

The New York Times

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

THE WEATHER

Today, unseasonably warm, sunny, a light breeze, high 86. **Tonight**, clear, balmy, low 67. **Tomorrow**, abundant sunshine, a light breeze, high 80. Weather map appears on Page 20.

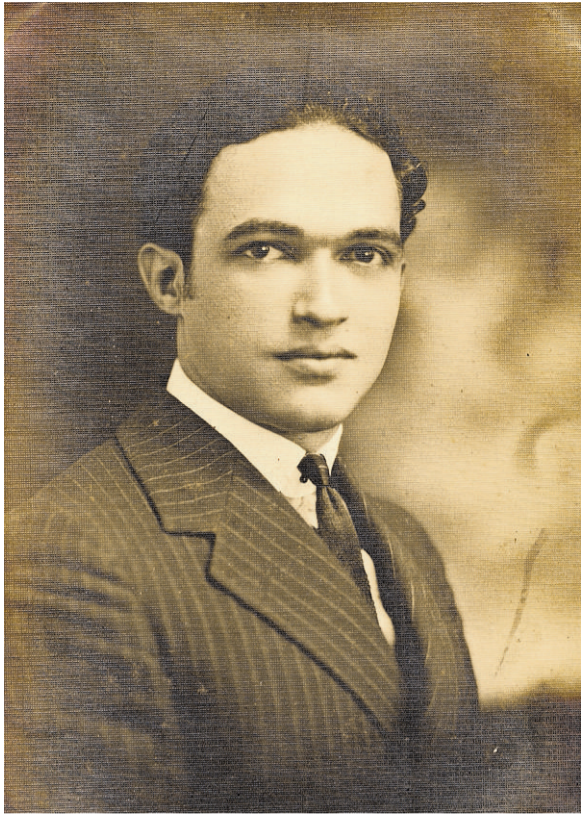
VOL. CLXXV ... No. 60,887

© 2026 The New York Times Company

SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2026

Prices in Canada may be higher \$6.00

When their mother died, Edward and George DeGrange were sent to live at an orphanage for Black children in New Orleans.



Edward eventually followed a well-worn corridor north to Chicago, where he lived as a white man.



George, whose skin was slightly darker, stayed behind in New Orleans and rarely spoke of Edward.

My Family's American Secret

This is the story of how one fateful decision 100 years ago created parallel lives and unfolded across generations.

BY SUSAN SAULNY PAGE 16

NEWS ANALYSIS

Trump's Push For Friendship Is Unrequited

Seeking Bond With Xi But Getting Little Back

By ANTON TROIANOVSKI

BEIJING — There was a vague agreement that China would purchase Boeing jets and more American soybeans. There was discussion about Iran and opening the Strait of Hormuz, and a nod to other issues, like cracking down on chemicals used to make fentanyl.

But President Trump departed Beijing on Friday with almost nothing concrete to show for his two-day summit with President Xi Jinping of China. After months of buildup and a delay necessitated by Mr. Trump's difficulty in extricating the United States from the war with Iran, the summit ended with no major public progress on the Middle East, trade, Taiwan, nuclear proliferation, artificial intelligence or any of the other myriad issues that are sources of friction between the world's two superpowers.

Instead, Mr. Trump seemed intent on a different kind of diplomacy, forging a personal bond with a Chinese leader who appeared far more focused on advancing his own nation's strategic agenda.

Mr. Trump toasted Mr. Xi as "my friend" at their banquet in Beijing on Thursday and said he had "become really a friend" when they sat down before the cameras on Friday.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, asked at a briefing during the summit whether Mr. Xi considered Mr. Trump a friend, responded with boilerplate: "The two sides exchanged views on major issues."

Mr. Trump has hailed the summit in Beijing as a major success, highlighting the personal bond he says he has built with China's longtime leader. But the feeling is not necessarily mutual, as evidenced by Mr. Xi's more measured tone and the lack of clarity about any major agreements.

Orville Schell, the vice president of the Center on U.S.-China Relations at the Asia Society in New York, called the summit "quite insubstantial and aspirational."

"We have Trump dreaming out loud," he said.

The mismatch shows the risks in Mr. Trump's personality-driven approach.

FUND PROPOSED TO COMPENSATE ALLIES OF TRUMP

\$1.7 BILLION PRICE TAG

Targets of Investigations by the Biden Justice Department

This article is by Glenn Thrush, Andrew Duehren and Alan Feuer.

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration is considering the establishment of a \$1.7 billion fund to compensate the president's allies and others investigated by the Justice Department under President Joseph R. Biden Jr., creating an ethical and political minefield for Republicans and the department's leadership.

The unusual plan, which Democrats and former government officials criticized as a vast political slush fund financed by taxpayers, is being fast-tracked, but has yet to be finalized or approved, according to people familiar with the situation who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

The Justice Department is modeling the program, in part, on a landmark \$760 million settlement fund the Obama administration created to compensate Native American farmers and ranchers who were deprived access to federal subsidies for decades, one of those people said. Payments in that settlement came from the Judgment Fund, an uncapped pot of money that does not require congressional approval to make payments and is maintained by the Treasury Department.

The proposal comes in response to various claims President Trump has made against a federal government he himself controls. He has sought compensation for the leak of his tax returns during his first term, as well as the investigations into his handling of classified documents after he left office and into his 2016 campaign's potential ties to Russia.

The idea of establishing a government fund to pay Mr. Trump's political allies has gained traction internally as the Justice Department and White House try to resolve a \$10 billion lawsuit Mr. Trump filed in January against the Internal Revenue Service. The judge overseeing that case is considering throwing out Mr. Trump's suit because it is ridden with perceived conflicts of interest and the potential for self-dealing.

Volley of Talks Fails to Prevent L.I.R.R. Strike

This article is by Stefanos Chen, Ashley Southall and Ellen Yan.

Thousands of workers for the Long Island Rail Road walked off the job early Saturday morning, staging the first strike in more than 30 years for America's busiest passenger railway and grinding service to a halt.

After three years of failed contract negotiations, two federal interventions and a volley of last-minute bargaining, unions representing about half of the work force decided to take to the picket line to protest what they called insufficient wage increases.

Five unions representing more than 3,500 workers — including engineers, signalmen and machinists — called the strike after contract discussions with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the state agency that runs the railroad, fell apart.

Kevin Sexton, a vice president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, one of the unions, said the two sides could not agree on raises in 2026, or on issues like health care contributions.

"We are truly sorry that we're in this situation," Mr. Sexton said at a midnight news conference outside of M.T.A. headquarters. "But this is why you have to take collective bargaining seriously."

More than 270,000 daily riders rely on the service to travel between New York City and Long Island, a sprawl of suburbs and bedroom communities where many of the region's workers live.

At the Kew Gardens-Union Turnpike subway station, a transfer point for passengers traveling from Long Island, there was no



Passengers scanned the horizon during the Hondius's trip to the Canary Islands from Cape Verde.

How a Nature Cruise Turned Into a Nightmare

This article is by Jason Horowitz, Claire Moses and Amelia Nierenberg.

The grim-faced captain had bad news for the people gathered in the lounge of the MV Hondius. One of their fellow passengers had died.

"Tragic as it is, it was due to natural causes, we believe," the captain, Jan Dobrogowski, told them on April 12. He added that the ship's doctor had said the man was "not infectious, so the ship is safe."

Less than two weeks earlier, the captain had convened the same group for a celebratory toast, as the Hondius left Argentina to sail the south Atlantic for bird watching and wildlife spotting on some

Uncertainty and Fear Amid an Outbreak of a Lethal Virus

of the world's most remote islands.

Now, passengers consoled the man's widow, Mirjam Schilperoord-Huisman, 69, of the Netherlands. She and her husband, Leo Schilperoord, also 69, had crossed South America in pursuit of rare birds. Some asked if she would prefer that the trip be cut short.

"Everyone is here for a purpose," she responded, according to Ruhi Cenet, a Turkish documentary filmmaker who was on the ship. She urged her fellow bird watchers to push on because her husband "would have wanted me to do the same."

Within weeks, two more passengers, including Ms. Schilperoord-Huisman, would be dead. The cause, health officials say, was almost certainly the Andes species of the hantavirus, a family of viruses, carried by rodents, that can spread between humans.

Over the following weeks, a world still traumatized by the coronavirus pandemic watched anxiously as the passengers and crew of the Hondius, hailing from at least 23 countries, lived the nautical nightmare of a potential out

break.

But its reach has gone far beyond the Mormon corridor, and its rise in popularity has dovetailed with an overall decline in U.S. alcohol consumption. "There's not a lot of Mormon people in our neighborhood," said Greenberg. "But there are a lot of people who are sober-curious or not drinking."

The reality show, which follows a group of Mormon influencers in Utah, helped popularize dirty soda beyond the Mountain States and inspired a wave of TikTok videos on the subject. Swig rapidly

Soda, Syrup, Cream and Ice. Sound Dirty? It's Supposed To.

By GABRIELLA GERSHENSON

The first time Pop's Social, a catering company in South Orange, N.J., that specializes in dirty soda, served an alcoholic drink at an event, something strange happened.

At the gathering in December, its nonalcoholic offering, a spiced pear-cider seltzer with vanilla and peach syrups, cream, lemon and cold foam, was a hit. The Prosecco-spiked version? Not so much.

"People were more interested in the mocktail than the cocktail," Ali Greenberg, an owner of the business, said in an interview.

Dirty soda — a customizable blend of soda, flavored syrup, creamer and sometimes fruit, served over pebble ice — has been crossing into the mainstream for years, especially after the cast of "The Secret Lives of Mormon Wives," the hit reality show that premiered in 2024, frequented Swig, the Utah chain that started it all.

But its reach has gone far beyond the Mormon corridor, and its rise in popularity has dovetailed with an overall decline in U.S. alcohol consumption. "There's not a lot of Mormon people in our neighborhood," said Greenberg. "But there are a lot of people who are sober-curious or not drinking."

The reality show, which follows a group of Mormon influencers in Utah, helped popularize dirty soda beyond the Mountain States and inspired a wave of TikTok videos on the subject. Swig rapidly



The Strawberry Breeze, on the menu at a Swig store in Utah.

INTERNATIONAL 4-13

'On the Other Side of the World' Latin American migrants shackled and sent to Kinshasa face a stark choice: Go back home or stay in Africa. PAGE 4

A Drug Cartel's Durable Shield Insiders say they traded bribes and political support for almost total free rein in Mexico's Sinaloa State. PAGE 8

SUNDAY BUSINESS

Can We Learn From This? A look inside a collaboration between the online education empire Khan Academy and OpenAI that brought artificial intelligence into the classroom. PAGE 6



SPECIAL SECTION

Savor Every Bite of Summer New York Times Cooking editors have assembled 24 recipes to help you capture the tastes of the season.

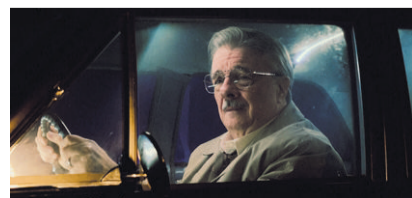
NATIONAL 14-26

A Perilous Summer Looms After a warm and dry winter, Oregon is bracing for water shortages and a heightened risk of wildfires. PAGE 14

What's Next for Murdaugh? A new trial could be on the horizon after South Carolina's top court overturned his murder convictions. PAGE 26

METROPOLITAN

Big Dreams, Cloudy Futures Traditional milestones for young adults may feel further away in New York and other cities amid a bleak job market, rising rents and huge debt. PAGE 1



ARTS & LEISURE

How Broadway Stars Suit Up For Nathan Lane, above, Taraji P. Henson and other actors to get into character, it can take wigs, hugs or banishing ghosts to transform. PAGE 14

SUNDAY OPINION

Ross Douthat PAGE 8

SUNDAY STYLES

Eating by Way of the Bible A diet that consists mostly of foods that are mentioned in the Bible has found new audiences online. "Sin entered into the world through food," one Christian content creator says. PAGE 1

Exploring Frida Kahlo To better understand the painter, it can help to view her as a performance artist, forever putting on a show for the world. We look at some of the things that made her so special. PAGE 7

