

Congo to Allow More Oil Wells In Rainforests Policy May Accelerate Global Warming

By RUTH MACLEAN and DIANNE SEARCEY DARAR, Senegal — The Democratic Republic of Congo, home to one of the largest old-growth rainforests on earth, is auctioning off vast amounts of land in a push to become "the new destination for oil investments," part of a global shift as the world retreats on fighting climate change in a scramble for fossil fuels.

The oil and gas blocks, which will be auctioned in late July, extend into Virunga National Park, the world's most important gorilla sanctuary, as well as tropical peatlands that store vast amounts of carbon, keeping it out of the atmosphere and from contributing to global warming.

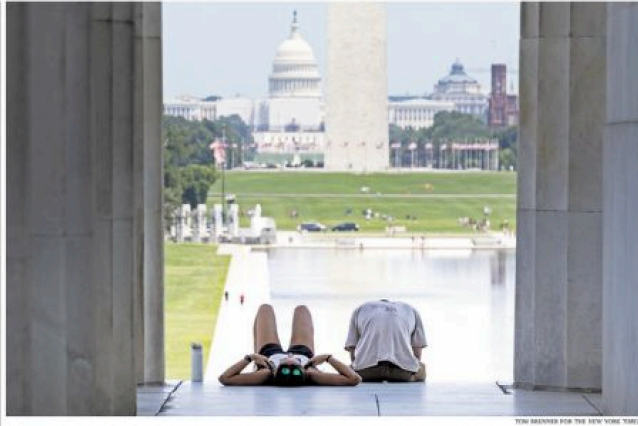
"If oil exploitation takes place in these areas, we must expect a global climate catastrophe, and we will all just have to helplessly," said Irene Wabawa, who oversees the Congo Basin forest campaign for Greenpeace in Kinshasa.

Congolese activists in an allowing oil drilling in environmentally sensitive areas comes eight months after its president, Félix Tshisekedi, stood alongside world leaders at the global climate summit in Glasgow and endorsed a 10-year agreement to protect its rainforests, part of the vast Congo Basin, which is second in size only to the Amazon.

The deal included international pledges of \$500 million for Congo, one of the world's poorest nations, over the first five years.

But since then, the world's immediate priorities have shifted. Russia's invasion of Ukraine sent oil prices soaring and led to U.S. and British bans on Russian energy and, last week, a call to ration natural gas in Europe.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES

Shelter From the Swelter

Visitors found shade at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, as much of the U.S. saw summer's first prolonged heat wave. Page A13.

When Those Behind a Badge Question the Vote

By ALEXANDRA BERZON and NICK CORASANTI

LAS VEGAS — An influential network of conservative activists fixated on the idea that former President Donald J. Trump won the 2020 election is working to recruit county sheriffs to investigate elections based on the false notion that voter fraud is widespread.

The push, which two right-wing sheriffs' groups have already endorsed, seeks to lend law enforcement credibility to the false claims and has alarmed voting rights advocates. They warn that it could cause chaos in future elections and further weaken trust in an American voting system already battered by attacks from Mr. Trump and his allies.

One of the conservative sheriffs' groups, Protect America Now, lists about 70 members, and the other, the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association, does not list its membership but says it conducted training on various issues for about 300 of the nation's roughly 3,000 sheriffs in recent years.

It is unclear how many sheriffs will ultimately wade into election matters. Many aligned with the groups are from small, rural counties.

But at least three sheriffs involved in the effort — in Michigan, Kansas and Wisconsin — have been carrying out their own investigations, clashing with election officials who warn that they are overstepping their authority and meddling in an area where they have little expertise.

"I'm absolutely sick of it," said Pam Palmer, the clerk of Barry County, Mich., where the sheriff has carried out an investigation into the 2020 results for more than two months.

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Texas Turmoil Jolts the Race For Governor

By J. DAVID GOODMAN

SUGAR LAND, Texas — One of the deadliest school shootings in U.S. history. The revival of a 1920s ban on abortion. The country's worst episode of migrant death in recent memory. And an electrical grid, which failed during later cold, now straining under soaring heat.

The unraveling succession of death and difficulty facing Texas over the last two months has soured them on the direction of the state, hurting Gov. Greg Abbott and making the race for governor perhaps the most competitive since Democrats last held the office in the 1990s.

Polls have shown a tightening, single-digit contest between Mr. Abbott, the two-term incumbent, and his ubiquitous Democratic challenger, the former congressman Beto O'Rourke.

Mr. O'Rourke is now raising more campaign cash than Mr. Abbott — \$27.6 million to \$24.9 million in the last filing — in a race that is likely to be among the most expensive of 2022.

Suddenly, improbably, perhaps unwisely, Texas Democrats are again daring to think — as they have in many recent election years — that maybe this could be the year.

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Do You Babble to Your Baby? So Does the Rest of the World.

By OLIVER WHANG

We've all seen it. We've all heard it. From 40 parents on six continents, in 18 languages from diverse communities: rural and urban, isolated and cosmopolitan, those who speak to their infants in their own language. Baby is utterly baffled by your unintelligible warble and your shamelessly doctored grin, but "Ooo, helloooooo baby!" you say your voice lilting like a rapturously accommodating Walmart employee. Baby is utterly baffled by your unintelligible warble and your shamelessly doctored grin, but "Ooo, helloooooo baby!" you say your voice lilting like a rapturously accommodating Walmart employee.

Regardless of whether it helps to know it, researchers recently determined that this sing-songy baby talk — more technically known as "parentese" — seems to be nearly universal to humans around the world. In the most wide-ranging study of its kind, more than 40 scientists helped to gather and analyze LEIS voice recordings from 40 parents on six continents, in 18 languages from diverse communities: rural and urban, isolated and cosmopolitan, those who speak to their infants in their own language.

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KANSAS ELECTION POSES FIRST TEST AFTER ROE'S FALL QUESTION ON ABORTION

Lawmakers Could Gain Authority for Ban or Further Limits

By MITCH SMITH

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. — Kansas voters will decide next week whether to remove protections of abortion rights from their State Constitution, providing the first election test of Americans' attitudes on the issue since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade.

The election could give the state's Republican-controlled Legislature authority to pass new abortion limits or to outline the procedure entirely, potentially reshaping the map of abortion access in the nation's center. The vote, which has been planned since last year but took on far higher stakes after the federal right to abortion was eliminated, is expected to send a message far beyond Kansas as politicians nationwide weigh new abortion measures and watch for signs of how the public is reacting.

"Kansas is the bell-curve of the United States in terms of its geography, but it's also the bell-curve of the country that has emerged from the Supreme Court decision has now focused," said Pastor Randy Frasier, who leads a large church in suburban Kansas City, and who like many clergy members supports using legislators the power to restrict abortions.

"Huge advertising and attention have flooded into the campaign since the ruling last month, returning Kansas to the forefront of the national abortion debate, a place it has occupied frequently and sometimes violently over the past few decades. Combined, the two sides have spent more than \$11 million on the election this year.

"I've never been so engaged for so long," said Courtney Schmitz, who volunteered for her first time in her life to work at a campaign phone bank after the Supreme Court ruling. Ms. Schmitz, who works in early-childhood education and lives in suburban Kansas City, said she felt "a sense of duty" to make sure women from states where abortion was now banned could continue to get abortions in Kansas.

Kansas is a conservative state where registered Republicans far outnumber Democrats. But what limited public polling has been conducted on abortion suggests a relatively tight race leading up to the Aug. 2 vote on whether to amend the State Constitution to restrict abortion.

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Think tank is facing blowback over Jan. 6

The Claremont Institute triumphed in the Trump years. Then came a riot.

By MARC FISHER and ISAAC STANLEY-BECKER

CLAREMONT, CALIF. — Early in 2016, as Donald Trump's march toward the Republican presidential nomination gathered the air of inevitability, alumni of a conservative think tank nestled here at the base of Southern California's San Gabriel Mountains received an email with a tough question: "What is time for supporters of the Claremont Institute to help make Trump president?"

"I'd sooner cut off my arm with a rusty spoon," replied Nathan Tardent, an editor at RealClear Education, an offshoot of the political site RealClearPolitics, according to emails obtained by The Washington Post.

Others were interested, however. "I'm graduating this May and would very much like to get involved," wrote Darren Beattie, a philosophy graduate student who would later work in Trump's White House, until he was fired in 2018, after revelations that he had attended a conference with white nationalists. Tardent declined to comment. Beattie did not respond to requests for comment.

The next four years would revolutionize the role of the Claremont Institute and a handful of other intellectual institutions that preach an America-first, originalist ideology. The institute — along with its journal, the

SEE CLAREMONT ON A8

Pessimistic Big Tech braces for a recession

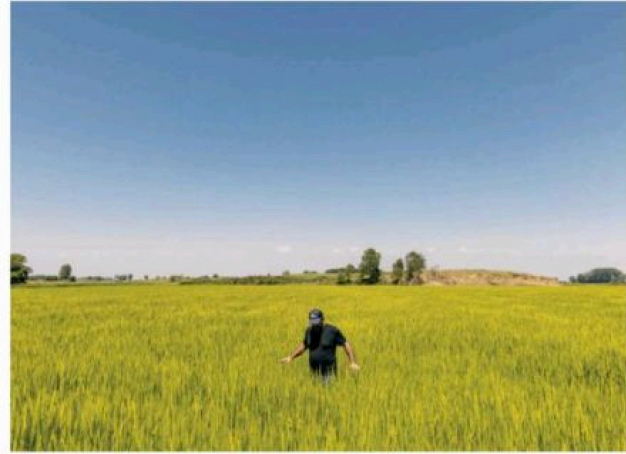
By RACHEL LERMAN and GERRIT DE VYNCK

Big Tech is bracing for an economic recession and an uncertain future. That, in turn, is triggering more economic angst. The biggest tech firms, many of whom report quarterly earnings this week, have offered recent hints they are hunkering down.

The biggest tech firms, many of whom report quarterly earnings this week, have offered recent hints they are hunkering down. Amazon is facing a growing labor movement, and Facebook is facing a new advertising climate. Regulators domestically and

Meanwhile, Twitter's protracted bad romance with Elon Musk is tangled up in court and the outcome is uncertain, a point the company made as it reported disappointing numbers Friday. Amazon is facing a growing labor movement, and Facebook is facing a new advertising climate. Regulators domestically and

SEE TECH ON A9



Italy's famed rice is parched

Farmers in risotto heartland are facing 'stomach-churning' heat and dryness

By CHRIS HANLAN and STEFANO PITRELLI in VERGOLAIA, ITALY

There'd been a single day of good rainfall all year, the afternoon temperature was again soaring 100 degrees, and Fabrizio Rizzotti walked into his fields — 220 acres of rice, a plant that grows by being submerged in water. He didn't need his boots.

The rice stems were desiccated and stunted. The field, rather than lush with shin-high water, crunched underfoot. Rizzotti, a seventh-generation rice farmer, said the paddy was already dead — "not a single grain of rice can come from this," he said — and then he gestured to an adjacent field, slightly greener and in dire need of more water.

"In a few days that field will be dead, too," he said. "It's stomach-churning."

In Europe's sweltering summer, few places have been hit more directly than northern Italy, where extreme drought has dried up a major river, triggered a state of emergency and put the country's famed agricultural heartlands in profound trouble. The drought is also causing Italians to fret

SEE RISOTTO ON A12



PHOTO COURTESY BERTACCIO FOR THE WASHINGTON POST ABOVE: Freshly harvested rice grains from Rizzotti's farm.

Flow of rockets annoys Ukraine

QUANTITY, QUALITY ON OFFICIALS' MINDS

Slow U.S. delivery part of wait-and-see approach

By ISABELLE KHURMUHDYAN, KAREN DE'YOUNG, ALEX HORTON and KAROL DZEMBEJAN

NEAR LYUVI, UKRAINE — If only they had more, and more sophisticated, weapons from the West, Ukrainian officials often tell their American counterparts and anyone else who will listen, they could make short work of Russian invaders. Last month's arrival of the first of what are now a dozen U.S. multiple-launch precision rocket systems, known as HIMARS, has already been a game changer, soldiers here said this week.

Since a recent HIMARS strike on an enemy ammunition depot in Lyuv, located southeast of Ukraine's second-largest city Kharkiv, Russian shelling has been "10 times less" than before, said Bohdan Dmytruk, a battalion commander in Ukraine's 3rd Mechanized Brigade. Yet the Biden administration has parceled out the rocket systems slowly, watching how the Ukrainians handle them — and how the Russians respond. To fighters on the ground, that makes little sense at a crucial moment in the war.

In his battalion alone, Dmytruk said, the number of killed and injured has fallen dramatically compared with when his soldiers moved to this part of the front line three months ago. "We have about one guy suffer a concussion every week now. Before the HIMARS hit, it was about two to three a day because of the intensity of the shelling."

Dmytruk and soldiers in the

SEE UKRAINE ON A14

In Nebraska politics, an early 'grooming' debate

Unproven sex-ed claim helped propel far-right school board candidates

By BETS REINHARD and EMMA BROWN

KLARENZ, NEB. — Last year, when the state board of education proposed new sex-education standards for teaching about issues such as sexual orientation, gender identity and consent, a retired pediatrician in this central Nebraska town reached out to Gov. Pete Ricketts and state lawmakers.

*This is NOT Sex Ed as anyone

SEE NEBRASKA ON A4

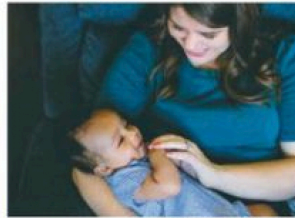
Adoption rare for those denied abortion

Despite Roe's fall, experts believe the dynamic is unlikely to change

By SYDNEY TRENT

In the Supreme Court's momentous decision overturning Roe v. Wade, Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. referred to the availability of adoption to women who find themselves pregnant with a child they do not want to parent.

"A woman who puts her newborn up for adoption today has little reason to fear that the baby will not find a suitable home," Alito said, writing for the majority and summarizing the views of many Americans who oppose abortion. In a footnote, he cited a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report juxtaposing the tiny "domestic supply of in-



ALEXANDRA SMITH FOR THE WASHINGTON POST Crystal, 35, plays with son Alex, 3 months, at their home in Texas this month. She and her husband adopted Alex.

SEE ADOPTION ON A6



PHOTOGRAPHS BY BEN WATSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Some of the buildings in Sanford Soloy's formidable portfolio. There have been only 27 deed theft cases since 2014 in Brooklyn.

A Big New York Property Owner Is Accused of Stealing Homes

This article is by Stefano Chen, Ted Clifford and Constance Burris. Over the past dozen years, Sanford Soloy has built a New York real estate empire, snatching up small residential buildings across the city that churn on hundreds of thousands of dollars in rent.

Courts Are Slow to Act in Deed Theft Cases

The practice is known as deed theft, and as city and state officials promised to crack down on it, they honed in on Mr. Soloy. The Brooklyn district attorney, whose office has charged him with taking the

homes of seven families, called his behavior "despicable." In Queens, prosecutors accused Mr. Soloy and his associates of cheating 10 people out of their properties. The court appointed a monitor to scrutinize his transactions. But an examination by The New York Times has found that they not only in Mr. Soloy still profiting from buildings under dispute, city has charged him with taking the

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