

## What's News

## Business &amp; Finance

Existing-home sales, which rose in November to the highest seasonally adjusted annual rate since January, are on track for their strongest year since 2006 as low mortgage rates and a robust job market drive up demand. **A1**

◆ Amazon's cloud-computing unit suffered a new outage, at least its third this month, spurring disruptions at other companies. **B1**

◆ Amazon said all workers at its U.S. warehouses will have to wear masks again, a move prompted by the spread of the Omicron variant. **B1**

◆ U.S. stocks rose, with the S&P 500, Dow and Nasdaq advancing 1%, 0.7% and 1.2%, respectively. **B9**

◆ TikTok was the world's most visited internet site in 2021, surpassing last year's leader, Alphabet's Google, according to Cloudflare. **B1**

◆ The FAA proposed fixes to prevent engine coverings from breaking apart on certain Boeing 777 aircraft, as they did in a series of incidents. **B3**

◆ Tencent is shedding most of its stake in JD.com, saying that the e-commerce company has grown to the point where it no longer requires Tencent's financial backing. **B4**

◆ China Evergrande said the panel helping steer its massive restructuring is deploying extensive resources to help contain risks and will engage with creditors. **B9**

◆ Musk sold more Tesla stock, bringing the total value of his share sales to more than \$15 billion since the billionaire last month began a string of such transactions. **B9**

## World-Wide

◆ People infected with the Omicron variant of coronavirus are at markedly lower risk of hospitalization than those who contracted earlier versions of the virus, new data from Scotland and South Africa suggest. **A1**

◆ The FDA cleared use of a Covid-19 pill from Pfizer, the first drug that newly infected patients can now take at home to try to ward off serious illness. **A1**

◆ The Supreme Court said it would hold a Jan. 7 special hearing on whether the Biden administration can enforce Covid-19 vaccine rules for large private employers and for many healthcare workers. **A3**

◆ The House panel investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol requested a meeting and information from GOP Rep. Jim Jordan, a close ally of Trump. **A4**

◆ Biden said he is eager to run for reelection against Trump in 2024, while expressing regret that he didn't act more quickly to purchase at-home Covid-19 tests to distribute to the public. **A4**

◆ The president extended the pause on student-loan payments that had been scheduled to expire at the end of January by another 90 days, to May 1, 2022. **A3**

◆ The EU outlined its plans for implementing a global minimum-tax rate on corporate profits in 2023. **A10**

◆ Biden's national security adviser met with Israel's prime minister as the U.S. and Israel sought to present a more united front on Iran's nuclear program. **A11**

CONTENTS Opinion.....A17-19  
Arts in Review.....A15  
Business News.....B35  
Capital Account.....A2  
Crossword.....A16  
Heard on Street.....B9  
Markets.....B9

© 2021 Dow Jones & Company, Inc.  
All Rights Reserved

## Variant Sparks Surge in Testing Across U.S.

New York



Bethesda, Md.



Los Angeles



CHECK-IN: Americans lined up at Covid-19 testing locations around the country Wednesday, including, from top, a pop-up testing site in New York City; a drive-through site in Bethesda, Md.; and a clinic for travelers at Los Angeles International Airport.

## Home Sales Headed for Best Year Since 2006

By NICOLE FRIEDMAN

Existing-home sales, which rose in November to the highest seasonally adjusted annual rate since January, are on track for their strongest year since 2006 as low mortgage interest rates and a robust job market drive up demand.

Sales of previously owned homes rose 1.9% in November, climbing for the third straight month, the National Association of Realtors said Wednesday.

The booming housing market comes against a backdrop of an economy that is growing but facing pressure from high inflation and worries about the Omicron variant of the coronavirus. The new fast-spreading variant could crimp consumer spending during the holiday shopping season, particularly outlays on in-person services like travel, entertainment and dining out.

Consumer confidence rose in December from November but remains well below levels seen in the early summer, the Conference Board, a private research group, said Wednesday. The survey may not fully reflect the recent rise in cases driven by the Omicron variant, but it showed that as of earlier this month, consumers' worries about rising prices and the pandemic had abated slightly.

The Commerce Department said Wednesday that the economy grew a bit faster in the third quarter than previously estimated. U.S. gross domestic

Please turn to page A2

## Nation's January Goal: Stay Open

Businesses, schools, hospitals and governments are preparing for a new year with a sense of déjà vu, as the spread of Covid-19's Omicron variant

By Chip Cutter, Douglas Belkin and Ruth Simon

brings a familiar challenge: how best to navigate another surge. This time, they're hopeful they can stay open and operating.

In the short term, many big employers have delayed plans to reopen their offices in January.

Some universities and schools in the U.S. have switched, temporarily, to remote instruction. Professional sports leagues have canceled games. Governments in Europe and Asia are imposing travel restrictions. And major events in January, such as the gathering of world leaders and chief executives in Davos, Switzerland, are being put off.

Still, the leaders at many of these organizations say they have learned much about the coronavirus and that with vaccines available, their goal is to find ways in 2022 to make life

more normal. They realize the world won't quickly return to pre-Covid routines, but they also don't want a repeat of 2020 and 2021—when many businesses closed, offices were empty and schools went remote.

"It really hit home to me how easy it is to unknowingly spread this horrible disease, and how easy it is to defend against it," Gary Kelly, the chief executive of Southwest Airlines Co., said in a message to staff on Monday. Days earlier he had disclosed testing positive for Covid, despite being triple vac-

inated and testing negative when he traveled to testify before Congress.

"If you're unvaccinated, you're just at risk," he said. "If you're vaccinated with a booster, your risk is vastly reduced. Yes, I got the infection, but I had very mild symptoms."

How governments and especially local schools respond to the latest surge could upend plans set by business leaders. While parts of Europe have recently reimposed pandemic-related restrictions, U.S. officials

Please turn to page A6

## Far From His Rented Digs, Elon Musk Stays in a Mansion

Tesla CEO, who says he lives in a \$50,000 house, has also been at friend's estate

By ROB COPELAND

AUSTIN, Texas—When Time magazine last week named Elon Musk "Person of the Year," it painted a spartan picture of his living arrangements. "The richest man in the world does not own a house," the piece began.

The magazine was repeating what has become a core element of Mr. Musk's public persona. Since last year, when the billionaire Tesla Inc. and SpaceX CEO announced he was "selling almost all physical possessions" in an effort to simplify his life, Mr. Musk has

repeatedly portrayed himself as a man of modest tastes.

"My primary home is literally a 50K house in Boca Chica/Starbase that I rent from SpaceX," he tweeted this June, referring to a Texas town near the Mexican border near SpaceX's rocket-launch facility. "It's kinda awesome though."

What Mr. Musk hasn't said, and what few people know, is that for roughly a year he has also been living in a waterfront estate in Austin owned by a

rich friend nicknamed "Kenny," people familiar with the matter say—a home so extravagant

Please turn to page A12



Elon Musk

## Who Pays Highest Hospital Prices

A type of network sometimes used in limited-benefits plans can draw big charges

By ANNA WILDE MATHEWS AND TOM MCGINTY

Newly public data show that hospital prices vary in unpredictable ways that seem out of patients' control. A Wall Street Journal analysis of health coverage that leaves patients with especially high bills.

Hospitals' highest rates often aren't for a specific insurance plan, but rather a type of healthcare provider network that is rented out to other companies. In the complex puzzle of healthcare, rental networks are sometimes used to underpin plans that are barely insurance at

all, with limited benefits and capped payouts for care, usually at lower premiums than standard insurance plans.

The rates for some of the biggest rental networks are consistently among the highest that hospitals negotiate, the Journal has found. And patients with bare-bones plans that rely on them are often left with a double hit of meager coverage and high prices.

Tenney Colon signed up one such plan in 2019 in her search for an affordable option that would cover care at Baptist Health South Florida. She knew the plan, from

Please turn to page A12



## Cashing in

Executive share sales need tougher controls — BROOKE MASTERS, PAGE 15

## Afghanistan's agony

Will the US help the Taliban stave off famine? — BIG READ, PAGE 13



## Meta bling

Luxury brands rush to join craze for NFTs — INSIDE BUSINESS, PAGE 5

## Russia threat Draghi candid over Ukraine

Italian prime minister Mario Draghi addresses a press conference in Rome yesterday at which he said Europe had few means to deter Moscow from taking military action against Ukraine.

President Vladimir Putin has stoked fears of a Russian invasion, warning of "military-technical measures" against Nato "aggression". Sergei Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, said yesterday that talks with the US on Moscow's demands would start early next year.

Draghi noted the EU had no "armies". Sanctions would be the only deterrent but it was "not the right moment" for Europe to give up Russian gas.

The former ECB president also hinted his term as premier might be ending.

Report page 2



ANSA/NTV via Getty Images

# Hole in Turkish reserves suggests 'backdoor' bid to prop up currency

◆ Data signal up to \$7bn spent ◆ No official intervention ◆ Erdogan pushes savings plans

ADAM SAMSON  
AND LAURA PITEL — LONDON  
AYLA JEAN YACKLEY — ISTANBUL

Turkey's foreign currency reserves have tumbled by billions of dollars since the start of the week, suggesting that aggressive interventions have aided the lira's bounce back from record lows.

The lira has fallen significantly following the latest series of interest rate cuts, but it turned sharply higher on Tuesday after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan unveiled a savings scheme aimed at incentivising Turks to hold lira deposits.

At the same time, the country's net foreign assets fell by \$5.9bn in the first two days of this week to minus \$5.1bn, according to Financial Times calculations based on central bank data.

The Turkish central bank has not

announced any official interventions this week and declined to comment on whether it had sold dollars to prop up the lira in recent days. But the erosion of its foreign assets suggests that this has played a big role in the lira's recovery.

Ugur Gurses, a former central bank official, said the 50 per cent rally in the currency from Monday's nadir was explained at least in part by a large "backdoor intervention".

A London-based analyst, who asked not to be named, said he calculated an intervention of \$6.9bn on the same days. Estimates range from \$5.5bn to \$7bn. Turkish bankers reported a "concerted and aggressive effort" to make Erdogan's scheme look good, he said.

The lira hit a record low of 18.4 to the dollar on Monday, down 60 per cent

over the year, but rebounded after Ankara announced a pair of schemes, backed by the Treasury and the central bank, to protect lira savings and underpin the currency by indexing them to foreign currency.

Erdogan declared yesterday: "We are battling against the oppression of our people with inflation and interest."

Analysts estimate that the moves at the start of the week bring total interventions by the central bank this month to between \$15bn and \$17bn.

The scale is likely to reignite alarm among analysts about the health of Turkey's foreign currency reserves.

The bank's war chest had recovered this year after plummeting to a 20-year low following a previous attempt to defend the lira while cutting interest



Analysts warned that the savings schemes risk further fuelling already sky-high inflation, which stood at an official rate of 21 per cent in November.

rates burnt through more than \$100bn. Rating agency Fitch, which this month changed its outlook on Turkey to "negative", voiced concern at an announcement at the start of December that the central bank would resume interventions to support the lira. It warned the policy "risks further undermining the already weak central bank international reserves composition".

The concerns about Turkey's reserves came as analysts warned that the new savings schemes announced by the president risk further fuelling the country's already sky-high inflation, which stood at an official rate of 21 per cent in November.

Additional reporting by Jonathan Wheatley in London  
Lex page 16

### Briefing

► **Apple fails to block forced labour vote**  
Wall Street watchdogs have rejected the technology group's bid to block investor votes on forced labour, workplace harassment and App Store content from the annual meeting expected next year. — PAGE 6

► **Omicron cases less likely to be serious**  
Data from Denmark and South Africa have shown a lower share of those infected are likely to need hospital treatment compared with the Delta strain. — PAGE 4; AZ TARGETS OMICRON, PAGE 5; FT VIEW, PAGE 14

► **Xi silent on Lam's future as pair meet**  
China's president has praised Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam for implementing a security law last year, but failed to signal whether she would get a new term. — PAGE 4; FT VIEW, PAGE 14

► **Downgrade record for China developers**  
Property groups have been hit by record numbers of downgrades from credit rating agencies this year as Evergrande's collapse fuelled concerns for the health of the whole Chinese economy. — PAGE 8

► **Olympics bill twice what Tokyo expected**  
The cost of hosting the 2020 event, postponed by the pandemic and held without spectators, has come in at \$12.7bn. Big Games-related expenses such as road renovations are not included. — PAGE 4

► **Credit Suisse fires Greensill managers**  
The Swiss bank has fired portfolio manager Lukas Haas and Luc Mathys, head of fixed income at Credit Suisse Asset Management, who oversaw the \$10bn suite of funds that blew up in March. — PAGE 5

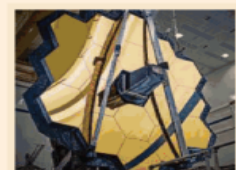
► **UK and EU strike fishing deal for 2022**  
London and Brussels have struck a deal for next year, although a separate dispute over French access to UK waters continues. Campaigners fear a pledge to end overfishing has been broken. — PAGE 2

### Datawatch

#### Winter warmers



Killerton in Devon experienced the warmest UK Christmas Day on record, at 15.6°C, in 1920. But three of the top five warmest occurred over the past 10 years. The coldest, at minus 18.2°C, was recorded in the Scottish Highlands in 2010.



### Telescope on mission to glimpse the first stars

The Christmas present astronomers around the world are hoping for is the safe ascent of man's most ambitious telescope. The \$10bn James Webb Space Telescope, successor to the Hubble, will launch from Kourou, in French Guiana, on Christmas Day. It will carry the hope of scientists seeing deeper into space than before and taking images of the first stars and galaxies that formed, 200m years after the Big Bang, in the cosmic dawn.

Cosmic dawn — PAGE 4

## Brussels' legal assault against Poland ratchets up battle over EU principles

SAM FLEMING — BRUSSELS  
JAMES SHOTTER — WARSAW

Brussels is launching legal action against Warsaw over rulings made by Poland's top court in an escalation of a struggle between the two sides over the fundamental legal bonds that hold the EU together.

The European Commission said it was taking the action because of "serious concerns" regarding rulings by the Polish constitutional tribunal in July and October. The decisions "expressly" challenged the primacy of EU law, it said. Poland has two months to respond to the complaint.

The commission also said it had "serious doubts about the independence and impartiality" of the constitutional tribunal. The infringement procedure is the latest in a succession of legal steps by the

commission as it contests changes to Poland's judicial system that the ruling Law and justice party has said were necessary to increase efficiency.

Brussels can bring infringement procedures against member states when they do not respect or fully implement EU laws. The cases can ultimately be brought before the European Court of Justice and result in financial penalties.

The commission has been engaged in a five-year struggle with Warsaw over rule of law concerns related to judicial reforms, including an attempt to purge the Supreme Court and the introduction of a disciplinary regime that allows judges to be punished for the content of their rulings. The EU's top court has ruled that several elements of Poland's overhaul are incompatible with EU law.

The commission said the rulings by the tribunal were a breach of "general

principles of autonomy, primacy, effectiveness and uniform application of Union law and the binding effect of rulings of the Court of Justice", adding that they also breached rights to effective judicial protection in the EU.

Polish prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki said Brussels misunderstood the powers it had been granted. "More and more EU states realise that there must be a limit somewhere to these competences," he told a press conference. "The development of bureaucratic centralism in Brussels is continuing and unfortunately it needs to be blocked."

The stand-off between Brussels and Warsaw has affected Poland's bid for its share of the EU's €800bn Next Generation recovery fund, which the commission said this month would be delayed into the new year.

### Subscribe In print and online

www.ft.com/subscribe  
Tel: 1 800 628 9086  
For the latest news go to  
www.ft.com

© THE FINANCIAL TIMES LTD 2021  
No: 40,898 ★

Printed in London, Liverpool, Glasgow, Dublin,  
Frankfurt, Milan, Madrid, New York, Chicago, San  
Francisco, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore, Seoul,  
Osaka



World Markets									
STOCK MARKETS					CURRENCIES				
	Dec 22	prev	%chg		Dec 22	prev	%chg	Dec 22	prev
S&P 500	4884.10	4849.23	0.75	\$ per £	1.132	1.126	0.756	US Gov 10 yr	147.06
Nasdaq Composite	15485.25	15341.09	0.94	£ per €	1.335	1.323	0.915	UK Gov 10 yr	0.81
Dow Jones Ind	35655.76	35492.70	0.46	¥ per €	0.048	0.051	0.588	Ger Gov 10 yr	-0.30
FTSE 100	1856.42	1840.42	0.87	₹ per €	114.315	114.085	0.202	Japan Gov 10 yr	112.83
Euro Stoxx 50	4209.78	4174.99	0.83	₹ per \$	152.571	150.962	1.066	US Gov 30 yr	119.50
FTSE 250	7341.86	7297.41	0.61	S\$ per €	1.043	1.042	0.100	Ger Gov 30 yr	-0.70
FTSE All-Share	4173.94	4144.08	0.70	€ per \$	0.883	0.888	-0.568		
CAC 40	7951.67	7894.99	1.24						
Nikkei 225	15933.47	15647.44	0.95						
Hang Seng	23642.21	23517.59	0.51						
MSCI World	3152.31	3100.50	1.62						
MSCI EM	1203.06	1190.08	1.14						
MSCI ACWI	736.41	724.73	1.61						

COMMODITIES					INTEREST RATES				
	Dec 22	prev	%chg			price	yield	chg	
Oil WTI	72.20	71.12	1.52	Feed Feds Eff		0.09	0.09	0.00	
Oil Brent	74.83	73.80	1.35	US 3m Bill		0.07	0.07	0.00	
Gold	1793.75	1796.30	-0.14	Euro Libor 3m		-0.60	-0.61	0.01	
				UK 3m		0.23	0.24	-0.01	

Prices are latest for option. Data provided by Morningstar

A Nikkei Company

## BOVET

1822  
Engineering Brilliance

Awarded "Hyper GT of the Year" - Top Gear

### Battista Tourbillon

Unique Automobili Pininfarina Design. Battista Hyper GT Details Throughout. Brand-New Patented Double-Sided Flying Tourbillon Movement. 10-day Power Reserve with Patented Spherical Rewinding System. Double-Sided Box Sapphire Crystal. Asymmetrical Dial. Limited to 30 Pieces in Titanium.

bovet.com



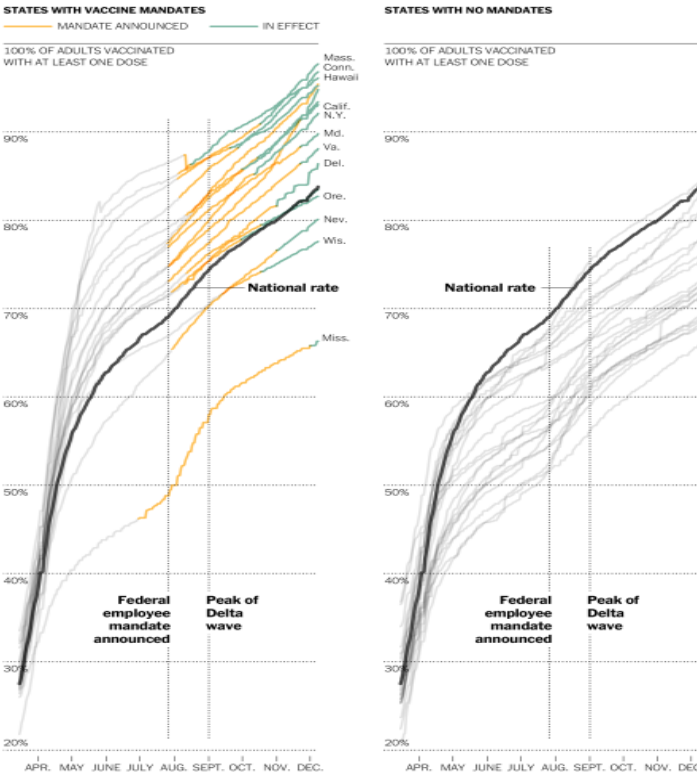
## Builders Block Push to Bolster Tornado Safety

'It Really Does Kind of  
Boil Down to Money'

By CHRISTOPHER FLAVELLE  
WASHINGTON — After a tornado killed 162 people in Joplin, Mo., safety experts and cement manufacturers proposed a way to save lives: Require most new apartments, commercial structures and other large buildings in tornado-prone areas to have safe rooms — concrete boxes where people can shelter, even if the building around them is torn to shreds.  
Safe rooms provide "near-absolute protection" during a tornado, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. They can cost as little as \$15,000 for a small shelter in a commercial building, and possibly could have saved the six workers who died when a tornado destroyed the Amazon warehouse in Edwardsville, Ill., two weeks ago.  
But the 2012 proposal was blocked by a little-known organization that sets the building codes widely used by states and cities around the country. That group, the International Code Council, is made up of state and local code officials from around the country. Before it could vote, the proposal was scrapped by a council committee made up of building industry representatives and local code officials. The committee found the 2012 safe room proposal to be "overly restrictive and contained several technical flaws."  
Who experts say the technology and design standards exist to better protect people and buildings from tornadoes, attempts to incorporate those designs into building codes have repeatedly been blocked or curtailed by the building industry, according to public documents and people involved in efforts to tighten the model codes.  
"It really does kind of boil down to money," said Jason Thompson, vice president of engineering at the National Concrete Masonry Association and one of the proponents of the 2012 change. "There's just different groups out there that want to keep the cost of construction as low as possible."  
The stakes are growing. Tornadoes, long associated with Oklahoma, Kansas and other sparsely populated Plains states, appear to be shifting eastward, occurring more frequently in states like Kentucky and Tennessee, according to Victor Gentili, a professor in the department of geographic and atmospheric sciences at Northern Illinois University.  
Although scientists lack the data to clearly connect tornadoes with climate change, a warming  
Continued on Page A19

## States With Mandates Are Ahead on Vaccinations

At least 12 million workers are covered by a vaccine mandate, according to a Times survey of six states and the 100 largest cities. Many of those areas already had relatively high vaccination rates. Page A12.



## National Guard Welcome in an Unfamiliar Role

By ANDREW JACOBS  
NEW HOPE, Minn. — Pfc. Shina Vang and his fellow soldiers in the Minnesota National Guard have had an exceptionally busy year. They helped process Afghan refugees fleeing Kabul for the United States, provided security at American military bases across the Horn of Africa and stood sentinel in Washington following the Jan. 6 attacks on the U.S. Capitol.

Closer to home, they have been deployed across Minnesota during the civil unrest prompted by the police killings of George Floyd in Minneapolis and Daunte Wright in nearby Brooklyn Center.  
But none of those experiences prepared Private Vang and his fellow Guard members for their latest deployment: collecting bedpans, clipping toenails and feeding residents at North Ridge Health and Rehab, a sprawling

nursing home in suburban Minneapolis that is the largest in the state.  
"I've had protesters throw apples and water bottles at me, but that doesn't compare to the challenge of giving someone a bed bath," Private Vang said.  
Over the past two weeks, 30 Guard members have been working as certified nursing assistants at North Ridge, which has been so badly hobbled by an exodus of em-

## Omicron Is Largely Found To Cause Milder Sickness

Despite Biden's Vow,  
Tests Weeks Away

Spread Is Still Likely  
to Strain Hospitals

By MICHAEL D. SHEAR and SHERYL GAY STOLBERG  
WASHINGTON — President Biden promised Americans he is making 500 million coronavirus tests available free of charge, but help is at least weeks away — if not longer — for anxious Americans facing a surge of new virus cases.  
Mr. Biden's administration has not yet signed a contract to buy the tests, and the website to order them will not be up until January. Officials have not said how many tests people will be able to order or how quickly they will be shipped once they begin to be available next month. Manufacturers say they are already producing tests as fast as they can.  
As a candidate, Mr. Biden excoriated the lack of testing during the Trump administration, saying in March 2020 that "the administration's failure on testing is colossal, and it's a failure of planning, leadership and execution." But the Omicron variant caught the White House off guard, as the president has acknowledged, and cases have far outstripped the government's ability to make tests available.

The president's pledge of a half-billion tests on Tuesday was the centerpiece of a newly aggressive testing effort, announced just days before Christmas, as Americans search for the hard-to-find tests so they know whether they are infected during the holiday season.  
"That's not a plan — it's a hope," said Jennifer Nuzzo, an epidemiologist at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, which tracks testing trends. "If those tests came in January and February, that could have an impact, but if they are spread out over 10 to 12 months, I'm not sure what kind of impact it is going to have."

Contracts to purchase tests could be finalized as soon as next week, officials said.  
Whether testing manufacturers can now ramp up to produce an extra 500 million at-home tests — and how soon — is unclear. John M. Koval, a spokesman for Abbott Laboratories, a major manufacturer of rapid at-home antigen tests, said in an email message that the company is seeing "unprecedented demand" for its  
Continued on Page A18

By CARL ZIMMER and EMILY ANTHES  
Three separate teams of scientists on two continents have found that Omicron infections more often result in mild illness than earlier variants of the coronavirus, offering hope that the current surge may not be quite as catastrophic as feared despite skyrocketing caseloads.  
The researchers examined Omicron's course through populations in South Africa, Scotland and England. The results in each setting, while still preliminary, all suggested that the variant was less likely to send people to hospitals.  
"Given that this is everywhere and given that it's going to be so

transmissible, anything that would lower severity is going to be better," said Natalie Dean, a biostatistician at Emory University in Atlanta.  
Since the discovery of the Omicron variant in southern Africa in November, scientists have struggled to learn whether it causes more severe illness compared with other variants — and if so, in whom.  
The new research suggests that the variant may have biological features that make it somewhat less dangerous than Delta, the variant that dominated the world from summer till now.  
But Omicron's lowered risk of hospitalization in all three countries also appears to be due in large part to immunity in those populations. Many of the infected already had protection against severe disease, either because of  
Continued on Page A6

transmissible, anything that would lower severity is going to be better," said Natalie Dean, a biostatistician at Emory University in Atlanta.  
Since the discovery of the Omicron variant in southern Africa in November, scientists have struggled to learn whether it causes more severe illness compared with other variants — and if so, in whom.  
The new research suggests that the variant may have biological features that make it somewhat less dangerous than Delta, the variant that dominated the world from summer till now.  
But Omicron's lowered risk of hospitalization in all three countries also appears to be due in large part to immunity in those populations. Many of the infected already had protection against severe disease, either because of  
Continued on Page A6

**TESTING TROUBLES** Long lines, shortages and misinformation are complicating a crucial strategy to control the coronavirus. PAGE A17  
**BALANCING RISKS** Gov. Kathy Hochul of New York said the state intended to avoid shutdowns, despite record numbers of cases. PAGE A16

## F.B.I. Sent Surveillance Teams To Infiltrate Portland Protesters

This article is by Mike Baker, Sergio Olmos and Adam Goldman.  
PORTLAND, Ore. — In the hours after President Biden's inauguration this year, protesters marched once again through the streets of Portland, sending a message that putting a Democrat in the White House would not resolve their problems with a system of policing and corporate wealth that they saw as fundamentally unfair.  
"No cops, no prisons, total abolition," they chanted. Some of the activists, dressed in the trademark uniform of solid black cloth-

ing and masks that often signals a readiness to make trouble without being readily identifiable, smashed windows at the local Democratic Party headquarters.  
The event — like others that had consumed the city since the murder of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis in 2020 — included a variety of anarchists, antifascists, communists and racial justice activists. But there were others mingling in the crowd that day: plainclothes agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.  
The F.B.I. set up extensive sur-

Continued on Page A14

## Brutality and Persecution Drive India's Christians Underground



Christians, wary of Hindu extremists' attacks, gathered in secret.

By JEFFREY GETTMAN and SUHASINI RAJ  
INDORE, India — The Christians were mid-hymn when the mob kicked in the door.  
A swarm of men dressed in saffron poured inside. They jumped on stage and shouted Hindu supremacist slogans. They punched pastors in the head. They threw women to the ground, sending terrified children scuttling under their chairs.  
"They kept beating us, pulling out hair," said Manish David, one of the pastors who was assaulted. "They yelled: 'What are you doing here? What songs are you singing? What are you trying to do?'"

The attack unfolded on the morning of Jan. 26 at the Satprakashan Sanchar Kendra Christian center in the city of Indore. The police soon arrived, but the officers did not touch the aggressors. Instead, they arrested and jailed the pastors and other church elders, who were still dizzy from getting punched in the head. The Christians were charged with breaking a newly enforced law that targets religious conversions, one that mirrors at least a dozen other measures across the country that have prompted a surge in mob violence against Indian Christians.  
Pastor David was not converted.  
Continued on Page A10

INTERNATIONAL A4-11

**Rules Eased for Afghan Aid**  
The U.S. Treasury Department and the United Nations moved to exempt aid groups from strict sanctions meant to pressure the Taliban. PAGE A8

NATIONAL A12-19

**College Mental Health Crisis**  
After almost two years of remote schooling, restricted gatherings and constant testing, many students are isolated and depressed. PAGE A17

BUSINESS B1-6

**Court Speeds Mandate Cases**  
The Supreme Court will hold a special hearing on Jan. 7 on two Biden administration initiatives that seek to address Covid in the workplace. PAGE B1

ARTS C1-8

**Life After 'Game of Thrones'**  
The series consumed the actor Peter Dinklage for nearly 10 years, but now he is embracing love in the movie musical "Cyrano." The Projectionist. PAGE C1

OPINION A20-21

**Gail Collins** PAGE A21



Regent  
SEVEN SEAS CRUISES  
AN UNRIVALED EXPERIENCE™

UNRIVALED SPACE AT SEA™  
WITH EVERY LUXURY INCLUDED

VISIT RSSC.COM OR CALL 1.844.473.4368



## First pill to treat COVID authorized

FDA clears Pfizer drug for use against early infections. Initial supplies will be scarce.

BY MATTHEW PERRONE

WASHINGTON — U.S. health regulators on Wednesday authorized the first pill against COVID-19, a Pfizer drug that Americans will be able to take at home to head off the worst effects of the coronavirus.

The long-awaited milestone comes as U.S. cases, hospitalizations and deaths are all rising and health officials warn of a tsunami of new infections from the Omicron variant that could overwhelm hospitals.

The drug, Paxlovid, is a faster, cheaper way to treat early coronavirus infections, though initial supplies will be extremely limited. All of the previously authorized drugs for COVID-19 require an IV or an injection.

An antiviral pill from Merck is also expected to win authorization soon. But Pfizer's drug is all but certain to be the preferred option because of its mild side effects and superior effectiveness, including a nearly 90% reduction in hospitalizations and deaths among patients most likely to get severe disease.

"The efficacy is high, the side effects are low and it's oral. It checks all the boxes," said Dr. Gregory Poland of the Mayo Clinic. "You're looking at a 90% decreased risk of hospitalization and death in a high-risk group — that's stunning."

The Food and Drug Administration authorized Pfizer's drug for adults and children ages 12 and older with a positive coronavirus test and early COVID-19 symptoms who face the highest risks of hospitalization. That includes older people and those with conditions such as obesity and heart disease. Children eligible for the drug must weigh at least 88 pounds.

The pills from Pfizer and Merck are expected to be effective against Omicron because they don't target the spike protein where most of the variant's worrisome mutations reside.

Pfizer currently has 180,000 treatment courses available worldwide, with roughly 60,000 to 70,000 allocated to the U.S. Federal health officials are expected to ration early shipments to the hardest-hit parts of the country. Pfizer said the small supply is due to the manufacturing time — about nine months. The company says it can halve production time next year.

The U.S. government has agreed to purchase enough Paxlovid to treat 10 million people. Pfizer says it's on track to produce 80 million courses globally next year, under contracts with Britain, Australia and other nations.

Health experts agree that vaccination remains the best way to protect against COVID-19. But with roughly 40 million American adults still unvaccinated, effective drugs will be crucial to blunting the current and future waves of infection.

The U.S. is reporting more than 100,000 new infections daily, and federal officials warn that the Omicron variant could send case counts soaring. Omicron has already whipped across the country to become the [See Pill, A7]

### Justices to decide on vaccine orders

A hearing is set for Jan. 7 on Biden's mandates for health workers and large employers. **NATION, A4**



**NURSE ERGEE ALMALEZ** administers a rapid coronavirus test to Terri Black at John Wayne Airport on Tuesday. The Omicron variant now constitutes 73% of the nation's virus cases, up from 13% a week before. **ALLEN J. SCHABEN** Los Angeles Times

## As cases rise, 'be vigilant'



**CALIFORNIA'S** surge in overall virus cases, as well as cases of the Omicron variant, is likely tied to holiday gatherings. Above, a shopper in Inglewood on Monday. **JAE C. HONG** Associated Press

The Omicron variant sweeps across U.S. and California, but there are hints of optimism.

BY RONG-GONG LIN II AND LUKE MONEY

**SAN FRANCISCO** — California's winter COVID-19 surge intensified Wednesday, with new overall coronavirus cases likely tied to holiday gatherings spiking up, along with confirmed cases of the Omicron strain, which officials in some parts of the state expect will become dominant within weeks and bring new challenges to the healthcare system.

Because Omicron is so easily transmissible, it is spreading with unprecedented speed. But there are some hints of optimism among early data from England, Scotland, Denmark and South Africa, which suggest that an Omicron infection resulted in a 40% to 70% reduced need for hospitalization compared with the Delta variant. There's also no evidence that people who are vaccinated and have received a booster shot are getting severely ill with Omicron, unless they have a significantly weakened immune system.

That raises the possibility that this winter in the [See Omicron, A6]

## How much more can we take?

Omicron complicated hopes for recovery and healing in 2021

BY THOMAS CURWEN

With numbers confirming a fifth wave of COVID-19 led by the Omicron variant, the lights of the holiday season have grown suddenly dim. Travel plans, parties and celebrations meant to make up for lost time have been canceled or recalibrated. The disappointment is real, but nature's rules are often at odds with human intentions.

Adapting, modifying, shapeshifting, SARS-CoV-2 is a predator unlike any other, seeking out new hosts with unsentimental efficiency. Its Delta variant kills 1,300 Americans a day and has helped push the death toll over 800,000. In three months, that number is expected to reach a million.

Now Omicron is further complicating the picture and raising ques-

tions about national resolve and endurance at a time of mounting frustration and fatigue.

"Americans have a mixed record in dealing with historical challenges," said Lawrence Wright, author of "The Plague Year: America in the Time of COVID."

The pandemic, he argues, presents the country with a profound question: "Is our generation capable [See Variant, A6]"



**GARY CORONADO** Los Angeles Times

**THE LURE** of casinos is tough to ignore. "A lot of people have been alone and struggling with their addiction," said a former gambler who now helps others.

### LAS VEGAS THE ROAD BACK

## A rise in hidden addiction

More seek help as pandemic fuels gambling

BY KURTIS LEE

**LAS VEGAS** — The last bet Lou Remillard placed was a \$2,000 online sports wager on a Major League Baseball game. The 46-year-old Las Vegas restaurateur was drunk and broken at the time and said that he no longer cared to be alive.

Having lost that final bet and facing tens of thousands of dollars in debt, Remillard for the first time walked into a 12-step

meeting for gambling addiction the next day. It was Oct. 1, 2018.

"That's the date I protect," Remillard said on a recent afternoon from the crepe restaurant he owns that is a short drive from the Las Vegas Strip. He agreed on that Monday to stay sober, stop gambling and help counsel those facing the same predicament.

"All we can do is help each other," he said, a task that has been made even more [See Gambling, A9]

## Facing scandal, Mater Dei closes ranks, keeps quiet

The diocese, school staff, parents and students put up the old wall of silence.

BY HANNAH FRY, CONNOR SHEETS, AND LAURA J. NELSON

Hoisted upon the shoulders of his players, fresh leis piled high around his neck, Bruce Rollinson looked out upon thousands of faithful fans who had braved 48-degree weather to watch Mater Dei High School win its third state football championship in five years.

A chant — "Roll! Roll!" — began to echo from the stands.

But rather than stay on the field for postgame interviews with his star players,



**LUIS SANCHEZ** Los Angeles Times

**COACH** Bruce Rollinson has had just one losing season since 1989.

Rollinson was quickly hustled away by a knot of security guards and assistant coaches when journalists approached him. The Monarchs' resounding win on Dec. 11 capped a

month of external scrutiny for Rollinson and the school's storied athletic program, following a lawsuit that accuses Mater Dei and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange of trying to cover up a brutal locker room altercation that left a player with a traumatic brain injury.

Allegations of scandals at schools often lead to protests by students, petitions circulated by alumni, and other calls for change. Not at Mater Dei, which has one of the nation's best high school football programs.

Employees, parents, students and the diocese have largely closed ranks. Supporters and employees of the football program, a fundraising powerhouse, have fallen back on a practiced wall of silence. [See Mater Dei, A7]

### Pause on student loan payments

Biden administration extends the moratorium three more months to May 1, helping millions of borrowers. **NATION, A4**

### A rush to give out housing vouchers

As hotels shift away from sheltering homeless people, L.A. officials race to find rental units. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

**Weather** Light to heavy rain. L.A. Basin: 58/54. **B6**



**BUSINESS INSIDE:** Airlines face a holiday challenge with Omicron and short staffing. **A8**





Partly sunny 44/35 • Tomorrow: Partly sunny 55/46 B8

Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2021 • \$2

## Signs of omicron optimism overseas

S. Africa's cases subside as U.K. suggests variant is milder than delta

BY MAX BEARAK AND WILLIAM BOOTH

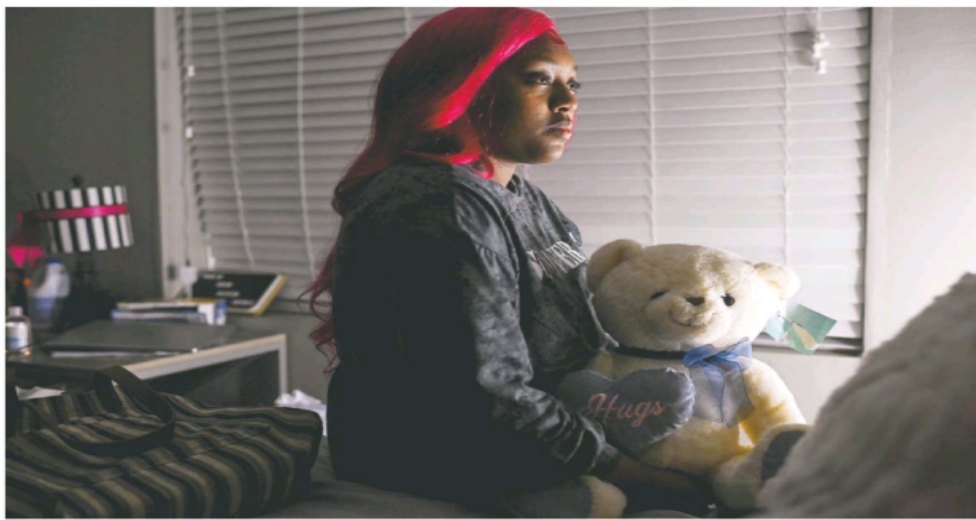
NAIROBI — South Africa's huge wave of omicron cases appears to be subsiding just as quickly as it grew in the weeks after the country first announced to the world that a new coronavirus variant had been identified.

South Africa's top infectious-disease scientist, Salim Abdool Karim, said Wednesday that it had rapidly passed the peak of new omicron cases and, judging by preliminary evidence, he expected "every other country, or almost every other, to follow the same trajectory."

Offering another reason for optimism, researchers in Britain looking at coronavirus cases there reported Wednesday that the omicron variant appears to be less severe than the once-dominant delta strain. Early evidence from Scotland and England suggests that omicron is sending fewer people to the hospital.

"This is a qualified good-news story," said Jim McMenamin, national covid-19 incident director at SEE SOUTH AFRICA ON A6

### Daily reported cases in South Africa



JOSHUA LOITZ/THE WASHINGTON POST

## Father's covid death jars aspiring doctor

BY ANNIE GOWEN

MEMPHIS — Alyssa Quarles long dreamed of becoming a doctor.

So when her dad, Theodis, became ill with covid-19 while Alyssa was home from college last year, she helped nurse him as he struggled to breathe, quarantined in his home office, away from her mom and four little sisters. When he died 10 days later, Alyssa's world shattered. She could no longer bear the idea of medical school, which had been everything her dad had wanted for her, and everything she had wanted for herself.

"He was my first patient, and I couldn't save him," she said. Theodis, 49 and otherwise healthy, had been the center of his family of seven — the chef, disciplinarian, mentor, cheerleader and organizer.



FAMILY PHOTO

Alyssa Quarles, top, clutches a teddy bear given to her by her father, Theodis Quarles, who died last year of covid. Above, the pair are seen in happier times.

Without him, they were lost. For months after his death, Alyssa, her sisters and their mom, Vickie, lived as if they were "stuck in time," as Vickie put it, closed off in their home in southeast Memphis. A Christmas tree with frosted pink snowflakes, the last project Theodis had worked on with the girls, remained in the corner of the living room.

Alyssa and her sisters had become a statistic, part of the more than 140,000 children in the United States who lost a parent or grandparent caregiver in the first 14 months of the pandemic, 65 percent of them children of color, the journal Pediatrics found in a recent study, childhoods scarred by tragedy that will have an impact for years to come.

As summer approached and the SEE SISTERS ON A10

## Covid-19 pill is cleared by FDA

PFIZER DRUG IS FOR THOSE AT HIGH RISK

Demand likely to outstrip supply as omicron surges

BY CAROLYN Y. JOHNSON AND KATIE SHEPHERD

Federal regulators Wednesday authorized the first easy-to-take pill to treat covid-19, a drug developed by Pfizer that will help refill the nation's medicine cabinet even as the omicron variant, now dominant in much of the country, has thwarted most other options.

Tens of thousands of pill packs of Pfizer's Paxlovid are sitting in a company warehouse in Memphis, ready to be loaded onto trucks and planes in anticipation of the green light from the Food and Drug Administration. But as omicron cases skyrocket nationwide, doctors are expected to quickly burn through that initial supply of the drug, which has shown to be 89 percent effective at keeping high-risk patients from developing severe illness when given within three days of symptoms starting.

Antiviral pills have been highly anticipated as a potential turning point in the pandemic — a new class of drugs that will help transform life-threatening covid-19 into SEE VIRUS PILL ON A6

FAQs on breakthrough cases: What to do if you test positive. A4

Legal challenges: Supreme Court sets hearing for vaccine rules. A14

Long wait: Surge is crowding the region's emergency rooms. B1

## NASA hopes the stars align for its momentous launch

Everything must go just right for Webb telescope to successfully unfurl

BY JOEL ACHENBACH

NASA's long-delayed James Webb Space Telescope, a \$10 billion marvel of engineering and scientific ambition, is finally poised to rocket into deep space from a launchpad in French Guiana, on the northeast shoulder of South America. What happens in the following days and weeks will either change our understanding of the universe or deliver a crushing blow to NASA and the global astronomical community.

The Webb must cruise for 29 days to a unique orbit around the sun that keeps it roughly 1 million miles from Earth, four times the distance to the moon. At launch, it will be folded upon itself, a shrouded package inside the cone

of the European Space Agency's Ariane 5 rocket. After it escapes Earth's gravity, it must begin opening up, blossoming into a functioning telescope.

That starts with the deployment of the solar panels to make the whole thing work. Next comes the unfurling of a tennis-court-size expanse of multilayered foil — the sun shield, akin to a giant umbrella, ideally more reliable than what you would get from a drugstore.

Then, the telescope must deploy 18 hexagonal, gold-covered beryllium mirrors, which collectively act as a light bucket 21 feet across, designed to capture ancient light emitted more than 13 billion years ago as the embryonic universe was still learning how to create stars and galaxies.

What could go wrong? NASA actually has an answer to that question: This mission is vulnerable to, and therefore must avoid, 344 potential "single-point failures," according to an inde-

SEE TELESCOPE ON A20

INVISIBLE

## Mexico's wheat feeds the globe — and warms it

BY JOSHUA PARTLOW AND CHRIS MOONEY



LUIS ANTONIO ROJAS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Ruffino Barreras Anaya, 45, rests at a truck full of wheat grains at a plantation in Benito Juárez, Sonora, Mexico, in May. Sonora state is home to the Yaqui Valley, a breadbasket of the country.

CIUDAD OBERGÓN, MEXICO — In the foothills of the Sierra Madre mountains, the carcasses of starving cattle rotted in a bone-dry reservoir. Useless fishing nets hung on dusty fences. Rowboats were stranded in the sand.

Down on the valley floor, Rafael Parra bent to the work of feeding the world — and unintentionally warming it.

A layer of chalk-white fertilizer had been scattered on the barren ground. Tractors had cut long furrows in the dry and crumbling soil. The wheat seeds would not be planted for days, but it was time to release the laughing gas.

Parra plunged one end of an old, plastic tube into an irrigation canal, generating the suction that sent water gurgling into the drought-parched earth. It was a low-tech, gravity-fed form of irrigation used for generations here in the Yaqui Valley, a storied SEE EMISSIONS ON A12

## IN THE NEWS



JULIA RENDLEMAN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**Ongoing mystery** The opening of a time capsule retrieved from the site of a Lee statue in Richmond produced more intrigue. B1

**High-altitude buildup** India and China are upgrading infrastructure and boosting troops along their disputed Himalayan border. A8

### THE NATION

A Justice Department report found that special counsel John Durham's review of the FBI's Russia investigation has cost U.S. taxpayers \$3.8 million since October 2020. A2  
Amazon's cloud-computing operation suffered its third outage in a month, briefly shutting down a vast number of online services. A2  
The Democrats' push to pass landmark voting rights legislation has grown more urgent as the midterm elections approach. A3  
The Biden administra-

tion extended its pause on payments on federal student loans until May 1. A3  
Texas abortion providers, eager to restore access to the procedure, asked a federal appeals court to return their case to a district judge who previously blocked the state law. A18

### THE WORLD

Libya postponed its presidential vote amid political disputes and a renewed threat of unrest. A9  
The United States moved to loosen sanctions restricting assis-

tance to Afghanistan. A9  
Europe and the United States are leaning on significant sanction threats to discourage Russia from invading Ukraine. A18

### THE ECONOMY

The fragile coalition that has kept the International Space Station going for decades is fraying as U.S.-Russia tensions reach levels not seen in years. A16  
Chinese crypto entrepreneur Justin Sun will be heading to space on a Blue Origin flight scheduled for next year. A17  
Regulators are probing Tesla over reports that video games can be acti-

vated on front screens while the cars are being driven, an investigation summary said. A17

### THE REGION

Former senator and Virginia governor Charles S. Robb and his wife were injured but expected to survive after a massive house fire. B1  
A member of the Proud Boys pleaded guilty to a felony charge in the Jan. 6 riot and agreed to cooperate with the government. B2  
A man fatally stabbed in a Bethesda shopping area was lured there by three teens planning to rob him of a small amount of marijuana, court records claim. B2

## INSIDE



### LOCAL LIVING

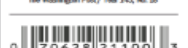
**It's not easy being evergreen** Before a Christmas tree makes it to your living room, it must survive more than a decade of careful cultivation.

### STYLE

**Back to the Valley** For "Licorice Pizza," Paul Thomas Anderson returned to the place that shaped his childhood. C1

BUSINESS NEWS	A10
COMICS	A16
OPINION PAGES	A21
LOTTERIES	B3
OBITUARIES	B6
TELEVISION	C4
WORLD NEWS	A8

CONTENT © 2021 The Washington Post / Year 145, No. 38





## deportes

## Manu Ginóbili

Camino al Salón de la Fama de la NBA

Exjugadores, entrenadores y reconocidos periodistas impulsan su candidatura.



## SE CALIENTA LA PELEA POR EL PRIME TIME EN LA RADIO

—espectáculos

Las AM tuvieron un año muy movido con los cambios en la franja más competitiva; en las FM se consolidan la "musicalización" y el ascenso de una nueva señal.

## EL NARCO QUE HUYÓ DE LOS MONOS Y ES UN BARÓN DE LA DROGA

—seguridad

Germán Velázquez dejó Rosario investigado por el asesinato de Pájaro Cantero; hoy es uno de los grandes proveedores de marihuana y cocaína. Página 26

## LA NACION

JUEVES 23 DE DICIEMBRE DE 2021 | LANACION.COM.AR

## Crítica evaluación del FMI sobre el préstamo que le dio al gobierno de Macri

INFORME. Dijo que el plan debió incluir una reestructuración de la deuda y el control de capitales

El Fondo Monetario Internacional (FMI) dijo ayer que el programa económico de Mauricio Macri, instrumentado tras haber acordado un préstamo con el organismo por US\$57.000 millones en 2018, fue "demasiado frágil" para encauzar una economía con muchos problemas. Entre otros ejes, destacó la existencia

de un "espacio político limitado" para implementar reformas estructurales y el rechazo de la administración macrista a reestructurar la deuda y restaurar el control de capitales para fortalecer el plan. Son algunas de las conclusiones del informe Evaluación Ex-Post del FMI, considerado una "autopsia" sobre el fracaso del

Acuerdo Stand-By gestionado por la administración de Cambiemos.

Nicolás Dujovne, ministro de Hacienda de Macri, justificó la estrategia en que el acuerdo "se dio en una situación de excepcionalidad debido a la sequía, la suba de tasas en EE.UU. y al elevado déficit heredado", según expresó en Twitter. Página 16

Se concretó el pago de US\$1900 millones al Fondo y caen las reservas

Página 17

Guzmán: "Al FMI le falta una revisión mayor"

Página 18

## Apura el oficialismo los cambios en Bienes Personales

SENADO. Emitió dictamen y se juega todo a una sesión incierta el 29

Apenas un día después de haberlo aprobado en la Cámara de Diputados, el oficialismo apuró el paso en el Senado con el proyecto que cambia el impuesto a los bienes personales, sobre el que ayer emitió dictamen favorable.

Pero la apuesta del Frente de Todos tiene un costado riesgoso, ya que por los tiempos legislativos recién podrá tratarlo el próximo 29 de diciembre. Ese día deberá sortear los problemas logísticos para que los senadores viajen y también lograr el número ya sin tener la mayoría. Página 8

## Reproches en JxC por la derrota en Diputados

Página 9

## EL ESCENARIO

## Una oposición que es parte del problema

Carlos Pagni

—LA NACION—

Desde que ganó las elecciones legislativas, la oposición de Juntos por el Cambio ha comenzado a insinuar que, en vez de ser parte de la solución, prefiere ser parte del problema. ¿Cuál es ese problema? El peso asfixiante del Estado. La imposibilidad de dotar a la economía de una mínima previsibilidad. La subordinación de los diagnósticos y de los programas a las luchas de facción. En definitiva: la dificultad para señalar un horizonte hacia donde caminar. Continúa en la página 10



ESPERANZA FRENTE A ÓMICRON. PRETORIA (AP).—El optimismo parece regresar antes de la segunda Navidad pandémica: en la región sudafricana de Johannesburgo (foto), que fue epicentro del brote de ómicron, los contagios caen aceleradamente y las infecciones remiten más rápido que delta. Página 23

## Hay casi 22 millones de vacunas contra el Covid sin aplicar en el país

PANDEMIA. Las provincias tienen 17 millones y la Nación, 5 millones sin distribuir

En otra jornada de alza de infectados de Covid-19, en la que el Gobierno informó otros 11.121 casos positivos, que representan un 12% más que anteayer, cuando se había regis-

trado la cifra más alta desde el 19 de agosto pasado, LA NACION confirmó que hay un stock de 21.922.242 vacunas sin aplicar en el país. De esa cifra, 16.831.481 dosis con-

tra el coronavirus están en manos de las provincias, mientras que el Ministerio de Salud de la Nación posee 5.090.761 aún sin repartir. Página 22

## Una boda, contagios y susto en el tenis argentino

Collarini tiene Covid-19 y otros siete jugadores están aislados de cara a Australia. Deportes, página 7

## Envían a Comodoro Py el caso D'Alessio

Página 14



## Receita tem debandada por salários

Mais de 10% dos auditores comissionados deixaram os postos devido ao privilégio a policiais dado por Bolsonaro

A aprovação do Orçamento de 2022 com um agrado a policiais federais, que o presidente Jair Bolsonaro (PL) considera uma de suas bases, gerou revolta na Receita. Pelo menos 324 de 2.938 auditores com cargos comissionados deixaram os postos.

O dado é do sindicato da categoria, que estima em talvez 500 as baixas. A debandada, que não significa demissão, é um protesto pelo R\$ 1,74 bilhão reservado na lei aprovada terça para a Polícia Federal e para a Polícia Rodoviária Federal.

O movimento é articulado em todo o país e já atinge outras carreiras de elite, como no Ipea, no Banco Central, peritos médicos e auditores agropecuários.

Na Receita, o maior impacto da movimentação vai ocorrer no setor de aduanas.

Segundo o sindicato, isso se deve à concentração de desistências de postos na chamada 8ª Região, que abrange São Paulo.

O estado é responsável por 40% da arrecadação do país e tem os maiores aeroportos do país em seu território.

Além disso, é a sede do maior porto do país, em Santos.

As categorias afirmam que um acordo de 2016 previa a instituição de bônus por desempenho e produtividade. No entanto, esses bônus, alegam sindicatos, estão congelados desde então.

O governo ainda não tem uma resposta ao movimento. O ministro Paulo Guedes (Economia), derrotado nessa questão e no fato de que o Orçamento contempla ao menos R\$ 4,9 bilhões para o fundo eleitoral de 2022, está em férias. **Mercado A15**

**Mundo A12**

### Entenda o mundo em 2021

Jornalistas e colunistas da Folha recomendam livros e séries que ajudam a compreender o ano que passou, que foi marcado por episódios que intensificaram cenários do xadrez geopolítico atual, além da continuação da pandemia de coronavírus.

**Esporte B7**

Após ano histórico, Atlético-MG vive expectativa para ter nova arena

**Ilustrada B8**

Troca-troca na Globo e invasão de streamings marcam televisão neste ano

**Turismo B13**

Igrejas de Paris ecoam musicalidade da Catedral de Notre Dame

**Fernanda Torres**

A chegada da velhice num mundo azedo

Ilustrada B11



Bruno Santos/Folhapress

### AVANÇO DO ECOMMERCE FAZ MERCADO DE GALPÕES LOGÍSTICOS ALCANÇAR NÚMEROS INÉDITOS

Obras de centro logístico da Prologis na rodovia Castello Branco, em Santana de Parnaíba; Grande São Paulo concentra serviço, que vê expansão **Mercado A16**

### Financiamento da eleição de R\$ 6,7 bi é recorde em 2022

A eleição do ano que vem terá um financiamento público recorde de R\$ 6,7 bilhões. Na conta, estão considerados o fundo eleitoral aprovado na terça pelo Congresso, de R\$ 4,9 bilhões, o fundo partidário e a renúncia fiscal que as TVs obtêm com propaganda dita gratuita. **Poder A4**

### Conrado H. Mendes Nenhuma nudez judicial é punida

Os acontecimentos jupornográficos do ano superam as categorias. A edição 2021 da homenagem à violência masturbatória e narcísica da magistratura excitou público e candidatos. Nenhuma nudez judicial será castigada. Toda desfaçatez magistratocrática será premiada. **Poder A11**

### Lava Jato acabou em 2021 sofrendo críticas de desvios

Ícone do combate à corrupção no país, a Operação Lava Jato foi encerrada neste ano sob fortes críticas e desgastes, acumulando denúncias de desvios e derrotas em tribunais superiores. Sérgio Moro, por exemplo, foi declarado parcial ao condenar o ex-presidente Lula. **Poder A10**

### Maioria afirma evitar viagem e festa fora de casa, diz Datafolha

Mesmo com a melhoria dos números da pandemia da Covid-19, o Datafolha aferiu que apenas 1 em cada 4 brasileiros pretende viajar no fim do ano, e 62% afirmam que vão passar as festas da estação apenas com membros de suas famílias em casa, evitando aglomerações. **Saúde B1**

### Proteção beira 100% com 3ª dose de vacina, aponta estudo **B4**



Marlene Bergamo/Folhapress

A educadora social Katarina Yalodê, 25, que criou projeto que atende gestantes e puérperas em São Bernardo do Campo

**Projeto na Grande SP leva atendimento de doulas para favelas **B2****

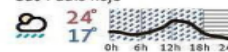
**EDITORIAIS A2**

**Contas degradadas**  
Sobre Orçamento de 2022 e despesas injustificáveis.

**Violência oculta**  
A respeito de agressões subnotificadas a mulheres.

**ATMOSFERA**

São Paulo hoje



	Hoje	Amanhã
Rio	21 27	20 27
Brasília	19 25	19 25
Ribeirão	21 29	18 29

Fonte: www.climatempo.com.br



**JHSF**  
apresenta

**BOA VISTA VILLAGE**

Golf Residences  
com vista  
para o campo  
de golfe de  
18 buracos por  
Rees Jones.

Veja nas páginas A20 e A21.





GESTIÓN  
PEDAGÓGICA  
PARA EL  
RETORNO  
SERIAL A  
CLASES  
PRESENCIALES 8

COLECCIÓN FRODOEN Nº 6

Libro + Foco  
C. 50.000



**No escarmienta: El condenado insiste con perverso sistema usurario**

## Investigan a RGD por apriete con cheques robados a Juzgado

- Prestamista fue grabado por víctima que lo denunció
- MP: 5 allanamientos en busca de los documentos
- Jueces y fiscales que le ayudaron, a investigación

PÁGINAS 48 y 49

**Procedimiento.** La comitiva sale de la casa de RGD. También allanaron la residencia de su hijo y de su abogada en busca de evidencias.



Movió USD 60 millones  
**Alarmas antilavado no sonaron en el nuevo caso de estafa piramidal**

PÁGINA 16

**Nicanor confirma que no se postula para la Junta y propone a Marito para ir contra HC**

PÁGINA 8

Preocupación por vacaciones  
**Ómicron: Salud quiere que viajeros se autoaislen al regresar al país**

PÁGINA 2

**Agencias piden sanciones contra Eastern por dejar varados a cientos de paraguayos**

PÁGINA 20

### Corrupción

**Hugo Javier, la estrella del árbol de impunidad**

**Mario Ferreiro va a juicio oral por la caja paralela**

PÁGINA 12

Acción de Conajzar en Ciudad del Este  
**Intervienen un casino por apuestas clandestinas mau**

PÁGINA 50









# The Christmas that changed me

Nina Stibbe,  
Adjoa Andoh,  
Shirley Ballas,  
Nitin  
Sawhney,  
and more  
*G2 special  
issue* ♦♦



Thursday  
23 December 2021  
£2.50  
From £1.75 for subscribers

# The Guardian

For 200 years  
News provider of the year

## Risk of hospital stay is 40% lower with Omicron variant, data shows

Warnings that NHS may still be overwhelmed as daily cases hit 106,000

Ian Sample  
Heather Stewart

The Omicron variant of coronavirus appears to be milder, with a 20-25% reduced chance of attending hospital and at least a 40% lower risk of being admitted for at least one night, the

first UK data of its kind has shown. But as daily Covid cases topped 100,000 for the first time yesterday, experts warned that high transmissibility meant the NHS was still at risk of being overwhelmed.

Wales and Northern Ireland announced strict new measures to come into force from Boxing Day in response to the Omicron surge, leaving England as the only country in the UK not to have announced post-Christmas measures.

In what was described by scientists as a "qualified good news story", two

studies yesterday pointed to a lower risk of hospitalisation with Omicron.

An Imperial College outbreak modelling team led by Prof Neil Ferguson analysed hospitalisations and vaccine records among all PCR-confirmed Covid cases in England between 1 and 14 December. The data set included 56,000 cases of Omicron and 269,000 cases of Delta.

Their report found that the risk of any attendance at hospital was 20-25% lower with Omicron versus Delta, and 40-45% lower when the visit resulted in being admitted for at

**'Health services face more demand if cases continue to grow'**

Prof Neil Ferguson  
Imperial College

least one night. For the small percentage of people who have neither been previously infected with Covid nor vaccinated, the risk of hospitalisation was about 11% lower for Omicron.

Ferguson said while it was "good news", the assessment did not substantially change Sage modelling, pointing to 3,000 daily hospitalisations in England at the peak of the wave next month without restrictions beyond the measures now in place.

While the analysis shows evidence of "a moderate reduction" in the risk of hospitalisation associated with Omicron compared with Delta, Ferguson said, "this appears to be offset by the reduced efficacy of vaccines against infection with the Omicron variant".



## Hundreds mark solstice in return to Stonehenge

Hundreds of druids, pagans and revellers marked the winter solstice at Stonehenge yesterday for the first time in two years. English Heritage allowed open access to the world heritage site on Salisbury Plain.

## Pledge to 'reset dial' on female healthcare

Andrew Gregory  
Health editor

Ministers have pledged to "reset the dial" on women's health to tackle decades of gender inequality in England, with plans to appoint a women's health tsar, reduce medical taboos, boost menopause support and ban "virginity repair" operations.

The Department of Health and Social Care will publish its Vision for Women's Health strategy today after 100,000 women came forward to share their healthcare concerns. Maria Caulfield, the minister for women's health, described some of their experiences as "shocking".

The document will set out initial government commitments, recognising "system-wide changes" are needed to



9 770261 307149 51