

"All the News
That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

THE WEATHER

Today, sunny, breezy, dry, high 41.
Tonight, mostly clear, chillier than
last night, low 27. Tomorrow, sunny
to partly cloudy, still dry, high 40.
Weather map appears on Page B12.

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Prices in Canada may be higher

\$4.00

NEWS ANALYSIS

Trump Cases
May Reshape
'24 Election

Supreme Court Is at
Center of Legal Storm

By ALAN FEUER

It has been obvious for months that politics and the law were going to bump into one another in the 2024 campaign, given the double role that former President Donald J. Trump has been playing as a criminal defendant and leading Republican candidate.

But in a way that few expected, that awkward bump has turned into a head-on collision. It now seems clear that the courts — especially the Supreme Court — could dramatically shape the contours of the election.

The nine justices have already agreed to review the scope of an obstruction statute central to the federal indictment accusing Mr. Trump of plotting to overturn the 2020 election. And they could soon become entangled in both his efforts to dismiss those charges with sweeping claims of executive immunity and in a bid to rid himself of a gag order restricting his attacks on Jack Smith, the special counsel in charge of the case.

The court could also be called upon to weigh in on a series of civil lawsuits seeking to hold Mr. Trump accountable for the violence at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

And in the latest turn of events, the justices now seem poised to decide a novel and momentous legal question: whether Mr. Trump should be disqualified from state ballots for engaging in an insurrection on Jan. 6 in violation of a Reconstruction-era constitutional amendment.

Taking up just one of these cases would place the Supreme Court — with a conservative majority bolstered by three Trump appointees — in a particular political spotlight that it has not felt in the 23 years since it decided *Bush v. Gore* and cemented the winner of the 2000 presidential race.

But a number of the issues the court is now confronting could drastically affect the timing of the proceedings against Mr. Trump, the scope of the charges he should face or his status as a candidate, with potentially profound effects on his chances of winning the election. And the justices could easily become ensnared in several of the questions simultaneously.

"In this cycle, the Supreme Court is likely to play an even larger role than in *Bush v. Gore*," said David Becker, executive director of the Center for Election Innovation and Research, a nonpartisan group dedicated to improving election administration.

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TRUMP'S PLAYBOOK He has raised a lot of money by playing up his indictments. PAGE A19



Demonstrators holding signs supporting the Houthi militia at a march in Sana, Yemen, to show solidarity with the people of Gaza.

A Booming Industry of Cutting Babies' Tongues

This article is by Katie Thomas, Sarah Kliff and Jessica Silver-Greenberg.

Tess Merrell had breastfed three babies and never expected trouble with her fourth. But after a month of struggling with her newborn, she hired Melanie Henstrom for help.

Ms. Henstrom, a lactation consultant, identified a culprit: The infant's tongue was tethered to the bottom of her mouth. It was a common problem, she said, and could be fixed with a quick procedure at a dentist's office.

"It was touted as this miracle cure," said Ms. Merrell, a soccer coach in Boise, Idaho.

OPERATING PROFITS

A Practice With Little Oversight

Ms. Henstrom recommended a dentist, who in December 2017 cut under the baby's tongue with a laser. Within days, the infant, Eleanor, was refusing to eat and had become dangerously dehydrated, medical records show. She spent her first Christmas on a feeding tube.

For centuries, midwives and doctors have been cutting such "tongue-ties" to ease breastfeeding. But the procedure's popularity has exploded over the past decade as women face intensifying pressure to nurse.

Lactation consultants and dentists have aggressively promoted the procedures, even for babies with no signs of genuine tongue-ties and despite a slight risk of serious complications, a New York Times investigation found.

A small fraction of babies are born with a bundle of tissue that attaches the tip of their tongue to the bottom of their mouth. In some pronounced cases, doctors snip that tissue. But many tongue-ties are harmless, and the evidence that cutting them improves feeding is scant.

Yet some lactation consultants and dentists pitch laser surgery to anxious and exhausted mothers

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Dr. Scott Siegel and his team in his Manhattan clinic with a 4-month-old patient.

Resisting U.S., Houthis Press Red Sea Raids

By VIVIAN NEREIM and SHUAIB ALMOSAWA

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — When the United States announced it was leading an international maritime task force to confront attacks on ships in the Red Sea, it did not take long for the group behind the attacks, the Houthi militia in Yemen, to dismiss the effort as a lost cause.

Within hours, a top Houthi official was making the rounds on Arabic television channels, describing the militia's campaign of hijackings and missile and drone launches at commercial ships as a righteous battle to force Israel to end its siege on Gaza.

Western militaries had already spent weeks attempting to deter the Houthis, so the task force announced this week was "nothing new," scoffed Mohammed Abdulalam, the Houthis' chief negotiator. And if the United States directly attacked Yemen, he warned, it could turn the war in Gaza into an international conflagration.

"The Yemeni position is clear," Abdullah Ben Amer, a high-ranking Houthi official in a department that is part of the group's defense ministry, told The New York Times. The Houthi escalation in the Red Sea will stop, he said, when "the Israeli war on the people of Gaza stops."

Those words echoed the stance that the Iran-backed militia has repeated since the war in Gaza began two months ago with the Hamas-led attacks that killed about

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SEPARATE TALKS SEEK TO SUSPEND FIGHTING IN GAZA

HAMAS TURNS TO EGYPT

At U.N., Security Council Aims for a Deal the U.S. Won't Veto

This article is by Farnaz Fassihi, Patrick Kingsley, Aaron Boxerman and Michael Levenson.

The top political leader of Hamas was holding talks with Egyptian officials on Wednesday about a possible truce in its war with Israel in the Gaza Strip, as the United Nations Security Council separately worked frantically to craft a resolution to suspend the fighting that would not draw a veto from Israel's staunchest ally, the United States.

The negotiations in Egypt were taking place as concerns in Israel grew over the fate of the dozens of hostages still being held in Gaza and as pressure mounted on the Israelis to stop their military campaign and allow more desperately needed aid into the devastated enclave.

Diplomats at the U.N. Security Council were engaged in their own intense talks in New York on Wednesday over a resolution that would call for extended pauses in the war; allow more aid into Gaza by land, air and sea; and urge the immediate release of all the hostages being held by Hamas.



IN RUINS Before-and-after images of Gaza show the vast scale of devastation. Page A12.

A vote had initially been scheduled for Monday but was delayed repeatedly, including on Wednesday, and is now not expected until Thursday morning at the earliest.

Council members have been fielding multiple last-minute requests by the Biden administration, according to several diplomats who spoke on the condition that they not be named because they were not authorized to speak publicly. The United States vetoed two previous cease-fire resolutions.

The diplomats said that the United States was concerned about part of the resolution calling for the establishment of a United Nations monitoring system to screen aid deliveries into Gaza. They said that Israel had urged the United States to reject the monitoring system because it would leave Israel with no role in searching cargo entering Gaza.

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Housing Aid Safety Net Frays as Rent Costs Rise

By JASON DePARLE

WASHINGTON — As the safety net has expanded over the past generation, the food stamp rolls have doubled, Medicaid enrollment has tripled and payments from the earned-income tax credit have nearly quadrupled.

But one major form of aid has grown more scarce.

After decades of rising rents, housing assistance for the poorest tenants has fallen to the lowest level in nearly a quarter-century.

Resistance From G.O.P. Takes Toll on Poor

The three main federal programs for the neediest renters — public housing, Section 8, and Housing Choice Vouchers — serve 287,000 fewer households than they did at their peak in 2004, a new analysis shows. That is a 6 percent drop, while the number of eligible households without aid grew by about a quarter, to 15 million.

"We're not just treading water — we're falling further behind," said Chris Herbert, the managing director of the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, which prepared the analysis at the request of The New York Times. "That was an eye-opener, even for me."

In an exception to the trend of falling aid, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit helped build several million subsidized apartments, but most are not affordable to the neediest renters without ad-

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After Years of Wrangling, an E.U. Migration Deal

By MATINA STEVIS-GRIDNEFF

BRUSSELS — European countries struck a key deal on Wednesday to overhaul their joint migration system, an agreement years in the making and aimed at allaying mounting pressure from ascendant far-right political parties across the continent.

The plan, named the European Union migration and asylum pact, took three years to negotiate and was only achieved through a patchwork of compromises. With anti-migrant sentiment rising and

Pact Aims to Hold Off Far-Right Parties

driving a shift to the right in Europe and beyond, negotiators were under pressure to complete the agreement ahead of elections this summer across the bloc's 27 nations.

The agreement aims to make it easier to deport failed asylum seekers and to limit entry of migrants into the bloc. It also seeks

to give governments a greater sense of control over their borders while bolstering the E.U.'s role in migration management — treating it as a European issue, not just a national one.

"Migration is a European challenge that requires European solutions," Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, said in written comments welcoming the deal.

"It means that Europeans will decide who comes to the E.U. and who can stay, not the smugglers,"

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NATIONAL A15-23

New Tensions in New York

With antisemitism and protests spilling onto the streets, the city's Jews are trying to navigate the unease. PAGE A15

No Resolutions for New Year

The Senate will need to resume talks on important issues in 2024, including delivering aid to Ukraine. PAGE A22

INTERNATIONAL A4-14

Ukraine's Lethal Sea Drones

The use of remotely piloted craft firing at Russian warships has been a bright spot in a difficult year for the Kyiv military. PAGE A4

An Important, Messy Election

Voting in the vast, resource-rich Democratic Republic of Congo began with violence at some polling places and delays at many more. PAGE A8

U.S.-Venezuela Prisoner Swap

An ally of Venezuela's president was exchanged for 10 jailed Americans, as the U.S. tries to improve relations with the authoritarian government. PAGE A9

BUSINESS B1-5

Stolen Checks for Sale

One reason this fraud is rampant: Open forums where anyone can buy what thieves take from the mail. PAGE B1

Right Time for Falling Prices

As inflation slows, prices for some goods are dropping, which could lift consumers' spirits. PAGE B1

ARTS C1-6

The Oompa-Loompas Evolve

"Wonka" is the latest film to try to shake the tiny unpaid laborers from their colonialist roots. And we finally hear their side of the story. PAGE C1



THURSDAY STYLES D1-10

Lift a Pinky. It's Time for Tea.

For an occasion that merits something more special than a coffee shop, tea salons are an oasis. PAGE D9

The 12 Vibes of Christmas

Vintage, Victorian or Hallmark Channel. Creepy, Summer or High-Octane. Which holiday style is yours? PAGE D1

SPORTS B6-9

When Backups Go Bad

N.F.L. teams have little long-term hope without their starting quarterbacks, although there are exceptions. PAGE B6

An Olympian's Rejuvenation

After success and failure, Abbey Weitzeil needed a break from swimming. Now she hopes to compete in Paris. PAGE B9

OPINION A24-25

Carlos Lozada

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