

The New York Times

THE WEATHER

Today, rain, breezy, chilly, high 56. Tonight, rain, some heavy, flooding, low 50. Tomorrow, breezy, cool, some rain into early afternoon, high 60. Weather map is on Page A20.

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Prices in Canada may be higher \$4.00

Abrego Garcia Gets Dismissal In Federal Case

Judge Rebukes U.S. for 'Vindictive' Motives

By ALAN FEUER

A federal judge on Friday dismissed the criminal case against the immigrant Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia, ruling that the Trump administration had brought human smuggling charges against him as part of a vindictive effort to punish him for challenging his wrongful deportation to El Salvador last year.

The ruling by the judge, Waverly D. Crenshaw Jr., was a stinging rebuke of both the Justice Department and its top official, Todd Blanche, the acting attorney general. Judge Crenshaw singled out Mr. Blanche for criticism in his 32-page opinion, pointing to statements he had made that prosecutors reawakened a dormant investigation into Mr. Abrego Garcia only after a different judge in Maryland questioned the administration's decision to deport him — along with scores of other immigrants — to a notorious Salvadoran prison in March 2025.

The decision, filed in Federal District Court in Nashville, marked the first time that a judge had dismissed a case brought by President Trump's Justice Department for being rooted in vindictive motives. It showed an emerging willingness among jurists to publicly call out the administration for prioritizing its political imperatives above the pursuit of actual justice.

Mr. Abrego Garcia, who is still fighting the administration's efforts to expel him from the country, is perhaps the best-known symbol of Mr. Trump's aggressive deportation agenda. His serial legal battles against the administration have dragged on for more than a year, reaching all the way to the Supreme Court. His release from criminal charges because of what Judge Crenshaw called their "vindictive taint" was another blow to the president's immigration crackdown, which had already been battered by, among

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IMMIGRATION Green-card seekers must leave the U.S. to apply, the administration says. PAGE A13

Scandals or Not, He Has Chance For Senate Win

By MICHAEL KRUSE and LAUREN MCGAUGHY

VICTORIA, Texas — Sharron Albertson, a longtime Republican activist, has been exchanging text messages with her old friend Ken Paxton, and she is not happy with his answers. Among the topics: the welfare of his estranged wife.

"One of the recent ones was, 'People are thinking that Angela's getting a bad deal in the divorce.' He wrote back, 'She's getting a better deal than I am,'" Ms. Albertson said.

Mr. Paxton, the Texas attorney general, has been accused of adultery by his wife of 38 years, Angela Paxton, who last year filed for divorce "on biblical grounds." He's been indicted on charges of felony securities fraud, and he's been impeached, too — with votes from members of his own party — on allegations of bribery, dereliction of duty, obstruction of justice and abuse of the public trust, and other misdeeds.

But none of that has stopped him from earning President Trump's endorsement and shaking up the U.S. Senate race in Texas, where he is battling Sena-

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PAMELA SMITH/GETTY IMAGES

T-shirt giveaways are now a staple of the N.B.A. postseason to create monochromatic backdrops.

Nope Couture: Knicks Fans Snub Free T-Shirts

By ANDREW KEH

When Stelios Yamalis and his mother, Fedra, arrived at Madison Square Garden on Tuesday night for Game 1 of the Eastern Conference finals, they found blue T-shirts — "Always Knicks" splashed across the front, a corporate sponsor logo on the sleeve — draped over the backs of their seats.

Identical shirts had been placed on each of the 20,000 or so other

Panache Over Promos in the Garden Seats

seats, and the suggestion was clear: Wouldn't it look cool if everybody put this on?

As far as Mr. Yamalis was concerned, he was already in uniform. He had on a two-piece suit crowded with mini Knicks logos. His mom sported a blue sequin

jacket he had gotten her for Christmas.

The notion that they would cover these outfits with a shapeless, extra-large shirt felt absurd.

"When you put the T-shirt on, everybody looks the same," said Mr. Yamalis, 24, an engineer from Ronkonkoma, on Long Island. "We're New Yorkers. We're all different kinds of people, in different kinds of ways."

The T-shirt giveaway has become a staple of the N.B.A. postseason, with teams across the country engineering monochromatic backdrops to elevate the atmospheres inside their arenas. Fans of the San Antonio Spurs, the Oklahoma City Thunder and the Cleveland Cavaliers — three of the four remaining teams — have embraced the shirts this postseason with enthusiasm.

But in New York, where the Knicks have handed out shirts in each round of the playoffs thus far, the stands have remained stubbornly kaleidoscopic. The free shirts were mostly ignored or taken home as keepsakes on Tuesday. Fans at Game 2 on Thursday were similarly indifferent to the swag, leaving thousands of promo towels largely unwaved while the

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ALONZO ADAMS/IMAGN IMAGES

Fans in Oklahoma City seemed to embrace wearing the swag.

Pro-Israel Groups' Strain With Mamdani Grows

By LIAM STACK and SALLY GOLDENBERG

As the news of a thwarted terrorist plot against a New York City synagogue quickly spread earlier this month, dozens of anxious Jewish leaders joined a Zoom call with police officials.

It was hours before weekly Shabbat services were to begin, and the leaders were seeking reassurances that they could tell their communities it was safe to attend prayer. Safety protocols were given, along with assur-

Questioning His Video on Palestinian Exile

ances of care and attention.

As the religious leaders began relaying that message to their congregants, another message was being delivered by Mayor Zohran Mamdani. After responding to the terror plot, he released a video marking Nakba Day, a mournful Palestinian commemoration of the displacement of Pal-

estinians during the creation of Israel in 1948.

The video — which shared the story of Inea Bushnaq, a Palestinian New Yorker who was forced to flee her home as a child — immediately drew fire because it omitted parts of that historical chapter that matter deeply to many Jews, including the role of the Holocaust in the creation of Israel and the participation of Arab states in the ensuing 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

Many pro-Palestinian New Yorkers, including Muslims and

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Risking Wrath of Trump, Some in G.O.P. Push Back

Lawmakers, Normally Compliant, Oppose Funds for Ballroom and Supporters

By LUKE BROADWATER

WASHINGTON — For much of President Trump's time in office, Republican lawmakers have had little appetite to stand up to his brand of vindictive politics.

Through revenge primary campaigns, bullying social media posts and the threat that he can command the G.O.P. base to go after anyone at any time, Mr. Trump has brought lawmakers in his party under his control like no president in modern history. A single critical word against Mr. Trump or his agenda could result in a full-scale retribution campaign to force a disloyal Republican from office.

But this week, in a rarity in G.O.P. politics, Mr. Trump's taunts, bullying and threats have backfired, at least for now. Senate Republicans, after the president targeted two of his own, stood up to Mr. Trump on two of his biggest priorities: money for his White House ballroom, and a \$1.8 billion fund to reward Trump supporters who claim political persecution by Democrats, such as the rioters who attacked the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

"So the nation's top law enforcement official is asking for a slush fund to pay people who assault cops?" said Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky. "Utterly stupid, morally wrong — take your pick."

Then, in another sign that the party was pushing back on Mr. Trump, House Republicans canceled a vote on a resolution to halt the war in Iran, after it became clear they did not have enough votes to defeat it.

The cracks in the president's dominance over Senate Republicans stemmed from two main sources. First, Mr. Trump asked

Republican lawmakers to take up politically unpop issues in a midterm election year.

At a time when gas prices are high, Americans are struggling to make ends meet. And as an unpopular war against Iran drags on, any Republican running for office will want to be seen as fighting for the American people, not bestowing lavish gifts upon the president and his associates, particularly ones who were convicted of crimes.

"Is it possible on May 21, 2026, Republicans finally found an ethical bridge too far?" asked Senator Richard J. Durbin of Illinois, the No. 2 Democrat. "I wonder: Could it have been that golden ballroom for a billion bucks that was supposed to be freebie that Mar-a-Lago golf buddies were going to pitch in for? Or perhaps it was this incredible slush fund — I don't know quite what to call it — it was a Capitol Police Cop Beaters Relief Fund?"

Mr. Trump has also openly attacked and worked against the very people he now needs to pass his priorities. There are only 53 Republican senators, several of whom are already independent minded and unlikely to support the most extreme parts of the president's agenda.

Mr. Trump did himself no favors when he supported a candidate to defeat Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana in a Republican primary, and endorsed a G.O.P. candidate against Senator John Cornyn of Texas. The result of those moves was to ensure that there would be fewer Republican senators who feel the need to be loyal to the president.

"You can't underestimate the

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One of Many Troubles in South Sudan

Hunger and conflict are on the minds of the residents of Akobo, where Ebola could have devastating consequences. Page A6.

Gabbard, Citing Ill Husband, Resigns as Intelligence Director

By DUSTIN VOLZ and JULIAN E. BARNES

WASHINGTON — Tulsi Gabbard, the director of national intelligence and an advocate of a more restrained foreign policy, submitted a letter of resignation to President Trump on Friday, saying that she was stepping away to support her husband after he recently was diagnosed with a rare form of bone cancer.

The departure will bring an end to Ms. Gabbard's rocky tenure overseeing the 18 U.S. intelligence agencies, during which she had been largely sidelined by the White House on significant national-security issues, including military operations in Iran and Venezuela.

Mr. Trump assembled a second administration last year with an

unusual mix of foreign-policy hawks in one corner and critics of American entanglements overseas like Ms. Gabbard in the other. But she and her wing found themselves increasingly marginalized in recent months, and her departure is the most significant exit yet from the coalition of restrainers.

In her letter Friday, Ms. Gabbard, 45, said she would remain in her post as the nation's intelligence chief until June 30.

"My husband, Abraham, has recently been diagnosed with an extremely rare form of bone cancer," Ms. Gabbard said in her resignation letter, a copy of which was released by her office. "He faces ma-

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Tough Road for New Fed Chair

The economic backdrop that Kevin M. Warsh inherits does not call for the rate cuts that the president wants. PAGE B1

Tesla Semi Could Jolt Industry

Early reviews of Tesla's electric heavy truck suggest that it could be a much-needed hit for the company. PAGE B1

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Officials closed ranks around Raúl Castro, their ex-president, whom the U.S. indicted for murder in the downing of civilian planes 30 years ago. PAGE A5

U.S. Promise for Poland

President Trump said he would send 5,000 troops, part of a back-and-forth that has left Europeans reeling. PAGE A8

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Ben Franklin in Paris

After an arduous trip, he persuaded the French to back the American rebels. We followed in his footsteps. PAGE C7



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The End of an Era

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Billy Eichner Opens Up

The comedian reflects on his career, including a vulnerable new audio memoir and a letdown over a film. PAGE C1

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Irrigation canals around Boise have served as a rat superhighway, bringing an infestation so serious that health officials have floated declaring a public emergency. PAGE A17

Choosing Her Battles

Gov. Abigail Spanberger of Virginia urged fellow Democrats, including Hakeem Jeffries, the minority leader, to stop pressing redistricting and focus on must-win midterm elections. PAGE A14

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'Rowdy' NASCAR Star Dies

The versatile (and at times temperate) Kyle Busch, 41, was unsurpassed with 234 victories in the organization's three national racing series. PAGE B11



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