

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

THE WEATHER

Today, warm, intervals of clouds and sunshine, high 82. Tonight, partly cloudy, light winds, low 55. Tomorrow, mostly cloudy, light winds, high 64. Weather map, Page B10.

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THURSDAY, MAY 2, 2024

Prices in Canada may be higher

\$4.00

Fed Declining To Ease Rates, Citing Inflation

Prolonging a Period of High Interest

By JEANNA SMIALEK

WASHINGTON — Federal Reserve officials left interest rates unchanged and signaled that they were wary about how stubborn inflation was proving, paving the way for a longer period of high borrowing costs.

The Fed held rates steady at 5.3 percent on Wednesday, leaving them at a more than two-decade high, where they have been set since July. Central bankers reiterated that they needed "greater confidence" that inflation was coming down before reducing them.

"Readings on inflation have come in above expectations," Jerome H. Powell, the Fed chair, said at a news conference after the release of the central bank's rate decision.

The Fed stands at a complicated economic juncture. After months of rapid cooling, inflation has proved surprisingly sticky in early 2024. The Fed's preferred inflation index has made little progress since December, and although it is down sharply from its 7.1 percent high in 2022, its current 2.7 percent is still well above the Fed's 2 percent goal. That calls into question how soon and how much officials will be able to reduce interest rates.

"What we've said is that we need to be more confident" that inflation is coming down sufficiently and sustainably before cutting rates, Mr. Powell said. "It appears that it's going to take longer for us to reach that point of confidence."

The Fed raised interest rates quickly between early 2022 and the summer of 2023, hoping to slow the economy by tamping down demand, which would in turn help to wrestle inflation under control. Higher Fed rates trickle through financial markets to push up mortgage, credit card and business loan rates, which can cool both consumption and

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INSIDE A NAVY SUBMARINE NAVIGATING THE ARCTIC



KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

The U.S.S. Hampton emerged from several feet of thick ice in the Arctic Ocean during a three-week operation to assess its readiness.

A New York Times photojournalist embarked on a nuclear-powered attack sub to see how the Pentagon is training for a potential war below the frozen sea. Pages A12-13.

BLINKEN PRESSES HAMAS TO ACCEPT TERMS FOR TRUCE

SEVENTH MIDEAST VISIT

Demanding That Israel Have a Plan to Protect Civilians in Gaza

This article is by Edward Wong, Adam Rasgon and Thomas Fuller.

JERUSALEM — Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken delivered twin messages to Hamas and Israel on Wednesday, pressing Hamas to accept a cease-fire proposal while at the same time urging Israeli leaders to put off a major ground invasion into the thickly populated southern Gaza city of Rafah.

On the last day of a Middle East trip, his seventh visit to the region since the war began in October, Mr. Blinken tried to turn up the pressure on Hamas.

"We are determined to get a cease-fire that brings the hostages home and to get it now, and the only reason that that wouldn't be achieved is because of Hamas," Mr. Blinken said at the start of a meeting in Tel Aviv with Isaac Herzog, the president of Israel. "There is a proposal on the table, and as we've said: No delays, no excuses. The time is now."

The proposed agreement calls for the release of 33 hostages in the initial stage of a cease-fire, and would lead to the release of Palestinian prisoners being held in Israel.

Mr. Blinken's comments, which were made in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, were part of a concerted campaign by the Biden administration to secure a pause in a war that, Gaza officials say, has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians. The bloodshed has roiled American campuses and is seeping into domestic politics.

Mr. Blinken also made clear that he expected more from Israel.

Speaking to reporters on Wednesday night after a day of meetings with Israeli leaders, including nearly three hours with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Mr. Blinken said that the Israelis had not convinced him that they can prevent the humanitarian catastrophe that is feared should there be a ground invasion of Rafah.

"We cannot, will not, support a major military operation in Rafah absent an effective plan to make sure that civilians are not harmed — and no, we've not seen such a plan," Mr. Blinken told reporters. "There are other ways, and in our judgment better ways, of dealing with the real, ongoing challenge of Hamas that does not involve, require, a major military operation."

Mr. Blinken's visit to the Middle East, which began on Monday, came as Israel is both softening some of its demands in negotiations over a cease-fire and digging in on its vow to move into Rafah "with or without a deal," as Mr. Netanyahu put it earlier this week.

In its latest proposal, Israel said it would ease travel back to northern Gaza for Palestinian civilians uprooted by its assault, according to two Israeli officials. That is a sharp reversal on an issue that has been a sticking point in the talks.

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Arizona Repeals 1864 Abortion Ban as 2 Republicans Cross Aisle

By JACK HEALY and ELIZABETH DIAS

PHOENIX — Arizona lawmakers voted on Wednesday to repeal an abortion ban that first became law when Abraham Lincoln was president and a half-century before women won the right to vote.

A bill to repeal the law passed, 16-14, in the Republican-controlled State Senate with the support of every Democratic senator and two Republicans who broke with anti-abortion conservatives who

dominate their party. It now goes to Gov. Katie Hobbs, a Democrat, who is expected to sign it on Thursday.

The vote was the culmination of a fevered effort to repeal the law that has made abortion a central focus of Arizona's politics.

"We are standing in a moment of Arizona history," said State Senator Anna Hernandez, a Democrat who called the repeal measure up to a vote on Wednesday.

The issue has galvanized Democratic voters and energized a campaign to put an abortion-

A Vote Caps a Fevered Effort Against a Law

rights ballot measure before Arizona voters in November. On the right, it created a rift between anti-abortion activists who want to keep the law in place and Republican politicians who worry about the political backlash that could be prompted by support of a near-total abortion ban with no

exceptions for rape or incest.

The 1864 law had gathered dust on the books for decades. But it exploded into an election-year flashpoint three weeks ago when a 4-2 decision by the State Supreme Court, whose justices are all Republican-appointed, said the ban could now be enforced because of the overturning of Roe v. Wade.

After the repeal is finalized, abortions in Arizona will be governed by a 2022 law that prohibits the procedure after 15 weeks of

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PAUL AUSTER, 1947-2024

Postmodernist Who Embodied Rich Literary Past of Brooklyn

By ALEX WILLIAMS

Paul Auster, the prolific novelist, memoirist and screenwriter who rose to fame in the 1980s with his postmodern reanimation of the noir novel and who endured to become one of the signature New York writers of his generation, died on Tuesday evening at his home in Brooklyn. He was 77.

His death, from complications of lung cancer, was confirmed by his wife, the writer Siri Hustvedt.

With his hooded eyes, soulful air and leading-man looks, Mr. Auster was often described as a "literary superstar" in news accounts. The Times Literary Sup-

plement of Britain once called him "one of America's most spectacularly inventive writers."

Though a New Jersey native, he became indelibly linked with the rhythms of his adopted city, which was a character of sorts in much of his work — particularly Brooklyn, where he settled in 1980 amid the oak-lined streets of brownstones in the Park Slope neighborhood.

As his reputation grew, Mr. Auster came to be seen as a guardian of Brooklyn's rich literary past, as well as an inspiration to a new generation of novelists who flocked to the borough in the 1990s and later.

"Paul Auster was the Brooklyn novelist back in the '80s and '90s, when I was growing up there, at a time when very few famous writers lived in the borough," the author and poet Meghan O'Rourke, who was raised in nearby Prospect Heights, wrote in an email. "His books were on all my parents' friends' shelves. As teenagers, my friends and I read Auster's work avidly for both its strangeness — that touch of European surrealism — and its closeness."

"Long before 'Brooklyn' became a place where every novelist seemed to live, from Colson Whitehead to Jhumpa Lahiri," she added, "Auster made being a writer

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MARK ABRAMSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Chaotic Night at U.C.L.A.

The university canceled classes on Wednesday after violent clashes over the war in Gaza. Page A17.

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'Breaking Down Walls,' United Methodists End Ban of Gay Clergy

By RUTH GRAHAM

The United Methodist Church on Wednesday removed its longstanding ban on ordaining gay clergy, formalizing a shift in policy that had already begun in practice and that had prompted the departure of a quarter of its U.S. congregations in recent years.

The overturning of the 40-year-old ban on "self-avowed practicing homosexuals" passed overwhelmingly and without debate in a package of measures that had already received strong support at the committee level.

Delegates, meeting in Charlotte, N.C., also voted to bar local leaders from penalizing clergy or churches for holding, or declining

to hold, same-sex weddings. The vote effectively allows same-sex marriage in the church for the first time, although the original penalty was unevenly enforced. Some clergy may still decline to perform same-sex weddings.

Further votes affirming L.G.B.T.Q. inclusion in the church are expected before the meeting adjourns on Friday.

"We've always been a big-tent church where all of God's beloved were fully welcome," said Bishop Tracy Smith Malone, the new president of the denomination's Council of Bishops and the first Black woman to serve in that role. She called the vote "a celebration of God breaking down walls."

She described the atmosphere

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Seeking Answers in Charlotte

The killing of four officers in a usually quiet enclave stunned residents and brought anguish to the city. PAGE A18

Giuliani's Creditors Skeptical

The former mayor, in bankruptcy, has blown his budget and has not made financial disclosures. PAGE A14

OBITUARIES A20-21

Rock 'n' Roll's Titan of Twang

Duane Eddy, a self-taught electric guitar virtuoso with a reverberant, staccato style, influenced a generation of musicians. He was 86. PAGE A21

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Political Test in England

A regional mayor faces a close re-election race, partly because of the troubles of the Conservative Party. PAGE A8

Taking His Vision to Netflix

Sanjay Leela Bhansali's films are known for their grandeur. Will that translate to smaller screens? PAGE A7



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Entrepreneurs Eye the Election

Black business owners in Georgia frustrated by the economy are considering voting Republican. PAGE B1

Hey, A.I., Let's Talk

Meta, Google and others are promoting voice assistants, but people still find the technology awkward. PAGE B1

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Feud Over NASCAR's Future

The organization is at odds with team owners who are seeking more revenue. Another source of tension: competing visions for stock car racing. PAGE B7

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A Visit With Shelley Duvall

After two decades, the actress known for her roles in "The Shining" and other films, has returned to acting. PAGE D6

The 'Image Architect'

Law Roach, stylist to Zendaya and other stars, said he was quitting. But now he remains very unretired. PAGE D1



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Choosing Her Own Pace

The singer Jessica Pratt has a delicate, vintage aesthetic that matches her cautious approach to her work. PAGE C1

Reflections on a Philosopher

Immanuel Kant's writings show that a free, just and moral life is possible — and that's relevant everywhere. PAGE C1

OPINION A22-23

Nicholas Kristof

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