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The New York Times

THE WEATHER

Today, plenty of sunshine, dry, not as chilly as recent days, high 46. **To-night**, cloudy, some drizzle, low 40. **Tomorrow**, early drizzle, cloudy, high 48. Weather map, Page B10.

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Prices in Canada may be higher

\$4.00

Justices Defer Issue of Trump And Immunity

Case in Appeals Court; Win for Ex-President

By ADAM LIPTAK

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court declined on Friday to decide for now whether former President Donald J. Trump is immune from prosecution on charges of plotting to overturn the 2020 election.

The decision to defer consideration of a central issue in the case was a major practical victory for Mr. Trump, whose lawyers have consistently sought to delay criminal cases against him around the country.

It is unclear what the court's order will mean for the timing of the trial, which is scheduled to start on March 4, though it makes postponement more likely. The case will now move forward in an appeals court, which has put it on a fast track, and most likely return to the Supreme Court in the coming weeks or months.

In denying review, the justices gave no reasons, which is typical, and there were no noted dissents.

Jack Smith, the special counsel prosecuting Mr. Trump, had asked the justices to move with extraordinary speed, bypassing the appeals court.

Any significant delays could plunge the trial into the heart of the 2024 campaign season or push it past the election, when Mr. Trump could order that the charges be dropped if he wins the presidency.

A speedy decision by the justices was of the essence, Mr. Smith said in his petition seeking immediate Supreme Court review, because Mr. Trump's appeal of a trial judge's ruling rejecting his claim of immunity suspended the criminal trial.

Mr. Smith wrote that the case "presents a fundamental question at the heart of our democracy: whether a former president is absolutely immune from federal prosecution for crimes committed while in office or is constitutionally protected from federal prosecution when he has been impeached but not convicted before

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VALUES A Colorado ruling puts the rule of law in tension with the will of voters. PAGE A13



People who had been ordered by Israeli forces to evacuate from Al Bureij, an area in central Gaza, arriving in Deir al-Balah on Friday.

Hunter Biden Text Is Not What G.O.P. Suggests

By ADAM ENTOUS

In January 2019, Hunter Biden sent a text message to his daughter Naomi.

"I Hope you all can do what I did and pay for everything for this entire family Fro 30 years," he wrote in the typo-filled message. "It's really hard. But don't worry unlike Pop I won't make you give me half your salary."

As they pursue their impeachment inquiry into President Biden, House Republicans have seized on that message and others sent to or from his son to try to link the president — "Pop," in this case — to Hunter Biden's business activities, suggesting that members of the Biden family reaped millions from a global influence-peddling scheme.

In the case of the message from Hunter Biden to his daughter, Republicans have portrayed it as evidence that he was privately acknowledging that he split his income with his father, who in early 2019 was out of office but preparing to begin the campaign that

Impeachment Inquiry Misses Back Story of 2019 Message

would put him in the White House. That income included the millions of dollars that Hunter Biden received from Burisma Holdings, a Ukrainian gas company, and from a company owned by a Chinese energy tycoon.

At a hearing in September, Representative Byron Donalds, Republican of Florida, displayed the message and asked a witness, Bruce G. Dubinsky, a forensic accountant, "If you saw a text message like this in a potential money laundering operation, or a potential pay-for-play operation, would you be looking for information related to money going from son to father?"

Mr. Dubinsky answered, "Absolutely."

But a close examination of the circumstances surrounding the

2019 text message, along with others that have been cited by Republicans during the impeachment inquiry and elsewhere to suggest that Hunter Biden's foreign income was shared with or benefited his father, shows the extent to which the contents of the communications have been misunderstood or outright distorted. And while it does not rule out the possibility that House Republicans could unearth evidence showing wrongdoing by President Biden, it underscores the flimsy nature of the material they have presented publicly so far.

The story behind the message, as explained by the Bidens and backed up by other interviews and a review of Hunter Biden's emails and text messages, offers sometimes unflattering insights into the family's finances and internal dynamics. And it adds more detail to what is known about Hunter Biden's erratic and irresponsible behavior while in the throes of addiction.

But it is very different from the

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Backing Israel, U.S. Is at Odds With Its Allies

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

WASHINGTON — Days of intense negotiations enabled the Biden administration to avoid casting a veto at the United Nations Security Council in defense of Israel's military campaign in Gaza.

But abstaining from a resolution designed to help more humanitarian aid reach Gaza only limited the damage to America's standing around the world as it becomes an increasingly lonely protector of Israel.

The outcome was a relief to U.S. officials loath to exercise America's veto power in defense of Israel for what would have been the third time since Hamas's Oct. 7 attacks. Abstaining from a 13-0 vote may look better than casting a veto — which President Biden has said should be reserved for "rare, extraordinary situations" — but it still may not help America's image abroad.

It is one reason, with the year drawing to a close, that the United States finds itself diplomatically isolated and in a defensive crouch.

That isolation is a dramatic

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Law to Prevent Violence by Mentally Ill Has a History of Failure

By AMY JULIA HARRIS and JAN RANSOM

After John Skeene served prison time for beating his mother to death with a chair leg, after he attacked a man with a radiator cover and threatened to murder his therapist, New York State placed him in its gold-standard program for treating mentally ill people at risk of committing violence.

The program, which grew out of legislation known as Kendra's Law and has been held up as a national model, was supposed to ensure that Mr. Skeene complied with a court-ordered treatment plan despite being homeless and living with schizoaffective disorder.

But by late 2018, there were signs that he was once again becoming unstable. He terrorized workers in his Queens transitional housing program, records show, banging on desks and kicking doors until they called 911. After subsequent outbursts, and while he was off his medications, the workers tried to send him for a hospital psychiatric evaluation, but he refused.

Under Kendra's Law, his treatment team could have forced him to go anyway, but it apparently did not take that step, records show.

Soon after, Mr. Skeene cornered a mental health worker in her office and punched her 30 times in the face, fracturing her eye socket and damaging her brain. She spent the next six months in the hospital, and, when she emerged, had to relearn how to walk. Mr. Skeene, then 59, went to prison.

For years, New York has used Kendra's Law to force the seriously mentally ill people it has judged to be most at risk of committing acts of violence to receive

psychiatric treatment, with the goal of protecting the patient and the public alike. Enacted in 1999, the law was designed to ensure that dangerous breakdowns never occurred again.

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The subway station in New York where a man shoved Kendra Webdale in front of a train in 1999.

On U.S. Roads, Dark Is Deadly. That's a Puzzle.

This article is by Ben Blatt, Emily Badger and Josh Katz.

Sometime around 2009, American roads started to become deadlier for pedestrians. Fatalities have risen ever since, reversing the effects of decades of safety improvements for reasons that aren't well understood.

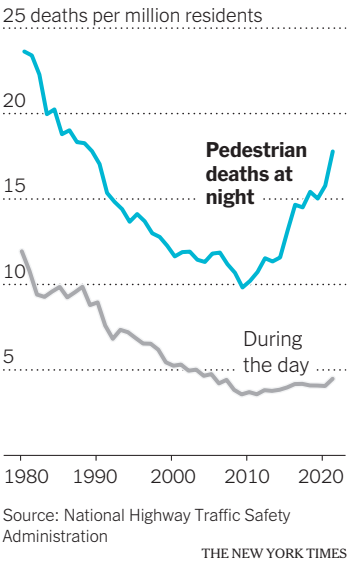
Embedded within this trend is an even more curious pattern that could provide some clues about what has changed: Nearly all of this rise in American pedestrian deaths has come at night.

Nothing resembling this pattern has occurred in other comparably wealthy countries. In places like Canada and Australia, a much lower share of pedestrian fatalities occurs at night, and those fatalities — rarer in number — have generally been declining, not rising.

In America, these trends

Pedestrian Fatalities

Deaths at night make up almost all of the growth in pedestrian deaths.



present a puzzle that has stumped experts on vehicle design, driver behavior, road safety and how they interact: What changed, starting about 15 years ago, that would cause rising numbers of pe-

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INTERNATIONAL A4-8

Spend on War, Ukrainians Say

Protesters are lobbying city councils to freeze urban renewal projects and buy military equipment instead. PAGE A5

Czech Mass Shooting

After 14 people were killed at a university, the republic's permissive attitude toward guns was questioned. PAGE A8



BUSINESS B1-5

Now the Cubicle Is Cool?

Workers are personalizing once-derided symbols of office life, and posting photos on social media. PAGE B1

Scavenging FTX's Remains

Investors are scooping up FTX bankruptcy claims, hoping that the money can be recovered. PAGE B1

SPORTS B6-9

A \$1.2 Billion Offseason

The Los Angeles Dodgers' unprecedented spending spree now includes Yoshinobu Yamamoto, a highly coveted right-handed pitcher from Japan. PAGE B6

ARTS C1-7

History Is Made at City Ballet

Black dancers performed the role of Dewdrop for the first time in "George Balanchine's The Nutcracker." PAGE C1

Owning His Own Star Power

Nine years ago, Colman Domingo was ready to quit Hollywood. Now, he's in two major roles onscreen. PAGE C1

TRAVEL C9-10

Mustangs and Stargazers

Spend a weekend amid the 800,000 acres of desert of Joshua Tree National Park, which now attracts twice as many visitors as it did a decade ago. PAGE C10

NATIONAL A9-17

Seismic Ruling in a Swing State

Wisconsin's top court ordered the redrawing of gerrymandered legislative maps that favored Republicans. PAGE A14

Police Scanners Go Silent

Cities are encrypting their emergency radio communications over concerns about safety and privacy. PAGE A9



SUNDAY SPECIAL SECTIONS

Ghosts on a Glacier

A camera found in the ice after nearly 50 years stirs old questions about the deaths of two American climbers.

The Year in Pictures

Images of the major events — some traumatizing, some blissful — that defined the past 12 months.

OPINION A18-19

Thomas L. Friedman PAGE A18

