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Deal Deadline Raised Stakes At Paramount

Pressure on Both Sides Before Mega-Merger

This article is by **David McCabe, Benjamin Mullin and Shawn Hubler.**

With a crucial deadline approaching in an antitrust lawsuit challenging Paramount’s \$111 billion acquisition of Warner Bros. Discovery, Rob Bonta, the California attorney general spearheading the opposition to the deal, spoke at The Atlantic Festival in New York.

Paramount, he said on Thursday during a panel discussion, was responding to “a straight-up, black-and-white, bread-and-butter, meat-and-potatoes antitrust case” by threatening to leave California.

Twenty-four hours later, Mr. Bonta was calling the other 11 states party to the suit and striking a different tone. He feared Paramount was going to follow through on its threat, according to two people familiar with the call, and said it was time to settle.

On Monday, the two sides announced a settlement that eliminated the last significant obstacle to a deal that would unite two movie studios, HBO Max and Paramount+ streaming services, and CNN and CBS News. They will all be under the control of David Ellison, the tech scion who has become a major player in entertainment and news.

The seeming about-face disappointed some of Mr. Bonta’s allies among the attorneys general and in Hollywood, many of whom were pushing for far-reaching concessions from Paramount — a sale of CNN, for example, or a commitment to spending more on TV production.

The settlement, however, was driven by pressures building for months. The states’ case was far from a legal slam dunk. Paramount’s relocation threats had

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EMPIRE BUILDER David Ellison is on the verge of wielding immense influence in Hollywood. PAGE B1



DAVE SANDERS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

António Guterres, the U.N. secretary general, told the General Assembly on Tuesday that “the fault lines in our world are widening.”

A.I. Threat Grabs Attention From Climate Risks

By **CHICO HARLAN**

New warnings that humans are flirting with out-of-control artificial intelligence raise an uneasy question: Has A.I. surpassed climate change as one of humanity’s gravest risks?

Though the danger of the technology is hard to assess, the worst-case scenario — human extinction — makes other earthly concerns seem small.

Yes, climate change is creating dangerously hot conditions, fueling superstorms and killing crops, and it may lead to planetary upheaval. But that matters only if our civilization is still recognizable.

“In terms of things that could be the end of humanity, I think A.I. is a bigger risk,” said Toby Ord, a re-

Activists Fear a Shift in Focus Could Alter Priorities

searcher at Oxford University and author of “The Precipice: Existential Risk and the Future of Humanity.”

All of this leaves climate activists competing for a finite pool of political consideration. As diplomats and world leaders gather at the United Nations this week to grapple with the planet’s most pressing problems, some worry that global warming could be overlooked even as it worsens.

When President Xi Jinping of China meets in Washington on

Thursday with President Trump, the leaders of the countries that produce the most greenhouse gases are expected to discuss A.I. safety, among other issues. Climate change, which Mr. Trump dismisses as a “con job,” is unlikely to be on the agenda.

Leah Stokes, a professor of environmental politics at University of California, Santa Barbara, wrote last week that A.I. was “eating up all our attention” and argued that climate change posed the more concrete danger, citing deadly heat waves in Europe this summer and a horrific glacier collapse last month in Nepal.

“Unlike A.I., climate change’s existential threat is not hypothetical. It is killing people now,” Dr. Stokes wrote. “It also feels like a lot of people have conveniently

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Keeping Truce With the U.S. Is Xi’s Mission

By **DAVID PIERSON**

HONG KONG — When China’s top leader, Xi Jinping, and President Trump meet in Washington this week, the two men will be operating on vastly different clocks.

The American president is constrained by the immediate demands of a midterm election in November and a grinding war. The Chinese leader is gearing up for a norm-shattering fourth term as head of the ruling Communist Party, that will keep him in power for another five years.

For Mr. Xi, the disparity in political realities gives him an edge in maintaining the truce that the two countries reached last year. A renewed trade fight would hit American consumers right before the election — a risk Mr. Trump can ill afford. China’s economy is also struggling, but Mr. Xi answers to no electorate, giving him the patience to prolong the détente on his terms.

“Each of Xi’s face-to-face encounters with Trump in his second term would only have reinforced Xi’s prior conviction that Trump is leading an America that is dangerous but declining,”

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WHITE HOUSE MEMO

TV Boycott Draining President Of Lifeblood: All Eyes on Him

By **PETER BAKER**

WASHINGTON — For President Trump, this is the tree-falls-in-the-forest moment of his administration. If the most television-addicted president in history suddenly finds the cameras missing, is he really still president? Not the kind he has been, anyway.

Mr. Trump, for whom television is better than any narcotic, finds himself for the first time at least partly deprived of the major networks that have covered nearly every movement and utterance he has made for more than a decade. No longer can he

THE WEATHER

Today, breezy, clouds and sun, high 67. **Tonight**, partly to mostly cloudy, breezy, low 52. **Tomorrow**, windy, more clouds than sunshine, high 67. Weather map appears on Page B8.

TRUMP TELLS U.N. IRAN FACES A RISK OF ANNIHILATION

SAYS DEAL IS POSSIBLE

Tehran Seeks Agreement After U.S. Midterms, President Claims

This article is by **Farnaz Fassihi, Zolan Kanno-Youngs, David E. Sanger and Michael Levenson.**

As other world leaders pleaded for international cooperation and an end to wars in the Middle East, President Trump warned the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday that he could either strike a deal with Iran or obliterate the country.

“I have a big decision to make,” Mr. Trump said from the podium of the assembly’s annual meeting in New York. “Will a deal be made with Iran that lets them rebuild and create a far greater country than it ever was before — maybe one of the greatest in the Middle East or even the world? Or do I annihilate the Islamic republic and do it quickly, never giving them a chance to kill and destroy people and countries again?”

Mr. Trump seemed to indicate that Iranian officials have been dragging out the war that the United States and Israel began almost seven months ago, in hopes of hurting Republicans, who are trying to retain control of the House and Senate in the midterm elections in November.

“Do I drive them into hell with no chance of survival and no hope of future greatness or generations?” Mr. Trump said. “But I believe we’ll make a deal right after the election because it doesn’t make sense for them not to. They’re waiting to see how I do in the midterm election.”

Mr. Trump’s threats echoed a social media post that he made in April, when he warned Iran that “a whole civilization will die tonight,” a threat he did not carry out, which legal experts said would amount to a war crime. But even by the standards of Mr. Trump’s bellicose rhetoric, it was startling to hear an American president issue such a dire threat at the United Nations, a body created in the aftermath of World War II with the goal of peaceably resolving conflicts.

Stone-faced diplomats from Iran and other countries listened as Mr. Trump, the second world leader to address the General Assembly, alternately trumpeted his own power and lashed out at nations and institutions he held up as worthy of scorn, including Cuba

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POWER DRIVE In his U.N. speech, President Trump promoted brute force. News Analysis. PAGE A12

Parisians Deprived of Dion Have Her Back, and She’s Their Lady

By **CATHERINE PORTER and GIULIA IMBERT**

PARIS — Paris hasn’t just opened its arms to Céline Dion. It has declared its fevered, undying love for her.

After the coronavirus pandemic disrupted her last tour and then illness prevented her return, Ms. Dion, the French Canadian diva, is finally back in the French capital. Her arrival, for a 16-date residency through October, has been greeted with a citywide frenzy, spurring Céline Dion singalongs, Céline-themed Seine cruises and no fewer than eight tribute bands heading around the country to perform her songs.

The lyrics of songs she has sung have been plastered on street posts and subway walls and, in one breathtaking case, etched onto a golden cauldron that was installed for the Olympics in 2024 beside the Louvre Museum. Emmanuel Grégoire, the mayor of Paris, announced that the city was hosting two giant “Paris Sings Céline” karaoke events with a social media post capturing him working at his desk while singing her 1995 song “Prière païenne,” or “Pagan Prayer.” And every day, the crowd waiting to cheer her outside her hotel seems to grow.

The national newspaper Le Monde has compared the fever to Beatlemania.

Even Line Basbous, the president of an international Céline Dion fan club, said that over her decades of intense fandom, she



DMITRY KOSTYUKOV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Fans at a karaoke event dedicated to Céline Dion, who is performing a 16-date residency in Paris.

had “never experienced this before.”

“It’s an unprecedented outpouring of passion,” said Ms. Basbous, who figures she has been to 50 Céline Dion concerts.

Some in France were first introduced to Ms. Dion when she was just 14 as she appeared in 1983 on the country’s top variety television show. Still, it took years for her to break through to the larger

French public, said Clément Lagrange, author of “Céline Dion and France: A Love Story.”

The turning point came in 1995, when Ms. Dion was already a star in the United States. That year, she brought out an entire album of French songs, composed for her by a French musician, Jean-Jacques Goldman.

The album, “D’Eux,” sold more than one million copies in four

months in France. It remains the best-selling French-language album in history.

Suddenly, her face was on the covers of all the major French newspapers, magazines and talk shows, Mr. Lagrange said.

“Her name was on everyone’s lips; her songs were playing on the radio,” he said. “She became inescapable.”

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INTERNATIONAL A4-12

The Bard of Bollywood

The poet and lyricist Gulzar, 92, has profoundly shaped the idea of tender romance in India. PAGE A6

‘Way Too Hot’: U.K.’s Hospitals

Patients and workers sweltered in buildings ill-equipped for a chain of summer heat waves. PAGE A4

NATIONAL A14-22

Can Public Defense Be Saved?

Public defenders are overworked and underpaid. A growing corps of client advocates is helping defendants in communities across the U.S. PAGE A14

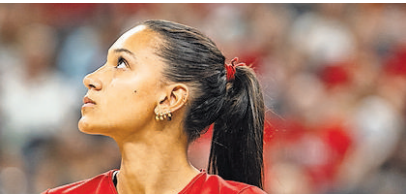
Mental Health Better in Teens

A national survey has found a rebound for young people from their worst levels during the pandemic. PAGE A20

FOOD D1-8

His Own Culinary Kingdom

In Virginia, Patrick O’Connell has made the Inn at Little Washington one of the country’s great restaurants. PAGE D8



SPORTS B7-11

A Striking Personality

Harper Murray, a volleyball star at Nebraska, is thriving in the spotlight by being her authentic self. PAGE B7

The End of 200-Hit Seasons?

A batting champion and a hitting coach explain why reaching the milestone could be nearing extinction. PAGE B10

BUSINESS B1-6

A.I. Party House Nightmares

Group tech haunts have proliferated across the San Francisco Bay Area in the artificial intelligence boom. One of the most prominent has also racked up an extensive police record. PAGE B1

Gen Z Pivots to Stock Market

Young adults are more focused on investment apps and their retirement accounts to build wealth for themselves than taking the traditional route of buying a home. PAGE B1

OPINION A26-27

Thomas L. Friedman

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ARTS C1-6

Shakespearean Desires

A work by Robbie Fairchild, above, that is premiering at the Fall for Dance festival discovers a lot of same-sex longing in “Romeo and Juliet.” PAGE C1

