

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

What's News

Business & Finance

Walmart and Home Depot reported stronger revenue, signs that Americans are spending even as they pay more for fewer products and are shifting their purchases to mitigate the effects of inflation. **A1**

◆ **Southwestern cotton growers** are abandoning millions of parched acres they planted in spring, prompting forecasts for the weakest U.S. harvest in more than a decade and sending prices sharply higher. **A1**

◆ **Amazon is accusing the FTC** of making excessive and unreasonable demands on founder Bezos and company executives as the agency probes Amazon's Prime membership program. **A2**

◆ **A Commerce Department-led process** that reviews U.S. tech exports to China approves almost all requests and has overseen an increase in sales of some particularly important technologies, according to an analysis of trade data. **A4**

◆ **American Airlines agreed** to buy 20 planes from aerospace startup Boom Supersonic, betting on the future of an ultrafast aircraft that is still years away. **B1**

◆ **The S&P 500 and Dow** posted gains of 0.2% and 0.7%, respectively, while the Nasdaq fell 0.2%. **B11**

◆ **China's Tencent is looking** to sell most or all of its stake in food-delivery company Meituan, people familiar with the matter said. **B1**

◆ **Natural-gas prices in Europe** closed at a record, with hot summer weather boosting fuel demand and Russia throttling back supplies. **B1**

World-Wide

◆ **Explosions rocked an ammunition depot** in Russian-held Crimea, damaging rail tracks and power lines and marking a fresh blow to Moscow's war effort. The blasts were set off by Ukrainian saboteurs, a senior Ukrainian government official said. Russian officials also blamed sabotage. **A1, A7**

◆ **Rep. Cheney conceded defeat** in the Republican primary in Wyoming, an outcome that was a priority for Trump as he urged GOP voters to reject one of his most prominent critics on Capitol Hill. **A1**

◆ **Two top lawyers** who worked in the White House under Trump were interviewed by the FBI about the handling of classified documents well before agents searched the former president's Mar-a-Lago home, people familiar with the matter said. **A4**

◆ **Germany plans** to postpone the closure of the country's last three nuclear-power plants as it braces for a possible energy shortage this winter after Russia throttled gas supplies to the country. **A8**

◆ **The federal government** declared an unprecedented new stage to the water shortage afflicting the Colorado River, triggering cutbacks likely to deepen economic damage to the Southwest. **A3**

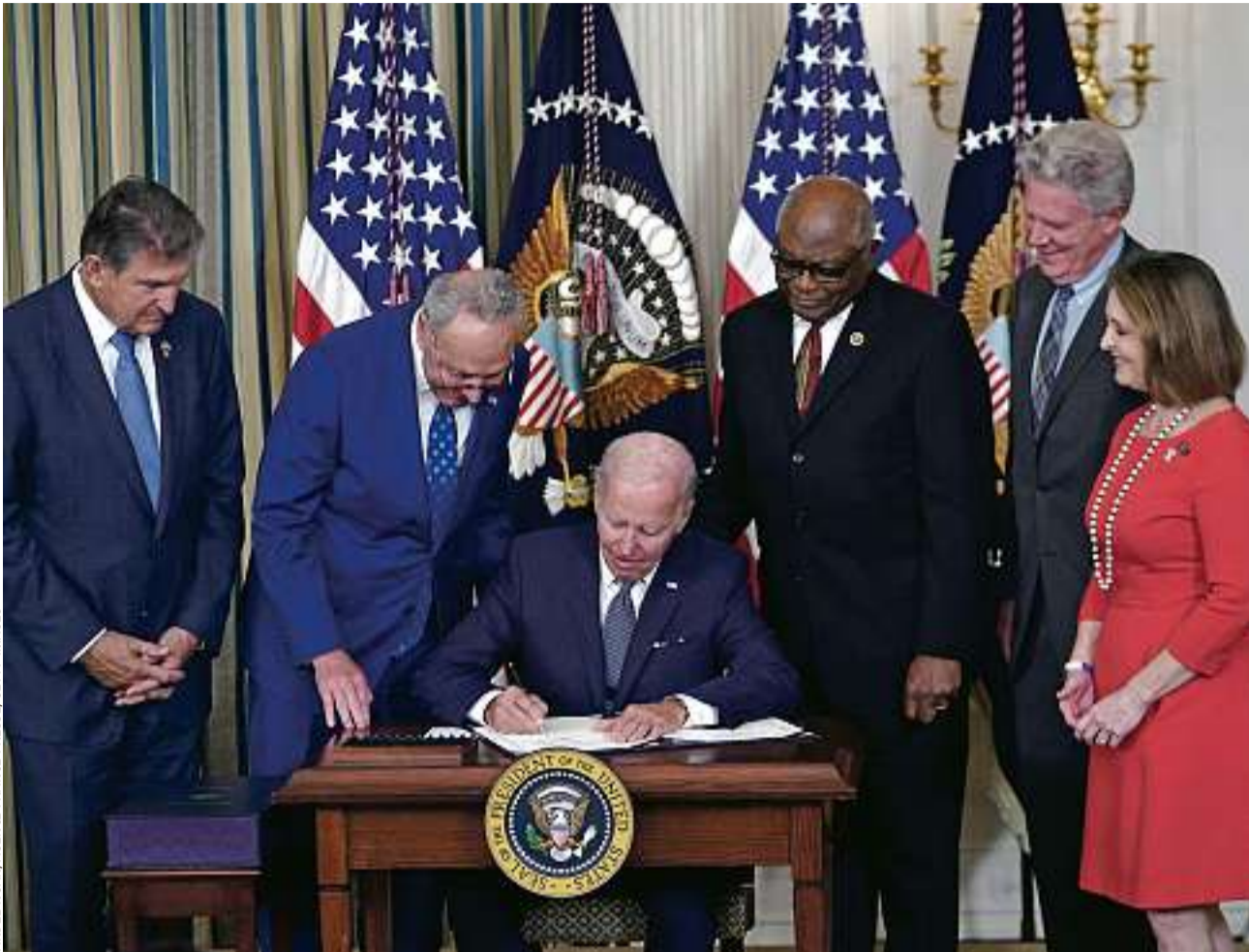
◆ **Opposition leader Odinga** rejected the results of Kenya's presidential election and vowed to challenge Ruto's victory in court. **A9**

◆ **The FDA said** it would allow some hearing aids to be sold over the counter. **A3**

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Biden Signs Sweeping Climate, Healthcare Bill Into Law



CEREMONY: The Democrat-backed package marks a legislative victory for President Biden that the White House hopes will improve his standing heading into November's midterm election. He and his party now face the task of selling it to the public. **A4**

Crimea Blasts Are Latest Sign Of Russia's War Vulnerabilities

Explosions rocked an ammunition depot in Russian-held Crimea, damaging rail tracks and power lines and marking a fresh blow to Moscow's war effort.

By James Marson, Ann M. Simmons and Matthew Luxmoore

The blasts were set off by Ukrainian saboteurs, a senior Ukrainian government official said. Russian officials also blamed sabotage, their first official acknowledgment of a major strike on the peninsula.

The explosions hit the ammunition dump at an abandoned farm near the village of Maiske early Tuesday, leaving two people with minor injuries. Authorities on the peninsula, which Russia's military seized in 2014, evacuated more than 3,000 people from a 3-mile zone around the depot and stopped trains on the nearby train line, which sweeps up from the eastern edge of the peninsula to the Ukrainian mainland.

"The demilitarization operation of the Armed Forces of

Ukraine will continue in a precise fashion until the full deoccupation of Ukrainian territories," Andriy Yermak, head of Ukraine's presidential administration, wrote on Telegram. "Crimea is Ukraine."

A senior Ukrainian government official also said information was being gathered about reports of additional blasts in Crimea, about 50 miles away in Hvardiiske.

The explosions underscore Russia's vulnerabilities as Ukraine seeks to retake territory in its south that Russia occupied

in the early stages of the war.

Ukraine, which lacks the forces for a head-on assault, has sought to erode Russia's ability to wage war by targeting ammunition dumps, command posts and bridges, usually with long-range rocket launchers provided by the U.S. Russia has

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- ◆ Kyiv shows its ability to hit behind Russian lines..... A7
- ◆ U.S. to buy millions in Ukrainian grain..... A7
- ◆ Germany plans to keep last three nuclear plants open.. A8

Drought Devastates Cotton Harvest In the U.S.

By RYAN DEZEMBER AND KIRK MALTAIS

Southwestern cotton growers are abandoning millions of parched acres that they planted in spring, prompting forecasts for the weakest U.S. harvest in more than a decade and sending prices sharply higher.

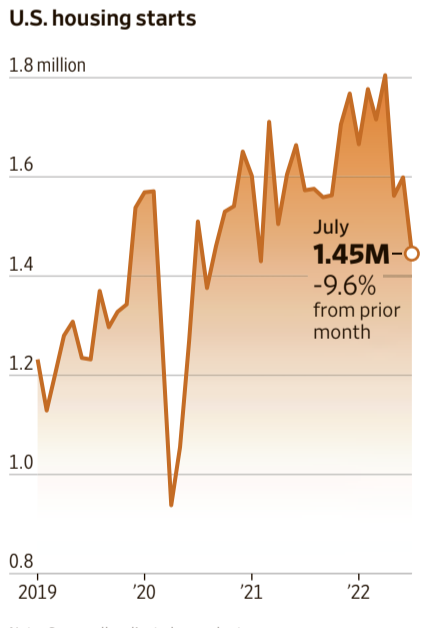
U.S. agricultural forecasters expect drought-struck farmers to walk away from more than 40% of the 12.5 million acres they sowed with cotton and harvest the smallest area since Reconstruction. Back then, in 1868, yields per acre were less than a fifth of what they are today, but the market for cotton was vastly smaller too.

December cotton futures, the most-traded contract, rose Tuesday for the sixth straight trading session to close at \$1.169 a pound. Last week, futures gained about 13%, the sharpest weekly climb since March 2011, when prices were on their way to a record of \$2.141 a pound.

Cotton was among the commodities that shot up in price earlier this year. Like other raw materials, it was lifted by hedge funds and other speculators piling into futures markets to blunt the effect of inflation elsewhere in their portfolios.

But cotton also gained from surging oil prices, which raised the price of petroleum-based fibers such as spandex, polyester and nylon. When synthetic fibers like those get more expensive, demand in-

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Note: Seasonally adjusted annual rate. Source: U.S. Census Bureau via St. Louis Fed

Housing Starts Declined In July

Construction of housing in the U.S. continued to slow as inflation and high mortgage rates made it more expensive to build and buy property. Housing starts fell 9.6% in July from the prior month to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.45 million, down from a revised 1.6 million in June. **A2**

Cheney Loses Race To Trump's Choice

By NATALIE ANDREWS

Rep. Liz Cheney conceded defeat Tuesday in the Republican primary in Wyoming, an outcome that was a priority for former President Donald Trump as he urged GOP voters to reject one of his most prominent critics on Capitol Hill.

She is set to serve until January, when the new Congress convenes, and as co-chair of the special House committee investigating events leading up to the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the Capitol and Mr. Trump's role in them.

Ms. Cheney was the last House Republican to face a primary among the 10 who

Retailers' Quarterly Results Cheer Investors

Walmart, Home Depot report an increase in revenue as consumers pay more for items

By SARAH NASSAUER

Walmart Inc. and Home Depot Inc. reported stronger revenue in the most recent quarter, signs that Americans are spending even as they pay more for fewer products and are shifting their purchases to mitigate the effects of inflation.

Investors bid up shares in both companies Tuesday, propelling the broader stock market, as their top lines and profits came in stronger than analysts had expected. Walmart shares rose more than 5%, Home Depot's more than 4%. The gains helped lift the Dow Jones Industrial Average nearly 240 points, or 0.7%.

"I certainly don't want to say the consumer is strong, but they are relatively OK," Walmart Chief Financial Officer John David Rainey said in an interview.

Walmart said revenue rose 8.4% to \$152.86 billion in the July quarter, helped by consumers paying more for items, market-share gains in its grocery business and more visits from shoppers. Company executives expect inflation and consumer spending to stay steady throughout the year. Home Depot's quarterly sales rose 6.5% to \$43.79 billion, despite a decline in the home-improvement chain's number of transactions from a year ago.

While many people in the U.S. are showing signs of financial stress, some measures of consumer health have shown improvement in recent

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Don't Fetch, It's a Rattler! Snake Safety Is Hot for Dogs

Classes teach canines to stay calm around reptiles; 'No pressure, Newton'

By JIM CARLTON

CAVE CREEK, Ariz.—On a recent toasty morning, a pointer named Lua trotted happily around a fenced enclosure, stopping to check out something she had never seen before: a coiled-up rattlesnake.

Wagging her tail, Lua bent down to investigate—then jumped straight up in the air, letting out a yelp. Trainer Cody Will had just zapped Lua with an electronic collar, enough to help make her steer clear of the venomous reptiles.

"That's not a lizard, is it?" Mr. Will said.

The Arizona desert is crawling with rattle-

snakes, commonly known as rattlers. They are increasingly coming into contact with curious canines that moved along with humans to Maricopa County, which includes Phoenix and Cave Creek and experienced an 18% population increase between 2010 and 2021, to 4.5 million people.

To keep the animals safely apart, a cottage industry of snake-avoidance classes has sprung up. Fitted with electronic collars, dogs are turned loose to face off with rattlesnakes, some in cages and some slithering in the open.

The classes cost around \$100 per dog and are so popular that Mr. Will's six-year-old business,

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When 'Rehab' Means Abuse and a Cell

Hundreds of Somali-American youths, sent abroad by parents, are rescued by U.S.

By MICHAEL M. PHILLIPS

NAIROBI, Kenya—The young Americans imprisoned at Irshad Rehabilitation Centre feared the isolation room the most.

When they violated some rehab-center rule, or no rule at all, they'd be locked in the room, located in a corner of an inner courtyard that was topped by electrified wire and razor coils.

Abdirizak Aden Ahmed, a Somali-American teenager from Mechanicsburg, Pa., says he spent a dozen or so stints in isolation during the months he was confined against his will at Irshad, in Nairobi's heavily So-



Rep. Liz Cheney

voted to impeach Mr. Trump for his actions related to the riot. She was defeated by Harriet Hageman, a water- and

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mali Eastleigh neighborhood. Irshad and similar facilities in Somalia and Kenya market themselves to desperate diaspora Somali parents as professional treatment for young people who are drug users, alcoholics, mentally ill, gay, disobedient, sacrilegious or simply too Westernized.

Mr. Aden's mother, frantic about his marijuana use in Pennsylvania, says she paid Irshad \$600 a month for what the center promised would be effective drug-treatment, room and board. The reality is much grimmer.

Mr. Aden says inside the

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U.S. NEWS

Health, Climate, Tax Bill Signed

Legislation, smaller than earlier versions, is major win for Biden, but now he has to sell it

By Andrew Restuccia

WASHINGTON—President Biden on Tuesday signed into law sweeping legislation to lower prescription drug prices, boost the renewable energy sector and impose new taxes on large corporations.

The Democrat-backed package is one of Mr. Biden's most consequential accomplishments since taking office, the latest in a string of legislative victories that the president's aides hope will improve his standing heading into November's midterm election.



President Biden and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer before the bill was signed Tuesday.

House. "Today offers further proof that the soul of America is vibrant, the future of America is bright and the promise of America is real and just beginning."

Mr. Biden has struggled at times to hold the public's attention amid the controversies surrounding former President Donald Trump and polling that shows many voters are focused on their dissatisfaction with the economy, the top issue for most Americans.

Mr. Biden has struggled at times to hold the public's attention amid the controversies surrounding former President Donald Trump and polling that shows many voters are focused on their dissatisfaction with the economy, the top issue for most Americans.

On healthcare, the law's most immediate effects will start next year, when people on Medicare will see their insulin costs capped at \$35 a month, seniors will be eligible to receive certain vaccines free and people who received Affordable Care Act subsidies through the 2021 American Rescue Plan will be able to count on another three years of those benefits.

Other consumer-friendly benefits won't start for years, with a \$2,000 cap on out-of-pocket drug costs for Medicare enrollees starting in 2025 and the ability of Medicare officials to negotiate prices on a narrow set of 10 drugs starting in 2026, potentially expanding to 20 medicines in 2029.

The package includes hundreds of billions of dollars in subsidies for investing in renewable-energy projects and producing energy from renewable sources—and includes credits to help factories retool to turn out electric vehicles or other products needed in a low-carbon economy.

The law creates a new 15% corporate minimum tax and a 1% excise tax on companies' stock buybacks and sets aside roughly \$300 billion for reducing the deficit. And it spends \$80 billion over a decade on new workers and technology at the Internal Revenue Service.

—Siobhan Hughes contributed to this article.

U.S. Agents Interviewed Cipollone And His Deputy

By Sadie Gurman and Alex Leary

WASHINGTON—Two top lawyers who worked in the White House under then-President Donald Trump were interviewed by the FBI about the handling of classified documents well before agents searched the former president's Mar-a-Lago home, people familiar with the matter said, offering a glimpse into steps investigators have taken in the monthslong probe.

Mr. Trump's White House counsel, Pat Cipollone, and his deputy, Pat Philbin, are the highest-ranking former officials known to have been interviewed in the probe, which intensified last week when agents removed from the Florida property 11 sets of classified documents, including some marked as top secret and meant to be only available in special government facilities.

Mr. Philbin was questioned in the spring, the person said, as Justice Department officials were negotiating with Mr. Trump's legal team over the return of the documents. The dispute over the material began after the National Archives in January retrieved more than a dozen boxes of White House documents from the resort, some of which officials deemed classified national-security information.

Messrs. Cipollone and Philbin were among seven officials whom Mr. Trump designated as representatives of his presidential records in a Jan. 19, 2021, letter to the archives. Neither responded to requests to comment about the interviews, which were earlier reported by the New York Times. Investigators have also reached out to several other Trump aides who had knowledge of his records-management practices, including Molly Michael, who served as Oval Office operations coordinator and continued to work for Mr. Trump after he left the White

The probe into the handling of the documents intensified last week.

House, people familiar with the matter have said.

The investigation into the handling of classified documents is separate from another one examining the actions of Mr. Trump and his allies around the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol. Messrs. Cipollone and Philbin have also been subpoenaed to appear before a federal grand jury investigating that event.

Earlier Tuesday, a federal judge in Florida indicated he would hear arguments Thursday over whether to make public the affidavit laying out what evidence led to the search. The affidavit would provide more detail about the FBI's investigation than what is contained in the search warrant unsealed last week by U.S. Magistrate Judge Bruce Reinhart.

The Justice Department has asked Judge Reinhart, who also approved the initial warrant to search, not to unseal the affidavit, saying its release would "compromise future investigative steps" and "likely chill future cooperation by witnesses."

In a Monday filing, prosecutors said they wouldn't object to making public some other, less sensitive information associated with the warrant, but that the affidavit itself would serve as "a road map to the government's ongoing investigation."

Monday's filing came in response to requests from media outlets, including The Wall Street Journal, to make public the document, which would explain what evidence, including witnesses, the government had collected and describe why investigators believe a crime may have been committed.

Mr. Trump and his supporters, including some in Congress, have also pushed for the release of the affidavit.

Nearly All Tech Exports to China Approved

By Kate O'Keefe

A Commerce Department-led process that reviews U.S. tech exports to China approves almost all requests and has overseen an increase in sales of some particularly important technologies, according to an analysis of trade data.

Of the U.S.'s total \$125 billion in exports to China in 2020, officials required a license for less than half a percent, Commerce Department data show. Of that fraction, the agency approved 94%, or 2,652, applications for technology exports to China, the analysis showed.

For 2021, that approval rate decreased to 88%, the analysis showed, but changes in data compilation methods between the two years make comparisons difficult. The figures omit applications "returned without action," meaning their outcomes were uncertain.

The result: The U.S. continues to send to China an array of semiconductors, aerospace components, artificial-intelligence technology and other items. Critics say such sales, which have taken place across successive U.S. administrations, could be used to advance Beijing's military interests.

The Commerce Department says it is focused on long-term, strategic competition with

China and that it makes export-control decisions with its interagency partners in the Defense, State and Energy Departments.

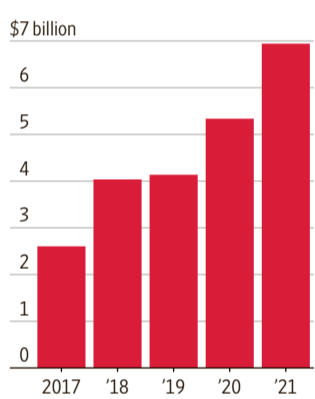
China, already a technological powerhouse, is developing increasingly sophisticated chips as well as other advanced technologies. Washington has responded with export controls and sanctions, and the Biden administration signed bipartisan legislation earlier this month to spend more than \$50 billion to expand U.S. semiconductor manufacturing facilities in the U.S.

Critics say Commerce officials, by allowing exports of sensitive technology, are improperly giving priority to U.S. commercial interests over national security and that an urgent regulatory revamp is necessary to respond to the threat from Beijing.

For Steve Coonen, the Pentagon's former top China export-controls analyst, the high rate of approvals for licenses to sell tech with potential military use is evidence of significant policy failure. "I have no problem trading with or feeding China," Mr. Coonen told colleagues in a September 2021 email after resigning over frustrations with the policy. "I have a huge problem with arming China."

A Pentagon spokeswoman declined to comment on Mr.

Chinese imports of semiconductor manufacturing equipment from the U.S.



Source: UN Comtrade

Coonen's resignation.

The U.S. export-controls process, long a niche topic, is now at the center of a debate over how much the U.S. should continue to trade with its most powerful adversary, dozens of current and former U.S. officials said in interviews with The Wall Street Journal.

"I do believe China's the greatest threat we face," said Mira Ricardel, a former Trump administration Commerce official in charge of export controls.

"What we don't have is a consensus in the U.S. government on what the relationship should be economically," she said. "There are people who

are like, 'No, no, no, we can't send China anything,' but that's not the policy," she said, referring to technology exports.

Some warn tighter restrictions on U.S. tech sales to China will backfire because allies such as Germany, Japan and South Korea will step in to fill the void. For export restrictions to be effective, "we need our allies to have the same controls," said Kevin Wolf, a senior Commerce official during the Obama administration who now advises companies on export regulations at law firm Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, while testifying on Capitol Hill last year.

Such coordination, however, could take years, and others argue that China's official military-civil fusion policy—which seeks to erase the distinctions between the military and the private sector—requires an immediate response, because it has made it impossible for the U.S. to guarantee tech transferred to China won't end up in military hands.

Some question the role of the Commerce Department, the U.S.'s lead agency on the issue. Matt Pottinger, former President Donald Trump's deputy national-security adviser, said the agency's export-controls unit, called the Bureau of Industry and Security, "has struggled to reconcile its mis-

State Sales-Tax Holidays Increase in Step With Prices

By Joseph De Avila and Lauryn Azu

Teresa Houston put off her daughter's back-to-school shopping until Illinois's new sales-tax holiday went into effect this August to save a couple bucks.

"I think just generally we're more money conscious this year, just because everything is more expensive," said Mrs. Houston, a high-school teacher from Roselle, Ill.

As the cost of household goods rose this year, more states are introducing or expanding existing tax holidays, which allow shoppers to make a variety of purchases tax free or at a lower state sales tax.

This year 20 states either lowered or abandoned their sales tax for at least a few days, according to the Federation of Tax Administrators, up from 18 states last year. Tennessee, Florida and Connecticut also expanded their state sales-tax holiday offerings in 2022. Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on Tuesday proposed temporarily suspending the state sales tax for school supplies, which would still need the approval of state legislators.

Illinois and New Jersey are the latest states to offer week-long tax holidays. Illinois reduced its sales tax to 1.25% from 6.25% during its holiday, while New Jersey isn't charging any sales tax during its holiday. But there are limits on the retail value of items that qualify in the majority of states.

Elected officials have pitched adding or expanding sales-tax holidays as a way to help consumers save money as the rate of inflation remains near a four-decade high.

The legislature in Illinois passed a law this year creating the tax holiday. It was part of a \$1.83 billion package that also included income and property tax rebates.

Florida expanded its sales-tax holiday to include certain dates for baby clothes, children's books and items for hurricane preparedness.

Many U.S. consumers have largely shrugged off rising prices and maintained spending, according to the Commerce Department. But there are indications that consumers with lower incomes have been opting to put off some purchases or are switching brands to save

money, according to market-research firms.

With prices on the rise, 38% of consumers said they are trimming spending to cover the cost of items for the coming school year, according to a July survey by the National Retail Federation and Prosper Insights & Analytics.

Consumers are expected to spend \$37 billion on back-to-school shopping, matching 2021's record high, according to the survey. Families with children in K-12 schools plan to spend an average of \$864 on school items, about \$15 more than last year.

Michelle Foszycz said rising prices contributed to her decision to spend around \$80 on qualifying items for her children during Illinois's back-to-school sales-tax holiday.

Graphing calculators have gone up \$10 to \$20 depending on the brand, she said.

"I remember being like, 'Oh, my God, this was only \$9 last year, and this year it's \$19.99,'" said Mrs. Foszycz, who lives in Hanover Park, Ill.

Critics of sales-tax holidays say the measures, while politically popular, can cost states mil-



Back-to-school purchases are expected to total \$37 billion.

lions in sales-tax revenue while providing negligible help to consumers. They also aren't effective at helping low-income consumers because they are designed to occur during specific periods of the year, said Lucy Dadayan, a senior research associate at the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, a think tank based in Washington, D.C.

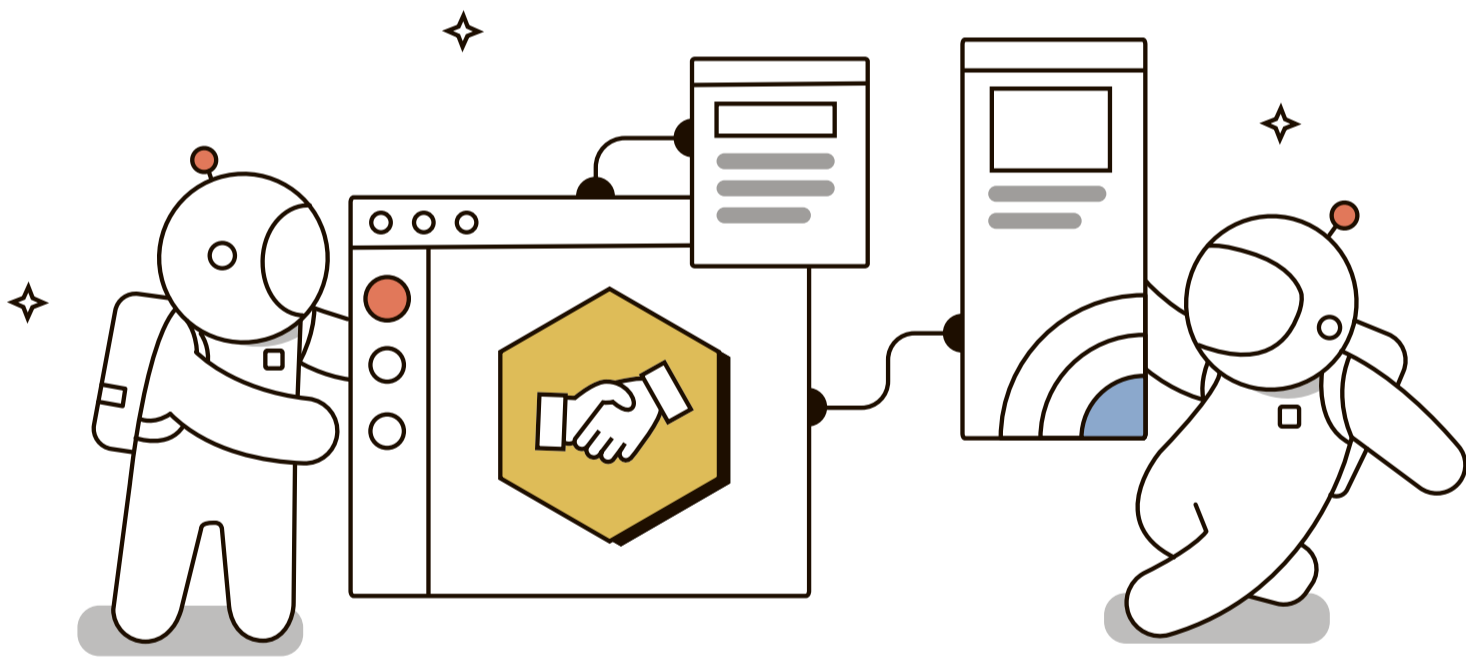
Janelle Fritts, policy analyst with the conservative-leaning

Tax Foundation, said tax holidays aren't well targeted to aid people who need the most help.

"People with higher incomes also benefit, just as much, if not more, because they're able to spend more during those tax holiday," Ms. Fritts said.

In Illinois, consumers are expected to save \$50 million from the tax holiday, a Department of Revenue spokeswoman said.

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WORLD NEWS

U.S. to Buy Millions in Ukrainian Grain

BY WILLIAM MAULDIN
AND JARED MALSN

The U.S. Agency for International Development is spending more than \$68 million to purchase and ship Ukrainian grain in the largest such export deal since Russia's invasion and the start of a July agreement to allow for renewed shipments from Ukraine's Black Sea ports.

USAID is providing the funds to the World Food Program, a United Nations agency that historically gets the biggest part of its grain from

Ukraine, to purchase, ship and store up to 150,000 metric tons of wheat, the agency said.

"While this additional wheat will be used to help feed people in countries facing severe hunger and malnutrition, much more is needed to help the world recover from the global devastation caused by Putin's brutal war," USAID administrator Samantha Power said.

The U.S. so far has provided \$4.8 billion to the World Food Program this year, the most of any year.

The July grain-export deal,

brokered by the United Nations and Turkey, has been gathering momentum as the pace of ships moving in and out of Ukrainian ports has accelerated.

Five more ships left Ukraine under the agreement Tuesday in the largest single convoy to depart since the deal was signed. Four more ships were set to be inspected in Istanbul on their way to Ukraine, said the Turkish Defense Ministry.

The shipments have raised hopes that the Black Sea grain corridor can meet the U.N.'s goal of alleviating a global hun-

ger crisis caused in part by the invasion. The Russian attack in February trapped millions of tons of grain and other foodstuffs in Ukraine, contributing to a surge in world food prices that has pushed tens of millions of people closer to starving.

Before the war, Ukraine exported about 10% of the world's wheat, and was a key supplier to countries in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, where the food crisis has been most severe.

The increasing tempo of Ukraine's Black Sea exports is the result of frenzied work in

recent weeks by Ukrainian, Turkish and U.N. officials who have been racing to carry out the agreement. In recent days the first ships to both enter and leave Ukrainian ports have departed safely in a rare sign of normality along Ukraine's vital shipping lanes.

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres plans to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on Thursday in Lviv, according to a U.N. spokesman, before visiting the port of

Odesa, one of the three ports being used as part of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Among the ships that departed Ukraine on Tuesday was the first vessel carrying a humanitarian cargo of wheat. The Brave Commander is carrying 23,000 tons of wheat for the World Food Program in Ethiopia, a mission partly funded by USAID.

So far, 21 ships have been authorized to leave three Ukrainian ports in and around Odesa under the agreement, according to the U.N.

Crimea Strikes Show Kyiv Can Hit Beyond Front Lines

BY JAMES MARSON
AND MICHAEL R. GORDON

Russian forces seized Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 with barely a fight, and Vladimir Putin said it would belong to Moscow forever.

Eight years later, blasts at a Russian air base and ammunition depot there—the result

ANALYSIS of Ukrainian attacks, according to senior officials in Kyiv—have exposed Moscow's vulnerability and made the peninsula the latest battleground in the continuing war between the neighbors.

Ukraine's immediate goal isn't to retake Crimea, but degrade Russia's ability to wage war in the south and east, where Kyiv is seeking to regain territory captured by Moscow. Crimea is home to large Russian bases and plays a critical role in supplying forces elsewhere.

For two months, Kyiv has used long-range rocket launchers furnished by the U.S. to hit targets in Russian-held territory on the Ukrainian mainland. The Crimea strikes demonstrate Ukraine's ability to hit deep into Russian areas that are beyond the range of those U.S. weapons.

An attack at Saki air base

last week destroyed at least eight Russian warplanes, according to satellite images and Ukrainian and Western officials. Russia said ammunition detonated and no planes were lost. Tuesday, a Russian ammunition depot in northern Crimea was rocked by blasts.

Ukrainian officials haven't publicly taken credit for the strikes, but senior officials have said they are the work of Ukrainian forces.

In late July, a small explosive device delivered by a drone hit the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in Crimea, prompting the Russians to cancel ceremonies honoring Russia's navy, a Russian lawmaker and Sevastopol's mayor said. Ukrainian officials didn't confirm their forces were involved.

Russian officials have warned that assaults on Crimea could lead to a direct war between Russia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. A U.S. official said that it doesn't tell Ukraine how to fight, and that "Crimea is Ukraine, and Ukraine has the right to defend itself."

U.S. officials previously have said they are sharing intelligence with Ukraine on Russian forces in Russian-occupied Crimea and Donbas.



A Russian ammunition depot in northern Crimea was rocked by explosions on Tuesday.

They add, however, that the U.S. had no advance notice of the attack on the Saki air base.

The strikes in Crimea have provided a morale boost to Ukrainians and slice into Russian supply lines in the south.

Ukraine has used rockets provided by the U.S. to hit Russian ammunition depots, command posts and bridges there. The aim, Ukrainian officials say, is to avoid a head-on colli-

sion with Russian forces and instead squeeze them out of territories that they captured in the early days of the war.

"This strategy presents the Russians with a bunch of very bad choices, but leads the Russians to leaving the west bank of the Dnipro," said Frederick Kagan, senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a think tank in Washington. "The only question is when

and at what cost."

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Tuesday that the HIMARS had no impact on Russia's military campaign in Ukraine and accused the West of waging war with Russia by proxy by providing weapons systems and targeting data.

The explosions in Crimea suggest that Ukraine has capabilities in addition to HIMARS, including sabotage groups that can

strike well behind enemy lines.

"It's not a fist against a fist," Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said in an interview. "It's a mobile tactic."

That strategy will take time, but officials and analysts say it is the best way to take on a powerful foe.

"We need to continue to be patient with a small country that can't have one-on-one military parity with Russia," said Mr. Kagan. "Slow is good because the Ukrainians suffer fewer losses."

Russian propagandists fumed that Ukraine has crossed red lines and should be punished.

Mr. Putin's largely bloodless seizure of Crimea in 2014 cemented his image as a leader who had restored Russia's power on the world stage.

The Russian president has invested heavily in the peninsula, including a road and railway bridge linking it with the Russian mainland.

Andrei Klisshas, senior lawmaker in Mr. Putin's United Russia party, called for harsh measures to prevent further sabotage. "Russia's strikes in response should be very convincing," he wrote on social media. "It's a matter of our sovereignty."

Blasts Hit Russian War Effort

Continued from Page One reinforced its military in the south with thousands of troops that were transferred from eastern Ukraine.

President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine asked Ukrainians in occupied regions like Crimea to stay away from "the military objects of the Russian army" and the places where Russian forces store ammunition and equipment. "The fewer opportunities the occupiers have to do evil and kill Ukrainians, the sooner we will be able to end this war by liberating our land," he said in his Tuesday night address.

Blasts at a Russian air base in Crimea last week destroyed several warplanes, according to satellite images and Ukrainian and Western officials. Kyiv mocked Russia over the incident, but didn't take responsibility. Russia blamed an ammunition explosion, and said no warplanes were lost.

The damage to Russian facilities in Crimea has provided a morale boost for Ukrainian forces, which surrendered the peninsula in 2014 with little resistance and have been losing ground in the country's east. The incidents also demonstrate a new threat to Russian supply lines from territory Moscow considers its own in a war it has sought to portray as a limited operation.

Russian officials said the exploding ammunition caused damage to a railway line that leads from eastern Crimea, where a bridge connects the peninsula with the Russian mainland. The Russian Ministry of Defense said power lines and infrastructure, as well as homes, were damaged. Authorities halted passenger trains at a station to the southeast of the fire.

Russia relies heavily on rail to transport military vehicles, equipment and troops.

Speaking via video to the Moscow international security conference on Tuesday, President Vladimir Putin of Russia repeated his claim that the

U.S. is to blame for the war. Mr. Putin launched the war on Feb. 24 in an attempt to take control of Ukraine, which he said presented a security threat to Russia.

The explosions are a test of Western efforts to see Ukraine victorious but avoid escalation. The U.S. has balked at Ukrainian requests to provide longer-range tactical rockets that can travel more than 185 miles and, thus, could strike well into Russia. The multiple-launch rocket systems and ammunition it has provided have a range of 48 miles, U.S. offi-

The damage to Russian facilities is a morale boost for Ukrainian forces.

cial say. The Biden administration supplied them after Ukraine promised not to use them to strike Russian territory. The U.S., like most countries, doesn't recognize Crimea as part of Russia.

Moscow officials have warned that assaults on Crimea could lead to a direct war between Russia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. But a U.S. official said the U.S. doesn't advise Ukraine how to

fight and that "Ukraine has the right to defend itself."

Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu of Russia said the HIMARS rocket systems that Ukraine has used to target Russian military infrastructure and supply lines have had no effect on Russia's military campaign. Western and Ukrainian officials and analysts have said the systems have dented Russia's ability to wage war by forcing its military to locate ammunition supplies and command posts further from the front lines.

Fighting around the Zaporizhzhia nuclear-power plant has intensified in recent days. Mr. Zelensky on Monday accused Russia of rejecting the security demands of the European Union and other countries that have called on Russia to withdraw its forces from the plant.

Vasily Nebenzya, Russia's permanent representative to the United Nations, said on Friday that Russia's withdrawal from the nuclear station would make it "vulnerable to anyone who would like to go there with unknown intentions."

—William Mauldin contributed to this article.

Watch a Video

Scan this code for a video on the explosions at the ammunition dump in Crimea.

Explosions in Crimea



Sources: Institute for the Study of War and the American Enterprise Institute's Critical Threats Project (areas of control)

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S CHAIRS
PRESIDENTIAL PROVENANCE

Lincoln's chairs. Historic suite. White House provenance.

These two chairs were part of a suite of fourteen ordered by Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln in 1860, and were used in the White House during Lincoln's presidency — one of the most important times in the nation's history. Handcrafted of mahogany in a dignified Renaissance Revival style, Lincoln's most iconic portrait was taken in a chair from this very group. At 150 years old, they remain in excellent condition, endowed with the distinction of being a piece of American history from one of the nation's most beloved presidents. Circa 1860. 38 1/4" h x 19" w x 17" d. #31-5807

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WORLD NEWS



Global companies counting on China's consumer market are feeling a pinch. Above, the Pop Mart flagship toy store in Shanghai.

Beijing Shifts Approach in Bid To Stimulate Ailing Economy

By STELLA YIFAN XIE
AND JAMES T. AREDDY

HONG KONG—For the past two decades, China has conditioned global companies and markets to anticipate big government spending at any hint of an economic slowdown. Now, as growth sputters, Beijing is taking only small steps toward boosting its ailing economy.

On Monday, China's central bank cut two key interest rates, as fresh economic data showed a range of economic activity slowing in July. Unlike in the U.S., interest rates in China have a limited effect, and economists said the move would likely do little to encourage further borrowing by households and businesses.

The world's second-largest economy is facing headwinds ahead of a Communist Party gathering where Chinese leader Xi Jinping is expected to break with recent precedent and claim a third term.

The country's zero-Covid policy is restraining domestic consumption. A mortgage revolt over properties unfinished by heavily indebted developers has dragged the property sector into deeper distress. Even at slightly lower interest rates, private businesses have little appetite for new loans, and the biggest borrowers, state-run enterprises, are less sensitive to changes in credit conditions.

While economists say more rate cuts from the People's Bank of China are likely in the

coming months, few expect the government to offer big stimulus measures with massive new official spending as it has used to address past slowdowns.

In response to the 2008 global financial crisis, Beijing unleashed more than four trillion yuan, equivalent then to roughly \$586 billion, of stimulus spending that amounted to nearly 13% of its GDP. In relative terms, it was about three times the size of efforts taken by the U.S., according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

At a meeting in July, the Communist Party's top policymaking body didn't announce fresh stimulus as some expected. Instead, officials effectively acknowledged the overwhelming downward pressure and abandoned their 5.5% target for full-year growth.

The absence of more-powerful stimulus measures from Chinese leaders suggests Beijing is more keenly aware of the unsustainable nature of the country's traditional approach to supporting the economy by borrowing to spend big on infrastructure, economists say.

"There are some real fiscal constraints in China in a way that there weren't back in 2008," said Nicholas Borst, director of China research at Seafarer Capital Partners LLC, an investment-advisory firm. "The economy as a whole is much more indebted than it was."

As of December, total government debt in China—including central and local govern-

ments—was estimated to reach about 120% of GDP, up from 60% in 2014, according to his research. More significantly, other forms of government debt, including local government's off-balance-sheet borrowing, grew rapidly and were nearly five times as large as explicit central government debt.

The burden of stimulating the economy in China has traditionally fallen primarily on local governments, which became more financially strained this year as land sales dried up and tax revenue plummeted amid Covid-19 disruptions.

Few expect the government to offer big stimulus steps in coming months.

Another possible reason behind Beijing's reluctance to prop up growth more aggressively is that China's familiar formula for stimulating the economy is yielding fewer benefits than in the past.

Because China has built so much already, the infrastructure works it targets have an environmental dimension that often makes for smaller footprints and less job creation than the construction in the past, such as highways, railways and new business districts.

Evidence of a push toward a broader concept of infrastruc-

ture spending was apparent in China's July figures, which showed some of the strongest infrastructure-investment growth in environmental projects, such as water-conservation works, which UBS Group AG says accelerated 18.4% year-over-year from 18% in the previous month. Investment in projects such as subways remained more muted.

While the infrastructure China has built in recent decades has modernized the country's landscape and employed multitudes, the International Monetary Fund argues such spending hasn't been matched with outlays that might make individuals confident to spend. "We really want to see more forceful fiscal support, with a clear shift in the composition of the support to households, to support their private consumption," Joong Shik Kang, deputy mission chief for China at the IMF, said this week.

Measures such as increasing benefits to retirees and unemployed people that the IMF advises China to adopt would shore up its social-safety net. It also suggests China could scale up direct cash transfers to individuals.

Another problem for China is that the effect of any stimulus measures Beijing takes now will likely be muted by the country's strict Covid-19 policies, which have battered business and consumer sentiment.

◆ Foreign investors turn net buyers of Chinese bonds B10

Germany Plans to Keep Last 3 Nuclear Plants Open, in Policy Change

By BOJAN PANCEVSKI

BERLIN—Germany plans to postpone the closure of the country's last three nuclear-power plants as it braces for a possible energy shortage this winter after Russia throttled gas supplies to the country, German government officials said.

While temporary, the move would mark the first departure from a policy initiated in the early 2000s to phase out nuclear energy in Germany and which had over time become enshrined in political consensus.

The decision has yet to be formally adopted by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's cabinet and would likely require a vote in parliament. Some details are still under discussion, three senior government officials said.

Still, while a formal decision could be weeks off, the government believes two key conditions allowing a temporary extension of the life of the three remaining plants, now expected to close on Dec. 31, have been met: Germany is facing a likely shortage of gas and letting the reactors operate longer poses no safety concern, the officials said.

"The reactors are safe until Dec. 31, and obviously they will remain safe also after Dec. 31," a senior official said.

The plan underlines how deeply Moscow's attack on Ukraine has scrambled politics in Europe, and particularly in Germany, which long enjoyed close economic relations with Russia and whose economy had grown highly dependent on Russian natural-gas supplies.



The Isar nuclear-power plant, which includes the Isar 2 reactor, in Essenbach is one of Germany's three remaining facilities.

China's New Exercises Around Taiwan Reflect Measured Response

China last week wound down seven days of unprecedented military exercises around Taiwan, the self-ruled democratic island that Beijing claims as its own.

By Karen Hao
in Hong Kong and
Joyu Wang in Taipei

The calm didn't last long. On Monday, China's military, the People's Liberation Army, launched a new set of drills in response to the arrival in Taiwan of a U.S. congressional delegation led by Sen. Ed Markey (D., Mass.).

But the new maneuvers lacked the firepower of the response to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's trip to Taiwan this month, when an enraged Beijing encircled Taiwan's main island with ballistic missiles, simulated land-strike attacks and reaffirmed its willingness to use force to bring Taiwan under its control.

The PLA sent 30 warplanes and five warships near Taiwan's waters on Monday, as Mr. Markey's delegation was

leaving Taipei, Taiwan's military said. That was less than half the number of planes and ships the PLA sent into the same area on Aug. 7 in the midst of exercises that Beijing launched in response to Mrs. Pelosi's visit.

The deployment of fewer ships and planes in response to Mr. Markey's delegation suggests that Mrs. Pelosi's visit was the exception to the rule, given her seniority in the U.S. government and her defiance of repeated Chinese warnings against proceeding with the visit.

In contrast, Mr. Markey's trip wasn't publicly known in advance, while his lower status—unlike Mrs. Pelosi, he isn't in the presidential line of succession—seems to have earned him a far more subdued military response alongside the usual words of condemnation. Over the past two years, 33 U.S. members of Congress have traveled to Taiwan, Taipei said, and none generated the response that Mrs. Pelosi's visit drew.

The differing reactions to



An Albatross unmanned aerial vehicle took off during the live-fire drills at Hengchun Airport, in Pingtung, Taiwan, on Tuesday.

this month's two visits come as Beijing seeks to calibrate its displays of force in line with the perceived severity of offenses, while aiming to avoid outright military conflict, people familiar with Chinese thinking said.

In the absence of U.S. actions that China would regard as further eroding the status quo, some defense and political experts say Beijing could seek opportunities to lower the temperature around Taiwan in the next few months,

even as it seeks to establish a "new normal," which the PLA has said would include more frequent drills staged ever closer to the island.

"Having really visually and publicly affirmed its red line, it's possible when the atmosphere is right for Beijing to switch gears to a softer approach," said Wen-Ti Sung, a political scientist at Australian National University who studies ties between Washington, Beijing and Taipei. "Beijing

knows that a coercive reunification scenario is unduly costly and unduly destabilizing toward China's own security."

Those who argue that Beijing isn't seeking to actually push the standoff toward the brink of armed conflict point to how the PLA decided to carry out its maneuvers: It has shot missiles over Taiwan—but so high in the atmosphere that it didn't constitute a real threat. Its planes have repeatedly crossed the halfway mark of the Taiwan Strait—but only for short bursts of time, dipping in and immediately back out, most often at the northeast and southwest ends rather than around the center of the island, according to maps released by Taiwan's Defense Ministry.

During the Markey-led visit, Taiwan military spokesman Maj. Gen. Sun Li-fang said Taiwan didn't raise its combat-readiness level, in the absence of any signs of a broader PLA mobilization.

On Monday, the PLA's Eastern Theater Command released video footage claiming to show its pilot flying over

Penghu, a Taipei-controlled island chain in the Taiwan Strait. Asked about the clip on Tuesday, Tung Pei-lun, Taiwan air force's vice chief of staff for operations, dismissed the video as psychological warfare, saying the Chinese military exaggerated how close it got to Taiwan-controlled territory.

Separately, Beijing said Tuesday that it would impose sanctions against seven Taiwanese government officials and lawmakers, including Hsiao Bi-khim, Taiwan's de facto ambassador in Washington, and Wellington Koo, secretary-general of Taiwan's National Security Council.

Some analysts say the most durable shift could be in the way Beijing used Mrs. Pelosi's visit to establish a new status quo around Taiwan and expand its political options. While the PLA has engaged in military exercises around Taiwan every summer, the House speaker's visit allowed Beijing to launch more ambitious drills—something it has desired, experts say—and frame it as a matter of self-defense.

Chinese Ambassador Accuses Washington of Exacerbating Tensions

By PAUL BECKETT

WASHINGTON—China's ambassador to the U.S. accused Washington of escalating the current crisis over Taiwan, in the latest round of official objections from Beijing to the recent visits by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other lawmakers to the island.

"Some Americans do not recognize and correct their mistakes," Ambassador Qin Gang said at the beginning of a news briefing Tuesday. "The

U.S. side took the first step to provoke China on the Taiwan question," he said, adding that the visit of Mrs. Pelosi (D., Calif.) and a subsequent delegation that included Sen. Ed Markey (D., Mass.) "greatly infringed on China's sovereignty."

The congressional visits in support of Taiwan's government and democracy have brought U.S.-China relations to their most tense point in years, and prompted furious responses from Beijing, which

has accused Washington of deviating from its longstanding Taiwan policy, agreed through a series of communiqués between the U.S. and China. In response to the lawmakers' visits, China launched unprecedented military drills around Taiwan and took other measures to signal its objections.

President Biden and other U.S. officials have said there is no change in U.S. policy toward Taiwan, and noted that Congress is an independent branch of government. Mr. Qin

said Beijing considered Congress "part of the government of the United States."

In a briefing Friday, Kurt Campbell, White House coordinator for the Indo-Pacific, accused Beijing of using Mrs. Pelosi's trip to pile pressure on Taiwan, thereby jeopardizing stability in the region. "China has overreacted and its actions continue to be provocative, destabilizing and unprecedented," Mr. Campbell said.

Mr. Qin said, "I hope the U.S. would stop pointing fin-

gers at China, stop its words and actions that escalate tension."

Asked about the prospect of a Republican takeover of the House in November's midterm elections, Mr. Qin said, "I hope Nancy Pelosi is the last speaker visiting Taiwan."

The Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the U.S. accused Beijing of overreacting to the visits from Mrs. Pelosi and other U.S. lawmakers. "China's efforts to create a chilling effect by at-

tacking political leaders who are fighting for Taiwan's international visibility will only backfire and make the people of Taiwan even more resentful," the office said in a statement.

The fracas over Taiwan comes amid other strains in the U.S. relationship with China, with national security officials frequently referring to Beijing as a top counterintelligence threat.

—Andrew Restuccia
contributed to this article.

WORLD NEWS

Kenya Opposition Leader Rejects Vote Results

By NICHOLAS BARIYO
AND MICHAEL M. PHILLIPS

NAIROBI, Kenya—Opposition leader Raila Odinga, declared the loser of last week's presidential election in Kenya, rejected the results Tuesday and vowed to challenge William Ruto's victory in court.

Mr. Odinga's move risked throwing the bitterly fought race into crisis and raised fears Kenya could again face the partisan and ethnic violence that left some 1,100 people dead after disputed elections in 2007. In that race, Messrs. Odinga and Ruto ran on the same opposition ticket and their supporters spent months fighting backers of then-President Mwai Kibaki.

This time, Mr. Odinga had the endorsement of Kenya's outgoing president, Uhuru Kenyatta, who, in an unusual twist, had turned his back on his own deputy, Mr. Ruto.

A police spokesman said there were no major incidents in large Kenyan cities Tuesday. Odinga supporters clashed with officers overnight, following the announcement by the national electoral commission that Mr.



Kenyan presidential candidate Raila Odinga, center, vows to challenge his election loss in court.

Ruto won the Aug. 9 vote.

During a Tuesday news conference the 77-year-old Mr. Odinga accused the chairman of the commission of manipulating the vote tally.

After Kenya's last election, in 2017, Mr. Odinga got the Supreme Court to annul the first round of voting, only to lose

again in the rerun. Dozens of protesters were killed by police during those elections.

"What we saw yesterday was a travesty and a blatant disregard of the constitution and the laws of Kenya," Mr. Odinga said, while urging his supporters to stay calm. "The terrible memories of the after-

math of the 2007 elections are still fresh in our minds."

Shortly before Mr. Odinga's statement, four of the seven members of the electoral commission repeated their concerns about the final tally and accused the commission's chairman, Wafula Chebukati, of hiding return data from

other commissioners. An electoral commission spokesman said Mr. Chebukati wasn't available to comment.

On Monday, after six days of counting votes, Mr. Chebukati declared Mr. Ruto the winner by a margin of 50.5% to 48.9%, with two minor candidates receiving the remainder.

Kipchumba Murkomen, a member of the Ruto campaign team, said Tuesday anyone could confirm the announced results from polling-station reports that the electoral commission had published online.

To contest the results, Mr. Odinga must file suit with the Supreme Court within seven days of the results announcement, and the court must issue a ruling within 14 days.

International and Kenyan election observers praised the voting itself as largely peaceful and the counting process as transparent. Posting results online "greatly enhanced transparency and accountability of the tabulation process and was a notable improvement over past elections," a joint U.S. observer mission from the International Republican Institute and National Democratic Insti-

tute concluded.

Police reported a few outbreaks of violence immediately following the announcement of Mr. Ruto's win, including protests in the Odinga stronghold of Kisumu, where police fired tear gas to disperse demonstrators. In Nairobi's Kibera slum, gunfire rang out as police confronted crowds of angry Odinga supporters who burned tires and blocked roads, witnesses said.

An elections official who went missing on Friday after stepping out of a tallying center was found dead on Monday, police said.

Kenya is a key U.S. ally in East Africa, providing troops and facilities for the long war against al-Shabaab, al Qaeda's affiliate in neighboring Somalia. The country is considered a rock of stability and economic potential at a time when some of its neighbors are embroiled in conflict.

"We ask all political party leaders to continue to urge their supporters to remain peaceful and refrain from violence during the electoral process," the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi said late Monday.

WORLD WATCH

SRI LANKA

Chinese Ship Docks As India Objects

A Chinese survey ship arrived at Sri Lanka's southern port of Hambantota on Tuesday after the visit was delayed over security concerns raised by India.

The Yuan Wang 5 was originally scheduled to arrive on Aug. 11 before Sri Lanka requested a deferral. On Saturday, Sri Lanka's Foreign Ministry said the vessel was given permission to dock until Aug. 22 to refuel and take on supplies on the condition that it would keep its identification systems on and wouldn't carry out any research activities while in Sri Lankan waters.

Sri Lanka is navigating a balancing act between regional

powers China and India as it struggles through an economic crisis that has seen its foreign reserves drain to near zero. The country requires cooperation from Beijing, its largest bilateral creditor, as it seeks a bailout from the International Monetary Fund and works to restructure a mountain of debt.

New Delhi has raised concerns that China could use the port as a base for military activities. China controls the port through a 99-year lease that Sri Lanka granted after it struggled to repay a loan that funded the port's construction.

India has given nearly \$4 billion in financial assistance this year, providing a lifeline for Sri Lanka to address its acute shortages of fuel, food and medicines.

—Philip Wen

HONG KONG

Officials Shut Down Some Facebook Pages

A national security crackdown in Hong Kong was extended to Facebook pages on which many workers and residents traded gossip.

Several prominent Facebook pages that were used to share anonymous comments about government and educational institutions in Hong Kong have shut down, following the arrest last week of two men by national security police on suspicion of sedition. The men were administrators of a social-media group and suspected of publishing posts that "promote feelings of ill will," police said.

Soon after the arrests, a

Facebook page called Civil Servant Secrets that had more than 204,000 followers went offline. It displayed a message saying its content was no longer available, which typically means administrators have deleted it. Last month the page hosted a video showing a police officer who appeared to be sleeping in a break room while on duty.

Hong Kong Police didn't respond to a request to comment.

A spokeswoman for Facebook parent Meta Platforms Inc. declined to comment when asked whether authorities had requested Facebook user data related to the page and others, or whether they had asked Facebook to close them. She said the company doesn't disclose user data to Hong Kong authorities.

—Newley Purnell

SOUTH KOREA

U.S., Seoul to Hold Exercises Next Week

The U.S. and South Korea will begin their biggest combined military training in years next week amid an increasingly aggressive North Korea, which has been ramping up weapons tests and threats of nuclear conflict against Seoul and Washington, the South Korean military said Tuesday.

The allies' drills, called Ulchi Freedom Shield, will take place from Aug. 22 to Sept. 1 in South Korea and include field exercises involving aircraft, warships, tanks and potentially tens of thousands of troops.

The drills underscore Washington and Seoul's commitment to

restore large-scale training after they canceled some of their regular exercises and downsized others to computer simulations in recent years to create space for diplomacy with North Korea and because of Covid-19 concerns.

While the U.S. and South Korea describe their exercises as defensive, Ulchi Freedom Shield will almost surely draw an angry reaction from North Korea, which describes all allied training as invasion rehearsals, and has used them to justify its nuclear weapons and missiles development.

China, North Korea's main ally, expressed concern over the expansion of U.S. military exercises with its Asian allies, saying they could worsen tensions with the North.

—Associated Press

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Maderas Golf Club
Poway, California
Photo Credit: Dave Sansom

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FROM PAGE ONE

‘Rehab’ Centers Targeted

Continued from Page One
 darkened chamber a man named Cherad “Abubakar” Okumu, the rehab center’s staff supervisor, punched him until his face bled and doused him in urine and cold water for perceived offenses as minor as failing to memorize verses from the Quran. Mr. Okumu left the 18-year-old laid out on the isolation room’s concrete floor, undressed and shivering in a puddle for days, Mr. Aden says. “They were torturing me,” he says.

In April, Kenyan police raided Irshad and rescued Mr. Aden, five other Somali-Americans and one Somali with U.S. residency, as well as ethnic Somalis from the U.K., Canada and the Netherlands. The U.S. Embassy in Nairobi secured passports and air tickets home for the American citizens.

The group is among several hundred Somali-Americans that the embassy has helped escape from for-profit rehab centers in Somalia and Kenya over the past five years.

According to former residents, an ex-Irshad employee, U.S. diplomats, Somali human-rights activists and Kenyan police, Irshad and many other so-called cultural-rehabilitation centers in East Africa are little better than private prisons where hundreds of young people raised in the U.S. and Europe are stripped of their passports and beaten into mending their ways. In some centers, residents spend their days and nights in chains.

‘Moneymakers’

“These cultural-rehabilitation centers are moneymakers and pop up everywhere,” says Robyn Luffman, a consular officer at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi.

Embassy officials say there are four licensed rehab centers in Kenya; police raided two others in 2017.

A spokesman for the Kenyan National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse, which supervises anti-addiction programs such as the one at Irshad, declined to comment on the treatment of residents at Irshad.

The vast majority of cultural-rehab centers are next door, in Somalia, operating with little or no government oversight, according to diplomats and human-rights advocates.

“Hundreds of people are in there—we don’t know the exact number,” says Guleid Ahmed Jama, a prominent Somali human-rights lawyer.

Since the 1980s, Somalia has slogged through phases of civil war, inter-clan violence,

Islamist terror, famine and political strife. Many Somalis escaped to America or Europe, only to watch their Westernized offspring stray from their religion and a culture in which parents traditionally have the last word until their children marry. They sometimes find themselves unable to steer their children clear of drugs, gangs and an unfamiliar legal system, or to help them cope with mental illness.

Large numbers of diaspora Somali parents from the U.S., the U.K., Denmark, Canada and elsewhere have decided their best hope is to take their children—most in their late teens or early 20s—back to Somalia to relearn traditional ways.

Some parents deposit their children with family in the hope that Somali behavioral standards will rub off on them.

Others commit their children to private centers in Somalia and Kenya that promise to turn young people ruined by the West into respectful, drug-free Somalis.

Pervasive threat

In Minnesota, home to 79,000 Somali immigrants, the threat is so pervasive that young Somalis warn each other darkly to run for it if their parents announce a family vacation to Dubai or a visit to a dying grandmother in the old country.

“We have found in many cases the victim’s parents had no idea of the conditions and were shocked to hear of the physical, mental, and sexual abuse their children suffered,” says Larry André, the U.S. ambassador in Mogadishu, Somalia’s capital. The State Department has issued a travel advisory warning that such centers operate with “inadequate or nonexistent licensing and oversight.”

Mr. Aden, who split his childhood between Mechanicsburg and St. Cloud, Minn., admits he smoked marijuana in the U.S., and he spent two years in and out of juvenile detention. “My son made some mistakes when he was young,” says his mother.

She says she worried if he didn’t straighten up before he turned 18, he’d end up with an indelible criminal record that would ruin his chances of getting a good job in the U.S.

A cousin suggested a rehab center in Mogadishu.

Early last year, she told Mr. Aden they were going to Africa to see family. They paid a visit to relatives in Kismayo, on the Indian Ocean coast of Somalia, then traveled to Mogadishu.

Mr. Aden smoked marijuana on the morning of his 17th birthday that February in Mogadishu. An older cousin picked him up, and Mr. Aden, very high and barely familiar with Somalia, let himself believe they were going to McDonald’s as a birthday treat.

Instead, the car pulled into



‘They were torturing me.’

Abdirizak Aden Ahmed, now back in St. Paul, Minn., was confined in Somalia and Kenya.

a walled compound. Mr. Aden was taken aback when a group of men grabbed him and seized everything he had—his Crocs shoes, his lighter, his money, even the rubber band that kept his ponytail secure. Within minutes, guards locked chains around his ankles and wrists and threw him in a cell. He realized too late that he had been tricked into a rehab center, a fate he had heard about but hadn’t taken seriously.

On the first night, he says, staff members whipped him with a hose, working their way from one part of his body to another. “Your feet are the worst,” he recalls. “They’re sensitive like crazy.” His ankles and wrists were shackled day and night for virtually the entire six months he was confined at the center, he says. His ankles still bear visible scars. “I wanted to kill myself,” he says. “I didn’t want to wake up.”

Mr. Aden’s parents are separated and tell sharply different stories about their son’s experience in East Africa. Mr. Aden’s Ethiopian-born father, Aden Wako, a truck driver, says he thought his wife had enrolled their son in school in Somalia.

When Mr. Aden was finally allowed a phone call home, he risked retaliation from the staff and told his father about the chains and beatings. Mr. Wako demanded that his wife have the boy released, Mr. Aden says.

Mr. Aden’s mother, who works in a warehouse, says she doesn’t believe her son’s reports of abuse. She says she pulled him out of the Mogadishu center last August, mostly because the weather in Soma-

lia was too hot. “I took him to Africa to get better, not to arrest him or anything,” the mother says.

Fartun Wel, executive director of Isuroon, a Somali women’s organization in Minneapolis, says diaspora parents opt for African rehab centers as a last resort.

“If I were a mom and faced the choice of sending my son to an American prison where he might get raped, I’d rather send him to some horrific place in Somalia,” Ms. Wel says. “That’s what every mom and every dad is thinking.”

Immediately after removing him from the Mogadishu center in August 2021, Mr. Aden’s mother flew him to Nairobi, in

Youths who disobey parents, use drugs or come out as gay can land in rehab.

neighboring Kenya. A week later, men identifying themselves as police showed up at their hotel.

In Mogadishu Mr. Aden had been blindsided when his mother forced him into a rehab center. This time he saw it coming.

He pretended to go along with the men and then bolted down the street. He says the men caught him, beat him bloody in the back of their SUV and drove him to Irshad, which sits behind cinder-block walls and a guarded metal gate.

The center has inner and outer courtyards, separated by a bolted steel door. In the

outer courtyard is a small office, where a sign on the wall says that the minimum rehab stay is three months, and the maximum six months. Phone calls are permitted only after three weeks.

Next to the office is the room where Mr. Okumu, known to residents as the center’s enforcer, lived with his wife, its cook.

Staff wouldn’t allow a reporter into the inner courtyard or the isolation room. Surveillance cameras monitored in the office show a series of resident rooms arrayed around a concrete patio, each with steel blackout shutters, steel security bars and hasps allowing the doors to be bolted and padlocked from the outside.

Relatives routinely have troubled family members involuntarily confined at the center, according to Irshad’s managing director, Abdullahi Hussein, who says he is also one of its owners.

On average, families pay the equivalent of \$340 a month for treatment, plus additional fees for food, he adds.

Mr. Abdullahi says he has no day-to-day contact with residents, but denies they are abused. He says such reports are the fantasies of the drug users his center usually treats. “He may think he’s being harmed, but there’s nothing like that,” Mr. Abdullahi says. “We don’t do such things.”

He declined to make Mr. Okumu available for an interview. Mr. Okumu, who didn’t respond to calls or text messages, quit Irshad several weeks ago, according to staffers.

Mr. Abdullahi didn’t respond to further questions

about Mr. Aden’s case. He referred inquiries about the facility’s professional standards to its consulting psychiatrist, Dr. Gerald Nganga.

Dr. Nganga says he has visited the center only twice to examine residents, and even then was limited to interviews in the exterior courtyard in the presence of Irshad’s in-house staff. He says none of the residents complained to him of abuse. He says he wasn’t aware of the police raid.

A former Irshad employee says if the young men complain, managers extend their incarceration by a few months.

“I would hate to be affiliated with something like that,” Dr. Nganga says. “You go to a hospital to get well. You don’t go to be restrained and beaten. That has nothing to do with medicine.”

Hassan Sheikh, Irshad’s manager, says the isolation room is used “if somebody needs discipline.”

“First he meets with counselors—they give him a warning and advice,” Mr. Hassan says. “If he doesn’t obey the warnings, he normally gets two to three hours in the isolation room.”

Punishment room

The former employee describes it differently, saying new arrivals are routinely locked in isolation for several days. Mr. Aden reports spending his first five days at Irshad in the punishment room.

“If a boy behaved badly, there was a private room with cold water on the floor,” the former employee says. “They had to sleep on the wet floor all night until morning.”

In April, Kenya’s Directorate of Criminal Investigations received an anonymous tip that young foreigners were being held against their will at Irshad, according to police spokesman Michael Mugo.

Officers raided the center and collected the 10 foreign residents, but left a dozen ethnically Somali Kenyans locked up at Irshad.

One officer involved in the raid described conditions at Irshad as “inhumane,” says Inspector Mugo, who adds that no arrests were made. Most cases collapse because the victims don’t appear in court, he says.

Officers drove Mr. Aden and the others to the police station, where a U.S. diplomat met them and arranged for their return to the U.S.

Mr. Aden is now staying with an uncle in St. Paul and driving a forklift in a Minneapolis lumber yard. His troubles derailed his education, but he is still hoping to finish his last year of high school. He dreams of becoming a pilot someday.

He no longer speaks to his mother. “What she did to me wasn’t right,” he says.

Her reply: “I was doing all of that to save him, so he’d have a better future.”

Don’t Fetch, It’s A Rattler!

Continued from Page One
 Rattlesnake Ready, is booked solid into fall. One reason for the demand, local veterinarians say, is storms last summer left a bumper crop of rattlers, resulting in a spike in encounters between man’s best friend and one of his most-reviled enemies.

Arizona is home to 13 rattlesnake species, the most of any state, according to the Arizona Game and Fish Department. The granddaddy of them all is the Western Diamondback Rattlesnake, which measures up to 7 feet long and is among the most lethal in the U.S. Arizona rattlers bite on average more than 200 people a year and untold dogs. While deaths are rare, venom spreads through the bloodstream and can cause problems such as internal bleeding.

Naturally inquisitive, canines get bitten as they follow their nose to investigate the creature making a rattling sound, said Arizona Animal Hospital’s Brett Cordes, who goes by “Brett the Vet.”

“Dogs often mistake a snake with a stick or a hose,” said Christopher Oosthuisen, owner of Partners Snake Avoidance, also in Cave Creek, which trains 1,500 dogs a year. His fa-



Cody Will watches a dog named Hanna during rattlesnake-avoidance training in Cave Creek, Ariz.

ther, Leighton, started the training 20 years ago for search and rescue dogs and business expanded as more people started having snake encounters in neighborhoods, he said—particularly desert-area ones such as Cave Creek, a suburb 30 miles north of Phoenix.

Snakes like backyards, which have water and hiding places, said Bryan Hughes, owner of Rattlesnake Solutions, which goes on as many as 20 calls a day to remove rattlers.

The snake-avoidance schools have desert enclosures that resemble local yards. At Partners

Snake Avoidance—“Where good dogs become great”—canines are allowed to sniff around until they encounter one. Although all the rattlers are caged, dogs learn to avoid them anyway, after a handler triggers a shock collar to create a negative association.

While the small shock startles the dog, Dr. Cordes said it’s better than letting the animal go through the agony of a snake bite—not to mention the agony for owners of thousands of dollars in medical treatment.

At Rattlesnake Ready, snakes not kept in cages are muzzled with safety tape. Mr.

Will himself was bitten once on a finger while handling one. “It didn’t hurt too bad,” said Mr. Will, who keeps 80 rattlers in a herpetarium. The snakes take turns scaring the dogs, usually on shifts of once a week “to minimize the stress,” he said.

Mr. Will, 31, got his start in Northern California 10 years ago, where his love for reptiles prompted friends to ask him to teach their dogs how to stay away from rattlers. His father-in-law convinced him to relocate to Phoenix because there are so many snakes. Now, he trains more than 2,000 dogs a year.

“We get an occasional fail-

ure story,” Mr. Will said. “Before they’re halfway done telling me, I’m thinking, ‘I bet this is a poodle.’” Poodles, he added, are among the most intelligent dogs and don’t always accept training.

Some dogs arrive for snake training with a swagger, like a pit-bull mix named Newton who was Mr. Will’s first student one morning last month.

“Dude, that dog is very opinionated and not afraid of anything,” warned his owner, Brett Tossell.

Mr. Will grabbed two red buckets marked “Danger, Venomous Reptiles,” and instructed Mr. Tossell and his 15-

year-old daughter, Katherine, to meet him in a fenced-in patch of desert. As they led Newton on a romp, Mr. Will pulled a Mojave rattlesnake named Paul out of a bucket and discreetly placed it next to some rocks. “No pressure, Newton,” Mr. Will said, as the dog approached the snake—now rattling furiously.

The dog jumped back in alarm when he got a jolt. Two more times he got zapped, when sniffing at a discarded snake skin and checking out a loud rattling sound from an orange speaker wedged between rocks. Newton left with a whimper, darting for the exit when class was over.

Hanna, a Czech German shepherd, was more skittish as owners Ian and Wendy Bond led her in for training, saying they wanted their dog to safely accompany them on hikes. “Hi Hanna, can we get your necklace on?” Mr. Will said, slipping the shock collar on the animal. Hanna explored the grounds outside, soon ending up in front of the first rattler. She leapt back with a bark after getting her first jolt. “Good girl!” Mr. Will said.

After getting zapped twice more in other snake encounters, Hanna was ready for her final exam: steer clear, with no shock this time, of a Western diamondback named JJ blocking one of the exits. She passed with flying colors, racing away to try to climb over a section of fence. Afterward, Ms. Bond held Hanna’s “snake school” diploma. “We are going to frame it,” she said.

PERSONAL JOURNAL.

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Wednesday, August 17, 2022 | A11



Pontremoli, Italy, welcomes newcomers. Savana Rose Woods, right, enjoys Malta.

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM: EMANUELE CAMERINI FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (2); RENAN CARINHA



the influx has driven up rents and other living costs. Likewise, many remote workers have set up shop abroad, only to run into Wi-Fi troubles, tax mishaps and visa and other administrative hurdles.

The U.S. requires its citizens, no matter where they live, to file and pay income tax. Many, though, are eligible for a credit or deduction on foreign income taxes they pay if they live in a country that has a tax treaty with the U.S.

Some countries are trying to smooth out the red tape for digital nomads. Italy aims to start administering visas in the coming months that would let foreign remote workers stay well beyond the 90 days allowed for many tourists. Spain's program, expected to launch around the same time, includes tax breaks for non-EU remote workers and entrepreneurs who settle there and a visa allowing stays for up to five years.

Malta rolled out a "nomad residence permit" late last year that allows non-European Union remote workers earning at least €2,700 a month to live on the Mediterranean island nation for up to a year. The Maltese government has since processed more than 400 applicants.

Savana Rose Woods, 64, was working from her San Luis Obispo,

Calif., home when she learned about Malta's visa program. "I was just sitting in front of my computer and thinking: Are you just going to sit here in front of your computer for the rest of your life?" recalled Ms. Woods, who runs a marketing company. Within five months, she'd held a party to get rid of her belongings and set up her business there.

With her work hours adjusted for American clients, Ms. Woods said she often starts her mornings savoring a cappuccino and a pastry from the bakery down the road. She might run an errand, take a swim or chat with people in town.

The California native is looking at staying in Malta the rest of the year, though she isn't certain she'll renew her visa for 2023.

"There are just so many other choices available," she said. "Maybe Portugal will be next?"

Wanted: Digital Nomads

European destinations are courting remote workers with special visas, tax breaks and more

By LUCY PAPACHRISTOU
AND ELISSA MIOLENE

Many remote workers indulged their wanderlust during the pandemic, taking their laptops and passports to far-flung destinations. Now many parts of Europe are enticing them to come stay awhile longer.

Nearly a dozen European countries, from Latvia to Croatia to Iceland, have introduced longer-term visas to attract affluent remote workers from abroad. Others, including Italy and Spain, have similar plans in the works. Many, such as Greece and Estonia, are also wooing these so-called digital nomads with tax breaks and other perks.

Some European cities and villages have also started their own remote-worker campaigns as a way to boost their economies and sustain local service jobs. In Spain, for instance, a group called the National Network of Welcoming Villages for Remote Workers helps such workers settle in villages with 5,000 or fewer inhabitants. Its website lets users search participating villages for information on accommodation, Wi-Fi connection speeds and local attractions.

Some workers have taken "work from anywhere" to heart. The number of Americans who identify as digital nomads—meaning those who combine remote work with travel—more than doubled to 15 million in 2021 from seven million in 2019, ac-

ording to MBO Partners, which sells support services to independent contractors. Many say they want to stay untethered. In a June Gallup survey, 22% of workers who said their jobs can be done from anywhere said they plan to continue working remotely full time in 2022 and beyond.

Many digital nomads are skilled knowledge workers who earn well beyond the €2,000-€3,500 (about \$2,035-\$3,560) monthly income requirements of most European digital visa programs—a big reason so many countries and towns are trying to lure them.

"Countries are now competing for talent, just like companies used to compete for talent," said Prithviraj Choudhury, an associate professor at Harvard Business School who estimates nearly three-dozen countries worldwide now provide digital-nomad visas.

In Pontremoli, a town of 7,300 residents tucked in Italy's Tuscan hills, two locals founded Start Working Pontremoli in 2020 after watching villagers leave for jobs in bigger cities for years. The group offers welcome services and free tours to remote workers considering resettling there. Once they arrive, it helps them set up meetings with school staff, real-estate agents and local administrators. A village priest has donated a co-working space in a former seminary.

To date, 14 remote workers have moved to Pontremoli as part of the Start Working project—both from elsewhere in Italy



Start Working Pontremoli, founded by two locals in 2020, offers a co-working space.

and as far away as Brazil. In July, much of the town came together to celebrate the marriage of two remote workers. One is originally from Pontremoli; the other moved there from northern Italy in 2021.

"For raising kids, Pontremoli is paradise," said Adolfo Sotelo, a 37-year-old Microsoft Corp. executive from Mexico who moved to Pontremoli in June. He and his family moved to Milan from Mexico in 2019 but wanted a change once the pandemic arrived.

"With so many young people here, it offers the opportunity for us to balance our kids, our dogs and our social lives in a way we couldn't in a big city," said Mr. Sotelo, who says he plans to stay and work remotely from Pontremoli.

Some companies are also promoting short-term remote-work assignments to keep sought-after

talent happy.

This year, Cisco Systems Inc., which sells videoconferencing and other networking technology, brought 16 of its European salespeople to Venice for three months of remote work as part of the city's "Venywhere" initiative, which aims to attract remote workers to the Italian city. Alongside their regular jobs, the group is taking part in surveys and interviews about their remote-work experience and helping codesign new practices and technologies for hybrid and remote workers, Cisco said.

Organizers behind such local initiatives say they're trying, in part, to avoid the pitfalls experienced by some digital nomads and the hot spots they've moved to. In Mexico City, a popular destination for American remote workers, some residents have complained

These Guys Love Lululemon Pants



ON TREND
JACOB
GALLAGHER

Men's fashion is jammed with culty fan bases. There's a cult of dogmatic Dunk fans, snatching up each new Nike release. A cult of Patagonia hoarders, swapping fleece jackets from the '90s. And, as I've learned repeatedly over the years, a cult of men who will tell you, in no uncertain terms, that Lululemon makes the greatest pants ever conceived.

Yes, Lululemon, a 24-year-old, Vancouver-based activewear company best known for women's yoga pants—and the controversial comments of the brand's founder Chip Wilson about some women who wear those leggings—has garnered a near-religious following among men for its spartan, wouldn't-turn-heads, tech-fabric trousers. (Mr. Wilson stepped down as chief executive in 2015 and left Lululemon's board in 2015.)

"They look so professional, they look like regular pants but the fabric and everything is kind of more like sportswear," said Nick Looijmans, 35, a race-car driver who previously worked in the tech industry in Ottawa. He has been a Lululemon convert since a former colleague turned

him onto the trousers years ago. "When you put them on, it's just like the best pair of pants that you'll ever feel."

Lululemon is widely credited (or if you're wistful for the days of tailoring and ties, blamed) with kick-starting the leggings-everywhere athleisure trend that spawned a zillion elastic-waisted trousers and stretch-fit shirts. From across the office, its two most popular men's pant styles—the Commission pant introduced in 2017 and the ABC pant introduced in 2014 (both \$128)—look convincingly like dress pants, but are made from a pliable, could-do-calisthenics-in-them material.

In 2021, men made up 25% of Lululemon's total revenue. While the brand doesn't break out revenue by category, according to Deb Hyun, Lululemon's SVP of global brand management and operations, the ABC and Commission pants for men comprise "a pretty large share of our total purchases," particularly among new shoppers.

Lulule-Men, she said, "want products that really meet both their comfort and functionality as well as their style needs. And that's really the type of products that are doing well across our assortment."

The Commission is cut like a familiar chino while the ABC echoes an elemental jean. (There are also other fit options for the ABC and Commis-



Lululemon's stretchy trousers have garnered a robust men's fan base.

sion such as slim, cargo and a tapered jogger cut.) Both feature a "Warpstreme" stretch fabric that is billed as being quick-drying and wrinkle resistant. Flexibility is a key hook.

"I definitely had thought that like 'Oh like this is a woman's brand,'" said Jon Lai, 36, a sales compensation analyst in Seattle, who came to Lululemon about five years ago and wears the pants almost daily. The Lulu-is-just-for-leggings reputation was ultimately easy to surmount: "Once I tried the brand I was like, 'I don't really care what people think.'"

In recent years, the brand has aimed at men more directly. For a time, it collaborated with Robert Geller, a New York-based men's designer, on a slick product range that included a lemon yellow running jacket and two-toned shorts. (That

partnership has ended.) Last month, it released a unisex x hiking collection with drippy color-streaked shorts and a purple fleece vest, baiting the gorpcore crowd. And NBA player Jordan Clarkson appears in current ad campaigns.

More than any marketing scheme or designer-led subbrand, word-of-mouth has helped the brand spread among men. Everyone I interviewed said they tried the brand's trousers after being recommended them by a friend or through an online search. "If you typed in Reddit like 'comfortable pants for men,' I think the top posts would be Lululemon ABC," said Brandon Flora, 27, a restaurant manager in Chicago, who heeded that advice and now wears the pants religiously.

Carlo Cavaluzzi, a 27-year-old pho-

tographer in Los Angeles, came to the pants via a peculiar corner of the internet: a Discord chat server for professional yo-yoers. "If I was to post in that channel and say, 'Hey guys, what kind of pants should I get?'—the answer is ABC Lululemon pants," said Mr. Cavaluzzi who has since worn his black ABC pants on "hundreds of jobs."

YouTube brims with videos of men reviewing the pants (often, positively) or comparing them to the multitude of similar tech-fabric trousers that have emerged from Instagram-marketed startups like Rhone and Cuts Clothing.

Beyond comfort, Lululemon successfully identified that many men care more about looking merely presentable than being fashionable. Sold in earth-tone color schemes that bring to mind unobtrusive kitchen countertops, Lululemon's pants aren't supposed to be noticed, let alone remarked upon.

Lululemon's designs have "not a lot of zippers, not a lot of buttons, there's not that many different textures," said Mr. Looijmans of Ottawa approvingly.

David Brunelle, 42, the vice president of web and mobile at Starbucks who lives in Twisp, Wash., noted that the pants have a "universal nature" and offer a "low maintenance and kind of casual vibe that you can get away with wearing anywhere." For him, that's business meetings and dinners out alike.

Over time, he has endorsed them to co-workers, converting them to the cult of Lululemon.

Said Mr. Brunelle, "Man, the people that have discovered them become pretty big fans quickly."

PERSONAL JOURNAL.



MY RIDE | A.J. BAIME

A Legacy Convertible Fit for a President

Marisa Gustafson in Detroit with her 1977 Secret Service Lincoln Continental.

SAMUEL TROTTER FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (3)

Marisa Gustafson, 37, a freelance video producer living in Carlsbad, Calif., on her 1977 Lincoln Continental Secret Service convertible, as told to A.J. Baime.

My father, John Gustafson, started selling used cars in 1951, and by the 1970s he was the owner of the Murphy Lincoln-Mercury dealership in Long Beach, Calif. In 1977, he attended a conference at Ford headquarters [Lincoln being a division of Ford Motor Co.] in Dearborn, Mich. That is where we believe he first saw this Lincoln, which he was told had been driven by the U.S. Secret Service security detail in Jimmy Carter's presidential inauguration. Only a select group of dealers would have had access to a specialty fleet vehicle such as this one. My father acquired this car, and he would display it at his showroom in Long Beach.

When I was growing up, my father would sometimes pick me up



Ms. Gustafson's dad acquired the car and her mother held on to it for her.



at school in this car. I was embarrassed. I thought: "Why can't he drive a soccer-mom car like everyone else?" I would see this imposing grille come around the corner and turn away. Then I would turn back a couple seconds later and the car would still be going around the corner, because it was so long.

The car had these huge leather seats and an 8-track player. It was a true product of the 1970s—opulent, decadent.

My father passed away when I was 12. My mother decided to hold on to the car because she had the foresight that maybe, when I was older, I might want to have this

car, as a way to connect with my father. I would walk by it all the time, in the garage. I never thought about it. But as I got older, I started to get curious. At about age 20, I decided I wanted to drive this Lincoln. I was amazed at how smoothly it handled for being such a big car.

As time went by, I learned so much from this car. There were so many things I had wanted to ask my father, but I couldn't because he was gone. The more research I did, the more I learned about the car, but also about him. Among his papers, I found a "District of Columbia 1977 Inaugural Registration Certificate" for the Lincoln. On the line where it says "issued to" it says, "U.S. Secret Service."

Years ago, I decided that, to come full circle, the former president should see the car again. I tried to get ahold of Jimmy Carter, but he was quite elusive. He was always on the move. It took years before I was able to make contact with someone in his circle, who told me that if I shipped the car to Plains, Ga., where the former president

was from, I could drive it in the Plains Peanut Festival parade. So the Lincoln Continental went continental in 2019. I was able to meet the former president and first lady Rosalynn Carter. And when I drove the car past the balcony where he was sitting during the parade, he gave me a thumbs-up and an enthusiastic wave.

Right now, I have the car in Detroit so I can attend festivities for Lincoln's centennial this summer, celebrating Ford's acquisition of Lincoln in 1922. Then I am going to drive the Lincoln in the Woodward Dream Cruise in August (a parade of cars through greater Detroit billed as "North America's largest celebration of automotive culture"). My motto is, "Have Lincoln, will cruise." I love to travel, and when I think back on all the places I have been, so many of those trips were automotive-related. None of that would have happened if my father had not decided to acquire this car, if my mother had not decided to hold on to it, and if I had not decided I wanted to maintain it.

ROLEX

OYSTER PERPETUAL DAY-DATE 36

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ROLEX OYSTER PERPETUAL AND DAY-DATE ARE TRADEMARKS.

Getting Rid of 'Paxlovid Mouth'

BY ALEX JANIN

Jeanette Witten recently rummaged through her pantry for Red Hots, the cinnamon-flavored candy.

The 56-year-old in Montclair, N.J., was looking for a reprieve from a persistent residual taste—"like your mouth is just clenched around a grapefruit rind"—that came after she took Paxlovid, Pfizer's antiviral drug to treat Covid-19.

Ms. Witten is one of many people who have scouted remedies for what is informally known as Paxlovid mouth, a taste that can linger for as long as you take the drug. Patients who have taken Paxlovid have described it as sun-baked trash-bag liquid, a mouthful of dirty pennies and rotten soy milk. They have tried to erase the taste with salves from cinnamon to milk to pineapple. They are also trading strategies online.

A Pfizer spokesperson acknowledged the side effect, called dysgeusia, and pointed to a study that found the symptom occurred 5.6% of the time people took the drug. The study was funded by Pfizer and published in the New England Journal of Medicine. The company said most patients' dysgeusia symptoms were mild.

The culprit is likely ritonavir, a part of the drug that is used to boost levels of antiviral medicines, doctors say. It is a small price to pay given the nearly 90% reduction in hospitalization and death among those at risk for severe disease from Covid-19, say doctors and people who

have taken the medication. But it's still hard for many patients to stomach.

Lisa Crawford, 35, scoured the internet for potential remedies after the taste hit her: "It was like the smell that hot garbage has, but in your mouth."

Ms. Crawford, who lives in Phoenix and has asthma, came across a comment on Reddit recommending pineapple. She considered stopping the course altogether, but the fruit provided some relief. She snacked on it every 10 to 15 minutes, day after day.



Paxlovid is used to treat people with Covid-19.

"I probably have no tooth enamel left," she says, "but it was the only thing that saved my sanity."

Unless patients can't keep the medication down, even with anti-nausea medication, or is displaying signs of an allergic reaction, they should stay the course, doctors say. Stopping the drug too early could increase the likelihood of a rebound case.

"If you do not take the full course, you are adding an opportunity for the virus to hang around with less drug presence to block replication," says Yale School of Medicine infectious disease

specialist Scott Roberts.

He suggests people try sucking on things that bind to the mouth's taste receptors, such as lozenges and mints. Shivanjali Shankaran, a doctor and infectious disease specialist at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, recommends sipping chocolate milk or eating a spoonful of peanut butter to coat the mouth before taking each dose.

If a patient is vomiting or experiencing an allergic reaction, they should stop the course and talk to their doctor about other antivirals.

Cinnamon gum is effective for two reasons: The flavor is overpowering and almost numbing, and the gum helps improve the flow of saliva, which can prevent dryness that can worsen the taste.

While holed up in a Chicago hotel room with Covid in May, Jacklyn Grace Lacey, 36, a medical anthropologist, tweeted about taking Paxlovid. She got a message from a former student recommending mouthwash and other mint-flavored things. She opened a food-delivery app and "ordered, like, every mint item they had," she said.

She also ordered a half gallon of milk in hopes that it would help coat her throat.

Andrea Freire, a paralegal in Tampa, Fla., says she downed four bottles of strawberry-flavored Pedialyte daily for three to four days to try to mask the taste.

For Mrs. Freire, 40, who has a heart defect, it was still a no-brainer to take the drug a second time when she got Covid-19 a month later.

"I would take it again 100 times over," she says.

FROM TOP: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ELENA SCOTTI/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL; JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

ARTS IN REVIEW



KARLI CADEL/THE GLIMMERGLASS FESTIVAL (2)

Keely Futterer in 'Tenor Overboard,' left; Mikaela Bennett, Nadia Buttermann and Michael Mayes in 'The Sound of Music,' below left



OPERA REVIEW

Zambello's
Curtain Call at
Glimmerglass

mater"; and a *buffo* number from "Il viaggio a Reims."

The game young cast played the comedy with aplomb. The standout singer was Keely Futterer as the daffy Jean Harlow-esque actress Angostura, who knocked out the bravura "Bel raggio lusinghier" from "Semiramide" (a Joan Sutherland staple) with total command. Mr. Colaneri's effervescent conducting kept the fun bubbling throughout. Co-directors Ms. Zambello and Brenna Corner did the same, dropping in sight gags like a wandering gondola and an octopus that flies on board during a storm, aided by James Noone's playful set, Loren Shaw's clever costumes, and Robert Wierzel's heavily saturated, colored lighting. Good comedies are in short supply: This show would make a terrific gala event, especially with a raft of top-flight Rossini singers.

Ms. Zambello's championing of American musicals started shakily in 2011 with "Annie Get Your Gun" but has gained strength over the years. Memorable productions include "Carousel," "Candide" (which is returning next summer), "Oklahoma!" and "West Side Story." Ms. Zambello has judiciously seeded the Young Artist program with musical-theater-trained performers (who know how to dance) and for the most part cast music-theater specialists as principals when necessary.

This year's "The Sound of Music" was sumptuously produced. Clever backdrops enabled Peter J. Davison's rotunda set to look convincing as both the abbey and

Captain von Trapp's elegant living room and Aleš Valášek's costumes captured the period. Soprano Mikaela Bennett was vocally assured and charming as Maria; baritone Michael Mayes made Captain von Trapp's metamorphosis from martinet to human being convincing; Alexandra Loutsion was an imposing Mother Abbess; Peter Morgan and Alyson Cambridge were nicely wry as Max and Elsa, the show's cynics. Young Artist Tori Tedeschi Adams was a fine Liesl and the six younger von Trapp children were

The festival's artistic
director, Francesca
Zambello, takes a bow in
her final season.

terrific, a credit to Glimmerglass's work with its Youth Ensemble. Ms. Zambello's direction made the Rodgers and Hammerstein show seem fresh rather than saccharine, and hearing the score played by a full orchestra, conducted by James Lowe, was a pleasure.

Ms. Zambello has a mixed track record in recent and classic American operas. Standouts, in addition to "Blue," were revivals of mid-20th-century works—Kurt Weill's "Lost in the Stars" with Eric Owens and Robert Ward's "The Crucible" with Jamie Barton. This year, a double bill of "Taking Up Serpents" by Kamala Sankaram and Jerre Dye (2018) and

the world premiere of "Holy Ground" by Damien Geter and Lila Palmer offered contrasting looks at religion and parenting.

"Serpents" examines the toxic relationship between Kayla (the wiry-sounding Mary-Hollis Hundley) and her father, a snake-handling Pentecostal preacher (the dynamic Mr. Mayes). Ms. Sankaram's well-shaped score, with its repeating motifs, eerie whirly tube interjections and full-on praise services, powerfully juxtaposes Kayla's longings with her dominating environment. The piece has been revised since its premiere at Washington National Opera and given a fuller production—by Chloe Treat, with a set by James F. Rotondo III—that clarifies some elements. However, I was chilled to see that Kayla's liberation from her fear appears to include a future in snake-handling.

"Holy Ground," by contrast, is an earnest imagining of a contemporary Annunciation: How might a new Virgin Mary accept the responsibility of incubating the Second Coming? A comic band of archangels—decked out in brightly colored satins and brocades by Trevor Bowen—deputize their youngest, Cherubiel (the lively tenor Jonathan Pierce Rhodes) to make the ask. (They've already been turned down by 489 women.) Their target, Mary (an affecting Jasmine Habersham), who is in the process of being married—in effect, sold to an older man as breeder—and wants more from her life, starts off a no but gets to yes. The score, which includes skillful vocal writing, is tuneful but conventional; the comic and serious elements don't quite jell. Lidiya Yankovskaya was the incisive conductor for both operas.

Glimmerglass was my third, and thankfully last, encounter with Bizet's "Carmen" this summer, and the chaotic production by Denyce Graves, once an arresting Carmen herself, did nothing to mitigate the pain. As Carmen, the dry-sounding Briana Hunter undulated through sexy poses; as Don José, an undirected Ian Koziara seemed to think he was singing Siegfried; Symone Harcum's vocal wobble marred her Micaëla. Bass-baritone Richard Ollarsaba (Escamillo) introduced some vocal richness; his eye patch, man bun and slinky suit also supplied some danger. Otherwise, Oana Botez's costumes went overboard on flowered skirts; Riccardo Hernández's bleak set, along with the bulletproof vests on the soldiers and a mystifying green jumpsuit for Carmen in Act 3, suggested some vaguely contemporary time period. Mr. Colaneri was the efficient conductor. For standard repertory shows, Ms. Zambello's legacy is better served by the Native American-inspired "Magic Flute," the commedia dell'arte "Barber of Seville" or, back in 2011, a "Carmen" directed by Anne Bogart that stripped this chestnut to its essence: a battle to the death.

Ms. Waleson writes on opera for the Journal and is the author of "Mad Scenes and Exit Arias: The Death of the New York City Opera and the Future of Opera in America" (Metropolitan).

BY HEIDI WALESON

Cooperstown, N.Y. Francesca Zambello's final season as artistic and general director of the Glimmerglass Festival reflects many of the initiatives that she pursued over her 12-year tenure, efforts to lift it out of a period of doldrums and turn it back into a must-visit summer destination. Repertory innovations included classic American musicals staged with full orchestra and no amplification; new productions of recent and classic American titles; and the commissioning of Jeanine Tesori and Tazewell Thompson's "Blue," one of the best new operas of the past 20 years. In casting, she tapped famous singers, such as Eric Owens and Christine Goerke, to serve as artists in residence, and went out of her way to hire and promote BIPOC artists. She hired conductor Joseph Colaneri as music director to get the orchestra into shape. She developed a Youth Ensemble, commissioning some wonderful new operas for performance by young people, and she expanded the company's community reach with visits to Attica (the maximum-security prison), as well as lectures, concerts and other events.

During the pandemic, she improvised: an appealing series of short films in 2020 and an outdoor festival, complete with specially built chalets in addition to lawn seating in 2021. A constant presence on the grounds, Ms. Zambello exudes seemingly inexhaustible energy and enthusiasm, and under her leadership the festival has, for the most part, done the same.

Ms. Zambello has a populist bent, and the surprise delight of 2022 was "Tenor Overboard," a confection devised by playwright Ken Ludwig, Mr. Colaneri and dramaturge Kelley Rourke in which lesser-known Rossini extracts were repurposed as musical numbers in a new comic script. Mr. Ludwig's book is old-fashioned and a little corny—a 1940s caper on an Italy-bound ocean liner featuring two sisters disguised as men, their pursuing father, a male vocal quartet, and an egomaniacal film actress—but the music, along with slightly massaged texts, is so wittily integrated that it doesn't matter. Musical selections—all sung in Italian—are as varied as "La danza" (a famous Luciano Pavarotti encore, here arranged for male quartet); the Act I finale of "L'italiana in Algeri," an a cappella mourning ensemble from "Stabat

TELEVISION REVIEW | JOHN ANDERSON

The Kids Are Not All Right

A group of Norwegian children discover that they have telekinetic powers

Children with power are scary. Rod Serling, Stephen King and "The Bad Seed" have all shown that to be true, as did Henry James in "The Turn of the Screw"—and director Jack Clayton, who turned the James novella into "The Innocents" of 1961. In that tale lay ambiguity. In "The Innocents" of Eskil Vogt, good and evil simply square off, just below the sightline of adults.

Writer-director Vogt's laudably intelligent, slightly uneven but often exhilarating supernatural thriller compares favorably to one of the best horror films of the past 20 years, "Let the Right One In" (not the pointless American remake, "Let Me In"). This isn't for the more obvious reasons: That film was Swedish; this is Norwegian. That film was a vampire story; this is a psychodrama that invents a traditions-free supernaturalism that surprises the palate even as it shocks the nervous system. But both films take place in a world of children who are played by brilliant children: "The Innocents" features some superb kid-acting, which doesn't just entertain and convince but embellishes the malevolent intelligence (call it sociopathy) at work in Mr. Vogt's story.



Rakel Lenora Fløttum as Ida in Eskil Vogt's 'The Innocents'

Its center is Ida (Rakel Lenora Fløttum), whose troubled frame of mind is established before she—or her autistic sister, Anna (Alva Brynsmo Ramstad), or their father and mother (Morten Svartveit and Kadra Yusuf)—even arrive at their new home in the suburbs of Oslo:

Ida, out of irritation, fascination or both, pinches her sister's leg, hard, to no effect. It's not a surprise, except to us: The ever-grunting Anna never reacts; she presumably doesn't feel pain, and Ida occupies a classic position, the child rendered secondary by her sibling's disability.

She resents it. We don't hold it against her, partly because when little Ms. Fløttum smiles, the world lights up.

It doesn't need to: The Nordic summer sun never quite sets, and the unfolding of "The Innocents" under either a relentless day or flesh-crawling twilight is part of what makes the movie so unnerving, if understatedly so. ("Mid-sommar" fans take note.) Likewise the casting: It may seem unkind, but young Sam Ashraf makes the sadistic Benjamin even more repellent than he would be otherwise. Gifted with a mental agility that he refines over the course of the movie, Ben fascinates Ida and her new friend, Aisha (Mina Yasmin Bremseth Asheim), with his ability to move a bottle cap in the air with his mind. The kids discover that if they merge their minds, they can move larger things. And that Aisha has a psychic bond with Anna: The girls can read each other's thoughts and Anna, at Aisha's urging, begins to say actual words, something that sends her parents into paroxysms of confused joy.

While there's certainly a temptation here to read more into the setup, what's created by Mr. Vogt (who also wrote this year's popular "The Worst Person in the World") is a strange, inexplicable and eerie universe exclusive to the few children who inhabit it. Does Aisha, who is half African and suffers what appears to be vitiligo (a pigment disorder), represent some overarching racial metaphor? There's certainly a complexion variant at work—Ida is a poster child for blond Scandinavia and Ben is clearly not. But to go there is to miss the movie's more significant point, that so much of childhood is a mystery, a world that can't be penetrated by adults who, like the ones in the movie, would never imagine that the catastrophes occurring around them could have anything to do with such an angelic clique of psychics—who, in fact, are engaged in a life-or-death conflict.

The story is imagined by a filmmaker with a nose for elements that so often go missing among many movies put in the horror pigeonhole. Sophistication. Depth. And an appreciation for old-fashioned emotion and unexpected heroism. It's hard to frame "The Innocents" as a feel-good movie, but there's much in it that's ennobling as well as disturbing, and satisfyingly weird.

The Innocents
Thursday, Shudder

SPORTS

BY LAINE HIGGINS

The middle seat between an elderly couple on a five-and-a-half-hour flight to Los Angeles isn't where Clare Legaspi imagined she would ever take a college exam.

"It was essays, and I literally took it on the plane on the tray table," Legaspi said.

Legaspi's improvised exam setting is an example of the great lengths athletes in some college sports—ones that require more frequent travel than football but are not afforded the same cushy charter flights—go to juggle athletics and academics.

The Los Angeles schools, located in the southwest corner of the Pac-12 conference, currently do not travel farther than about 1,100 miles and one time zone to play league opponents.

Even with the most creative scheduling models, which both UCLA and USC say they are exploring, there is no way around the reality that Trojans and Bruins athletes are about to be spending a lot more time on the road.

Among the 42 varsity programs sponsored by USC and UCLA, golfers currently miss some of the most days of class because their schedule entails multiday regional tournaments primarily on weekdays.

During the 2021 fall season, for example, the USC women's volleyball team played 17 of their 30 games on weekdays.

"We were gone for a solid week and a half, two weeks," said Sabrina



The Nightmare Travel Days Ahead

Even with the most creative scheduling models, there is no way around the reality that USC and UCLA athletes will spend a lot more time on the road when the schools join the Big Ten in 2024



USC and UCLA are joining the Big Ten in 2024. Time spent on the road is part of the reason why Mariel Galdiano, above, a former Bruins golfer, switched majors.

Smith, who played for the Trojans as a graduate student in 2021 after spending four years on UCLA's team.

Even though the majority of volleyball games last season took place on Fridays and Sundays, the team traveled two days before to help acclimate, said former USC player Raegan LeGrand.

At both UCLA and USC, athletes get priority when picking classes and academic advisers help them build schedules around weekday practices and road games.

"We have the resources to take an individualized approach," said Christina Rivera, UCLA's senior associate athletic director who formerly oversaw the Bruins' academic and student services department.

that we can be flexible, we can be nimble, we can be creative."

Over the course of the season, Smith said that she missed eight days of class on Thursdays and Fridays during the fall semester.

There is little data on how much of an impact missing class can have on an athlete's grades, as schedules are highly individualized and most universities do not disclose this information due to privacy concerns.

For a standard course that meets three hours per week over a 15-week semester, said Burbey, "We came to the conclusion that if students had missed more than about nine [hours], their academic performance in that class greatly diminished by at least a half of a grade overall."

Time spent on the road is part of the reason why Mariel Galdiano, a Bruins golfer who graduated in 2020, switched majors.

Galdiano said she often prioritized golf over academics. Still, she had to keep her grades up to stay

eligible for NCAA competition.

"I took midterms and finals on the road after rounds at 10 p.m.," said Galdiano.

It isn't just athletes' grades that might take a hit: There is evidence that long travel days spanning time zones have an adverse impact on physiological performance.

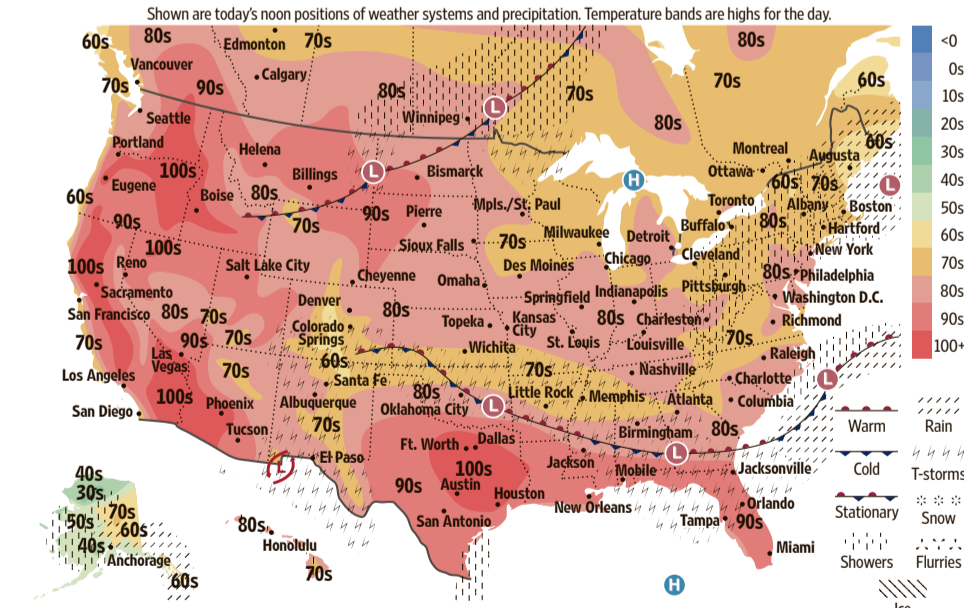
"From a performance, and just as a human standpoint, there really needs to be someone looking at this and saying, 'Is this in the athletes' best interest?'" Paule-Koba said.

Once the move to the Big Ten is complete, sports like golf and cross-country that follow a regional scheduling format might provide a blueprint for other sports facing frequent far-flung head-to-head competitions.

Still, no amount of creativity can change the geographic reality that Los Angeles is more than 2,000 miles from the Big Ten headquarters in Chicago.

"I just hope a lot of these kids understand what they're getting into," said LeGrand of USC.

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U.S. Forecasts

Table with columns for City, Today Hi/Lo/W, and Tomorrow Hi/Lo/W. Lists major cities across the US with their forecasted weather conditions.

International

Table with columns for City, Today Hi/Lo/W, and Tomorrow Hi/Lo/W. Lists international cities with their forecasted weather conditions.

The WSJ Daily Crossword | Edited by Mike Shenk

A crossword puzzle grid with numbered squares and blacked-out areas.

- 62 Famed four-wheel failures
28 Stretching muscle
63 Tropicana Field team
29 Try for a hit
30 Challenges for srs.

UPSTARTS By Mike Shenk

- 1 Kensington Gardens conveyance
26 Fighters who are cheerfully confident?
5 Mound of northern California

Previous Puzzle's Solution grid containing words from the crossword puzzle, such as PITON, SIRTH, ODES, ADEPT, TICUS, BOLT, etc.

OPINION

The Trump-Biden Codependency



BUSINESS WORLD
By Holman W. Jenkins, Jr.

As the Robert Mueller report into Donald Trump's alleged collusion with Russia (which found no collusion with Russia) wended its way toward publication, one thought became hard to resist. The absurd overkill of the Mueller task force's armed raids on the Trump associates Roger Stone and Paul Manafort in the preceding months had been the special counsel's way of buying credibility for the no-collusion finding he knew he would be delivering.

The same suspicion pops into mind after the FBI raid on Mar-a-Lago. The government's most important secrets are highly technical and would have little value or meaning for Mr. Trump. On the other hand, every love note from a foreign leader is necessarily treated as restricted when it arrives though it contains no valuable secrets.

As I pointed out years ago in the Hillary Clinton email case, while officials have a duty to obey rules about handling government information, the value of government secrets is grossly exaggerated.

Whatever was in the boxes, if Mr. Trump knew about their contents at all as he was chaotically vacating a presidency that he pretended for two months he

wouldn't be vacating, he likely saw priceless souvenirs to be framed in a future Trump hotel or presidential shrine, testifying to his place as the greatest president since Lincoln (as he modestly rates himself). Sure, maybe Chapter 43 of the Trump follies will be the one chapter where media hysteria isn't disproportionate to the end result. It seems unlikely. If the Mar-a-Lago raid turns out to be a Mueller-like down payment on a Justice Department failure to find the Jan. 6 crimes that many Americans are lusting to see Mr. Trump prosecuted for, one collateral cost is Mr. Trump's extreme delight at being returned to the center ring of the American political circus—and also the extreme delight of his codependents, Joe Biden and the Democrats.

Mr. Biden's party has given America something to talk about (and talk about and talk about) besides inflation, crime, racial and gender panic, and Mr. Biden's low approval ratings—none of which were working particularly well going into the midterm elections that are barely 2½ months away.

We shouldn't underestimate the secret delight of Mr. Biden himself as he looks toward 2024. His best ticket back to the nomination despite his age, lousy polls and an unimpressive record is Mr. Trump being the likely Republican nominee.

Mr. Biden has said as much himself several times and he means it. And nothing

helps like the astonishing concatenation of DOJ-FBI inquiries bearing the public ceaselessly back to the batlements of yesteryear however much voters might wish to move on from the bizarre, technicolor fights of the Trump era.

The Trump classified-records controversy percolated quietly with the National Archives for months and only now detonates in the public's

The Mar-a-Lago raid is one of many DOJ probes hanging over the 2024 election.

face, with the FBI in the middle of it, setting aflame much well-earned neuralgia in various parts of the electorate (not all of them on the right).

The Justice Department continues to pursue Jan. 6 rioters and undoubtedly promises many more months of searching into every possible angle by which Mr. Trump and his associates might be criminally implicated in those events.

Though some readers resist the knowledge, the Justice Department and FBI also have been investigating the influence peddling of Hunter Biden at least since December 2019. Merrick Garland, the attorney general, has assured the press the matter is being handled professionally and without political favoritism. Given emails, texts and

witness testimony in the public domain, perfunctory questions at least will have to be asked about President Biden's possible tax or other liability related to Hunter's dealings, especially if a GOP-led House is conducting its own investigation.

Elsewhere in the Justice Department the John Durham team continues to investigate the government's handling of Trump-Russia allegations originating with the Hillary Clinton campaign, including the upcoming and fortuitously timed Oct. 11 trial of Steele dossier source Igor Danchenko, an indirect employee of the campaign who is charged with lying to the FBI.

More may be coming from Mr. Durham, and we don't know how much more.

Add it all together—the Trump documents and Jan. 6 investigations, the Hunter Biden-related investigations, the Clinton campaign-FBI-Russia collusion investigation—and, golly, our Justice Department and FBI will be dragging us back, Michael Corleone-like, into the Trump wars whether we like it or not as 2024 approaches.

Polls show most Americans don't like it, don't want a Biden-Trump rematch, don't want the baggage of these two old men dominating our politics for the next two years and possibly far beyond. But arguably two people do—Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden, who otherwise would find history and the electorate running away from them at flank speed.

Hopeful Midterm Signs for Democrats



POLITICS & IDEAS
By William A. Galston

The race to the midterm elections will accelerate after Labor Day—and if past is prologue, Democrats are likely to lose control of at least one legislative chamber. But current facts are more ambiguous than the historical record.

Midterm elections are usually referendums on the incumbent president and his party. Although President Biden's job approval remains low (as it has been for the past year), it appears to have improved by 2 to 3 percentage points in recent weeks. If this trend continues, the president will be less of a drag on his party's candidates than he was at his nadir.

Surprisingly, Democrats remain tied with Republicans in the generic congressional ballot, which reflects national preferences for the parties' House candidates. If this is still true on Election Day, Republican gains will be much smaller than they were in 1994 and 2010. Other factors—including the record low number of truly competitive House districts—point in the same direction.

In Senate races, candidate quality matters more. As has happened repeatedly in recent cycles, Republicans appear to have damaged their prospects during primary

contests by choosing nominees who have more appeal with their party's base than with statewide electorates. In Ohio, Pennsylvania, Georgia and Arizona, nominees backed by Donald Trump trail their Democratic opponents, several by wide margins.

In the race to succeed Pat Toomey, the two-term Republican senator from Pennsylvania, Democrat Lt. Gov. John Fetterman leads TV personality Mehmet Oz by double digits. In Ohio—which Mr. Trump carried by wide margins in 2016 and 2020—Democratic Rep. Tim Ryan has moved out to a 4.5-point lead over political neophyte J.D. Vance. If Democrats can pick up this seat, which Republicans have held since 1999, the GOP's chances of retaking the Senate will be dealt a possibly fatal blow, even if Herschel Walker and Blake Masters manage to eke out victories over Democratic incumbents in Georgia and Arizona.

Inflation will do more than any other issue to shape this year's midterms, and broad-based price increases have tilted polls toward the Republicans since last fall. But even on this issue recent trends have been favorable for Democrats. According to the AAA's daily survey, gasoline prices have fallen to \$3.95 a gallon from a peak of \$5.02 two months ago. Lower shipping prices and a strengthening dollar should hold down the prices of imported goods,

and bloated inventories will force retailers to give consumers some relief. Although July's more positive inflation report—which showed a modest reduction in year-over-year inflation, to 8.5% from 9.1%—doesn't necessarily signal a trend, a sustained decline between now and November could persuade some voters that the worst is behind them.

Inflation, abortion and bad Republican choices may limit the expected losses.

In midterm elections, turnout is variable—and crucial. When Democratic interest in the 2014 cycle was muted, Republicans added 13 House seats to their already substantial majority. In 2018, by contrast, Democrats surged to the polls to express their opposition to President Trump and gained 41 seats, retaking the majority after eight years in opposition.

Democrats' enthusiasm about going to the polls this fall had substantially trailed Republicans'—but recent events have narrowed the gap. After the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, Democratic interest in the midterms surged. The passage of the major energy-and-climate bill that many Democrats had given up for dead

further lifted their spirits.

The abortion issue could prove a game-changer. As the results of Kansas' Aug. 2 referendum indicate, the court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* isn't popular, and severe restrictions on abortion are even less so. Eighty-five percent of Americans favor allowing abortions in cases of rape, incest and risks to the mother's life, and a strong majority believe that the procedure should be widely available during the first trimester of pregnancy. While only 3 in 10 Americans favor abortion on demand, less than 1 in 10 support an outright ban.

Most voters accept abortion in some circumstances but not others, and candidates who appear dogmatic or extreme will pay a price at the polls. By a margin of 25 points, voters favor protections for abortion in their state constitutions—a position backed by most demographic groups and even by one-third of Republicans.

Women care about this issue, which now trails only inflation in their list of top concerns. The pain of loss typically outweighs the satisfaction of gain, and tens of millions of pro-choice women have suffered a loss that until recently seemed unimaginable. If Democrats do better than expected this November, the justices who voted to overturn *Roe* will be a big piece of the explanation.

Let the Professional Player Win

By Bob Brody

Two other old guys and I got together some years back for a summer game of round-robin basketball. I would face off against Al; whoever hit a basket would face Jay, and so on. Al and I never expected to do a good deed that day.

Jay played professional basketball in the 1960s. He was only 6 feet tall, but he could dunk. Now, at 70, he could no longer dunk, run, bend over or jump more than a few inches. He had recently undergone a double hip replacement.

But Jay could still hoop it up. He competed in intense, full-court, five-on-five contests with much younger players every Sunday morning at a neighborhood park in the New York City borough of Queens. He could still nail 20-foot shots, pass the ball with precision, and dribble with a sure hand.

Jay's new hips limited his

mobility so much that he could barely trot. He was unable to plant himself in the crouch necessary for successful defense. He could no longer perform key motions like backpedaling or moving laterally.

Jay was 70 and had two artificial hips. Al and I decided to take mercy on him.

Still, Jay had challenged us. Not only were Al and I amateurs; neither of us had played on high school or college teams. Even so, we were veterans of hard-core pickup playground basketball. Though hardly young ourselves—Al was 51, I was 63—we could more or less respectably hold our own.

A once-in-a-lifetime chance to pit myself against someone once paid to play the sport I

had played since I was 8? Sure, I thought. Al felt the same.

The score stayed close. Al would one-up me, only for Jay to one-up him, and me to one-up Jay in turn. Al was slightly taller than both of us, and with octopus-like arms he flipped in baby hooks. I drove past Jay for layups and swished jumpers from the top of the key.

Halfway through, we were dripping sweat. Kids waiting to occupy the court watched our geriatric antics with amused curiosity.

Then Jay took a narrow lead, held on and won by the requisite 2-point margin. A few years earlier, Jay would have mopped the asphalt with us. Al and I congratulated him with handshakes. Jay looked the happiest I ever saw him.

Al and I never told him we let him win. Neither of us had planned to concede an inch. Nor had we conspired beforehand. Only

while walking home afterward, well out of Jay's earshot, did we admit to going easy on him and trying slightly less than usual to stop him from scoring.

Cutting Jay some slack defied our instincts as recreational athletes. We took as an article of faith that participating in a sport meant you implicitly signed a contract to compete your guts out. But we made an exception for Jay. Each of us realized midgame that prevailing over a proud former pro athlete with titanium joints would bring us no satisfaction, much less glory. So we dialed back our aggression just enough to escape his notice.

Jay got to keep his dignity. We also kept ours.

Mr. Brody, a consultant and essayist in Italy, is author of the memoir *"Playing Catch with Strangers: A Family Guy (Reluctantly) Comes of Age."*

BOOKSHELF | By Barbara Spindel

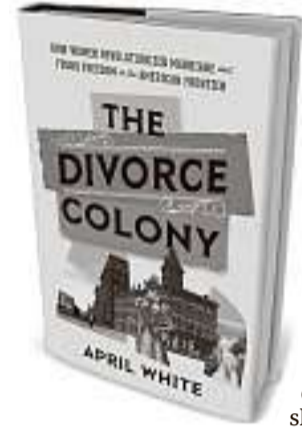
Making Tracks For Splitsville

The Divorce Colony

By April White
(Hachette, 272 pages, \$30)

In 1867, the Dakota Territory's legislature reduced its requirement for legal residency to 90 days, an acknowledgment of the peripatetic nature of life on the American frontier. While the three-month rule granted eligible settlers the right to vote and other privileges, it also had an unintended consequence: Women began traveling west to take advantage of what was, at the time, the quickest path to a legal divorce.

April White tells the tale in "The Divorce Colony," an entertaining and edifying account of the divorce industry that emerged in Sioux Falls, S.D. Sioux Falls became the go-to destination for those looking to escape a marriage—it was easily accessible by train and boasted an upscale hotel, the Cataract House, that was palatable to the East Coast elites who could afford to wait in luxury.



While some men traveled to Sioux Falls to dissolve their marriages, Ms. White reports that in the second half of the 19th century, nearly two out of three divorce-seekers were women. In addition to outnumbering the men, the women attracted much fiercer interest. As the author observes, "a man who expected his freedom was not as outlandish as a woman who demanded hers."

Accordingly, along with dozens of law firms and various shops and restaurants catering

to the city's new high-end female clientele, the divorce industry supported a steady stream of newspaper correspondents. They hung around the Cataract hoping to break the news of the latest high-society wife to decamp to Sioux Falls from, say, New York, where the only path to divorce was proof of adultery, or Rhode Island, which required a full year of residency in order to petition to end a marriage.

Ms. White, a writer and editor at online travel magazine Atlas Obscura, benefits from the period's fascination with the would-be divorcees, quoting liberally from lurid tabloid reports of their travails. She acknowledges that most of the Dakota divorcees were quiet, mutual proceedings, but her book ends up being skewed toward the salacious cases. While they might not be representative, they surely make for more enjoyable reading.

The narrative is divided into four parts, each focused on a woman whose divorce featured prominently in the headlines at the turn of the 20th century. Maggie De Stuers, a descendant of John Jacob Astor, married a Dutch baron low on funds. She accused him of attempting to have her institutionalized so he could gain control of her fortune.

Mary Nevins eloped at 19 with Jamie Blaine, the disolute 17-year-old son of the former senator and secretary of state, James G. Blaine. Her mother-in-law opposed the match, practically locking Jamie in the family home to keep the two apart. Mary arrived in Sioux Falls, charging her husband with abandonment. When the judge granted her divorce, he declared that Jamie's family was to blame—"especially his mother."

Free-spirited Blanche Molineux (née Chesebrough) penned an unpublished memoir revealing that she craved "passion and love" and "brute masculine force." But her practical side won out, and she reluctantly married wealthy Roland Molineux. Tragedy ensued: Blanche's lover turned up dead, and Roland was later tried for a separate murder by poison—at which he was sentenced to death. Ms. White suggests that Blanche was sorely disappointed when he was exonerated after a retrial. She boarded a train for Sioux Falls the day after he was freed.

In late 19th-century America, Sioux Falls, S.D., was where the unhappily wedded relocated to obtain a quickie divorce.

Ms. White notes that many of Sioux Falls's permanent residents clung to the "flattering fiction" that their well-heeled visitors were enchanted by South Dakota, despite ample evidence to the contrary: Most of the divorcees, while claiming that they were establishing residency in good faith, headed back east the moment they had their decrees in hand. The upstanding Flora Bigelow Dodge, unlike the others, adhered to the spirit of the residency rule, gamely immersing herself in Sioux Falls life even after her three months were up. She wrote cheerfully to her father about attending a weekly meeting of churchwomen who "sew and abuse their neighbors," adding, "I skip it once in a while so they have a chance at me!"

Appearing throughout the book is Episcopal bishop William Hare, who called his state's lax divorce laws "a national scandal." His efforts to restrict divorce were opposed by both progressive thinkers and those loath to lose the income the practice brought to South Dakota. Still, for many Americans, divorce remained taboo. In 1908, when the question was put to a referendum, South Dakotans voted to extend the residency requirement to one year, effectively shutting down the "divorce colony." Nevada later filled the gap, becoming known for quickie divorces. A 1969 law made California the first "no-fault" divorce state.

"The Divorce Colony" is subtitled "How Women Revolutionized Marriage and Found Freedom on the American Frontier." The divorce seekers, concerned primarily with their own situations, were certainly not revolutionaries like their contemporaries who were marching in the streets for suffrage. The women's rights movement was itself divided on the question of divorce. Famed suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote that "the States which have liberal divorce laws are to women what Canada was to the slaves before Emancipation." But others worried that easy divorce would be economically disastrous for women.

As for finding freedom, at a time when women couldn't even vote, liberty came with caveats. Upon arriving in Sioux Falls, Blanche Molineux told a reporter, "I desire my freedom above all else in the world and I am justified in seeking it." This was an audacious statement for a woman to make, but as when she'd married Roland, Blanche seems to have realized that her options remained limited. Flora reported that after her divorce, Blanche married "a dreadful little man." Her liberation, hard-won, was apparently quickly surrendered.

Ms. Spindel's book reviews appear in the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and elsewhere.

OPINION

REVIEW & OUTLOOK

A Biden Hearing-Aid Breakthrough

Hear, hear to the Biden Food and Drug Administration, which on Tuesday finalized a rule that Commissioner Robert Califf said will open up the hearing-aid market to competition and “unleash the power of American industry.” This is the right way to reduce prices.

The FDA rule will let Americans buy hearing aids over the counter rather than by prescription. This will expand the hearing-aid market and could save seniors thousands of dollars. The four largest manufacturers control 84% of a relatively small market. In 2019 the average retail price of a hearing aid was \$2,284, about three times more than the wholesale cost.

Blame these huge markups on the cartel of licensed specialists who typically contract with two or three hearing-aid manufacturers and bundle the cost of the device with other fees and services. Many Americans can't afford to pay thousands of dollars for devices, which aren't covered by Medicare or most private insurance.

The result is that some 40 million Americans with hearing loss don't use hearing aids. Some use less expensive personal sound amplification products, but these aren't as effective or personally adjustable. Untreated hearing loss can reduce seniors' quality of life and is estimated by the Lancet Commission on Dementia to be responsible for about 8% of dementia cases.

A new FDA rule will allow more competition and reduce prices.

This is the Biden Administration's best move on regulation to date, though opening up the hearing-aid market has been a bipartisan effort. In 2017 President Trump signed legislation co-sponsored by Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley that directed the FDA to establish standards by August 2020 to allow hearing aids to be sold over the counter.

As is it often does, the FDA dawdled amid opposition from the hearing-aid oligopoly. But an executive order by President Biden lit a fire under the agency. Mr. Biden said Tuesday that the FDA rule is the “latest action we are taking to make our economy more competitive and less concentrated.” We're glad to hear it, but he's overlooking a crucial point.

The main cause of limited competition in the hearing-aid market was government regulation. Yet his Administration is currently working on regulations across the rest of the economy that will squeeze small businesses while benefiting bigger companies that can absorb the additional costs. This will reduce competition and encourage consolidation the way ObamaCare has in healthcare.

More regulation and subsidies usually result in higher prices, which is why the Inflation Reduction Act that he signed Tuesday is more likely to raise prices. If only the Administration listened to the lesson of hearing aids.

Starbucks Sees Bias at the NLRB

Are National Labor Relations Board employees colluding with labor unions to rig union elections? That's the claim in a 16-page complaint to the board filed by Starbucks on Monday that raises questions about the fairness of the Biden labor agency.

Few companies strive to be more progressive than Starbucks, but the coffee chain has become a leading target of union organizers. That's typically a problem for Starbucks to address with better pay and benefits. But the company's complaint, which is supported by evidence from an unidentified NLRB career employee, makes a strong case about union and NLRB misconduct in a mail-ballot election at a store this spring in Overland Park, Kansas.

Starbucks says NLRB employees gave the Workers United-SEIU union confidential real-time information about whether and how many ballots were received on particular dates, “thereby improperly enabling the Union to monitor the status of voting and, through process of elimination, identify and specifically target individuals who had not yet voted.”

When union reps said pro-union workers hadn't received ballots in the mail, NLRB employees prepared duplicate ballots while arranging for these same workers to vote in person at the agency's local office.

These special arrangements violated Starbucks's election agreement with the union, Starbucks says, and “converted the mail-ballot only election into an impromptu mixed mail/manual election for a handful of select individuals who were hand-picked and solicited by the Union, and with the NLRB giving improper support to a single party.”

The complaint says NLRB employees then went to great lengths to conceal favors to the union. Four NLRB employees attended the ballot counting, which Starbucks and union representatives were obliged to witness via Zoom. When ballots materialized without postmarks, an NLRB employee falsely asserted that “Board protocol” allowed some workers to vote in-person at the agency's office.

A complaint details labor board favoritism in organizing elections.

With the union leading in the ballot count, an NLRB employee took seven unopened ballots that were challenged by the union or Starbucks out of the room to photocopy. It's unclear what then happened to them, but the NLRB employee signed the Starbucks attorney's name to the ballot tally despite her objections.

Starbucks is challenging the union's election victory, and it has asked the NLRB to suspend other mail-ballot elections until an investigation is done. It also wants future elections to be conducted exclusively in-person—as they were before the pandemic.

According to the complaint, an election this spring at a store in Buffalo was set aside after NLRB employees were found to have not counted seven valid mail-in ballots. Starbucks also says it has encountered “misconduct and the absence of neutrality” by NLRB agents in numerous unfair labor practice cases.

An NLRB regional director charged Starbucks with surveilling employees engaged in protected labor activity and retaliating against three union supporters. But in depositions in federal court, two of the workers contradicted the director and a third provided testimony proven false by store security video. The judge dismissed the director's complaint.

Starbucks also notes that NLRB regional offices and the board's general counsel repeatedly proclaim that Starbucks committed more than 100 “unfair labor practice” violations, though none of these complaints to date have been proven. Such accusations are intended to sully Starbucks's reputation and give ammunition for union organizers.

The NLRB says it doesn't comment on open cases but has “well-established processes” for parties to challenge how elections are handled. The agency is supposed to be neutral in labor elections, but the agency tilted hard to the left in the Obama years and appears to be doing so again. The Starbucks complaint raises questions about the integrity of union elections. If the courts won't intervene, Republicans have another job if they win the House in November.

Gun Sales and Political Harassment

Gun-restriction advocates hurt their cause when political point-scoring eclipses public safety. So it is with a House effort to badger Smith & Wesson about routine and legal firearm sales. A committee charged with oversight has burst its legal bounds and crossed into character assassination.

The dispute between the House Oversight Committee and Smith & Wesson escalated Monday when the company objected to the committee's subpoena. Committee Democrats, led by Chair Carolyn Maloney, are demanding that the manufacturer produce sales and revenue figures for its AR-15-style sporting rifles. The company says the subpoena squashed months of good-faith efforts to cooperate.

“Congress must clearly spell out with even more specificity why it needs the granular level of information requested by the committee,” wrote the company's lawyer Mark Paoletta in an Aug. 15 letter to the committee. The letter says Smith & Wesson has already provided detailed records of its rifle sales since House Oversight started investigating the industry in May. That wasn't good enough for Ms. Maloney, yet she hasn't described a legislative need for more specific data.

Democrats launched the investigation in response to shootings this year, including the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas. By the end of June President Biden had signed the largest gun-safety law in decades, making it easier to restrict criminals and unstable people from buying weapons. The prospects of further legislation soon are

A House subpoena to Smith & Wesson lacks a legislative purpose.

nil, but the Oversight Committee has continued to blame gun manufacturers for new shootings. “It is long past time for the gun industry to be held accountable for the carnage they enable and profit from,” said Ms. Maloney before a planned hearing with firearm company executives.

The manufacturers complied when the investigation remained in its original scope, including a commitment by Smith & Wesson CEO Mark Smith to face questioning. The company balked when the committee issued a formal subpoena, demanding proprietary information on its revenue from AR-15-style guns, despite no clear purpose other than to harass the company and feed an anti-gun narrative.

The Supreme Court has restricted subpoenas of exactly this sort. In *Trump v. Mazars* (2020), the Justices voted 7-2 to void the demand by several House committees for the former President's financial records. In addition to affirming the separation of powers, Chief Justice John Roberts's opinion held that congressional subpoenas need a clear legislative purpose.

Ms. Maloney likely understood this when she decided to serve Smith & Wesson, but don't forget the political context. The New York Congresswoman is in a primary battle against Rep. Jerrold Nadler and others after House seats were redrawn last year. Taking on the gun manufacturers could buy her support in the many neighborhoods of Manhattan, but even politically unpopular companies deserve the protection of limits on Congress's power.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Firings and the Politics of the Civil Service

Regarding James Sherk's “The Power to Fire Insubordinate Bureaucrats” (op-ed, Aug. 9): I served in President Richard Nixon's White House and then as director of the Bureau of Domestic Commerce in the early 1970s. During my first days in office, a longtime department employee came into my office and told me that he didn't like Nixon, didn't support his agenda and wouldn't support me. He told me that I couldn't fire him nor take away his supergrade.

While many career federal employees were terrific, some greatly increased the difficulty of trying to develop new programs, generate a positive work environment and fulfill the mission of the department.

HUDSON B. DRAKE
Del Mar, Calif.

Mr. Sherk's radical proposal would inhibit civil servants from speaking truth to power, elevating loyalty to an administration over competence and the public interest. Our democracy is the envy of the world because of the professional civil service. Mr. Sherk's plan, however, would clog the government with unqualified patronage appointees. The civil service can be improved with increased accountability for poor performers. But Mr. Sherk's proposal is the equivalent of dealing with splinters in home floors by burning down the house.

MAX STIER
*Partnership for Public Service
Washington*

In my years in government, I found that civil servants are highly responsive to political leaders. As Labor Department solicitor, Eugene Scalia was

dissatisfied with an agreement negotiated between the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and industry. He directed that it be changed, without even a meeting. The civil servants don't delay the next day. An unresponsive civil servant can easily be transferred to a less important position or a different location.

Washington is run by an army of political assistant secretaries and their deputies. There are more than enough of them to watch over the civil servants. Further, civil servants don't delay regulations. They are proud of and measured by the ones they issue or delete. The political appointees in the budget office and the White House delay regulations by requiring duplicate analyses and fighting among themselves.

CHARLES GORDON
Gaithersburg, Md.

I was once invited to a Senate office to interview for a nomination as commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration. After brief courtesies, I stated that I couldn't possibly take the position without independent authority to hire and fire; my goal would be to get rid of all the deadwood and refocus resources on compliance and product approvals.

After a brief silence and clear surprise, I received the following response: “You know I'm a Democrat, right?” We broke out into such laughter that tears streamed down our faces. A staffer came in to make sure we were OK. Then we shook hands, said thank you and I exited. I haven't laughed that hard about politics since.

GLEN FREIBERG
Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.

Trump Derangement Syndrome Spares None

Kimberley Strassel is correct that “Trump derangement syndrome has a curious way of scrambling coherent thought” (“The Payback Will Be Brutal,” *Potomac Watch*, Aug. 12). But she misapprehends the victims of this malady.

Former President Donald Trump himself identified the victims when he said that even if he shot somebody on Fifth Avenue, his supporters would still vote for him. Surely those supporters suffer from Trump derangement more than the people who believe “Nancy Pelosi's piety”—as Ms. Strassel calls it—that no one is above the law.

Alas, it seems inevitable that we all will eventually be victims, in one way or another, of the syndrome, as it spreads from the mouth of the de-

ranger in chief, through his sycophants and makes us all into an army of deplorables.

ANDY FOX
Beverly Hills, Calif.

In 1957, I was 10 years old and my ex-Central Intelligence Agency father told me with a chuckle that the majority of documents stamped “Classified” and “Top Secret,” although illegal to share with others on grounds of national security, were in fact daily clippings from the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times* and others. How many of the classified items in Merrick Garland's treasure trove of seized documents are already in the public domain?

ELIZABETH MORGAN
Cary, N.C.

Carried Interest Isn't a Gain on Risk Capital

Your editorial “The Houdinis of Carried Interest” (Aug. 8) argues that carried interest is rightly treated like a capital gain because “it is essentially risk capital.” Yet the investors who put up the risk capital don't benefit from this provision. Rather, the investment manager, doing his nor-

mal job, gets special tax treatment for the portion he receives of the earnings that he generates on the real investors' risk capital.

The investors who put up the risk capital get capital-gains treatment, as they should. The manager should get capital-gains treatment only on the risk capital he advances, if any. The money he earns on investors' capital, the so-called “carried interest,” is not risk capital and gets this special treatment only because of the successful lobbying of investment managers.

DOUGLAS B. SWETS
Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif.

Is What's Good for General Motors Good for America?

“Everyone who wants an electric vehicle should be able to buy one,” writes General Motors CEO Mary Barra (Letters, Aug. 13). Then she says, “Policies supporting EVs are good for America, too.” She wants me to buy an EV if I want one, but she also wants government to pursue policies that force me to want an EV. That's nifty for GM, which was exactly the point of Allysia Finley's column “GM Is Government Motors Again” (*Life Science*, Aug. 10).

DANIEL LOWE
Encinitas, Calif.

Ms. Barra states, “Everyone who wants an electric vehicle should be able to buy one.” The corollary, everyone who wants a gas-powered vehicle should be able to buy one, also applies. Since GM is going all-electric, I suppose those people will have to buy from a competitor.

ROBERT KLEMMER
Clarkston, Mich.

Auditing the IRS Expansion

The only proper rationale for hiring so many more Internal Revenue Service agents is to raise more money than the agents would cost (Letters, Aug. 10). But will this calculation include all the opportunity cost of the expenditure of nonproductive effort? And what happens if the calculation indicates the “investment” isn't worth it? Is it conceivable that 87,000 government employees will be fired?

STUART L. MEYER
Hollywood, Fla.

Pepper ... And Salt

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



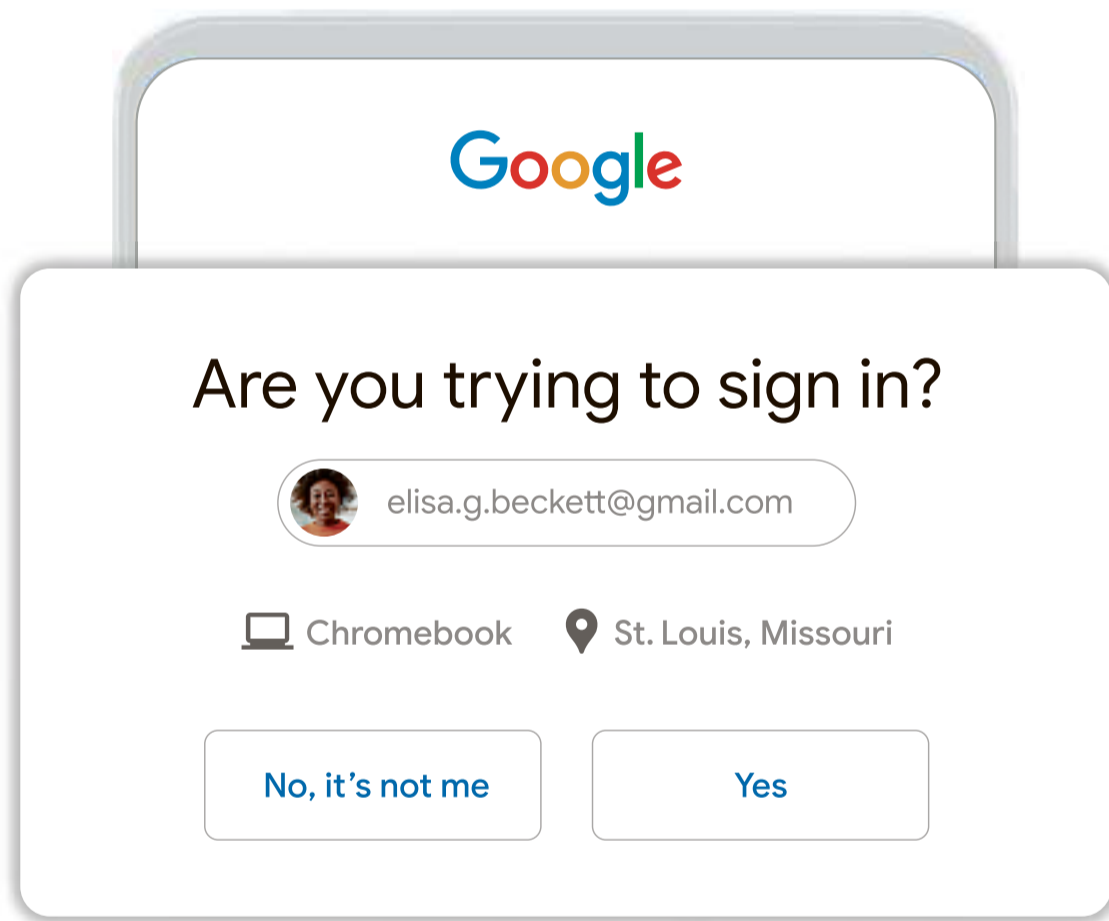
“He turned out to be a sugar-free Daddy.”

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BUSINESS NEWS



Clothes on display at a H&M store in Shanghai in February. China was the retailer's third-largest market before the Xinjiang flare-up.

H&M's Digital Sales Platform Resumes Operations in China

By CLARENCE LEONG AND LIZA LIN

H&M resumed sales on a popular e-commerce platform in China, more than a year after the Swedish fashion brand was virtually erased from the Chinese internet after it expressed concerns about reports of forced labor in the country's Xinjiang region.

Chinese social-media users noticed this month that H&M Hennes & Mauritz AB reopened its official store on Tmall, one of the flagship e-commerce platforms run by Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.

A check by The Wall Street Journal found the store to be operational. Fall and summer fashion lines for men and women were listed for sale, and so was a collection of Lego building-block-themed children's apparel.

No reason was given for the reopening, and the companies couldn't be reached for comment.

In March 2021, H&M be-

came the poster child for the falling-out between Western businesses and China over sourcing from the northwestern Xinjiang region. The fast-fashion retailer was wiped off the country's leading e-commerce, ride-hailing, daily-deals and map apps and sites. In 2020, H&M issued a statement expressing concern about reports of forced labor and discrimination against ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. It also said it didn't source products from the region and that it strictly prohibits forced labor in its supply chain. The Swedish company's stance drew ire from Chinese social-media users, who promised to boycott the brand.

Meanwhile, a search for "H&M" still doesn't return results on many Chinese apps, including mapping apps owned by Baidu Inc. and Alibaba, a consumer-review platform run by Meituan and Didi Global Inc.'s ride-hailing app.

The Chinese government has targeted the Xinjiang re-

gion's mostly Muslim ethnic minorities with mass-detention internment camps and omnipresent surveillance as part of a yearslong campaign of forcible assimilation. Rights groups have alleged that some former camp detainees have been forced to work in factories.

China has called allegations of forced labor "malicious lies" and described its actions in Xinjiang as necessary measures to fight terrorism and protect national security.

Since then, other apparel companies such as Nike Inc. and Adidas AG as well as semiconductor manufacturer Intel Corp. have been singled out by Chinese social-media users for sourcing practices in Xinjiang. A new U.S. law bans virtually all imports from Xinjiang under the presumption that items produced there, or by entities linked to the government there, are made with forced labor.

The Swedish fast-fashion retailer was hit hard by the consumer boycott and subsequent internet blackout. Be-

fore the Xinjiang flare-up, China was H&M's third-largest market after the U.S. and Germany. Shortly after the online erasure, China had dropped to sixth place. By its fourth fiscal quarter that ended in November, China was H&M's eighth-largest market, while sales in the country had plunged about 40% from the same quarter in the previous year. This fiscal year, the retailer stopped reporting its list of top 10 largest markets.

The retailer said it was still struggling in the market as Covid-19 outbreaks swept the country.

H&M Chief Executive Helena Helmersson, who has previously called China an important market, said in June that the company was still in a complex situation there. Ms. Helmersson added that the retailer was in talks with different stakeholders in China.

H&M's official account on China's Twitter-like Weibo platform hasn't posted any updates since the end of March.

Owner of Reebok To Buy Ted Baker

By TREFOR MOSS

Authentic Brands Group LLC said it agreed to buy Ted Baker PLC for the equivalent of \$254 million, adding the struggling British fashion label to its stable of brands that include Brooks Brothers and Reebok.

The New York company said Tuesday there were "significant growth opportunities for the Ted Baker brand in North America" in particular, and that taking the business private would enable a restructuring that would "maximize its future potential."

Authentic Brands has made a name for itself in recent years by buying up downtrodden brands, which it then typically licenses to retail operators. Last year, it bought sneaker maker Reebok from Adidas AG, and in 2020 acquired bankrupt fashion retailer Forever 21 Inc.

Late last year, the company, which owns retailer Eddie Bauer and Sports Illustrated magazine, raised about \$3.5 billion by selling stakes to CVC Capital Partners and HPS In-

vestment Partners in a deal that valued the company at \$12.7 billion.

For Ted Baker, the sale to Authentic Brands for £211 million ends months of uncertainty about the 35-year-old retailer's future. The London-listed company said in April it was seeking a buyer and previously rebuffed approaches from Sycamore Partners, the U.S. private-equity firm. It had earlier identified Authentic Brands as its preferred bidder, only for the U.S. company to rule itself out of any acquisition in June after the two sides failed to agree on a valuation.

Those differences have seemingly now been ironed out, with Ted Baker saying in a statement Tuesday that the 110-pence-a-share offer—an 18% premium to its closing price Monday—was "fair and reasonable," and that its directors were unanimously recommending that shareholders vote in favor of the sale.

The company's share price has hovered around the £1 mark for the past two years. That compares with its peak at over £27 seven years ago.

Dollar General Fined Over Workplace Safety

By ALLISON PRANG

The Labor Department fined Dollar General Corp. over workplace safety issues after it found problems at three of the company's Georgia locations earlier this year.

Inspectors "found exit routes obstructed, boxes of merchandise stacked unsafely and electrical panels hard to access" at stores in Pembroke, Smyrna and Hogansville, the Labor Department said.

The Labor Department found four willful violations and seven repeat violations, and has proposed a fine of

roughly \$1.3 million, it said. There is a 15-day period in which the company can ask for a meeting with the area director of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, during which the proposed penalty can be adjusted.

Dollar General said the Labor Department "identified store conditions that were not in keeping with our standards and expectations." The company said it immediately worked to address the problems.

"The safety of our employees and customers is of paramount importance to us," the company said in a statement.

Advertisement for Habitat for Humanity featuring a young girl and the text 'everyone deserves a decent place to live. Learn more at habitat.org.'

Advertisement for NYCWFF 15 Years (New York City Wine & Food Festival) from Oct. 13-16, featuring logos for sponsors like Capital One, God's Love We Deliver, and Southern Glazers.

TECHNOLOGY

WSJ.com/Tech

XPO's Tech Chief Readies for CEO Job

For Harik, being a chief executive who sees technology as the answer will be a boon

By ISABELLE BOUSQUETTE

XPO Logistics Inc. said earlier this month that it would promote its CIO to CEO, a move that highlights the increasing importance of data and technology in the logistics sector.

Chief Information Officer Mario Harik, who is also president of XPO's North American less-than-truckload business, will succeed current Chief Executive Brad Jacobs after XPO spins off its brokerage business in the fourth quarter.

"Being CEO with a technology background, you're always looking at every problem that we have, or every opportunity that we have, or every customer relationship that we have, as having technology as part of the answer," Mr. Harik said, adding, "for us in our industry, that's going to be a competitive edge."



Mario Harik

The logistics sector in recent years has attracted an influx of digital freight startups using technology to streamline the process of connecting truckers with shippers and forcing traditional freight companies, including XPO, to ramp up tech investments in order to compete.

Avery Vise, a vice president of freight research firm FTR Transportation Intelligence,

said that as new entrants came on the scene, "There certainly was a big concern of loss of market share, so that has sort of jump-started a lot of that investment."

An important part of Mr. Harik's role as CIO has been executing the blueprints for integrating and separating the IT functions of the company's various acquisitions and spinoffs. But, he added, he has balanced those priorities with growth-driving innovations.

Those efforts include an analytics-driven pricing platform that offers cost estimates with less manual processing from pricing experts, a system that estimates how many hours or workers are needed on a particular dock at a particular time, and machine-learning algorithms that optimize the number of stops truck drivers make to increase efficiency.

"When you think of a CIO, usually a lot of times you think, only a technology platform. But I've been part of the team that effectively has made decisions in every part of how we operate," Mr. Harik said.



XPO is spinning out its brokerage business. An XPO Logistics distribution hub in Barcelona in May.

Mr. Harik was Mr. Jacobs's third hire in 2011 and has directly reported to him since.

Speaking of Mr. Harik, Mr. Jacobs said: "He developed the proprietary technology that gives us our competitive edge in the marketplace, and our tech advantage is what's driven our growth." Mr. Jacobs added, "Mario's background will be mission-critical as XPO becomes a tech-focused pure-play LTL company."

Mr. Harik steps in as the company proceeds with plans to break apart a business that since its 2011 founding has grown through acquisitions to become one of the largest freight players in the U.S. After spinning off its contract logistics business last year,

XPO is now spinning out its brokerage business, leaving the company as the pure-play less-than-truckload business that Mr. Harik will ultimately helm.

The less-than-truckload business works by combining freight loads from multiple customers that would not fill an entire truck on their own in order to optimize cost and resources.

In addition to leading the North American less-than-truckload business and his decade as CIO, Mr. Harik also spent a year as chief customer officer of XPO.

Before joining the supply-chain giant, Mr. Harik was CIO at Oakleaf Waste Management and CTO at software company Tallan.

Amazon Faces New York Union Bid

By SEBASTIAN HERRERA

A labor organization that earlier this year became the first to unionize an Amazon.com Inc. warehouse in the U.S. has filed to hold an election at a company facility in upstate New York near Albany.

A group of workers affiliated with the Amazon Labor Union, which in April won the right to represent workers in the New York borough of Staten Island, on Tuesday filed to hold an election at a company warehouse near Albany, according to a spokeswoman with the National Labor Relations Board.

If the NLRB grants workers a vote, it would be the fourth union election at an Amazon facility this year. The upstart labor group has seen mixed results so far.

"Employees recognize that they have rights and are able to use those rights to form a union and send a loud message that they no longer have to be controlled," said Heather Goodall, an employee at the facility who has led organizing efforts at the upstate New York facility.

An Amazon spokesman said the company doesn't believe unionization is necessary. "Our focus remains on working directly with our team to continue making Amazon a great place to work," the spokesman said.

Ms. Goodall said workers at the warehouse chose to join forces with the Amazon Labor Union because the union was started by current and former Amazon employees. Union supporters are campaigning to raise wages and improve safety measures at the facility, which Ms. Goodall said is plagued by safety issues. Amazon has recorded higher injury rates than the national average. The company has said it more rigorously reports injuries than peers.

Musk Tweets He Is Buying Soccer's Manchester United

By ROBERT WALL

Elon Musk said on Twitter he is buying English soccer team Manchester United Ltd., using the platform he previously sought to acquire to drop an enigmatic statement about his intentions.

The Tesla Inc. chief executive's tweet on Tuesday came as a reply to a post he had made five minutes earlier about politics, in which he said: "To be clear, I support the left half of the Republican Party and the right half of the Democratic Party!" Mr. Musk then tweeted:

"Also, I'm buying Manchester United ur welcome."

Mr. Musk didn't respond to a request for comment late Tuesday. Manchester United didn't respond to an email request for comment.

Mr. Musk, the world's wealthiest person and one of Twitter's most prominent users, with more than 100 million followers, has used the platform before to drop big pronouncements—some serious, many of them not.

Weeks after persuading Twitter Inc. to accept his \$44 billion acquisition offer in

April, he used the platform to say that the deal was "temporarily on hold" pending clarity on questions about the company's user data. He later cited the same issue, in part, as reason for trying to walk away from the deal, prompting Twitter to sue the billionaire to enforce the contract. A trial in that case is scheduled for October in Delaware's Court of Chancery.

Mr. Musk also tweeted several days after signing the Twitter deal that he was acquiring Coca-Cola Co., which at the time had a market value of

about \$282 billion. "Next I'm buying Coca-Cola to put the cocaine back in," Mr. Musk wrote.

While the price tag for Manchester United, which is listed on the New York Stock Exchange and has a market value of around \$2 billion, would be considerably smaller than Twitter's, buying the storied Premier League football team would further stretch Mr. Musk's finances amid uncertainty over whether the Delaware court will force him to go through with the Twitter takeover.

Manchester United is considered one of the world's most

valuable sports brands, with a base of passionate supporters that reaches around the globe. But it is also a club that has frequently been in turmoil. The U.S.-based Glazer family, then led by the late corporate raider Malcolm Glazer, took over the club in a leveraged buyout in 2005. The club went public on the New York Stock Exchange in 2012, but the Glazers are the only entity holding more than 10% of its shares, according to the Manchester United website.

—Bruce Orwall and Andrew Beaton contributed to this article.

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THE PROPERTY REPORT

American Dream Mall Misses Debt Payments

By KATE KING

American Dream, the most expensive U.S. shopping center ever built, is behind on its bills.

Its owner, Canadian mall operator **Triple Five Group**, failed to make a quarterly \$125,000 payment that was due on Aug. 1 to East Rutherford, N.J., according to the town's mayor. It is the second time the developer has been late on the payment-in-lieu-of-taxes. Triple Five didn't respond to requests to comment.

The owner of the shopping center and entertainment complex, located across the Hudson River from Manhattan in East Rutherford, hoped to redefine the mall experience when it opened in 2019 after a cost of \$6 billion. It was the first mall in the U.S. to devote more space

to entertainment, restaurants and theme-park rides than to traditional retail, part of an effort to lure younger shoppers. Its nearly 90-acre site includes a 16-story ski hill, a roller coaster, as well as a water park with a slide that rises 14 stories high.

Triple Five Group found it challenging to make the project financially viable. The mall was closed for six months as a result of the pandemic, and it continues to struggle even as foot traffic to the complex picks up.

Visits to the American Dream mall in July were 46% higher than in January 2021, according to data-analytics firm Placer.ai. Nationwide, visits to indoor malls were down slightly in July compared with the same month last year and July 2019, according to Placer.ai.

The developer last week



Mall operator Triple Five Group has struggled to make the American Dream complex in East Rutherford, N.J., financially viable.

made a late payment of nearly \$14 million to U.S. Bank NA, which serves as the trustee for an \$800 million municipal bond connected with the mall's construction, according to financial filings. Triple Five hasn't, however, paid interest on the overdue amount and is therefore in default on its financial agreement, the filings said.

It is unclear what will happen next, but East Rutherford Mayor Jeffrey Lahullier said he considers the American Dream

to be "too big to fail" since the state of New Jersey invested so much in the property, and he doubts the mall's lenders would want to take over operations.

The developer said it hoped to draw 40 million annual visitors when American Dream opened nearly three years ago. The pandemic resulted in delayed store openings, loss of rent payments from retailers and a default on its mortgage.

Triple Five, which owns Mall of America in Bloomington, Minn., took over the project in 2011 after two other developers abandoned it as a result of delays caused by the recession, as well as since-resolved litigation over parking and permitting requirements.

Mr. Lahullier said in addition to the missed August payment and unpaid interest, American Dream's owners owe the town about \$5.4 million in sewer fees and payments-in-lieu-of-taxes under three other agreements that give the developer rights to

build a baseball stadium, hotel and office space at the site. "We have retained counsel and we're following it very closely, but I don't know what our options are," Mr. Lahullier said. "We can't get blood from a stone."

The mayor said he refuses to attend ribbon cuttings at American Dream until the owner pays its bills. Still, he said, "I hate to see the project go under or go bankrupt, it does employ a lot of people down there."

SETH WEING/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Entrepreneur Bets RV Storage Will Be the Next Big Thing

By PETER GRANT

Thousands of recreational-vehicle owners are hitting the road this summer. Gary Wojtaszek's new business is about what happens to them when they get back.

The real-estate entrepreneur, best known for building and selling a data-center company for about \$15 billion this year, has a new niche commercial-property business. This one focuses on storing recreational vehicles when they aren't in use. RV sales boomed during the pandemic as people opted for

vacations that allowed for social distancing.

Mr. Wojtaszek and his capital partner, the private-equity firm **Centerbridge Partners LP**, created **RecNation RV & Boat Storage**. The company owns 31 properties in Texas, Florida and Arizona that store RVs, plus boats, all-terrain vehicles and other leisure-time equipment.

RecNation signed contracts to acquire another 10 locations in the next six weeks, Mr. Wojtaszek said, and will spend about \$300 million once the current deals in the pipeline close. He hopes to expand to as

many as 400 properties by acquiring small operators. "It's not a really well-run, professionally managed industry," he said. "It's just mom-and-pop operators."

RecNation's expansion comes as investors search for new commercial real-estate businesses because of growing challenges being posed by traditional property types. Remote-working trends raised doubts about office-building valuations, while industrial- and apartment-building prices are starting to look expensive. Niche sectors such as data centers, university housing and self-storage per-

formed well in recent years. Scale enabled them to invest more than smaller competitors in such things as digital marketing and specialized services.

"You can build clusters [of locations] within key markets," said Billy Rahm, senior managing director of Centerbridge.

RV manufacturers such as Thor Industries Inc., Winnebago Industries Inc. and Berkshire Hathaway's Forest River RV shipped over a record 600,000 vehicles in 2021. This year is on track to be the second-biggest year with more than 500,000 unit shipments, according to the

RV Industry Association.

But high gas prices and inflation, as well as a possible recession, could put a damper on sales. Some top-of-the-line RVs—which can cost more than \$1 million fully loaded with marble countertops, several bathrooms and king-size beds—have gas tanks that hold 150 gallons.

Manufacturers might have to raise their prices to make up for their own increasing costs.

Mr. Wojtaszek predicts that demand for storage will stay strong even if there is a recession or if high inflation damps RV sales. He noted other trends

are benefiting the storage business, particularly growing efforts by homeowner associations in some communities to prohibit RVs and boats from being stored in front of houses.

RecNation charges range between \$150 and \$700 a month depending on the size of the RV and the location of the facility. Mr. Wojtaszek says he invests in many of his locations by enclosing all the storage units and providing a range of services like maintenance assistance, sewage dump stations and "things that are generally a pain if you have to deal with them."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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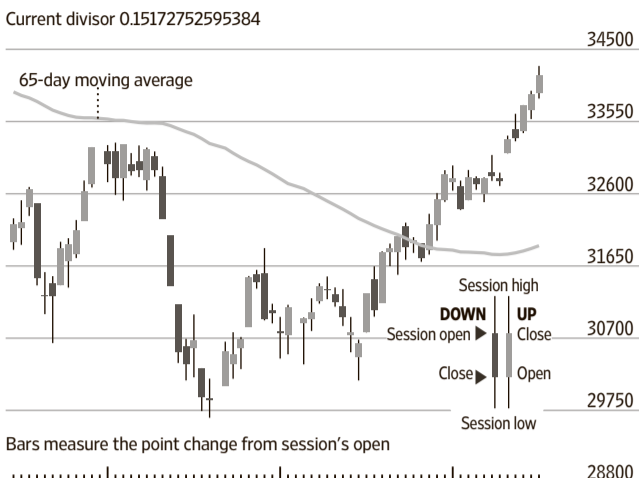
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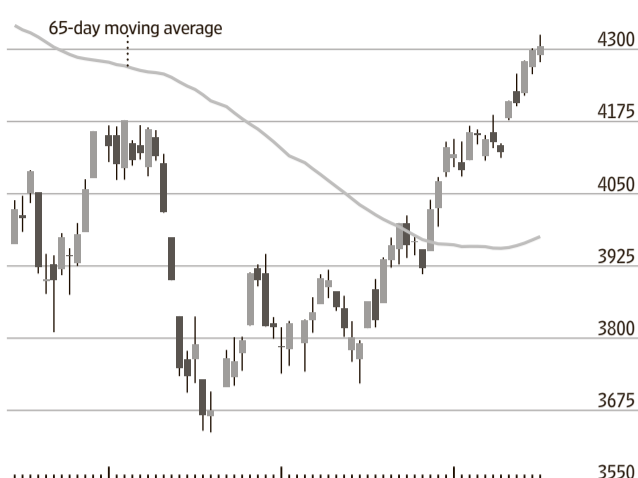
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34152.01 ▲ 239.57, or 0.71%
High, low, open and close for each trading day of the past three months.



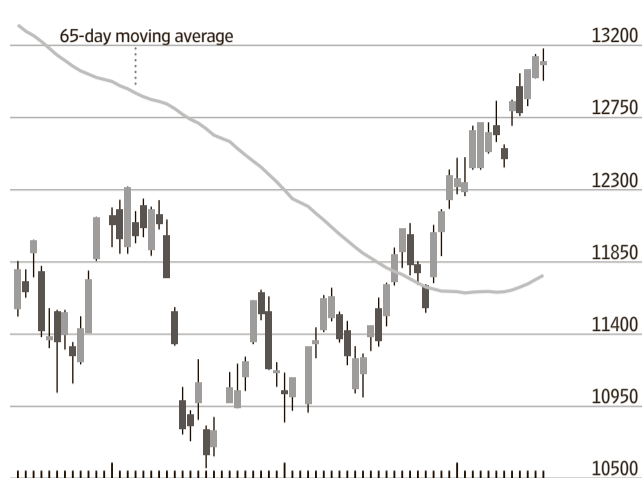
S&P 500 Index

4305.20 ▲ 8.06, or 0.19%
High, low, open and close for each trading day of the past three months.



Nasdaq Composite Index

13102.55 ▼ 25.50, or 0.19%
High, low, open and close for each trading day of the past three months.



Major U.S. Stock-Market Indexes

Table with columns: Index Name, High, Low, Close, Net chg, % chg, 52-Week High, Low, % chg, YTD % chg, 3-yr. ann.

Late Trading

Most-active and biggest movers among NYSE, NYSE Arca, NYSE Amer. and Nasdaq issues from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. ET as reported by electronic trading services...

Most-active issues in late trading

Table of stock symbols, volume, and price changes during late trading sessions.

Trading Diary

Volume, Advancers, Decliners

Summary of market activity including volume, advancers, and decliners for NYSE and NYSE Arca.

International Stock Indexes

Table of international stock indexes by region/country, including MSCI ACWI, Euro STOXX, and others.

Percentage Gainers...

Table of top-performing stocks in percentage gainers.

Percentage Losers

Table of top-performing stocks in percentage losers.

Most Active Stocks

Table of most active stocks by volume and price change.

Volume Movers

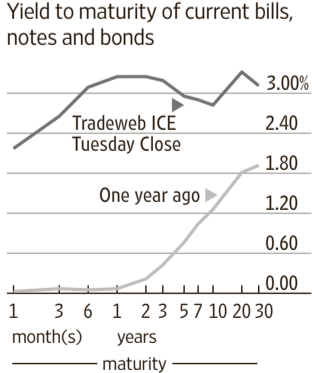
Table of volume movers ranked by trading volume over 65 days.

CREDIT MARKETS

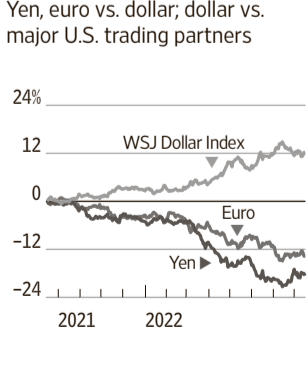
Consumer Rates and Returns to Investor

Section containing U.S. consumer rates, selected rates, and a chart showing yield/rate trends from 2021 to 2022.

Treasury yield curve



Forex Race



Corporate Borrowing Rates and Yields

Table of corporate borrowing rates and yields for various entities and sectors.

CURRENCIES & COMMODITIES

Currencies

Table of U.S. dollar foreign-exchange rates in late New York trading.

Commodities

Table of commodity prices and changes, including oil, natural gas, and gold.

COMMODITIES

wsj.com/market-data/commodities

Futures Contracts

Table with columns: Metal & Petroleum Futures, Copper-High (CMX), Gold (CMX), Palladium (NYM), Platinum (NYM), Silver (CMX), Gasoline-NY RBOB (NYM), Natural Gas (NYM). Includes Open, High, Low, Settle, Chg, and Open Interest columns.

Table with columns: Agriculture Futures, Corn (CBT), Oats (CBT), Soybeans (CBT), Soybean Meal (CBT), Soybean Oil (CBT), Rough Rice (CBT), Wheat (CBT), Wheat (KC), Cattle-Feeder (CME), Cattle-Live (CME), Hogs-Lean (CME). Includes Open, High, Low, Settle, Chg, and Open Interest columns.

Table with columns: Interest Rate Futures, Ultra Treasury Bonds (CBT), Treasury Bonds (CBT), Treasury Notes (CBT), Treasury Notes (CBT), 5 Yr. Treasury Notes (CBT), 2 Yr. Treasury Notes (CBT), 30 Day Federal Funds (CBT), 10 Yr. Del. Int. Rate Swaps (CBT), Three-Month SOFR (CME), Eurodollar (CME). Includes Open, High, Low, Settle, Chg, and Open Interest columns.

Table with columns: Currency Futures, Japanese Yen (CME), Canadian Dollar (CME), Swiss Franc (CME), Australian Dollar (CME), Mexican Peso (CME), Euro (CME), Index Futures, Mini DJ Industrial Average (CBT), Mini S&P 500 (CME), Mini S&P Midcap 400 (CME), Mini Nasdaq 100 (CME), Mini Russell 2000 (CME), Mini Russell 1000 (CME), U.S. Dollar Index (ICE-US). Includes Open, High, Low, Settle, Chg, and Open Interest columns.

Cash Prices

wsj.com/market-data/commodities

Tuesday, August 16, 2022

These prices reflect buying and selling of a variety of actual or "physical" commodities in the marketplace—separate from the futures price on an exchange, which reflects what the commodity might be worth in future months.

Table with columns: Energy, Metals, Fibers and Textiles, Grains and Feeds, Food, Fats and Oils. Includes various commodity names and their prices.

KEY TO CODES: A=ask; B=bid; BP=country elevator bids to producers; C=corrected; D=CME; E=Manfra, Tordella & Brookes; H=American Commodities Brokerage Co; K=bi-weekly; M=monthly; N=nominal; n.a.=not quoted or not available; P=Sosland Publishing; R=SNL Energy; S=Platts-TSI; T=Cotlook Limited; U=USDA; V=Benchmark Mineral Intelligence; W=weekly; Y=International Coffee Organization; Z=not quoted. *Data as of 8/15

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Exchange-Traded Portfolios | WSJ.com/ETFResearch

Table showing Exchange-Traded Portfolios. Columns include Symbol, Closing Price, Chg, YTD, and various performance metrics. Lists numerous ETFs like SPDR, iShares, and others.

Real estate advertisement for 'HOLLYWOOD PARK'. Features a large image of a modern building with a glass facade. Text includes 'A NEW TYPE OF WORKFORCE.', 'HOLLYWOOD PARK', and 'HOLLYWOODPARKLIFE.COM'.

BONDS

Tracking Bond Benchmarks

Return on investment and spreads over Treasuries and/or yields paid to investors compared with 52-week highs and lows for different types of bonds

Table with columns: Total return close, YTD total return (%), Index, Yield (%), Latest, Low, High. Sub-sections include Broad Market, U.S. Corporate Indexes, Mortgage-Backed, High Yield Bonds, U.S. Agency, and Global Government.

*Constrained indexes limit individual issuer concentrations to 2%; the High Yield 100 are the 100 largest bonds. † In local currency. ‡ Euro-zone bonds. ** EMBI Global Index. Sources: ICE Data Services; Bloomberg Fixed Income Indices; J.P. Morgan

Global Government Bonds: Mapping Yields

Yields and spreads over or under U.S. Treasuries on benchmark two-year and 10-year government bonds in selected other countries; arrows indicate whether the yield rose (▲) or fell (▼) in the latest session

Table with columns: Country, Maturity, Yield (%), Spread Under/Over U.S. Treasuries, In basis points. Rows include U.S., Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain, and U.K.

Source: Tullett Prebon, Tradeweb ICE U.S. Treasury Close

Corporate Debt

Prices of firms' bonds reflect factors including investors' economic, sectoral and company-specific expectations

Investment-grade spreads that tightened the most...

Table with columns: Issuer, Symbol, Coupon (%), Yield (%), Maturity, Spread*, In basis points. Rows include Baker Hughes, Ally Financial, UBS, Barclays, etc.

...And spreads that widened the most

Table with columns: Issuer, Symbol, Coupon (%), Yield (%), Maturity, Spread*, In basis points. Rows include UBS, HSBC Holdings, HCA, Walt Disney, etc.

High-yield issues with the biggest price increases...

Table with columns: Issuer, Symbol, Coupon (%), Yield (%), Maturity, Bond Price as % of face value. Rows include Navient, Royal Caribbean, American Airlines, etc.

...And with the biggest price decreases

Table with columns: Issuer, Symbol, Coupon (%), Yield (%), Maturity, Bond Price as % of face value. Rows include WeWork, Ford Motor, Hughes Satellite Systems, etc.

*Estimated spread over 2-year, 3-year, 5-year, 10-year or 30-year hot-run Treasury, 100 basis points=one percentage pt.; change in spread shown is for 2-spread. Note: Data are for the most active issue of bonds with maturities of two years or more. Source: MarketAxess

Biggest 1,000 Stocks | WSJ.com/stocks

Table with columns: Stock, Sym, Close, Net Chg. Includes sub-sections for How to Read the Stock Tables and Footnotes.

Table with columns: Stock, Sym, Close, Net Chg. Lists various stocks including Ameren, AmericanMovie, AmericanAirlines, etc.

Table with columns: Stock, Sym, Close, Net Chg. Lists various stocks including CaesarsEnt, CamdenProperty, Carmeco, etc.

Table with columns: Stock, Sym, Close, Net Chg. Lists various stocks including AcadiaHealthcare, Accenture, ActivisionBlz, etc.

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Real estate advertisement for Medical Office Properties. Features: 11 Medical Office Properties, Located throughout Northern NJ, MT, Kisco, NY & Miramar, FL. Avg. Size: 27,000 SF • Current Occupancy: 82%. Tenants include: Regional Surgery Centers, Hospitals, Labs, Dentists & More.

Real estate advertisement for Chateau Bu-Sché. Features: REAL ESTATE AUCTION SEPTEMBER 13, 2022. Chateau Bu-Sché. AT THE INTERSECTION OF 115TH & CICERO AND ADJACENT TO CHICAGO 1155 S. CICERO AVE., ALSIP, ILLINOIS. This 26,000 sq. ft. multi-use facility sits atop an ornately landscaped 11.5 acre parcel with 325 on-site parking spots.

Real estate advertisement for Land for Sale. Features: SEALED BID Sept. 14th, 2022. TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY. LAND FOR SALE. 4th & Union Lakewood, CO. 59 +/- ACRES. RealEstateSales.gov/co

Real estate advertisement for Real Estate Auction. Features: REAL ESTATE AUCTION SEPTEMBER 20, 2022. 1002 W. WASHINGTON AVE. POLK CITY, IOWA. ONE-STORY 19,803 SQ. FT. COMMERCIAL BUILDING ON 3.41 ACRES. Built in 1976, this currently closing nursing and rehab facility is zoned R-1 (single-family detached residential.)

BIGGEST 1,000 STOCKS

Continued From Page B8

Table of 1,000 largest stocks with columns for Stock, Sym, Close, Net Chg, and various financial metrics. Includes sub-sections for D E F, J K L, M N, and O P Q.

Dividend Changes

Table of dividend changes with columns for Company, Symbol, Yld %, Amount, New/Old, Frq, Payable/Record.

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BANKRUPTCY

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK Chapter 11 Case No. 20-12345 (MG) Debtor. NOTICE OF DEADLINES REQUIRING FILING OF ADULT SURVIVORS ACT SEXUAL ABUSE PROOFS OF CLAIM ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 10, 2022. TO ALL PERSONS AND ENTITIES WITH ADULT SURVIVORS ACT SEXUAL ABUSE CLAIMS AGAINST THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NEW YORK (THE "DEBTOR")...

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS In re UNITI GROUP INC. SECURITIES LITIGATION Master File No. 4:19-cv-00756-BSM CLASS ACTION SUMMARY NOTICE OF PENDENCY AND PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF CLASS ACTION AND MOTION FOR ATTORNEYS' FEES AND EXPENSES. To: all persons and entities that purchased or otherwise acquired Unit Group Inc. (f/k/a Communications Sales & Leasing, Inc. ("Uniti")) Securities during the period from April 24, 2015 through June 24, 2019, inclusive, and were allegedly damaged thereby (the "Settlement Class")...

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AUCTIONS

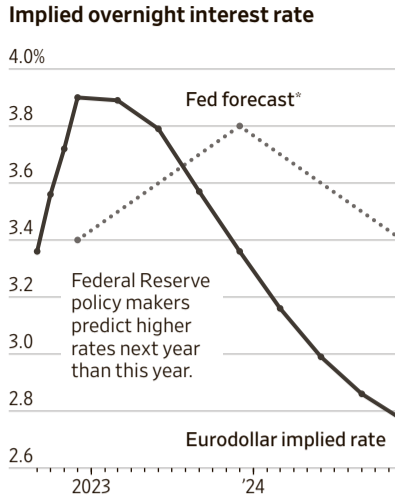
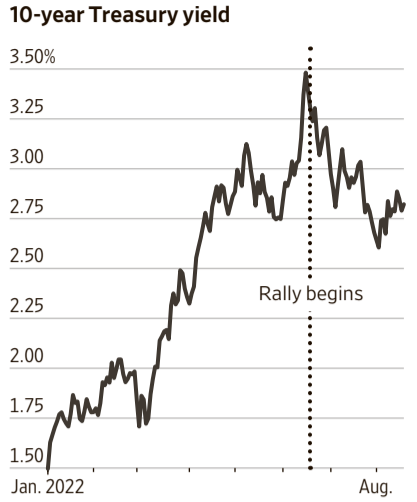
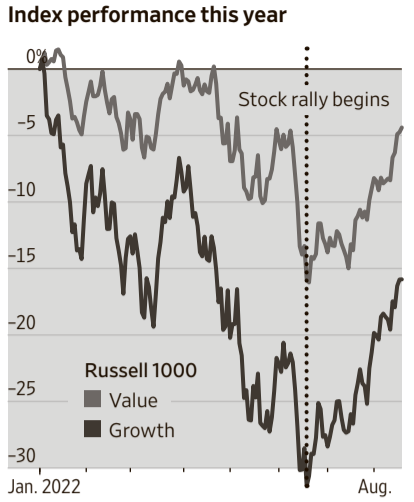
NOTICE OF DISPOSITION AT PUBLIC AUCTION SALE NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on Tuesdays, August 30, 2022, at 10:00 A.M. (PDT) (the "Auction Date"), Sabag Holdings, LLC (the "Secured Party") intends to sell at a public sale auction (the "Auction") the Collateral (defined below) to the highest qualified bidder (defined in the Terms of Sale, but including the requirement that any such Qualified Bidder must be either a "qualified institutional buyer" within the meaning of Rule 144A under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended or "accredited investor" in reliance on Rule 506(c) under the Securities Act ("Rule 506(c)"), in a public auction (the "Auction") in accordance with Section 9.610 of the Uniform Commercial Code as enacted in the State of California ("UCC"). The Collateral is to be sold in two (2) Lots which Lots will not be further divided or sold in any lesser amounts. The Collateral consists of all right, title and interest of Social Building Ventures, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company ("Debtor"), and in to the following Shares and Membership Units (collectively, the "Collateral") - (i) LOT 1 - 5,000 shares of stock in aggregate represented by Share Certificate numbers, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, each reflecting 1,000 shares, in and to Valley Collective Care, Inc, a California corporation (collectively, the "Shares"), which interest is purported to constitute fifty percent (50%) of the total outstanding share in Valley Collective Care, Inc; and (ii) LOT 2 - 500 membership units in aggregate represented by Membership Certificate numbers, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6, each reflecting 100 membership units, in and to Satcoy Property Management, LLC, a California limited liability company (collectively, the "Membership Units"), which interest is purported to constitute fifty percent (50%) of the total outstanding membership interests in Satcoy Property Management, LLC. Secured Party's interest in the Collateral is set forth pursuant to the terms of that (x) certain Security Agreement, dated as of March 6, 2020 (the "Security Agreement 1"), entered into by and among Debtor and Secured Party, to secure the amounts due pursuant to certain Secured Promissory Note in the original principal amount of Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000) dated April 1, 2019, as amended from time to time (the "S2M Note"); (y) the S2M Note and each individually a "Secured Note" and collectively the "Secured Agreements" and (z) the Loan Documents, as each individually or collectively amended, modified or supplemented, in and to the following Shares and Membership Units (collectively, the "Collateral") - In light of local, state and/or federal COVID-19 related laws, rules and/or regulations that may be in effect at the time of the Auction, the Auction will be held on the Auction Date by video and teleconference (the site of which shall be referred to as the "Virtual Auction Site") the details of which shall be available at the website of Braum International as follows: https://www.braum.com/world/worldwide-auctions-business-asset-services/ The Auction will be conducted at the Virtual Auction Site only. The Auction will be conducted by Braum International together with GT Securities (broker dealer license number CRD#: 116021/SEC#: 8-5352) (collectively, "Auctioneer"), acting solely in its capacity as auctioneer, on behalf of the Secured Party. Secured Party reserves the right to postpone, continue or cancel the Auction in its sole discretion. Only Qualified Bidders as set forth in the Qualified Bidder Requirements which can be found at the Virtual Auction Site may participate in the Auction. In advance of the Auction, Qualified Bidders must submit a written and a participant access code by the Auctioneer for participation and bidding at the Virtual Auction Site. The Secured Party reserves the right to (a) remove one or both Lots from the sale, (b) terminate the sale in whole or in part, or to adjourn the sale to such other date and time as the Secured Party may deem proper, by announcement (i) prior to the Auction Date, (y) on the Auction Date (but prior to the start of the bidding at the Auction) on the Virtual Auction Site, or (z) at any subsequent adjournment of the Auction (at such adjourned date and location of the Auction), without further publication, (c) waive any formalities or irregularities in any bid, (d) negotiate, re-offer or sell one or both Lots of the Collateral, (e) reopen bids, (f) settle disputes between bidders and/or (g) resolve all other sale matters in its sole discretion.

BANKING & FINANCE

Stocks bet on a soft landing...

...while bonds bet on an easier Fed...

...and the Fed says no



*Fed forecasts are median prediction from June summary of economic projections for year ends. Sources: FactSet (indexes); Ryan ALM (Treasury); CME Group (implied rate); Federal Reserve (forecast)

Market's Five Beliefs Right Now

Continued from page B1 them back quickly next year. Stocks and corporate bonds are delighted at the prospect of lower rates in the long run and expect it to happen without a nasty recession that shakes policy makers. Here are the five things the contrarian market seems to believe:

1. Inflation is transitory.

Just as the Fed argued last year, repaired supply chains and the postpandemic shift of demand will mostly bring price rises under control, with a few more rate rises this year finishing the job.

2. The Fed realizes this in time.

After being burned by its belief in transitory inflation

last year, the Fed laid out an expected path of rates under which rates would stay high next year. The market thinks the Fed will change course at the end of this year and cut rates rapidly as inflation drops back toward target, perhaps accepting higher inflation for a while.

3. The jobs market cools enough to slow wage rises.

Wage gains are far above what's compatible with 2% inflation, so have to come down under this scenario. That means less demand for workers and probably a rise in unemployment.

4. But not so much it means falling household spending.

If unemployment rises too much, household spending will suffer, hurting the economy and corporate profits.

5. So consumer spending rises in real terms.

The bull case that stocks and corporate bonds are pricing requires the combination of low joblessness and wage

rises to allow spending to rise faster than inflation even after pandemic savings run out. But not so much faster that it hits capacity constraints and accelerates inflation.

The first assumption is the hardest to believe, and where the market is contrary to much of what Wall Street's commentators—and me—have been saying. It's true that many of the supply problems that pushed inflation up so high are being at least partly resolved, with transport costs plunging, microchips more widely available and commodity prices falling fast. The New York Fed's index of global supply-chain pressure dropped to the lowest since the start of last year, while demand shifts brought on by the pandemic are returning to normal. Prices of some of the things that sudden demand pushed up the fastest this year, such as airfares, fell last month.

All of that will help, but it is clear the economy was overheated, with more jobs than workers to fill them. The case for risky assets rests on

the expectation that a few rate rises will be enough to cool things down. It also relies on the Fed recognizing this in time, and cutting rates to avoid pushing the economy into a nasty recession.

Such a soft landing is possible, and some data indicate the economy is weakening. But also possible is a continued overheat that leads the Fed to keep on hiking and force a recession, something the Bank of England admits it will have to do for the U.K. Plausible, too, is that the Fed does what it says and proves unwilling to cut rates fast, or at all, next year. The economy has been exceptionally volatile in the wake of the pandemic. Yet both stocks and Treasury are betting on a narrow path that works out for them. I like to be contrarian, and it's uncomfortable to agree with Wall Street economists, given the poor record of the consensus forecast. Yet, there's no margin of safety in this market. With so much uncertainty, investors should want more security than usual.

China's Bonds Draw Foreign Investors

By REBECCA FENG

Foreign investors once again became net buyers of Chinese government bonds in July—but only by a hair.

International investors have spent much of the past seven months reducing their exposure to the market, concerned about the geopolitical risks of investing in China following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. They have also been attracted by yields available in the U.S. government bond market, which in April started to offer higher returns than Chinese government bonds for the first time in more than a decade.

Foreign investors changed course in July. Their total holdings of Chinese government bonds edged up to 2.32 trillion yuan, the equivalent of \$343 billion, last month. That represented a net inflow of roughly

\$487 million, breaking a five-month streak of net outflows.

Foreign buyers continued to sell billions of dollars of bonds issued by Chinese policy banks, state-funded lenders that play an important role in implementing the government's plans, and have made large loans to Russian borrowers.

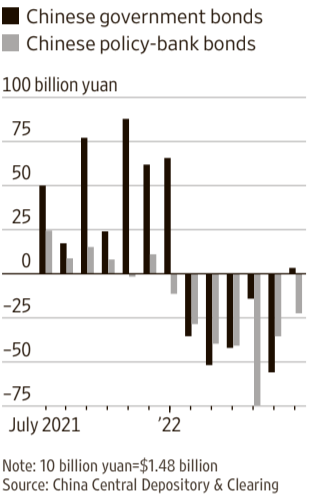
Overall figures for July reflected an outflow of \$8 billion. Still, the pace of overall outflows has slowed since March, when foreigners pulled a record \$15 billion from the Chinese bond market. In all, foreign investors have cut their investments in China's bond market by \$82 billion since the start of February, the month Russia invaded Ukraine. They held a total of \$518 billion yuan-denominated bonds at the end of July, down from roughly \$526 billion in June, according to data from the China Central Depository & Clearing Co. and the Shanghai Clearing House.

The easing in the exodus of foreign investors from Chinese bonds in July was partly because geopolitical concerns about investing in Chinese assets have now been digested.

Investors who pared back their holdings of Chinese bonds last month did so mainly because of a general reduction in emerging-markets exposure in July, said Edmund Goh, Shanghai-based head of China fixed income at Abrdn.

"This is very unlike what happened in March, when people were redeeming because of worries about geopolitical risks and uncertainty around China's Covid policies," said Mr. Goh.

Monthly change in foreign investors' holdings of yuan-denominated debt



Note: 10 billion yuan=\$1.48 billion Source: China Central Depository & Clearing

Biggest 1,000 Stocks | WSJ.com/stocks

Table with columns: Stock, Sym, Close, Chg, Net Chg. Lists top 1000 stocks including RegalReXRnd, RegencyCtrs, RegenPharm, etc.

Table with columns: Stock, Sym, Close, Chg, Net Chg. Lists top 1000 stocks including Telus, TelsusIntl, TFI Intl, etc.

Table with columns: Stock, Sym, Close, Chg, Net Chg. Lists top 1000 stocks including WescottIntl, WestFaserTimber, WestPharmScp, etc.

New Highs and Lows

The following explanations apply to the New York Stock Exchange, NYSE American and Nasdaq Stock Market stocks that hit a new 52-week intraday high or low in the latest session. % CHG-Daily percentage change from the previous trading session.

Table with columns: Stock, Sym, 52-Wk Hi/Lo, % Chg. Lists new highs and lows including ARKRestaurants, AST Space, ATI, etc.

Table with columns: Stock, Sym, 52-Wk Hi/Lo, % Chg. Lists new highs and lows including NortheastBank, NorthwestBchs, ObeliOyAuto, etc.

Table with columns: Category, Value, Week ago, -52-Week High, Low. Includes Inflation, Federal funds, U.S. consumer price index, etc.

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MARKETS

S&P 500, Blue Chips Gain On Strong Retailer Reports

Walmart shares rise 5.1% after company raises its outlook for fiscal year

By ANNA HIRTENSTEIN AND PIA SINGH

Stock indexes closed mostly higher as investors parsed better-than-expected earnings from major retailers that showed consumers are still shopping despite high inflation.

TUESDAY'S MARKETS

The S&P 500 added 8.06 points, or 0.2%, to 4305.20 after opening lower. The technology-focused Nasdaq Composite shed 25.50 points, or 0.2%, to 13102.55. The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 239.57 points, or 0.7%, to 34152.01.

Stocks have largely rallied in recent days, with the S&P 500 climbing for four straight weeks as of last Friday. Some investors view the rally as a sign of easing negative sentiment. Others believe that the momentum may be fading, citing recent weak data on China's economy and U.S. manufacturing.

"Every time we're seeing a dip, the buyers show up, and I think that's more a reflection of the fact that far too many managers were way underweight equities for the reality and now they're chasing momentum," said Derek Amey, partner and co-chief investment officer of StrategicPoint Investment Advisors.

Investors might be realizing their bleaker outlook in recent weeks was overestimated, he said, noting that year-over-

year inflation slowed in July and "hopefully has peaked."

Mr. Amey said his firm remains overweight in industrials and healthcare and slightly underweight in technology and discretionary sectors.

Investors have been pleasantly surprised by earning reports from big-name retailers this week as they gauge how rising prices are affecting consumer spending. **Walmart** and **Home Depot** reported on Tuesday and Target and others are scheduled for later in the week.

"It's going to be about inventory levels, margins and pricing power and if consumers are still spending on discretionary, or if all their wages are going to food and energy," said Esty Dwek, chief investment officer at FlowBank.

Walmart rose \$6.77, or 5.1%, to \$139.37 after the big-box re-

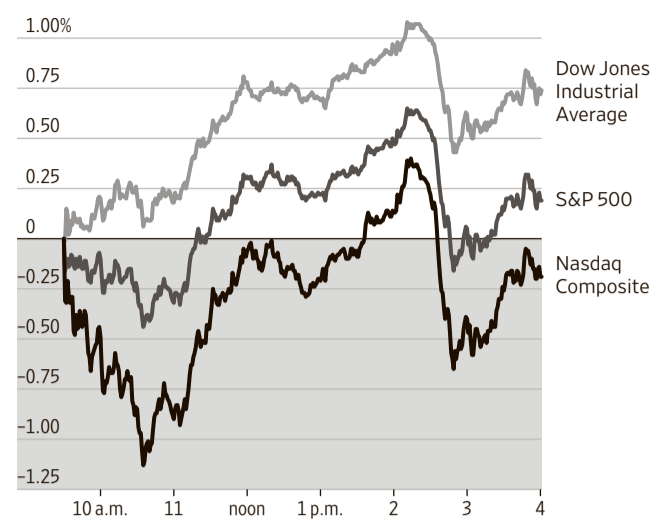
tailer reported earnings that beat estimates. The company also raised its outlook for the fiscal year, less than a month after it had issued a profit warning. Its chief executive said the company had been able to cut costs in its supply chains.

Home Depot gained \$12.77, or 4.1%, to \$327.38 after the retailer posted record quarterly sales and earnings that beat Wall Street's estimates but also said customer transactions had declined.

"I think there are some clues that the consumer is starting to say, how can I save some money and buy some of these cheaper items—house brands versus some name brands," said Jon Maier, chief investment officer at Global X ETFs.

The bond market continued

Index performance Tuesday



Source: FactSet

to flash a recessionary signal on Tuesday, with the yield curve remaining inverted. The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note rose to 2.822% from 2.790% Monday, while the two-year yield reached 3.249%.

Oil prices edged lower. Global crude benchmark Brent was down 2.9% to \$92.34 a barrel, closing at its lowest set-

tlement value since February.

Overseas, the pan-continental Stoxx Europe 600 added 0.2%. Early Wednesday, Japan's Nikkei 225 was up 0.8%, Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index was up 0.5%, South Korea's Kospi was down 0.5% and the Shanghai Composite and Australia's S&P ASX 200 were up less than 0.1%. S&P 500 futures fell less than 0.1%.

Gas Prices Surge In Europe

Continued from page B1

gas futures climbed Tuesday to \$9.329 per million British thermal units, the highest price in 14 years and 150% more than a year ago.

A heat wave is jeopardizing efforts in Europe to put enough gas into storage to avoid rationing in the cooler months. High temperatures have fueled gas demand in Europe and north Asia, pushing utilities in the two regions to compete for a limited number of tankers carrying supercooled liquefied natural gas and driving prices higher.

Hot, dry and still weather brings other complications. "You don't have enough wind,

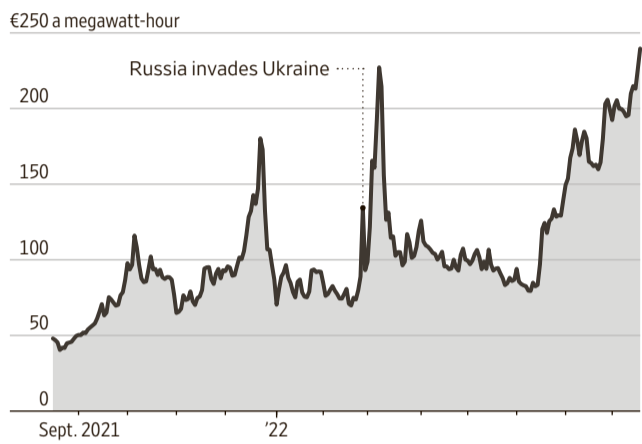
or enough coal barges in Germany. And actually in France, nuclear plants cannot get enough water for cooling," said Xi Nan, an analyst at Rystad Energy. "And of course, hydro-power levels in general are quite low, especially in Norway."

In an acknowledgment of the impending crisis, Germany plans to postpone the closure of its final three nuclear power plants—pausing a two-decade policy of ditching nuclear power, The Wall Street Journal reported, citing government officials.

Futures for gas at a trading hub in the Netherlands, the benchmark in northwest Europe, rose 3.2% Tuesday to €233.56 a megawatt-hour, about \$237. That is the highest price ever in euros, surpassing the record set March 7, shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine.

Power markets, currently dictated by the price of electricity-generating gas, are surging, too. In Germany, prices for baseload power that will be

Natural-gas futures prices in northwest Europe



Note: €1= \$1.02

Source: FactSet

dispatched in early 2023 rose almost 9% Tuesday to €583 a megawatt-hour.

High prices are taking a toll on energy-intensive industries. On Tuesday, zinc producer **Nyrstar NV** said it would idle its Dutch smelting operations starting Sept. 1. Electricity costs are as much as 10 times as

high as historical levels, and Nyrstar has struggled to pass them on through higher zinc prices, a person familiar with the decision said.

In industrial powerhouse Germany, expectations for economic growth slid so far this month, a survey by the Zew research institute showed Tues-

day. Andrew Kenningham, chief Europe economist at consulting firm Capital Economics, said the data suggest a recession is inevitable this year in part because of the effects of high energy prices on households and industry.

The U.S. hasn't been immune from the pain, given how surging domestic prices have raised heating and electricity costs. But the increase in U.S. natural-gas prices has been less intense than in Europe. Plus, the U.S. economy benefits by selling natural gas across the Atlantic.

The surge in gas prices also comes in contrast to oil prices, which are down by a third from postinvasion highs, pulling prices at gasoline pumps sharply lower and giving relief to American drivers.

Economies in Central and Eastern Europe that depend on Russian oil and gas are the most exposed in the region. Moody's Investors Service this month changed the outlook for the Czech government's credit

rating to negative from stable. It cited the risk of prolonged gas-supply disruptions from Russia that could lead to rationing and a deep recession.

Storage sites in the EU are almost 75% full, according to Gas Infrastructure Europe, putting the bloc on track to meet its target level of 80% by Nov. 1. The heat is making that more difficult, however. One reason: River levels have fallen to such low levels that German coal-power plants are struggling to import fuel. In turn, that means burning more gas to generate electricity.

Russia's aim in cutting gas supplies to Europe, analysts and energy executives say, is to cause so much economic harm that support for Ukraine wanes.

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