

What's News

Business & Finance

Semiconductor inventories are growing as consumers buy fewer electronics, creating an oversupply that marks a sharp turnaround from a global chip shortage during two years of supercharged demand. **A1**

◆ **Most laid off tech workers** are finding jobs shortly after beginning their search, a new survey shows, as employers continue to scoop up workers in a tight labor market. **A1**

◆ **Southwest said it would** limit new bookings on the planes it plans to fly in the coming days, and the airline came under more scrutiny from Washington for its holiday storm meltdown. **A3**

◆ **Japanese companies** said they reached deals with Omani and U.S. producers for mid-to-long-term natural-gas supplies, a move to lock up the fuel after turmoil caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. **B3**

◆ **Learning loss could** shave \$70,000 off the lifetime earnings of children who were in school during the pandemic, according to a new study by a Stanford economist. **A2**

◆ **Major U.S. stock indexes** ended mixed, with the S&P 500 and Nasdaq losing 0.4% and 1.4%, respectively, and the Dow rising 0.1%. **B11**

◆ **Cash holdings** are the lowest since the financial crisis at U.S. government pension funds and just above last year's 13-year low for U.S. corporate pensions. **B1**

◆ **Home prices fell** in October from the previous month as higher mortgage interest rates continued to weigh on home-buying demand. **A2**

World-Wide

◆ **The Supreme Court** kept pandemic-era border controls in place while it considers whether nearly two dozen Republican-led states can intervene in a lawsuit over those restrictions, leaving thousands of asylum-seeking migrants stranded in northern Mexico. **A1**

◆ **The Biden administration** is weighing new precautionary measures for travelers entering the U.S. from China, following Beijing's decision to reopen its borders to international travel. **A6**

◆ **Russia banned the sale** of its oil and petroleum products to countries that put cap on their sales price in a move that threatened more uncertainty ahead for global energy markets. **A8**

◆ **The FDA is studying** whether legal cannabis is safe in food or supplements and plans to make recommendations for how to regulate cannabis-derived products in the coming months, agency officials said. **A5**

◆ **One of the men** convicted in the plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Whitmer, was sentenced by a federal judge to 16 years in prison. **A3**

◆ **The Pentagon** for the first time allowed 700 recruits who had been diagnosed with ADHD to join the military without a waiver under revamped rules. **A5**

◆ **Taiwan will extend** mandatory military service for male citizens in the face of growing concerns about a Chinese attack and intensifying competition between Washington and Beijing. **A6**

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Lost Bags, Canceled Flights Mar Southwest Recovery Effort



BACKLOG: Employees sorted through luggage Tuesday at the Southwest baggage claim at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. Southwest canceled 65% of its scheduled Tuesday departures, as it struggled to stabilize operations. **A3**

Once-Thin Chip Inventories Swell as Gadget Sales Falter

By ASA FITCH

The world is now awash in chips.

The oversupply marks a sharp turnaround from a global shortage during two years of supercharged demand. Consumer appetite for electronics has weakened against a backdrop of rising interest rates, a falling stock market and recession fears. Chip inventories are swelling,

mirroring what is happening in the wider economy where retailers are stuck with goods on their shelves and producers of a range of products in high demand early in the pandemic now face a glut.

What is happening in chips amounts to good news for consumers who can get their hands on products from washing machines to laptops faster, and sometimes more cheaply, than a year ago. For chip makers,

the shift has triggered a wave of job cuts and reduction in capital spending as companies try to restore profitability levels that have eroded in recent months.

Chip inventory levels are "well above our target level," said Sanjay Mehrotra, chief executive of memory maker Micron Technology Inc., as the company on Thursday missed Wall Street earnings projections, gave a subdued outlook

and said it would cut about 10% of its workforce.

Lead times between chip orders and deliveries swelled early in the pandemic have fallen in recent months, according to an analysis by Susquehanna International Group LLP. Inventory levels, typically measured in days, are at their highest levels in more than a decade, or about 40 days above the median for the

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Telehealth Ads Flout Standards

Online firms inhabit gray regulatory zone

By KHADEEJA SAIFAR AND ANDREA FULLER

In an advertisement on Facebook and Instagram, a middle-aged man holding a dumbbell says testosterone "literally changed my life," restoring his energy and happiness.

What the October ad from telehealth startup Hone Health doesn't say is that the unidentified man is an actor who has never used the prescription drug. It doesn't mention that testosterone is approved by the Food and Drug Administration only for

men with specific disorders and that among its risks are heart attacks and stroke.

Similar telehealth companies are flooding TikTok, Instagram and other platforms with ads that don't conform to longtime standards governing the marketing of prescription drugs and health-care treatments. They feature actors posing as customers, tout benefits of drugs with no mention of side effects and promote medications for uses not approved by the FDA.

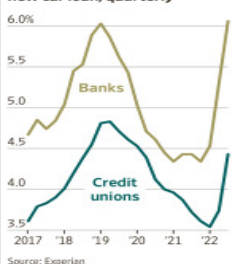
Since the pandemic, on-

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Gap Widens For Auto Loans

Credit unions are undercutting banks on auto loans even as interest rates rise. **B1**

Average rate on a new car loan, quarterly



Source: Experian

Axed Tech Workers Find Jobs Quickly

By SARAH CHANEY CAMBON AND GWYNETH GUILFORD

Most laid off tech workers are finding jobs shortly after beginning their search, a new survey shows, as employers continue to scoop up workers in a tight labor market.

About 79% of workers recently hired after a tech-company layoff or termination landed their new job within three months of starting their search, according to a ZipRecruiter survey of new hires. That was just below the 83% share of all laid-off workers who were re-employed in the same time frame.

Nearly four in 10 previously laid off tech workers found jobs less than a month after they

began searching, ZipRecruiter found in the survey.

"Despite the widespread layoffs, hiring freezes, and cost-cutting taking place in tech, many tech workers are finding re-employment remarkably quickly," said Julia Pollak, chief economist at ZipRecruiter. "They're still the most sought-after workers with the most in-demand skills."

Job openings across the economy—at 10.3 million—are down from record highs but far exceed the number of unemployed Americans, providing opportunities for workers who lose their jobs and those who choose to seek another.

Workers previously employed in other industries, in-

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INSIDE



PERSONAL JOURNAL

Glimpses into the reality of retiring with a nest egg of \$1 million. **A12**



SPORTS

This season, referees are blowing the whistle much more often for walks. **A14**

Hip-Hop's Breakout Stars Include Two Rappers in Their 70s

British duo upends expectations; 'Pete' is in the pub with a baked potato

By JAMES HOOKWAY

MANCHESTER, England—Basil Bellgrave, one half of British rap duo Pete & Bas, stalked the stage on a recent night here, riling up the crowd. "You need a lesson in being a man," he spat. "Tuck in your shirt and pull up your pants, listen again if you don't understand."

Pete Bowditch took over as the beat swelled: "Shoulda listened when I told ya!" Mr. Bowditch is 72. Mr. Bellgrave, 76.

At a time when younger people debate how old is too old to run for president or why so much wealth is in the hands of their parents or grandparents, Messrs. Bellgrave and Bowditch are upending expectations about what seniors can or should be

doing—and building a few bridges along the way.

"I think they're fantastic," said Will Sullivan, a 20-year-old economics student, lining up to get a T-shirt after the show. "Pete and Bas have totally changed how I think about the older generation."

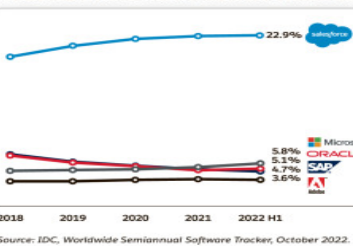
"They're legit artists," said James Bayat, a disc jockey who interviewed the pair on Unity Radio here in Manchester, northern England. "They're opening doors for everybody."

Pete, with his south London drawl and soccer tattoos, and Bas, tall and lean with a silver ponytail trailing off the back of his balding head, have hundreds of thousands of followers on Instagram and TikTok and a clutch of gold discs. The Manchester show was the first

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Salesforce. #1 CRM.

Ranked #1 for CRM Applications based on IDC 2022 H1 Revenue Market Share Worldwide.



Source: IDC, Worldwide Semiannual Software Tracker, October 2022.

salesforce.com/number1CRM

CRM market includes the following IDC-defined functional markets: Sales Force Productivity and Management, Marketing Campaign Management, Customer Service, Contact Center, Advertising, and Digital Commerce Applications. © 2022 Salesforce, Inc. All rights reserved. Various trademarks held by their respective owners.

4 small banks in Utah export high-cost loans

Critics say state law allows "predatory lending" with no limits on interest rates. **In Money**

Challenge accepted: Ranking year's best songs

What makes a great hit? The lyrics? The melody? The beat? We list 2022's top 10 tracks. **In Life**

J.J. Watt's legacy extends beyond NFL

Retiring star is one of the best defenders, but he'll also be remembered for what he did off the field, columnist Nate Davis writes. **In Sports**

USA TODAY

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JOE RONDONE/
USA TODAY
SPORTS



IMMIGRATION

Justices block end of Title 42 removals

Court to hear arguments on program in February

John Fritze and Martina Stewart
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — In a blow to the Biden administration's ability to set the nation's immigration policy, the Supreme Court on Tuesday said the government could not halt the expulsion of migrants for public health reasons under the controversial Title 42 program.

That program, which has been in place since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, must continue while courts assess a lawsuit filed by Republican officials in 19 states who say that unwinding the Title 42 policy would unleash a national "catastrophe."

The emergency intervention from the high court came days after the Trump-era program was set to expire. The justices announced they will hear

See TITLE 42, Page 5A

WEATHER CHAOS



A passenger sleeps Tuesday at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

JOE CAVARETTA/SOUTH FLORIDA SUN-SENTINEL VIA AP

Storm leaves thousands stranded

As a deadly winter storm continues to bury the Buffalo, New York, area, flight cancellations across the country have left thousands of travelers stranded at airports. President Joe Biden said Tuesday that his administration will hold airlines accountable. The U.S. Department of Transportation announced it will look into Southwest Airlines' cancellations in particular, which accounted for the majority of disruptions. Meteorologists say some relief is in sight for hard-hit Buffalo; on Wednesday, a warm front is expected to move across north-central New York, raising temperatures above freezing. **Story, 3A**

Parents of LGBTQ kids beat the learning curve



The journey for Oliver Honig, 15, and his mother, Chrissy, began when Oliver started wearing dresses and skirts at age 3. "I just hope that he's always confident enough to just be who he is," Chrissy says. PHOTOS BY JENNA WATSON/USA TODAY NETWORK

Love, acceptance and understanding might conquer all, but navigating today's climate takes a new level of strength



Suzette Hackney
National columnist
USA TODAY

Oliver Honig started donning dresses and skirts at age 3. His cousin first gave him a tutu and he wanted to wear it everywhere, so he did. At age 5, he was skillfully walking up and down the steps of the family's backyard slide in his mother's high-heeled boots. And by the time he was 8, he was experimenting with makeup, often overlining his mouth with so much lipstick the results rivaled comedic clownery.

Oliver's mother, Chrissy Honig, lovingly laughs as she recalls their journey navigating a world where a skittish youngster, and now a very vocal teenager, often called by his nickname, Ollie, continues to seek the freedom to live, love — and dress — as he pleases.

Messy makeup aside (his lipstick



Oliver identifies as a boy — "definitely" — but labels at this point don't seem important to him. "I'm still trying to figure out who I am," he says.

game has progressed nicely and is now on point), there have been really bad wigs, even worse dye jobs and ill-fitted frocks over the years. His style sensibility has morphed and matured as he has become more attuned with the clothing that makes him happy and feels good on his body. Sometimes, it's the fabric and texture, or the fit of the waistline and the swoosh of the skirt. Sometimes it's just the idea of wearing a dress he loves that makes him feel confident.

"I'm still trying to figure out who I am," Oliver told me last month as he played with his shoulder-length, thick and wavy brown hair with pink highlights.

Now, when Oliver performs in school talent shows, singing his 15-year-old heart out to "Get The Party Started" by Pink, one of his favorite artists, and "Home" from "Beetlejuice The Musical" — while decked out in a blue sequined dress with a blazer or in a formal black and white evening gown — he feels beautiful.

See PARENTS, Page 6A

Transplant reunites high school friends

They went their separate ways; now they have a story to share

Mark Harper
Daytona Beach News-Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

"I'd give my kidney for a ..."

It's not the most common idiom being bandied about, but you hear it from time to time as a means of expressing a strong desire. Rarer, still, is the person who says, "I'd give my kidney." Period. No qualifiers.

Dawn Fowler, one of 92,000 Americans on the United Network for Organ Sharing list waiting for a transplant, found such a person. Tracy Miley, a Florida health coach, literally gave her kidney to a long-lost high school classmate living 2,000 miles away last July before the two — now both on the mend — reunited recently in Florida.

See TRANSPLANT, Page 4A



Dawn Fowler, left, and Tracy Miley knew each other since childhood and sang in their high school choir. NIGEL COOK/USA TODAY NETWORK



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The power of climate change hogwash

PILITA CLARK, PAGE 16

Drama is the populist's most damaging trait

JANAN GANESH, PAGE 17

US big freeze Deadly storm brings chaos

Ice formed in a blizzard by the spray off Lake Erie encases a restaurant in Hamburg, New York.

President Joe Biden has declared an emergency in the state after the winter storm over the Christmas weekend.

The blizzard caused chaos across the US, leaving at least 49 people dead and tens of thousands without power. Meteorologists described the weather as a "bomb cyclone", denoting a storm that intensifies rapidly, with temperatures across the country plummeting to as low as minus 40C over the past few days.

As the ferocity of the cold blast abated yesterday, travel disruption hit the run-up to the New Year.

According to the flight-tracking site FlightAware, more than 2,800 US flights had been cancelled by yesterday morning, while nearly 1,000 more had been delayed.

Flights cancelled page 2



Lindsey DeCaro/Reuters

Beijing scraps travel quarantine rules in firm break with zero-Covid policy

◆ Coronavirus regime dismantled ◆ Fear of 10m deaths as cases spiral ◆ Chinese equities boosted

THOMAS HALE — SHANGHAI

China will remove quarantine requirements for inbound travellers from January 8 as the country dismantles the remnants of a zero-Covid regime that closed it off from the rest of the world for almost three years.

The National Health Commission revealed the move as part of a wider announcement that downgraded the country's management of Covid-19 and definitively abandoned a host of other preventive measures.

The Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention said yesterday that under the downgraded classification, it would release Covid data only monthly.

China's data has only reflected the situation on the ground as rules such as

mass testing have ended. But computer modelling has estimated that the virus could lead to close to 10m deaths.

The government, which this month also scrapped the requirement for positive cases to quarantine at centralised facilities, is battling a severe outbreak, with estimated cases spiralling into the hundreds of millions.

Announcing the relaxation, however, the NHC said that more than 90 per cent of cases of the Omicron variant were

China is set to miss an annual 5.5% growth target that was already its lowest in decades

"mild or asymptomatic", a shift in tone as coronavirus rages across a country where until recently very few of the 1.4bn population had contracted it.

Chinese equities led rises across the Asia-Pacific region after the change in rules yesterday, with the CSI 300 of Shanghai and Shenzhen-listed stocks climbing 1.15 per cent, while the Shanghai Composite index gained 1 per cent. Hong Kong's exchange was closed.

China had pursued a strict zero-Covid policy since the pandemic emerged, locking down many of its largest cities and imposing quarantines on foreign arrivals in an attempt to eliminate the virus within its borders.

Late this year, the policy began to unravel as authorities struggled to contain outbreaks, including in the capital

Beijing. Protesters took to the streets in November in a rare display of defiance against the central government, which dramatically relaxed its approach.

The quarantine announcement signalled the end of the zero-Covid system that transformed China's relationship with the outside world and which for long periods successfully limited the transmission of the virus.

At one point this year, inbound travellers were required to spend three weeks in a hotel room. After January 8, arrivals will be required only to have a negative Covid test result within 48 hours of departure and to wear masks on flights.

The immigration authority announced yesterday that it would resume granting visas for mainland residents to travel abroad from January 8. Author-

ities will also start issuing coveted Hong Kong entry permits.

Economic data highlighted the costs of the policy. Retail sales, a gauge of consumer spending, fell 5.9 per cent year on year in November, worse than expectations, while the economy is set to miss an annual 5.5 per cent growth target that was already its lowest in decades.

But analysts have also warned over the economic and corporate costs as the virus sweeps China, with Apple among those vulnerable. Its shares slipped 1.9 per cent yesterday to below \$130, striking their lowest level since June 2021 as investors worry over disruption to its China-based assembly operations.

Additional reporting by Cheng Leng
Health workers bear the brunt page 3
Apple faces earnings hit page 6

Briefing

► **Cyber attacks to become uninsurable, warns Zurich**
Zurich, one of Europe's biggest insurers, has said cyber attacks rather than natural catastrophes will become "uninsurable" as hacking disruption grows. — PAGE 6

► **Putin imposes oil ban**
Vladimir Putin has hit at the G7's moves to cap gains from Russia's oil revenues, by banning sales under contracts that comply with the \$60 price ceiling. — PAGE 2

► **Taiwan firms up defences**
Two days after China's latest air drills around Taiwan, Taipei has pledged to beef up its defences with longer military service and more muscular training. — PAGE 4

► **Covid hits iPhone output**
Apple is under threat from a Covid-19 outbreak in China, with supply-chain experts warning of a risk of months-long disruption to iPhones' production. — PAGE 6

► **S Korea leader pardoned**
Lee Myung-bak, ex-president of South Korea, is to be pardoned, four years into a 17-year sentence for embezzlement, corruption and bribery. — PAGE 4

► **India in e-commerce push**
New Delhi is set to launch a state-backed e-commerce initiative to "democratise" online shopping and challenge the dominance of Amazon. — PAGE 6

Datawatch



Bitcoin hit a record high against the dollar in 2021, paving the way for a 2022 rise in crypto foreign direct investment projects. The United Arab Emirates has attracted the largest number of projects, having set up a conducive regulatory environment.



Crypto downturn clouds picture for NFT creators

Celebrity endorsements and social media hype helped digital items known as non-fungible tokens burst into mainstream culture last year, as people were urged to spend billions of dollars to acquire NFTs from marketplaces such as OpenSea. But the market has dried amid a sell-off in the broader crypto market and some analysts are sceptical that NFT makers will be able to form successful businesses beyond selling digital art.

Play for the real world — PAGE 8

JPMorgan eyes \$15bn of client money held in rival Morgan Stanley's tax fund

JOSHUA FRANKLIN — NEW YORK

JPMorgan Chase's army of private bankers are pushing rich clients to move billions of dollars from Morgan Stanley's tax strategy funds on to the bank's own platform, according to people familiar with the matter.

The initiative comes after JPMorgan announced an expansion in September of its "tax-smart" platform, which offers tax-loss harvesting — the process of selling securities at a loss that can then be used to offset taxable gains — and customised portfolios.

Tax-loss harvesting has boomed on Wall Street with Parametric, owned by Morgan Stanley, a leading provider.

JPMorgan's private bank this year identified about \$15bn of client funds held with Parametric that could be migrated to its own platform, one of the

people familiar with the matter said. JPMorgan would continue to offer Parametric funds to its clients.

JPMorgan and Morgan Stanley declined to comment.

Morgan Stanley acquired fund manager Parametric in 2021 through its \$7bn acquisition of Eaton Vance. JPMorgan had also bid for Eaton Vance, the Financial Times has reported.

After missing out on Eaton Vance, JPMorgan bought Boston-based financial technology company 55ip in December 2020, which subsequently formed the cornerstone of the new tax platform being pitched to clients by the bank.

Direct indexing firms such as Parametric allow investors to create bespoke portfolios tailored to their personal preferences. This can range from creating a basket of investments to mimic the

performance of an established index, to managing tax losses.

JPMorgan's bankers are tempting clients to consider a move from Parametric on the basis that their new product is cheaper and will provide more regular reports for investors, the people familiar with the matter said.

The bank can run its own service at a lower cost and in-house ownership prevents it becoming reliant on a rival, such as Morgan Stanley, should it ever try to raise prices or restrict access for its clients, say the same people.

JPMorgan has made 55ip available to outside investment advisers. Since the bank acquired the company, the number of accounts on its platform has grown from 5,000 to 25,000 — about 95 per cent of which are from third party-registered advisers — one person familiar with the matter said.

World Markets

STOCK MARKETS					CURRENCIES					GOVERNMENT BONDS				
	Dec 27	Prev	%Chg		Pair	Dec 27	Prev	%Chg		Yield (%)	Dec 27	Prev	%Chg	
S&P 500	3839.03	3844.82	-0.15	\$/€	1.065	1.061	0.38	0.36	US 2 yr	4.42	4.31	0.11		
Nasdaq Composite	10403.50	10487.86	-0.80	\$/£	1.202	1.206	-0.33	-0.27	US 10 yr	3.94	3.75	0.19		
Dow Jones Ind	33706.31	33703.93	0.01	€/£	0.866	0.860	0.70	0.78	US 30 yr	3.55	3.42	0.11		
FTSE 100	1691.10	1698.02	-0.41	\$/¥	133.350	132.850	0.38	0.36	UK 2 yr	3.66	3.66	0.00		
Euro Stoxx 50	3832.81	3817.01	0.41	\$/¥	160.259	160.224	0.02	0.02	UK 10 yr	3.62	3.62	0.00		
FTSE 100	7473.01	7468.29	0.05	\$/¥	167.74	168.44	-0.42	-0.41	UK 30 yr	3.89	3.89	0.00		
FTSE All Share	4063.66	4075.25	-0.11	\$/¥	112.08	112.08	0.00	0.00	JPN 2 yr	0.04	0.04	0.00		
CAC 40	6550.56	6554.93	-0.70	\$/¥	112.08	112.08	0.00	0.00	JPN 10 yr	0.46	0.46	0.00		
Xetra Dax	13995.10	13940.93	0.39	\$/¥	112.08	112.08	0.00	0.00	JPN 30 yr	1.54	1.51	0.02		
Nikkei	26447.87	26405.87	0.16	\$/¥	112.08	112.08	0.00	0.00	GER 2 yr	2.60	2.60	0.00		
Hang Seng	19593.06	19679.22	-0.44	\$/¥	112.08	112.08	0.00	0.00	GER 10 yr	2.38	2.38	0.00		
MSCI World \$	2925.48	2926.19	-0.01	\$/¥	112.08	112.08	0.00	0.00	GER 30 yr	2.26	2.26	0.00		
MSCI EM \$	956.48	954.78	0.18											
MSCI ACWI \$	605.97	605.78	0.03											
FT Wtshv 2500	4087.31	4058.89	0.57											
FT Wtshv 5000	38943.44	38723.61	0.57											

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LATE EDITION
Today, a partly sunny sky, warmer, more seasonable than recent days, high 44. **Tonight**, mainly clear, low 34. **Tomorrow**, partial sunshine, high 48. Weather map is on Page A22.



A security checkpoint bottleneck at Denver International Airport on Tuesday. Travelers from some 7,900 Southwest flights were stuck at airports with little recourse.

A Meltdown at Southwest Will Be Felt for Days

By ISABELLA SIMONETTI
and PETER EAVIS

After a winter storm pummeled many parts of the country, most airlines quickly bounced back from delays and cancellations. But not Southwest Airlines, which days later is still struggling from what executives and analysts describe as its biggest operational meltdown in its five-decade history.

The bad weather, coming days before Christmas, hit the airline harder than the rest of the industry because of inadequate computer systems that made it hard for the airline to get crews to waiting planes and put passengers on alternative flights, and a flight model that allowed problems at one airport to cascade to others.

Angry Passengers and Warnings of Federal Consequences

"This is the worst round of cancellations for any single airline I can recall in a career of more than 20 years as an industry analyst," Henry Hartevelt, who covers airlines for Atmosphere Research Group, said.

Thousands of travelers were stranded at airports, and many said Southwest had done little or nothing to get them to their destinations. Southwest canceled more than 2,900 flights on Monday; scrapped about 2,500 each day for the next two days, more than 60

percent of its schedule; and said it could take days to fully restore normal operations.

Fabian Maldonado, a construction manager from Los Angeles who described himself as a loyal Southwest customer, said he and his two sons flew from Burbank, Calif., to Sacramento on a Southwest flight on Monday, planning to fly from there to Spokane, Wash. But the Spokane flight was canceled, and Southwest did not notify him, he said.

"This is really kind of making me rethink them," Mr. Maldonado said. "The customer service isn't there; it's falling apart."

In a video statement on Tuesday night, Southwest's chief executive, Bob Jordan, apologized to customers. He said the airline had

Continued on Page A15

Stranded in Cars and Buried In Snow: Blizzard's Toll Rises

This article is by Lola Fadulu, Hubrie Meko and Sarah Maslin Nir.

Trapped in her car as a blinding snowstorm engulfed Buffalo, Ann-del Nicole Taylor, 22, texted her family that she was scared. She had been calling emergency services for hours on Friday but kept being put on hold.

At midnight, with four feet of snow piling up on the ground and her car still stuck, she told her family she was going to try to get some sleep.

"That was the last time we spoke to her," said her older sister, Shawnequa Renee Brown, 35, who lives in Charlotte, N.C.

Ms. Taylor was found dead in

her car on Christmas Eve.

A certified nursing assistant, Ms. Taylor had moved from Charlotte to Buffalo about two years ago to care for their ailing father. On Christmas Day, the family gathered in North Carolina, mourning at what should have been a celebration. Ms. Taylor's presents were under the tree, still wrapped.

"It was just a crying day," Ms. Brown said. "All day long, we just cried."

In western New York, the death toll from the punishing winter storm continued to climb four days after the snow began on Friday; nearly 30 people were re-

Continued on Page A15

Mickey's Copyright Adventure: Public Will Soon Own 'Willie'

By BROOKS BARNES

LOS ANGELES — There is nothing soft and cuddly about the way Disney protects the characters it brings to life.

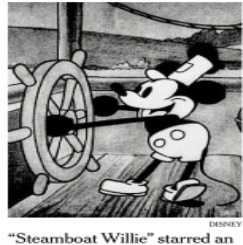
This is a company that once forced a Florida day care center to remove an unauthorized Minnie Mouse mural. In 2006, Disney told a stonemason that carving Winnie the Pooh into a child's gravestone would violate its copyright. The company pushed hard for an extension of copyright protections in 1998 that the result was derisively nicknamed the Mickey Mouse Protection Act.

For the first time, however, one of Disney's marquee characters — Mickey himself — is set to enter the public domain. "Steamboat Willie," the 1928 short film that introduced Mickey to the world, will lose copyright protection in the United States and a few other countries at the end of next year, prompting fans, copyright experts and potential Mickey grabbers to wonder: How is the notoriously litigious Disney going to respond?

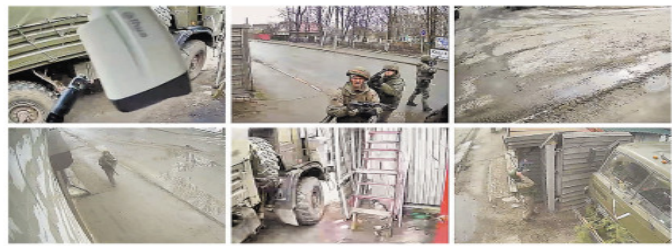
"I'm seeing in Reddit forums and on Twitter where people — creative types — are getting excited about the possibilities, that somehow it's going to be open season on Mickey," said Aaron J. Moss, a partner at Greenberg Glusker in Los Angeles who specializes in copyright and trademark law. "But that is a misunderstanding of what is happening with the copyright."

The matter is more complicated than it appears, and those who try to capitalize on the expiring "Steamboat Willie" copyright could easily end up in a legal mousetrap. "The question is where Disney tries to draw the line on enforcement," Mr. Moss said, "and if courts get involved to draw that line judiciously."

Continued on Page A17



"Steamboat Willie" starred an early version of Mickey Mouse.



Exposing the Russian Unit Behind 'the Road of Death'

Exclusive phone records, documents, interviews and thousands of hours of video reveal how one Russian paratrooper unit killed dozens of people on one street in Bucha, a Kyiv suburb. PAGES A5-9

Russian City Mourns Dead but Supports the War

By VALERIE HOPKINS

RYAZAN, Russia — Even under a thick coating of snow, the graveyard for Russian soldiers killed in the Ukraine war is awash in color. Graves are heaped with wreaths of plastic flowers and, at each mound, flags representing the dead soldier's unit whip in the wind.

On a recent Saturday, a woman named Natalia grasped a brush and carefully swept clumps of

A Base for Paratroopers Serving in Ukraine

sticky fresh snow off her son's wreaths. She removed the red carnations she had brought the week before, now frozen, replacing them with a small Christmas tree she bought at the cemetery entrance.

Natalia comes at least once a

week to care for the grave of her only son, who was killed in the first days of the war, after his group of soldiers swept into Ukraine and tried and failed to secure the Hostomel airport, near Kyiv. What was left of his body arrived in Ryazan several weeks later.

"Even when I'm sick, I come here because I worry he's going to be bored," she said of her son, whose remains arrived just shy of

Continued on Page A10

CHINA'S HOSPITALS IN 'TRAGIC BATTLE' AS COVID SPREADS

UNREADY FOR ONRUSH

Emergency Room Chaos After Beijing Lifted Rules Suddenly

By ISABELLE QIAN
and DAVID PIERSON

Slumped in wheelchairs and lying on gurneys, the sickened patients crowd every nook and cranny of the emergency department at the hospital in northern China. They cram into the narrow spaces between elevator doors. They surround an idle walk-through metal detector. And they line the walls of a corridor ringing with the sounds of coughing.

China's hospitals were already overcrowded, underfunded and inadequately staffed in the best of times. But now with the coronavirus spreading freely for the first time in China, the medical system is being pushed to its limits.

The scenes of desperation and misery at the Tianjin Medical University General Hospital, captured on one of several videos examined by The New York Times, reflect the growing crisis. And as Covid cases rise, health workers on the front lines are battling rampant infections within their own ranks. So many have tested positive for the virus in some hospitals that the remaining few say they are forced to do the job of five or more co-workers.

To ensure enough staff members are on the floor, some facilities have given up requiring doctors and nurses to test themselves before work. One doctor in the central city of Wuhan said her hospital's staff had been so depleted that a neurosurgeon in her department recently had to perform two operations in one day while fighting symptoms of Covid.

"The hospital was operating on the brink," said the physician, Dr. Judy Pu, whose ward usually has 10 to 15 nurses and was down to just a pair. "About 80 to 90 percent of the people around me have been infected."

Continued on Page A13

Justices Uphold Migrant Limits Driven by Virus

This article is by Adam Liptak, Miriam Jordan and Eileen Sullivan.

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court said on Tuesday that a pandemic-era health measure that restricted migration at the southern border would remain in place for the time being, delaying the potential for a huge increase in unlawful crossings.

In a brief, unsigned order, the justices halted a trial judge's ruling that would have lifted the measure, known as Title 42, which has allowed even migrants who might otherwise qualify for asylum to be swiftly expelled at the border.

The court said that it would hear arguments in the case in February and that the stay would remain in place pending a ruling. The justices said they would address only the question of whether the 19 major Republican-led states that had sought the stay could pursue their challenge to the measure.

Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, Neil M. Gorsuch and Ketanji Brown Jackson dissented. The White House indicated that it would comply with the Supreme Court's order and prepare for its review. "At the same time, we are

Continued on Page A16

NATIONAL A14-19

Kidnapping Plotter Sentenced

A judge gave Adam Fox 16 years in prison for scheming against Michigan's governor in 2020 in what prosecutors called a threat to democracy. PAGE A19

Attacks on 4 Power Stations

Vandals broke into and damaged four electricity substations in Pierce County, Wash., on Sunday, leaving thousands in the dark, the authorities said. PAGE A14

G.O.P. Leaders Mum on Santos

A muted response suggests that false-hope from Representative-elect George Santos about his background will probably go unpunished. PAGE A18

INTERNATIONAL A4-13

Nicaraguans Join Migrant Tide

More than 180,000 have crossed the U.S. border this year, escaping poverty and repression at home. PAGE A12

A Cemetery Teeming With Life

At Père-Lachaise in Paris, home to Oscar Wilde, Jim Morrison and other icons, nature is alive and well. PAGE A4



BUSINESS B1-5

Seeking Help in Frigid Britain

Crisis agencies are being overwhelmed as energy costs soar and vulnerable families in chilly, drafty homes struggle with rising bills. PAGE B1

Google Challenges Utilities

Google says state-regulated utilities, notably in the Southeast, curb its quest for carbon-free power. PAGE B1

SPORTS B6-8

Soccer in Argentina's Barrios

Organized five-on-five games are in the blood of the nation's great players like Lionel Messi. PAGE B6

ARTS C1-8

Gig Jobs and Elusive Dreams

Some of the year's best television series depict the pressures of those trying to make it on the margins of an economy where promised riches are forever shimmering on the horizon. PAGE C1

Banned, Then in Demand

Art Spiegelman, 74, just wants to work after a chaotic year when his Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel, "Maus," thrust him into a national debate about censorship and antisemitism. PAGE C1

OPINION A20-21

Peter Coy

PAGE A20



FOOD D1-8

Restrooms Worth the Wait

A discotheque, a shrine to Dolly Parton, an ode to Iranian films: These are just a few of the themed WCs that have become attractions at restaurants. PAGE D1



The Washington Post

Prices may vary in areas outside metropolitan Washington.



Sunny 49/31 • Tomorrow: Mostly sunny 50/34 B6

Democracy Dies in Darkness

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2022 • B3

Jobs list faulted in disability decisions

Social Security uses guidance from 1970s when reviewing claims

BY LISA REIN

He had made it through four years of denials and appeals, and Robert Heard was finally before a Social Security judge who would decide whether he qualified for disability benefits. Two debilitating strokes had left the 47-year-old electrician with halting speech, an enlarged heart and violent tremors.

There was just one final step: A vocational expert hired by the Social Security Administration had to tell the judge if there was any work Heard could still do despite his condition. Heard was stunned as the expert checked his computer and announced his findings: He could find work as a nut sorter, a dowed inspector or an egg processor — jobs that virtually no longer exist in the United States.

"Whatever it is that does those things, machines do it now," said Heard, who lives on food stamps and a small stipend from his parents in Tullahoma, Tenn. "Honestly, if they could see my shaking, they would see I couldn't sort any nuts. I'd spill them all over the floor."

He was still hopeful the administrative law judge hearing his claim for \$1,300 to \$1,700 per month in benefits had understood his limitations.

But while the judge agreed that Heard had multiple, severe impairments, he denied him benefits, writing that he had "job opportunities" in three occupations that are nearly obsolete and agreeing with the expert's dubious claim that 130,000 positions

SEE JOBS ON A6



Hundreds of passengers wait to handle their baggage claim issues with Southwest Airlines at Baltimore's airport on Tuesday.

Blizzard piles on misery

Southwest cuts thousands more flights, drawing scrutiny and ire

BY JUSTIN GEORGE, RACHEL LERMAN AND HANNAH SAMPSON

Southwest Airlines accounted for about 85 percent of canceled domestic flights Tuesday, drawing the attention of U.S. regulators and lawmakers amid a days-long meltdown of holiday air travel that began with a winter storm late last week.

More than 3,000 U.S. flights were canceled Tuesday among

all carriers, with Southwest accounting for more than 2,600 of the total — a problem the airline blamed partly on tools for tracking and creating employee schedules. The airline grounded 64 percent of its scheduled flights Tuesday, even as other carriers appeared to recover. Among other major domestic carriers, about 2 percent of flights were not operating as planned, according to flight-tracking website FlightAware.

SEE SOUTHWEST ON A16

'Act of goodness': Stranger saves disabled man lost in storm. A5

Buffalo's no stranger to snow. So why was the storm so deadly?

BY BRIANNA SACKS AND EMILY WAX-THIBODEAUX

For 14 hours in Buffalo, emergency services technician Felicia Williams sat inside her snow-covered ambulance without food or water, helplessly listening to her dispatchers answer calls about people freezing, mothers and babies stranded in cars, oxygen tanks running out, and other first responders trapped trying to get to them. In front

of her, four cars were askew in snowdrifts, blocking the road. And, as the 26-year-old began to fear that even she may die there, Williams grew furious that Buffalo hadn't acted sooner to prevent people from going out on the roads in the worst storm since 1977.

"I think a travel ban should have been put in place a lot earlier," said Williams, an EMT with American Medical Response in Buffalo.

SEE BUFFALO ON A15

Buffalo: Residents begin to dig out from catastrophic blizzard. A20

Justices leave Title 42 in place

BORDER POLICY EXTENDED FOR NOW

Biden seeks to end it as states warn of chaos

BY ROBERT BARNES AND ANN E. MARIMOW

The Supreme Court on Tuesday blocked the Biden administration's plans to end a pandemic-era policy allowing the quick expulsion of migrants from U.S. borders without the opportunity to seek asylum, as officials warned of a crisis along the southern border.

A federal judge had ruled that the Trump-era policy, known as Title 42, should expire last week, but the court's action extends a pause Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. imposed to give the high court more time to weigh the issue.

In Tuesday's order, five conservative justices sided with Republican officials in 19 states, including Texas and Arizona, who sought to maintain Title 42, which has been used to expel migrants more than 2 million times since it was implemented in March 2020.

In effect, the Supreme Court's action keeps the status quo in place by blocking the district judge's order until the court can consider the dispute in late February. But the court said it will consider only whether the objecting states have the legal standing to intervene.

While the majority did not provide reasoning, which is

SEE BORDER ON A4

Title 42: Policy's use waned under Biden, border statistics show. A3

Captured Russian 'trophies' mired in repair shops

Battlefield tanks and gear are coveted, but workers lack the parts to fix them

BY SAMANTHA SCHMIDT, ISABELLE KHURSHUDYAN AND SERHI KOROLCHUK

KHARKIV REGION, UKRAINE — When Ukrainian forces came across the abandoned Russian fighting vehicle on the battlefield, they knew they had found a rare prize.

The BMP-3, armed with a 100mm main gun and a 30mm autocannon, was one of the few of its kind that the Ukrainian military had seized from the Russians since the start of the invasion. But about a month ago, after weeks of being operated by Ukrainian soldiers, its engine and fueling system began to fail.

Ever since, the Russian fighting vehicle has been out of commission, stuck at a repair site in

SEE UKRAINE ON A12



At a field repair site in the Kharkiv region, a maintenance battalion works to fix tanks and armored personnel carriers seized from the Russians, including erasing the "Z" symbols of their former owner.

CONGRESSIONAL ENSLAVERS

One-third of Capitol's art honors enslavers

The Washington Post examined more than 400 artworks and also tallied images of Confederates

BY GILLIAN BROCKELL

When the 118th Congress is sworn in on Tuesday, its members will walk the halls of a building whose paintings and statues pay homage to at least 140 enslavers.

As part of a year-long investigation into Congress's relationship with slavery, The Washington Post analyzed more than 400 artworks in the U.S. Capitol building, from the Crypt to the ceiling of the Capitol Rotunda, and found that one-third honor enslavers or Confederates. Another six honor possible enslavers — people whose slaveholding status is in dispute.

Congress has made some efforts to address the legacy of slavery since the 2020 protests that followed the death of George

Floyd. The 117th Congress — the most diverse in history — established Juneteenth as a national holiday. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) had portraits of speakers who participated in the Confederacy removed. Florida replaced a Confederate statue representing the state with one honoring Mary McLeod Bethune, the first African American chosen for the National Statuary Hall collection.

And on Tuesday, President Biden signed a bill to remove and replace a bust of Supreme Court justice and enslaver Roger B. Taney — infamous for the *Dred Scott* decision denying Black people citizenship — with one of Thurgood Marshall, the first African American justice.

SEE ENSLAVERS ON A8

IN THE NEWS



Whitmer plotter sentenced Adam Fox, called the "driving force" of a scheme to kidnap the Michigan governor, gets 16 years in prison. A2

THE NATION House Democrats called for Rep.-elect George Santos (R-N.Y.) to resign over "lies" on his résumé, dialing up pressure on GOP leadership to respond. A2

THE WORLD Europe is keeping its thermostat down despite the cold as the war in Ukraine has energy prices sky-high and governments in regulation mode. A10
Taiwan announced that men will be re-

quired to serve one year in the military, up from four months, citing Chinese aggression. A11
A sausage tycoon died after falling from his hotel room while on vacation in India, the latest in a string of mysterious deaths of Russian businessmen this year. A12

THE ECONOMY Shadowbanning is real, and social media companies need to tell us exactly when and why they're suppressing

our megaphones — and give us tools to appeal, columnist Geoffrey A. Fowler writes. A13
Seven tips from columnist Michelle Singletary for preparing for a recession in 2023, whether one is coming or not. A20

THE REGION Over a year after Maryland passed laws in 2021 to increase government transparency, especially within police departments, a host of news organizations and public interest groups are suing to force agencies to comply. B1

Rep. Don Beyer (D-Va.) is pursuing a degree in artificial intelligence at age 72, in hopes of using what he learns in his legislative work. B1
A 100-year-old Virginia woman has hand-made more than 200 jackets, each depicting "all the things that matter" from recipients' lives. B1
The D.C. Council approved legislation that, if enacted, would create a path for pot "gifting" stores to apply for licenses to sell medical marijuana. B1

INSIDE



FOOD New Year's feast Six festive, fun, flexible and foolproof snacks for holiday entertaining. E1

STYLE All Taylor, all the time A look at Swift's hold on pop culture in 2022. C1

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WORLD NEWSA10

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COURT REFUSES TO LIFT TITLE 42

In 5-4 vote, justices grant an appeal from 19 states to prevent a new spike in migrants.

By David G. Savage

WASHINGTON — A divided Supreme Court refused Tuesday to lift the Trump-era rule that has turned away migrants at the border as a public health threat.

By a 5-4 vote, the justices granted an appeal from Arizona and 18 other Republican-led states that sought to keep Title 42 in place to prevent a new spike in migrants who seek to apply for asylum.

The court agreed to hear arguments in February from the GOP states, but its order said it did not "prevent" the Biden administration from taking steps to limit the disputed policy.

But the White House conceded its options are limited.

The Supreme Court's order today keeps the current Title 42 policy in place while the court reviews the matter in 2023. We will, of course, comply with the order and prepare for the court's review," said White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre.

Last month, a federal judge in Washington set aside the Trump rule adopted in March 2020, holding it could no longer be justified now that the pandemic has faded. His decision would have lifted Title 42 and gave hope to thousands of migrants who had come to the U.S.-Mexican border anticipating they would be able to make a claim for asylum.

But the court on Tuesday blocked that decision from taking effect.

"This stay precludes giving effect to the District [See Court, A10]

Airline feels heat for meltdown



AMANDA GEVORGYAN searches for her luggage among hundreds of bags that accumulated at the Southwest Airlines terminal at Los Angeles International Airport after many flights were canceled Tuesday.

Thousands of travelers in limbo

Mass flight cancellations have would-be passengers trying to figure out a Plan B

By Nathan Solis, Andrew J. Campa, Jessica Garrison and Alexandra E. Petri

Californians with vacation envy had a surefire cure this week: All they had to do was check out the scene at any airport.

The meltdown at Southwest Airlines left thousands of travelers stranded, many without luggage or a clue as to when they would get to their destinations, or how.

At Los Angeles International and Hollywood Burbank airports Tuesday, the lines — for information, for attempts to rebook, for rental cars — snaked for hours. Departure boards all told the same story: Canceled. Canceled. Canceled.

Long-planned family reunions, vacations, work meetings, medical appointments [See Canceled, A5]



LUIS AND RUTH Hernandez of Torrance, with their dog Sissi, wait for a ride Tuesday at LAX after their Southwest Airlines flight to Omaha was canceled.

Bad weather, outdated tech, vulnerable flight patterns cause 'perfect storm' for Southwest.

By Grace Toohey, Margot Roosevelt and Alexandra E. Petri

As chaos at Southwest Airlines brought misery to thousands of frustrated travelers and growing scrutiny from U.S. regulators and lawmakers, many in the aviation industry said the massive cancellation of flights by the nation's largest domestic carrier was far from surprising.

Industry experts and union leaders for Southwest employees cited the company's outdated technology and vulnerable operations, both of which are particularly susceptible to any disruptions, much less multiple coast-to-coast weather events.

"This was the perfect storm," said William McGee, a senior fellow focused on aviation for the American Economic Liberties Project. "Other [airlines] dealt with this and came back from this; Southwest was sort of brought to its knees. It deserves to be blamed for not being more resilient."

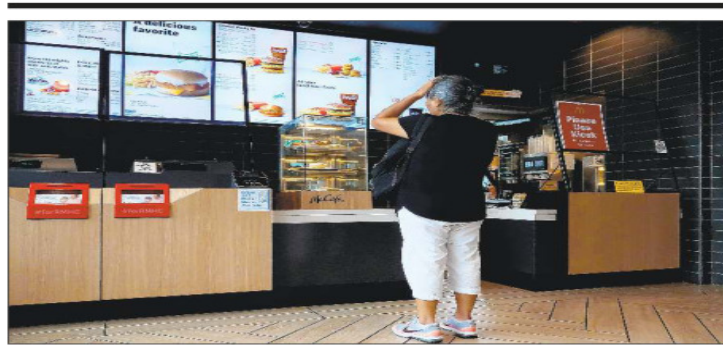
Of the more than 3,000 flights canceled Tuesday across the U.S., about 85% were Southwest's, according to the flight tracking website FlightAware. Thousands of the airline's passengers were stranded in airports across the nation — not to mention its crew members. In California, hundreds of flights have been delayed or canceled through the end of the week — making up much of the Southwest schedule.

The U.S. Department of Transportation said this week it plans an inquiry into the source of the airline's massive problems.

Although the company [See Southwest, A5]

Havoc wreaked on holiday plans

Chaos has been a nightmare for families, including columnist Sandy Banks'. CALIFORNIA, B1



PEOPLE were 23% less likely to order red meat if the fast-food menu had labels warning that those meals had a negative effect on the climate, researchers found.

Would you like to try fillet of 'Low Climate Impact' fish?

Special fast-food labels could help cut beef industry's carbon footprint, study finds.

By Tony Briscoe

Could ordering a McChicken, as opposed to a Big Mac, help in the fight against climate change?

To fend off the disastrous effects of global warming, many people have been willing to trade in their gas-guzzling cars, install solar panels on their roofs or dial down their energy use.

But on any given day, more than a third of Americans find themselves eating fast food, which serves up a significant portion of climate-burdensome red meat. What customers decide to order may be a matter of personal preference, but experts say it has tremendous implications for the amount of planet-warming gases emitted from farms.

In a study published Tuesday in the Journal of the American Medical Assn., researchers polled more than 5,000 adults nationwide to gauge whether placing climate-impact labels

on fast-food menus might persuade customers to make more environmentally friendly choices.

They found customers were 23% less likely to order red meat at a fast-food restaurant if the menu had labels warning that those meals had a negative effect on the climate. Customers were nearly 10% more likely to order a more climate-friendly option, such as chicken or fish, if those items had labels promoting them as climate-friendly.

"If, at a population level, we made even just some minor shifts to the way we [See Labels, A10]

State Bar says it's finally serious about rogue lawyers

Girardi's downfall prompted a two-year reckoning with promises of reform.

By Matt Hamilton and Harriet Ryan

Up until two years ago, the regulation of California's lawyers was not something many people outside the profession gave much thought. Then the legendary Wilshire Boulevard law firm Girardi Keese collapsed under circumstances that

transfixed both the Golden State's power structure and the nation's reality TV fans. Tom Girardi, political influencer and renowned champion of the downtrodden, had been stealing from clients for decades. It emerged in court records and media reports. And his wife, Erika, flaunted diamonds and couture on "The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills." He had been enjoying, perhaps unwittingly, an opulent lifestyle underwritten by cheated clients.

In this evolving melodrama, the spotlight eventually came to rest on a new vil-

lain: the State Bar of California, the regulatory agency responsible for licensing 266,000 lawyers and protecting the public from corrupt ones.

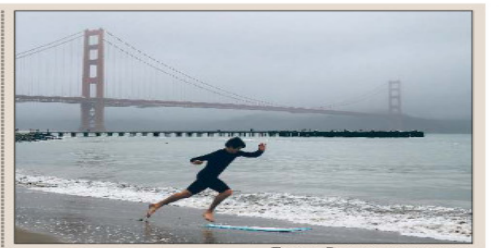
"In the past, 0.1% of the California population gave a damn about what the State Bar was doing," said state Sen. Tom Umberg, the Orange County lawyer who has been chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee since 2018. These days, he said, "community members go, 'What are you doing about this thing? This is horrible.'"

Revelations about Gi- [See Lawyers, A7]

Russia says Kyiv poses a threat Moscow demands the demilitarization of Ukraine and claims that the West is fueling the conflict. WORLD, A3

Man gets 16 years in Whitmer plot Prosecutors call Adam Fox the "driving force" urging recruits to kidnap the Michigan governor. NATION, A4

Weather Clouds clearing. L.A. Basin: 65/51. B6



READY FOR SOAKING A surfer rides a skimboard at Crissy Field in San Francisco. The Bay Area could get 8 to 12 inches of rain over the next 12 days. CALIFORNIA, B1



COVID China elimina la cuarentena para viajeros internacionales **P25**



CULTURA Los 100 años de Stan Lee, el héroe villano de Marvel **P28 y 29**

EL PODER JUDICIAL DESBLOQUEA LA RENOVACIÓN DEL ALTO TRIBUNAL

El Tribunal Constitucional abre una etapa de mayoría progresista

Los progresistas votan por "sentido institucional" a los candidatos de la derecha

María Luisa Segoviano y César Tolosa serán los nuevos magistrados

Durante los últimos nueve años ha tenido mayoría de jueces designados por el PP

REYES RINCÓN, Madrid
El pleno del Consejo General del Poder Judicial eligió ayer por unanimidad a los magistrados del Supremo César Tolosa (conservador) y María Luisa Segoviano (progresista) para el Tribunal Constitucional. Eran los dos candidatos propuestos por el sector conservador, que desde el inicio de la negociación rechazó al magistrado propuesto por los progresistas. De manera inesperada, el bloque progresista decidió apoyar "por sentido institucional" a esos candidatos para poner fin al bloqueo, que ya duraba seis meses.

El Partido Popular y la derecha judicial habían denunciado el asalto del Gobierno al Tribunal Constitucional porque con la elección de estos magistrados, obligada por ley, cambiaba la mayoría en ese órgano. Durante los últimos nueve años, el Constitucional ha estado dominado por una mayoría de magistrados que designó el PP. Con la elección de ayer, serán mayoritarios los magistrados de tendencia progresista elegidos a propuesta del PSOE. Esa situación puede mantenerse nueve años si los resultados electorales no dan mayorías abrumadoras a ninguno de los dos bloques.

PÁGINA 14



Pedro Sánchez, ayer durante su comparecencia en La Moncloa. / ANDREA COMAS

El Gobierno quita el IVA a alimentos básicos y da 200 euros a 4,2 millones de hogares

El plan contra la inflación prorroga el tope al alquiler de viviendas hasta junio

J. L. ARANDA / P. CHOUZA
J. MARCOS, Madrid
El nuevo paquete anticrisis para paliar los efectos de la guerra en Ucrania suprime el IVA para ali-

mentos básicos como el pan, la leche, los huevos y las verduras; reduce del 10% al 5% el IVA para el aceite y la pasta, y aprueba un cheque de 200 euros para 4,2

millones de hogares con ingresos anuales inferiores a 27.000 euros. Además, se prorroga el tope al alquiler de viviendas durante otros seis meses. Las medi-

das aprobadas ayer por el Consejo de Ministros cuestan más de 10.000 millones de euros y entrarán en vigor el próximo domingo 1 de enero. **PÁGINAS 37 y 40**

Solo habrá ayuda estatal al transporte urbano si ponen su parte las autonomías

El descuento de 20 céntimos al carburante solo será para profesionales

Los impuestos a la luz y el gas seguirán rebajados seis meses

El servicio ferroviario de cercanías continuará siendo gratuito



Un soldado ucraniano, ayer en Yampil.

GUERRA EN UCRANIA

EL PAÍS se adentra con el ejército de Kiev en el frente del Donbás

"No nos dan respiro pero nosotros a ellos tampoco"

MARÍA R. SAHUQUILLO, Yampil
ENVIADA ESPECIAL
El comandante Ginger se sacude el barro de los pantalones, apoya un pie en un árbol derrumbado y se ajusta el fusil. El esfuerzo es inútil. El bosque está cuajado de lodo. A la derecha y a la izquierda, violentas explosiones sacuden la arboleda de las Montañas Sagradas, en la vía hacia Kremina, uno de los bastiones de Lugansk ocupado por Rusia en abril, en los primeros compases de la invasión. "No nos dan respiro, pero nosotros a ellos tampoco", dice el capitán ucraniano. **PÁSA A LA PÁGINA 2**



Luis Bárcenas, ayer en Madrid.

Bárcenas, de la cárcel a colaborar en un comedor social

ÓSCAR LÓPEZ FONSECA, Madrid
El extesorero del PP Luis Bárcenas, condenado a 29 años de prisión por su implicación en la Gürtel, trama de corrupción vinculada al PP, estrenó ayer el régimen de semilibertad. Saldrá casi a diario del Centro de Inserción Social Victoria Kent, situado en el centro de Madrid, para colaborar en el comedor social de una ONG, según su defensa. **PÁGINA 20**

Riquelme

Va por todo el poder en Boca

Sin hablar de candidaturas, el vice presentó su agrupación, "Soy Bostero" y pidió apoyo para ganar las elecciones. P.34



Demanda de autotest por falta de hisopados del Estado

En la sexta ola de Covid, crece la venta en las farmacias. P.30

Tema del día • Reparación pública después de la condena por corrupción

No renuncié a nada, estoy proscripta, dijo Cristina y atacó muy duro a la Corte

En un acto en Avellaneda, la vicepresidenta negó haber renunciado a postularse a alguna candidatura el año que viene, pese a lo que había afirmado después de conocerse la sentencia en la causa Vialidad. "Ni renunciamento ni autoexclusión; acá hay proscrición", dijo, pese a que, al no estar firme la condena, no hay impedimentos para que se presente. Acusó al "partido judicial" de influir "en la calidad de vida de todos los ciudadanos". Y fustigó a la Capital por el presupuesto que tiene, frente a Avellaneda o Quilmes. P.3

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Del Editor

Ricardo Roa

Cristina y Fernández siguen en lo suyo, igualito que el dólar

MÁS TENSION CAMBIARIA

El dólar blue, sin techo: llegó a \$ 356 y ya subió 30 pesos en una semana

El paralelo sigue batiendo récords y ayer subió \$ 10. El alza alcanzó también a los dólares financieros. Es el mayor valor en 2022 y en los tres años de gestión de Alberto Fernández. La suba del blue amenaza con reactivar el crecimiento de la inflación si la tendencia alcista se mantiene. P.8

LA TORMENTA DEL SIGLO EN EE.UU.

Morir de frío en el auto por el rescate que no llegó

La ola polar provocó al menos 63 muertos. Muchos murieron en sus vehículos, con hasta 30° bajo cero. Algunos se intoxicaron con monóxido de carbono, después de un encierro de horas, con la calefacción encendida. A otros los mató el frío. La tormenta y la nieve acumulada impidieron la llegada de los rescatistas. P.20

HASTA EL 28 DE FEBRERO

Los enfermos crónicos pueden seguir usando recetas por mail

El Ministerio de Salud dio una parcial marcha atrás y permitirá que por dos meses pacientes con tratamientos prolongados puedan usar recetas por WhatsApp. Es por el rechazo y los trastornos que provocó la medida anunciada el lunes. P.26

Acampe en el jardín.
Graboys y militantes, con la casa de Joe Lewis de fondo.



Graboys y piqueteros, okupas en una casa famosa

Unos cien militantes, encabezados por el dirigente social K Juan Grabois, ingresaron de modo ilegal a la casa del empresario Joe Lewis en El Bolsón, aduciendo que son tierras públicas. Agredieron y amenazaron a una mujer que trabaja allí. P.17

IBA A PUNTA DEL ESTE

Susto y fuego en el río por el incendio de un barco

El yate había partido de San Fernando rumbo a Uruguay. Por causas que aún no están claras, la nave empezó a incendiarse frente a Costanera Norte. Los tres tripulantes no alcanzaron a dar una señal de alerta. Un buque de draga-

do, que estaba en el puerto porteño, avisó a Prefectura, y se coordinó un operativo con otras dos naves deportivas que estaban cerca para rescatar a los hombres, que fueron llevados al hospital Fernández, fuera de peligro. P.31

Corrida B10

Quem perdemos

Ano levou Jô Soares, Isabel Salgado, Gal Costa, Cláudia Jimenez e outros ícones da TV, da música e do esporte

Ilustrada B6

Livros subiram de preço, ganharam mulheres e viram censura à espreita

Política A8

Brasileiros otimistas

Para 60% dos brasileiros, 2023 será melhor do que 2022, diz Datafolha. Com mais polarização, a taxa caiu ante 2021

Ciência B5

Mundo celebra os 200 anos de Pasteur, cientista francês que mudou a história

Tebet aceita Planejamento, mas fica sem bancos oficiais

Senadora do MDB, símbolo da coalizão pró-Lula, queria cargo na área social

Terceira colocada no primeiro turno deste ano e símbolo da tentativa de Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (PT) de montar uma base de apoio além da centro-esquerda, Simone Tebet aceitou integrar o futuro governo do petista.

A senadora em fim de mandato pelo MDB-MS será ministra do Planejamento.

A decisão ocorreu após Tebet ver sua pretensão de ocupar o Ministério do Desenvolvimento Social, área de grande visibilidade para seus planos políticos, ser frustrada pelo PT.

Lula chegou a ofertar a ela o Meio Ambiente, que acabou com outra aliada insatisfeita, Marina Silva (Rede).

O partido de Lula também impediu que uma outra demanda de Tebet fosse aceita: a possibilidade de que o Planejamento também abrigasse Caixa e Banco do Brasil.

O formato negociado deve manter o Planejamento com parcerias e investimentos, mas dividindo funções com Fazenda e Casa Civil.

As duas pastas serão lideradas por petistas. A Fazenda também irá receber controle sobre o estratégico Conselho de Controle de Atividades Financeiras, hoje sob o BC. Mercado A13 e A14

Sônia Guajajara será a 1ª ministra dos Povos Indígenas Cotidiano B2



Pedro Ladeira/Folhapress

MILITARES ENSAIAM A POSSE, E EQUIPE DE LULA PEDE SEGURANÇA CONTRA AMEAÇAS

Soldados ensaiam subida de Lula na rampa do Planalto, que ocorrerá domingo; time do presidente eleito pediu fechamento da Esplanada dos Ministérios para varredura já na sexta Política A6

Manifesto alerta para mudanças para saneamento

Após grupo de Cidades da equipe de transição de Lula sugerir a criação de um novo marco do saneamento, barrando concessões e privatizações, associações do setor enviaram carta ao governo eleito apontando retrocesso. Mercado A14

Haddad não quer a prorrogação da desoneração de combustíveis

Mercado A14

Saúde amplia vacina da Covid a crianças de 6 meses a 4 anos

Saúde B4

Aras vai ao STF contra indulto do caso Carandiru

O procurador-geral Augusto Aras acionou o Supremo Tribunal Federal contra indulto de Natal dado por seu aliado Jair Bolsonaro (PL) a condenados, incluindo policiais militares que participaram do massacre de Carandiru. Cotidiano B2

Governo não será aparelhado, diz futuro ministro

Anunciado para a Secretaria-Geral da Presidência, o deputado federal Márcio Macêdo (PT-SE) afirma que os movimentos sociais terão no governo federal um endereço para levar seus pleitos, mas que não o aparelharão. Política A7

Lula pede fim negociado de protestos, mas admite retirada

O futuro ministro da Justiça, Flávio Dino, disse que Lula quer o fim pactuado dos atos que pedem um golpe militar contra sua posse dia 1º, mas que "se não houver essa providência, outras serão tomadas". A descoberta de uma bomba com um bolsonarista no sábado aumentou o alerta acerca da segurança da cerimônia, e Dino foi ao governador do DF discutir o caso. Política A6

Bernardo Guimarães Política econômica não começa com bons presságios

Economistas aprenderam muito sobre desenvolvimento e produtividade em 30 anos. Pelo trabalho acadêmico do futuro titular Guilherme Mello, esse aprendizado estará ausente da Secretaria de Política Econômica. Mercado A18

EDITORIAIS A2

Autocontenção

Sobre normas do STF para decisões monocráticas.

Receita incerta

Acerca de arrecadação do governo federal em 2023.



Eduardo Knapp/Folhapress

TRANSPORTES AVANÇAM E ATRASAM SOB O PSDB EM SP

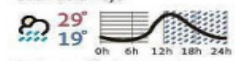
Trecho abandonado do Rodoanel na zona norte de São Paulo, projeto com atrasos que superam dez anos e que simboliza alguns dos problemas na área de transportes nos 28 anos de gestão tucana no estado, marcada também por melhorias Cotidiano B1

Tarcísio terá de cumprir 1 promessa a cada 12 dias em SP

O governador eleito de São Paulo, Tarcísio de Freitas (Republicanos), precisará cumprir uma promessa a cada 12 dias de mandato para honrar os 124 compromissos na eleição. Saúde e infraestrutura são os mais citados. Política A4

ATMOSFERA

São Paulo hoje



Fonte: www.climatempo.com.br



MARSEILLE
LES NOUVELLES STRATÉGIES
DE LA POLICE POUR ENRAYER
LES TRAFICS DE DROGUE **PAGE 7**



CLIMAT
CES PROJETS FOUS
POUR RALENTIR
LE RÉCHAUFFEMENT **PAGE 8**

PRÉSIDENTIELLE
Zemmour-Le Pen :
le jour où les
courbes des
sondages se sont
croisées **PAGE 5**

SOLIDARITÉ
Ces entreprises
qui hébergent
des sans-abri **PAGE 7**

JEUX VIDÉO
Le marché prêt
à rebondir **PAGE 16**

IMPÔTS
Quand
les buralistes
deviennent
percepteurs
PAGE 17

EUROPE
L'Allemagne
de plus en plus
dépendante
du chinois Huawei
PAGE 18

CINÉMA
« Les Banshees
d'Inisherin »,
un conte courant
et sanglant **PAGE 22**

**LES GAGNANTS
DE 2022**
Avec « L'Innocent »,
Louis Garrel
a révélé
un grand talent
de réalisateur **PAGE 24**

**CHAMPS
LIBRES**
• Au cœur de la plus
grande centrale
hydroélectrique
d'Europe
• Les tribunes
de Jean-Michel
Delacomptée et
de Pierre Adrian
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**FIGARO OUI
FIGARO NON**
Réponses à la question
de mardi :
Redoutez-vous l'invasion
de Taiwan par la Chine ?
OUI 71% NON 29%
TOTAL DE VOTANTS : 188 250

**Votez aujourd'hui
sur lefigaro.fr**
Délinquance juvénile :
faut-il renforcer la
responsabilité parentale ?
VALÉRIE VREL/PHOTOPQR/LA
PROVENCE/MAXPPP/MARIO TAMA/AP

La crise des transports creuse les fractures territoriales

Une grande déconnexion entre les métropoles et les petites villes, ainsi qu'entre Paris et les régions, est à l'œuvre. La dégradation des réseaux suscite l'exaspération des Français.

Dans les Hauts-de-France, le Limousin, le Grand Est ou en Normandie, dans cette « France périphérique » si bien décrite par le géographe Christophe Guilluy, les Français sont excédés. Quotidiennement, ils vivent un cauchemar pour aller travailler dans la ville d'à côté,

rallier Paris, retourner chez eux. Avec la criante diminution de l'offre de transports et la cacophonie sur les lignes - trains en retard ou supprimés, grèves, vétusté du rail, travaux -, c'est la grande déconnexion entre les métropoles et les petites villes, entre les régions et la

capitale, qui est à l'œuvre. Une tectonique inexorable qui pousse aux fractures territoriales, à l'isolement, en pleine ère de la technologie et des communications. Usagers, élus locaux et chefs d'entreprise tiennent la sonnette d'alarme, craignant pour la vitalité de

leurs territoires. Pour le géographe Laurent Chalard, nous sommes arrivés « aux limites de la métropolisation », de cet « État central qui ne pense que par et pour les grandes métropoles, semblant ignorer les problématiques de développement du reste du pays ».

➔ **ENTRE PARIS ET LIMOGES, LES VOYAGEURS DU POLT RACONTENT LES GALÈRES SUR CETTE LIGNE D'UN AUTRE ÂGE**

➔ **LAURENT CHALARD : « NOUS VOYONS LES LIMITES DE LA MÉTROPOLISATION »**
PAGES 2, 3 ET L'ÉDITORIAL



Depuis près d'une semaine, les États-Unis sont frappés par une tempête hivernale d'une rare intensité. La situation s'améliore mais une cinquantaine de personnes sont mortes. L'état d'urgence a été décrété dans la région de New York. **PAGE 6**

ÉDITORIAL par Laurence de Charette ldecharette@lefigaro.fr

Sur le quai

Aux citadins qui - peut-être - étaient en passe de l'oublier, les grévistes de la SNCF se sont chargés de le rappeler le week-end dernier : vaste est la France, d'est en ouest et du nord au sud, quand, faute de transports, les distances s'étirent. Quand Marseille ne se situe plus à moins de trois petites heures et demie de la « capitale », mais à une grosse journée de route ; ou que rejoindre ses proches au vert dans les environs de Vannes ne demande plus deux heures, mais trois fois plus au moins - pour les chanceux qui auront pu grimper dans un car ou se glisser à l'arrière d'un covoiturage les rapprochant à peu près du but. La France des grandes villes, celle qui courait en mocassins de TGV en aéroports, expérimente à son tour le piétinement. Les habitants de Saint-Just-en-Chaussée ou de Monestier, les ruraux, comme les banlieusards, le savent, eux, depuis un moment : Intercités, TER, RER... les transports sont désormais plus imprévisibles que le temps ! La « France périphérique » ne compte plus les heures passées sur le quai. Dans une société « liquide », où chacun est sans cesse sommé d'être « agile », elle subit

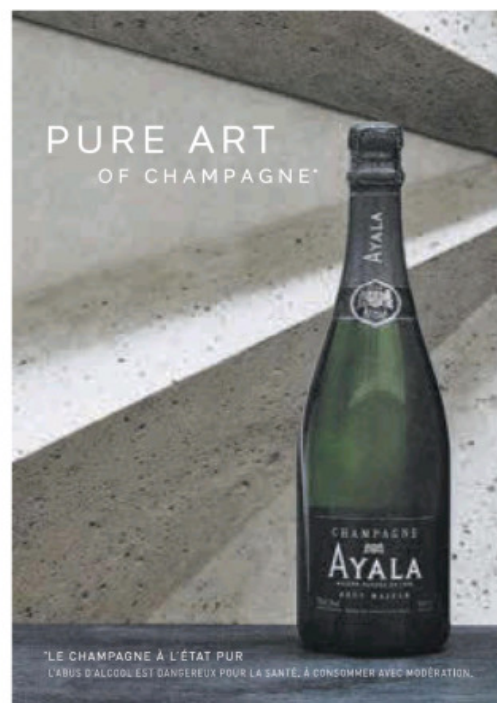
quotidiennement les frottements à l'ancienne de l'espace et du temps et la décapitation des matériels roulants. Le monde entier se déploie sous ses yeux, à portée d'écran, mais, sous ses pieds, bien peu de réelle « mobilité » : la liberté de ces Français « dépossédés » d'eux-mêmes, de la vie comme elle allait, si bien dépeints par Christophe Guilluy, se réduit en même temps que le maillage des régions se délite, sous le coup de la désindustrialisation et des injonctions antivoiture des bobos - sans compter aujourd'hui la hausse de l'énergie.

Délitement du maillage des régions

Il est frappant de voir combien l'affaiblissement des institutions autrefois garantes de ce bien commun qu'est l'aménagement du territoire fragilise aujourd'hui la puissance publique. Comme si, dans la géographie, sur le terrain, se matérialisait cette impossibilité à se retrouver par-delà les divergences, cette faillite de l'universalisme dont l'État et le politique étaient à la fois les inspireurs et les garants. ■

Politique : les gagnants et les perdants de l'année 2022

L'année qui s'achève n'aura pas la même saveur pour tous les politiques. Douze mois durant lesquels les équilibres politiques ont été remodelés, permettant l'éclosion de nouveaux visages ou le déclin de certains autres. Fabien Roussel pour le PCF ou Aurélien Pradié pour LR ont par exemple su se servir de 2022 comme d'un tremplin. À l'inverse, Anne Hidalgo ou Jean-Michel Blanquer ont connu, eux, une « année horribilis » **PAGES 4 ET 5**





Shared destiny

China-Japan ties have evolved beyond political differences

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Draft revision to wildlife law reviewed

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Inclusivity in art

Wheelchair user shares videos, hoping to raise public awareness

LIFE, PAGE 18



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Xi outlines targets for top leadership

Building political capacity to serve people stressed at annual performance review

By XU WEI
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Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, has called on members of the Party's top leadership to keep enhancing their capacity to promote high-quality development, serve the people and prevent and defuse risks.

In remarks made at a meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee on Monday and Tuesday, Xi said political capacity is the most important factor for senior officials from the 24-member body to conduct their duties.

Political Bureau members reflected on their performances and reviewed those of their colleagues, as part of the Party's traditional practice of criticism and self-criticism at the annual meeting, which is usually held at the end of the year.

This year's meeting centered on upholding the Party's overall leadership, following a people-centered development philosophy and exercising strict governance over the Party.

Xi urged the senior officials to exercise strict self-discipline, as required of Marxist statesmen, and to improve their capacity to analyze and judge general trends in domestic and global affairs.

They should always bear in mind major issues of the country, be adept at planning for major issues for the country and Party, deliver benefits to the people and win their support, Xi said.

The Political Bureau members said 2022 was a year of "extreme importance" in the history of the Party and State. The nation was able to respond to shocks from factors that went beyond expectations, secure positive economic growth, maintain a steady job market and stable commodity prices, and ensure food and energy security as well as people's living standards.

They stressed the need to carry forward the CPC's great founding spirit and work in a united way to ensure the nation has a good start on its journey to build a modern socialist country in all respects next year.

Xi stressed that implementing the requirements from the 20th CPC National Congress is the top political task for the entire Party, now and in the future. Members of the Political Bureau must lead the Party on this front.

He reiterated the need to uphold the centralized and unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee, and warned that the Party and the country can accomplish nothing without firm and strong leadership from the Central Committee.

The Chinese path to modernization is an unprecedented endeavor that requires exploration and innovation, and imposes fresh and higher demands on Party units and officials at various levels, he said.

It is important for officials at various levels to undertake their duties to translate the grand visions outlined at the congress into reality, he said, adding that officials must perform their responsibilities with zero complacency and a proactive attitude.

The conduct of officials, especially senior officials, has always been a key indicator for the Party and society, and members of the Political Bureau should place emphasis on correcting pointless formalities and bureaucratic acts, Xi said.

He encouraged senior officials to make more frequent trips to grassroots areas to learn about real situations and create an atmosphere for grassroots officials and the people to tell the truth and speak from their hearts.

The CPC has always represented the fundamental interests of all people and has never stood up for the interests of any particular interest group or a privilege-seeking class, Xi said.

Members of the Political Bureau must take the lead in assuming clean governance and self-discipline as well as the political duty for Party governance, he said.

He called on the members to discipline their family members and relatives, as well as their associates, to prevent them from seeking unjustifiable benefits with their power or influence.



Travelers walk through Beijing Capital International Airport on Tuesday, the same day the State Council announced that, starting on Jan 8, inbound passengers will no longer need to quarantine. TINGSHU WANG / REUTERS

China to lift quarantine for inbound passengers

By CUI JIA
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People arriving in China from abroad for work, business, study or family reunions will no longer need to quarantine starting on Jan 8, according to the latest changes in the country's COVID-19 policy. Inbound passengers will still need a negative nucleic acid test 48 hours before departure and have to wear protective masks onboard flights, the State Council's Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism announced on Tuesday.

Testing on arrival will also be scrapped beginning on Jan 8, and passengers will not be subjected to any special restrictions during their stay in China as long as their health declarations are normal and they show no symptoms of the disease during a "routine health check" while clearing customs.

Since March 2020, travelers to the Chinese mainland have been required to quarantine, typically for up to 21 days, at designated hotels. The quarantine policy, which has evolved over time, currently requires five days of quarantine at a centralized facility, followed by three days at home.

The State Council said that restrictions on entry of international flights, such as the "Five-One Policy" — a rule under which a country can send only one flight of one airline via a single route just once per week — will be lifted as well.

According to the announcement, restrictions on outbound travel will be relaxed, while visa arrangements for foreigners wanting to enter the country for work, business, study or family reunions will be improved.

The National Immigration Administration announced on Tuesday that it will resume issuing passports to Chinese citizens wanting to arrive in or depart from the Chinese mainland. It will also start granting exit and entry permits to those traveling to and from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

See *Tourism*, page 4

Inside

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Nation to downgrade virus management

By WANG XIAOYU
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China will downgrade its management of COVID-19 from Class A to Class B on Jan 8, a move made possible by the reduced virulence of Omicron, expanded vaccinations and increased treatment and emergency response tools, officials and experts said on Tuesday.

The downgrade, a major change to China's antiviral strategy, means inbound travelers will no longer have to undergo quarantine or take a nucleic acid test upon arrival in the country, the State Council said in a document released on Monday.

Isolation of infected people, tracking of close contacts and classification of at-risk areas will be scrapped. Testing services will be available for those wanting to take a test, and reporting of epidemic information, which is currently published daily, will be published monthly, the notice said.

Li Bin, vice-minister of the commission, said at a news briefing that China's COVID-19 control work has entered a new phase and has a new mission.

See *Virus*, page 4

NEW DAWN BREAKS IN BATTLE AGAINST COVID-19

Focus now on vulnerable groups and patients in serious condition

By WANG XIAOYU

The shift of focus in China's COVID-19 containment strategy signals a new dawn in the battle against the virus, according to officials and experts.

Indepth

The nation has switched from prompt and precise containment of domestic outbreaks of the disease to shielding the most vulnerable groups and dedicating all-out efforts to treating patients in serious condition.

Wu Zunyou, chief epidemiologist at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said the country will be hit by three waves of COVID-19 this winter, with the first centering on urban areas until the middle of next month.

The second wave will be triggered by increased movement during Spring Festival from late January to mid-February, while the third, from late February to mid-March, will be linked to migrant employees returning to their workplaces. Wu said during a speech titled "How to stride over the darkness before the dawn".

See *COVID*, page 2

Economy expected to rebound next year

By OUYANG SHILIA
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Despite facing headwinds and a harsher external environment, China's economy is set to recover steadily next year, with an anticipated rebound in economic activity and gradual return to normalcy of work and life, according to experts.

They said that while COVID-19 outbreaks may continue to curb factory activity in the short term, the economy will gradually stabilize with the implementation of optimized COVID-19 containment measures and stronger macroeconomic policy support, such as targeted property sector support, relief measures for households and a push for infrastructure spending.

Their comments came as data released on Tuesday by the National Bureau of Statistics showed that the profits of China's major industrial companies contracted at a faster pace between January and November, as renewed COVID-19 outbreaks and shrinking demand weighed on factory activity.

Industrial profits fell 3.6 percent year-on-year in the first 11 months of 2022, according to the NBS, compared with a 3 percent decline in the first 10 months.

Zheng Houcheng, director of the Yingda Securities Research Institute, said the drop in industrial profits is in line with the slowing growth of industrial production and falling producer prices.

China's industrial output grew 2.2 percent year-on-year in November after a 5 percent rise in October. Meanwhile, the producer price index, a gauge of industrial profitability, stayed in negative territory for the second month in a row in November, rekindling worries about slowing demand and weak activity.

Despite the overall fall of industrial profits, "Tuesday's (detailed) data showed that the business profit structure of industrial firms continues to optimize, as profits earned by some midstream and downstream industrial enterprises post an uptick in profit margins with the help of government measures to ensure stable prices and supplies, reduce taxes and fees, and increase financial support," said Zhou Maohua, a macroeconomic analyst at China Everbright Bank.

Profits in the equipment manufacturing industry jumped 3.3 percent year-on-year between January and November, which was 0.1 percentage point higher than

the figure for the first 10 months, according to the NBS.

Looking ahead, Zhou expected to see a gradual improvement in industrial profits next year.

Louise Loo, senior economist at British think tank Oxford Economics, said that while a surge in COVID-19 cases and uncertainties point to a weaker outlook in the first quarter of next year, the economy will gradually recover and stabilize with macro policy easing.

Amid a slew of measures focused on supporting the real estate sector, recent high-level talk "suggests that fiscal policy will take a front seat in stimulating domestic consumption next year, while authorities keep monetary conditions loose," Loo added.

The NBS said on Tuesday that China has updated its 2021 GDP growth to 8.4 percent from the 8.1 percent released in January, raising the comparison base for China's GDP expansion this year.

Despite expected growth pressures and external challenges, global executives remain optimistic about China's economic vitality.

Jeffery Liu, vice-president of US material science giant Corning Inc, said that China has always been a strategic market for the company.

Blizzard conditions



A man attempts to clear snow off his roof on Monday in Buffalo, New York, in the United States. A brutal blizzard killed at least two dozen people in New York state, while the nationwide death toll from the severe winter storm reached 57 on Tuesday.

JOHN NORMALE / GETTY IMAGES See story, page 12

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