

TURNING POINTS

Events to Shake, or Gently Rattle, the World in 2024

Planning your calendar for next year? Here are some events to look out for.

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This article is part of a series called Turning Points, in which writers explore what critical moments from this year might mean for the year ahead. You can read more by visiting the Turning Points series page.

Sadly, the world appears poised for more shakes than gentle rattles in 2024. The year 2023 was marked by rising tensions and geopolitical shifts: In April, India overtook China as the world's most populous country; in May, July and September, the entertainment and automotive industries in the United States were upended by labor strikes; the first week of July was declared the planet's hottest week on record, and there were record-breaking wildfires in Canada, a historic drought in Brazil's Amazon jungle, and winds from Hurricane Dora caused the deadliest fires in the United States in more than a century in Maui. In July and August, coup d'états in Niger and Gabon made for a total of 10 attempted coups in Africa's "coup belt" since 2020; in August, Japan proposed a record \$52 billion increase to its military spending amid tensions with China; in September, NATO hopeful Sweden boosted its defense budget to about \$11 billion, with the defense minister Pal Jonson citing "the most serious security policy situation since the end of the Second World War;" and in October, Hamas launched the deadliest civilian massacre in Israeli history in a surprise attack out of Gaza.

Looming in the wings is 2024, a live-wire year for democracy: America enters possibly one of the most critical presidential election periods in modern history, while Russian President Vladimir V. Putin will likely walk, not run, to his fifth term in his country's presidential elections. Then there is Ukraine, where President Volodymyr Zelensky may be up for re-election on March 31 after his first term in office ends, unless martial law remains in effect, delaying the vote.

In 2024, we will experience a wide range of events — from world-shaking elections to global commemorations — many of which will serve as reminders of the importance of connection and community in these trying times. Read on to learn more.

JANUARY

UNITED STATES, Jan. 1: A troublemaker version of Mickey Mouse from the past enters the public domain as Disney's copyright expires on the 1928 Mickey from "Steamboat Willie." This mischievous Mickey is known for gags like playing animals as musical instruments and hooking a cargo crane to Minnie Mouse's bloomers to get her on a boat. Disney's legal and public relations teams versus the internet: Let the games begin.

THE NETHERLANDS, Jan. 1: Students in the Netherlands will lose phone (and tablet and watch) privileges during school hours, following examples set by France in 2018 and China in 2021. While the ban on devices may merely lead to profound boredom among a generation unfamiliar with a world without smartphones, the Dutch education ministry expects it to increase students' ability to concentrate.

FEBRUARY

VENEZUELA, Feb. 21: An acrobatic ode to one of the greatest soccer players of all time, Cirque du Soleil's "Messi10" continues its Latin American tour. The first Cirque du Soleil show to feature a sports theme, "Messi10" premiered in Barcelona in 2019 and has been updated to follow Lionel Messi's story from childhood through his victory with Argentina in the 2022 World Cup.

GERMANY, POLAND AND THE BALTIC STATES, February and March: One of the most important harbingers of potential armed conflict between Russia and the West may be the Steadfast Defender, a NATO military exercise that will launch in the spring. The largest collective defense exercise since the Cold War, Steadfast Defender will involve military personnel, air combat missions and naval drills among NATO's member states and NATO-hopeful Sweden.

MARCH

UNITED STATES, March 4: Former President Donald J. Trump's trial on charges of election interference begins one day before Super Tuesday. A few months later, in May, Mr. Trump's trial on charges of obstruction of justice commences. Though it is unlikely that either of these actions could block the man with four criminal indictments from the Republican presidential nomination, these trials may cast shadows on his campaign.



This standard poodle's hair is anything but standard as it gets primped for Crufts, the world's largest dog show. Molly Darlington/Reuters

ENGLAND, March 7-10: In the dog calendar, Crufts, the largest dog show in the world, is like the Met Gala for dogs: the place to sniff and be sniffed. Started in 1891 by Charles Cruft, a dog food salesman, Crufts has grown to involve more than 18,000 dogs and 160,000 dog-loving humans. But some traditionalists wonder if the trappings of modern dog shows, such as agility tasks set to pop music or the use of mousse and hair spray, have a place among a showing of the world's most proper pooches.

RUSSIA, March 17: Vladimir V. Putin, who has led Russia as either prime minister or president since 1999, will “run” for a fifth term. The race will undoubtedly look more like a leisurely stroll by Mr. Putin past his Kremlin-approved opposition candidates and back into the presidential office until 2036, pursuant to constitutional changes he enacted in 2020.

FRANCE, March 26-July 14 AND THE UNITED STATES, Sept. 8-Jan. 20, 2025: To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the first Impressionist art exhibit, the Musée d’Orsay in Paris and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., will stage “Paris 1874: The Impressionist Moment,” a blockbuster exhibit including 130 works by Claude Monet, Auguste Renoir, Edgar Degas, Berthe Morisot, Camille Pissarro, Alfred Sisley and Paul Cézanne, all of whom showed their work at the first exhibit on the Boulevard des Capucines in defiance of the government-sponsored Paris Salon.

APRIL



Make sure you are ready with your eclipse glasses to catch April’s solar eclipse, and then submit your pictures to NASA’s SunSketcher 2024 app. Matthew Abbott for The New York Times

UNITED STATES, MEXICO AND CANADA, April 8: Don your eclipse glasses and watch the moon and the sun align in a cosmic kiss as the Pacific Ocean, Mexico, part of the United States, Canada and the North Atlantic plunge into daytime darkness. It will be the last solar eclipse in the United States for more than 20 years. Celebrate it at the Total Eclipse of the Heart Festival in Arkansas or the Portal Eclipse Festival in Mexico. Wherever you are, download SunSketcher 2024, an app developed by NASA to allow observers in the path of totality to capture images at varying angles and contribute to NASA’s heliophysics research.



Narendra Modi, the incumbent prime minister of India who has embraced nationalist policies, will face off against the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance in April’s general election. Matthew Abbott for the New York Times

INDIA, April-May: The world’s most populous democracy holds a general election for prime minister. The race is between incumbent Narendra Modi — a pro-Hindu nationalist who, at the Group of 20 summit that he hosted in September, sat behind the nameplate Bharat, the Hindi name for India, thought to promote his nationalist agenda — and a united front of all 26 of the opposition parties in a new alliance. The formation of this new group, the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance, signals an opposition to Mr. Modi’s nationalist policies and promotes India’s multiparty democracy and secular values.

ITALY, April 20-Nov. 24: For its 60th edition, the Venice Biennale, the world’s longest-running contemporary art exhibit, explores the theme “Foreigners Everywhere.” Staying on theme, the curator of the main exhibition, Adriano Pedrosa, the head of the São Paulo Museum of Art, will become the first Latin American to host the show, and the Choctaw-Cherokee abstract painter and sculptor Jeffrey Gibson will become the first Indigenous artist to represent the United States.

MAY

CHINA: China’s Chang’e-6 mission will attempt to collect up to 2 kilograms (4.4 pounds) of samples from the dark (well, technically, the “far”) side of the moon, which always faces away from the Earth because of the synchronous rotation of the moon’s orbit. There is no confirmation yet if the mission’s official soundtrack is by Pink Floyd.

JUNE



Senator Xóchitl Gálvez, the opposition candidate in Mexico's June presidential election, is a self-made woman with Indigenous roots. Henry Romero/Reuters

MEXICO, June 2: Who run the world? Or Mexico, at any rate? In a first, two women are running for the presidency of the world's largest Spanish-speaking country. The ruling party candidate is Claudia Sheinbaum, the former mayor of Mexico City and a physicist who is viewed as the protégée of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, Mexico's current president. Her opponent is Xóchitl Gálvez, a computer engineer and tech founder who grew up in rural poverty and is known for her down-to-earth demeanor, Indigenous clothing and cycling habits around Mexico City.

AUSTRALIA, June 14-Oct. 6: To stage "Pharaoh," a landmark exhibition showcasing more than 3,000 years of ancient Egyptian art and culture, the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne will receive the biggest loan ever by the British Museum, consisting of more than 500 ancient Egyptian artifacts created during the reign of Egyptian pharaohs, such as the boy king Tutankhamen. The focus of the exhibit is on the roles and rituals of the pharaoh as ruler.

JULY

SPAIN, July 15-19: At the 20th International Botanical Congress in Madrid, botanists will vote on a proposal to allow existing culturally offensive animal names to be changed; for example, *Hypopta mussolinii* for a butterfly discovered in Libya, and named at a time when Libya was considered an Italian colony.



The Paris Summer 2024 Olympics will make history by allowing nonticket-holding spectators to watch its opening ceremony from the banks of the Seine. Benoit Tessier/Reuters

FRANCE, July 26-Aug. 11: Paris hosts the Summer Olympics exactly one century after it last hosted in 1924, this time with a decidedly modern touch. Departing from the Greek tradition, the opening ceremony will not be held in a stadium, but rather on a flotilla of boats carrying the 10,500 participating athletes down the Seine. Spectators with tickets will watch from the lower banks, while the upper banks will be open to the public for free — another first in recent Olympic history. The surfing events will take place almost 10,000 miles away, in Teahupo'o, Tahiti, a village whose name roughly translates from Tahitian to "Wall of Heads" for the waves that reach nearly 23 feet crashing on its shores. Artificial intelligence technology will monitor visitors to detect and report signs of misconduct. And, of course, there will be some notable absences — Russia and Belarus because of the war in Ukraine, and Guatemala because of government interference with the independence of its National Olympic Committee.

AUGUST

ITALY, Aug. 7-23: The Rossini Opera Festival will stage five of the Italian composer Gioachino Rossini's works in his birthplace of Pesaro on the Adriatic coast. More music to the ears of opera lovers: Pesaro has the distinction of being Italy's Capital of Culture in 2024.



Construction of Indonesia's new capital, Nusantara, has already begun, in preparation for the city's grand opening on Indonesia's independence day. Ulet Ifansasti for The New York Times

INDONESIA, Aug. 17: Faced with a sinking and overcrowded Jakarta, President Joko Widodo will inaugurate a new capital city, Nusantara, on Borneo, the third-largest island in the world. A \$30 billion project, Nusantara is scheduled to open on Indonesia's independence day with the unveiling of the presidential palace and other government buildings.

SEPTEMBER

UNITED STATES, Sept. 10-Feb. 2, 2025: The J. Paul Getty Museum will organize 60 shows in a regionwide initiative in Southern California known as "PST Art: Art & Science Collide." Held every five years, the exhibitions in 2024 will examine the technology that has enabled humans to explore both the minute and the cosmic world around them. Featured objects will include a French microscope from the Getty's collection; a manuscript showing how medieval astrology intersected with medicine, divination and life in the Middle Ages; and a 12-foot-long transparency (essentially an 18th-century motion picture) by Louis Carrogis de Carmontelle.

OCTOBER



The Synod on Solidarity, an assembly that Pope Francis convened to encourage dialogue about the path of the Roman Catholic Church, will have its final session in October. Remo Casilli/Reuters

THE VATICAN: This month, the Vatican will hold the final session of a three-year assembly convened at the request of Pope Francis to re-examine the direction of the Catholic faith. The assembly, called the Synod on Solidarity, has addressed modernization issues such as the role of women in the ministry and the blessing of gay marriages, which could lead to reforms that define Pope Francis's liberal legacy.

RUSSIA: Russia hosts the BRICS summit in the southwest city of Kazan. The geopolitical rival to the Group of 7 will count six new nations among its members by the time the summit is held: Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Leaders in the bloc have heralded its first expansion in 13 years as the "emerging of a new world order" by Russian President Vladimir V. Putin, which Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi told Iran's Al Alam television network "shows that the unilateral approach is on the way to decay."

NOVEMBER



November's presidential election in the United States is expected to set the record for the most expensive election in history, with an estimated \$10 billion spent on political advertisements. Seth Herald/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

UNITED STATES, Nov. 5: The ballot for November's presidential election may be a mirror image of the Joseph R. Biden Jr.-Donald J. Trump showdown in 2020, but the election itself threatens to be an altogether different animal. This is expected to be the costliest election in American history, with more than \$10 billion expected to be spent on political ads, according to the tracking company AdImpact. The political ads themselves are the subject of increasing concern over the role of artificial intelligence in creating deepfakes and spreading disinformation. Although the Federal Election Commission has yet to issue any rules on A.I. in political campaign ads, certain tech companies like Google have already imposed mandates that all political advertisements label the use of A.I. in their content.



NASA's Artemis II mission will be its first crewed expedition to the moon in 52 years. Cristobal Herrera-Ulashkevich/EPA, via Shutterstock

UNITED STATES: On the first crewed mission in 52 years, four astronauts will journey to the moon for 10 days. The crew includes the first Black astronaut and the first female astronaut to make the trip. NASA's Artemis II mission will collect data on the Orion spacecraft and assess the readiness of the Artemis program to send more people to the lunar surface.

DECEMBER



While the original iteration of the Fyre Festival, a supposedly luxurious destination music festival held in the Bahamas, was a debacle, the event's founder is out of prison and bringing the festival back in December. Scott McIntyre for The New York Times

THE CARIBBEAN, Dec. 6: In 2017, celebrities including Kendall Jenner and Bella Hadid promoted the Fyre Festival, which was billed as a glamorous and luxurious destination music festival. The actual event turned out to be a fiasco, as attendees were stranded on a deserted island in the Bahamas, lacking water and served cheese sandwiches in foam containers (which is the opposite of #goals on Instagram). The "greatest party that never happened" became a punchline, as well as the focus of documentaries on Netflix and Hulu. But despite its infamy, the Fyre Festival's return feels pretty on brand for 2024. In an announcement video, the disgraced Fyre Festival founder, Billy McFarland, explained that the idea to give it another go came to him "during a seven-month stint in solitary confinement."

SOMETIME IN 2024

AFRICA: An antimalarial vaccine developed by the University of Oxford and the Serum Institute of India is expected to be distributed in 12 African nations. This is an effort to root out the disease that kills nearly half a million people in sub-Saharan Africa each year. R21/Matrix-M is the second of its kind and has a higher efficacy rate than the first antimalarial vaccine, RTS,S, which the World Health Organization approved in October 2021.

ENGLAND: Show me the money! King Charles III bank notes will enter circulation on the 5-, 10-, 20- and 50-pound bills, in co-circulation with notes featuring Queen Elizabeth II. Next up, mailboxes and state documents will be updated to feature Charles's official monogram.

INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION: In 1975, American Brig. Gen. Thomas Stafford and Russian cosmonaut Aleksei Leonov first shook hands in the collaborative Apollo-Soyuz space mission, symbolizing a space détente at the height of the Cold War. Nearly 50 years later, Russia will leave the International Space Station, a modular space station it currently shares with the United States, Japan, Europe and Canada, and plans to launch its own, the Russian Orbital Service Station, in 2028.

CHINA: A giant spherical structure dedicated to studying neutrinos will become operational in Jiangmen City. While they might sound like a delicious cat food, neutrinos are actually tiny, ghostlike particles composed of matter from distant stars. According to research, trillions of neutrinos pass through our bodies every second, and these particles may hold the clues to the origins of the universe. Jiangmen Underground Neutrino Observatory, built nearly 2,300 feet below ground, will be used to measure neutrinos in order to predict when a star is about to explode. This will give astronomers time to prepare their telescopes, while also helping efforts to piece together a fuller picture of the universe.