

The New York Eimes

THE WEATHER Today, humid, sun and clouds, an afternoon storm, high 81. **Tonight,** cloudy, low 63. **Tomorrow,** cloudy,

humid, a heavy afternoon storm, high 70. Weather map is on Page 21.

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CHERISS MAY FOR THE NEW YORK TIME:

Graduation, and an Obligation

At West Point on Saturday, President Biden told graduating cadets that "nothing is guaranteed" about America's democracy. Page 22.

The Hamas Chief and the Israeli Who Saved His Life

By JO BECKER and ADAM SELLA

TEL AVIV — This is how Dr. Yuval Bitton remembers the morning of Oct. 7. Being jolted awake just after sunrise by the insistent ringing of his phone. The frantic voice of his daughter, who was traveling abroad, asking, "Dad, what's happened in Israel? Turn on the TV."

News anchors were still piecing together the reports: Palestinian gunmen penetrating Israel's vaunted defenses, infiltrating more than 20 towns and military bases, killing approximately 1,200 people and dragging more than 240 men, women and children into Gaza as hostages.

Even in that first moment, Dr. Bitton says, he knew with certainty who had masterminded the attack: Yahya Sinwar, the leader of Hamas in Gaza and Inmate No.



Yahya Sinwar, left, and Yuval Bitton over a dozen years ago when Mr. Sinwar, now Hamas's Gaza leader, was in an Israeli prison.

had a history with Yahya Sinwar. As he watched the images of terror and death flicker across his screen, he was tormented by a de-

perately ill Mr. Sinwar, and how afterward the Hamas leader had told him that "he owed me his life." The two men had then formed a relationship of sorts, sworn enemies who nevertheless showed a wary mutual respect. As a dentist and later as a senior intelligence officer for the Israeli prison service, Dr. Bitton had spent hundreds of hours talking with and analyzing Mr. Sinwar, who in the seven months since Oct. 7 has eluded Israel's forces even as their assault on Gaza has killed tens of thousands and turned much of the enclave to rubble. Now American officials believe Mr. Sinwar is calling the shots for Hamas in negotiations over a deal for a cease-fire and the release of some of the hostages. Dr. Bitton saw that, in a sense,

everything that had passed between himself and Mr. Sinwar was a premonition of the events now coming to pass. He understood the way Mr. Sinwar's mind worked as well as or better than any Israeli official. He knew from experience that the price the Hamas leader would demand for the hostages might well be one Israel would be unwilling to pay.

Dangers Grow As Workplaces Become Hotter

Push for a Safety Rule Faces Big Hurdles

By CORAL DAVENPORT and NOAH WEILAND

WASHINGTON — For more than two years, a group of health experts, economists and lawyers in the U.S. government has worked to address a growing public health crisis: people dying on the job from extreme heat.

In the coming months, this team of roughly 30 people at the Occupational Safety and Health Administration is expected to propose a new rule that would require employers to protect an estimated 50 million people exposed to high temperatures while they work. They include farm laborers and construction workers, but also people who sort packages in warehouses, clean airplane cabins and cook in commercial kitchens.

The measure would be the first major federal government regulation to protect Americans from heat on the job. And it is expected to meet stiff resistance from some business and industry groups, which oppose regulations that would, in some cases, require more breaks and access to water, shade and air-conditioning.

But even if the rule takes effect, experts say, the government's emergency response system is poorly suited to meet the urgency of the moment.

Last year was the hottest in recorded history, and researchers are expecting another recordbreaking summer, with temperatures already rising sharply across the Sun Belt. The heat index in Miami reached 112 degrees Fahrenheit last weekend, shattering daily records by 11 degrees.

The surge in deaths from heat is now the greatest threat to human health posed by climate change, said Dr. John M. Balbus, the deputy assistant secretary for climate change and health equity in the Health and Human Services Department.

"The threat to people from extreme heat is reaching a point where we have to rethink how, at all levels of government, we are preparing and putting in place a response that matches the severity of the problem," Dr. Balbus said in an interview. "This is new territory."



By EMILIANO RODRÍGUEZ MEGA and SIMON ROMERO

CELAYA, Mexico — Gisela Gaytán had just arrived at an event on the first day of her mayoral campaign in central Mexico's industrial heartland when the gunfire broke out.

Moments later, her lifeless body laid crumpled in a pool of blood.

The assassination in broad daylight of Ms. Gaytán, a 37-year-old lawyer, reflects a gruesome trend in this year's general election in Mexico. She figures among the 36 people killed since last summer while seeking public office, according to a New York Times analysis, making this one of the most blood-soaked election cycles in recent memory.

The candidate killings point to a threat at the core of Mexico's democracy. Voters are preparing to cast ballots next month in a spirited election that could produce the country's first female president, a milestone in the world's largest Spanish-speaking country.

But analysts and law enforcement officials say that emboldened cartels are spreading fear in races at the local level as they expand their reach into extortion rackets, migrant trafficking and food production.

Heightening the sense of terror, not only candidates but their family members are being increasingly targeted, with at least 14 such relatives killed in recent months. Some cases have been especially gruesome; in Guerrero state, the dismembered bodies of a candidate for City Council and his wife were found this month.

Armed groups are also turning some of the killings into mass shootings. In Chiapas state, gunmen this month killed a mayoral candidate and seven other people including the candidate's sister and a young girl.

To maximize their profits, hydra-headed criminal groups need pliant elected officials. Threats

7333335 in the Israeli prison system from 1989 until his release in a prisoner swap in 2011.

But that was not all. Dr. Bitton

cision he had made nearly two decades before — how, working in a prison infirmary, he had come to the aid of a mysteriously and desAnd by day's end, he knew something else: Mr. Sinwar's operatives had his nephew.

Continued on Page 10

An estimated 2,300 people in the United States died from heatrelated illness in 2023, triple the *Continued on Page 14*

and bribes can ensure that a small-town mayor or City Council member turns a blind eye to illicit *Continued on Page 9*

Rediscovery of Slave Narrative Awakens an Era's Fierce Voice

By JENNIFER SCHUESSLER

One day in 1855, a man walked into a newspaper office in Sydney, Australia, with an odd request.

The man, later described as a "man of color" with "bright, intelligent eyes" and an American accent, was looking for a copy of the United States Constitution.

The text was procured, along with a recent book on the history of the United States. Two weeks later, the man returned with a nearly 20,000-word text of his own, bearing a blunt title: "The United States Governed by Six Hundred Thousand Despots."

The first half offered an account of the author's birth into slavery in North Carolina around 1815, his escape from his master, his years on a whaling ship and then his departure from "the land of the free" for the shores of Australia, where he went to work in the gold fields. The second half was a long, blistering condemnation of the country he had left behind, in particular its revered founding document.

"That devil in sheepskin called the Constitution of the United States," the man wrote, is "the great chain that binds the north and south together, a union to rob and plunder the sons of Africa, a union cemented with human blood, and blackened with the guilt of 68 years."

The newspaper published the narrative anonymously, in two installments, attributing it only to "A Fugitive Slave." How it was received is unknown.

The man's words then sat, unread and forgotten, until a few years ago, when an American literary scholar came across them

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KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Senator John Fetterman, the first-term Pennsylvania Democrat, owns a political brand that has always been quirky and irreverent.

Edgier Fetterman Riles the Left And Alienates Some Supporters

By ANNIE KARNI

WASHINGTON — Senator John Fetterman was hard to miss, lumbering down an empty hallway in a Senate office building dressed in his signature baggy gym shorts and a black hoodie. So when Stevie O'Hanlon, an environmentalist and organizer from Chester County, Pa., spotted him recently, she took the opportunity to question her home-state senator about a pipeline in her community.

Mr. Fetterman's reaction was surprisingly hostile. Raising his phone to capture the confrontation on video, the senator began ridiculing her.

"I didn't expect this!" Mr. Fetterman said, feigning excitement. "Oh my gosh!"

As Ms. O'Hanlon politely pressed him on what she called his "change of heart" on the issue of the local pipeline, which he had previously opposed, Mr. Fetterman pulled faces of faux concern until he stepped onto an elevator and let the closing door end the interaction.

Ms. O'Hanlon, a co-founder of the progressive Sunrise Movement, was stunned.

"I've talked to Republicans who are much friendlier than that," she said in an interview, after a clip of the interaction circulated widely on social media. "The person that we voted for is not the person who mocks constituents when they bring up concerns."

Ms. O'Hanlon is not the only one wondering who Mr. Fetterman has become. Since last fall, the first-term Democratic senator from Pennsylvania has undergone a significant change in politi-

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METROPOLITAN

Legal Minds, Sharp Tongues

A litigation team that is suing Elon Musk was built from the savviest, funniest tweeters in a thread responding to a defamation lawsuit. PAGE 1

SUNDAY STYLES

The Reluctant TV Star

West Wilson was unemployed and almost broke when he was cast in the reality show "Summer House." Now he's an audience favorite. PAGE 10

SUNDAY BUSINESS

'Selling Out' Is Not an Insult

Despite the popular image as an activist, idealistic generation, Generation Z students at elite schools appear to be strikingly corporate-minded. PAGE 4

ARTS & LEISURE

How Loss Can Shape Art

Ten writers, actors, musicians and filmmakers discuss grief — how they have experienced it and how it has changed them. PAGE 10



SUNDAY OPINION

