

# The New York Times

### THE WEATHER

Today, cloudy, breezy, a few showers through the early afternoon high 66. Tonight, breezy, mainly clear, low 41. Tomorrow, cooler, clouds and sun, high 55. Weather map, Page 23.

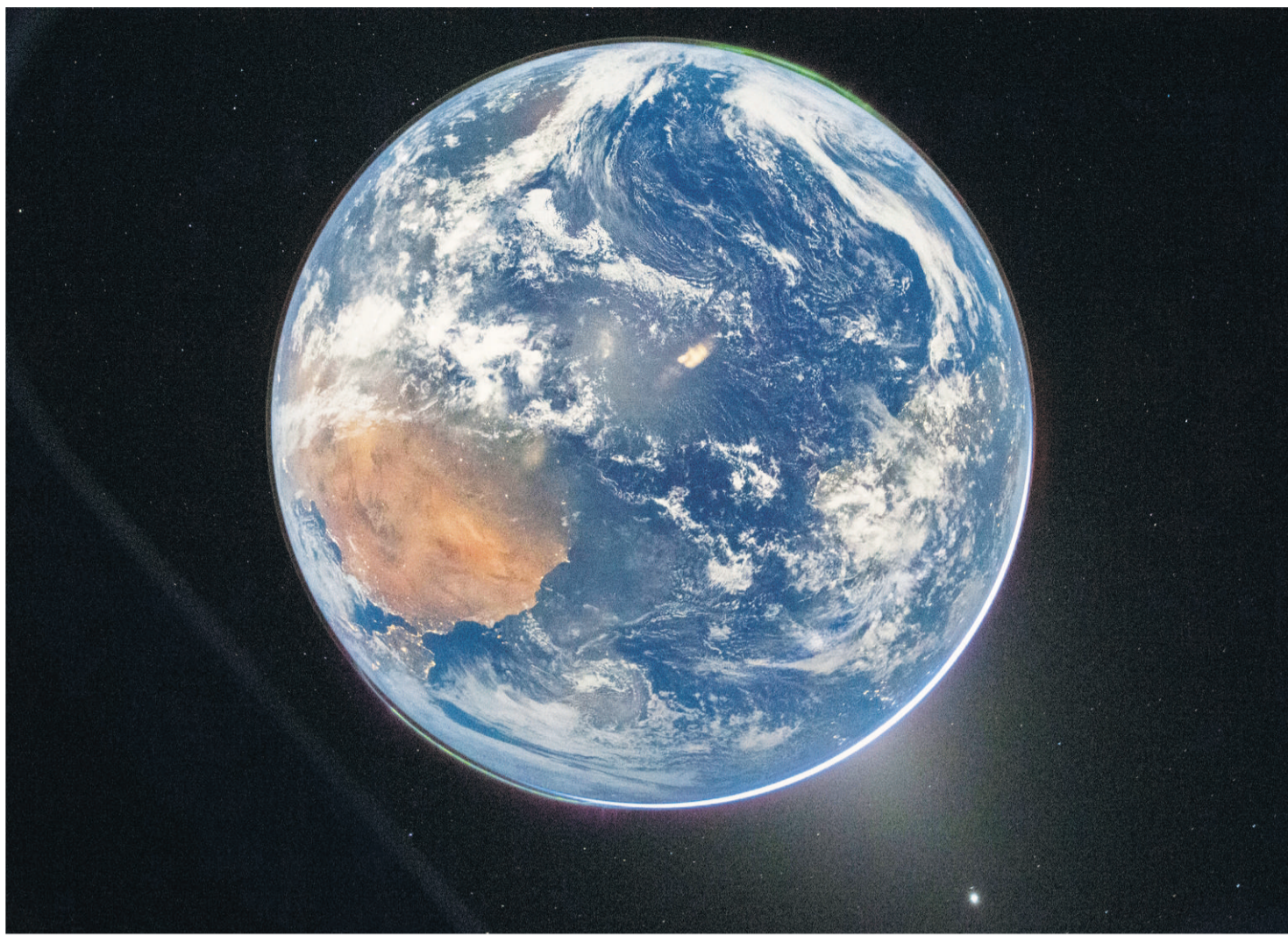
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Prices in Canada may be higher \$6.00



REID WISEMAN/NASA, VIA GETTY IMAGES

## ‘Hello, World’

An image from Artemis II showing the Sahara at bottom left. The mission has rekindled Houston’s “Space City” identity. Page 18.

### WASHINGTON MEMO

## Moon Launch For the Ages, For a Minute

By PETER BAKER

WASHINGTON — The first time human beings flew to the moon, it came at the end of a rotten year. War, political violence, racial strife, protesters in the streets — it felt like everything was coming unraveled. Yet when Apollo 8 splashed down, it proved so inspiring that one American summed up the feeling with a telegram thanking the astronauts: “You saved 1968.”

Fifty-eight years later, another American spacecraft hurtled toward the heavens last week to begin a journey back to the moon amid deep divisions at home. For a brief moment, the talk was again about courage, exploration, national ambition and common purpose. But it was no fault of the four astronauts of Artemis II that the planet they left behind remains riven by war, strife and violence or that 2026 has not, as yet, been saved.

The launch of Artemis II on Wednesday evening captured the tenor of the times in a country that can still do big things but seems forever mired in big problems. The roar of the rocket managed to hold the spotlight for less than two and a half hours before President Trump came on the screen to change the subject. While he congratulated the astronauts at the top, he quickly turned the nation’s attention back to the latest war dividing Americans and the economic turmoil it has wrought here and

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## Hewing to His Immigration Agenda, but Quietly

This article is by Zolan Kanno-Youngs, Hamed Aleaziz, Christopher Flavelle, Emily Cochrane and Glenn Thrush.

It was May 2025, a few months into the second Trump administration, and Stephen Miller, the right-wing populist powering the White House crackdown on immigration, was clearly frustrated.

President Trump had talked about arresting “the worst of the worst” of undocumented immigrants — the rapists, killers and other criminals he had emphasized during the previous year’s

## In the Wake of Chaos, Miller Is Less Visible but Undeterred

campaign. Mr. Miller, however, had long pushed for removing anyone who had entered the country illegally.

So when Mr. Miller arrived one day last spring at the headquarters of Immigration and Customs Enforcement for an update from agency leaders, an official raised a question on many agents’ minds:

Who exactly should they be going after?

Mr. Miller was unequivocal, according to three people with knowledge of the meeting. Agents should not limit themselves to dangerous criminals. Instead, they should stop people with the lowest level of reasonable suspicion, and detain anyone in the country illegally, with warrantless arrests. His message was clear: Push the limits.

Eight months later, Mr. Miller did something startling — he backpedaled.

His demands had helped set in

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TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

## A Border Wall Plan Draws Bipartisan Complaints

The Rio Grande in Texas’ Big Bend area, where a coalition is fighting a building proposal. Page 11.

## A \$1.8 Billion Business Built With A.I. and a Payroll of Just Two

By ERIN GRIFFITH

LOS ANGELES — Matthew Gallagher took just two months, \$20,000 and more than a dozen artificial intelligence tools to get his start-up off the ground.

From his house in Los Angeles, Mr. Gallagher, 41, used A.I. to write the code for the software that powers his company, produce the website copy, generate the images and videos for ads and han-

dle customer service. He created A.I. systems to analyze his business’s performance. And he outsourced the other stuff he couldn’t do himself.

His start-up, Medvi, a telehealth provider of GLP-1 weight-loss drugs, got 300 customers in its first month. In its second month, it gained 1,000 more. In 2025, Medvi’s first full year in business, the company generated \$401 million in sales.

## Super-Efficient Effort, Though a Bit Lonely

Mr. Gallagher then hired his only employee, his younger brother, Elliot. This year, they are on track to do \$1.8 billion in sales.

A \$1.8 billion company with just two employees? In the age of A.I., it’s increasingly possible.

Sam Altman, the chief executive of OpenAI, predicted the rise of a new breed of super-efficient company in 2024. A one-person business worth \$1 billion “would have been unimaginable without A.I.,” he said on a podcast, “and now it will happen.”

Now as A.I. tools spread, entrepreneurs are harnessing the technology to expand their start-ups to an enormous scale at

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## Pledge to End War Swiftly Lacks Explanation of How

## Iran’s Downing of Plane Undercuts Image of ‘American Warrior Unleashed’

By GREG JAFFE

WASHINGTON — From the moment the Iran war started, President Trump has been laboring to persuade anxious Americans that it will soon end.

“I can say tonight that we are on track to complete all of America’s military objectives shortly,” he promised on Wednesday from the White House. “Very shortly.”

Days earlier, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, just back from a trip to the Middle East, insisted that the war he witnessed was nothing like the one he had fought two decades earlier in Iraq. That war had been a grinding treadmill. “It was always about the next rotation, never knowing when the mission would end,” he recalled.

This war — Operation Epic Fury — was the “exact opposite,” he said.

“It was sheer mission focus,” he said of the conflict, now in its fifth week. “It was the American warrior unleashed.”

The message from Mr. Trump and Mr. Hegseth: America was not engaged in an endless war.

The problem: Neither Mr. Trump nor Mr. Hegseth has been able to explain how the war will end, short of the U.S. military battering Iran’s leaders into agreeing to concessions that, thus far, they have been unwilling to make.

Those prospects grew even more complicated on Friday after Iran downed an Air Force F-15E fighter jet, undercutting American claims of having achieved near-total air superiority.

One of the plane’s two crew members was rescued by American forces, which were attempting to locate and rescue the other on Saturday.

Mr. Trump and Mr. Hegseth launched the Iran war convinced that they had corrected for the mistakes that produced the quagmires of the past. U.S. troops, they vowed, would not take on ill-

defined or impossible nation-building missions as they had in Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. military, unencumbered by “stupid rules of engagement,” would employ overwhelming force, Mr. Hegseth promised.

Perhaps most important, Mr. Trump would ensure that the war’s objectives remained vague and flexible. That way, he could decide when those aims had been met and the war was won.

Mr. Trump’s approach worked in Operation Midnight Hammer, the campaign last summer to strike Iran’s nuclear sites. It produced swift results in what Mr. Trump described as the “perfectly executed” raid to capture President Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela.

The continuing war in Iran, however, has revealed the biggest flaw in Mr. Trump’s approach. When the stakes are at their highest, the enemy often refuses to quit.

“If you corner a regime into fighting for its life, the incentive for it to escalate is significant,” said Richard Fontaine, the chief executive officer of the Center for a New American Security. “That’s what we’re seeing today.”

Mr. Trump and Mr. Hegseth have sought to work around this uncomfortable reality by demanding that America’s reluctant allies take up the fight so that U.S. troops can leave. They have called on U.S. allies in Europe and Asia to mount an operation aimed at forcing Iran to reopen the Strait of

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**CHOKO POINTS** U.S. aggression has led other countries to try to pressure the economy. PAGE 8

**THE STRAIT** European leaders have ideas for reopening after the war. But none are sure bets. PAGE 8

## ‘Renaissance’ for Luxury Bibles: High Quality, Prices and Sales

By RUTH GRAHAM

Blake Musick’s first Bible, given to him as a child by his parents, was a hardback King James Version with an illustration of Jesus teaching some children on the cover. His second was a large-print edition, acquired as a teenager, with a thick zippered cover to protect it as he carried it to church.

He acquired his 70th Bible, give or take, in February, an English Standard Version bound in soft brown cowhide with a sticker price of \$299.99, scooped up for \$200 secondhand on Facebook.

“This is actually God’s word,” Mr. Musick, 38, said. “If it’s something that important, then why not have a really nice copy of it?”

Mr. Musick, a pharmacist in Johnson City, Tenn., is among a growing number of Americans buying high-end — and high-priced — copies of the Bible. The growing category of premium Bibles includes a wide array of translations assembled with high-quality materials, like genuine leather covers, and in many cases extras like elaborate color illustrations. Mr. Musick estimated that about half the Bibles in his collection are in that category.

The retail cost can run up to \$400 for a single book, an even more remarkable figure in a category where the core text itself has been in print continuously since the invention of the printing press, and is often handed out for free.

“There’s been a renaissance in the whole field,” said Sky Cline,



TIERNEY L. CROSS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

A leather-bound premium Bible can run up to \$400.

who has been selling premium Bibles online since the early 2000s, and later began producing his own, sourcing materials like calfskin leather from Italy and paper milled in France. His sales began growing during the coronavirus pandemic and haven’t stopped.

Mr. Cline attributes his success to a few factors, including a gravitation toward handmade, long-lasting objects, and “a push away from instant, artificial, blue-light culture,” he said. Bible apps like YouVersion, which marked its billionth unique download in November, remain extremely popular. But many collectors of premium Bibles mention how satisfying the books feel and smell, with comparisons to baseball gloves and saddle shops.

Online, collectors post photos of

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### SUNDAY BUSINESS

#### Teens Talking to Chatbots

Beyond the “funny violence,” confiding about a broken heart or filling a void of loneliness, a darker reality looms. PAGE 4

#### Selling Blood Plasma to Get By

Plasma centers are opening in wealthier U.S. areas as more people struggle with the higher living costs. PAGE 1

### NATIONAL 14-24

#### Predicting Stability of Studies

Conducting research is hard; confirming the results is, too. And artificial intelligence isn’t ready to help. PAGE 22

#### Candidate Goes the Extra Miles

Kaela Berg is a Delta flight attendant and a legislator who is running for Congress in Minnesota. PAGE 20

### ARTS & LEISURE

#### The Final Season of ‘Hacks’

A photographer captured the mood as the HBO comedy finished production this year, and the showrunners looked back on its award-winning run. PAGE 8

### THE MAGAZINE

#### A New Approach

You’ll find a collection of new content this weekend in The New York Times Magazine, which has been redesigned for a more dynamic presentation. Even as it retains its commitment to in-depth reporting, the magazine will feature more visual journalism, more history and humor, more essays, and more photography. New features include The Context, which identifies deeper meaning in the news by providing intellectual and historical background; a revived On Language column; and a column in which a writer tries a popular product or service to see what the fuss is about. But rather than impose a fixed editorial lineup each week, the intent is to create an environment of experimentation.



### SUNDAY STYLES

#### A Werner Herzog Film School

Fifty artists shot shorts in the Azores, guided by the director. They just needed \$10,000 and airfare. PAGE 10

#### Ready for the Culture Wars?

The author Caro Claire Burke wades deep into the tradwife conversation with her novel, “Yesteryear.” PAGE 1

### SUNDAY OPINION

#### Claire Wilmot

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