

“All the News
That’s Fit to Print”

The New York Times

THE WEATHER
Today, very humid, clouds and sun, afternoon thunderstorm, high 88. **Tonight**, humid, thunderstorm, low 76. **Tomorrow**, humid, some sun, high 90. Weather map, Page B12.

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Prices in Canada may be higher

\$4.00



Phra Maha Nikhom, a Buddhist abbot in Thailand, swam in the Kok River as a boy, an activity that would pose health risks today.

A Thai River Runs Toxic as Mining Flourishes Across a Border

By HANNAH BEECH
ON THE KOK RIVER, Thailand — When Phra Maha Nikhom was a boy, he swam and splashed in the crystalline Kok River. He caught crabs and fish. Today, he is the abbot of a Buddhist temple near Thailand’s border with Myanmar, and monks, with their copious saffron robes, don’t tend toward water play. But even if he wanted to, this tributary of the Mekong, Southeast Asia’s life force, is now a forbidden zone. Unregulated rare earth mining in Myanmar, directed by Chinese

enterprises, is poisoning the Kok and at least three other rivers that flow through Thailand. For months, levels of arsenic and other toxic metals have spiked to dangerous levels in Thai waterways, including the Mekong, government data shows. The Kok, which normally flows limpid at this time of year, now runs brown, sullied with sediment believed to have been churned up by the mining in Myanmar. People who enter the river complain of skin ailments. The threat of longer-term health problems associated with toxic materials from rare earth extraction is sobering,

A Rare Earth Boom in War Zones Churns Up Contaminants

including lung, bladder and kidney cancers. “Seeing the river like this is like seeing your mother in the I.C.U., but you cannot help, and you are separated from her by a glass window,” Phra Maha Nikhom said. The residents of Thaton, the riverside village where he grew up, were officially informed of the

contaminants only in April, months after government data showed unsafe levels. More troublingly, the local authorities, who have warned residents to stay away from the water, have not checked for other pollutants, including radioactive ones, that are often released through rare earth processing. “This is the biggest concern of the people,” said Dr. Suebsakun Kidnukorn of Mae Fah Luang University in the city of Chiang Rai, who earlier this year tested river water only to be chastised by local

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Allies of Trump Teamed to Fell A School Head

By STEPHANIE SAUL
The Jefferson Council, a band of conservative-leaning University of Virginia alumni, was impatient and fed up. For years, the group had railed against the university’s president, James E. Ryan, for his robust promotion of campus diversity initiatives. They had counted on Glenn Youngkin, the state’s Republican governor who vocally opposed D.E.I., to force a new direction at one of the country’s most prestigious public universities. But as 2025, the final year of Mr. Youngkin’s term, began, the university’s diversity, equity and inclusion apparatus was still in place. And time was running out, with polls showing that the governor’s race would be an uphill battle for a Republican candidate. But the Jefferson Council had a new ally in its campaign: President Trump. In his first week in office, Mr. Trump signed executive orders banning federal diversity, equity and inclusion programs, which threatened any public and private universities receiving federal funds. The Justice Department then hired a lawyer to help enforce those orders at its Civil Rights Division: Gregory W. Brown, a University of Virginia alumnus and donor.

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Michael Maggart, who appeared, second from left, in “Asteroid City,” keeps getting bit parts in Wes Anderson films. A math tutor, he has no other acting credits, and no interest in acting otherwise.

Wes Anderson’s Easter Egg? A High School Pal.

By SOPAN DEB
Michael Maggart spends most days running the online tutoring company he founded after a decade working as a math teacher. But every now and then, his high school friend Wes Anderson, the director, contacts him out of the blue, summons him to a film set and sends him to wardrobe. There’s Maggart playing a security guard in “The Phoenixian Scheme,” Anderson’s latest film, which was released in May. Previously, he played a detective in An-

Fastidious Filmmaking, Sizable Starry Casts, and Then This Guy

derson’s 2023 film, “Asteroid City,” and a hotel concierge in Anderson’s second feature film, “Rushmore” (1998). His credits also include a series of AT&T commercials that Anderson directed, and Anderson’s 2023 short film, “The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar.”



VINCENT ALBAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Maggart, 55, who splits his time between Austin, Texas, and New York City, has no formal training or interest in pursuing a career in acting. He has no other acting credits and would never have appeared in movies at all if not for an old friend who happens to be a celebrated film director — one who likes him enough to put him on camera. For Maggart, this has meant hobnobbing, dining and running lines with A-list actors like Tom Hanks, Bill Murray and Benicio Del Toro.

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