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# WSJ

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL WEEKEND

Vodka Makes a  
New Splash  
OFF DUTY



DOW JONES | News Corp \*\*\*\*\* SATURDAY/SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18 - 19, 2021 - VOL. CCLXXVIII NO. 144 WSJ.com ★★★★★ \$6.00

### What's News

World-Wide

**Officials worked to shore up testing and healthcare capacity, as new Covid-19 infections hit a daily record in New York state and the Omicron variant added new risks to the pandemic response across the U.S. A1**

◆ **A federal appeals court reinstated Biden administration rules that require many employers to ensure that their workers are vaccinated or tested weekly for Covid-19. A6**

◆ **Pfizer and partner BioNTech have pushed back plans to request authorization of their Covid-19 vaccine in children ages 2 to 5. A6**

◆ **The Biden administration is considering redirecting helicopters and other equipment once allocated for the Afghan military to Ukraine amid a buildup of Russian troops near its border. A1**

◆ **Despite global efforts to slash carbon emissions, global coal-fired power generation is expected to rise 9% and hit a record by the end of 2021, the IEA said. A10**

◆ **Early-admission applications to some of the nation's most selective colleges remained near historic highs this year. A3**

### Business & Finance

◆ **U.S. stocks ended the week on a downbeat note, with all three major indexes dropping as investors worried about rising interest rates and a surge in Covid-19 cases that is slowing the economic recovery in the U.S. and Europe. A1**

◆ **Central banks across swaths of the globe are continuing to raise rates in an effort to tame inflation, largely dismissing for now the threat to economic growth posed by the spread of the Omicron variant. A2**

◆ **The jury was instructed to begin deliberating in the trial of Theranos founder Elizabeth Holmes, whose alleged fraud has underpinned one of the biggest white-collar criminal cases in Silicon Valley history. B1**

◆ **Blackstone is in advanced talks to acquire a 49% stake in a new Manhattan office tower in a deal that values the skyscraper at \$2.85 billion. B1**

◆ **Microsoft's Bing said it suspended the autofill suggestion feature in China to comply with Chinese laws, while some users in the country said the search engine had become inaccessible. B3**

### NOONAN

"West Side Story"  
And the Decline  
Of the Bijou A19

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## Rise in Covid Cases Spurs Lines for Testing in New York



**CROSSROADS OF CAUTION:** People wait to get tested for the coronavirus at a mobile site in New York's Times Square on Friday. City officials said they were adding testing locations and doubling capacity at existing sites amid increased demand.

## States Bolster Capacity As Virus Spreads

National Guard called to alleviate shortages of hospital workers; testing sites are added

By JULIE WERNAU  
AND AASHA DADI PATEL

Officials worked to shore up testing and healthcare capacity, as new Covid-19 infections hit a daily record in New York state and the Omicron variant added new risks to the pandemic response across the U.S.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said Friday that the state recorded 21,027 new Covid-19 cases, surpassing the previous record of 19,942 set in January. Of roughly 263,500

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◆ Appeals court reinstates rule on company vaccinations... A6

## U.S. Weighs Sending More Arms to Ukraine

WASHINGTON—The Biden administration is considering a plan to redirect helicopters and other military equipment once allocated for the now-defunct Afghan military to Ukraine to help quickly reinforce its defenses amid a

By Vivian Salama,  
Michael R. Gordon  
and Gordon Lubold

buildup of Russian troops near its border, U.S. and Ukrainian officials said.

The equipment is being sought by Ukraine, which discussed it with Pentagon officials, who generally support providing more arms to Ukraine. The National Security Council has yet to approve the arms delivery while the admin-

istration seeks a diplomatic solution to get Moscow to back off its military pressure campaign, the U.S. officials said.

The military kit previously earmarked for the Afghan National Security Forces includes Russian-made Mi-17 helicopters, U.S. officials said. The helicopters would provide more mobility for Ukrainian forces, which have a large front to defend and lost aircraft in clashes in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea and pro-Moscow separatists rebelled in Ukraine's east.

Ukrainian officials have also been lobbying the administration for air-defense systems, including Stinger surface-to-air missiles, that would help them defend their country against Russian aircraft, a Ukrainian

Please turn to page A8

## How TikTok Inundates Teens With Eating-Disorder Videos

App's algorithm can send users down rabbit holes into extreme content

TikTok is flooding teen users with videos of rapid-weight-loss competitions and ways to purge food that health professionals say contribute to a wave of eating-disorder cases spreading across the country.

By Tawnell D. Hobbs,  
Rob Barry and Yoree Koh

A Wall Street Journal investigation involving the creation of a dozen automated accounts on TikTok, registered as 13-year-olds, found that the popular video-sharing app's algorithm served them tens of thousands of weight-loss videos within a few weeks of joining the platform.

Some included tips about taking in less than 300 calories a day, several recommended consuming only water some days, another sug-

gested taking laxatives after overeating.

Other videos showed emaciated girls with protruding bones, a "corpse bride diet," an invitation to a private "Christmas-themed competition" to lose as much weight as possible before the holiday and a shaming for those who give up on getting thin: "You do realise giving up after a week isn't going to get you anywhere, right?...You're disgusting, it's really embarrassing."

On Thursday, several days after the Journal sought comment for the findings detailed in this article, TikTok said it would adjust its recommendation algorithm to avoid showing users too much of the same content, part of a broad re-evaluation of social-media platforms and the potential harm they pose to younger users. The company said it is testing ways to

Please turn to page A15

## Working From Work Can Be Hard

Office employees try to keep distractions at bay

By KATHERINE BINDLEY

When Cara Dimitropoulos started working from home nearly two years ago, she was constantly distracted by her chatty husband and the dog. These days, working from home is a welcome respite from the place she seems to have a hard time getting anything done: the office.

"Most people now want to sit and just chit-chat with me for an hour," said Ms. Dimitropoulos, 30, who works in marketing for a real-estate company in East Longmeadow, Mass. "I'll try and come in early and I won't ever actually be alone. Somebody will come

Please turn to page A4

## EXCHANGE



**AMC GOES APE**  
Inside the chain's wild year of unruly investors and runaway memes.  
B1

## Stocks Log Losing Week On Concerns Over Rates, Case Count

By HARDIKA SINGH  
AND WILL HORNER

U.S. stocks ended the week on a downbeat note, with all three major indexes dropping as investors worried about rising interest rates and a surge in Covid-19 cases that is slowing the economic recovery in the U.S. and Europe.

The benchmark S&P 500 posted its largest weekly percentage decline in three weeks. The Dow Jones Industrial Average has fallen in five of the past six weeks. Oil prices and bond yields fell. Markets lost ground after a brief rally Wednesday, when Fed officials said they

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◆ Central banks across globe move to tame inflation... A2



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## Putin sets new 'red lines' for US and Nato

- Sabre-rattling amid Ukraine tension
- Terms rewrite Europe security rules

MAX SEDDON — MOSCOW  
HENRY FOY — BRUSSELS  
AIME WILLIAMS — WASHINGTON

Russia has published a set of stringent demands on the US and Nato that would end all prospect of Ukraine or any more former Soviet states joining the transatlantic alliance and rewrite many of the principles upholding European security since the end of the cold war.

Moscow's demands go even further than the "red lines" President Vladimir Putin has said are needed to insulate Russia from the threat of attack, many of which have previously been ruled out by Nato and its members.

The US and EU fear that the proposals could be a prelude to war after Russia deployed about 100,000 troops near its border with Ukraine in recent weeks.

Putin, who denies Moscow plans to invade its neighbour, has blamed the tensions on Nato, for supplying Kyiv with weaponry and holding "provocative" exercises near Russia's borders.

Sergei Ryabkov, a deputy Russian foreign minister, said yesterday Moscow wanted to begin negotiations on its proposals in Geneva as soon as possible.

"US and Nato have aggressively escalated the security situation in recent years, which is absolutely unacceptable and extremely dangerous," he said.

Joe Biden, the US president, agreed to discuss Putin's grievances in a video call last week but gave no indication that Washington would accept the demands. An administration official said Washington was ready to discuss some elements of the proposals but was concerned by Russia's "increasingly harsh rhetoric" and "false narrative that Ukraine is... seeking to provoke a conflict".

Under the proposals, Nato would have to seek consent from Moscow to deploy troops in former Communist countries in Europe that joined Nato in May 1997. A separate treaty with the US would require each side to keep their bombers, naval vessels and missiles out of striking distance of the other party, and limit nuclear weapons to their own territory.

The US would also pledge not to set up bases in any former Soviet country.

Jen Psaki, White House press secretary, said: "We will not compromise the key principles on which European security is built, including that all countries have the right to decide their own future and foreign policy."

Jens Stoltenberg, Nato's secretary-general, did not rule out talks but said the alliance was "clear that any dialogue with Russia would also need to address Nato's concerns about Russia's actions [and] be based on the core principles".

## Crushed Big by-election defeat deals fresh blow to Johnson's leadership



UK premier Boris Johnson, already beset by multiple crises, took 'personal responsibility' as his ruling Conservatives lost a seat they had held for 200 years *Big Read*, Page 6; *FT View*, Page 8

## What's up in Biden country?

LIFE & ARTS



## The science of presents

Tim Harford

LIFE & ARTS



## How To Spend It

Start the holiday in style

SEPARATE MAGAZINE



## The mouthpiece of Meta

Nick Clegg

LIFE & ARTS



## Year in markets shaped by shifting sands of investing

The year began with the revenge of the nerds as retail investors ganged up on a hedge fund that had taken a short position on GameStop, the console seller. It ended with a reminder of the power of Tesla, as those who had been betting against it threw in the towel. Events in between included two crises sparked by the Chinese government, whose crackdowns on crypto mining and the education sector caused brutal price crashes that hurt investors.

Standout moments > PAGE 13

## LVMH settles claim that ex-intelligence boss spied on maker of Arnault film

LEILA ABOUD — PARIS

LVMH is to pay €10m to settle claims that a former French intelligence chief spied for the company, including on an activist making a film about its billionaire owner Bernard Arnault.

The settlement, approved yesterday by a Paris judge, ends multiple criminal investigations linked to the company's employment of Bernard Squarcini, who headed France's domestic intelligence agency from 2008 to 2012.

While LVMH has not admitted wrongdoing, the scandal is a blow to the reputation of Arnault, who built LVMH into the world's biggest luxury group.

The investigations centred on allegations that Squarcini committed acts of corruption while working for LVMH.

According to court documents, he was hired in 2015 to consult on fighting

counterfeits, preventing espionage and hacking, and crisis management.

But prosecutors alleged that Squarcini put his network of police, legal and intelligence contacts in the service of LVMH and the Arnault family in acts that amounted to influence peddling, invasion of privacy and other offences.

Squarcini is alleged to have spied in 2015 on François Ruffin, a documentary maker who is now an elected member of parliament, and infiltrated his advocacy group Fakir to obtain a copy of the film "Thanks, boss!", which details Arnault's rise to become France's richest man.

Separately in 2013, Squarcini was said to have sought confidential information about an investigation into LVMH's raid on rival Hermès, including the name of the investigating judge and evidence held by police. In what was dubbed the handbag wars, Hermès filed a complaint

about the tactics LVMH had used in 2010 to buy a 20 per cent stake that allowed it to avoid disclosure requirements. LVMH later paid an €8m fine.

Squarcini and others involved are still being investigated for various alleged crimes and could yet be tried if charges are filed. He has contested the allegations in 16 criminal probes against him and maintains his innocence.

The settlement means LVMH has no legal risk and will not be indicted for crimes allegedly linked to Squarcini.

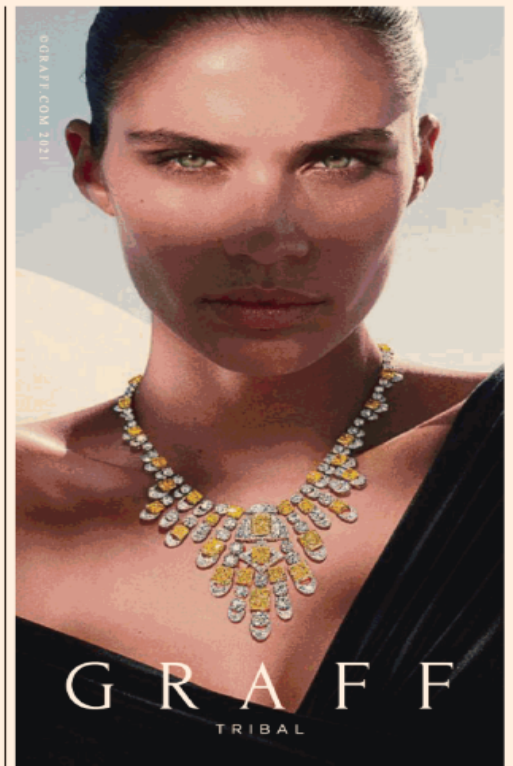
Ruffin said the luxury group should not have got off so lightly. "LVMH has already bought and paid for the intelligence services of our country and is now doing the same with the justice system."

An LVMH executive admitted at the hearing to "internal dysfunctions" but argued it should be allowed to settle after co-operating with prosecutors.

## World Markets

STOCK MARKETS				CURRENCIES				INTEREST RATES			
	Dec 17	prev	%chg		Dec 17	prev	%chg		price	yield	chg
S&P 500	4633.21	4698.67	-1.4%	\$ per £	1.127	1.131	-0.3%	US Gov 10 yr	146.81	1.36	-0.05
Nasdaq Composite	15163.75	15190.44	-0.1%	\$ per €	1.326	1.323	0.2%	UK Gov 10 yr		0.56	0.00
Dow Jones Ind	35442.77	35693.64	-0.7%	£ per €	0.859	0.848	1.3%	Ger Gov 10 yr		-0.36	-0.03
FTSEurofirst 300	1628.24	1650.35	-1.3%	¥ per \$	113.635	113.745	-0.1%	Japan Gov 10 yr	112.94	0.05	0.01
Euro Stoxx 50	4164.24	4201.87	-0.9%	₩ per \$	150.725	151.640	-0.6%	US Gov 30 yr	119.52	1.82	-0.06
FTSE 100	7289.92	7280.61	0.1%	Sfr per €	1.040	1.042	-0.2%	Ger Gov 2 yr	104.62	-0.73	-0.03
FTSE All-Share	4130.94	4122.09	0.2%	€ per \$	0.887	0.884	0.3%				
CAC 40	6928.63	7025.07	-1.1%	COMMODITIES					price	prev	chg
Xetra Dax	15531.89	15636.40	-0.6%		Dec 17	prev	%chg	Feed Funds Eff	0.08	0.08	0.00
Nikkei	28545.88	29096.32	-1.7%	Oil WTI \$	70.94	72.15	-1.6%	US 3m T-bill	0.05	0.05	0.00
Hong Kong	23102.83	23475.56	-1.6%	Oil Brent \$	73.71	75.02	-1.7%	Euro Libor 3m	-0.81	-0.81	0.00
MSCI World \$	3187.33	3175.11	0.4%	Gold \$	1795.70	1788.65	1.5%	UK 3m	0.10	0.10	0.00
MSCI EM \$	1223.89	1214.90	0.7%					Prices are for reference. Data provided by Morningstar			
MSCI ACWI \$	740.91	741.08	-0.1%								

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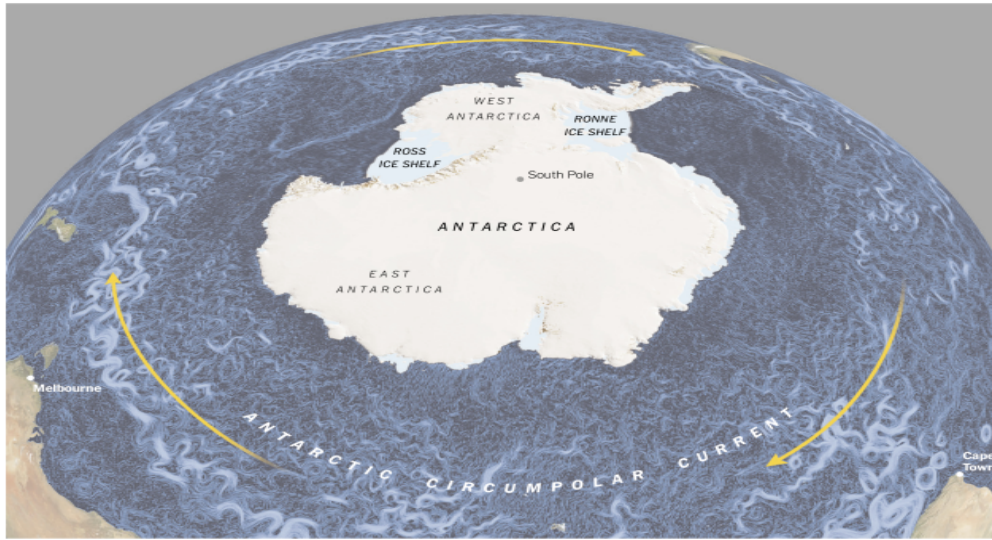
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## Powerful Climate Engine Circling the South Pole

The Antarctic Circumpolar Current generates a cooling force that has prevented the planet from growing even warmer.



Sources: British Antarctic Survey; NASA Earth Observatory; Asia-Pacific Data Research Center; Bright Earth e-Atlas Basemap

JEREMY WHITE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

## Warning From the Antarctic Deep

Shifts in Icy Current May Complicate Fight Against Climate Change

By HENRY FOUNTAIN  
and JEREMY WHITE

The immense and forbidding Southern Ocean is famous for howling gales and devilish swells that have tested mariners for centuries. But its true strength lies beneath the waves.

The ocean's dominant feature, extending up to two miles deep and as much as 1,200 miles wide, is the Antarctic Circumpolar Current, by far the largest current in the world.

It is the world's climate engine, and it has kept the world from warming even

more by drawing deep water from the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans, much of which has been submerged for hundreds of years, and pulling it to the surface. There, it exchanges heat and carbon dioxide with the atmosphere before being dispatched again on its eternal round trip.

Without this action, which scientists call upwelling, the world would be even hotter than it has become as a result of human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases.

"From no perspective is there any place more important than the Southern

Ocean," said Joellen L. Russell, an oceanographer at the University of Arizona.

"There's nothing like it on Planet Earth." For centuries this ocean was largely unknown, its conditions so extreme that only a relative handful of sailors plied its iceberg-infested waters. What fragmentary scientific knowledge was available came from measurements taken by explorers, naval ships, the occasional research expedition or whaling vessels.

But more recently, a new generation of floating, autonomous probes that can

Continued on Page A10

## Liberal Mayor Cracks Down Against Crime

This article is by Thomas Fuller,  
Shaila Dewan and Kellen Browning.

**SAN FRANCISCO** — The mayor of San Francisco on Friday made a sharp break with the liberal conventions that have guided her city for decades, declaring a state of emergency in one of its most crime-infested neighborhoods.

Mayor London Breed's announcement came just days after she emphasized the need for the police to clean up what she has described as "nasty streets." At a news conference at City Hall, steps away from where drug dealers openly peddle fentanyl and methamphetamines, she said, "We are in a crisis and we need to respond accordingly." She added, "Too many people are dying in this city, too many people are sprawled on our streets."

The neighborhood, the Tenderloin, has been ground zero for drug dealing, overdose deaths and homelessness for years. But Ms. Breed said in an interview that she reached her "breaking point" in recent weeks after meet-

Continued on Page A17

## Adams's Proposals on Rikers and Policing Clash

By NICHOLAS FANDOS  
and JONAH E. BROMWICH

As the Rikers Island jail complex descended into chaos this year, Eric Adams was clear: If elected, he would back Mayor Bill de Blasio's watershed plan to close the notorious facility by 2027 and replace it with newer, smaller lockups across New York City.

But as Mr. Adams prepares to take office, his support for closing Rikers appears increasingly to be on a collision course with his promises to crack down on crime and accommodate local leaders' opposition to the new jail sites.

It is unclear how, or if, the measure will survive the impact.

Where the current plan to replace the complex requires a sharp drop in the jail population, Mr. Adams has committed to policies that, in the near term, are likely to put more people behind bars. He has said he would restore a plainclothes police unit that was disbanded amid criticism of its aggressive tactics, and appoint tough-on-crime criminal court judges. He has urged state lawmakers to tighten bail laws that were recently loosened.

Mr. Adams has also expressed reservations about some of the sites selected for four new jails and has said he would show defer-



DAVE SANDERS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Mayor-elect Eric Adams's messages on closing Rikers are mixed.

ence to two incoming City Council members who are furious about the prospect of jails opening in their districts.

And although the incoming mayor has not expressed it publicly, a person familiar with his thinking said that Mr. Adams was concerned that the \$8 billion cost of the new jails could rise and said he would scrutinize the construction plans in light of a projected city budget crunch.

The conflicting messages combine to raise the possibility that a marquee criminal justice initiative of Mr. de Blasio's tenure, which he pointed to regularly when asked about conditions at Rikers, could soon be materially rewritten or unraveled entirely.

"There is a disconnect between thinking we can close Rikers and having policies that are invariably

Continued on Page A18

## Despair Sets In As Cases Bury Hospital Staffs

Medical Workers Feel  
Crisis Has No End

By MITCH SMITH

**SAGINAW, Mich.** — On the top floor of the hospital, in the unit that houses the sickest Covid-19 patients, 13 of the 14 beds were occupied. In the one empty room, a person had just died.

Through surge after surge, caregivers in the unit at Covenant HealthCare in Saginaw, Mich., have helped ailing patients say goodbye to their relatives on video calls. The medical workers have cried in the dimly lit hallways. They have seen caseloads wane, only to watch beds fill up again. Mostly, they have learned to fear the worst.

"You come back to work and you ask who died," said Bridget Klingenberg, an intensive care nurse at Covenant, where staff levels are so strained that the Defense Department recently sent reinforcements. "I don't think people understand the toll that that takes unless you've actually done it."

The highly contagious Omicron variant arrives in the United States at a moment when there is little capacity left in hospitals, especially in the Midwest and Northeast, where case rates are the highest, and where many health care workers are still contending with the Delta variant. Some researchers are hopeful that Omicron may cause less severe disease than Delta, but health officials still worry that the new variant could send a medical system already under pressure to the breaking point.

About 1,300 Americans are dying from the coronavirus each day. The national case, death and hospitalization rates remain well below those seen last winter, before vaccines were widely available. But suddenly, positive tests are growing. State officials in New York reported more than 20,000 coronavirus cases on Friday, which they said was more than on any other day of the pandemic. In Connecticut and Maine, reports of new infections have grown by around 150 percent in the last two

Continued on Page A13

## SURGING DEMAND FOR VIRUS TESTS SWAMPS SYSTEM

U.S. SUPPLY LAGS EUROPE

Biden Efforts Dealt Blow  
After Holidays and  
Variant Converge

By SHERYL GAY STOLBERG  
and SHARON LAFRANIÈRE

**WASHINGTON** — The nation's coronavirus testing capacity, already straining to keep up with demand, is facing enormous new pressure, with holiday travelers waiting in long lines to be tested, overworked laboratories struggling to keep up and rapid at-home diagnostics flying off pharmacy shelves as the Omicron variant fuels a rapid spike in Covid-19 cases.

Two years into the pandemic, the surging desire for tests in the face of limited supply threatens to thwart President Biden's response, but it is hardly a new problem. The United States has bungled testing from the outset of the pandemic, experts say, and matching supply with demand has been a persistent challenge for both the Trump and Biden administrations.

Mr. Biden came into office vowing to make testing for the virus cheap and easily accessible, and there have been some improvements since he was sworn in. Laboratory tests are more plentiful now, and more than a dozen at-home tests are available, up from zero in January. The Food and Drug Administration has sped up its approval process, and the supply of at-home tests has increased steadily since August; last month, it was expected to double by March.

But the United States remains a far cry from Europe, where more than three dozen types of at-home tests are available for as little as \$1 to \$2 per test. Americans can pay as much as \$25 for a box of two, and Mr. Biden's plan to have insurers reimburse for those purchases will not take effect until mid-January at the earliest.

In Miami, cars lined up bumper

Continued on Page A14

**EMPLOYEE VACCINE MANDATE** A federal appeals panel restored a Biden rule ordering large companies to require the shot. PAGE B1

**RECORD FOR CASES** New York State reported 21,027 cases on Friday, the highest total since the earliest days of the pandemic. PAGE A14

**WEAK IMMUNE RESPONSE** In a clinical trial, Pfizer-BioNTech's low-dose shot fell short for children aged 2 to just under 5. PAGE A14

## Putin Moves to Push NATO Out of Former Soviet Republics

ANDREW E. KRAMER and STEVEN ERLANGER

**KYIV, Ukraine** — Russia demanded on Friday that the United States and its allies halt all military activity in Eastern Europe and Central Asia in a sweeping proposal that would establish a Cold War-like security arrangement, posing a challenge to diplomatic efforts to defuse Russia's growing military threat to Ukraine.

The Russian proposal — immediately dismissed by NATO officials — came in the form of a draft treaty suggesting NATO should offer written guarantees that it would not expand farther east toward Russia and halt all military activities in the former Soviet republics, a vast swath of now-independent states extending from

Eastern Europe to Central Asia.

The proposals codified a series of demands floated in various forms in recent weeks by Russian officials, including by President Vladimir V. Putin in a video call with President Biden. They represent in startling clarity goals long sought by Mr. Putin, who analysts say is growing increasingly concerned that Ukraine is drifting irretrievably into a Western orbit, posing a grave threat to Russian security.

The demands also reinforced the notion that Mr. Putin seemed willing to take ever-greater risks to force the West to take Russian security concerns seriously and to

Continued on Page A5

### INTERNATIONAL A4-11

#### 'Time We Can't Get Back'

Hundreds of Chileans adopted abroad have learned that they were taken from their parents in the 1970s and 1980s under Augusto Pinochet's rule. PAGE A4

### NATIONAL A12-18

#### Officer Apologizes on Stand

Kimberly Potter, the former police officer in Minnesota who killed Daunte Wright, told a jury she had only meant to fire her Taser. PAGE A15

### BUSINESS B1-6

#### Early Decision Wiggle Room

If you can't afford the price a college quotes you, you don't have to go. The supposedly binding offers are not actually binding, Ron Lieber writes. PAGE B1

### SPORTS B7-9

#### N.F.L. Reschedules 3 Games

The league has little wiggle room with only one open weekend before the Super Bowl. Covid also disrupted college sports and N.H.L. games. PAGE B8

### OPINION A20-21

#### Tom Morello

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## How a struggle to read propelled Newsom

The governor goes to great lengths to overcome insecurities related to dyslexia.

BY TARYN LUNA  
AND PHIL WILSON

SACRAMENTO — California's most powerful politician often begins his day around 6 a.m. alone in his office, struggling to read.

With his headphones on and the door closed, Gov. Gavin Newsom goes through his daily briefing binder once. Then a second time. Then a third.

His staff knows to give him space for at least two hours as he circles and underlines the reports. He distills pages of notes onto yellow cards and slides them into his pocket to study during the ride to news conferences or speaking engagements.

Newsom says the painstaking system helps him retain information and compensate for his dyslexia. It's a bit of a security blanket for a governor who said he didn't feel smart until age 35.

"The only way I'm going to be confident in my job, and be able to do my job is I've got to be confident enough in what I'm trying to communicate and what I'm trying to say," Newsom said. "Otherwise, I'll be deeply anxious about my job, and I will not enjoy it. That's like not getting sleep the night before. It's not a day I want to experience."

In front of the cameras, Newsom's propensity for rattling off numbers and facts can feed into the public image of a self-assured and all-too-polished politician. But it's also a byproduct of insecurities over learning issues that seeped into his consciousness at an early age.

"I'm in a sort of perpetual place of trying to overcompensate, trying to prove something to myself," Newsom said.

Dyslexia affects 20% of the population and can be experienced differently from person to person, according to the Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity.

"It's spelling, writing and just deep struggles reading — and the reading is comprehension, because I can read two chapters and literally be daydreaming, and I'll have read every word and not remember one damn thing unless I'm underlining it," Newsom said.

While growing up, Newsom said, other children viewed him as the "slow kid" [See Newsom, A9]

## Harris on COVID and other issues

In an interview with The Times, the vice president says virus variants came as a surprise. **NATION, A4**

## Utility faces fine in five wildfires

California regulators reach a \$550-million record with Edison over 2017 and 2018 blazes. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

**Weather**  
Sunny and cool.  
L.A. Basin: 66/43. **B8**

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**HARJINDER SINGH** drives a grape harvester on his family's farm in October. The 500-acre farm in the San Joaquin Valley relies on five deep groundwater wells whose levels have dropped significantly the last few years.

## Low and dry in the valley

### Big farms' well-drilling frenzy leaves homes without water

BY MARIA L. LA GANGA,  
GABRIELLE LAMARR LEMEE  
AND IAN JAMES

VISALIA, Calif. — Vicki McDowell woke up on a Saturday morning in May, thinking about what she would make her son for breakfast. He was visiting from Hayward, and she wanted to whip up something special. Biscuits and gravy. Fried potatoes. Eggs.

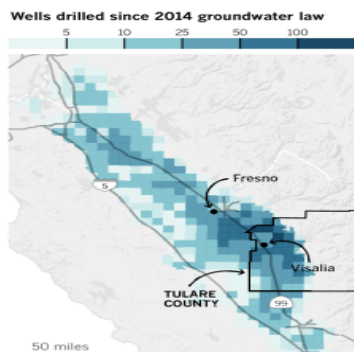
She walked to the kitchen sink to wash her hands. Turned on the faucet. Nothing happened. Worried, she tried the bathroom sink. Still nothing. She flushed the toilet. It gurgled.

The 70-year-old called her landlord. He called a well driller. The news was grim. The well that pumped water to the small, cream-colored house she rents on an olive ranch had gone dry.

Six months have passed. It's still dry.

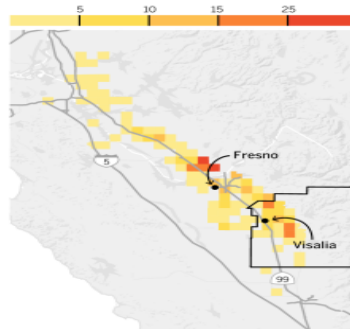
[See Wells, A6]

### A race to the bottom in the San Joaquin Valley



Department of Water Resources, OpenStreetMap contributors

### Reports of homes with dry wells in 2021



GABRIELLE LAMARR LEMEE Los Angeles Times

## Virus policy lets kids stay in school

Federal guidelines say if students are exposed and test negative, they can avoid quarantine.

BY HOWARD BLUME

Students exposed to the coronavirus will be able to remain in class and avoid the disruption of going home to quarantine if they are tested for the virus with negative results and remain free of COVID-19 symptoms under new federal "test to stay" guidelines released Friday.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has firmly embraced the test-to-stay approach, already used in many school districts, based on research that included findings from the Chicago and Los Angeles areas.

In Los Angeles Unified alone, more than 2,000 students will enter quarantine in a typical week as a result of being a close contact of someone who tested positive for a coronavirus infection. Last week, the numbers surged past 4,000 in the nation's second-largest school system. Some families have gone through the ordeal multiple times. A quarantine can last for up to 10 days.

"Test-to-stay is an encouraging public health practice to help keep our children in school," CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said Friday.

Many California school districts were headed toward or had already adopted the policy. About a dozen of the largest 100 [See Students, A10]

## Colleges prepare as virus cases rise

USC is likely to require booster shots and weighs a remote start to spring semester. **CALIFORNIA, B3**



**OFFICE CLEANER** Mario Alarcon of Montecito Heights helps sons Angel, 9, left, and Daniel, 6, center, get ready for school as Alfredo, 2, looks on.

### PANDEMIC PORTRAITS: THE LATINO EXPERIENCE

## Migrant family had hopes for more. Then, COVID

BY ALEJANDRA REYES-VELARDE

Glenda Valenzuela plopped some canned beans into a pan of sizzling onions — breakfast for her husband and three young boys.

She grabbed a bag of white beans to wash and dump into a slow cooker.

That batch would be for lunch. More beans were on the menu for dinner. And for breakfast the next morning.

Once, Valenzuela and her husband,

Mario Alarcon, worked full time cleaning offices, schools and other buildings. With money from side gigs, they could take their children to a buffet or a movie night including popcorn and drinks.

They dreamed of more: a bigger home in a neighborhood where their autistic eldest son could have better services and where Alarcon could expand his entrepreneurial spirit.

It all seemed within reach for two immigrants without legal status — until the [See Latinos, A12]

This three-part series examines how the pandemic has affected Latinos. Read the other stories at [latimes.com](http://latimes.com). *Leer en español on latimes.com.*

## How experts plan to stay safe while marking holidays

Personal precautions vary widely, unlike the one-size-fits-all approach of last year.

BY MARIA L. LA GANGA

The Three Kings Day party has been canceled for the second year in a row at Barbara Ferrer's home in Echo Park. No hilarity, no live music, no 80 or so guests honoring the Magi who brought gifts to the infant Jesus.

Instead, the director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is planning a small outdoor Christmas Eve dinner with family and a few close friends. There will be tamales, arroz con pollo. And COVID-19 tests all around.

Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, professor of medicine and an infectious-disease specialist at UC San Francisco, is flying to the East Coast with his wife and two teenage daughters to celebrate with family. At just one small dinner, not the usual string of festivities.

And what are UCLA epidemiologist Shira Shafir,

her husband and their 3-year-old son planning? Mostly nothing. The grown-ups in the house are vaccinated and boosted. Little Benji isn't yet eligible. "It's the three of us and maybe a Zoom," Shafir said, "and that's it."

These are among the experts who have guided us through 21 grueling months of fear and death and uncertainty. They have told us when to mask, when to stay home, when to vaccinate, when to get a booster shot.

Many of us have listened. But not all. Which is why we're here, getting ready to celebrate another COVID-19 Christmas as another variant threatens and another surge looms, as the U.S. death toll crests 800,000 and we fret over which is more dangerous: infection or isolation.

Unlike COVID-19 Christmas No. 1, when precautions were drastic and one-size-fits-all, there are tools today to help keep us safe: vaccines and boosters and easily accessible tests for the virus, better basic information about who is at most risk and why. Now, the precautions to take are as varied as [See Holidays, A10]



## Va. police investigate possible serial killer

Man is charged in 2 killings, may be linked to 2 bodies found in Fairfax

BY JUSTIN JOUVENAL,  
PETER HERMANN  
AND RACHEL WEINER

Virginia authorities said Friday they are investigating a possible serial killer, a man they allege sought out women on dating apps, lured them to hotels and then killed them before using shopping carts to wheel their bodies to vacant lots and dump them.

Anthony Robinson, 35, of D.C., had already been charged in November with slaying two women in Harrisonburg, Va., before Fairfax County police announced Friday they had discovered the remains of what appear to be a missing D.C. woman and a second unidentified person in a trash can.

Robinson has not been charged in the killing of Cheyenne Brown, 29, or the other person, but he is being probed as a person of interest in both deaths after investigators said they found evidence linking him to Brown. Police said Robinson has no prior criminal record.

The pattern of the killings and the short time frame in which they all occurred — just a matter of months — have left authorities concerned that other victims have yet to be identified.

Fairfax County police and other departments across the area have begun scouring missing persons files to see if other cases fit the same profile. Fairfax County

SEE FAIRFAX ON A4



LEY UMBELA FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

BY MAX BEARAK,  
CHRIS MOONEY  
AND JOHNN MUYSKENS

INVISIBLE

## The race to defuse Congo's carbon bomb

Peatland stirs poor country's desire for growth but holds centuries of greenhouse gases

Men wade through the carbon-rich Buya bog about 52 miles into the Central Basin in Équateur, Democratic Republic of Congo, on July 6. Tons of carbon are stored in the peatlands.

BOLOMBA TERRITORY, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO — The parishioner approached the pastor after morning prayer to tell him she'd had a dream the night before — a premonition, really — that a White man would walk into their remote village soon and change their lives forever.

The arrival of professor Simon Lewis and his colleagues in Ikenge just months later would indeed upend this calm idyll tucked away in one of the world's remaining rainforests.

The village — home to a few dozen families living in earthen houses ringed by fields of cassava — is exceptionally secluded. Reaching it requires journeying for at least a day in dugout canoes

up charcoal-black tributaries, often while torrential thunderstorms crisscross overhead. Ikenge's residents are familiar with the world beyond the forest, though they seldom interact with it.

So when Lewis and his colleagues began talking in giddy, hushed tones about carbon and a substance called "tourbière" in French, Pastor Timothée Bombala sensed the premonition was coming true.

"They kept saying, 'This is the biggest and deepest we have ever seen.' They were very excited," Bombala recalled of that momentous day in 2019. "They took many pieces of it with them."

"And when they left, they told me

SEE CONGO ON A10

Unsettling: Extreme weather will get even worse, studies warn. A13

## Russia outlines security demands for U.S., NATO

As Ukraine tensions rise, senior Biden official calls requests 'unacceptable'

BY ROBYN DIXON  
AND PAUL SONNE

MOSCOW — Russia on Friday spelled out its demands for sweeping new security guarantees from the United States and NATO, seeking pledges that would halt NATO's eastward expansion and block U.S. military ties with former Soviet states.

The central tenets of Russia's "sphere of influence" doctrine — including demands for an effective veto over other nations' foreign and security policies — have repeatedly been dismissed as nonstarters by NATO officials. A senior Biden administration official described some of Russia's demands as "unacceptable" to Washington and said Moscow "knows that."

But the latest announcement by the Kremlin underscored its escalating confrontation with the West over Ukraine, which Russia views as part of its political orbit. It also raised worries among analysts that Moscow is

making requests that it knows the United States will not agree to, seeking to send a message domestically and create a pretext for possible military action against Ukraine once those demands are spurned.

Russia published two lists of demands — for Washington and for NATO — the latter calling for the removal of all NATO military infrastructure installed in Eastern European countries after 1997, effectively attempting to rework the consequences of the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, which left Russia weakened for years.

The demands for NATO also seek to prevent the alliance from carrying out any military activity outside its territory in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

A senior Biden administration official, during a briefing with reporters Friday, said it was unhelpful to conduct the negotiations in public.

The official said the United States will not compromise on key principles on which European security is built, including the right of all countries "to decide their own future and their own foreign policy, free from

SEE RUSSIA ON A13



MICHAEL WILLIAMSON/THE WASHINGTON POST

Zeke Vier, born at 23 weeks in May weighing 1 pound 4 ounces, in a neonatal intensive care unit in Iowa with his parents, Kourtney and Riley Vier. Today, Zeke is a chubby baby at 12 pounds.

## Medical leaps pose thorny issues for Roe

BY ARIANA EUNJUNG CHA

The clock struck midnight as Kourtney Vier was wheeled into the delivery room at the University of Iowa Hospital. She had just crossed the line between her 22nd and 23rd week of pregnancy, and the baby was coming.

"I'm scared," she cried out to her husband. Doctors and nurses kept telling her "you're doing great," and before long, the room erupted

into cheers. Zeke Vier — at 1 pound 4 ounces and 11 inches long — had been born.

Vier saw her son for just a few seconds before he was swaddled away to neonatal intensive care. He wasn't crying, she remembered. But as she looked at his little fingers and toes, she thought about how he would not be alive if she had stayed at the first hospital she had tried near her hometown. "They told me there was

SEE VIABILITY ON A5

## Families navigate wait for vaccines

PFIZER DELAYS SHOT FOR THOSE UNDER 5

'Test-to-stay' programs may keep kids in desks

BY CAROLYN Y. JOHNSON  
AND LAURA MECKLER

With the omicron variant looming, the pandemic playbook got two major updates for families of young children Friday — a gut punch on vaccines but a promising strategy for managing exposures in schools. Together, they underscore the reality that navigating the coronavirus will be a major challenge for months to come.

In a major disappointment to families with young children, pharmaceutical company Pfizer announced that its coronavirus vaccine would not be available to children younger than 5 until after March at the earliest. The two-dose regimen being tested in young children did not trigger a protective immune response in 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds, so Pfizer and its German partner, BioNTech, will begin testing a third shot.

That setback was accompanied by new data and recommendations that could help families live with the virus while adding logistical challenges and opportunities

SEE VACCINE ON A7

Vaccinations: Appellate court reinstates Biden's mandate. A8

WFT postponed: Outbreak pushes key clash vs. Eagles to Tuesday. D1

## Hot economy thrown curve by another covid surge

BY RACHEL SIEGEL  
AND LAURA REILEY

The sudden surge of new coronavirus cases has jolted some parts of the U.S. economy that depend most on face-to-face interactions, while other businesses are preparing for record holiday seasons and so far appear unscathed by the spreading omicron variant.

The impact is uneven but acute. It reflects how some American consumers and business owners have grown accustomed to making instant decisions to cancel their plans, while others are more undeterred after such a long period of setbacks and delays.

In recent days there has been a flurry of other announcements about changes.

Late Friday, the Radio City Rockettes announced they had canceled all their remaining New York City holiday shows, citing "increasing challenges from the pandemic." The dance company typically performs multiple shows per day in December. A number of other restaurants and theaters in New York City that rely

SEE ECONOMY ON A7

## IN SUNDAY'S POST



HALEY HUDSON

« Highway to heaven In British Columbia, a roughly 630-mile mountainous loop — in addition to traditional resorts, backcountry tours and heli-skiing — is a skier's powder paradise. Travel Off this week The Magazine section is taking a break and will return to its normal schedule next week.



ORIOLE TARRIDES/REX/ANADOL

« But is it even art? An NFT, or non-fungible token, is akin to a certificate of authenticity, recorded on a blockchain. Some digital NFT artworks are selling for millions of dollars. Will they transform the art world? A critic goes to America's most prestigious art fair to answer your questions — and his. Arts & Style

## INSIDE

REAL ESTATE Behold: 'Barndominium' Metal or metal-wood homes that look like barns are gaining favor for their durability and cost savings.

VIRGINIA 1987 time capsule found Workers dismantling the base of the former Robert E. Lee statue chiseled it free. Now, to open it. B1

THE NATION Ex-officer takes the stand Kimberly Potter, charged in the fatal shooting of Daunte Wright, told jurors the scene was "chaotic." A6

THE WORLD Israel prods Biden on Iran Israeli officials oppose reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, which is the focus of negotiations in Vienna. A14

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The Washington Post / Year 145, No. 13





**espectáculos****La temporada teatral de Mar del Plata arranca con gran expectativa**

Fátima Florez levanta el telón mañana; la ciudad quiere recuperarse del golpe de la pandemia.

**RIVER-COLÓN, EN BUSCA DEL ÚLTIMO FESTEJO DEL AÑO**

—deportes

Desde las 21.10, en Santiago del Estero, definen el Trofeo de Campeones; en caso de triunfar, será la 14ª conquista de Gallardo como DT del millonario. **Página 2**

**EL ANSIADO REGRESO DE LAS CELEBRACIONES**

—sábado

Después de un 2020 marcado por el encierro y los microfestejos, este año vuelven las grandes celebraciones y la mesa larga.

# LA NACION

SÁBADO 18 DE DICIEMBRE DE 2021 | LANACION.COM.AR

## Desconcierto en el Gobierno tras la dura derrota con el presupuesto

Un discurso desafiante de Máximo Kirchner selló la suerte de la iniciativa; llamada urgente del Presidente al FMI

El gobierno de Alberto Fernández quedó expuesto en su debilidad y sometido a un fuerte desconcierto después del inesperado rechazo del proyecto de ley de presupuesto 2022 en la Cámara de Diputados. Ocurrió al cabo de una sesión de 20 horas cargada de dramatismo y que, como en una obra de teatro, tuvo un giro de guion en el último minuto.

Una intervención desafiante de Máximo Kirchner, en la que maltrató con duros términos a los referentes de Juntos por el Cambio, desencadenó el voto negativo de la mayoría, cuando se había acordado devolver el dictamen a la comisión y reabrir el debate la semana próxima.

Entre gritos e insultos, el oficialismo cosechó un fracaso histórico cuando dieron las 10 de la mañana. Alberto Fernández se encontró en medio de una crisis impensable horas antes. El ministro de Economía, Martín Guzmán, acusó a la oposición de "crear incertidumbres" y de entorpecer las negociaciones con el Fondo Monetario Internacional (FMI).

Lo hizo en paralelo a una comunicación entre el presidente Fernández y la directora gerente del organismo, Kristalina Georgieva. Ambos coincidieron en que la votación en Diputados suma "un problema inesperado" a las tratativas por la deuda.

Fernández quedó obligado a prorrogar por decreto el presupuesto de 2021. El clima de extrema tensión y desconfianza con la oposición alimenta las dudas sobre cómo hará un gobierno sin mayorías para conseguir el apoyo a un programa con el FMI que evite un default.

Los mercados reaccionaron de manera negativa, con caídas en los bonos soberanos y otra suba del riesgo país. **Página 14**



Máximo Kirchner pide la palabra para una intervención que dinamitó un frágil consenso alcanzado con la oposición

## Madrugada de tensión y desconfianza

**Laura Serra**  
LA NACION

El mensaje de la Casa Rosada llegó temprano por la mañana. Provenía de Olivos, del presidente Alberto Fernández. De inmediato, Sergio

Massa, presidente de la Cámara de Diputados, convocó a los principales jefes de bloque al pequeño salón que se ubica detrás del sitio de presidencia.

Habían pasado 18 horas de un debate agónico y la única certeza, has-

ta entonces, era que el oficialismo no había logrado, durante la larga madrugada, y pese a todos sus intentos, reunir la mayoría de los votos para aprobar el proyecto de presupuesto 2022, clave para el acuerdo con el FMI. Continúa en la página 16

**EL ESCENARIO**

Los números "involuntarios" del proyecto

**Diego Cabot**  
Página 18

## Alarma en Córdoba: hay 456 casos de ómicron

**COVID.** Aún no registró circulación comunitaria

**CÓRDOBA.** Los pacientes están en sus casas, con síntomas leves o asintomáticos, y la mayoría tiene el esquema de vacunación comple-

to. Ese es el panorama de la provincia, que ya tiene 456 infectados con ómicron por dos brotes, uno en la capital y otro en Jesús María y Colo-

nia Caroya por actividades sociales. Las autoridades sanitarias señalan que, a pesar de la cantidad de infectados, no hay circulación comunitaria. Pero no descartan más brotes y admiten que podría escalar hasta 2000 casos diarios en breve. Por eso, reiteran la importancia de cumplir con las normas sanitarias, vacunarse y hacer testeo ante síntomas compatibles con el coronavirus. **Página 30**

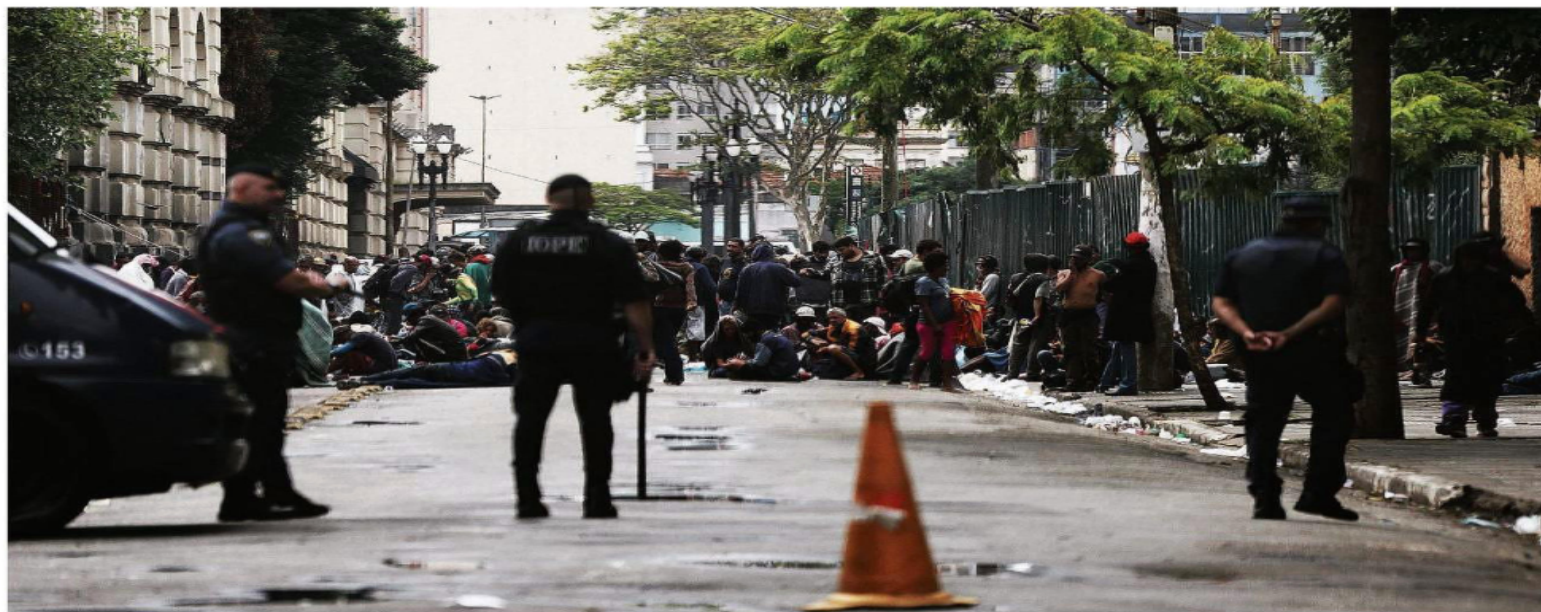
## Boris Johnson enfrenta un fin de año de pesadilla

**GRAN BRETAÑA.** Un revés electoral erosionó aún más su liderazgo. **Página 6**

## Alertan sobre nuevas formas de estafas virtuales

**RIESGOS.** Crecen los fraudes vinculados con falsas encomiendas. **Página 33**





Rivaldo Gomes/Folhapress

## AGLOMERAÇÃO NA CRACOLÂNDIA VOLTA A SUBIR E JÁ SUPERA NÍVEL PRÉ-PANDEMIA

Fluxo na alameda Cleveland, na região central da capital paulista; dados da prefeitura revelam aumento do número de usuários após esvaziamento durante a crise sanitária Cotidiano B1

### Mercado imobiliário A27

#### Tendências para 2022

Movimentos que ganharam força com a pandemia — como a valorização do espaço, uso de tecnologia em casa e preocupação com sustentabilidade — continuarão importantes.

### Esporte B7

Confederação de surfe corre risco de perder R\$ 3 milhões das loterias

### Ilustrada C1

Livro 'Autobiografia do Vermelho' faz da poesia espaço ideal do ensaio

### Ilustrada C4 e C5

Críticos da Folha indicam as 20 grandes obras lançadas neste ano

### Folhinha C10

Mapas acompanham Papai Noel na noite de Natal e mostram se ele está chegando



Carolina Daffara

## Congressistas restabelecem fundo eleitoral de R\$ 5,7 bi

Base governista derruba veto de Bolsonaro e autoriza valor recorde para 2022

Com aval do PL, partido de Jair Bolsonaro, e de siglas aliadas, o Congresso derrubou o veto presidencial ao fundo eleitoral de R\$ 5,7 bilhões em 2022. Na Câmara, a decisão uniu governistas, independentes e oposição. Depois, o Senado a ratificou.

Com a derrubada, o financiamento público de campanha será o maior da história — criado em 2017, o fundo ficou em torno de R\$ 2 bilhões nos anos eleitorais. Estudo em julho mostrou que o Brasil liderava esse tipo de gasto entre 25 nações.

O governo evitava apoiar a queda do veto, mas líderes partidários decidiram liberar a bancada para votar, em claro sinal a favor do fundo. Bolsonaro se beneficia da medida, pois o PL foi a 8ª legenda que mais recebeu verba de campanha em 2018.

O projeto de Orçamento precisará ser ajustado, já que a previsão para essa finalidade era de R\$ 2,1 bilhões. Aliados afirmam que agora Bolsonaro pode culpar o Congresso pelo valor recorde, esquivando-se de desgastes com apoiadores. Poder A10

## Bolsonaro mantém pior avaliação de seu governo, aponta Datafolha

Jair Bolsonaro (PL) mantém o pior nível de avaliação de seu governo ao fim do terceiro ano de mandato, com 53% dos brasileiros reprovando a forma com que ele administra o país. O dado foi aferido pelo Datafolha, que ouviu 3.666 pessoas, de 13 a 16 de dezembro. A margem de erro é de dois pontos.

De acordo com o instituto, somente 22% consideram o governo bom ou ótimo, enquanto 24% o classificam como regular. O presidente terá de reaver boa parte dos que votaram nele no 2º turno em 2018. O levantamento revela que 4 em 10 de seus apoiadores há três anos desertaram.

Na opinião de 65% dos entrevistados, Bolsonaro cuida mal do país, contra 30% que dizem pensar o contrário. Nunca acreditam no presidente 60% dos brasileiros, nível recorde. Poder A4, A6 e A7

Para 70%, Alckmin como vice não muda intenção de voto em Lula A6

### ATMOSFERA

São Paulo hoje



### Em SP, adultos com esquema primário da vacina são 100%

São Paulo chegou, em teoria, a 100% da população adulta com esquema primário completo, ou seja, com duas doses de um imunizante ou com a vacina de dose única. O número é uma estimativa, e SP é o primeiro estado brasileiro a alcançá-la. Saúde B3

### EDITORIAIS A2

Realidade paralela Sobre descrédito de Bolsonaro, segundo o Datafolha.

### Hélio Schwartsman Curto-circuito nas eleições do Chile

Após mais de 30 anos de alternância entre centro-esquerda e conservadores, ambos comprometidos com a democracia, o Chile se vê diante de um extremista de direita e de um esquerdista bem mais radical que os do campo progressista local. Opinião A2

Professor valorizado A respeito de proposta para remuneração em SP.

### Fux barra eventual soltura dos quatro condenados da Kiss

O presidente do STF, Luiz Fux, vetou a soltura dos 4 condenados pelo incêndio da boate Kiss. Ele acatou pedido do Ministério Público para impedir o efeito de eventual habeas corpus pelo TJ gaúcho. Advogado de defesa fala em "aberração jurídica". Cotidiano B2

### Marcas de azeite são suspensas após fiscalização

Mercado A24

### Último grande leilão do pré-sal rende R\$ 11 bi

Com pouca disputa, o governo concedeu duas áreas para exploração e produção de petróleo no pré-sal, o que rendeu arrecadação de R\$ 11 bilhões e deve gerar investimentos de R\$ 204 bilhões. O leilão é considerado a última grande oferta de blocos, diante do fim do estoque de áreas com potencial alto e pressões por transição energética. Mercado A17 e A19

**JHSF**  
apresenta

**BOA VISTA VILLAGE**

Com  
Grand Lodge  
Residences,  
de 220  
a 500 m<sup>2</sup>  
e 2 a 5  
suítes.

Veja nas páginas A8 e A9.





**Pese a que una ley habilita la fiscalización, el ente pone trabas al cumplimiento**

## Itaipú se resiste a permitir ser auditado por Contraloría

La binacional, lado paraguayo, apeló una orden judicial para ser inspeccionada en sus estados financieros, el balance analítico, el listado de planes, programas y proyectos.

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Salud liberó aplicación de 3ª dosis  
**No vacunados tienen 22 veces más riesgos de morir por Covid que las personas vacunadas**

PÁGINA 2

Compra con sinfín de irregularidades  
**Proveedora de Nenecho entregó saturómetros diferentes a los que exigía el contrato**

PÁGINA 21

Procesado por corrupción  
**La Fiscalía pidió 8 años de cárcel para el ex intendente Cárdenas**

PÁGINA 48



## Reciclados para la Navidad

**Santa Rita.** Comuna construyó árbol de Navidad con botellas de plástico recicladas. Plan pretende embellecer centro urbano con material similar.

PÁGINA 43



Aumenta salida de buses por Falcón  
**Abdo reclamó a Argentina reapertura de la frontera**

PÁGINAS 8 y 18

Emblema de la artesanía nacional  
**Poncho de 60 listas, objeto de un estudio académico**

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ANTOINE DUPONT,  
JUSQU'OU'IRA LE JEUNE PRODIGE  
FRANÇAIS ? PAGE 17

**GASTRONOMIE**  
LES SECRETS D'UN BON  
PLATEAU DE FRUITS DE MER  
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**ROYAUME-UNI**  
Johnson fragilisé  
par une claque  
électorale PAGE 8

**ALLEMAGNE**  
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Merz, la droite  
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## RELIGION

Les prêches  
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## DISTRIBUTION

À l'approche de Noël,  
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## FINANCES

La forte inflation  
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**CHAMPS LIBRES**

- Patrimoine immatériel de l'Unesco : la longue quête du graal
- La chronique de Mathieu Bock-Côté
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- Les tribunes d'Alain Finkielkraut et de Thierry Wolton

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**FIGARO OUI  
FIGARO NON**

Réponses à la question  
de vendredi :  
Lignes TGV :  
approuvez-vous  
l'ouverture à la  
concurrence européenne ?

**OUI 56% NON 44%**  
TOTAL DE VOTANTS : 151 412

Votez aujourd'hui  
sur [lefigaro.fr](http://lefigaro.fr)  
Pensez-vous que  
Christiane Taubira ferait  
une bonne candidate  
d'union pour la gauche ?

GEOFF CADDICK/AFP - MARIANNE BOUCRET

# Christiane Taubira trouble le jeu d'une gauche divisée

« J'envisage d'être candidate à l'élection présidentielle », a déclaré l'ancienne ministre dans une vidéo sibylline. Yannick Jadot et Jean-Luc Mélenchon ont accueilli froidement son annonce.

Constatant « l'impasse » dans laquelle se trouve la gauche dans la perspective de l'élection présidentielle, Christiane Taubira a annoncé ce vendredi « envisager » d'être candidate. Dans une vidéo de trois minutes diffusée sur YouTube, l'an-

cienne garde des Sceaux s'est cependant défendue de porter « une candidature de plus », assurant vouloir mettre « toutes ses forces dans les dernières chances de l'union ». Elle a donné rendez-vous à la mi-janvier pour voir si sa dé-

marche aura ou non enclenché une dynamique unitaire. Pour l'heure, cette sixième offre à gauche (hors extrême gauche) n'a pas provoqué le moindre électrochoc. Désigné par EELV, Yannick Jadot a invité à « être sérieuse dans cette

campagne » en rappelant que le scrutin n'était plus que dans quatre mois. Quant à Anne Hidalgo, elle s'en tient à sa proposition d'une primaire et a suggéré l'organisation d'un débat télévisé entre tous les prétendants de la gauche.

→ UNE FIGURE ADULÉE ET CONTROVERSÉE DE LA GAUCHE MORALE

→ LE CONTRE-POINT DE GUILLAUME TABARD : L'« IMPASSE », OU COMMENT NE PAS EN SORTIR PAGE 4 ET L'ÉDITORIAL



## Le débat sur la chasse s'invite dans la campagne présidentielle

Plusieurs accidents graves ont émaillé les premiers mois de la saison de chasse. Dans la foulée, les candidats à l'Élysée ont multiplié les déclarations autour de cette pratique qui réunit plus de 1 million de Français. PAGES 14 ET 15

## Appel à la vigilance face à la menace du variant Omicron

Les autorités craignent que l'amélioration de la situation épidémique en France, avec un nombre de nouveaux cas qui plafonne, soit de courte durée avec l'arrivée du nouveau variant. Le premier ministre, Jean Castex, a appelé les Français à se faire tester avant tout rassemblement, et a annoncé la transformation en passe vaccinal. Le délai avant la troisième dose de vaccin a été raccourci à quatre mois. PAGES 18 ET 19

**ÉDITORIAL** par Yves Thérard [yththread@lefigaro.fr](mailto:yththread@lefigaro.fr)

## Gauche, tourisme et vidéo

Si Christiane Taubira ne veut pas être « la candidate de plus » à gauche, elle est déjà la candidate de trop. Ainsi en est-il pour Yannick Jadot et sans aucun doute pour Jean-Luc Mélenchon. À défaut de briller dans les sondages, l'un et l'autre ont des arguments recevables à faire valoir. L'écologiste a la légitimité que lui confère son succès à la primaire des Verts. L'Insoumis est, quant à lui, le moins mal classé de son camp dans les études d'opinion. L'ancienne garde des Sceaux, dont la décision définitive pour concourir à la présidentielle sera connue mi-janvier, est donc déjà face à un mur du non. Seuls la socialiste Anne Hidalgo et le souverainiste Arnaud Montebourg pourraient accepter de débattre avec elle, mais pour quel résultat ? L'union à trois risque d'être une illusion. L'humiliation est au bout de l'impasse. Certes, la vidéo de trois minutes postée sur les réseaux sociaux par Christiane Taubira a pu réveiller la flamme de quelques nostalgiques du temps jadis. Quand l'égérie de la gauche morale faisait chanter les mots du mariage pour tous et revivait les grands auteurs à la tribune de l'Assemblée nationale.

Aujourd'hui encore, elle sait prendre des airs entendus pour dire sa volonté « d'agir sur le présent et d'inventer l'avenir ». Elle n'a pas son pareil pour faire ronfler les lieux communs et danser les idées vagues. Vendredi, dans la poésie des formules creuses, jaillissait moins la lumière de lendemains meilleurs que l'inconsistance d'un discours usé, mille fois répété et rabâché. Pour se redresser, la gauche n'a pas besoin de donner des leçons de morale, mais de présenter des propositions sonnantes et pertinentes à l'oreille de l'électorat populaire qui l'a désertée.

Christiane Taubira n'a pas son pareil pour faire danser les idées vagues

Un petit tour et puis s'en va... Christiane Taubira sera-t-elle autre chose qu'une étoile filante dans la campagne, aussi éphémère qu'un effet de manches ? Il y a peu de chances tant sa sortie était improvisée, sans queue ni tête, relevant davantage du tourisme politique que de l'expression de convictions. ■

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# No 10 party inquiry boss quits – over his own party

Leading civil servant allegedly hosted event during lockdown

Embarrassment for Downing Street as scandal deepens

**Peter Walker**  
**Aubrey Allegretti**

The country's leading civil servant has stepped down from his role investigating alleged lockdown-breaking parties inside Downing Street after claims emerged he had hosted an event himself over the same period.

Downing Street said Simon Case had removed himself from the process "to ensure the ongoing investigation retains public confidence". He will be replaced by the veteran civil servant Sue Gray, second permanent secretary at the communities

and levelling up department. "She will ascertain the facts and present her findings to the prime minister," the statement added, without putting a timeframe on the process.

A report by Case into an alleged party inside No 10 on 18 December last year, when all indoor social mixing was banned, plus a series of other claimed events, had been due to be published as early as this week.

But the plans were plunged into doubt after a series of sources alleged a Christmas event for staff took place in Case's office on 17 December, the day before the supposed Downing Street party.

Some outlets described staff from both the Cabinet Office and other departments mingling in Case's office and an outside room on 17 December last year, the day before a No 10 party he has been investigating. The occasion is said to have included drinks, snacks and Christmas decorations.

But a Cabinet Office statement said staff in Case's private office took part in "a virtual quiz" that date. It said: "A small number of them, who had been working in the office throughout the pandemic and on duty that day, took part from their desks, while the rest of the team were virtual."

"The cabinet secretary played no part in the event, but walked through the team's office on the way to his own office. No outside guests or other staff were invited or present."

"This lasted for an hour and drinks and snacks were bought by those attending. He also spoke briefly to staff in the office before leaving."

The disclosures are another significant embarrassment for Downing Street, which has been engulfed by a series of scandals in recent weeks, as well as the embarrassment of losing the North

## Johnson in 'last-chance saloon'

**Heather Stewart**  
**Rowena Mason**  
**Aubrey Allegretti**

Boris Johnson is "on notice," and could be gone within a year unless he cleans up his act and shakes up his No 10 operation, senior Tories are warning, after the Liberal Democrats scored an extraordinary victory in the North Shropshire by-election.

The Conservative party chair, Oliver Dowden, conceded yesterday that voters had wanted to give the government a "kicking," because they were "fed up" with "sleaze allegations".

But Johnson himself did not appear repentant about the accusations of parties in No 10 during lockdown or the scandal over the attempt to water down the MPs' standards system that led to the North Shropshire by-election.

In an interview, the prime minister said he took responsibility for the loss, but also blamed the media and public for focusing too much on "politics and politicians" rather than real issues.

The veteran backbencher Roger Gale said Johnson was now in "last orders time" and warned that "one more strike and he's out", while Ruth Davidson, the



**'We made it clear the person in charge should be uncompromised ... These revelations put that into question'**

**Angela Rayner**  
Labour deputy leader

◀ Johnson, pictured yesterday, faces embarrassment about Simon Case on top of a crushing by-election defeat PHOTOGRAPH: LEON NEAL/GETTY IMAGES

9 ➔

6 ➔