

What's News

Business & Finance

U.S. shoppers spent more at the start of the year as the Omicron wave started to recede and consumers absorbed higher prices. Retail sales rose by a seasonally adjusted 3.8% in January from the prior month. **A1**

◆ **Federal prosecutors** are investigating whether short sellers conspired to drive down stock prices by sharing damaging research reports ahead of time and engaging in illegal trading tactics. **A1**

◆ **Google plans** to adopt new privacy restrictions to curtail tracking across apps on Android smartphones, putting restraints on an ad industry that has covertly collected data across mobile devices. **A1**

◆ **Fed officials** at their meeting last month discussed an accelerated timetable for raising interest rates, beginning with an anticipated increase in March. **A2**

◆ **Activist investor Loeb**, whose Third Point counts Amazon as one of its biggest holdings, said he sees roughly \$1 trillion in untapped value at the e-commerce company. **B1**

◆ **Alta Fox**, a little-known activist investor, is seeking to add directors to Hebro's board and is urging the firm to spin off the unit housing games such as Dungeons & Dragons. **B1**

◆ **The S&P 500** posted a gain of 0.1%, while the Dow and Nasdaq slipped 0.2% and 0.1%, respectively. **B1**

◆ **Ex-Goldman partner Timothy Leissner**, the prosecution's star witness, testified at the trial of former colleague Roger Ng on charges related to the looting of INDB. **B10**

World-Wide

◆ **Russia is continuing** its military buildup around Ukraine, Western officials said, even as Moscow said it had begun drawing down some of its troops and released footage of tanks and armored personnel carriers departing Crimea. **A1, A5, A18**

◆ **U.S. and Russian military aircraft** flew dangerously close to each other in weekend incidents over the Mediterranean Sea, Pentagon officials said. **A18**

◆ **Biden is directing** the National Archives to release White House visitor logs to the Jan. 6 committee, dismissing Trump's request to shield the information. **A6**

◆ **FAA chief Dickson** is resigning as the top U.S. air-safety regulator. He cited personal reasons for his departure and will step down at the end of March. **A3**

◆ **The Biden administration** faulted China for failing to meet its commitments to purchase U.S. goods under the 2020 trade deal. **A6**

◆ **Social-media companies** would be held responsible for harm they cause to children under bipartisan legislation introduced Wednesday. **A6**

◆ **Police in Ottawa** gave hundreds of protesters written warnings to leave their encampment in the Canadian capital's downtown. **A18**

◆ **Several jurors** in Palin's defamation case against the New York Times learned before they issued a verdict that the judge planned to reject her claims, though they said it didn't affect deliberations. **A4**

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Team USA Can't Find a Miracle in Hockey Quarterfinals



OUT OF REACH: Marek Hrivik of Team Slovakia scores in the third period against Strauss Mann of Team USA to tie the game 2-2 and go into overtime during the men's ice hockey quarterfinal. Slovakia won 3-2 in a penalty shootout. **A13**

Defiant Ukraine Girds for War As West Cites Russian Buildup

Russia is continuing its military buildup around Ukraine, Western officials said, even as Moscow said it had begun drawing down some of its

troops and released footage of tanks and armored personnel carriers departing Crimea. On Wednesday, the day some U.S. intelligence officials had said a Russian invasion

was likely to occur, Ukrainians rallied in a display of solidarity and defiance, raising the national flag and singing the anthem in morning ceremonies. The country was rattled by a cyberattack on Tuesday that targeted the Ministry of Defense and two of its biggest banks, temporarily disrupting payments and showing zero balances on accounts.

“We have heard the signs from Moscow about readiness to continue diplomatic efforts,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization Secretary-General Jens

Stoltenberg said as defense ministers from the alliance's 30 member states gathered in Brussels. “But so far, we have not seen any de-escalation on the ground. On the contrary, it appears that Russia continues its military buildup.”

U.S. officials also called into question Moscow's statements about troop withdrawals. A senior Biden administration official said that Russia has instead increased its troops by as many as 7,000. Some of the troops arrived Wednesday, the official said.

“In recent weeks, and even in recent days, more Russian forces, not fewer, are at the border, and they're moving, concerning into fighting positions,” State Department spokesman Ned Price said Wednesday.

A senior U.K. intelligence

◆ **U.S. spies can't crack** the code on Putin. **A8**
◆ **Beijing backs Moscow**, but stays wary. **A18**
◆ **Russian, U.S. planes** had close encounters. **A18**

Pushback On Plan To Pause Gas Tax

A push by some Senate Democrats to suspend the federal gasoline tax through the end of the year is running into opposition from both Republicans and other Democrats, as rising prices at the pump contribute to a surge in inflation. **A4**

Average price of regular gasoline in the U.S., weekly



U.S. Probes Trading Tactics Of Prominent Short Sellers

By LIZ HOFFMAN AND JUSTIN BAER

Federal prosecutors are investigating whether short sellers conspired to drive down stock prices by sharing damaging research reports ahead of time and engaging in illegal trading tactics, people familiar with the matter said.

The Justice Department seized hardware, trading records and private communications in an effort to prove a wide-ranging conspiracy among

investors who bet against corporate shares, the people said. One tactic under investigation is “spoofing,” an illegal ploy that involves flooding the market with fake orders to push a stock price up or down, they said. Another is “scalping,” where activist short sellers cash out their positions without disclosing it.

Carson Block, the fiery short seller behind Muddy Waters, was served with a search warrant by an agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation

in October, said people familiar with the matter, one of whom added that the warrant extended to Mr. Block's phones.

Federal agents took computers belonging to Andrew Left, another prominent short seller, according to Bloomberg News, which previously reported the existence of an investigation.

Never the most popular camp on Wall Street, short sellers have had an especially bruising few years. Soaring

Google to Curb App-Data Tracking

Google plans to adopt new privacy restrictions to curtail tracking across apps on Android smartphones, following Apple

By Tripp Mickle, Sam Schechner and Patricia Haggin

Inc. in putting restraints on an advertising industry that has covertly collected data across billions of mobile devices.

Google's plans for Android could hasten an end to more than a decade of advertising practices across smartphones in which companies including Meta Platforms Inc.'s Facebook layered their code into hundreds of thousands of apps to track consumer behavior.

Apple's changes, which went into effect last year, have already upended the digital-ad industry and contributed to a

wipeout of more than \$300 billion from Meta's market value.

Google said Wednesday that it plans to develop more privacy-focused replacements for the alphanumeric identifiers associated with individual smartphones that some apps use to gather and share information about users.

The Alphabet Inc. unit said it plans to keep supporting

El Salvador Asks, Can Bitcoin Be a Nation's Currency?

It's legal tender but gets little use; world's first bitcoin-backed sovereign bond is planned

By KEJAL VYAS AND SANTIAGO PEREZ

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador—President Nayib Bukele called Canadian videogame developer and bitcoin enthusiast Samson Mow up on stage at a beachside bitcoin convention in November that had the flair of a rock concert.

In front of a screen emblazoned with the phrase “Feed the Bit,” Mr. Mow unveiled the tiny Central American country's novel international finance idea: a plan to raise \$1 billion by issuing the world's first bitcoin-backed sovereign bond. The crowd, a mix of mostly crypto advocates, Bukele fans and a few curious locals, erupted in loud cheers as they filmed the event on their smartphones.

“Bitcoin is going to change

the world,” Mr. Bukele, dressed in all white, said at the event. “It's the evolution of humankind, and we're going there.”

In less than three years in office, Mr. Bukele has moved fast to remake his country. He has removed judges and stacked the courts with his supporters, harassed journalists reporting on corruption and clashed with the Biden administration over Mr. Bukele's efforts to cement power. Wearing leather jackets, aviator shades and a backward baseball cap, he has reveled in the political skirmishes, jokingly referring to himself as “the coolest dictator.”

The 40-year-old president is perhaps best known for turning El Salvador into a real

Blast the Music, Turn Up the Heat—Time to Break WFH Rules

When one partner goes back to work, things change at the home office

By VERONICA DAGHER

Elliot Pepper wasn't allowed to do one of his favorite things when he and his wife, Shira Pepper, were both working from home.

Mr. Pepper likes to sing at the top of his lungs. Ms. Pepper, a creative director at a marketing company, mostly had control of the couple's playlist and would tolerate her husband's music for about 20

minutes, she said.

Now that Mr. Pepper, a 36-year-old financial adviser, is at their Baltimore home alone, he is able to sing along with the Foo Fighters or Collective Soul at his discretion. Standing in front of the dining-room mirror using his son's baseball bat as an air guitar, Mr. Pepper recently blasted Red Hot Chili Peppers' “By The Way.”

“It reminds me of my glory

INSIDE



PERSONAL JOURNAL
A boom in weddings means higher costs for both hosts and their guests. **A11**

GETTY IMAGES

Tehran's conditions

Foreign minister details nuclear deal demands — EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW, PAGE 4

Trouble brewing

Unilever tea sale tests private equity's social conscience — BIG READ, PAGE 17



We have a problem

The pitfalls of investing in the space race — SINÉAD O'SULLIVAN, PAGE 19

Call to arms Hong Kong battles Covid

A parent and toddler with Covid-19 symptoms wait outside a medical centre in Hong Kong yesterday.

The city is in the midst of its worst coronavirus wave. With 4,285 cases yesterday, and more than 7,000 preliminary positives, patients have been left on beds outside hospitals.

The wave's severity prompted a rare intervention from Xi Jinping. China's president said Hong Kong must "mobilise all forces and resources", with the fight against the Omicron variant taking "priority over everything else". His order fuelled fears of even more stringent rules in the financial hub, which has, in effect, been cut off for two years. Hong Kong braced page 4

FT View page 18



AP Photo/Vincent Yu

Briefing

► **Cook's \$99m package stirs opposition**
Advisory group Institutional Shareholder Services has urged Apple investors to block chief Tim Cook's \$99m pay, forcing one of tech's most prominent equality campaigners on to the defensive. — PAGE 6

► **Poland and Hungary lose rule of law fight**
The top EU court has dismissed a legal challenge from the two countries, a move that opens the way for Brussels to withhold funds from member states for rule of law violations. — PAGE 2; FT VIEW, PAGE 18

► **Chinese state pumps cash into metaverse**
Local governments and state-backed entities have ploughed money into companies aiming to develop hyper-realistic virtual worlds, as China competes to become the global centre of the trend. — PAGE 4

Rupture threatens Argentina IMF deal

A split in government ranks has cast doubt on President Alberto Fernández's bid to persuade lawmakers to back an outline deal to restructure \$44.5bn in debt. — PAGE 4



Google to limit tracking across Android

The internet giant has said it will bring in restraints in the way the online advertising industry targets users, after a similar move by Apple. The change will not be brought in for at least two years. — PAGE 8

California bill to protect children's data

State lawmakers are due to propose a bill today that will require platforms in the state, including Meta and YouTube, to limit data collection, as global momentum grows for stricter regulation. — PAGE 2

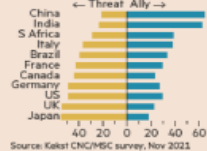
Heineken drinkers face \$10 pint

Chief executive Dolf van den Brink has warned that "off the charts" inflation will push up prices as he pointed to the risk of outright shortages as brewers faced challenges delivering beer to venues. — PAGE 6

Datawatch

Friend or foe?

% of adults seeing Russia as:



Russia is viewed as a threat in both the US and the UK but attitudes vary across the G7 and Brics nations. In a survey last year, Chinese and Indian adults overwhelmingly saw Russia as an ally. In Italy, sentiment is evenly divided.

Source: Kantar CNC/IPS survey, Nov 2021

France seeks security shake-up to head off Russian threat in Europe

◆ Foreign minister sounds alarm ◆ Rules 'nearly obsolete' ◆ Risk of permanent tension

VICTOR MALLET AND ANNE-SYLVAINE CHASSANY — PARIS

France has called for a revamp of Europe's security framework, warning that it has become "nearly obsolete" and risks allowing Russia to become a permanent threat even if Vladimir Putin does not invade Ukraine.

Jean-Yves Le Drian, the French foreign minister, told the Financial Times that there were "no more rules" governing European security and stability because arms control pacts covering everything from intermediate-range nuclear missiles to transparency on military movements had become "nearly obsolete or irrelevant".

He said Russia had to recognise that the EU had its own security concerns, given that Putin wanted to exercise an

unacceptable form of "partial sovereignty" over its neighbours, and that agreement was needed to restore long-term stability.

Putin "can choose to make Russia a destabilising power... which could mean a permanent strategy of tension over the long term, or he can choose to become the actor, the partner in a new security and stability order in Europe," he said. "It's his choice".

Russia has massed more than 135,000 troops on Ukraine's borders, sparking the biggest threat of conflict in Europe in decades, although Moscow insists it has no plans to invade.

In diplomatic exchanges to try to defuse tension, Putin has demanded that Nato pull forces out of eastern Europe and pledge never to admit

Ukraine. The west has said the demands are unacceptable, arguing that Kyiv has the right to make its own decisions, but is trying to find common ground with Moscow on issues such as arms control.

"While there is a demand from Russia for stability, for guarantees, there is also a demand for stability and for guarantees from our side," Le Drian said. "Europe needs guarantees of security and stability. We're ready to talk about it, about everything."

Le Drian, foreign minister since the start of Emmanuel Macron's presidency in 2017 and previously defence minister under François Hollande, insisted there was no divergence with the US on the assessment of the Russian threat.

He outlined a three-phase approach to defuse the crisis: the verified withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine's



Jean-Yves Le Drian says Vladimir Putin 'can choose to make Russia a destabilising power or become the partner in a new security order in Europe'

borders; a resumption of talks on the Minsk accords to resolve war between Moscow-backed separatists and Kyiv in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region; and a new European security framework.

Le Drian cautiously welcomed "encouraging words" of troop pullouts and diplomatic overtures from Russia. But he remained "vigilant", describing the moves as "a small beginning".

"We'll need to see how the manoeuvres in Belarus end, for example, how the manoeuvres in the Black Sea and near the Ukrainian borders end. All of that is part of de-escalation," he said.

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Constance Stelzenmüller page 19

Ericsson 'embarrassed' after admitting to possibly paying Isis for access in Iraq

RICHARD MILNE
NORDIC AND BALTIC CORRESPONDENT

Ericsson has conceded that it might have made payments to terrorist organisation Isis in Iraq, sparking a sharp fall in the group's share price yesterday.

The Swedish telecoms equipment maker revealed late on Tuesday that an internal investigation from 2019 had found serious breaches of compliance rules in Iraq, including payments for transport routes to evade local customs.

"What we are seeing is that transport routes have been purchased through areas that have been controlled by terrorist organisations, including Isis," Borje Ekholm, chief executive, told Swedish newspaper Dagens Industri.

Shares in Ericsson closed down 14 per cent yesterday.

Ericsson said that unusual expenses

claims dating back to 2018 had triggered an internal probe that found serious breaches of compliance and ethics rules for "corruption-related misconduct".

The evidence included donations without a clear beneficiary; paying suppliers without documents; and improper use of sales agents and consultants. It also found violations of Ericsson's internal financial controls, conflicts of interest, non-compliance with tax laws and obstruction of the investigation.

Its investigators could not determine the ultimate recipient of payments for alternative transport routes but they occurred at a time when Isis and other terrorist groups controlled some routes.

The group said it "could not identify that any Ericsson employee was directly involved in financing terrorist organisations

"but added that several workers "were excited from the company".

Ekholm told the Financial Times: "It's an embarrassment to be in this situation. You find yourself with an echo, a shadow of the past. At the same time, it's fair to say we're on a journey to change the culture. One element of that journey is to deal with the past."

He added that Ericsson had not disclosed the internal probe in 2019 because it could not establish the beneficiaries of the payments or whether they were terrorist organisations. "It becomes hard when you can't substantiate anything to communicate," he added.

Ericsson paid more than \$1bn in December 2019 to settle US investigations into foreign corruption in countries spanning China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Djibouti and Kuwait.

Lex page 20



Citi chief faces hard sell as big-league ambitions wilt

The communications skills of Jane Fraser, the former McKinsey consultant known for her frank but encouraging manner, face a test as she sets out Citigroup's new path. Since taking the helm a year ago her strategy has been to focus on increasing market share in more profitable areas. Her vision also means that the bank gives up hopes of breaking into Wall Street's investment banking top three, much to the concern of investors and bankers.

Fraser shake-up — PAGE 9

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World Markets

STOCK MARKETS				CURRENCIES				INTEREST RATES					
	Feb 16	prev	%chg		Feb 16	prev	%chg		price	yield	chg		
SSP 500	4465.76	4471.07	-0.57	\$ per €	1.137	1.136	0.730	0.740	US Gov 10 yr	140.96	2.04	0.01	
Nasdaq Composite	14032.54	14135.76	-0.97	\$ per £	1.358	1.352	1.195	1.191	UK Gov 10 yr	1.45	-0.08		
Dow Jones Ind	34767.61	34988.84	-0.63	€ per \$	0.877	0.840	€ per £	131.181	131.425	0.27	-0.03		
FTSE100	1829.32	1827.96	0.02	¥ per \$	115.436	115.775	£ index	82.607	82.804	110.25	0.22	0.09	
Euro Stoxx 50	4130.55	4143.71	-0.11	¥ per €	156.243	156.492	SFr per \$	1.253	1.253	US Gov 30 yr	101.44	2.36	0.02
FTSE 100	7603.78	7608.92	-0.07	SFr per €	1.049	1.052	US Gov 2 yr	103.83	-0.37	-0.01			
FTSE All-Share	4251.96	4254.78	-0.07	€ per \$	0.886	0.881							
CAC 40	6864.98	6879.97	-0.21										
Nikkei 225	16203.36	15412.71	-0.28										
Hang Seng	24719.90	24795.71	1.48										
MSCI World	3054.26	3011.48	1.42	Oil WTI \$	94.52	92.07	2.66		Feed Funds Eff	0.08	0.08	0.03	
MSCI EM	1229.05	1230.42	0.71	Oil Brent \$	95.61	93.29	2.50		US 3m Bills	0.40	0.43	-0.03	
MSCI ACWI	717.81	708.34	1.34	Gold \$	1840.55	1866.15	-0.94		Euro Libor 3m	-0.58	-0.58	0.00	
									UK 3m	0.89	0.89	0.00	

Prices are latest for action

Data provided by Bloomberg

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President Volodymyr Zelensky arriving at a Ukrainian military base on Wednesday, a day proclaimed a National Day of Unity.

Biden Rebuffs Trump's Effort To Shield Logs

By MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT

President Biden ordered the National Archives to hand over a range of visitor logs from the Trump White House to the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, rejecting his predecessor's claim that the material is protected by executive privilege.

The decision boosts the committee's efforts to gather information about who was coming and going from the White House not just on the day of the attack last year but also in the months preceding it as President Donald J. Trump sought to overturn the election.

Mr. Biden had similarly decided last year not to support Mr. Trump's claim of executive privilege over other batches of White House documents and records sought by the committee. Mr. Trump went to federal court to block the release of those earlier batches but lost.

In a letter sent Tuesday to the National Archives, Mr. Biden's White House counsel, Dana Remus, said Mr. Biden had rejected Mr. Trump's claims that the visitor logs were subject to executive privilege and that "in light of the urgency" of the committee's work, the agency should provide the material to the committee within 15 days.

The archivist of the United States, David Ferriero, said in a letter to Mr. Trump on Wednesday that unless prohibited by a court, the National Archives would hand over the logs to the committee on March 3.

Mr. Trump did not respond publicly, and it isn't clear if he might go to court again to try to delay or block the release of the logs.

Continued on Page A12

Ukraine? Putin's Bigger Fear May Lie in Poland.

By ANDREW HIGGINS

REDZIKOWO, Poland — Tomasz Czesiek, a Polish archaeologist and television journalist, walks his dog each morning through a forest near his home here on NATO's eastern flank, wandering along the edge of a green chain-link fence topped with razor wire.

He enjoys the fresh air and morning quiet — until loudspeakers on the other side of the fence, strung with "Keep Out" signs in Polish, English, German and Russian, start blasting "The Star-Spangled Banner" at high volume. "I don't know anyone who has ever been inside there," Mr. Czesiek said, pointing across the fence toward a cluster of hazy-

New U.S. Military Base Is a Mere 100 Miles From Russia

shrouded buildings in the distance.

The fence is the outer perimeter, guarded by Polish soldiers, of a highly sensitive U.S. military installation, expected to be operational this year, which Washington insists will help defend Europe and the United States from ballistic missiles fired by rogue states like Iran.

But for President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, the military base in Poland, and another in Roman-

nia, are evidence of what he sees as the threat posed by NATO's eastward expansion — and part of his justification for his military encirclement of Ukraine. The Pentagon describes the two sites as defensive and unrelated to Russia, but the Kremlin believes they could be used to shoot down Russian rockets or to fire offensive cruise missiles at Moscow.

On Wednesday, Russia announced further troop withdrawals and Ukraine signaled a willingness to forgo its ambitions to join NATO, a critical issue in the current conflict. But tensions ratcheted up later in the day when a U.S. official said that Russian claims about a reduced troop presence were "false" and that

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ANTHONY KWAN/GETTY IMAGES

Covid Overwhelms Hong Kong

Hospitals are out of rooms as the city struggles to follow China's response playbook. Page A4.

Facing Doubts About His Wealth, Trump Produces New Figures

By MIKE MCINTIRE

On Tuesday evening, former President Donald J. Trump, rattled by news that his longtime accountants had declared that years of his financial statements were not reliable, issued a statement of self-defense with new claims about his wealth.

These, too, did not add up. In a rambling emailed message,

Mr. Trump referred to a "June 30, 2014 Statement of Financial Condition" prepared by the accounting firm, Mazars USA, showing that the year before his first presidential run his net worth had been \$5.8 billion. But that is not what he said back then.

When he declared his candidacy in 2015, he produced what he called his "Summary of Net Worth as of June 30, 2014" with a very dif-

Shifting Valuations as Legal Peril Mounts

ferent number: \$8.7 billion. A month later, he upped the ante, releasing a statement pronouncing that his "net worth is in excess of TEN BILLION DOLLARS."

The shape-shifting valuations,

even in the face of mounting legal peril with Mazars' decision to sever ties and disavow its past financial statements, get to the core of a problem for Mr. Trump. He has spent a lifetime bending reality to his will, often making it up as he went along, inventing facts and figures to support his needs in the moment. In fact, in his Tuesday email he suggested the intangible

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WEST SEES BUILDUP OF RUSSIAN FORCE, NOT A DRAWDOWN

U.S. and Allies Say Moscow Added 7,000 Troops Near Ukraine's Border

This article is by Andrew E. Kramer, Anton Troianovski and Michael D. Shear.

KYIV, Ukraine — Tensions over Ukraine abruptly ratcheted up on Wednesday as Western officials accused Russia of lying about whether it had really begun pulling back troops from the Ukrainian border.

After days marked by flickers of hope that the conflict might be resolved peacefully, a senior American official, who refused to be quoted by name, told reporters that far from winding down its deployment, Moscow had added more than 7,000 combatants.

Western allies expressed similar doubts about the Russian claims. The American official directly accused Russia of lying, saying there was fresh evidence it was mobilizing for war.

British military officials said Wednesday they had spotted Russian armored vehicles, helicopters and a field hospital moving toward Ukraine's border.

"Contrary to their claims, Russia continues to build up military capabilities near Ukraine," Lt. Gen. Jim Hockenhull, the British chief of defense intelligence, said in a statement. "Russia has the military mass in place to conduct an invasion of Ukraine."

The Western warnings contrasted sharply with Russia's attempts to show that it was de-escalating.

Only hours earlier, the Russian

Defense Ministry had released a video of a military convoy departing Crimea over the 12-mile bridge to Russia that President Vladimir V. Putin ordered built after the peninsula's 2014 annexation. And the Kremlin's spokesman praised the United States for being willing to negotiate and for offering constructive ideas.

With the sudden turn of events Wednesday night, the outlines of any diplomatic solution to the crisis once again looked very hard to discern.

In recent days, American officials had pointedly declined to accept Russian claims of a pullback.

On Wednesday, Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, in an interview on MSNBC, said that the military units critical for an invasion force were continuing to move "toward the border, not away from the border."

To some extent, the battle between the West and Moscow over Ukraine has been one of signaling. To keep international pressure on Russia high, the United States has repeatedly declared that an invasion was near, even imminent. Moscow, in turn, has repeatedly accused Washington of exaggerating the threat.

But beyond the verbal dueling, real troops have been repositioned.

In Brussels, defense ministers from the NATO countries discussed ways to reinforce military

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Adams's Budget Spares Police But Shaves \$4 Billion Elsewhere

By EMMA G. FITZSIMMONS

Mayor Eric Adams, who rode a tough-on-crime platform to victory in November, has spent his first few weeks in office being buffeted by a spate of violent crimes in New York City, including the killing of two police officers.

On Wednesday, Mr. Adams got his chance to seize the initiative and detail his vision for the city, using his first executive budget proposal to showcase his intention to curtail some of the city's free spending, cutting funding to most city agencies and pointedly avoiding an increase in the police budget. He argued that he could improve public safety without increasing police spending by moving officers from desks to the streets.

"We're going to redeploy our

manpower, we're going to make sure that everyone who is supposed to be on the streets doing their job is doing their job, and then we will make the analysis if we have to put more money into it," Mr. Adams said at a news conference at City Hall.

Mr. Adams's \$98.5 billion spending plan marked a break with his predecessor, Bill de Blasio. Mr. Adams called for a gradual reduction in a municipal work force that had risen to a historic high under Mr. de Blasio, proposing to cut 10,000 workers through attrition and unfilled vacancies. The mayor also required most city agencies to cut spending by 3 percent, and proposed adding

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Governor by Chance, Hochul Is Now the Democrats' Favorite

By NICHOLAS FANDOS

When Kathy Hochul unexpectedly ascended to the governor's mansion last August, elevated after her predecessor's sexual harassment scandal, she hardly resembled the kind of political powerhouse New Yorkers were accustomed to — brash, self-aggrandizing, male and from downstate.

Many in Gotham's tight-knit political class immediately assigned an asterisk to her name and predicted that Ms. Hochul, a moderate from Buffalo with a penchant for making friends but not headlines, would struggle in a pitched primary battle to hold onto the job.

Six months later, they could



DAVE SANDERS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

scarcely look more wrong.

Instead, Ms. Hochul set out on a brisk campaign to corner party leaders and crowd out potential rivals that was as ruthlessly efficient as it was exceedingly congenial. Leveraging the powers of her office as well as her own self-

Continued on Page A16

INTERNATIONAL A4-10

Another Prince on Hot Seat

The London police said they were looking into allegations that a charity led by Charles, a day after Prince Andrew settled a sexual assault suit. PAGE A6

SPORTS B7-15

The Testosterone Issue

A transgender college swimmer has revived a debate over who should participate in women's events. PAGE B10

Dizzying Display of Strength

The quadruple jump has become a staple of women's skating. And nobody does it better than the Russians. PAGE B8

BUSINESS B1-6

The Paradoxes of Libel Law

The Sarah Palin lawsuit may have started the effort to curtail the constitutional protections of journalists. PAGE B1

Order Your Garage Door First

Home construction is booming, but supply chain hang-ups have left new houses lacking a basic item. PAGE B1



NATIONAL A11-19

New Front in Admission Wars

A conservative legal group is behind lawsuits challenging elite public high schools that change admissions policies to diversify the student body. PAGE A18

Turning to TikTok for Justice

Feeling ignored by the media and the police, families and friends of Black women are building their own missing-persons operations online. PAGE A11

Covid and Mental Health

Those who caught the virus were more likely to be diagnosed with psychiatric disorders over the next year than the uninfected were, a study found. PAGE A15

ARTS C1-8

Starting a New Journey

For the deaf actor Troy Kotsur, an Oscar nomination for "CODA" has been historic but also healing. "I didn't realize what a big step forward this would be," he tells Kyle Buchanan. PAGE C1

Dismantling Stereotypes

The drumming and dancing of the Afro-Colombian company Sankofa Danazfro reawakens the Joyce Theater with "Accommodating Lie," a work about the display of Black bodies. PAGE C5

OPINION A22-23

Jamelle Bouie

PAGE A22



THURSDAY STYLES D1-6

Some Stylish Momentum

Vanessa Friedman found lots of anarchic creative energy at Fashion Week, as well as one well-dressed mayor. Above, from Jason Wu's show. PAGE D4



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RAMS PLAYERS celebrate their Super Bowl win over the Cincinnati Bengals during a Wednesday rally at the L.A. Memorial Coliseum. **WALLY SEALIZ** Los Angeles Times

S.F. vote signals a larger upheaval

MARK Z. BARABAK

San Francisco is quite familiar with earthquakes, and what happened Tuesday — the ouster of three extreme lefties from the Board of Education — was not one of those.

Earthquakes are sudden and unexpected. The result of Tuesday's recall was neither. The removal of board President Gabriela López and members Faauuga Moliga and Allison Collins was destined the moment the city's liberal establishment, led by Mayor London Breed, joined the effort along with several discontented millionaires, who threw in loads of cash.

What happened Tuesday was more a foreshock, a warning — as if Democrats needed any more of those — that November's midterm elections could be very bad. [See Barabak, A9]



'A EUPHORIC FEELING'

BY MARISA GERBER, PRISCILLA VEGA, JONAH VALDEZ, CONNOR SHEETS AND ANDREW J. CAMPA

There were cheers and bullhorns and speakers blaring Dr. Dre. Open-air, double-decker buses in brilliant Los Angeles Rams blue transporting the championship team and blasting confetti over a rapturous crowd. The smell of bacon sizzling from street vendors' grills. Sunshine and palm trees and celebration.

On Sunday, the Rams won their first Super Bowl as Los Angeles' team, defeating the Cincinnati Bengals 23-20 at

Thousands of fans celebrate the Rams' Super Bowl victory with a parade and rally

SoFi Stadium. And on Wednesday, thousands of grateful fans came out to celebrate with a petite parade — 1.1 miles, around 45 minutes, no floats, no horses, no marching bands that started at the Shrine Auditorium and ended in a rally at the L.A. Memorial Coliseum.

Angelenos young and old lined the parade route. And so did police officers on motorcycles, lights flashing. Fans watched from building ledges and office windows and garages. To get a better look at cigar-chomping football players and cheerleaders waving pompoms, they climbed [See Rams, A14]

'RUN IT BACK': Parade mantra hints McVay, Donald may return, Dylan Hernández writes. **SPORTS, D1**

West sees no Russia troop withdrawal

U.S. says Kremlin has boosted border forces. Putin presses issue of Ukraine's NATO bid.

BY NOAH BIERMAN AND NABIH BULOZ

KYIV, Ukraine — American and European officials cast doubt Wednesday on Russia's claims that it was withdrawing troops from the Ukrainian border in an apparent attempt to defuse tensions that have unsettled the region and rekindled a



ARMY TANKS, shown in a photo taken from video, are returning to their bases after drills, Russia says.

Cold War-style standoff with the West.

"Unfortunately, there's a difference between what Russia says and what it does, and what we're seeing is no meaningful pullback," Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken said on ABC News. "On the contrary, we continue to see forces, especially forces that would be in the vanguard of any renewed aggression against Ukraine, continuing to be at the border, to mass at the border."

Blinken's comments, coupled with similar warnings from NATO, under- [See Ukraine, A4]

Claim of racist talk roils D.A.'s office

Former colleague says top O.C. prosecutor made bigoted remarks while discussing case.

BY HANNAH FRY

An Orange County prosecutor who was fired last week previously wrote a memo detailing racist comments he alleged his boss, Dist. Atty. Todd Spitzer, made while discussing the case of a Black murder de-

fendant, according to copies of the internal documents obtained by The Times.

Former prosecutor Ebrahim Baytieh alleged in a memo dated Dec. 3 that during a meeting of top prosecutors on Oct. 1, Spitzer said that he knows "many black people who get themselves out of their bad circumstances and bad situations by only dating white women."

Spitzer was discussing the case of a Black man, Jamon Buggs, charged with [See Prosecutor, A9]

Gascón altering juveniles policy

L.A. County district attorney has revised his ban on trying youths as adults. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Weather
Sunny and windy.
L.A. Basin: 73/48. **B6**

Red carpet for cryptocurrency

Blockchain gets a star-studded turn in Super Bowl ads. **CALENDAR, E1**



BEIJING OLYMPICS

Born in California, medaling for China

BY STEPHANIE YANG

BEIJING — In one Winter Olympics sweep, Eileen Gu has solidified her place as one of the biggest sports stars in the world, not to mention one of the most politically divisive.

The California native has won two medals competing for China and is going for a third in the women's freestyle skiing halfpipe on Friday, known to be her best event. But Gu's success comes in tandem with a highly controversial Winter Games and an increasingly strained relationship between China and the U.S., directly challenging her insistence that sports, and her skiing career, are apolitical.

Gu, 18, has posted win after win in international competition ahead of the Olympics. She's one of the most visible athletes in China and beyond, having [See Gu, A6]



OLYMPIAN EILEEN GU, 18, who decided in 2019 to compete for her mother's home country of China, reacts after winning a silver medal in slopestyle.

Uyghurs in Southland call Games 'shameful'

Abuses in Xinjiang should have disqualified China as host, they say. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

BUSINESS INSIDE: U.S. has power to cut cancer drug's price, Michael Hiltzik writes. **A10**

The Washington Post

Prices may vary in areas outside metropolitan Washington.

SU V1 V2 V3 V4

Mostly cloudy 70/53 • Tomorrow: Partly sunny, windy 56/31 B8

Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2022 • B2

Arbery's killers sent racist texts, FBI reveals

Analyst details use of slurs, violent language at men's hate-crimes trial

BY HANNAH KNOWLES,
DAVID NAKAMURA
AND MARGARET COKER

One of the three White men convicted in the murder of a Black man and called him the n-word in a text message, according to the FBI.

Another shared a meme that claimed "White Irish slaves were treated worse than any other race in the U.S." The third, Travis McMichael, who fatally shot Arbery in February 2020, spoke about killing Black people and wrote in a message that he loved his job because "zero n—rs work with me."

"We used to walk around committing hate crimes all day," he wrote in another text conversation a few months before the shooting.

The second day of testimony in the federal hate-crimes trial over Arbery's death opened Wednesday with an FBI analyst detailing dozens of racist social media posts and messages allegedly sent by the three men who chased and killed Arbery, a 25-year-old Black man, in their coastal Georgia neighborhood in early 2020.

Prosecutors are seeking to prove that McMichael, his father, Greg McMichael, and their neighbor William "Roddie" Bryan attacked Arbery out of racial bias. The men have said they suspected him of wrongdoing. All three were convicted of murder last fall and sentenced to life in prison, with Bryan eligible for parole after 30 years.

Their murder trial, in state court before a nearly all-White jury, began Tuesday.

SEE TRIAL ON A6

At the front lines, Ukrainian troops watch and wait



MICHAEL ROBINSON/CHRYZ/THE WASHINGTON POST

Ukrainian soldiers haul logs to shore up trenches' walls for their standoff with Russia-backed separatists near Novotroitske. Things are relatively quiet, but the troops know that could change at any time. **Story, A10**

Russia, U.S. clash on troop activity

DIFFERING CLAIMS OF PULLBACK, BUILDUP

Contradictory remarks deepen Ukraine dispute

BY JOHN HUDSON,
ROBYN DAVIS,
EMILY RAUHALA
AND RACHEL PANNETT

The United States and Russia offered alternative versions of reality on Wednesday with Moscow announcing a partial withdrawal of forces from Ukraine's border and Washington responding that the Kremlin added troops and weapons critical for a full-scale invasion.

The contradictory remarks dampened hopes that the two adversaries might be closer to resolving the standoff and added to the uncertainty about the trajectory of the crisis.

"Unfortunately there's a difference between what Russia says and what it does, and what we're seeing is no meaningful pullback," Secretary of State Antony Blinken told ABC's "Good Morning America." "On the contrary, we continue to see forces, especially forces that would be in the vanguard of any renewed aggression against Ukraine, continuing to be at the border, to mass at the border."

Blinken's remarks were echoed by other Western officials, including NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, who said Ukraine was "on the border."

Ukraine's military, which has been fighting Russia-backed separatists, said it was "on the border."

Foreign policy: Munich meeting to test Harris' political mettle. **A7**
Weary nation: Ukrainians mark Unity Day amid uncertainty. **A12**

Clyburn wields his clout for Supreme Court pick

BY CLEVE R. WOOTSON JR.
AND MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR

Most nights when he's in Washington, House Majority Whip James E. Clyburn (D-S.C.) sits down to dinner with Cedric L. Richmond, one of President Biden's closest advisers, at the members-only National Democratic Club.

"Even when Jim and I disagree, I know where he is, and I can always, for the most part, articulate his thoughts on a particular

issue," said Richmond, a former congressman from Louisiana who co-chaired Biden's 2020 presidential campaign. The long-standing dinners have morphed into an informal way for the White House to understand Clyburn's thinking on issues of import.

Biden, 79, and Clyburn, 61, have been friends for decades, and the South Carolina lawmaker's endorsement helped the former vice president overcome a string of damaging early-state losses to win the state's Democratic primary in

2020, saving his political career and putting him on course to win the White House.

That victory has given Clyburn tremendous influence, both allies and critics say, marked by private dinners with Richmond and public interviews where he has made it clear whom he wants Biden to appoint to the Supreme Court.

Although Clyburn's unabashed advocacy for U.S. District Judge J. Michelle Childs has quietly irked colleagues with differing opinions, the congressman insisted in

an interview that his push is more suggestion than ultimatum. He said he has earned the right to advocate for a Black woman who represents the values of the voters in his state — a product of public universities and academic scholarships who he says would garner bipartisan support.

"I always said it would be a plus, but it's not a must," Clyburn said of his support for Childs during an interview at his office in the U.S. Capitol last week. "I don't believe

SEE CLYBURN ON A18

Shattered dreams for Afghan Fulbright hopefuls

As program halts, top students stuck under Taliban rule feel abandoned by the Biden administration

BY SUDARSHAN RAGHAVAN

KABUL — They are Afghanistan's best and brightest, part of a young generation of future scientists, journalists, climatologists, government officials, educators and business leaders keen to rebuild their country at a critical juncture in its history.

At least those were the futures they wished for when they became semifinalists for a prestigious Fulbright scholarship to pursue graduate studies and research in the United States. Now, that pathway has vanished. On Jan. 29, after waiting for months filled with hope and expectation, the 140 Afghans received a crushing email from the program run by the State Department:

"Regrettably ... " the correspondence began.

Today, like thousands of Afghans aligned with the United States, they feel abandoned.

SEE FULBRIGHT ON A14



Mohammad Mokhtar, 28, left, listed Columbia University as his top pick for a master's degree in journalism. Terina Yusufzal, 24, hoped to study systems engineering in a U.S. graduate program.



SUDARSHAN RAGHAVAN/THE WASHINGTON POST

A convict got a second chance. Then he was gone.

Attorneys for a D.C. man with disabilities say he was released from prison without a plan

BY EMILY DAVIES

She was waiting at Union Station to see her cousin for the first time in 28 years, trying to figure out how to catch him up on decades of change.

Their family, once united under one roof, had moved and married and given birth. LeDroit Park in Northwest Washington, where they had grown up together, was no longer a Black enclave. Everyone had smartphones now.

Michelle Royster, 45, was ready to integrate him into the life she had built in his absence — a chance she never thought she would have after Kevin Flythe was convicted of murder.

Flythe was released from a prison in West Virginia in late January, five months after he suffered a stroke that left him barely verbal and partially paralyzed. A judge reduced his sentence under a new early-release

amendment in the District, which means that Thursday, Flythe, 52, was supposed to be on a bus, on the way to his second chance.

Or so his cousin thought, as she stood outside the train station in the icy air.

Royster waited until the wee hours of Friday, Jan. 28, scanning the ebbs and flows of travelers for a face that would never appear. Two weeks later, she was still looking for him, more desperate, angry and grief-stricken by the day.

Flythe's family and attorneys have filed two missing persons reports and galvanized a village of public defenders to conduct a sweeping search that spans multiple cities. Fearing the worst, they point to the Federal Bureau of Prisons for allegedly failing to respond to their efforts ahead of Flythe's release to put a plan in

SEE FLYTHE ON A18

IN THE NEWS



LINTAO ZHANG/GETTY IMAGES

Heartbreak in Beijing The U.S. men's hockey team is ousted from the Olympics by Slovakia in a shootout loss that made grown men cry. **D1**

Md. backlog delays funerals As bodies linger at the state medical examiner's office, funeral homes are waiting weeks for remains. **B1**

THE NATION Voters in San Francisco ousted three school board members in a move fueled by closed schools and actions related to racial justice. **A2**
The move by the Biden administration to mail out free coronavirus tests was largely lauded. Critics say the rollout disadvantaged already hard-hit minority communities. **A3**
A watchdog report found that Ryan Zinke broke ethics rules while serving as President Donald Trump's interior secretary by maintaining improper ties with land

developers. **A4**
The gunman who took hostages at a Texas synagogue last month tried to buy drugs and a machine gun, an FBI agent testified. **A7**
A federal judge zeroed in on whether Oath Keepers leader Stewart Rhodes directly ordered members to break into the Capitol. **A7**
THE WORLD A reliance on a "zero covid" strategy meant that Hong Kong's hospitals were unprepared when the virus finally burst in. **A8**
The European Union

can withhold funds when countries fail to uphold the rule of law, a court ruled. **A13**
THE ECONOMY The impasse on Democrats' spending agenda has stifled clean energy expansion as hoped-for tax credits hover out of reach. **A15**
Parag Agrawal, who became Twitter's CEO less than three months ago, will be taking "a few weeks" of parental leave, the company said. **A17**
THE REGION A Swiss man with blood ties to a Confederate war criminal said he wants to free the family name from "the stain." **B1**

A Maryland judge announced he would consider whether a bid protest for a highway project was filed in time. **B1**
Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin signed into law a measure requiring public schools to make masks optional. **B1**
A D.C. police lieutenant was suspended over alleged improper contacts with a prominent member of the Proud Boys extremist group. **B4**
OBITUARIES F.J. O'Rourke, 74, was an incendiary satirist and commentator who began as a member of the counterculture but turned toward libertarian conservatism. **B6**

INSIDE



LOCAL LIVING Kids won't listen? Music might help. Songs can allow you to bond with children in a way more in tune with their development.

STYLE Saints be praised Mary Magdalene and Jesus are meet-cute teens in the hilarious biblical musical "A.D. 16" at Olney Theatre. **C1**

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OBITUARIES C4
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deportes

El sello del gol

La primera alegría para River y Boca

Julián Álvarez hizo tres en el 4-1 a Patronato; Villa, los dos del xeneize (2-1) ante Aldosivi.



SPENCER TRAE OTRA VEZ AL CINE EL AURA ETERNA DE LADY DI

—espectáculos

La actriz de *Crepúsculo*, Kristen Stewart, encarna a la princesa de Gales en la película de Pablo Larraín, que se estrena hoy; se perfila para el Oscar.

JONES HUALA ESTÁ PRÓFUGO Y CREEN QUE VOLVIÓ AL PAÍS

—política

Después de que la Corte chilena revocó su excarcelación, es buscado por la Justicia; sospechan que estaría escondido en el sur argentino. **Página 14**

LA NACION

JUEVES 17 DE FEBRERO DE 2022 | LANACION.COM.AR

La Justicia dejó firme el procesamiento de Cristina en el caso de los cuadernos

ASOCIACIÓN ILÍCITA. El máximo tribunal penal desestimó los recursos de la vicepresidenta

La Cámara de Casación Penal desestimó los recursos defensivos de Cristina Kirchner que obstruían el avance de la causa de los cuadernos de las coimas y dejó firme el procesamiento de la vicepresidenta, acusada en ese expediente de liderar una asociación ilícita.

El fallo fue firmado por los jueces

Daniel Petrone y Diego Barroetaveña, en mayoría, con la disidencia de la jueza Ana María Figueroa. Confirmaron así el procesamiento de la jefa del Frente de Todos y el embargo sobre sus bienes dictado por el fallecido juez Claudio Bonadio en 2019 y confirmado por la Cámara Federal.

El tramo principal de la causa cuadernos, que escribía el chofer Oscar Centeno, tiene más de 100 acusados. Queda todavía un largo proceso hasta llegar al juicio oral, cuyo comienzo podría demorarse más allá de este año justamente por la magnitud sin precedente de la acusación. **Página 8**

EL ESCENARIO

Una valla menos en una larga carrera

Diego Cabot

Página 9

La magia de Van Gogh fascina a multitudes

cultura— La muestra inmersiva de Van Gogh levantó ayer el telón en el predio de la Rural. Gente de todas las edades disfrutó de la experiencia que busca conectar al espectador con la obra y el espíritu del genial artista holandés. **Página 25**



En el primer día, muchos se emocionaron ante la experiencia que propone la muestra *Imagine Van Gogh*

GERARDO VIERCOVICH

Guzmán ve más cerca la firma del acuerdo con el FMI

CUMBRE. El directorio del organismo se reunió para analizar detalles del programa argentino

El directorio del Fondo Monetario Internacional (FMI) volvió a discutir ayer el caso argentino, en un encuentro fuera de la agenda pública. El Gobierno y el Ministerio de Economía tomaron el dato como un guiño en favor del acuerdo para refinanciar la deuda por 45.000 millones de dólares que acordó en 2018 el gobierno de Mauricio Macri.

El ministro de Economía, Martín Guzmán, dijo antes de esa reunión que el Gobierno mandará al Congreso un proyecto de ley "con todos los detalles" sobre el programa que se pacte con el FMI. "Es un sinsentido la idea de que habrá documentos secretos", añadió. **Página 10**

Feletti reclama más intervención del Estado para frenar la inflación

Carlos Manzoni

Página 15

Cuatro adolescentes, tras el crimen de Caseros

INVESTIGACIÓN. Uno de ellos era buscado por matar a un agente

Los cuatro asaltantes que el lunes mataron al comerciante Rolando Villafañe en su fábrica de Caseros acaban de cumplir 18 años. Al menos dos de ellos tienen antecedentes. Y uno era buscado desde noviembre por el asesinato del chofer de una patrulla policial, crimen ocurrido tras una persecución que terminó en Fuerte Apache. Ese sospechoso era, entonces, menor de edad, según fuentes del caso. **Página 26**

Tragedia en Brasil: un alud causó al menos 80 muertos

LLUVIAS. El río de barro y piedras dejó a más de 300 personas sin hogar en Petrópolis. **Página 6**

Entre el Covid y la ansiedad. Más rescates por problemas de salud en el Aconcagua

De 1700 ascensos, debieron ser asistidos el 10% de los escaladores

MENDOZA. Fue una de las temporadas de escalamiento más cortas de los últimos años y estuvo marcada por inconvenientes de salud. En solo un mes y medio, intentaron

hacer cumbre en el Coloso de América 1700 montañistas; de ellos, cerca de 170 debieron ser rescatados y atendidos por distintos problemas de salud. El Covid no fue el único;

también hubo cuadros de edema pulmonar por altura, que los especialistas atribuyeron a la falta de aclimatamiento y a la ansiedad por escalar en menos tiempo. **Página 22**



Moradores, bombeiros e agentes da Defesa Civil buscam sobreviventes no Morro da Oficina em Petrópolis, região serrana do Rio, após chuva deixar dezenas de mortos Eduardo Anzellini/Folhapress

Chuva mata ao menos 94 em Petrópolis

Cidade no RJ com histórico de desastres foi arrasada em seis horas; mais de 400 estão desalojados e 35 desaparecidos

Seis horas de temporal iniciado na noite de terça (15) devastaram Petrópolis (RJ) e deixaram ao menos 94 mortos, incluindo duas crianças, além de 439 desalojados. Havia ainda 35 desaparecidos, e as buscas prosseguem.

A Defesa Civil contabilizou 269 deslizamentos de terra e 56 outras ocorrências, como desabamentos, causados pela força da água. A tempestade equivale, segundo autoridades, a toda a chuva observada na cidade em 30 dias.

A previsão é de temporais até amanhã. A prefeitura decretou calamidade pública, com o município em alerta máximo. Moradores relatam um cenário de muita lama, casas destruídas, ferro retorcido e carros amontoados.

Na véspera da tragédia, a Defesa Civil estadual recebeu alerta para possíveis deslizamentos na região e comunicou às autoridades municipais. As sirenes que avisam os moradores foram acionadas depois que a água já caía.

O governador Cláudio Castro (PL) nega que tenha recebido avisos. Em janeiro de 2011, tempestades na região serrana do Rio deixaram 918 mortos. Estima-se que 20% da população de Petrópolis viva em áreas de risco.

Elenir de Souza viu ontem ruir em minutos o que construiu em 38 anos. "Meu bairro acabou." Cotidiano B1 e B2

Moradores deveriam ter sido removidos após alerta dias antes, diz cientista B3

Somos solidários à Rússia, declara Bolsonaro a Putin

Em visita a Moscou no meio de uma crise entre Rússia e Ucrânia, o presidente Jair Bolsonaro disse a Vladimir Putin que seu governo é solidário ao Kremlin. Ontem, o brasileiro tentou associar sua viagem à retirada de tropas da fronteira. Mundo A10

Flávia Boggio Garimparia artesanal gourmet

Assim como batizam abacate de "avocado na casqueta", chamaram o garimpo predatório de "mineração artesanal". Uma forma gourmetizada de dizer: "Vamos acelerar a destruição do país acabando com rios e igarapés". Já é prática do governo dar nome pomposo a falcaturas e desastres. Ilustrada C6



Maxim Shemetov/Reuters

HOMENAGEM A HERÓIS COMUNISTAS

Jair Bolsonaro, que declara com frequência sua ojeriza ao comunismo, segue a liturgia de visitas de Estado em Moscou e deixa flores no Túmulo do Soldado Desconhecido, monumento a militares soviéticos mortos na Segunda Guerra. Mundo A10

EDITORIAIS A2

Etapa vencida

Sobre avanço da privatização da Eletrobras no TCU.

Disque STF

Acerca de decisão contrária a medida de Dames.

SP terá vacinação de alunos em escolas a partir deste sábado

O governador de São Paulo, João Doria (PSDB), anunciou que enviará equipes de vacinação contra a Covid a escolas públicas e particulares dos dias 19 a 25 deste mês. Os responsáveis terão que assinar termo de permissão. B4

Alta da dívida vai acelerar com subsídio a combustível, diz IIF

O Brasil dificilmente evitará o crescimento acelerado da dívida nos próximos cinco anos se adotar cortes tributários para tentar baixar o preço dos combustíveis. A visão é de artigo do IIF (Instituto de Finanças Internacionais). A13

Esporte B7

Corinthians evita apostas para não errar mais no técnico

Ilustrada C1

'Licorice Pizza' pode dar a Paul Thomas Anderson seu Oscar

Guia C7

Teste analisa quatro plataformas de streaming gratuitas

Turismo C8

Resorts de esqui na Europa oferecem até feijão para brasileiros

Presidente chama ministros do STF de 'adolescentes'

Política A5

Emilio Fúster y Arnaldo Giuzzio se reunieron con agentes de Inteligencia brasileños

Llamativa demora fiscal para allanamientos a tabacaleras

Titular anticontrabando lo solicitó en el 2018 y no recibió respuesta. Afirma que los contrabandistas de cigarrillo usan las mismas rutas del narcotráfico y tráfico de armas.

PÁGINAS 6 y 7

Empresas están en delicada situación
Vialeras reclaman el pago de deuda de USD 250 millones al MOPC

PÁGINA 15

Mañana llegan dosis de Pfizer
Desde el primer día de clases vacunarán a los niños en escuelas

PÁGINA 2

Vence plazo para Nenecho
Firma amiga de la Municipalidad infló el costo de las carnes

PÁGINA 4



¡VACUNATE!
LA VACUNA CONTRA EL COVID ES SEGURA

Olimpia a segunda fase

Copa Libertadores. El Decano clasificó a otra etapa luego de ganar 2-0 al César Vallejo de Perú en el Defensores. En la foto, Guillermo Paiva festeja su gol.

PÁGINAS 47 y 48

Fretes es presidente y Ramírez Candia no aceptó vicepresidencia 2ª
Elección de autoridades de la Corte Suprema desata una crisis interna

PÁGINA 40

Está ligado a firmas que se dedican al blindaje de vehículos
Narco detenido en Brasil, vinculado a telaraña de empresas en Paraguay

PÁGINA 41

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PETROBRAS LUBRAX TOYOTOSHI

LE FIGARO

« Sans la liberté de blâmer, il n'est point d'éloge flatteur » Beaumarchais



PATRIMOINE
COURSON : LE PARADIS
DES PLANTES
EST À VENDRE **PAGE 30**

LE FIGARO LITTÉRAIRE
QUAND LES ÉCRIVAINS
RETOURNENT EN ENFANCE
NOTRE SUPPLÉMENT



MAJORITÉ
François Bayrou :
« Le président
doit incarner
l'élan vital
retrouvé du pays »
PAGE 5

RN
Nicolas Bay :
« J'ai décidé
de m'engager
aux côtés
d'Éric Zemmour »
PAGE 6

EUROPE
État de droit :
Bruxelles au pied
du mur pour
sanctionner
les violations
PAGE 7

FOOTBALL
Kyllian Mbappé
met Madrid
et l'Europe
à ses pieds
PAGE 13

CHAMPS LIBRES

- En Israël, un bataillon religieux aux sulfureux états de service
- Les chroniques d'Eugénie Bastié et de Luc Ferry
- Le tête à tête de Charles Jaigu
- Les tribunes de Pierre Lellouche et de David Lisnard
- L'analyse de Ronan Planchon

PAGES 16 À 19

**FIGARO OUI
FIGARO NON**

Réponses à la question de mercredi :
Faut-il supprimer le passe vaccinal ?

NON 30% OUI 70%

TOTAL DE VOTANTS : 196 902

Votez aujourd'hui sur lefigaro.fr
L'Europe doit-elle se doter de moyens pour envoyer des astronautes dans l'espace ?

JEAN-PIERRE DELGARDE/DOMAINE DE COURSON

Sahel : la France tourne la page de l'opération Barkhane

En mauvais termes avec la junte au pouvoir à Bamako, Paris et ses alliés européens s'apprêtent à réduire leur dispositif de lutte antiterroriste, qui va être redéployé dans les pays voisins du Mali.

Lors d'un dîner organisé mercredi soir à l'Élysée, les principaux acteurs internationaux de l'intervention militaire au Mali devaient s'accorder sur un constat : il est devenu impossible de poursuivre en l'état les opérations

Barkhane et Takuba (la mission de soutien européenne), engagées dans la lutte contre les groupes djihadistes au Sahel. La fin de Barkhane va donc être entérinée, mettant un terme à neuf ans de présence militaire française au

Mali sur un constat d'échec à la fois tactique et politique. Les coups portés contre les groupes djihadistes ne sont pas parvenus à éliminer la menace islamiste, et les efforts des soldats de Barkhane n'ont pas enrayé un senti-

ment antifrancophone croissant dans la population. Les forces françaises devraient être réduites de moitié (à moins de 2500 hommes) et le dispositif revu de fond en comble. Il devrait désormais s'appuyer principalement sur le Niger.

→ L'ARMÉE FRANÇAISE CHERCHE À DÉMENTIR LE SENTIMENT D'ÉCHEC
→ LA MAURITANIE ENTEND VELLER SUR LE G5
→ AU MALI, LA FUITE EN AVANT ANTIFRANÇAISE
PAGES 2, 3 ET L'ÉDITORIAL



Clément Noël, slalomeur en or

Le Vosgien de 24 ans a décroché la quatrième médaille d'or française aux Jeux de Pékin, au terme d'une deuxième manche de slalom parfaitement maîtrisée. La consécration dans l'une des épreuves reines des JO d'hiver. **PAGE 12**

ÉDITORIAL par Philippe Gélie pgelie@lefigaro.fr

Au revoir, Bamako

Pour la France, le plus commode serait de tirer la leçon de son échec au Mali en levant le camp une fois pour toutes. Après une décennie passée à traquer les djihadistes dans les sables sahéliens, tombés de 53 de nos soldats, la plus longue opération extérieure française depuis la guerre d'Algérie a atteint le bout de sa logique. Nous ne sommes plus les bienvenus dans ce pays qui nous avait appelés au secours en 2012 : la junte portée au pouvoir par un double coup d'État, les mercenaires de Poutine devenus ses alliés et les combattants islamistes eux-mêmes sont complices pour nous en chasser. Qu'il en soit ainsi : au revoir, Bamako ! Mais la guerre antiterroriste n'est pas de celles qu'on peut désertier : elle s'impose à ceux qu'elle frappe et les rattrape quand ils cherchent à s'y dérober. Cela donne une justification à Emmanuel Macron pour « ouvrir une nouvelle page de l'engagement international » au Sahel, habillage politique d'une déroute qui ne doit pas ressembler à Kaboul - au risque de jeter son ombre sur la campagne présidentielle. Avec les partenaires africains et européens qui lui restent, Paris entend « redéployer » son dispositif pour au

moins contenir les bandes islamistes qui sillonnent la région des trois frontières (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger) et cherchent à s'étendre vers le sud, du Sénégal à la Côte d'Ivoire et au Bénin.

On peut douter des chances de succès de cet exercice d'acrobatie militaire, mené avec moitié moins de troupes qu'aujourd'hui sur une zone vaste comme dix fois la France. Il

Le Mali sera bientôt une partie du problème djihadiste

paraît écrit que la junte interdira toute incursion étrangère sur son territoire (dont près des deux tiers échappent à son contrôle) et négociera directement avec les groupes affiliés à Daech et al-Qaïda, leur offrant de facto un sanctuaire. De contributeur (même récalcitrant) à la solution, le Mali sera bientôt une partie du problème. Ses militaires se croient sans doute assez forts avec leurs nouveaux amis de Wagner, mercenaires russes contents de se payer sur la bête, mais c'est tout le pays perclus de sanctions qui risque de devenir un trou noir islamiste. Ce jour-là, à qui en appellera Bamako ?

Dettes, déficit : le rappel à l'ordre de la Cour des comptes

Avec la crise sanitaire, la France a vu sa dette s'alourdir de 560 milliards d'euros en deux ans pour atteindre 113,5 % du PIB, ce qui risque de fragiliser son crédit. À côté des mesures d'urgence déployées pour soutenir les entreprises, la Cour des comptes souligne que le gouvernement a laissé filer la dépense publique et creusé le déficit structurel de l'État. Elle appelle à des mesures de redressement énergiques et rapides. **PAGES 22 ET 23**

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Covid jab programme extended to cover all children aged five to 11

Hannah Devlin
Nicola Davis
Rowena Mason

All children aged five to 11 will be offered a Covid vaccine, ministers said yesterday in a long-awaited announcement, emphasising that parents would be expected to make their own decisions for their families. The vaccinations in England,

described by the health secretary Sajid Javid as “non-urgent”, will begin in April in pharmacies, GP surgeries and vaccination centres using Pfizer/BioNTech doses.

The decision followed a recommendation by the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) that jabs should be extended to younger children after months of deliberation over the benefits and risks. The move in England was

brought forward by several days after similar announcements from Wales and Scotland. Stormont’s health minister, Robin Swann, confirmed Northern Ireland will mirror the decision.

Emphasising that the final decision would be left to parents, Javid said: “The NHS will prepare to extend this non-urgent offer to all children during April so parents can, if they want, take up the offer to increase

protection against potential future waves of Covid-19 as we learn to live with this virus.”

A government source said vaccination for this age group “would not be pushed in the same way” as the offer for adults and older children, with parents being told it is available if wanted, but no campaign or attempts at persuasion.

The main purpose of offering the vaccine to younger children, the

JCVI said, was to protect against rare cases of severe illness in advance of a potential future coronavirus wave. However, the experts emphasised that the jabs should not be prioritised over other childhood vaccination programmes such as MMR and HPV, which have fallen behind during the pandemic.

In England, children are expected to be offered the jab through pharmacies, GPs and

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Storm after storm Winds of 100mph forecast to hit north and west

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PHOTOGRAPH: PETER BYRNE/PA WIRE

Prince of Wales may face police interview

Jamie Grierson
Vikram Dodd

The Prince of Wales is facing the prospect of being interviewed by police as a witness after Scotland Yard launched an investigation into an alleged cash-for-honours scandal.

The Prince’s Foundation, Charles’s charitable body, is at the heart of a criminal inquiry into allegations that a Saudi donor was offered help in securing a knighthood.

The announcement marked further turmoil for the royal family, coming a day after Charles’s brother, the Duke of York, reached an out-of-court settlement with a woman who accused him of sexually assaulting her when she was 17, which he denies.

Last year the Prince’s Foundation ordered an independent investigation which found that Charles’s former close aide Michael Fawcett coordinated with

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Oil firms ‘greenwash’ on climate, study finds

Damian Carrington
Environment editor

Accusations of greenwashing against major oil companies that claim to be in transition to clean energy are well-founded, according to the most comprehensive study to date.

The research, published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal, examined the records of ExxonMobil, Chevron,

Shell and BP, which together are responsible for more than 10% of global carbon emissions since 1965. The researchers analysed data over the 12 years up to 2020 and concluded that the company claims did not align with their actions, which include increasing rather than decreasing exploration.

The study found a sharp rise in mentions of “climate”, “low-carbon” and “transition” in annual

reports in recent years, especially for Shell and BP, and increasing pledges of action in strategies. But concrete actions were rare and the researchers said: “Financial analysis reveals a continuing business model dependence on fossil fuels along with insignificant and opaque spending on clean energy.”

Numerous previous studies have shown there are already more reserves of oil and

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