TODAY IS CHRISTMAS! REMEMBER TO GIVE BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITIES!

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

Che New York Times

THE WEATHER

Today, partly cloudy, breezy in the afternoon, high 44. **Tonight**, clear to partly cloudy, low 23. **Tomorrow**, cloudy, colder, snow arriving later, high 30. Weather map, Page B10.

\$4.00

VOL. CLXXV No. 60,744

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2025

Prices in Canada may be higher

ZELENSKY OFFERS Talks Have Stalled Over By CONSTANT MÉHEUT

KYIV, Ukraine - President

The offer, made in comments to reporters this week, was the closest Mr. Zelensky has come to addressing the thorny territorial disputes in Donetsk that have repeatedly derailed peace talks, signaling his willingness to compromise after weeks of U.S.-mediated negotiations.

But the proposal also hinted at the significant gaps that remain between Ukraine and Russia. Mr. Zelensky's offer of a demilitarized zone came with a condition: Russia would have to pull its forces from an equivalent stretch of land in Donetsk. So far, the Kremlin has given no indication that it is willing to accept anything less than

The proposal forms part of a revised 20-point peace plan that was drawn up by Ukraine and the United States in the past few weeks and that Mr. Zelensky presented to reporters in Kyiv on Tuesday. The blueprint covers a broad range of issues, from potential territorial arrangements to the security guarantees Kyiv wants to prevent future Russian

Mr. Zelensky portrayed the

It remained unclear how the proposed Ukrainian concessions not yet accepted by the United States would be communicated by American officials to Moscow.

Still, Kyiv's proposed concesplant to Ukrainian control.

The Kremlin said President

PULLBACK IN EAST FOR A PEACE DEAL

A DEMILITARIZED ZONE

Donetsk as Russians Seek Full Control

Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine is willing to pull his troops back from areas of the eastern Donetsk region still under Kyiv's control and turn those areas into a demilitarized zone as part of a possible peace deal with Moscow.

full control over the region.

aggression, as well as plans to re-

build the war-ravaged nation. plan as Ukraine's best effort to end the war and said it was now up to Russia to decide how to respond. He said that the new draft was being presented to Russia by the United States.

The Ukrainian leader said the various points in the plan "largely reflect the joint Ukrainian American position." But Kyiv and Washington did not reach an agreement on two sticking points: the fate of Ukrainian-held territory in Donetsk and control of a major nuclear plant currently occupied by Russia. On the second point, Kyiv offered to manage the plant jointly with the United States as a form of

sions, even if accepted in full by the United States, are likely to be rejected by Moscow. The Kremlin has insisted that its primary goal is a full military takeover of Donetsk - whether achieved on the battlefield or at the negotiating table — and has dismissed any notion of returning the nuclear

Continued on Page A9

A Fraught Escape From the Horrors of Sudan

Refugees returned to a camp in eastern Chad after collecting material to build huts. Many had fled the paramilitary takeover of El Fasher, in the Darfur region. Page A6.

Trump's Moves Imperil Lifeline For Venezuela

By ANATOLY KURMANAEV and REBECCA F. ELLIOTT

The United States' aggressive campaign against tankers carrying Venezuelan crude has thrown the country's oil industry into disarray, jeopardizing its government's main source of revenue.

President Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela has been struggling to adjust to President Trump's dramatic escalation of pressure against his government, which has seen U.S. law enforcement agents taking action against three tankers involved in the export of Venezuelan crude, according to people close to the Venezuelan oil industry. They spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensi-

Venezuela's ports are piling up with tankers filled with oil, as officials fear releasing them into international waters and into the cross hairs of the United States. Tankers bound for Venezuela have turned around midway, shipping data shows. And shipowners are canceling contracts to load crude, the people said.

In the past two weeks, the United States seized one sanctioned tanker carrying oil as it sailed from Venezuela toward Asia. It intercepted another oil vessel that was not under U.S. sanctions. And the U.S. Coast Guard tried to board a third tanker as it was on the way to Venezuela to pick up cargo.

The measures have paralyzed Venezuela's oil export industry, according to the people and shipping data. Oil accounts for a vast majority of the country's foreign currency earnings

To keep the country's oil wells pumping, the Maduro government is considering borrowing privately owned tanker ships to store the crude until it figures out how to sell the resource, the people said. But that would only go so

"This can't go on for months on end," said Jim Burkhard, global head of crude oil research for S&P Global Energy, a research firm. Mr. Maduro is also weighing a

more forceful response, the peo-Continued on Page A10

Father and Son Bond With \$108 Billion Bid for Media Moguldom

By THEODORE SCHLEIFER

When David Ellison became a teenager, his father, Larry, bought him a gift not usually bestowed on a 13th birthday: his own Katana stunt plane. The two had spent little meaningful time together. But with their own aircraft, the father and son could bond in the air, practicing aerobatic flips and ruling the skies together.

Now, Larry Ellison is trying to

help buy his son a media empire so they can rule Hollywood and news together.

What was once a relatively weak father-and-son relationship has transformed into one of modern media's most intriguing business partnerships. Towering behind almost every move made by David Ellison, now 42 and the chief executive of Paramount, is his swaggering 81-year-old father, the billionaire co-founder of the software giant Oracle.

Warner Bros. Discovery in Ellisons' Sights

The two have formed an unusual tag team in their pursuit of major media deals, according to more than two dozen people with knowledge of their interactions. They bought Paramount this summer, and now they are hunting Warner Bros. Discovery with a

On Monday, David Ellison made it clearer than ever that his father is the centerpiece of this bid, telling Warner Bros. that Larry Ellison personally guaranteed \$40.4 billion for Paramount's offer. David Ellison has referred to the deal as something "we" — or "the Ellison family" — were pursuing. Both have sought to arm-twist Warner executives

\$108 billion hostile bid.

Father and son speak about five Continued on Page A20

Deluge Augurs Havoc in L.A. Over Holidays

This article is by Jacey Fortin, Orlando Mayorquín and Judson Jones.

intense winter storm drenched Southern California on Wednesday, setting off flash floods and debris flows that closed roadways, and forcing residents to evacuate in parts of the Los Angeles region.

The storm, part of a weather system that could bring record rainfall over the holidays, has raised concern among officials about mudslides and even worse flooding, particularly in places where the ground is still scarred from wildfires in January.

By midmorning on Wednesday, rushing debris flows had shut down Highway 2 in San Bernardino County, east of Los Angeles, and fire crews there were evacuating homes. Battered by heavy surf, Ventura County's most famous fishing spot, the Ventura Pier, closed and would not reopen before the weekend. Firefighters rescued a man who had been trapped in a drainage tunnel by the Los Angeles River, lowering a ladder so that he could climb

Mayor Karen Bass of Los Angeles and other officials have been repeating the same warning to residents: Stay off the roads if you can. "We have had a number of major storms this year, and I ask all Angelenos to take this one seri-

ously during this holiday week," Continued on Page A13







Less Santa, More Claws

Christmas trees made of lobster traps began as a quaint New England curiosity. Now the structures, often decorated with buoys, draw visitors for photo shoots and even marriage proposals. Page A12.

Investigators Find Few Clues in Detached Life of Brown Suspect

By ANEMONA HARTOCOLLIS and AZAM AHMED

Claudio Neves Valente was like a ghost.

He dropped out of Brown University in the early 2000s, and friends and family have said they had no idea what happened to him until he appeared two decades later, accused of killing two students at Brown University and a Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor this month.

Now, law enforcement officials are piecing together his life in the intervening years and trying to understand what drove him. But Mr. Neves Valente, once known for his intelligence as a young student, led what appears to have been a quiet and disconnected life once he left the university, making his path difficult to track.

Friends and family said they had lost touch with him, and few

Tracking the Trail of a Former Top Student

neighbors recalled his presence. He left few records or traces on the internet.

Originally from Portugal, Mr. Neves Valente was estranged from his family there. But after he left Brown in the spring of 2001, it

appears he returned to his home country, where he worked for a major Portuguese internet services provider known as SAPO. He was employed at the Lisbonbased company between 2010 and 2013, according to a spokeswoman for MEO, a telecommunications firm that owns SAPO.

Mr. Neves Valente obtained a visa to come to the United States in 2017, and a police affidavit sug-

Continued on Page A17



INTERNATIONAL A4-11

Celebration Mixed With Hope

Palestinian Christians in Bethlehem revived public Christmas events paused during the Gaza conflict.

The End for a Kabul Cinema

Built in the 1960s, the Ariana closed under the Taliban and was razed to make way for a shopping mall. PAGE A5 **BUSINESS B1-4**

Downplaying the Risks of A.I.

The administration has dismissed concerns of mass job losses and a potential financial bubble as the president cheers the sector's soaring stock prices. PAGE B1

Crypto for Christmas

Despite recent volatility in the market, Gen Z-ers are still open to receiving digital currencies as gifts.

SPORTS B5-8

N.F.L. Alum Pays It Forward

Even Laveranues Coles's closest friends didn't understand why he would choose to become a cop at age 47.



NATIONAL A12-17, 20

Scarred Community Brightens Nearly a year after a wildfire devastated Altadena, Calif., putting up holiday lights serves as a catharsis.

A Race to Save Wind Farms

The Democratic governors of several states join the fight against President Trump's war on wind projects. PAGE A15 ARTS C1-6

Hurdling Toward His Future

Timothée Chalamet stars as a magnetic, striving table-tennis champ in a lost Lower East Side in "Marty Supreme," which our critic calls one of the most exciting movies of the year.

A Game of Ice and Fire

Michelle Goldberg

"Heated Rivalry" started as "a small Canadian show" about a romance between two closeted male professional hockey players and quickly grew into a surprise hit for HBO Max. PAGE C1

OPINION A18-19



THURSDAY STYLES D1-8

Heroes Make the Rounds

Despite a murky future for the postal service's 500,000 employees, mail carriers are valued members of the community, particularly in rural areas. PAGE D1

