.

Still, Mr. al-Arouri’s killing — in an explosion in a Beirut suburb that senior officials from Hamas, Lebanon and the United States as-



AMR ABDALLAH DALSH/REUTERS

Saleh al-Arouri, a senior Hamas leader, was killed Tuesday.

cribed to Israel — sets Hamas back at a highly vulnerable time, analysts say. Israel has not taken responsibility for his killing.

Israel’s overwhelming offensive in Gaza has significantly weakened the military strength of Hamas there, including its ability to manufacture rockets and other weapons. Mr. al-Arouri’s position, as Hamas’s de facto ambassador to Iran and Hezbollah, meant that he would have had an important role in the group’s efforts to rebuild militarily with help from foreign backers.

“Hamas will suffer, because it has lost one of its key strategists,” said Emile Hokayem, the director for regional security at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. “He was someone who did well managing high-level political relationships and also had credibility as a commander.”

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As War Drags On, Ukrainians Shun TV News as ‘Propaganda’

By CONSTANT MÉHEUT and DARIA MITIUK

KYIV, Ukraine — Since the early days of Russia’s full-scale invasion in 2022, the people of Ukraine have had access to a single source of television news — an all-day broadcast packed with footage of Ukrainian tanks blasting Russian positions, medics operating near the front line and political leaders rallying support abroad.

The show, Telemarathon United News, has been a major tool of Ukraine’s information war, praised by the government officials who regularly appear on it for its role in countering Russian disinformation and maintaining morale.

“It’s a weapon,” President

Saying That Coverage Sugarcoats Reality

Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine said last January of the program, which is jointly produced and broadcast 24/7 by the country’s biggest television channels.

But after nearly two years of war, Ukrainians have grown weary of Telemarathon. What was once seen as a crucial tool for holding the country together is now increasingly derided as little more than a mouthpiece for the government.

Viewers have complained that the program often paints too rosy a picture of the war, hiding worry-

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Doctors Strike in England

Junior physicians began a six-day walkout, in the latest blow to the struggling National Health Service. PAGE A4

Canada’s Dwindling Forests

A study finds that logging has inflicted severe damage to the vast boreal wilderness in Ontario and Quebec. PAGE A9

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New Lessons in Literacy

New York State ranks 32nd in reading proficiency. The governor is proposing changes to literacy education to address that. PAGE A11

G.O.P. Pressure on Migrants

The House speaker made a visit to the border as Republicans demanded that the Democrats agree to strict new immigration policies. PAGE A12

Housing Crisis in New York

As the state’s legislative session gets underway, the politicians who could fix the debilitating problem face even bigger hurdles than last year. PAGE A10



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Acclaim for Opera Leader

Wayne Brown, the former Detroit Opera president, helped to bring the organization to new heights. PAGE C1

The 15th Doctor Is In

Ncuti Gatwa is the new Doctor in “Doctor Who” and the first Black, openly queer one in the show’s history. PAGE C4

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The National Labor Relations Board said the rocket company had wrongly dismissed eight people for a letter critical of Elon Musk. PAGE B1

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After some embarrassing blowouts, five suggestions on how to fix college football’s bowl season, prevent mass opt-outs and restore the fun. PAGE B7

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Making Herself Clear

Sini Majuri uses glass as a medium to explore subjects such as human nature, violence and femininity. PAGE D1



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