

Muck, Danger
And Partying
In the Desert

Crowd at Burning Man
Shakes Off a Deluge

This article is by Finn-Olaf Jones,
Anna Betts and Amanda Holpuch.

BLACK ROCK DESERT, Nev. — The torrential rains that turned roads and grounds into muck and left thousands of people stranded at the Burning Man festival also put off the climax of the carefree celebration of art, music and counterculture: The annual burning of a manlike figure did not happen on Sunday night as had been planned.

A social media account affiliated with the Burning Man Project’s website said the burn would instead happen on Monday night, adding that the muddy conditions and rain had made moving heavy and fire safety equipment to the site unfeasible. The announcement was the second postponement of the burn, which had been initially scheduled for Saturday night.

It was an unusual turn of events that tested the resolve of participants, who were told to conserve food and water, at a more than three-decade-old festival that prides itself on grit and self-reliance and normally battles excessive heat and, sometimes, excessive partying.

True to form, some were taking it in stride.

“Burning Man is an all-weather state of mind,” said Star Heart-song, 43, a tech entrepreneur who came from Austin, Texas, had said earlier. He added that “when it’s time to leave, we’ll leave.”

“Burners aren’t victims,” he said, using the name that attendees are known by.

But the authorities were investigating the death of one participant, and the worsening conditions on Sunday — it was raining harder in the afternoon than on the previous two days — could delay people leaving the event, which ends Monday and in normal conditions causes a lengthy traffic backup.

On Sunday afternoon, a White House official said that President Biden had been briefed on the sit-

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JOSH LEASE, VIA AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

The authorities advised people at the flooded Burning Man festival in Nevada to conserve food and water. Thousands were stranded.

Seeing Threats Everywhere, China Enlists Public as Spy Catchers

By VIVIAN WANG

BEIJING — Beijing sees forces bent on weakening it everywhere: embedded in multinational companies, infiltrating social media, circling naïve students. And it wants its people to see them, too.

Chinese universities require faculty to take courses on protecting state secrets, even in departments like veterinary medicine. A kindergarten in the eastern city of Tianjin organized a meeting to teach its staff how to “understand and use” China’s anti-espionage law.

China’s Ministry of State Security, a usually covert department that oversees the secret police and intelligence services, has

even opened its first social media account, as part of what official news media described as an effort at increasing public engagement. Its first post: a call for a “whole of society mobilization” against espionage.

“The participation of the masses,” the post said, should be “normalized.”

China’s ruling Communist Party is enlisting ordinary people to guard against perceived threats to the country, in a campaign that blurs the line between vigilance and paranoia. The country’s economy is facing its worst slowdown in years, but China’s authoritarian leader, Xi Jinping, appears more fixated on national security and preventing threats to

Stoking Unease About
the U.S. as Early as
Kindergarten

the party’s control.

“We must be prepared for worst-case and extreme scenarios,” Mr. Xi told China’s National Security Commission in May. He called on officials to “enhance real-time monitoring” and “get prepared for actual combat.”

The sense of urgency may be heightened by the fact that Beijing is confronting some of its biggest challenges since Mr. Xi’s ascension more than a decade ago. Be-

yond the economic gloom, China’s relations with the West are increasingly tense. And unexplained personnel changes at the highest tiers of power — including the sudden removal in July of China’s foreign minister and two high-ranking generals — suggest that Mr. Xi may have feared threats to his control.

In July, China revised its anti-espionage law to broaden an already sweeping scope of activities that it regards as spying. It is offering rewards of tens of thousands of dollars to people who report spies.

While the call for mass vigilance has inspired widespread caution, it is unclear to what ex-

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UKRAINE REMOVES
CHIEF OF MILITARY
AS WAR DRAGS ON

SEEKS NEW DIRECTION

Ministry Under Pressure
From Investigation
Into Corruption

By ANDREW E. KRAMER

KYIV, Ukraine — President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Sunday that he was replacing his minister of defense, the biggest shake-up in the leadership of Ukraine’s war effort since Russia’s full-scale invasion began, citing the need for “new approaches” as the war stretches toward a second year.

The fate of the defense minister, Oleksii Reznikov, had been the subject of increasing speculation in Ukraine as financial improprieties in the ministry came to light and the government started several investigations into official corruption.

Mr. Zelensky said in a statement that Mr. Reznikov, who has not been personally implicated in the widening investigations into mishandling of military contracts, would be replaced by Rustem Umerov, the chairman of Ukraine’s State Property Fund. Mr. Zelensky said he expected Ukraine’s Parliament, which must approve the change, to sign off on his request.

“Oleksii Reznikov has gone through more than 550 days of full-scale war,” Mr. Zelensky said in a statement announcing his decision on Sunday night. “I believe that the ministry needs new approaches and other formats of interaction with both the military and society at large.”

The decision to replace Mr. Reznikov atop the Defense Ministry comes as Ukraine is in the midst of a major counteroffensive, slowly gaining territory in the south and the east. Last week, Ukrainian officials said they had captured the southern village of Robotyne, suggesting that the offensive had penetrated the first

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Biden on Attack
As G.O.P. Talks
Of Impeaching

By PETER BAKER

WASHINGTON — Just before 8 p.m. on Thursday, Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene posted a video of herself at a town hall in her Georgia district declaring that she “will not vote to fund the government” unless the House holds a vote to open an impeachment inquiry against President Biden.

It took just 68 minutes for the White House to fire back with a blistering statement that such a vote would mean that House Republicans had “caved to the hardcore fringe of their party in prioritizing a baseless impeachment stunt over high-stakes needs Americans care about deeply,” like drug enforcement and disaster relief.

The White House, as it turns out, is not waiting for a formal inquiry to wage war against impeachment. With a team of two dozen lawyers, legislative liaisons, communications specialists and others, the president has begun moving to counter any effort to charge him with high crimes and misdemeanors with a best-defense-is-a-good-offense campaign aimed at dividing Republicans and taking his case to the public.

The president’s team has been

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For Ukrainians, Leveling of a Dam Has Unleashed Suffering That Has Lingered

By JEFFREY GETTLEMAN

ZELENODOLSK, Ukraine — Sunset along the Kakhovka Reservoir in central Ukraine, especially in summer, used to be gorgeous: kids played in the shallow water near the shore, men fished and young couples walked under the pine trees as the last traces of sunlight reflected off the water.

But after the destruction of a major dam just downriver, that shimmering lake, one of Europe’s biggest, simply disappeared. Now all that remains is a 150-mile-long meadow.

For 60-plus years, the Bezhan family ran a fishing business on these shores. They bought boats, nets, freezers and enormous rumbling ice-making machines, and generation after generation made a living off the fish. But now there are no fish.

“If the war ended tomorrow, and I don’t think it will,” said Serhii Bezhan, the family’s broad-chested patriarch, “it would take five years to rebuild that dam and then at least two more for the reservoir to fill up. Then it would take another 10 years for the fish to grow — for some species, 20.”

He looked away as his eyes misted up.

“I’m 50,” he said quietly. “I don’t know if I’ll even be around that long.”

On June 6, seismic meters hundreds of miles away detected an enormous explosion at the Kakhovka dam along the Dnipro River. The reinforced concrete



PHOTOGRAPHS BY FINBARR O'REILLY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Kakhovka Reservoir’s draining has resulted in a drinking-water crisis, left, dead fish, center, and an irrigation plight for farmers.

walls, more than 60 feet high and as much as 100 feet thick, crumbled, and 4.8 trillion gallons of water gushed out.

Scientific evidence indicates that the dam was blown up from the inside, almost certainly by the Russian forces occupying it. In one stroke, they unleashed epic floods on Ukraine and an ensuing drought that, taken together, brought a stunning level of de-

struction to the environment, the economy and the lives of civilians already enduring the hardships of war.

This summer, a team of New York Times journalists traveled hundreds of miles from Zaporizhzhia in central Ukraine to Odesa on the Black Sea to assess the full impact. What we found were homes still soggy and smeared with mud; dead fish ly-

ing in droves; underwater mollusk colonies destroyed; a drinking-water crisis; an irrigation crisis for farmers; entire communities without work; and a yawning sense of loss whose dimensions have not yet been established.

During this war, the Russians have deliberately bombed power plants and grain silos, leaving no shortage of scorched-earth brutality. But the destruction of the

Kakhovka dam stands out as perhaps the single most devastating and punitive blow even if the military intent was to flood the area and slow down Ukrainian troops. The way Ukrainians see it, the invading Russians are simply expressing a hatred of the land — and the people — that they are claiming as theirs.

This was a “katastrofa,” Mr. Reznikov said. “It’s a disaster.”

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True Cultural Immersion

Swimming in Paris offers intimate views into the French psyche, as well as mostly coed showers.

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Cluster Bomb Victims Reflect

U.S. veterans’ grim memories of the munitions were revived by the decision to send them to Ukraine.

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Making Their Vacations Work

Taking a break from the presidential campaign trail is risky. History is littered with cautionary tales of candidates who got it wrong.

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Traffic-Stop Trickery?

Auditors say Connecticut state troopers falsified tens of thousands of records in a bid to seem more productive.

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Coneheads and Tonys

Franne Lee, a costume designer who worked on “Sweeney Todd” and also on “Saturday Night Live,” was 81.

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The Cubicle or the Couch?

Hybrid work patterns across the globe depend on cultural norms, home size and pandemic experience.

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A.D.H.D., Women and Money

A diagnosis of the disorder in adulthood has solved a mystery for some, helping them rein in their finances.

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Betrayed by a Revolution

Reflections on the perils of power by Sergio Ramírez, a key figure in Nicaraguan literature and politics for decades, carry much weight. His latest crime novel is out in English.

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Beyond ‘Margaritaville’

Jimmy Buffett was best known for the song about a lost soul in need of a shaker of salt, among other things. But his tunes weren’t all smiley and one-dimensional, Jon Pareles says.

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Maia Szalavitz

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SPORTS D1-7

A Very American Open

It has been several decades since U.S. players have dominated en masse this deep into their home Grand Slam event. Above, Ben Shelton.

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