

## What's News

## Business &amp; Finance

U.S. stocks slid amid intensifying geopolitical tensions and the prospect of tighter monetary policy, with the S&P 500, Nasdaq and Dow losing 2.1%, 2.9% and 1.8%, respectively. **A1**

◆ **Tesla accused the SEC of harassing Musk** over his compliance with a regulatory settlement that sought to restrict his use of social media. **A1**

◆ **NHTSA is investigating Tesla** over customer complaints that its most popular vehicles brake for unexpected reasons. **B5**

◆ **Fed nominee Raskin is struggling** to overcome resistance from Republicans on a Senate panel for which she once served as a lawyer. **A2**

◆ **Walmart reported stronger sales** over the winter holiday shopping season and said it was absorbing higher costs. **B1**

◆ **Federal and state regulators have widened their probes** into how Activision's leadership handled workplace misconduct claims. **B1**

◆ **Federal prosecutors charged former Infinity Q investment chief James Velissaris** with securities fraud and obstruction of justice. **B10**

◆ **Amazon.com and Visa reached an agreement** allowing customers to use Visa credit cards across Amazon's websites and shops. **B3**

◆ **Airbus posted a record profit** while tempering expectations for sharply boosting production of its A320 jet. **B3**

◆ **Brazilian meatpacker JBS said it scrapped plans** to buy the rest of U.S. chicken processor Pilgrim's Pride. **B5**

## World-Wide

◆ **Violence escalated in eastern Ukraine** on Thursday, with Russian-backed separatists and authorities in Kyiv trading accusations over cease-fire violations along the front line, as Biden said Moscow was fabricating a pretext to invade its neighbor and warned the threat of a Russian incursion remained "very high." **A1, A7, A8**

◆ **A New York judge ruled** that Trump and two of his adult children must testify under oath as part of the New York attorney general's civil-fraud probe into the former president and his company. **A5**

◆ **The Senate passed a stop-gap bill** keeping the government funded beyond Friday after Democrats beat back measures related to drug paraphernalia and Covid-19 vaccine mandates. **A4**

◆ **Newly reported Covid-19 deaths** are starting to decline in the U.S., driven by drops in the Northeast and Midwest, offering the latest sign that the surge fueled by the Omicron variant is fading. **A3**

◆ **Officials are considering** citywide Covid testing in Hong Kong, adopting a strategy used in mainland China after Beijing demanded more be done to control an Omicron surge. **A9**

◆ **House Minority Leader McCarthy endorsed** a Republican challenger to incumbent Rep. Cheney of Wyoming after breaking with her over her criticism of Trump. **A4**

◆ **FERC voted to give more weight** to environmental concerns over new natural-gas pipeline projects in deciding whether to approve them. **A4**

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## Ottawa Police Begin to Arrest Protesters, Organizers



**OFF THE STREET:** Ottawa police arrested a man Thursday as they moved to end a weeklong blockade protesting Covid-19 mandates. Two of the organizers of the protest group, called the Freedom Convoy, were among those arrested. **A9**

## Dow Falls Over 600 Points, Turning in Worst Day of 2022

European crisis, prospect of higher rates trigger steep, broad-based losses

By GUNJAN BANERJEE AND ANNA HIRTENSTEIN

The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped more than 600 points Thursday, its steepest one-day loss of 2022, as geopolitical tensions and the prospect of tighter monetary policy roiled markets. The blue-chip index slid

622.24 points, or 1.8%, to 34312.03, its worst session on a points and percentage basis since November. The S&P 500 fell 94.75 points, or 2.1%, to 4380.26. The tech-focused Nasdaq Composite Index dropped 407.38 points, or 2.9%, to 13716.72.

The losses were broad based. Tesla fell 5.1%, Morgan Stanley dropped 4.9% and Meta Platforms Inc. slid 4.1%. Thursday's drop in the shares of Facebook's parent pushed the company out of the ranks of the 10 largest global companies by market value.

The stock is down 46% from its September peak.

Nine of the 11 sectors in the S&P 500 declined, led by the technology and communication-services groups, which both fell about 3%.

Stocks have come under pressure in recent sessions from the escalation in tensions between Russia and Western allies over Ukraine. The White House warned that a Russian invasion could be imminent, and diplomatic efforts have so far been inconclusive.

The geopolitical tensions come as investors have already

been grappling with high inflation and preparing for the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates this year. These shifts have whipsawed the stock and bond markets for much of the year.

"The absolute key factor for this year is going to be inflation and monetary policy," said David Spika, chief investment officer of GuideStone Capital.

**◆ Crisis is boon to U.S. natural-gas industry..... B1**  
**◆ Streetwise: Don't expect Fed help on Ukraine impact..... B1**



The average rate for a 30-year fixed-rate home mortgage increased to 3.92% for the week ended Thursday, according to Freddie Mac, up from 3.69% a week earlier. Mortgage rates have now climbed for three straight weeks and are at their highest level since May 2019. **A2**

## Mystery of Italy's Crown Jewels Is Who Gets to Keep Them

The government says the treasure belongs to the nation, not the ex-royals

By GIOVANNI LEGORANO

ROME—The crown jewels usually bring to mind kingly treasures. Yet for the past 75 years, Italy's own glittery trove was largely forgotten.

In the aftermath of World War II, Italy's last king and his family left Rome in a hurry after Italians voted to dump them for a republic in June 1946.

A few days after the referendum, a representative of the ousted family stashed the crown jewels in a deposit box at the Bank of Italy, where they remain.

Over decades, neither the ownership of the crown jewels

nor their fate was ever established. Nobody bothered to assess their worth. Then last year, the descendants of Umberto II, Italy's last king, decided they wanted them back.

"They have to be returned to the royal family. They are private jewels," said Sergio Orlandi, the lawyer for the former royal dynasty, the House of Savoia.

The government refused, saying the crown jewels belong to the Italian state. But unlike other royal assets seized in Italy, including villas and palaces, no postwar government ever got around to confiscating the jewels.

Please turn to page A10



No, mine.

## Americans Start Splurging On Travel and Experiences

By WILL FEUER

More people in the U.S. are satisfying their wanderlust and spending big to do it, companies say.

With daily new Covid-19 cases falling, restrictions easing and the strongest consumer finances in recent history, people are finally emerging from the pandemic eager to splurge on everything from travel and sports events to restaurants, cruises and theme parks, executives said.

Companies including Marriott International Inc., Expedia Group Inc., Coca-Cola Co. and MGM Resorts International told analysts recently that business is already improving from an Omicron dip and indications point to people eager to live large.

"Premium customers, who after being cooped up for 2020 and the first part of 2021, are traveling and spending again with a vengeance," Wynn Resorts Ltd. Chief Executive Craig Billings said Tuesday of the latest quarter.

As more people travel, Marriott is seeing greater demand for its high-end properties,

CEO Anthony Capuano said on a conference call with analysts Tuesday.

At Walt Disney Co.'s theme parks, business came roaring back in the most recent quarter, with revenue from both domestic and international parks more than doubling year-over-year. Attendance is still short of pre-pandemic levels, but those who are showing up are spending as much as 40% more per capita than in 2019, Chief Financial Officer Christine McCarthy said last week.

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## Tesla Criticizes SEC's Investigation of Musk

By DAVE MICHAELS

Tesla Inc. accused U.S. regulators of harassing Chief Executive Elon Musk over his compliance with a 2018 regulatory settlement that sought to restrict his use of social media.

In a letter filed Thursday with a federal judge who oversaw that settlement, attorneys for the company charged that the Securities and Exchange Commission is conducting undue investigations of Mr. Musk and Tesla. Earlier this month, the electric-car maker disclosed that regulators sent a subpoena last year that sought information showing how the company and its CEO complied with the terms of the deal.

The SEC hasn't distributed \$40 million in fine money to shareholders allegedly hurt by Mr. Musk's 2018 tweets that he planned to take Tesla private,

according to the letter. The SEC alleged that Mr. Musk's statements weren't truthful. The regulator's 2018 lawsuit eventually led to an unusual agreement that Tesla lawyers would preclear certain of the CEO's tweets and other public statements.

In December, U.S. District Judge Alison Nathan in Manhattan found that a company appointed to distribute money to shareholders hadn't sent required status reports and quarterly accounting statements to the court about its efforts. The company, Rust Consulting Inc., told the judge in January that it was still working with the SEC on the distribution plan.

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◆ Musk tweet compares Trudeau, Hitler..... A6  
◆ Tesla investigated over reports of brake problem..... B5

## Ukraine Violence Raises Prospect Of War

Moscow, Kyiv trade accusations of attacks on front line, as Biden cites 'very high' threat

Violence escalated in eastern Ukraine on Thursday, with Russian-backed separatists and authorities in Kyiv trading accusations over cease-fire violations along the front line, as President Biden said Moscow was fabricating a pretext to invade its neighbor and warned the threat of a Russian incursion remained "very high."

Adding to the tension, the Kremlin threatened in a letter to the U.S. to resort to unspecified "military-technical measures" if it didn't receive from the U.S. and its allies legally binding guarantees of its security, which include a pledge from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization that it will never allow Ukraine to join, as well as curbs on troop deployments in Eastern Europe.

At the United Nations, meanwhile, Russia formally leveled allegations that Russian leaders have repeated in recent weeks—that Ukraine is pursuing a "genocide" against Russian speakers. Western officials dismissed those accusations as a disinformation effort.

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◆ Blinken challenges Russia over Ukraine..... A7  
◆ Biden relies on allies after early missteps..... A8  
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## Crypto alarm

Sense of menace invades regulators' benign picture — GILLIAN TETT, PAGE 15

## Land of the rising pay

Can Japan's workers win their first increase for 30 years? — BIG READ, PAGE 13



## Travellers' tales

Poor jokes and the law harass British minority — ROBERT WRIGHT, PAGE 14

# Russia poised to invade Ukraine within days, Biden warns allies

◆ Flare-up in contested Donbas ◆ US fears 'false flag' gambit ◆ Kremlin pins blame on Kyiv

JAMES POLITI — WASHINGTON  
ROMAN OLEARCHYK — KYIV  
MAX SEDDON — MOSCOW

Joe Biden has warned that Russia is on the brink of invading Ukraine within "several days", saying the US believes the Kremlin is engaged in "a false flag operation to have an excuse to go in".

The US president's comments yesterday came as Kyiv and Moscow blamed each other for clashes in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region. Incidents the west fears will be used as a pretext for a co-ordinated Russian military campaign.

Russia reiterated its threat to take "measures of a military-technical nature" after it complained that the US had "twisted" draft proposals Moscow put forward to address its concerns over European security.

Speaking at the White House, Biden offered a bleak assessment, noting there was a "very high risk" of a Russian invasion. "Every indication we have is they're prepared to go into Ukraine, attack Ukraine," he said. "My sense is it will happen in the next several days."

The president said a diplomatic path to resolving the crisis remained open, but his warning reflected growing pessimism in western capitals and more bellicose rhetoric from Moscow.

As tensions ratcheted up, global stocks dropped and traders took shelter in haven assets. The S&P 500 was down 1.1 per cent at lunchtime, while US government bonds rallied, pushing the 10-year Treasury yield down 0.07 percentage points to 1.97 per cent.

Tensions heightened in eastern Ukraine as Moscow and Washington exchanged barbs over the prospect of a diplomatic solution. In a letter yesterday, Russia's foreign ministry said the US "has not given a constructive response" to its core demands, including for NATO to pledge never to admit Ukraine and to roll back its eastward expansion.

Antony Blinken, US secretary of state, said he was evaluating the letter and had invited his Russian counterpart, Sergei



Joe Biden: 'Every indication we have is they're prepared to go into Ukraine, attack Ukraine'

Lavrov, to meet in Europe next week to prepare a possible summit to resolve "mutual security concerns". However, he echoed Biden's warning over a Russian attack, telling the UN Security Council that it would be a concerted assault involving "ground troops,

aircraft, ships" and cyber attacks. Earlier yesterday Ukraine claimed that "Russian occupation forces" controlling breakaway eastern regions of the country had shelled more than 20 locations, including a kindergarten, injuring two civilians.

The flare-up was the latest in a smouldering conflict that has claimed about 14,000 lives in the breakaway regions of Luhansk and Donetsk since Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean peninsula. Russia blamed Ukraine for the escalation, with Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin spokesperson, saying the shelling "was a subject of very, very deep concern".

Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Ukraine's presi-

dent, rejected the claim, describing the incidents as "provocative shelling".

The US, UK and Nato continue to rebut Russia's claims that it was pulling back some forces from the Ukraine border. The White House has called the Kremlin's assertion that it was withdrawing forces "false" and accused Russia of increasing its troop presence in the region by about 7,000 in recent days. Lavrov said the west was fanning "hysteria" by accusing Moscow of withdrawing its troops. "This is where the escalation is," Lavrov said, according to Interfax.

Poland braced for refugees page 2  
Treasury volatility soars page 8

**Lex.**  
Page 16

London lawyers do a roaring trade with Russian and Ukrainian clients. A big slice of that would be in jeopardy if Russia invades and sanctions are imposed

### Briefing

► **Sequoia lines up \$500mn crypto spend**  
One of Silicon Valley's most influential venture capital groups has unveiled plans to go deeper into digital markets, earmarking funds to invest in tokens traded on third-party exchanges. — PAGE 5

► **Top ECB economist shifts inflation tack**  
Philip Lane has said inflation looks unlikely to drop below the bank's 2 per cent target within two years, a change of heart that hints at a rising consensus on a need to cut stimulus moves. — PAGE 2, FT VIEW, PAGE 14

► **Amazon and Visa end card fee impasse**  
The retailer has reached an agreement that ends a global stand-off over transaction fees. Charges in Singapore and Australia were set to be lifted while a threat over UK payments was dropped. — PAGE 5

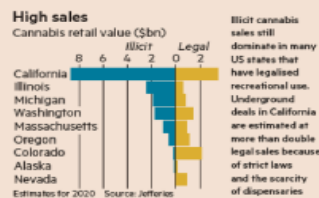
► **Gupta turns to his Romanian bank**  
Metals magnate Sanjeev Gupta has turned to Banca Romana de Credite si Investitii, which he owns, to process transactions as scrutiny rises after Greensill Capital's collapse. — PAGE 7

► **France and allies shift Sahel focus**  
Paris and its European and west African allies have announced they will concentrate their anti-terror campaign eastward to Niger and south to the Gulf of Guinea after being pushed out of Mali. — PAGE 4

► **UN-backed green ETF faces failure**  
Manager Impact Shares has warned that the MSCI Global Climate Select exchange traded fund is likely to be wound down next month. Big banks which pledged seed money have failed to deliver. — PAGE 6

► **Bribes accusations split Spain opposition**  
The People's party has been thrown into turmoil as Isabel Diaz Ayuso, charismatic leader of the Madrid region, accuses the leadership of trying to "destroy" her through fabricated corruption claims. — PAGE 2

### Datawatch



## Turbine industry turns full circle as costs soar

Wind turbine makers have suffered a reversal of fortune since the green rush of the pandemic and the climate pledges of COP26. One machine can weigh 100 tonnes and contain copper and rare earths in highly engineered components made all over the world. That means the perfect storm of supply chain disruption and soaring material costs have hit hard. Vestas, Siemens Gamesa and Orsted have had \$58bn wiped from their value in a year.

Blown off course — PAGE 7

# Travel sector hopes take wing as Airbus and Air France-KLM revenues rebound

SYLVIA PFEIFER AND PHILIP GEORGIADIS — LONDON  
SARAH WHITE — PARIS

Airbus and Air France-KLM have raised hopes of a sustained rebound in aviation as pandemic travel disruption recedes, despite lingering problems with supply chains and staffing.

The airline industry is emerging from the most brutal period in its history having shed tens of thousands of jobs and lost more than \$200bn globally in the battle to survive Covid-19.

Although the Omicron variant interrupted the recovery, Airbus reported a record net profit of €4.2bn for last year and restored its dividend after a two-year hiatus. The manufacturer said yesterday it expected to deliver 720 commercial aircraft this year, up from the 611 it handed to customers in 2021 but

fewer than the 860 it was delivering before the pandemic.

"It has been clear that people want to fly again and do so as soon as restrictions are relaxed," said Guillaume Frey, Airbus chief executive, forecasting that the market would recover fully between 2025 and 2025.

Air France-KLM reported a 29 per cent rise in annual revenues to €14.3bn. While still in the red, losses more than halved to €3.3bn in 2021 and the carrier's fourth-quarter operating income rose above pre-pandemic levels to €178mn as long-haul flights picked up.

Ben Smith, its chief executive, said he was "totally confident" demand for flying would endure. "If you want to go to Los Angeles, there's no train there. I think there's still a very strong desire by many people in the world to explore."

He told the Financial Times a flood of

demand had hit Air France-KLM when travel restrictions were lifted last summer in Europe. "We couldn't put enough aeroplanes into Greece. All of France wanted to go to Greece."

While many domestic routes have recovered strongly, international travel has taken longer to return. It was hit by a new burst of Omicron restrictions late last year and flights remain limited to China and other Asian countries with strict virus controls still in force.

The number of global flights was 30 per cent below normal levels in January, according to data from Cirium. Airlines are forecast to lose another \$11bn this year, according to trade body Iata.

But the bosses of other airlines have also expressed cautious optimism. Sean Doyle, British Airways chief, said last month there was "room for optimism that we are on the way out" of the crisis.

### World Markets

STOCK MARKETS				CURRENCIES				INTEREST RATES			
	Feb 17	prev	%chg		Feb 17	prev	%chg		price	yield	chg
S&P 500	4621.67	4475.01	+3.19	\$ per €	1.137	1.133	+0.36	US Gov 10 yr	140.85	1.97	-0.07
Nasdaq Composite	13800.02	14124.10	-1.58	\$ per £	1.362	1.358	+0.29	UK Gov 10 yr	1.38	-0.07	
Dow Jones Ind	34523.45	34934.27	-1.15	€ per £	0.876	0.877	-0.11	Gov 10 yr	0.23	-0.04	
FTSEurofirst 300	1816.83	1828.32	-0.63	¥ per \$	114.985	115.430	-0.39	Japan Gov 10 yr	110.05	0.22	0.09
Euro Stoxx 50	4110.43	4137.22	-0.65	¥ per €	158.583	156.743	+1.15	US Gov 30 yr	101.37	2.29	-0.07
FTSE 100	7537.37	7603.78	-0.87	SFr per €	1.046	1.048	-0.19	Gov 2 yr	103.86	-0.44	-0.07
FTSE All-Share	4212.67	4251.96	-0.92	€ per \$	0.886	0.880	+0.68				
CAC 40	6946.82	6954.98	-0.26								
Hang Seng	16297.53	15770.20	+3.67								
Nikkei	27232.87	27490.40	-0.93								
Shanghai	24792.77	24718.98	+0.30								
MSCI World \$	3090.29	3054.26	+0.30	Oil WTI \$	90.10	91.83	-1.98	Fed Funds Eff	0.28	0.08	0.03
MSCI EM \$	1244.19	1229.05	+1.23	Oil Brent \$	93.13	94.81	-1.77	US 3m Bill	0.38	0.40	-0.02
MSCI ACWI \$	720.10	717.81	+0.32	Gold \$	1862.60	1848.55	+0.76	Euro Libor 3m	-0.58	-0.58	0.00
								UK 3m	0.87	0.89	-0.02

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**DAMAGED SCHOOL** Shelling in eastern Ukraine struck a kindergarten and wounded at least six adults, the military said. Page A6.

## FEAR OF WAR RISES AS SHELLING PELTS EASTERN UKRAINE

### NEWS ANALYSIS

**Message to Moscow:  
Prove Us Wrong**

By DAVID E. SANGER

MUNICH — President Biden and his top aides acknowledge they are risking American credibility as they constantly renew the alarm that Russia is only “several days” away from triggering an unprovoked land war in Europe that could kill tens of thousands of Ukrainians in its opening hours, and plunge the world back into something resembling the Cold War.

But Mr. Biden’s aides say they are willing to take that risk. They would rather be accused of hyperbole and fearmongering than be proved right, they say, if that’s what it takes to deter President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia from pursuing an invasion that they worry will not stop at Ukraine’s borders.

“If Russia doesn’t invade Ukraine, then we will be relieved that Russia changed course and proved our predictions wrong,” Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken said at the United Nations Security Council on Thursday morning, in a speech that Mr. Biden had asked him to give only hours before. “That would be a far better outcome than the course we are currently on. And we will gladly accept any criticism that anyone directs at us.”

“I am here today not to start a war, but to prevent one,” he declared, an oblique reference to Colin L. Powell’s famous but false case, also made to the United Nations, about why the United States and its allies had to disarm Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Biden and Mr. Blinken make no secret of their suspicion that their increasingly desperate-sounding, last-ditch efforts to deter calamity will very likely fail. Their pessimism was reinforced Thursday by a series of escalations. Russian-backed forces in the Donbas region appeared responsible for shelling a school, and later claimed they had come under fire from Ukrainian forces, exactly the kind of incident Mr. Blinken warned might be used as a pretext to justify an invasion.

Mr. Biden will hold a phone call Friday afternoon with trans-Atlantic leaders about Russia’s

**Officials Say Russia  
May Claim Pretext  
for an Invasion**

By ANDREW E. KRAMER  
and ANTON TROIANOVSKI

STANYTSIA LUHANSKA, Ukraine — Residents near Ukraine’s front line rushed into basements for cover Thursday as exchanges of artillery fire with Russian-backed separatists reached their most intense level in months, an ominous development amid Western fears that Russia might use the fighting as a pretext to invade Ukraine.

As the United States and Russia traded conflicting accounts over whether Russian forces were really pulling back from the Ukrainian border, as Moscow has insisted, the separatists claimed they had come under fire from the Ukrainians. That is precisely the sort of incident Western officials have warned Russia might try to use to justify military action.

At the White House, President Biden said “every indication we have is they’re prepared to go into Ukraine, attack Ukraine.” He said the United States had “reason to believe” that Russia was “engaged in a false flag operation to have an excuse to go in.”

Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken made an unscheduled trip to New York, where he told the United Nations Security Council that American intelligence “indicates clearly” that Russian forces surrounding the country from three sides “are preparing to launch an attack against Ukraine in the coming days.”

The escalation of tensions rippled throughout the markets, where stock prices plunged.

Russia continued to insist Thursday that it had no plans to invade, issuing new updates about troop withdrawals and dismissing the American invasion warnings as “information terrorism.”

The Russian government also published a lengthy response to American proposals made last month to ease tensions, maintaining the Kremlin’s push to regain a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe and issuing a vague warning of new military deployments. If the United States does not accede to its demands, the document said, “Russia will be forced to respond, including through the

Continued on Page A6

## Judge Rules Attorney General May Question Trump and Family

This article is by **Jonah E. Bromwich, Benjamin Proffess and William K. Rashbaum.**

The New York attorney general can question Donald J. Trump and two of his adult children under oath as part of a civil inquiry into his business practices, a judge ruled on Thursday — the latest in a string of legal defeats Mr. Trump has suffered since leaving office.

The ruling came just three days after a court filing by the attorney general, Letitia James, in the same matter revealed that Mr. Trump’s longtime accounting firm had cut ties with him and had essentially retracted a decade’s worth of his financial statements.

Ms. James’s inquiry, and a parallel criminal investigation by the Manhattan district attorney, are both examining whether Mr. Trump used those statements to improperly inflate the value of his assets so he could receive favorable loans.

Lawyers for the Trump family had sought to prohibit Ms. James, a Democrat, from interviewing Mr. Trump, Donald Trump Jr. and Ivanka Trump. They had argued that Ms. James was politically biased against Mr. Trump and was

inappropriately using her civil inquiry to aid the district attorney’s criminal investigation, which she is also participating in.

But in a written ruling, the judge, Arthur F. Engoron, dismissed that point, saying it “completely misses the mark.” After dismantling several other arguments, he concluded that Ms. James had uncovered “copious evidence of possible financial fraud” — evidence that entitled

Continued on Page A18



Letitia James, attorney general of New York, has accused the Trump Organization of fraud.

## Push to Move On From Covid Sharpens Pain of Those at Risk

By AMANDA MORRIS  
and MAGGIE ASTOR

Denisse Takes’s world is very small these days. She makes a living by producing songs from her living room, plays “Animal Crossing” online with friends and leaves her home in Burbank, Calif., only occasionally to walk her dog.

Even as her social media feeds are flooded with friends and family members returning to their normal lives, she sees no one except for her husband, who donated his kidney in 2015 so that Ms. Takes, 37, could receive a compatible donor’s kidney in return.

The medication that keeps her immune system from rejecting the organ also suppresses it from creating antibodies in response to a coronavirus vaccine. Her body is so bad at fighting off infection that she has gone to the emergency room with common colds, she said. She fears that Covid-19 would kill her.

But the isolation and depression — amplified as the rest of the world seemingly moves on from the pandemic without her — have also taken their toll. “I keep trying to hold on for my husband, hon-

**The Vulnerable Feel  
Isolated, Devalued  
and Left Behind**

estly,” Ms. Takes said.

Millions of Americans with weakened immune systems, disabilities or illnesses that make them especially vulnerable to the coronavirus have lived this way since March 2020, sequestering at home, keeping their children out of school and skipping medical care rather than risk exposure to the virus. And they have seethed over talk from politicians and public health experts that they perceive as minimizing the value of their lives.

As Year 3 of the pandemic approaches, with public support for precautions plummeting and governors of even the most liberal states moving to shed mask mandates, they find themselves coping with exhaustion and grief, rooted in the sense that their neighbors and leaders are willing to accept them as collateral damage in a return to normalcy.

Continued on Page A14

## Spotify’s Huge Bet on Rogan Brought Headaches to Match

This article is by **Katherine Rosman, Ben Sisario, Mike Isaac and Adam Satariano.**

It was the deal that helped make Spotify a podcasting giant, but has now put the company at the center of a fiery debate about misinformation and free speech.

Spotify was already the king of music streaming. But to help propel the company into its next phase as an all-purpose audio juggernaut, and further challenge Apple and Google, it wanted a superstar podcaster, much as Howard Stern helped put satellite radio on the map in 2006. Spotify executives came to view Joe Rogan — a comedian and sports commentator whose no-holds-barred podcast, “The Joe Rogan Experience,” was already a monster hit on YouTube — as that transformative star.

In May 2020, after an intense courtship, Spotify announced a licensing agreement to host Mr. Rogan’s show exclusively. Although

### Intense Backlash Risks Its Podcast Strategy

reported then to be worth more than \$100 million, the true value of the deal that was negotiated at the time, which covered three and a half years, was at least \$200 million, with the possibility of more, according to two people familiar with the details of the transaction who spoke anonymously because they were not authorized to discuss it.

But in recent weeks the show that helped Spotify catapult into a market leader for podcasts has also placed it at the center of the sort of cultural storm that has long engulfed Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, over questions about the responsibility tech behemoths have for the content on their platforms.

It began when several promi-

Continued on Page A21

## Gasps, Then Tears, as One Russian Star Falls and Another Rises

By JULIET MACUR

BEIJING — Kamila Valieva, the Russian figure skating star at the center of a doping scandal, showed up at the Olympic rink on Thursday night facing a single, heavy expectation, especially heavy for a 15-year-old who has soared to the top of her sport in a quick four months, only to fall from it while the world was watching.

Her job was to win, for Russia. Continuing the country’s streak of two consecutive Olympic gold medals in the women’s event was at stake.

In a mostly black costume with flame-red gloves that glowed at the end of her long arms, she set out, determined, as Maurice Ravel’s “Bolero” began to play. But jump by jump, as her routine crumbled after uncharacteristic falls and stumbles, she knew a victory that everyone had once expected her to deliver was not to be.

Instead of ending the night in first place to perhaps salvage an Olympics gone bad after she was found to have tested positive



Kamila Valieva, the 15-year-old skater who was favored to win gold, finished fourth on Thursday.

weeks ago for a banned heart medicine, she finished it by skating off the ice in tears. Her coach, Eteri Tutberidze, greeted her not with a hug, but with a stern look. “Why did you let it go?” Tut-

beridze asked in Russian in a scene broadcast on live television. “Why did you stop fighting? Explain it to me, why? You let it go after that axel.”

Valieva did not reply.

The Russians were expected to sweep the medals, with Valieva finishing first and living up to her reputation as one of the best skaters in history. But a Russian team-

Continued on Page B9



### INTERNATIONAL A4-12

**Shifting Approach to Virus**  
South Korea is focusing on the most vulnerable and asking others with Covid to fend for themselves. PAGE A12

### Arabic Film Ignites a Debate

Conservatives say Netflix’s first movie in Arabic, a remake of an Italian film, flouts moral standards. PAGE A10

### NATIONAL A13-21

#### ‘You Have to Give Us Respect’

In a landslide vote to remove three San Francisco school board members, Chinese American anger was crucial to victory, organizers say. PAGE A17

#### White House’s Race-Blind Plan

Pollution disproportionately affects communities of color, research shows. But using race to allocate federal help could draw legal challenges. PAGE A13

#### Will a Fourth Shot Be Needed?

An F.D.A. official said the best time for adults to get an additional shot may be the fall, when the spread of the coronavirus is expected to rise again. PAGE A14



### SPORTS B6-14

#### An Uphill Climb

We’ve all seen bobsleds roaring down the course at the Olympics. But how do they get back up? PAGE B10

#### Not the Games She Planned

The U.S. skier Mikaela Shiffrin went to Beijing a strong favorite, but after three falls, she’s looking inward. PAGE B13

### BUSINESS B1-5

#### Résumé Padding on Steroids

“Everyone has fudged their résumé a little,” as the saying goes, but deception by job seekers has become more prevalent and brazen, putting employers on high alert for fishy behaviors. PAGE B1

#### Left Out of a Student Loan Deal

A \$1.7 billion settlement was portrayed as a win-win for 39 states and the loan giant Navient. But thousands of borrowers who received predatory loans still have to pay them back. PAGE B1

### OPINION A22-23

#### David Brooks

PAGE A23



### WEEKEND ARTS C1-20

#### Retracing an Artist’s Journey

At the New Museum, Faith Ringgold has her first New York retrospective in decades. Above, quilts from her “French Connection” series. PAGE C1



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## U.S. and NATO heighten warnings on Russia

As Blinken plans to meet his Kremlin counterpart, threat to Ukraine appears dire.

BY NOAH BIERMAN, DEL QUENTIN WILBER AND NABIH BULOS

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken warned Thursday that Russia "is preparing to launch an attack" against Ukraine, echoing earlier comments from U.S. and Western officials who said that an invasion could come any day and that Moscow would seek to use disinformation to create a pretext for such an assault.

"The most immediate threat to peace and security is Russia's looming aggression against Ukraine," Blinken said during an impromptu stop at a U.N. Security Council meeting to discuss developments. "The stakes go far beyond Ukraine. This is a moment of peril for the lives and safety of millions of people."

Even though Western officials have said they were holding out hope for diplomacy, their dire rhetoric on Thursday, as well as actions taken by the Kremlin,

[See Russia, A6]



BERGEE GUNNEEV Pool Photo

**RUSSIAN PRESIDENT** Vladimir Putin has reinforced false narratives accusing Ukraine of atrocities.

## Kremlin ramps up campaign to spread disinformation

Pro-Moscow media amplify falsehoods to justify an invasion

BY NABIH BULOS

KYIV, Ukraine — To hear Russian media tell it, the government of Ukraine is run by neo-Nazis waging a genocidal campaign against ethnic Russians in the country's east, where Moscow-backed authorities regularly uncover mass graves full of the corpses of women and children with bound hands and bludgeoned heads even as they face the hell of constant shelling.

Such false images and narratives have become a daily staple in Russia in the months since an estimated 150,000 Russian troops, along with armored vehicles, warplanes and naval ships, began assembling on Ukraine's periphery. The Russian media have gone into overdrive with stories depicting a government in Kyiv so cruel that Moscow has no choice but to swoop in and protect the ethnic Russians in eastern Ukraine's Donbas region.

"It's a war between the Ukrainian

government and its own people. ... People are dying there every day. Thousands of civilians died there. Thousands of children lost their limbs there, buried in little coffins," Margarita Simonyan, head of the state-funded broadcaster RT, said on a talk show on the Russia-1 channel.

"Go there once. ... You'll change your attitude completely. And you'll understand that Russia can't help but stop this war. Do we have to wait until they organize concentration

[See Ukraine, A6]

## Amid criticism, CSU chancellor resigns

BY COLLEEN SHALBY, ROBERT J. LOPEZ AND TERESA WATANABE

California State University Chancellor Joseph I. Castro, confronted with growing criticism of his handling of sexual harassment and bullying allegations involving a former top assistant, announced his resignation Thursday.

The announcement marks a stunning fall for Castro, who was hailed as a passionate advocate for students and employees and particularly praised for increasing graduation rates and narrowing achievement gaps while president of Fresno State before he was named chancellor in September 2020.

His resignation came after an all-day closed-door

session with the Board of Trustees.

"I have been honored to serve the California State University for more than eight years, including as its eighth chancellor, and the decision to resign is the most difficult of my professional life," Castro said in a statement. "While I disagree with many aspects of recent media reports and the ensuing commentary, it has be-

come clear to me that resigning at this time is necessary so that the CSU can maintain its focus squarely on its educational mission and the impactful work yet to be done."

Board of Trustees Chair Lillian Kimbell said in a statement that "we appreciate Chancellor Castro's cooperation with the Trustees and his decision to step down for the benefit of [the]

California State University system."

The trustees will finalize a succession plan soon. Until then, Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer Steve Relyea will serve as acting chancellor until an interim chancellor is named.

Castro's resignation comes amid widespread criticism after reports that

[See Castro, A12]

## STATE DETAILS PLAN AS COVID WANES

Officials' blueprint for pandemic's next phase focuses on flexibility, preparing for variants.

BY LUKE MONEY AND RONG-GONG LIN II

California officials on Thursday offered a cautious blueprint for the next phase of the pandemic, expressing optimism at the progress that has been made but stressing the state must be prepared for the potential for new variants and waves.

The plan comes amid a growing push in some quarters to finally move on from two years of restrictions due to the coronavirus. While mask mandates have been easing, state officials essentially said that it's unwise to fly a "mission accomplished" banner and that the most important thing now is to be prepared for any contingencies — and to learn from past lessons.

"Today is not about moving on but, rather, about moving forward," California Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly said. "We move into this next phase with humble confidence and a commitment to be active and aware every step of the way. We move into the next phase smarter than we ever have been."

That means being pre-

[See Pandemic, A12]

## Newsom unveils state's next phase

Governor, trying to avoid past mistakes, tempers tone with "SMARTER" strategy. CALIFORNIA, B1

## Good defense against Omicron

Booster shots and infection surge bolster Americans' immunity. Experts urge caution. NATION, A7



GARY AMBROSE For The Times

**RUSSIAN** figure skater Kamila Valieva, 15, takes a tumble after a spin during the women's free skating program. Valieva, facing doping allegations, finished fourth.

## It's a night of spills, no thrills for accused skater Valieva

BY DAVID WHARTON

BEIJING — Maybe the pressure was too much for a teenager — even a precociously talented teen such as Kamila Valieva.

The 15-year-old Russian hailed as the new face of women's figure skating stumbled through triple jumps and tumbled out of quadruples, waving a hand in disgust as her free skate program ended.

After a week embroiled in doping allegations and controversy of international proportions, Valieva quite suddenly looked her age Thursday night, bending under a weight that pressed her out of medal contention, from first all the way down to fourth place.

That opened the door for a slightly older and certainly steadier teammate, Anna Shcherbakova, to nail those quad jumps and win gold at the Beijing Olympics.

"It means so much," the 17-year-old Shcherbakova said. "Being able to perform my program cleanly is everything I wanted."

Another teammate, Alexandra Trusova, took silver by landing no fewer than five quads, and Sakamoto Kaori of Japan got bronze for a subtle, clean program.

"I don't have the big jumps that others have," Sakamoto said. "That means I have to make all my

[See Olympics, A4]

## Guilty verdict in fentanyl death of Angels pitcher

BY JORGE CASTILLO

FORT WORTH — A former Angels communications director was found guilty Thursday of distributing fentanyl and giving Tyler Skaggs the drugs that caused the Angels pitcher's death in a suburban Dallas hotel room in 2019, concluding a trial that yanked Major League Baseball to the center of the national opioid crisis.

Eric Kay, 47, faces 20

years to life in a federal prison and up to a \$1-million fine. His sentencing is scheduled for June 28.

The 12-person jury listened to closing arguments in U.S. District Court on Thursday morning before reaching a verdict after less than 90 minutes of deliberation. In addition to finding Skaggs guilty of committing the crimes in Texas, the jury agreed with the government that "but for" the fentanyl, Skaggs wouldn't have died.

With Kay convicted, the

attention will shift to the civil lawsuits the Skaggs family has filed against the Angels in Texas and California.

"We are very grateful to the government and the jury for seeing this important case through to the right verdict," the Skaggs family said in a statement. "Tyler was the light of our family. He is gone, and nothing can ever bring him back. We are relieved that justice was served, although today is a painful reminder of the

[See Kay, A9]

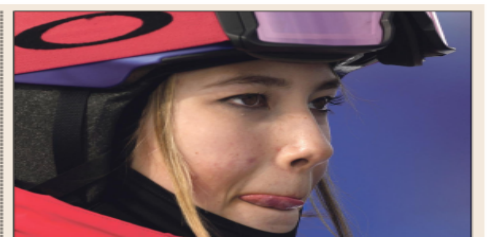
## 'Deputy gangs' spurs sheriff's ire

Villanueva sends cease-and-desist letter calling for L.A. County leaders to stop using the label. CALIFORNIA, B1

## Brazil mudslide deaths reach 117

Officials say 116 others are unaccounted for after torrential rains ravaged mountain city of Petropolis. WORLD, A4

**Weather**  
Sunny and warm.  
L.A. Basin: 75/49. B6



FRANCISCO BECO Associated Press

## A GOLDEN HALFPIPE

Eileen Gu, the American-born freestyle skier who represents China, won her third medal of the Winter Games in Beijing. SPORTS, B12

**BUSINESS INSIDE:** Fast-rising inflation stirs anxiety. Is the economy really that bad? A8



# The Washington Post

Prices may vary in areas outside metropolitan Washington.

SU V1 V2 V3 V4

Partly sunny, windy 58/31 • Tomorrow: Sunny, windy 49/24 B8

Democracy Dies in Darkness

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2022 • B2

## Left-wing ideas ebb ahead of midterms

Many Democrats shun 'defund,' other proposals popular in Trump era

BY SEAN SULLIVAN  
AND DAVID WIEGEL

As Democrats look fearfully toward the midterm elections, many of the party's candidates, strategists and voters are recoiling from some of the left-wing proposals that gained prominence during the Trump administration.

While they helped channel widespread anger with the former president's rhetoric and policies while he was in office, many Democrats now see them as too extreme and harmful to Democratic prospects this fall. Others who opposed them previously are speaking up more emphatically. The result is a growing backlash against more-liberal officeholders, challengers and plans.

In multiple states, Democrats running in competitive areas are scrambling to push back against the "defund the police" movement embraced by far-left activists, with some forced to try explaining past associations with the controversial slogan. President Biden has maintained his distance by touting federal funding that can be used to put more officers on the beat amid a rise in violent crime, as opposed to cutting their numbers.

SEE DEMOCRATS ON A5



A 2nd Cavalry Regiment soldier walks on a runway at Kuchyna Air Base as U.S. troops arrive in Slovakia for the NATO Saber Strike drill.

VLADIMIR SAMCEV/AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

## Disease experts preach caution to weary America

BY JOEL ACHENRACH

The masks are coming off Thursday at Disneyland and Disney World. The theme parks are the latest places to say the pandemic has reached a point at which indoor masking is no longer required for people who are vaccinated — another sign the nation's health emergency isn't what it was in 2020, 2021 or even January 2022.

Those who support continuing restrictions face increasing backlash

Blue state governors are lifting mask mandates. So is Muriel E. Bowser (D), mayor of the nation's capital. And everyone saw what happened Sunday at the Super

Bowl in the crowded, sort-of-outdoors environs of SoFi Stadium: Even though the Los Angeles County health department had said masks were required, just about the only people with their faces covered were the ones wearing helmets.

But the easing of the coronavirus pandemic's grip is hardly a serene moment. The country is witnessing a broad backlash from many conservatives and libertari-

ans, not only against the ongoing mask mandates but also against the past two years of public health measures, including school closures, designed to suppress the spread of the virus. As the fall elections approach, the virus itself isn't the hot topic so much as the response to it.

SEE VIRUS ON A10

Global efforts: The administration will surge vaccine aid to Africa. A10

## Russia retreat called a ruse

BIDEN AGAIN WARNS ATTACK IS IMMINENT

Continuing buildup near Ukraine dashes hopes

BY ELLEN NAKASHIMA,  
SHANE HARRIS,  
ALEX HORTON  
AND MICHAEL BIRNBAUM

U.S. officials have obtained intelligence that Russia's announced military pullback from Ukraine's border was a deliberate ruse to mislead the United States and other world powers, four officials said Thursday, as President Biden offered a bleak warning that the Kremlin will launch an attack "in the next several days."

The souring optimism that it would be possible to avoid conflict came just days after a flicker of hope, when Russian leaders signaled they would begin to draw down the more than 150,000 troops they have massed at Ukraine's border. That announcement was accompanied by Kremlin-produced videos of what they

SEE UKRAINE ON A12

On the front lines: In separatist Donetsk, war is ever present. A11

On the outside: Ukraine faces barriers to join NATO and E.U. A12

## Bowser's popularity drops as concerns over D.C. crime rise

But poll shows most back mayor's job performance as she pursues 3rd term

BY JULIE ZAUZMER WEIL,  
MICHAEL BRICE-SADDLER,  
SCOTT CLEMENT  
AND EMILY GUSKIN

A majority of D.C. residents approve of Mayor Muriel E. Bowser's job performance — although her popularity has dropped from previous years, with residents growing sharply more concerned about crime and the city's direction overall as she seeks a third term leading the nation's capital city, a Washington Post poll finds.

A 58 percent majority of residents approve of Bowser's overall job performance, down from 67 percent in Post polls conducted in 2019 and 2017. Bowser also holds a wide advantage in the June Democratic primary, with many voters still unfamiliar with her challengers. While Bowser gets high marks from voters on her handling of the coronavirus and road safety, voters rate her negatively on other matters, particularly her efforts to reduce crime, which has surged to the forefront of voters' concerns.

Asked to name the District's top problem, 36 percent cite crime, violence or guns — twice as many as in a 2019 Post poll. Over the same period, the share of

58 percent

of residents approve of D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser's performance. This is down from 67 percent in 2019 and 2017.

36 percent

of residents cite crime, violence or guns as the District's top problem. In 2019, this was 18 percent.

49 percent

of residents say the city is headed in the right direction, down from 59 percent in 2019.

residents saying the city is headed in the right direction dropped from 59 percent to 49 percent.

The random sample of 904 D.C. residents who were surveyed gave mixed marks for Bowser's leadership, including on some of her signature issues. A 72 percent majority say Bowser is doing an excellent or good job handling the coronavirus pandemic, and 58 percent rate her positively for working to improve street safety for bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists. But more than 6 in 10 rate Bowser negatively for her performance on affordable housing and homelessness, and more than 7 in 10 give her negative marks over reducing crime.

Yet despite residents' fears and frustrations, Bowser's detractors have not coalesced behind an opposing candidate. With the

SEE POLL ON A8



BERNAT ARMANGUE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

PERSPECTIVE

## Legacy of these Olympics? A teen's torment.

BY JERRY BREWER

**BEIJING** — Kamila Valieva sat crying, sandwiched between two consoling coaches. She would not rise. She bent over, head approaching her knees. She tilted over, falling into the lap of choreographer Daniil Gleikhengauz.

The Russian figure skater, just 15 and lost in doping purgatory, glued herself to the anguish for 2½ minutes. It hurt like 2½ hours. On Thursday night, the sport did what the Court of Arbitration for Sport declined to do after her positive drug test shook these



DAVID J. PHILLIP/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Figure skater Kamila Valieva weeps after finishing fourth. Anna Shcherbakova, top middle, won gold. Alexandra Trusova, top left, got silver, and Kaori Sakamoto won bronze.

Beijing Olympics. It took action and handed down the cruelest punishment possible. The result broke the child. After a disastrous free skate, Valieva tumbled from first to fourth place in the women's competition, a supposed sure thing left to watch gold, silver and bronze evade her.

There was no need for asterisks, provisional medals or any other winging-it gestures from the International Olympic Committee to manage a

SEE BREWER ON A18

Lost amid tears: Shcherbakova delivers a golden free skate. D1

## Ruling may put Trump depositions on fast track

Civil and criminal probes in New York center on family business dealings

BY SHAYNA JACOBS  
AND JONATHAN O'CONNELL

**NEW YORK** — Former president Donald Trump and two of his children must give depositions in a long-running civil investigation into the family's business practices — a ruling that means the trio could face hours of uncomfortable questioning by investigators in the near future.

Attorneys for Trump, Donald Trump Jr. and Ivanka Trump tried to get subpoenas for their testimony and related documents thrown out in court filings and at a hearing Thursday morning. They accused New York Attorney General Letitia James (D) of trying to circumvent the legal process by seeking evidence for the civil matter that she could also use to build a criminal case against the former president and his business.

James, who has called herself a partner in a criminal probe

SEE TRUMP ON A19

Jan. 6 texts: Messages paint a picture of events around attack. A6

## IN THE NEWS



AMRUL SALAH/UDEN/EPF/SHUTTERSTOCK

**Protests in Canada** Police said action to bring an end to the demonstrations that have paralyzed Ottawa was "imminent." A14

**THE NATION** Leandra Kruger, a potential Biden pick for the Supreme Court, is seen as a liberal who takes a careful, thoughtful approach to the law. A4

**Florida's House** approved a bill banning abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy. A7

**THE WORLD** France announced it will withdraw troops from Mali after nearly a decade of fighting an

extremist threat there that has surged in recent years. A13

**THE ECONOMY** Federal regulators investigated sudden, unexpected braking in Tesla vehicles after fielding hundreds of complaints from consumers. A16

**The Dow** plunged more than 600 points as the Russia-Ukraine crisis continued to weigh heavily on global markets. A17

**THE REGION** A judge ruled that a losing bidder on Maryland's toll lanes project filed most of its bid protest in time, allowing a legal challenge to proceed. B1

**D.C. leaders** revealed a new hospital will take its name from the nearby estate of abolitionist Frederick Douglass. B1

**In Maryland**, House Speaker Adrienne A. Jones said she wants to ensure social equity as the debate over pot legalization begins. B1

**After a woman** found

her father's segregated schoolhouse abandoned in the rural Virginia woods, the structure will be preserved. B1

**A federal judge** found the District in contempt for inadequate special education for students with disabilities in the D.C. jail. B4

**OBITUARIES** Walter Dellinger, 80, a legal scholar who served under President Bill Clinton as chief of the Office of Legal Counsel and then as acting solicitor general, helped shape generations of jurists. B5

## INSIDE



**WEEKEND GO, Van Gogh** Far from flashy "experiences," the paintings by the lauded master sprinkled across the D.C. region invite quiet contemplation away from crowds.

**BUSINESS NEWS** A16  
**COMICS** C4  
**OPINION PAGES** A21  
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**OBITUARIES** B5  
**TELEVISION** C6  
**WORLD NEWS** A11

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## El exgobernador Urribarri, con pedido de 12 años de cárcel

Está acusado de corrupción durante su gestión en Entre Ríos; le imputan una defraudación por US\$9 millones; hoy es el embajador argentino en Israel. **Página 13**



## RACING, EN UN EMPATE CON SABOR A DERROTA

—deportes

Ganaba 2 a 0 ante Defensa y Justicia, y terminó 2 a 2; Cardona erró un gol increíble pero luego convirtió de penal; Gimnasia, en La Plata, venció 1 a 0 a San Lorenzo.

## NO HABRÁ NUEVOS PLANES Y CRECE EL CONFLICTO PIQUETERO

—política

El Gobierno confirmó que no se ampliará el plan Potenciar Trabajo; aumenta la tensión con las organizaciones sociales de izquierda. **Página 14**

# LA NACION

VIERNES 18 DE FEBRERO DE 2022 | LANACION.COM.AR

## Suben las tasas de interés para frenar el dólar: los plazos fijos rendirán 41,5%

**POLÍTICA MONETARIA.** La medida busca impulsar el ahorro en pesos y dar una señal al FMI

Con el propósito de incentivar el ahorro en pesos y desalentar la demanda de dólares en el mercado paralelo, el Banco Central (BCRA) dispuso ayer un aumento de las tasas de interés. Es una medida que apunta a desacelerar el ritmo de emisión y a dar una señal al Fondo Monetario en el marco de los avances para el acuerdo por la refinanciación de la

deuda con el organismo. La suba de tasas busca atenuar la inflación, en un contexto de aumento sostenido a pesar de los controles de precios instrumentados por el Gobierno.

El ajuste anunciado por el BCRA incrementa la tasa de referencia entre 2,5 y 3 puntos. El rendimiento anual para las Leliq será de 47% y el de los plazos fijos, tanto de indivi-

duos como de empresas, de 41,5%. El BCRA estimó que la medida no afectará la tasa de los créditos. Según los expertos, tales aumentos se mantienen aún por debajo del actual ritmo mensual de inflación y de las proyecciones que hacen los analistas para este año, pero dan un paso hacia el objetivo de establecer tasas positivas. **Página 15**

**En enero una familia necesitó \$78.624 para no ser pobre**  
**Página 15**

**Polémica por la idea de una empresa estatal de alimentos**  
Carlos Manzoni  
**Página 16**

## Fernández apura el envío al Congreso del acuerdo con el Fondo

El presidente Alberto Fernández enviará al Congreso el proyecto de ley con el acuerdo con el FMI la próxima semana, a más tardar el miércoles, según adelantó una alta fuente a LA NACION.

Tras la presentación, el ministro de Economía, Martín Guzmán, irá al Parlamento para informar sobre el entendimiento. En la Casa Rosada aspiran a que el debate parlamentario sea corto: el objetivo es que el acuerdo sea aprobado en 10 días. **Página 8**

## El fuego también arrasa con la fauna de los Esteros

—sociedad

**Las llamas ya amenazan a la amplia biodiversidad del Parque Nacional; animales calcinados y otros que buscan escapar de los incendios, otra dramática realidad de los humedales correntinos**

**Página 20**



Yacarés afectados, en medio de un territorio destruido por el fuego en la reserva Don Luis, al norte del Parque Nacional Esteros del Iberá

GZA. EMILIO WHITE

## Una lluvia de misiles reaviva la tensión en Ucrania

**CONFLICTO.** KIEV (AP).— Un ataque con misiles a un asilo y a un jardín de infantes, realizado por los separatistas rusos en el este de Ucrania, reavivó ayer el temor por la crisis en la región, mientras Rusia mantiene más de 150.000 efectivos del otro lado de la frontera.

El conflicto quedó empantanado también en la vía de las negociaciones, luego de que el Kremlin decidió la expulsión del número dos de la embajada de Estados Unidos en Moscú, y el presidente norteamericano, Joe Biden, advirtió que el riesgo de una invasión rusa en

Ucrania sigue siendo "muy alto". "Todos los indicios que tenemos indican que están preparados para entrar en Ucrania", dijo el mandatario estadounidense. La grave situación quedó expuesta además en las declaraciones del canciller ruso, Sergei Lavrov, quien no des-

cartó medidas militares si Occidente rechaza sus demandas de seguridad. "Si no hay disposición de parte de Estados Unidos de entendernos (...) Rusia severa obligada a actuar, sobre todo aplicando medidas de carácter militar y técnico", señaló Lavrov. **Página 2**

## La Corte interviene en la pelea de Larreta con el Gobierno

**RECURSOS.** Citó a una audiencia sobre el recorte de la coparticipación  
**Página 10**



## TCU vê indício de fraude em produção de cloroquina

Relatório técnico do Tribunal de Contas da União obtido pela Folha aponta "indícios robustos" de fraude pela empresa que forneceu ao Exército o insumo para produção de cloroquina em 26 licitações, sendo 24 sob a pandemia.

Citada, a Sulminas Suplementos e Nutrição nega irregularidade. O Exército não respondeu. **Saúde B6**

### A pandemia em 17.fev

Dados das 20h

#### POPULAÇÃO VACINADA

No Brasil

Ap menos uma dose (dose única ou 1ª dose)

81,6%

1º ciclo vacinal completo (dose única ou 2ª dose)

71,4%

Dose de reforço

27,3%

#### ESTÁGIO DA DOENÇA

Óbitos

Média móvel

841

22,0%\*

Casos

-38,0%\* (acelerado)

\*Variação em relação a 14 dias

Em 24 h

1.129

Total

641.997

# Fachin critica acusações de Bolsonaro, mas se diz aberto

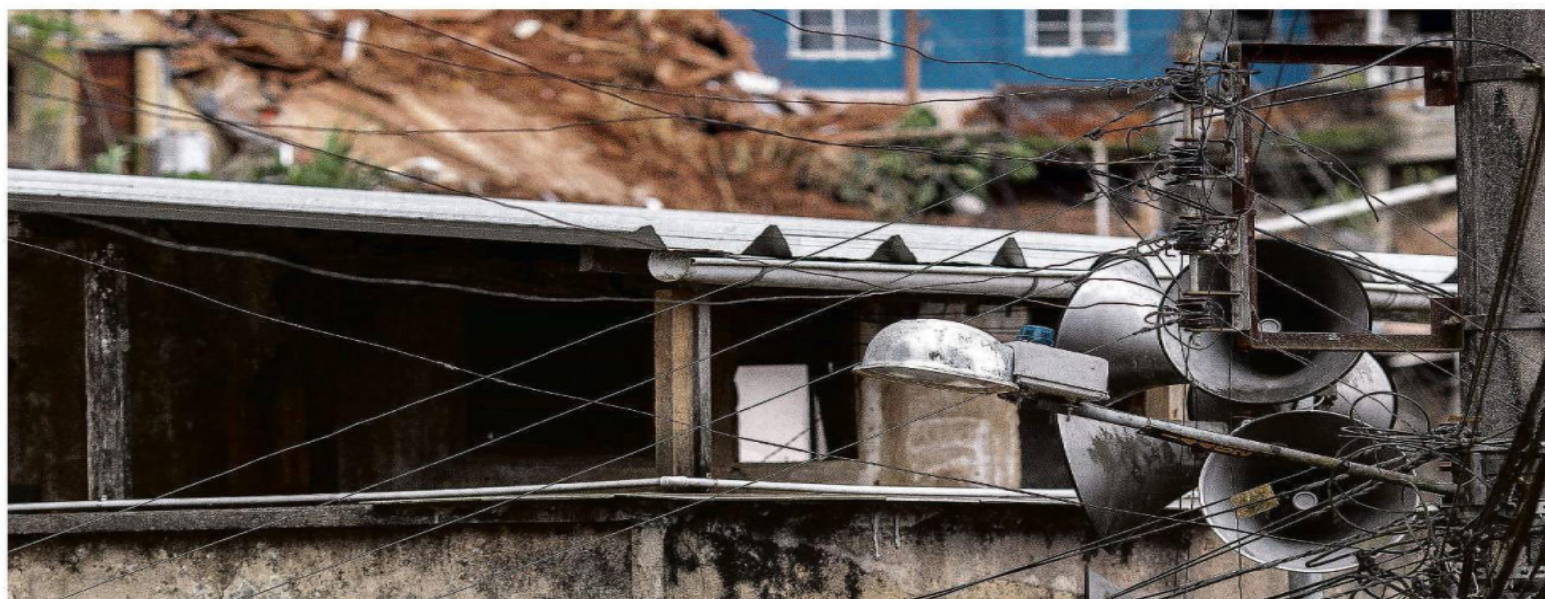
Atacar Justiça Eleitoral é atacar democracia, afirma próximo presidente do TSE

O ministro Edson Fachin, que assume terça-feira (22) a presidência do Tribunal Superior Eleitoral com o órgão na mira das críticas do presidente Jair Bolsonaro, afirma estar com a mão estendida ao chefe do Executivo. Não tolerará, porém, ataques.

"Não vamos tolerar os intolerantes. Mas, por agora, eu tenho uma mão estendida e eu espero reciprocidade", disse Fachin à Folha. Nesta semana, o ministro foi alvo do presidente por ter apontado o risco de ciberataques às urnas vindos da Rússia.

Ele declara que sua proposição é colaborativa e que as portas do TSE estarão abertas "para que todas as autoridades da República tenham dados e informações e espaços para questionamentos", contanto que mantido o diálogo respeitoso.

"Quem defende intervenção militar, fechar um Poder ou um tribunal como o Supremo Tribunal Federal, quem discute inexistente fraude em urna eletrônica não está discutindo urna, está discutindo a ruína da democracia." **Política A7**



Sirene no centro de Petrópolis integra sistema que alerta população da cidade para riscos de inundações e desabamentos, como os que mataram dezenas nesta semana **Eduardo Anizelli/Folhapress**

## Anvisa aprova primeiro autoteste para Covid no país

A Anvisa autorizou ontem o primeiro autoteste para Covid-19 no Brasil.

O produto registrado é da empresa CPMH, para uso com amostra de swab (cotonete) nasal não profunda. A agência reguladora havia aprovado a venda desse tipo de exame em janeiro passado. **Saúde B7**

## Mortes em Petrópolis sobem para ao menos 117 e podem dobrar

O número de mortos em decorrência das tempestades que atingiram Petrópolis na noite de terça (15) chegou ontem a 117 e pode dobrar. Outras 116 pessoas ainda estavam desaparecidas, segundo a Polícia Civil, e voltou a chover forte na cidade.

O sistema de sirenes que alerta os moradores para que deixem as áreas de risco foi acionado ontem. Equipes de resgate continuam trabalhando e acharam três sobreviventes. A população foi removida em pontos críticos em duas comunidades.

A demora em evacuar as regiões perigosas foi citada como uma das razões para o grande saldo de mortos. Apenas 33 corpos haviam sido identificados. Entre as vítimas, o número de mulheres era quase o dobro do que o de homens. **Cotidiano B1**

## Pasta de Doria loteada pelo MDB multiplica verba

Ocupada por Itamar Borges, do MDB, desde junho, a Secretaria de Agricultura e Abastecimento multiplicou por 15 os gastos em 2021, com entregas de benesses às vésperas da eleição deste ano —em que os tucanos João Doria e Rodrigo Garcia, seu vice, buscam cargos. **Política A4**

## Aras nega ter crime de Bolsonaro em caso de vazamento

**Política A8**

## Presidente cogita para vice ministro sanfoneiro

Jair Bolsonaro avalia Gilson Machado, seu ministro do Turismo, para a vaga de vice na sua chapa para tentar a reeleição. **A6**

### Cotidiano B4

Membro da ABL, acadêmico Candido Mendes de Almeida morre aos 93 anos

### Ilustrada C1

Nova onda de filmes explora a maternidade além dos estereótipos

### Guia C9

Capital paulista ganha bar de luxo com bolovo a R\$ 135 e horas de filas



Bernadett Szabo/Reuters

## BOLSONARO USA LEMA FASCISTA COM ORBÁN NA HUNGRIA

Em visita improvisada, presidente abraça premiê húngaro, ícone da extrema direita, com grata na cor de seu partido; brasileiro voltou a sugerir influência sobre crise na Ucrânia **Mundo A10**

## Ataques, ameaça russa e alerta dos EUA pioram crise na Ucrânia

Enquanto a guerra de versões em torno da Ucrânia se agravou com ataques reais no leste do país, a disputa diplomática entre Rússia e EUA escalou ontem, após dias de sinalização de Moscou em favor de negociações. **A10**

### Tatiana Prazeres

Pequim está de olho em Kiev e à espera de frutos

Apesar de não se beneficiar de uma eventual confrontação militar, Pequim pode colher frutos das tensões em curso. Primeiro, elas tiram o foco de que Biden precisa para lidar com a ascensão chinesa —o que, para o establishment americano, é a real ameaça aos EUA. **Mundo A11**

## Diante de gargalos, indústria têxtil altera até cores

**Mercado A12**

### EDITORIAIS A2

#### Água na fervura

Sobre respostas do TSE a investida de Bolsonaro.

#### Ciberameaças

Acerca de despreparo do país ante ataques virtuais.



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**Titular anticontrabando había solicitado procedimientos y no recibió respuesta**

## Fúster acusa a Fiscalía de mentir sobre allanamientos a tabacaleras

Ministerio Público sacó un comunicado diciendo que la causa en cuestión tiene condena y comiso histórico. Ministro afirmó que quería llegar a los financistas del contrabando.

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Fiscal a Monumental 1080 AM

**Aseguran que guardias hacen de campanas en el Paraná Country Club**

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Puede pedir libertad condicional en 2027

**Tribunal ratifica que la condena de Carmen Villalba va hasta 2035**

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Asumirá el domingo 6 de marzo

**Francisco nombró a Adalberto Martínez como nuevo arzobispo**

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**Reclaman a Nenecho el Fonacide para escuelas capitalinas**



**Inacción.** Oenegé reclamó a intendente G. 20.000 millones del Fonacide sin ejecutar. En Asunción se requieren 440 reparaciones o nuevas aulas.

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Habrà reunión con los fiscales que entienden en el caso

**Arregui afirma que investigar supuesto caso de lavado de Cartes es prioritario**

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Ex presidente de Honduras detenido y con pedido de extradición

**Captura de Hernández, aviso para otros en Latinoamérica, advierten desde EEUU**

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# LE FIGARO

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

À L'OCCASION  
DU LANCEMENT  
DE LA NOUVELLE  
CAMPAGNE BERLUTI,  
LE FIGARO A PATINÉ  
SON LOGO.



**ACADÉMIE FRANÇAISE**  
ANTOINE COMPAGNON, UN SPÉCIALISTE  
DE MONTAIGNE, DE PASCAL  
ET DE PROUST SOUS LA COUPOLE **PAGE 38**

**DESIGN**  
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C'EST CRÉER  
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Ségolène Royal  
lève le tabou  
du vote « utile »  
pour Jean-Luc  
Mélenchon **PAGE 6**

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La tension remonte  
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**INCESTE**  
« Je vivais dans  
la honte » : quand  
les victimes brisent  
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Pourquoi Quentin  
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**AÉRONAUTIQUE**  
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la crise, Air France-  
KLM la subit  
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entretien  
avec Fiodor  
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**FIGARO OUI  
FIGARO NON**

**Réponses à la question  
de jeudi :**  
L'Europe doit-elle  
se doter de moyens  
pour envoyer  
des astronautes  
dans l'espace ?

**NON 47% OUI 53%**  
**TOTAL DE VOTANTS : 102154**

**Votez aujourd'hui  
sur lefigaro.fr**  
Barkhane : approuvez-  
vous le retrait des troupes  
françaises du Mali ?

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE MARMARA / LE  
FIGARO - THOMAS MAYER / PIET HEIN  
EEK

## Pouvoir d'achat : les candidats peinent à convaincre

Selon notre sondage Odoxa, deux tiers des Français pensent que la présidentielle pourrait avoir un impact sur leur niveau de vie, mais ils restent sceptiques sur l'exécution des promesses.

Selon le sondage Odoxa-Backbone Consulting pour *Le Figaro*, 54 % des Français considèrent que le pouvoir d'achat constitue le thème qui influencera le plus leur vote à l'élection présidentielle, loin

devant la santé, l'immigration, la sécurité, l'environnement ainsi que le chômage. Ils sont d'ailleurs bien plus nombreux que lors de la précédente campagne de 2017, durant laquelle 33 % seulement considéraient

cette thématique comme déterminante dans leur choix électoral. Peut-être plus important encore, 67 % des Français estiment que cette élection présidentielle aura un impact sur leur pouvoir d'achat. Pour-

tant, selon le politologue Jérôme Fourquet, « nos concitoyens sont assez circonspects face aux annonces, car beaucoup anticipent que ce que l'État va donner d'une main, il le reprendra discrètement de l'autre ».

➔ **SONDAGE : LE POUVOIR D'ACHAT AU CŒUR DU VOTE DES FRANÇAIS**  
➔ **JÉRÔME FOURQUET : « DANS UNE SOCIÉTÉ DESIDÉOLOGISÉE, JE SUIS CE QUE JE CONSOMME »**  
**PAGES 2, 4 ET L'EDITORIAL**



**Face au pape François, la bataille de l'Ordre de Malte pour conserver son indépendance**

Pour ne pas perdre son autonomie, ce très ancien ordre de chevalerie de l'Église catholique s'appête à conduire une importante joute ecclésiastique en présence du pape, le 26 février, au Vatican. **PAGE 16**

**ÉDITORIAL** par Vincent Trémolet de Villers [vtremolet@lefigaro.fr](mailto:vtremolet@lefigaro.fr)

### Trompe-l'œil

Qu'est-ce qui entraîne un citoyen à se rendre aux urnes ? Son sens civique sans doute, ses espoirs politiques évidemment, mais quand les désillusions se succèdent il en faut plus encore pour remplir les isolement. Les esprits tocquevilliens en appellent aisément à la raison. Elle mesure l'imperfection de toutes choses, accepte la part de désenchantement substantielle à l'exercice démocratique, recommande les ambitions modestes et les choix tempérés. Ce sont les électeurs qui votent à chaque élection et qui sont caricaturés par le camp d'en face en tenants du suffrage censitaire.

Les enfants de Brumaire revendiquent plutôt les passions. Elles mêlent la ferveur et l'aventure, la force de l'émotion et l'esprit d'audace. Elles animent les forces du vote populaire, qualifiées par les « raisonnables » de vote « populiste ». Cette tension explique l'équivoque qui, dans cette élection, entoure la question du pouvoir d'achat. Élément constitutif de l'existence de chacun, pivot des disputes partisans, source infinie d'inspiration dans le registre des promesses de campagne, levier spectaculaire de la colère sociale, le « reste à vivre » hante la bataille présidentielle sans

que les candidats parviennent à se distinguer, à convaincre qu'ils pourront véritablement changer les choses. Comme si l'inconscient collectif considérait l'économie comme une chose trop sérieuse, trop complexe, pour être confiée à l'État. S'il donne, il prélève, s'il prélève, il dépensera. Le pouvoir d'achat est aussi un trompe-l'œil électoral. Les Français l'ont compris.

**Le souci de la fin du mois, la crainte de la fin d'un monde**

Il s'agit donc de s'emparer du sujet, d'imaginer mille propositions mais sans jamais oublier que la chose, pour être nécessaire, est rarement suffisante. Le souci de la fin du mois s'accompagne dans une très large part de l'opinion de la crainte de la fin d'un monde. Climatiques pour les uns, culturelles ou identitaires pour les autres, sociales enfin, ces craintes ont un pouvoir de mobilisation tout aussi important qu'une accumulation de promesses sectorielles. Au souci premier du capital matériel se mêle de plus en plus celui des richesses immatérielles. C'est à ce second niveau que se dessinent désormais les véritables clivages. ■

**Pour le président du Niger, la fin de Barkhane va « profiter aux terroristes »**

Emmanuel Macron a confirmé jeudi un « retrait coordonné » des moyens militaires déployés par la France au Mali pour lutter contre les groupes djihadistes. Le président du Niger, Mohamed Bazoum, qui se dit prêt à accueillir des forces dans son pays, craint que le « vide » créé par le départ de Barkhane ne soit « rempli par les organisations terroristes » présentes au Sahel. **PAGES 8 ET 9**

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## Russia ready to fake cause for Ukraine attack – Biden

US warns shelling in east by Kremlin-backed forces bears hallmarks of attempt to incite conflict

**Daniel Boffey** *Brussels*  
**Julian Borger** *Washington*  
**Dan Sabbagh**

Joe Biden has said he believes Russia is on the brink of invading Ukraine, as he joined Nato allies in warning that shelling in the disputed east of the country may be an attempt to set up the pretext for an incursion.

Claims of attacks by Russia-backed separatists at several locations in Ukraine's Donbas region, including at a kindergarten and a school, were said to bear the hallmarks of an attempt to incite conflict.

The US president, speaking shortly after the expulsion of his country's deputy ambassador to Moscow, said his administration had "reason to believe" that Russia was "engaged in a false-flag operation to have an excuse to go in". He told reporters: "Every indication we have is they're

prepared to go into Ukraine, attack Ukraine ... My sense is it will happen in the next several days."

The president made his comments as Russia handed over its long-awaited response to US and Nato proposals about European security. The Kremlin said in its 10-page letter that the US had not taken its concerns seriously about Ukraine's potential to join Nato and that Russia would need to take unspecified "measures of a military-technical nature".

Biden ordered his secretary of state, Antony Blinken, to change his travel plans at the last minute in order to speak at a UN security council meeting on Ukraine.

Russia continues to deny that it has any intention of invading Ukraine, but Blinken told those assembled that they found themselves in a "moment of peril for the lives and safety of millions of people". He said: "Our information indicates clearly that [Russian] forces, including ground troops, aircraft, ships, are preparing to launch an attack against Ukraine in the coming days."

"We don't know precisely how things will play out, but here's what the world can

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**Medal on ice**  
**First podium guaranteed as GB curlers reach final**

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PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW MILLIGAN/PA

## MPs' interest groups get £13m from private firms

**Exclusive**  
**Ben Quinn**  
**Rowena Mason**  
**Peter Geoghegan**

More than £13m has been poured into a growing network of MPs' interest groups by private firms including

healthcare bodies, arms companies and tech giants, fuelling concerns over potential for backdoor influence.

Analysis by the Guardian and openDemocracy found more than half the total £25m in funding for all-party parliamentary groups (APPGs) since 2018 has come from the private sector. Other

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## Red weather warning as Storm Eunice hits UK

**Mark Brown**  
**Caroline Davies**  
**Steven Morris**

A rare red weather warning for coastal parts of south Wales and south-west England was issued by the Met Office yesterday ahead of what could be

the worst storm to hit the UK in 30 years. People were being urged to consider staying at home today and rail services were being cancelled on a day with winds of up to 90mph expected and, farther north, possible heavy snow and blizzards.

Coastal areas of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and south Wales will bear

the brunt of Eunice, with the red warning in place between 7am and midday today. People can expect flying debris presenting "a danger to life", forecasters said, as well as roofs blown off, power cuts, uprooted trees and major travel disruption.

A major incident was declared in Cornwall, with

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