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"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

THE WEATHER
A front is expected to bring a few showers to portions of the Great Lakes region today. Heavy rain and thunderstorms for West Texas. Weather map appears on Page B12.

VOL. CLXXVI . . . No. 61,052 © 2026 The New York Times Company THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2026 Prices in Canada may be higher $4.00

Another Crash Plunges Spain In Grief Again

Second Fatal Accident on Same Rail Line

This article is by ***Jason Horowitz****,* ***José Bautista*** *and* ***Carlos Barragán****.*

MADRID — Traveling home on a high-speed train from Madrid to Seville in Spain, Fernando Seco was annoyed when congestion caused the train to stop about a half-hour after its 8 a.m. departure Wednesday. Not long after, it restarted, picked up speed and slammed into another train stopped on the tracks.

Mr. Seco, 62, and other panicked passengers climbed out of their carriage at the back of the train and into a field in central Spain. They saw the derailed carriages of the train they had barreled into in an embankment farther ahead. A rail beam, he said, had "pierced right through a carriage from bottom to top, like carving meat."

He and others rushed to those carriages and found the dead and injured, those "trapped in a twisted tangle of metal and wreckage."

The scene was eerily quiet because people were either dead or so hurt they couldn't speak. He said survivors used parts of the destroyed train as makeshift stretchers to extract the injured from the wreckage. That's when the screaming started. Doctors among the passengers treated people in what became a field hospital among almond groves.

At least 68 people died in the crash. More than 50 others were injured, some critically.

Spain is living through a recurring nightmare. For the second time in less than a year, a high-speed crash between the same two train operators on the same

Continued on Page A6



JAVIER SORIANO/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

A train crash between a high-speed train and a stationary train south of Madrid left at least 68 dead and dozens hurt on Wednesday.

Inside the Democrats' Effort to Stack the Alaska Midterm Ballot

Plan to Coax Potential Spoilers Into Race for Senate Seat

By KELLEN BROWNING

In the summer of 2025, a staffer for Mary Peltola, the Alaska Democrat who was eyeing a run for Senate, received unusual instructions from top campaign aides: Find as many people named Dan Sullivan in Alaska as you can.

The staffer complied, combing through voter records to produce a list of Dan Sullivans from across the state.

This was no random request. Dan S. Sullivan is the name of the state's Republican senator. And if the Peltola campaign or its allies could track down and persuade another Dan Sullivan to run for Senate, the confusion could cost the senator crucial votes on the state's unusual, four-person ballot.

The plan worked. This spring, a retired teacher from a tiny fishing village along the Alaska Panhandle, reachable only by air and sea, announced his candidacy for Senate. His name was Dan J. Sullivan.

The Peltola campaign has repeatedly denied any involvement in his candidacy. But The Times has found, based on interviews and text messages, along with documents prepared for a potential lawsuit against the campaign, that not only did Ms. Peltola's team work with people trying to recruit Mr. Sullivan to run for Senate, but that the effort was much broader. The group worked to coax other would-be spoilers into the race, to dilute the incumbent's support and help catapult the Democrat to victory.

The endeavor, which was internally called the ballot composition

Continued on Page A13

ISRAEL IN LIMBO AS VOTING YIELDS NO CLEAR VICTOR

EARLY NETANYAHU LEAD

Arab Support Could Be Pivotal in Talks on a Possible Coalition

This article is by ***Isabel Kershner****,* ***Johnatan Reiss****,* ***Aaron Boxerman****,* ***Qasim Nauman*** *and* ***Michael Levenson****.*

JERUSALEM — Israeli political leaders braced on Wednesday for days or weeks of negotiations over the shape of the next government after election results showed no clear winner between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing coalition and a diverse bloc of opposition parties.

About 80 percent of the votes had been counted as of Wednesday afternoon local time in an election that had the highest voter turnout in Israel since 1999. Those votes, combined with exit polls, indicated that Mr. Netanyahu's alliance will have more seats than the opposition bloc led by Gadi Eisenkot, a former Israeli military chief of staff, but neither will have the 61 seats needed to secure a majority in the Knesset, Israel's Parliament.

That means either side would need to find support from outside its bloc to form a government and select a prime minister. Two Arab parties were projected to win a total of about 18 seats — a remarkable show of strength that could make them Mr. Eisenkot's only path to toppling Mr. Netanyahu.

Israel's president, Isaac Herzog, said he would not begin consulting party leaders about forming a government until next week, when he expects to receive the full, official vote count. As head of state, Mr. Herzog will pick whoever he thinks has the best shot at assembling a majority in the Knesset.

The wrangling among parties can be drawn out and bruising. If the first candidate fails to gain support, Mr. Herzog can ask up two others. If they also fail, new elections would be held.

"We must do everything we can, certainly after yesterday, to avoid another round of elections," Mr. Herzog said on Wednesday.

The election on Tuesday was Israel's first since the Hamas-led attack on Oct. 7, 2023, and was widely seen as a referendum on Mr. Netanyahu and the coalition of hard-line nationalists and ultra-Orthodox Jews that he formed in 2022, the most far-right in Israeli history.

The early results, though subject to change, indicated that Mr. Netanyahu, a canny survivor over more than three decades in Israeli politics, had emerged with a good chance of clinging to power even though he fell short of an outright victory.

His alliance could drop from 68 seats to roughly 54 and lose its

Continued on Page A7

DOLORES HUERTA, 1930-2026

Labor Leader of Farm Workers Who Earned Folk-Hero Status

By ROBERT D. McFADDEN

Dolores Huerta, who with Cesar Chavez founded what became the United Farm Workers and led strikes and boycotts in the 1960s and '70s that unionized many California table-grape growers, changing laws and the lives of thousands of migrant laborers, died on Wednesday at her home in Bakersfield, Calif. She was 96.



SEPTEMBER DAWN BOTTOMS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The cause of death was cancer, Erik Olvera, a spokesman for her family, said.

Ms. Huerta, who became a kind of Mexican American folk hero, depicted in murals and ballads, was the union's vice president for nearly four decades and, until Mr. Chavez's death in 1993, his second-in-command. He was the charismatic — and, it was later revealed, abusive — leader; she, the skilled organizer who coordinated walkouts and boycotts under a black Aztec eagle banner and negotiated pathbreaking contracts

Continued on Page A20



RICARDO ARDUENGO/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Defeated Brazilian Candidate Lands in U.S.
Flávio Bolsonaro, with a canceled passport, arrived in Miami with his family Wednesday. Page A8.

C.T.E. in Football May Be Broader Than Feared

Study Links Disease to 3 in 4 Ex-N.F.L. Players

By CAROLYN Y. JOHNSON and JOHN BRANCH

This summer, a scientific study sent reverberations through the football world, making headlines and deeply worrying players and families.

At least 25 percent of retired N.F.L. players who died over a recent six-year period, the study found, had C.T.E., or chronic traumatic encephalopathy, the neurodegenerative brain disease associated with repeated hits to the head.

But most of the other 75 percent of deceased players were never tested. That left a complex, high-stakes question — the actual prevalence of C.T.E. among deceased ex-players — open for analysis.

Now, the same research team has deployed statistical techniques to home in on a more precise number. In a new study published Wednesday, they estimate that three out of four former N.F.L. players who died between 2008 and 2023 most likely had C.T.E. in their brains at death.

By contrast, the same re-

Continued on Page A17

A.I. Health Advice and a Devastating Outcome

Using Chatbot's Plan to Taper Epilepsy Drug

By TEDDY ROSENBLUTH

Qun Wan was in the middle of a heated call with his daughter, Bowen Wan, when the phone suddenly went silent.

The conversation, in early February, had started like most of their regular check-ins, a ritual that had kept them connected after Bowen moved from their small village in China to the United States.

But the mood soured when she admitted she had been cutting back on a seizure medication that kept her severe epilepsy under control. She told him she had been slicing her tablets into pieces with a pill cutter, allowing her to reduce her dose by one-fourth, Qun recalled.

Listen to your doctor, he pleaded. Bowen, 31, shot back that doctors didn't care how the drug's side effects affected her. She felt that the drug made her speaking stilted and her thinking slow.

Then, abruptly, she stopped talking. Thirty seconds passed, then a minute, then two. It was longer than seizures she'd had be-

Continued on Page A12

INTERNATIONAL A4-8
Another Carrot for Russia?
Dropping sanctions on Vladimir Putin's multibillion-dollar "slush fund" would be the latest U.S. concession "to help end" the Ukraine war. PAGE A5

NATIONAL A9-17
Trump Eases Methane Limits
Rules passed by the Biden administration that aimed to reduce the release of a potent climate-warming gas from oil wells are being weakened. PAGE A10

BUSINESS B1-6
Legal Firm May Soon Dissolve
Weil Gotshal & Manges has been rocked by an exodus of top lawyers, a failed succession plan and a scuttled deal to merge with a rival firm. PAGE B1

THURSDAY STYLES D1-6
His Not-So-Haunted House
A writer who was once a neighbor to R.L. Stine, the author of the "Goosebumps" series, finally summons up the nerve to visit his house. PAGE D6

OPINION A18-19
Jennifer M. Harris PAGE A18

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Dolores Huerta, center, led a rally with Howard Wallace, president of the United Farm Workers San Francisco chapter, and Maria Elena Chavez in San Francisco's Mission District in 1988.

Dolores Huerta, Labor Leader Who Earned Folk-Hero Status, Dies at 96

From Page A1

with agribusiness.

But there was a long-hidden dark side to her years by Mr. Chavez's side. She was, by her account, raped by him — an assault she never spoke about publicly until early 2026, when she was interviewed by The New York Times as it was reporting on the extensive evidence that Mr. Chavez had also groomed and molested underage girls as young as 12.

"I saw him, again, as my boss, as my hero, as, you know, somebody that would do the impossible," Ms. Huerta told The Times. "I never talked about it to anybody, and the reason I didn't is because I just didn't want to hurt the movement."

On picket lines and in civil disobedience protests, Ms. Huerta and Mr. Chavez practiced the nonviolent civil rights strategies of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. She was arrested 22 times, roughed up by strikebreakers and once severely beaten by a police officer, suffering broken ribs and a ruptured spleen that left her disabled for months.

The mother of 14 children, Ms. Huerta sometimes changed diapers between organizing meetings and nursed her babies during breaks in negotiations. Her children often lived with friends and supporters, ate donated food and coped with frequent moves. Most grew up to become activists and professionals, including a lawyer, a physician, performing artists, a therapist, business administrators and a chef.

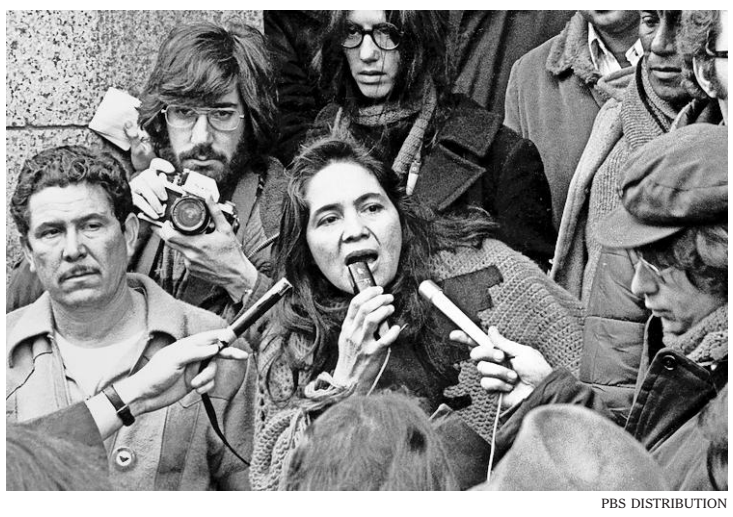
Ms. Huerta also championed immigrants' and women's rights and was an ally of progressive Democrats like Gov. Jerry Brown of California, who signed legislation she sought; Senator Robert F. Kennedy, whose murder she witnessed; and President Barack Obama, who awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honor, in 2012.

Mr. Chavez and Ms. Huerta founded the National Farm Workers Association in 1962 with little but a dream of an organization to help migrant laborers who toiled long hours at backbreaking work for low wages and with no job security, and to challenge abuses, including exposure to toxic pesticides, by powerful California growers.

"People thought we were crazy," Ms. Huerta told The Salt Lake Tribune years later. "They asked: 'How are you going to organize farm workers? They are poor, powerless immigrants. They don't have any money and they can't vote.'"

But by 1965, they had 1,200 members and enough clout to join Filipino workers in a strike against table-grape growers in the Delano area of the San Joaquin Valley, and later in the Coachella Valley of Southern California. It was a bitter fight. The growers brought in strikebreakers, and the local police ignored repeated acts of harassment and violence.

When one grower began selling grapes under another's label, Ms. Huerta and Mr. Chavez called for a boycott against the offender's products. The F.B.I. placed both labor leaders under surveillance for suspected Communist ties.



PBS DISTRIBUTION

Ms. Huerta in 1975. The organizer coordinated strikes and boycotts and negotiated pathbreaking contracts with agribusiness.

But the strike won the support of some other unions, including the United Auto Workers, and of Senator Kennedy, who attended a rally in Delano on March 10, 1968. "The world must know," he said, addressing the crowd of 4,000, "that the migrant farmworker, the Mexican American, is coming into his own right."

The senator then handed Mr. Chavez a piece of bread. Mr. Chavez had been fasting for 25 days, taking only water, and weighed 140 pounds, having lost 35. Accepting the bread, Mr. Chavez broke his fast. It was a crucial moment for both sides in the strike.

The union had recently declared a national boycott of all California table grapes, and Ms. Huerta was already in New York City organizing what became one of America's most successful produce boycotts, a cause célèbre that, polls showed, drew the support of 17 million households and thousands of food stores.

Table-grape sales plummeted. Several growers caved and signed contracts. In 1970, the Delano growers capitulated en masse. Most of the industry soon followed, granting first-time benefits to workers.

Membership in the renamed United Farm Workers Organizing Committee swelled to a record high of 80,000; as an affiliate of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., it became the United Farm Workers in 1972. Later strikes against lettuce and table-grape growers and the Gallo Winery led to another triumph: passage by California's Legislature in 1975 of the nation's first major farm-labor law outside Hawaii.

Signed by Governor Brown, the Agricultural Labor Relations Act guaranteed California farm workers the right to organize unions and required employers to bargain for contracts in good faith. Migrant workers became eligible for medical insurance, employer-paid pensions and other benefits, including mechanisms to challenge abusive working conditions.

In retrospect, it was the high point for the union. Its membership fell sharply in later years as growers signed with the rival Teamsters union, as strikes and boycotts lost their cachet and as the U.F.W. was hit by internal squabbles and, in an increasingly conservative nation, was no longer seen as a social cause, but as a conventional labor union struggling for political and popular support.

Ms. Huerta continued her activism. She spent four months in Washington lobbying lawmakers to pass the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, landmark legislation that granted amnesty to millions of undocumented immigrants.

But at a news conference scheduled to celebrate the victory, Ms. Huerta was nowhere to be seen, having not been told of the event. To her, it was a reflection of the sexism and machismo culture that permeated the union.

"I realized afterward they just wanted to get me out of the way so they could take credit for the work," she said of her male coworkers in remembering the news conference. "Straight male-chauvinist trick."

She did not describe the internal atmosphere publicly until she was interviewed by The Times for its 2026 investigation, when she also revealed Mr. Chavez's abuse. Ms. Huerta said that he raped her inside a vehicle in a secluded California grape field in 1966, when she was 36 and he was 38 or 39. She decided not to report the assault to the police because of their hostility toward the movement, she told The Times, and because she feared that no one in the union would believe her.

She said that two of her children were the products of sexual encounters with Mr. Chavez, including the rape — baby girls who, by her arrangement, were raised by others. She said she had not been aware of his abuse of underage girls.

"Unfortunately, he used some of his great leadership to abuse women and children," she said.

Reporting by The Times also showed that many other women in the union faced sexual assault and harassment from men they worked with, including senior managers. Interviews with former union associates and an examination of archived records suggested that a number of women complained at the time that Ms. Huerta often failed to support them and rebuffed their complaints of sexism.

Dolores Clara Fernández was born in Dawson, N.M., on April 10, 1930, the second of three children of Juan Fernández and the former Alicia Chávez Hernandez. Her father, a coal miner, became a union leader and a member of the New Mexico Legislature.

After her parents divorced, she and her two brothers were raised by their mother and a grandfather in Stockton, Calif. Her mother worked as a waitress, a cannery worker and a cook before buying and operating a hotel, where she sometimes housed and fed migrant workers at no charge.



VICTOR J. BLUE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Boarding a bus in Texas in 2018 to protest the detention and separation of immigrant families at the U.S.-Mexico border.

"My mother was a strong woman and she didn't favor my brothers," Ms. Huerta told Susan Ferriss and Ricardo Sandoval-Palos for "The Fight in the Fields" (1997), a companion book to a PBS documentary of the same name. "There was no idea that men were superior. At home, we all shared equally in the household tasks."

Credited with coining the chant 'Sí se puede' ('yes we can').

After graduating from Stockton High School in 1947, she earned a teaching certificate at Stockton College (now San Joaquin Delta College). She taught in an elementary school, but quit in frustration. "I couldn't stand seeing kids come to class hungry and needing shoes," she told The San Diego Union-Tribune.

In 1950, she married Ralph Head, a high school classmate. They had two daughters; the marriage ended in divorce. She had five children with her second husband, Ventura Huerta, whose surname she kept after their divorce. She later had four children with Richard Chavez, a brother of Cesar Chavez's, in a long-term domestic partnership with him.

Her survivors include 13 of her children, 24 grandchildren, 23 great-grandchildren and seven great-great-grandchildren.

Ms. Huerta was in her 20s when she became involved in community organizing, working for the Community Service Organization, a Latino civil rights group in California founded in 1947. She met Mr. Chavez in 1955, at a fund-raising dinner in Oakland, where she was introduced to him by a C.S.O. co-founder, Fred Ross Sr., a veteran grass-roots organizer who had mentored him.

In 1960, she organized the Agricultural Workers Association, two years before she and Mr. Chavez formed the National Farm Workers Association. It was in 1960, Ms. Huerta told The Times in 2026, that Mr. Chavez first made a sexual advance toward her. She described feeling pressured to have sex with him in a hotel room during a working trip in San Juan Capistrano, Calif.

Their encounters and the confrontations she witnessed in the fields were not the only moments of violence that affected Ms. Huerta. She stood with Senator Kennedy in 1968 as he celebrated his victory in the California presidential primary from a stage at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, then joined his entourage passing through a basement pantry, where he was shot by an assassin.

In 1988, at a demonstration against Vice President George H.W. Bush, then a presidential candidate, outside a San Francisco hotel where he was speaking, Ms. Huerta was seriously injured in an unprovoked attack by a police officer wielding a baton. She won a settlement with the city for $825,000, money that she used to benefit migrant workers. The city also agreed to change crowd-control procedures.

After her recovery, she took a leave from the union and traveled for two years for the Feminist Majority Foundation to promote women candidates for public office. She later became a mentor to many elected officials, including Hilda L. Solis, a four-term congresswoman who was President Obama's labor secretary from 2009 to 2013 and the first Hispanic woman to serve as a cabinet officer.

Ms. Huerta stepped down as an officer of her union in 1999 after 37 years. In 2002, she became founding president of the Dolores Huerta Foundation, which helps communities organize health, environmental, educational and economic projects.

Her portrait was known to hang in some U.S. embassies. She was showered with awards, including 15 honorary degrees, and at the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver, she formally placed Hillary Clinton's name in nomination for president.

Ms. Huerta is widely believed to have coined the phrase "Sí se puede" ("yes we can"), still a common chant at Democratic campaign rallies and marches, and which Mr. Obama adopted as his presidential campaign slogan. (He acknowledged it was hers in his remarks about her at the Medal of Freedom ceremony.)

Her life was extolled in "Dolores," a 2017 documentary by Peter Bratt. In 2019, Gov. Gavin Newsom of California proclaimed an annual Dolores Huerta Day to commemorate her "lifelong pursuit of justice." In a 2020 interview with The Times, she was asked why movements like hers transcended borders.

"I think it's because of the people who are involved," she said. "And this is the reason I, at the age of 90, continue to work. When people come together and take collective action, whether it's in a march, whether it's in a union election or, most important, come together to vote, this is how we make change."



LUKE SHARRETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Barack Obama awarded Ms. Huerta the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honor, in 2012.

Manny Fernandez and Sarah Hurtes contributed reporting.

More obituaries appear on Page B11.