

What's News

Business & Finance

Investors rushed for safety, pushing down stocks and lifting the prices of oil, gold and government bonds, after Russia's Putin launched a military operation in Ukraine. **B1**

◆ **U.S. life insurers**, as expected, made a large number of Covid-19 death-benefit payouts last year, with many seeing a jump in other death claims, too. **A1**

◆ **Barclays** said it has frozen former CEO Jes Staley's deferred pay while regulators complete a probe into how he characterized his relationship with Jeffrey Epstein. **B1**

◆ **A judge** said she would pause the trial of Roger Ng after prosecutors said they had failed to turn over a tranche of documents to the former Goldman banker's lawyers. **B1**

◆ **Ford's CEO** said the auto maker doesn't intend to spin off its electric-vehicle business, tamping down speculation that the company could break off its EV operations to boost market value. **B3**

◆ **The EU is proposing** legislation that would force more data sharing among companies in Europe, aiming to loosen the grip officials say a few big tech firms have on some commercial and industrial data. **B4**

◆ **Lowe's** surprised Wall Street with its announcement of costs and pricing in the latest quarter amid a slowing outlook for the home-improvement sector's sales. **B3**

◆ **Estée Lauder** suspended a top executive without pay following a backlash over a post on his personal Instagram account. **B3**

World-Wide

◆ **Russian missiles** and airstrikes hit Ukraine's capital Kyiv and more than a dozen other cities across the country Thursday, minutes after Putin announced a military operation that he said seeks to "demilitarize and denazify Ukraine" and bring its leaders to trial. **A1, A7-9**

◆ **The U.S. and its allies** are poised to unveil further sanctions, now that Biden called "an unprovoked and unjustified attack" on Ukraine, hoping a fresh tranche of penalties will have a greater deterrent effect than the first set. **A1**

◆ **Two prosecutors** leading the Manhattan district attorney's investigation into Trump and his business resigned, casting doubt on the future of the yearslong criminal probe. **A3**

◆ **The Justice Department** is ending a Trump-era initiative to counter national-security threats from China after it led to a series of failed prosecutions of academics. **A4**

◆ **Canada's Trudeau**, in a surprise turnaround, said his government no longer required emergency powers to deal with protests against Covid-19 restrictions. **A10**

◆ **A more infectious type** of the Omicron variant has surged to account for more than a third of global Covid-19 cases sequenced recently, adding to the debate about whether countries are ready for full reopening. **A6**

◆ **The number of women** in the U.S. who die while pregnant or shortly after pregnancy continued to rise in 2020 as the pandemic spread, according to a federal report. **A6**

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'Any provocation, any spark could trigger a blaze that will destroy everything.'

Ukrainian President Zelensky

'We will strive to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine.'

Russian President Putin

'Putin has chosen a premeditated war that will bring a catastrophic loss of life.'

President Biden

RUSSIA STRIKES UKRAINE



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, speaking in Russian in a video address, said his nation posed no threat to Russia and that a conflict could cause tens of thousands of victims.

Crisis Sets New Struggle For Global Supremacy

By MICHAEL R. GORDON

Russia's audacious military assault on Ukraine is the first major clash marking a new order in international politics, with three major powers jostling for position in ways that threaten America's primacy. The challenges are different than those the U.S. and its network of alliances faced in the Cold War. Russia and China have built a thriving partnership based in part on a shared interest in diminishing U.S. power. Unlike the Sino-Soviet bloc of the 1950s, Russia

is a critical gas supplier to Europe, while China isn't an impoverished, war-ravaged partner but the world's manufacturing powerhouse with an expanding military. In deploying a huge force and on Thursday ordering what he called a "special military operation," Russian President Vladimir Putin is demanding that the West rewrite the post-Cold War security arrangements for Europe and demonstrated that Russia has the military capability to impose its will despite Western objections and sanctions.

To do this, Mr. Putin shifted military units from Russia's border with China, showing confidence in his relations with Beijing. The two powers, in effect, are coordinating to reshape the global order to their advantage, though their ties stop short of a formal alliance. This emerging order leaves the U.S. contending with two adversaries at once in geographically disparate parts of the world where America has

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◆ **Greg Ip:** Ukraine clash puts dagger in globalization..... **A2**

Big Companies Rush to Plan For Repercussions of Attack

By ALISTAIR MACDONALD AND NICK KOSTOV

Western companies with operations in Russia and Ukraine are preparing for the potential impact of sanctions on their businesses there and readying contingency plans in the event of further military action, after President Vladimir Putin of Russia sent troops into two breakaway regions of Ukraine.

The U.S. and its European allies this week rolled out a range of sanctions against Russia, which they have promised to ratchet up. Those measures might include sanctions against big Russian companies and the country's business elite.

Such moves, though, could also complicate operations for multinationals that have operations in Russia and that often

join with Russian companies and businessmen. Big oil companies, including BP PLC, Exxon Mobil Corp. and Shell PLC, have substantial investments in Russia, as do brewing giant Carlsberg A/S and auto maker Renault SA.

On Wednesday, the chief executive of Renault said:

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◆ **Russia's move** against Ukraine rolls markets..... **B1**

Air attacks, missiles hit Kyiv, other cities; Biden pledges further steps to punish Putin

Russian missiles and airstrikes hit Ukraine's capital Kyiv and more than a dozen other cities across the country Thursday, minutes after President Vladimir Putin announced a military operation that he said seeks to "demilitarize and denazify Ukraine" and bring its leaders to trial.

By Yaroslav Trofimov, Alan Cullison and Brett Forrest in Kyiv and Ann M. Simmons in Moscow

"From all of you, we need calm," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in an early-morning television address. "We are working, our army is working. Don't panic, we are strong, we are ready for anything, we will overcome." He said he has ordered martial law and has spoken with President Biden about the attack.

Ukrainian officials said that the initial wave of strikes targeted military installations, airfields and government facilities across the country, as well as border force installations. In Kharkiv, eastern

Ukraine's largest city, residents said a large fire was visible in the morning darkness, after what appeared to be a hit at a weapons depot. Heavy shelling targeted the city of Mariupol on the Azov Sea. Air raid sirens sounded in Kyiv after 7 a.m.

While the Ukrainian military didn't release casualty figures, a senior Ukrainian official said he believed that hundreds of Ukrainian soldiers died in Russian airstrikes and missile attacks.

Russia denied conducting missile, air or artillery strikes on Ukrainian cities or threatening civilian populations, the country's Ministry of Defense told the Russian state news agency RIA Novosti.

President Biden called Mr. Putin's move an unprovoked, unjustified attack in Ukraine, pledging further action against Russia.

"President Putin has chosen a premeditated war that will bring a catastrophic loss of life and human suffering," he said in a statement.

Mr. Biden said he would be meeting Thursday with leaders of the Group of Seven.

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◆ **Germany** takes step to end Russian gas reliance..... **A7**

◆ **Biden** faces a new foreign-policy test..... **A9**

West Is Lining Up Further Sanctions

The U.S. and its allies are poised to unveil further sanctions now that Russia has launched what President Biden called "an unprovoked and unjustified attack" on Ukraine, hoping a fresh tranche of penalties will have a greater deterrent effect than the first set.

By Ian Talley in Washington and Laurence Norman in Berlin

On Tuesday, after Russian President Vladimir Putin sent troops into two breakaway regions of Ukraine, Western nations imposed sanctions on Russian sovereign debt, six Russian banks, several wealthy Russians linked to Mr. Putin's inner circle, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and other high officials, and halted the Nord Stream 2 natural-gas pipeline.

A senior U.S. administration official described the measures as "only the sharp edge

of the pain we can inflict."

U.S., European Union and British officials say they had other, more powerful financial weapons in their arsenal and were primed to use them as Mr. Putin escalated. Those include sanctions on much larger Russian banks, a ban on investment in Russian gas projects, and export controls designed to deprive Russian industry of technology needed for long-term economic growth.

Late Wednesday, Mr. Biden said he would in the morning announce "further consequences" on Russia.

The previous day, a senior administration official said potential plans included hitting the country's most critical banks.

"No Russian financial institution is safe if this invasion proceeds," the official said.

U.S. officials say that taken as a whole, the sanctions are intended to shock Russia's financial system.

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INSIDE



BUSINESS & FINANCE
Online used-car seller Carvana is tested as the tailwinds that boosted growth fade. **B1**



PERSONAL JOURNAL
Craft beer's hot new thing is a cold, crisp lager that couldn't be further from long-popular IPAs. **A11**



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Opposing Johnson

Can the UK's Labour party exploit premier's pains? — BIG READ, PAGE 13

ECB history test

Clamour for rate rise risks repeating Trichet's error — MEGAN GREENE, PAGE 15



Nasa vs Musk

Clash over congestion in low-earth orbit — PEGGY HOLLINGER, PAGE 5

Brussels hits Putin's inner circle as US hardens invasion warning

Russian troops 'ready to go' • Forces close in on Ukraine • EU weighs further sanctions

DEMETRI SEVASTOPULO — WASHINGTON
ELENA VARSITSIOTI, SAN FLEMIN
AND HENRY FOY — BRUSSELS

Vladimir Putin's chief of staff and defence minister have been blacklisted by the EU in a first round of sanctions against Moscow as the US warned that a Russian invasion of Ukraine could start imminently.

"Putin and his forces are as ready as they can be," a senior defence official said. "They've advanced their readiness to a point where they are literally ready to go if they get the order."

He added that 80 per cent of the Russian forces in the region had moved into locations in Russia and Belarus 5-50km from the Ukrainian border.

The official said Russia had already positioned more than two dozen warships in the Black Sea, including 10 amphibious landing ships. "These ships exist for one reason and that is to put boots on the ground," he said.

The US warning came as the EU named 27 people and entities in a list of restrictive measures. Anton Vaino, chief of staff in Putin's presidential executive office, and Sergei Shoigu, defence minister, are among those named.

Sanctions were also imposed on two of Russia's deputy prime ministers for "threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine", and the heads of Russia's navy, army and air force, in what EU officials said was the first of potentially multiple waves of measures.

Charles Michel, European Council president, has convened a summit of the bloc's leaders today. He told EU leaders: "The use of force and coercion to change borders has no place in the 21st century."

The EU move against Vaino and Shoigu, members of Russia's security council, takes the bloc's Ukraine-related sanctions to Putin's inner circle. They involve an asset freeze and ban on providing funds to those listed, as well as a ban on travel to and within the EU.



Vladimir Putin commemorates Defender of the Fatherland Day in Moscow yesterday
Alexei Nikolsky/Reuters Pool
Photos via AP

The US also imposed sanctions against Nord Stream 2, the company overseeing the construction of a gas pipeline from Russia to the EU, and its executives. Joe Biden, US president, said: "These steps are another piece of our initial tranche of sanctions in

response to Russia's actions in Ukraine." EU policymakers have warned that they are ready to increase the pressure on leading Russian business figures and the country's wider economy if Putin embarks on a full invasion.

Ursula von der Leyen, European Commission president, stressed she did not consider Russia had yet engaged in a "military invasion" but that it was guilty of a serious breach of international law. "If there is any further military action against Ukraine there will be a massive and robust second package," she added.

Margarita Simonyan, editor-in-chief of RT, the Kremlin-funded English language TV channel that broadcasts out-

side Russia, is on the list for having "promoted a positive attitude to... the actions of separatists in Donbas". Vladimir Solovyov, a TV news anchor, and Maria Zakharova, foreign ministry spokeswoman, will also be hit.

The EU sanctions will also apply to three banks with operations in the Donetsk and Luhansk separatist-held territories — YEB, Promsvyazbank and Bank Rossiya, according to the list.

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More teeth to curbs page 8

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Timothy Snyder
Page 15

Russia's president justified violence with a bizarre diatribe about the past. He is no historian. Ukrainians have as much right to a future as anyone else

Briefing

► **Soaring prices boost Rio Tinto payout**
The London-listed miner has turned in bumper results after cashing in on the commodities price surge. It declared dividends of \$7.7bn, the second-biggest in UK corporate history. — PAGE 5

► **Methane under-reported 'by 70%'**
The international energy watchdog has warned that emissions of the gas from the energy industry are grossly underestimated across the globe. Methane traps more heat than carbon dioxide. — PAGE 2

► **WHO drives job training for world's poor**
The World Health Organization has said it will set up a facility in South Korea to provide training for drug manufacturing in poorer countries in a bid to prepare for the next global health crisis. — PAGE 4

► **JPMorgan accused of Nigeria negligence**
A London court has heard the bank was "grossly negligent" in paying \$900m to a company controlled by a former Nigerian minister with a dirty-money conviction. — PAGE 6

► **Heathrow predicts summer recovery**
The UK's busiest airport has predicted a "surge" of holidaymakers will help recovery this summer, as it reported that total losses from plunging passenger numbers in the pandemic hit £3.8bn. — PAGE 5

► **Global broadcasters face ban in Turkey**
Germany's Deutsche Welle and the US public radio service Voice of America have said they will refuse to comply with a request to apply for licences, demands they described as "censorship". — PAGE 2

► **Quantum leap in underground mapping**
Researchers and industrial partners at Birmingham university in the UK have demonstrated a sensor that can detect subterranean structures by finding minute variations in gravity linked to them. — PAGE 4

Datavatch

The last straw

Share of respondents who want single-use plastic banned



Three-quarters of people across 28 countries want to do away with single-use plastics, up from 71 per cent in 2019, according to a recent poll. While support is greatest in Latin America, there is less enthusiasm in the US and Japan



Netflix has disappointing episode with Indian push

The streaming audience of India is eluding Netflix at a time when slowing subscriber growth elsewhere is making emerging markets crucial to its growth strategy. Its ambition to sign up 100m devotees, in a nation of 1.4bn, has fallen flat, with just 5.5m in the bag, according to researchers. Industry insiders say the California-based group was slow to address country-specific issues, including pricing, distribution and the importance of local languages. Ambitious targets — PAGE 6

Hong Kong lines up cash handouts as city buckles under coronavirus record

CHAN HO-HIM — HONG KONG

Hong Kong has launched a new round of cash handouts as it struggles to contain China's biggest outbreak of coronavirus since the start of the pandemic, despite economists warning that its zero-Covid strategy is "unsustainable".

Paul Chan, finance secretary, said the government would give cash vouchers of HK\$10,000 (\$1,280) to 6.6m adult residents, as the city reels from an outbreak of the Omicron variant that has overwhelmed the healthcare system and government quarantine facilities.

Hong Kong has more than 8,000 isolation beds but more than 60,000 cases have been reported since January, including a record 8,674 yesterday, according to official data. Chan said the government would spend HK\$5.4bn of its HK\$170bn budget on anti-pandemic

measures, including building new isolation facilities.

The subsidies, which will be given to permanent residents and some immigrants, were unveiled a day after Carrie Lam, Hong Kong chief executive, said all 7.4m residents would have to undergo mandatory testing next month.

Lam has denied she plans to impose a citywide lockdown despite Beijing ordering Hong Kong to adhere to China's zero-Covid strategy. Xi Jinping, China's president, told city authorities last week to make the virus its top priority.

"Fighting the epidemic is our overriding mission," Chan said in his budget speech, adding that the economy would expand between 2 per cent and 3.5 per cent in the first quarter compared with the last three months of 2021.

Analysts believe that government projections are optimistic, with econo-

mists saying growth will slow in the first quarter. They add that mandatory testing will hit productivity, with those testing positive placed in isolation.

The latest financial support was unveiled after it was announced this week that strict social-distancing measures would last until at least April.

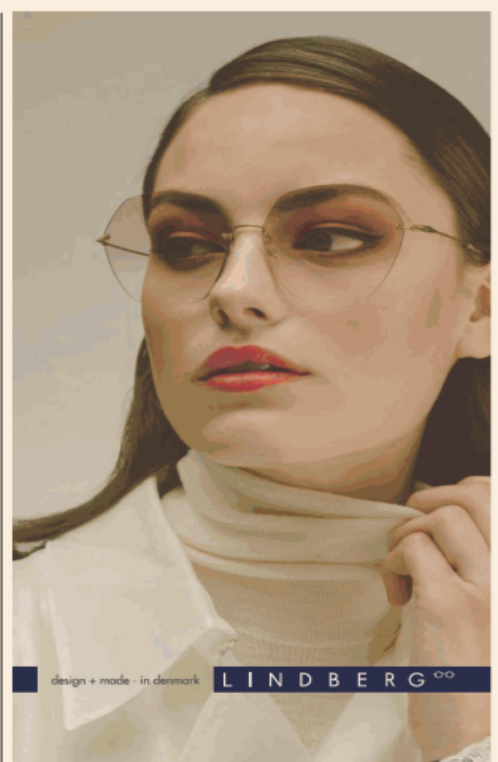
Travel rules, which enforce quarantine for overseas arrivals of up to three weeks, and flight bans to nine countries, including the US and UK, have also made life hard for global companies.

Hong Kong's zero-Covid approach is "obviously unsustainable", said Kevin Lai, chief economist for Asia excluding Japan at Daiwa Capital Markets. "You spend so much money on maintaining zero-Covid... and when the next wave of infections comes, you have to spend tens of billions again, sacrificing the city's economy."

World Markets

STOCK MARKETS				CURRENCIES				INTEREST RATES			
	Feb 23	prev	%chg		Feb 23	prev	%chg		price	yield	chg
S&P 500	4296.03	4304.76	-0.20	\$ per £	1.133	1.134	-0.09	US Gov 10 yr	141.71	1.98	0.04
Nasdaq Composite	13323.88	13381.52	-0.43	\$ per €	1.356	1.360	-0.29	UK Gov 10 yr		1.39	0.00
Dow Jones Ind	35546.28	35596.61	-0.15	€ per \$	0.835	0.834	0.12	Ger Gov 10 yr		0.23	-0.01
FTSE 100	1777.25	1780.00	-0.22	¥ per \$	115.056	115.061	-0.00	Jpn Gov 10 yr	110.68	0.19	0.05
Euro Stoxx 50	3969.83	3985.47	-0.39	¥ per €	155.975	156.436	-0.29	US Gov 30 yr	102.92	2.27	0.03
FTSE 100	7498.18	7494.21	0.05	SFr per €	1.539	1.544	-0.32	Ger Gov 2 yr	103.85	-0.37	0.04
FTSE All-Share	4160.64	4172.35	-0.06	£ per \$	0.883	0.882	0.11				
CAC 40	6780.67	6787.60	-0.10								
Xetra Dax	14631.36	14693.00	-0.42								
Nikkei	26449.61	26910.67	-1.71								
Hang Seng	22640.28	22820.00	-0.80								
MSCI World	2948.64	2975.91	-0.93								
MSCI EM	1206.63	1219.48	-1.05	Oil WTI \$	92.16	91.91	0.27	Fed Funds Eff	0.08	0.09	0.00
MSCI ACWI	694.57	700.90	-0.90	Oil Brent \$	96.98	96.94	0.14	US 3m Bills	0.37	0.35	0.02
				Gold \$	1800.10	1804.45	-0.30	Euro Libor 3m	-0.58	-0.59	0.00
								UK 3m	0.09	0.00	0.01

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RUSSIA ATTACKS AS PUTIN WARNS WORLD; BIDEN VOWS TO HOLD HIM ACCOUNTABLE



A Ukrainian soldier on Wednesday. President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia said his goal was to demilitarize but not occupy Ukraine.

Large Explosions in Ukrainian Cities — Moscow Says Not to Interfere

By ANTON TROIANOVSKI and NEIL MacFARQUHAR

Nations Security Council held an emergency meeting imploring him not to invade.

Mr. Putin said he was acting after receiving a plea for assistance from the leaders of the Russian-backed separatist territories formed in eastern Ukraine in 2014 — a move that Western officials had predicted as a possible pretext for an invasion.

Mr. Putin also described the operation as a response to a "question of life or death" that he said Russia was facing as a result of the eastward expansion of the NATO alliance — which Ukraine has aspired to join.

"This is that red line that I talked about multiple times," Mr. Putin said. "They have crossed it."

The operation's goal, Mr. Putin said, was "to defend people who for eight years are suffering persecution and genocide by the Kyiv regime," citing the false accusation that Ukrainian forces had been carrying out ethnic cleansing in separatist regions of east.

Continued on Page A10

Europe Hopes to Pressure Putin By Crimping Cronies' Lifestyles

By MATINA STEVIS-GRIDNEFF

BRUSSELS — The list included some of the Kremlin's highest ranking officials, the top Russian military leadership, senior bank executives, a prominent news anchor, the head of a global television network and a Russian businessman with links to a mercenary group.

For years, as part of the circles of power that surround President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, many have enjoyed lavish lifestyles — villas on Lake Como in Italy, jetting to see children living in European capitals, shopping on the Continent's glitziest boulevards.

On Wednesday, the European Union took aim at them with an array of sanctions.

E.U. officials said the bloc's nearly 600-page list of penalties —

Sleepless Nights in Moscow as a Nation Lurches Into a Conflict

By ANTON TROIANOVSKI

MOSCOW — Waiting for her friends on Moscow's princely landscaped Boulevard Ring earlier this week, Svetlana Kozakova admitted that she'd had a sleepless night. She kept checking the news on her phone after President Vladimir V. Putin's aggrieved speech to the nation on Monday that all but threatened Ukraine with war.

"Things are going to be very, very uncertain," she said, "and, most likely, very sad."

For months, Russians of all po-

Ordinary Russians Feel Powerless to Change Kremlin's Course

Pollsters said that most Russians probably supported Mr. Putin's formal recognition of the Russian-backed territories in eastern Ukraine this week, especially because they had no choice in the matter and because no significant political force inside the country has argued against it.

War is a different matter altogether, though; in recent days, Russia has not seen any of the jubilation that accompanied the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Going to war is one of Russians' greatest fears, according to the Levada Center, an independent pollster. And after Mr. Putin's angry speech and his cryptic television meeting with his Security Council on Monday, Russians realized that possibility was lurking closer toward becoming reality.

"This hatred that you could read in him so clearly, it wasn't

Continued on Page A11

2 Manhattan Prosecutors Quit, Putting Trump Inquiry in Doubt

This article is by William K. Rashbaum, Ben Protess, Jonah E. Bromwich, Kate Christobek and Nate Schweber.

The two prosecutors leading the Manhattan district attorney's investigation into former President Donald J. Trump and his business practices abruptly resigned on Wednesday amid a monthlong pause in their presentation of evidence to a grand jury, according to people with knowledge of the matter.

The unexpected development came not long after the high-

stakes inquiry appeared to be gaining momentum and now throws its future into serious doubt.

The prosecutors, Carey R. Dunne and Mark F. Pomerantz, submitted their resignations because the new Manhattan district attorney, Alvin Bragg, indicated to them that he had doubts about moving forward with a case against Mr. Trump, the people said.

Mr. Pomerantz confirmed in a brief interview that he had resigned but declined to elaborate. Mr. Dunne declined to comment.

Without Mr. Bragg's commitment to move forward, the prosecutors late last month postponed a plan to question at least one witness before the grand jury, one of the people said. They have not questioned any witnesses in front of the grand jury for more than a month, essentially pausing their investigation into whether Mr. Trump inflated the value of his assets to obtain favorable loan terms from banks.

The precise reasons for Mr. Bragg's pullback are unknown, and he has made few public statements about the status of the in-

Continued on Page A17



Alvin Bragg, the Manhattan district attorney, started Jan. 1.



Brain Failure, a Beijing band, in Wuhan. China's clubs had a mix of local and foreign musicians.

Xi's China-First Policy Is Shutting Out the World

By VIVIAN WANG

The miracle of modern China was built on global connections, a belief that sending young people, companies and future leaders to soak up the outside world was the route from impoverishment to power. Now, emboldened by its transformation, the country is shunning the influences and ideas that nourished its rise.

Curbing Flow of Ideas That Lifted Country

The country's most dominant leader in decades, Xi Jinping, seems intent on redefining China's relationship with the world, recasting the meeting of minds and cultures as a zero-sum clash.

Education officials are imposing restrictions on English education and requiring that scholars ask permission to attend even virtual international conferences. Regulars have punished Chinese companies for raising money overseas. Mr. Xi has exhorted artists to embrace "cultural confidence" by promoting traditional Chinese literature and art, and

Continued on Page A6

M.T.A. to Test Safety Barriers In the Subway

By MICHAEL GOLD
and ANA LEY

For years, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority had resisted calls to install the platform barriers that are used in subway systems around the globe to block access to tracks, citing the "special complexities" of bringing such technology to a century-old system not designed for it.

But on Wednesday, more than a month after a woman was shoved to her death in front of a train at the Times Square subway station, transit officials reversed course and said they would move to test such barriers.

While the pilot program will be limited to three stations, it does include some platforms at the Times Square station, one of the system's busiest stops, and officials say it could lay the foundation for an eventual expansion elsewhere.

More than one-fourth of the system's stations have layouts that could eventually accommodate platform barriers, according to an analysis commissioned by the

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INTERNATIONAL A4-13

Anti-Mandate Protests Spread

An occupation in New Zealand's capital shows the influence that American disinformation about vaccines is having on other democracies. PAGE A4

A Regal President's Softer Side

As elections near, Emmanuel Macron of France is aiming to put a more human face on his powerful position. PAGE A4

OBITUARIES B10-11

Growing Voice of Grunge

In bands like Screaming Trees and Queens of the Stone Age, Mark Lanegan, 57, helped lift a genre. PAGE B10

NATIONAL A14-19

Backing Florida's Covid Policy

Gov. Ron DeSantis has a partner in Dr. Joseph Ladapo, the state's new surgeon general, who has vowed to "reject fear" in managing the pandemic. PAGE A14

Ivanka Trump May Face Panel

Donald J. Trump's elder daughter is in talks to sit for an interview with the Jan. 6 committee, which regards her as an important witness. PAGE A18

Transgender Care Criticized

Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas told state health agencies that medical treatments for transgender adolescents should be classified as "child abuse." PAGE A15

BUSINESS B1-6

Apple vs. the Netherlands

Apple is fighting a Dutch regulator's effort to make the company give people multiple payment options for using dating apps on their phones. PAGE B5

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Soccer by Numbers

For many clubs, the pursuit of a top data analyst has become as important as the pursuit for the best players. PAGE B7

It's College Basketball's Turn

With the N.C.A.A. tournament fast approaching, we get up to speed with how the season is shaping up. PAGE B9

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Restarting 'Law & Order'

The show's first episode in 12 years has the intro and some old stars. But it's missing a few things. A review. PAGE C1

A Brutal Expression of Love

The Israeli dance troupe L-E-V displayed its sensuality in a work's premiere at the Joyce Theater. PAGE C8



THURSDAY STYLES D1-6

A Lens on the World

Marilyn Stafford, who photographed a good bit of the 20th century, finally gets recognition in the 21st. PAGE D1

Italy's Powerhouse Siblings

Chiara and Valentina Ferragni have emerged as a major force in fashion. PAGE D5

OPINION A20-21

Gail Collins

PAGE A21



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UKRAINE UNDER ATTACK

Putin warns against intervention; Biden says 'world will hold Russia accountable'

County to relax indoor mask policy

Businesses that check vaccine status will be free to drop rules on face coverings.

By Luke Money and Rong-Gong Lin II

Fully vaccinated individuals will soon be able to shed their masks indoors at Los Angeles County establishments that screen the inoculation status of visitors and patrons, health officials said Wednesday.

While not a complete easing, the revised rules — which take effect at 12:01 a.m. Friday — represent a significant relaxation of the county's universal indoor mask mandate, which has been in place since July. And depending on how many businesses elect to take advantage, the impact could be both widespread and widely apparent, especially in places like offices, gyms, restaurants, bars and hair salons.

However, it also may be short-lived. County health officials have expressed optimism that the region is mere weeks away from clearing the threshold they've set.

[See Masks, A14]

School mandates get voter support

By Paloma Esquivel

Nearly two-thirds of California voters, including a majority of parents, support mask and vaccine mandates in K-12 schools, according to a poll conducted this month by the Institute of Governmental Studies at UC Berkeley and co-sponsored by the L.A. Times.

The results of the early February poll of nearly 9,000 California voters suggest continued broad public support for policies aimed at reducing the spread of the coronavirus in schools, even as protests against mask and vaccine mandates garner public attention in school districts across the state.

"People really want the schools to get back to where they were," said Mark DiCamillo, director of the Berkeley IGS Poll. "But the desire to open schools is tempered with these feelings that these precautions should still be in place."

[See Poll, A14]

Herd immunity remains elusive

Experts say it's unlikely the Omicron wave will lead to the pandemic goal. PERSPECTIVES, A2

Another vaccine shows promise

Sanofi, GlaxoSmithKline have their COVID-19 shot has 100% efficacy against severe disease. NATION, A7



A UKRAINIAN soldier keeps watch not far from Russia-backed separatists near Shchastia in the east.



UKRAINIAN leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy had urged the U.N. Security Council to try to stop the invasion.



RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin sounded a beligerent note in announcing the attack on Ukraine.

Invasion also comes in cyberspace

Hackers have long targeted Ukraine, but may hit infrastructure to deepen the chaos.

By NABIH BULOS

KYIV, Ukraine — The attack began just before noon. First the websites of Ukraine's Defense Ministry and army went dark. Then the country's two largest state-owned

banks couldn't access their accounts — or, worse, saw their balances suddenly drained to zero. Fake text messages from Polish, Austrian and Estonian numbers popped up on their phones, warning them that ATMs were down.

"Then the snowball started to roll," said intelligence officer Yuri Shchigol, as the massive Feb. 15 online assault engulfed Ukraine's central bank, the president's office, the Foreign Ministry, the security service and a

raft of other state portals, disabling their websites for hours.

By early the following morning, the disruption was largely over. It left little damage: Even those whose bank accounts showed zero found their money untouched. But for Shchigol and others in Ukraine's cybersecurity corps, it was yet another onslaught in an eight-year war that — unlike its real-life counterpart — has never quieted down.

Another attack Wednesday

hit a number of banks as well as the national parliament, the Cabinet of Ministers and Foreign Ministry websites. Early Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that he would proceed with a military operation in Ukraine. Ukrainians woke up to the sounds of explosions in what Putin referred to as the "demilitarization" of Ukraine, demanding that the Ukrainian military stand down.

As for the cyberattacks, [See Cyberattacks, A6]

By ELI STOKOLS, NABIH BULOS AND TRACY WILKINSON

SHCHASTIA, Ukraine — While the U.N. Security Council was meeting to avert war, explosions thundered and flashed across Ukraine early Thursday as Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered his forces to attack the country after weeks of failed diplomacy and a massive military buildup intended to recast the map of Eastern Europe.

The move was a stunning — if expected — play from a leader who for weeks has massed troops on Ukraine's borders while brandishing threatening rhetoric and snubbing world leaders. The latest incursion shatters decades of relative peace in Europe and is certain to elicit a forceful response from the U.S. and NATO. Both Washington and its transatlantic allies have promised to impose even harsher sanctions than those enacted just days ago.

But Putin, who vowed to liberate and protect the Russia-backed separatist eastern region of Ukraine, was unbowed and belligerent, warning other countries to stay out of the conflict: "Whoever tries to impede us, let alone create threats for our country and its people, must know that the Russian response will be immediate and lead to the consequences you have never seen in history."

President Biden swiftly condemned Russia's attack and said he would meet with other world leaders on Thursday to discuss a response.

"The prayers of the entire world are with the people of Ukraine tonight as they suffer an unprovoked and unjustified attack by Russian military forces," Biden said. "President Putin has chosen a premeditated war that will bring a catastrophic loss of life and human suffering. Russia alone is responsible for the death and destruction this attack will bring, and the United States and its allies and partners will respond in a united and decisive way. The world will hold Russia accountable."

The Russian operation was a blatant affront to diplomacy and the United Nations Security Council, which was meeting at the urging of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to stop an invasion that [See Ukraine, A4]

Trump's stance divides the GOP

The former president seems to side with Russia as he praises Putin and mocks Biden. NATION, A7

Permit issue stalls O.C. oil spill probe



BIOLOGISTS assess Newport Beach tide pools after the October oil spill that sent at least 25,000 gallons of crude gushing into the waters off Orange County.

Investigators say they can't make progress without federal OK to remove pipeline.

By RICHARD WINTON AND LAURA J. NELSON

A federal investigation into the October oil spill that tared parts of the Orange County coast has been stalled for several months while officials wait for permission to cut apart, remove and analyze a portion of the ruptured pipeline.

The U.S. Coast Guard said Wednesday that the agency is still waiting for permits from federal officials before cutting apart the San Pedro Bay pipeline and transporting the damaged section to a lab for analysis.

That analysis, which was expected to start in 2021, could help reveal how long [See Oil spill, A8]

Part ways with LeBron James?

To avoid a decade of mediocrity, the Lakers should trade away their superstar, Bill Plaschke writes. SPORTS, B10

Nuclear deal with Iran nears

A revived agreement appears imminent, but it doesn't look as if it will be the "longer, stronger" one promised. WORLD, A3

State will target plastic waste

Panel's sweeping recommendations call for a variety of measures to prevent ocean pollution. CALIFORNIA, B1

Weather

Sunny, still cool. L.A. Basin: 61/40. B6



BUSINESS INSIDE: After years of violations, Tesla gets a modest \$275,000 EPA fine. A10

El Leeds de Bielsa sufrió otra goleada frente al Liverpool

Justo cuando pelea por evitar el descenso, fue vapuleado por 6-0; es la 12ª derrota del equipo en 25 partidos de la Premier League; está a tres puntos de la zona roja. Deportes, página 3



EL TEATRO DEL MUNDO, EN EL GRAN ESCENARIO DE BUENOS AIRES

—espectáculos

El Festival Internacional (FIBA), que empieza mañana, incluye propuestas locales e internacionales en las que conviven obras en espacios públicos y de realidad virtual.

CUATRO DETENIDOS MÁS EN LA CAUSA DE GENERACIÓN ZOE

—sociedad

Fueron apresados en Córdoba; tres de ellos son policías; Cositorto, líder de la empresa, sigue prófugo y anunció que el 7 de marzo reestructurará la compañía. Página 21

LA NACION

JUEVES 24 DE FEBRERO DE 2022 | LANACION.COM.AR

La discusión por la suba de tarifas retrasa el acuerdo con el Fondo

DEUDA. El FMI reclama un ajuste que supere la inflación, cercana al 60%; Guzmán lo rechaza y busca que esté ligado a los salarios

La discusión por el aumento que deberían tener las tarifas de luz y gas entorpece el cierre de la renegociación de la deuda entre el Gobierno y el Fondo Monetario Internacional (FMI). La resolución del tema es clave, dado que de eso dependen la reducción del déficit fiscal y la emisión monetaria, corazón de un potencial acuerdo. Sin embargo, fuentes oficiales afirmaron que confían en que el Gobierno y el organismo logren sellarlo este fin de semana.

Según pudo saber LA NACION, el FMI pretende que las tarifas de energía tengan un alza del 60%, por encima de la inflación estimada. El ministro de Economía, Martín Guzmán, rechazó el pedido y quiere que el aumento esté vinculado a la suba

de los salarios. Sin embargo, admite que el alza debe ser superior al 20%, ratificado por La Cámpora y el cristinismo duro para este año.

En medio de la creciente incertidumbre sobre la aprobación del acuerdo en el Congreso, la Coalición Cívica propuso ayer un proyecto de ley para que solo se vote el financiamiento y se evite la turbulencia de debatir cada uno de los puntos del entendimiento. Páginas 8 a 10

El gas aumenta 20% desde el martes, pero no bajan los subsidios

Sofía Diamante
Página 9

Nueva pista en busca de la cocaína adulterada

DROGAS. Tras conocerse que la droga incautada a Joaquín "el Paísa" Aquino no contenía carfentanilo, el opioide que combinado con cocaína causó 24 muertes, la investigación apunta ahora a uno de los históricos jefes narco del conurbano: Miguel Ángel "Mameluco" Villalba. Se realizó ayer un operativo contra búnkeres de venta de drogas instalados en San Martín que serían controlados por Villalba desde el penal de Rawson. Página 26

Por no estar vacunados, no pueden ir al colegio

COVID. En El Chaltén, unos 80 alumnos de niveles inicial y primario todavía no pudieron retornar a las clases presenciales porque no completaron el esquema de vacunación contra el coronavirus. Ese es el requisito que pide Santa Cruz para que los estudiantes puedan ingresar en las aulas. Los padres de El Chaltén presentaron un amparo por discriminación, que la Justicia aceptó porque la vacunación no es obligatoria. Página 23

— LA NACION EN UCRANIA —

EE.UU. advierte que la invasión rusa sería dentro de dos días y Kiev se moviliza

En la capital ucraniana impera un clima de shock; temen que Putin ordene un ataque masivo; Biden aguarda una incursión a gran escala

Elisabetta Piqué
ENVIADA ESPECIAL

KIEV.— Elena Klymenko dice que prefiere abstraerse de la realidad, encerrarse en sí misma y no pensar. "Silo hago me pongo a llorar y me da un ataque de pánico", confiesa esta psicóloga ucraniana de 38 años que resume el clima de shock que reina

en Kiev, la capital de Ucrania, donde todo ha cambiado dramáticamente desde el lunes, cuando el aquí detestado Vladimir Putin decidió patear el tablero, desafiar al mundo occidental y anexionar, de hecho, la región del Donbass, en el este, a unos 800 kilómetros de aquí, pegada a la frontera con Rusia. La jugada del líder del Kremlin era desde hace tiempo

esperada y muchos temen que sea el preámbulo de un ataque ruso masivo, lo que llevó a Ucrania a movilizar reservistas y a los otros grandes actores de este TEG explosivo, Estados Unidos y la Unión Europea, a aumentar sanciones contra Moscú. Washington advirtió que la invasión a gran escala podría comenzar "dentro de 48 horas". Continúa en la página 2



Bomberos intentaban ayer salvar, en Iberá, a un carpincho afectado por el fuego

ISMAEL MACÍAS/CADENA 3

Polémica por el desastre en Corrientes

INCENDIOS. Cabandí enfrentó en el Senado reclamos por la demora en la ayuda; más pérdidas y animales afectados

El ministro de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible, Juan Cabandí, fue ayer al Senado a dar explicaciones sobre el desastre que vive Corrientes por los incendios forestales.

Enfrentó duros reproches por la demora en la ayuda. Las pérdidas, mientras tanto, se acentúan por el avance de las llamas e intentan salvar a la fauna afectada. Página 18

Dólar cai a R\$ 5 com incertezas geopolíticas

O dólar atingiu ontem sua menor cotação frente ao real desde junho de 2021, fechando a R\$ 5. Ante à possibilidade de guerra entre Rússia e Ucrânia, investidores colocaram mais dinheiro no Brasil, valorizando a moeda local.

O recuo do dólar, com petróleo e commodities em alta, não deve reduzir a inflação no país. Mercado p. 1

Esporte B7

Corinthians contrata portugueses Vítor Pereira como seu novo treinador

Ilustrada C1

Séries e filmes sobre estelionatários reais fazem sucesso no streaming

Guia C6

Reaberto, bar Filial é sombra do passado em uma melancólica Vila Madalena

turismo

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João Gabriel Rodrigues/Fatopress/Folhapress

BOLSONARO USA GRAVATA COM DESENHOS DE FUZIS

Presidente vestiu o acessório em cerimônia sobre o Plano Nacional do Desporto, em Brasília

A pandemia em 23.fev Dados das 20h

POPULAÇÃO VACINADA

No Brasil	
Ao menos uma dose (dose única ou 1ª dose)	82,2%
1º ciclo vacinal completo (dose única ou 2ª dose)	71,8%
Dose de reforço	28,8%

Nois estados	Ao menos uma dose	1º ciclo completo	Dose de reforço
SP	90,5%	80,6%	42,6%
PI	90,8%	78,0%	26,2%
PB	83,8%	75,7%	33,3%
MG	81,9%	74,9%	31,0%

ESTÁGIO DA DOENÇA

Óbitos		
Média móvel	803	Em 24 h 956
	↓ -8,0%*	Total 646.490
Casos	↓ -41,3%* (acelerado)	
	*Variação em relação a 14 dias	

Putin ordena início da ação militar na Ucrânia

Anúncio foi feito nas primeiras horas de quinta, após União Europeia e EUA decretarem novas sanções a Moscou

O presidente russo, Vladimir Putin, deflagrou nas primeiras horas desta quinta (24) uma operação militar na Ucrânia com o declarado intuito de "proteger a população do Donbass", região do leste do vizinho onde ele reconheceu áreas separatistas pró-Rússia, relata o enviado especial Igor Girelov.

Até a conclusão desta edição, não havia sinais de uma invasão em larga escala — a intenção comunicada pelo Kremlin era enviar tropas para as áreas rebeldes etnicamente russas no país vizinho. Equipes de TV da rede CNN, porém, ouviram explosões à distância na capital ucraniana, Kiev, e em Kharkiv, perto de Donbass.

Se o bombardeio for confirmado, Moscou estará escalando a invasão de uma área ocupada desde 2014 para uma guerra contra a Ucrânia. O governo de Volodimir Zelenski conta com o apoio das forças da Otan, a aliança militar capitaneada por Washington.

O anúncio de Putin foi feito no momento em que Conselho de Segurança da ONU realizava uma reunião de emergência que adiou a madrugada em Nova York. Horas antes, Estados Unidos e União Europeia haviam anunciado mais sanções a Moscou.

O Parlamento da Ucrânia aprovou instaurar estado de emergência. Mundo A10

Sem rua, Carnaval fica restrito a quem pode pagar

O avanço da ômicron fez com que prefeituras dos principais destinos carnavalescos cancelassem eventos de rua, mas festas fechadas estão liberadas, desde que cumpram protocolos. Organizadores de blocos apontam para elitização. Cotidiano B1

TENDÊNCIAS / DEBATES A3

Cristiano Zanin e Valeska T. Martins
Lula não está livre por causa de Moro, mas sim porque foi feita justiça

Styvenson Valentim
Não, meu caro Flávio, quem soltou Lula foi Jair Bolsonaro

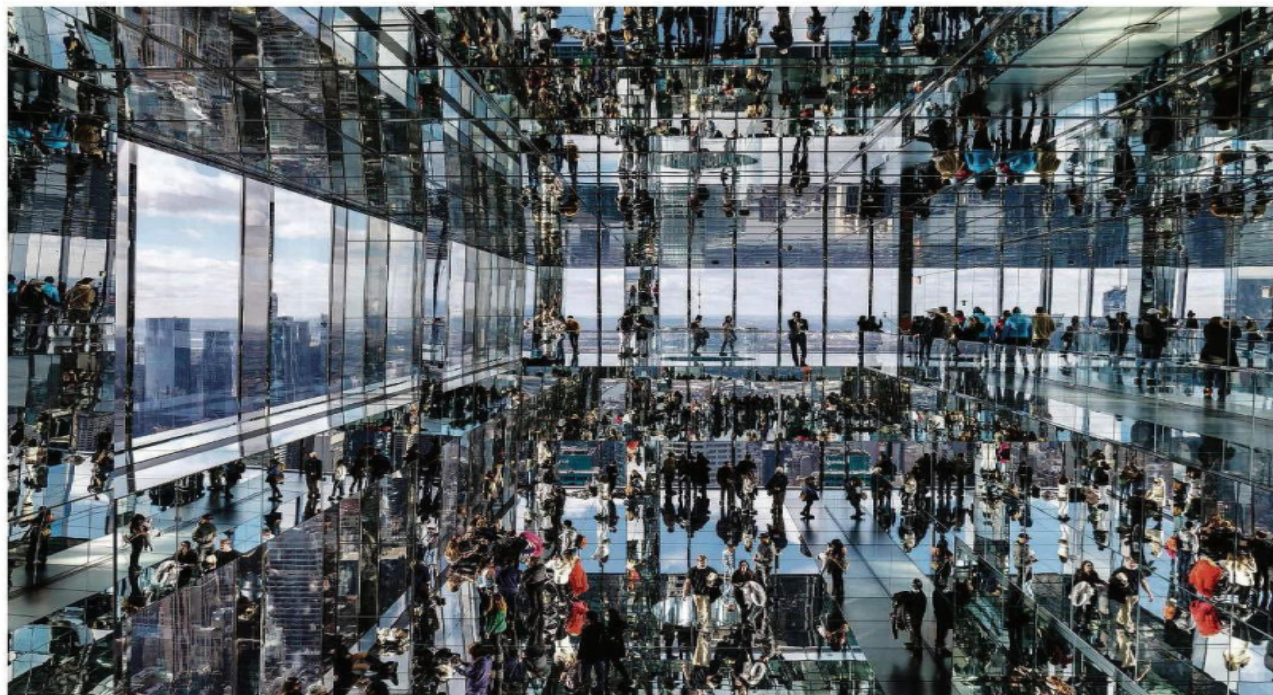
Jogo de empurra e rixas deixam terceira via isolada

A 3ª via expôs nesta semana as dificuldades do campo da centro-direita no enfrentamento a Lula e Jair Bolsonaro, com pressões para que nomes abram mão das pré-candidaturas e divergências sobre o momento de uma eventual aglutinação. Política A4 e A5

Petrobras tem lucro recorde de R\$ 106 bilhões em 2021

No ano em que o consumidor brasileiro pagou preços recordes dos combustíveis, a Petrobras apresentou o maior lucro de sua história, de R\$ 106,6 bilhões, crescimento de 1.400% ante 2020. A companhia anunciou mais R\$ 37,3 bilhões em dividendos aos acionistas.

Segundo a empresa, o desempenho recorde de 2021 reflete a alta de 77% do preço em reais do petróleo Brent, maiores volumes comercializados no mercado interno e melhores margens na venda de combustíveis, além de reversão de perdas contábeis. Mercado p.2



Visitantes contemplam vista da cidade de Nova York a partir do observatório Summit One Vanderbilt, na região central de Manhattan. Angela Weiss/AFP

STJ adia julgamento sobre planos de saúde

Após pedido de vista, corte interrompeu pela segunda vez julgamento que determinará se as operadoras estão obrigadas a cobrir procedimentos não incluídos em lista estipulada pela Agência Nacional de Saúde Suplementar. BS

EDITORIAIS A2

Apuração rachada
Sobre investigações em torno de Flávio Bolsonaro.

Mais negligência
Acerca de atraso na oferta de remédios contra Covid.

ATMOSFERA



Fonte: www.climatempo.com.br

Llanismo se reunió y en un acalorado encuentro no unificó su posición

Vuelta a sesiones tendrá juicio a Quiñónez como tema principal

Hay legisladores que ya quieren que se presente ante la Cámara de Diputados el libelo acusatorio. Destacan la pérdida de confianza de amplios sectores en el Ministerio Público.

PÁGINAS 6 y 7

Empresarios reclaman reformas
Inseguridad impacta
negativamente en el
clima de negocios

PÁGINA 14

Aplazan definición de la tarifa
Paraguay paga más
caro por la energía de
Itaipú que el Brasil

PÁGINA 16

Gobernador procesado por corrupción
Tribunal ratifica la
inhibición de bienes
para Hugo Javier

PÁGINA 12



Expo para ayudar a
escoger una carrera

Opciones. La Expo Universidades será presencial hasta hoy en el Shopping Mariscal. La virtual se extenderá al 27 de febrero. Es organizada por Última Hora.

PÁGINA 22



A Ultranza PY: Narcotraficantes simulaban
exportaciones lícitas para traficar cocaína

PÁGINA 2 a la 4

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LE FIGARO

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



STROMAE
LE GRAND RETOUR
DU CHANTEUR APRÈS
SEPT ANS D'ABSENCE **PAGE 30**

LE FIGARO LITTÉRAIRE
KESSEL, PÉREZ-REVERTE, RASPAIL...
CES JOURNALISTES DE TERRAIN
DEVENUS ÉCRIVAINS **NOTRE SUPPLÉMENT**



PRÉSIDENTIELLE
Le bal des trahisons
et des ralliements

PAGES 8 ET 9

ITALIE

Le pays encore
marqué par Mani
pulite **PAGE 11**

ENVIRONNEMENT

En France, l'état
des ressources
en poissons est en
nette amélioration

PAGE 14

ENTRETIEN

Pablo Longoria:
« Je ne pourrais
jamais vivre
autant d'émotions
qu'à l'OM » **PAGE 15**

AUTOMOBILE

Recette gagnante
de Tavares
chez Stellantis **PAGE 25**

SANTÉ

Le vaccin anti-
Covid de Sanofi
enfin prêt **PAGE 26**

CHAMPS LIBRES
• Les
chroniques
de Vincent
Trémolet
de Villers
et de Luc Ferry
• Le tête à tête
de Charles
Jaigu
• Des extraits
du nouvel
ouvrage de
Malika Sorel
• L'analyse
d'Amaury
Coutansais-
Pourtansière

PAGES 17 À 19

**FIGARO OUI
FIGARO NON**

**Réponses à la question
de mercredi:**
Pensez-vous
que les sanctions
pourront dissuader
Vladimir Poutine
d'envahir l'Ukraine?

OUI 8% NON 92%

TOTAL DE VOTANTS : 285 491

**Votez aujourd'hui
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Les Occidentaux
doivent-ils armer
les Ukrainiens?

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Des réservistes
ukrainiens
s'entraînent
près de Kiev,
le 19 février,
certains avec des
armes factices.

ETHAN SNOPE/BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY IMAGES

Kiev a décrété l'état d'urgence et la mobilisation des réservistes. Des renforts sont acheminés à l'est et au nord du pays pour parer aux différents scénarios d'une attaque de Moscou. **PAGES 2 À 6 ET L'EDITORIAL**

Le nombre de détenus étrangers s'accroît dans les prisons françaises

En dix ans, entre 2011 et 2021, la part des détenus étrangers dans les établissements pénitentiaires français est passée de 17,2 % à environ 25 %. Plus de la moitié viennent d'Afrique, pour

une facture avoisinant les 700 millions d'euros par an. Si des dispositifs de rapatriement existent, leur mise en œuvre est si complexe qu'ils ne sont presque jamais activés. **PAGE 12**



Retraites : l'inéluctable réforme du prochain quinquennat

Quel que soit le futur chef de l'État, les retraites s'imposent comme l'un des dossiers prioritaires. En perte de 18 milliards d'euros, le système restera « durablement en

déficit » si rien n'est fait, selon la Cour des comptes. Parmi les candidats, seuls Valérie Pécresse et Éric Zemmour proposent un relèvement de l'âge de départ. **PAGES 22 ET 23**

ÉDITORIAL par Philippe Gélie pgelie@lefigaro.fr

La guerre annoncée

Tandis que Vladimir Poutine suit son plan de marche, les Européens et – avec un peu moins d'illusions – les Américains s'accrochent au vague espoir que leurs sanctions « proportionnées » feront réfléchir le maître du Kremlin. Sans doute faut-il être atteint d'hypertension pour ne pas voir se dérouler sous nos yeux un scénario écrit à l'avance – et déjà éprouvé en Géorgie : l'intervention « défensive » au secours des « populations menacées » des nouvelles « républiques indépendantes » du Donbass étant désormais bordée juridiquement et politiquement, il n'y a plus qu'à choisir un prétexte pour la déclencher, en toute « légitimité ».

Au risque d'en fournir un à Moscou, les Ukrainiens, qui ne sont pas dupes, ont entrepris de se préparer à la guerre. Le président Zelensky a ordonné la conscription des réservistes et décrété l'état d'urgence pour trente jours à compter de ce jeudi. On n'en est pas encore à la mobilisation générale, même si des renforts font route vers les frontières menacées à l'est et au nord du pays. L'armée russe est cinq fois plus grande que la leur, mais les autorités de Kiev savent qu'elles n'auront pas le choix de l'esquive.

C'est précisément l'option retenue par les Occidentaux, qui débattent sans vergogne pour savoir si la présence militaire russe dans les provinces sécessionnistes constitue en soi une « invasion » de l'Ukraine. On entend d'ici glousser Vladimir Poutine, à qui Joe Biden a

Sanctions occidentales, le choix de l'esquive

promis qu'il n'envairait pas un fantassin, même pour évacuer des Américains. À l'Ouest, on ergote sur les punitions économiques : progressives, elles interviennent toujours à retardement et risquent d'envoyer un message de faiblesse; massives, elles peuvent constituer une provocation et justifier un passage à l'acte, puisque la facture est déjà établie. Ce dilemme montre combien il s'agit, par définition, de l'arme des désarmés. On ne prétendra pas qu'il serait préférable de se battre – ou d'en laisser planer l'incertitude. Les sanctions ne doivent d'ailleurs pas être si inoffensives, puisque le Kremlin se donne la peine d'annoncer une riposte « forte et douloureuse ». Mais il faut ne pas attendre de miracle de notre posture d'évitement : aux yeux de Poutine, nous n'agissons qu'un tigre de papier. ■

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'I didn't think this would happen!'

Yellowjackets' **Melanie Lynskey** on raunch, rage, and her 'rival' Kate Winslet

→ G2

Yes we can! How the British fell in love with tinned fish → G2



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State of emergency in Ukraine as Kyiv warns Putin is set to invade

Kremlin claims separatist territories call for more military aid from Russia

Andrew Roth Moscow
Emma Graham-Harrison Kyiv
Julian Borger Washington

Ukraine's president has said Russia has approved an offensive against his country and that Vladimir Putin had not responded to a request for talks, as Moscow appeared to set the stage for an imminent large deployment of troops across the border.

In a 10-minute address posted on Telegram last night that directly addressed the Russian people as well as Ukrainians, Volodymyr Zelenskiy said: "Today I initiated a phone call with the president of the Russian Federation. The result was silence."

He said the people of Ukraine wanted peace, but "if someone attempts to take away our land, our freedom, our lives, the lives of our children, we will defend ourselves."

"It will be our faces you see, not our backs."

Ukraine earlier declared a state of emergency, mobilised reserves and told nearly 3 million of its citizens to leave Russia as the US warned that Vladimir Putin had assembled almost 100% of the forces needed to launch a large-scale invasion.

Late last night the Kremlin said it had received an official request for military aid from the leaders of the



▲ Vladimir Putin takes part in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Moscow yesterday, marking Defender of the Fatherland Day, which honours the Russian army PHOTOGRAPH: ALEXEI NIKOLSKIY/TASS/GETTY IMAGES

two Russian-controlled territories in east Ukraine, setting the stage for Russia to send a large deployment of troops into the country imminently.

The separatist leaders asked Moscow to "help repel the aggression of the Ukrainian armed forces in order to avoid civilian casualties and a humanitarian catastrophe in the Donbas", said the Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov.

Putin received parliamentary authorisation to deploy his forces to Ukraine on Tuesday but claimed he had not sent troops there yet. More than 60% of Russia's ground forces are deployed close to Ukraine's borders, threatening a potential all-out invasion that could capture the country's capital, Kyiv.

It appeared last night that Russian forces could formally occupy the Donetsk and Luhansk regions for the first time since fighting began in 2014. Last night, the Ukrainian foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, said the request was a further escalation and called for an urgent UN security council meeting. The Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, said that Putin had not replied to his invitation to hold talks.

"We are potentially close to some sort of action," the Pentagon spokesperson, John Kirby, said last night, adding: "Russian forces continue to assemble closer to the border."

As Russian diplomats evacuated their embassy in the capital, the Ukrainian government said a massive cyber-attack had

Student loan payments extended to 40 years

Sally Weale
Education correspondent

Students in England will have to pay back university loans over 40 years instead of 30 under swingeing reforms designed to save the Treasury tens of billions of pounds.

The number of students expected to pay back their loan in full is to double from under a quarter (23%) to more than half (52%) as a result of the changes, which will see many graduates paying for their degree until retirement in what was described as a "lifelong graduate tax".

In a move designed to sugar the

pill, interest rates on student loans will be slashed for new borrowers and set at no higher than the rate of inflation from next year - but experts said this would disproportionately benefit higher earning graduates.

The controversial measures form the backbone of the government's long-awaited response to the Augar review of post-18 education and funding, which will be detailed in a statement to parliament today.

In a double whammy, graduates will also be asked to start paying off their debt sooner after the government confirmed

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Meat-eating linked to higher risk of cancer

Denis Campbell
Health policy editor

Vegetarians have a 14% lower chance of developing cancer than carnivores, according to a study that links meat-eating to a higher risk of the disease. A team of researchers from Oxford

University analysed data on more than 470,000 Britons and found that pescatarians had a 10% reduced risk. Compared with regular meat eaters - defined as more than five times a week - those who ate small amounts had a 2% lower risk of developing cancer, the study found.

"In this large British

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