

"All the News  
That's Fit to Print"

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Prices in Canada may be higher

\$4.00



GUERCHOM NDEBO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

## Bloodshed Over, Congo Turns Mostly Tranquil

A year ago, bodies had washed ashore on the banks of Lake Kivu in the eastern city of Goma. Now, vendors cross the water in canoes to bring food to the area. Page A8.

## HIRING IMPROVES AFTER SLOW 2025

Increase of 130,000 Jobs,  
January Report Finds

By LYDIA DePILLIS

The U.S. economy put in a strong showing at the start of 2026, following a year of disruptions that depressed both the demand for labor and its supply.

Employers added 130,000 jobs in January, the Labor Department reported on Wednesday, in a release delayed from last week by a short government shutdown. The unemployment rate fell to 4.3 percent from 4.4 percent a month earlier.

The peppier-than-expected reading is a sign that the labor market might be emerging from a period of extremely slow hiring brought on by a trade war that made companies hesitant to hire, an immigration crackdown that lowered the number of available workers and a federal government firing spree.

Annual revisions to earlier data, which are routine but have been larger than usual in recent years, darkened the picture of 2025. The economy added only 181,000 jobs last year, down from an earlier estimate of 584,000. Not counting the pandemic year of 2020, that is the slowest pace since 2010, the midst of the Great Recession [Page B1].

"The revised numbers tell a more accurate story of what people were experiencing, which was really, really, really slow job growth and stagnation on a pretty major scale," said Nicole Bachaud, a labor economist with the job search website ZipRecruiter.

For perspective, the economy added nearly as many jobs last month alone than the entire gain during all of 2025. "This is giving a glimpse of what might be a turning point for the market as stabilization is taking place," Ms. Bachaud said. "This is a pretty significant shift."

It's too soon to tell if the January numbers represent a real acceleration. The numbers may have been flattered by a seasonal quirk: Retailers hired many fewer seasonal workers than usual over the holidays. If fewer were laid off

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## Epstein Ties Bringing Shame, Or Denials, Around the Globe

By MARK LANDLER

PARIS — A French politician, famed as a cultural icon of the 1980s and 1990s. A Norwegian diplomat who played a role in the secret talks that yielded the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinians. A well-connected Slovak former minister who served as president of the United Nations General Assembly.

Three prominent officials, tripped up by their associations with Jeffrey Epstein — and they are far from the only ones.

Mr. Epstein, the financier and convicted sexual offender, collected friends and associates in an astonishing array of places. Now, several of them are being brought down by the unsavory details of their relationships — some after Mr. Epstein was convicted in 2008 — which were revealed in nearly

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three million pages of documents recently released by the Justice Department in the United States.

Jack Lang, who once served as France's culture minister, announced on Saturday he would resign as head of the Arab World Institute, a prestigious cultural institution in Paris, after the French authorities said they were investigating reports that he and his family had financial links to Mr. Epstein.

Mona Juul, who had been Norway's ambassador to Jordan and Iraq, quit after disclosures of financial dealings between her and her husband and Mr. Epstein. Miroslav Lajcak, the national security adviser to Slovakia's prime minister, Robert Fico, stepped down following the release of

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## 1967 Israeli Attack of U.S. Ship Becomes MAGA Dividing Line

By KEN BENSINGER

On June 8, 1967, the Israeli military machine-gunned, bombed and torpedoed the U.S.S. Liberty, an American vessel floating off the Sinai Peninsula, killing 34 service members.

Those facts are not in dispute. But almost everything else about the attack is driving a wedge through the MAGA movement.

On one side are prominent voices like the podcaster Ben Shapiro, Senator Ted Cruz of Texas and Rich Lowry, editor in chief of The National Review. They insist the attack on the Liberty was a tragic case of mistaken identity amid the chaos of the Six-Day War, a conclusion shared by a U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry and the Israeli government.

Those on the other side include the podcasters Tucker Carlson and Candace Owens and Representative Paul Gosar of Arizona. They insist Israel knew the Liberty was an American ship and say the attack is proof that the Israeli government cannot be trusted and is no ally to the United States.



Damage on the U.S.S. Liberty, seen in Malta after the attack.

While many Americans have never heard of the Liberty, it has become a topic of obsession on the right, which is increasingly divided over America's relationship with Israel. Conservatives are split between those who are ada-

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## INTERNATIONAL A4-11

### Shooting Suspect Is Named

The Canadian police said an 18-year-old killed her mother and stepbrother before shooting several at a school.

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### Menu Caters to Jews in Syria

The offering of kosher food is one of many signs of how much has changed since the Assad regime fell.

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## BUSINESS B1-5

### Amateurs vs. Wall St. Ph.D.s

Economists have noticed that betting markets like Kalshi and Polymarket are pretty good at predicting not just political events but economic data.

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SPORTS B6-11

### The Champion Next Door

Stefania Constantini, a 2022 gold medalist in curling, is just Stefi to her neighbors in her Italian hometown.

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### Welcome to Tanking Season

A loaded N.B.A. draft is looming, and a third of the league has little incentive to win. How bad will it get?

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## NATIONAL A12-21

### People Power in Twin Cities

Two months after federal immigration agents began operations in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, residents say they have found strength in uniting as a community.

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### El Paso Airport Is Closed

White House officials said Mexican drug cartel drones breached U.S. airspace. But the Defense Department's new counter-drone technology may have prompted the shutdown.

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## OPINION A22-23

### Nicholas Kristof

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## THE WEATHER

Today, partly sunny, dry, breezy, high 38. Tonight, partly cloudy, dry, low 23. Tomorrow, dry, breezy, a good amount of sunshine, high 37. Weather map appears on Page B10.

## G.O.P.'S CASH LEAD GIVES DEMOCRATS MIDTERM ANXIETY

### WIDE GAP IN FUNDING

Ruling Expected by Court  
May Give Further Lift  
to Republicans

By SHANE GOLDMACHER  
and THEODORE SCHLEIFER

For the first time in years, Democrats are sounding the alarm about money problems.

The Republican National Committee began this year with nearly \$100 million more than the Democratic National Committee.

The Supreme Court is widely expected to loosen restrictions on party funds in the coming months in a way that could help Republicans take fuller advantage of their fund-raising edge.

President Trump is sitting atop a super PAC with more than \$304 million — a huge sum for which there is no Democratic counterpart.

The world's richest man, Elon Musk, has re-engaged with the Republican Party after his blowup with Mr. Trump last year, donating tens of millions of dollars in the last two months and attending the recent wedding of a top Trump aide at Mar-a-Lago. And Democrats worry that well-funded super PACs tied to the cryptocurrency and artificial intelligence industries, which have coaxed up to Mr. Trump, could further fuel a Republican financial edge.

All told, new federal records show that the three leading arms

\$694.3

### Cash on hand

Total for parties and their main allies, accounting for debts owed. As of Jan. 1, in millions.

\$139.5

DEMOCRATS

REPUBLICANS

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of the national Republican Party and the two super PACs aligned with House and Senate Republicans entered this year with more than double the cash of the equivalent Democratic groups. The Republican groups had a combined \$320 million, compared with roughly \$137.2 million for the Democrats after accounting for debts.

"Any Democrat who isn't concerned isn't serious," said Bradley

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## States Push to Put Plug-In Solar on Your Porch

By CLAIRE BROWN

As the Trump administration stymies hundreds of commercial solar and wind projects nationwide, legislators in 24 states want to literally put the power in the hands of the people by allowing modest solar energy systems on balconies, porches and backyards.

Last year, in an unanimous vote, Utah became the first state in the nation to pass a law allowing residents to plug small solar systems straight into a wall socket. These systems, which retail for around \$2,000, produce enough electricity to power a laptop or small refrigerator.

In just a matter of months, legislators in 23 other states have announced similar bills, including California and New York. If



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passed, the legislation would eliminate one of the technology's biggest barriers in the United States: homeowners or renters could install plug-in panels systems, in most cases up to 1200 watts, without approval from their local utility.

Proponents also hope the bills speed the development of a set of safety standards that could open the floodgates to wider adoption. For politicians, the bills offer a rare legislative opportunity: the cost to the government is zero while the appeal of lowering electricity costs at a time of rising utility bills is great. The plug-in panels don't require complicated installation or the services of an electrician and are far cheaper than traditional rooftop systems, which cost an average of \$20,000.

"It's certainly one of, if not the fastest-growing legislative initiatives that I have worked on nationally," said Justin Flagg, director of communications and environmental policy for New York State Sen. Liz Krueger, a Democrat.

Utah State Rep. Raymond  
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THURSDAY STYLES D1-8

### Requiem for Marc Jacobs

The designer, whose collections have grown irrelevant, revisits his heyday with clothes you can wear.

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### Riding the A.I. Wave

Tech entrepreneurs in their early 20s live modestly in San Francisco while hoping to make millions.

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