

FINANCIAL TIMES

MONDAY 8 AUGUST 2022

INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

ASIA

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Big Tech's core business model is weakening — RANA FOROQAR, PAGE 17

Space constraints

Ominous signs for those who bet big on warehouses — BIG READ, PAGE 15



Coddling won't help

Life lessons for 20-something employees — PILITA CLARK, PAGE 18

Gaza attack Fresh fighting leaves 31 dead

A Palestinian man salvages belongings from the rubble of his home after it was hit by an Israeli air strike in Gaza City yesterday. In the most serious flare-up in hostilities for more than a year, Israeli forces bombed sites in the Gaza Strip while Islamic Jihad militants fired hundreds of rockets into Israel. Gaza's health ministry said 31 Palestinians had been killed since fighting began on Friday. The renewed conflict has sparked concerns that Hamas, which has run the Gaza Strip since 2007 and has greater military capabilities than Islamic Jihad, could enter the fighting. Israel and Hamas have fought four wars in the past 15 years. Crisis worsens page 4



Mahmud Hamsi/AFP/Getty Images

Briefing

- US oil groups defy call to boost output**
 The biggest producers have said they will use their bumper profits for share buybacks and dividends, pushing back against president Joe Biden's call for greater investment to increase supply. — PAGE 5
- Japan told to seize inflation opportunity**
 Goshi Kataoka, an aggressive reflationist who left the BoJ last month for a post at PwC Consulting, has urged the country to seize "a once-in-a-lifetime" opportunity to end the war on deflation. — PAGE 3
- Merck defends tax policy after US probe**
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- Europe at odds with US on Covid jobs**
 The drugs regulator has said it is sticking with plans to review vaccines designed to tackle the original coronavirus and the Omicron variant. The US plans approval before the release of efficacy data. — PAGE 2



West's alarm rises over deepening ties between Russia and Turkey

◆ Fears sanctions on Moscow will be undermined ◆ Hints of retaliation against Ankara

LAURA PITEL — ANKARA
AMY KAZHIN — ROME
ALICE HANCOCK — BRUSSELS
JAMES POLITI — WASHINGTON

Western capitals are increasingly alarmed at the deepening ties between Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, raising the risk of retaliation against Ankara if it helps Moscow avoid sanctions. Six western officials told the Financial Times they were concerned about the pledge made by Turkish and Russian leaders to expand co-operation on trade and energy on Friday. An EU official said the bloc was monitoring relations "more and more closely", while one senior western official suggested countries could call on their companies and banks

to pull out of Turkey if Erdoğan followed through the intentions he outlined — a highly unusual threat against a fellow Nato member state. Three European officials said the EU had not held any official discussions about possible repercussions. Several others cautioned that it was unclear what Erdoğan and Putin had agreed and that a formal EU decision on sanctions against Turkey would be challenging given divisions inside the bloc. But some member states could take action without an EU agreement. "For example they could ask for restrictions on trade finance or ask the large financial companies to reduce finance to Turkish companies," one official said. "I would not rule out any negative actions [if] Turkey gets too close to Russia."

The hints of potential retaliation against Turkey came after Ukraine intercepted a document from Moscow that outlined ways to help Russia evade sanctions through Turkish banks, according to a Ukrainian intelligence official and a western diplomat. Washington has warned repeatedly that it will hit countries that help Russia to evade sanctions with "secondary sanctions" targeting violations beyond the US legal jurisdiction. US deputy Treasury secretary Wally Adeyemo met Turkish officials and Istanbul bankers in June to warn them not to become a conduit for illicit Russian money. Russia's deputy prime minister Alexander Novak said Turkey had agreed to pay for Russia's gas in roubles, according to the report. Putin and Erdoğan dis-



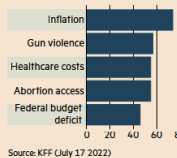
Russia's deputy prime minister Alexander Novak says Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Vladimir Putin discussed developing banking ties

cussed further developing banking ties in roubles and lira, he added. Erdoğan said there were also "very serious developments" on the use of Russia's MIR payment card system, which he said would help Russian tourists pay for shopping and hotels. Western officials fear they could also be used to help bypass sanctions. The senior western official suggested governments could ask western firms to "either pull out of relationships in Turkey, or shrink their relationships". But such a move would probably face opposition. "There are very significant economic interests that would probably fight hard against such negative actions," said one European official. **Aftak raises radiation fears page 2**
Oleg Ustenko page 17

Datavatch

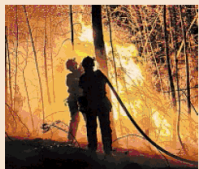
Midterm concerns

Very important issues (% of US adults)



Inflation tops the list of US voters' concerns as November's midterm elections loom. But after the Supreme Court's overturning of the legal protection for abortion, 55 per cent say the issue will be very important at the ballot box

Source: KFF July 17-20 2022



Threats force reinsurers to raise prices or retreat

Analysis — PAGE 6

Country	AS7000inc GST
Australia	AS7000inc GST
China	RMB33
Hong Kong	HK\$33
India	₹220
Indonesia	Rp45000
Japan	¥500inc. ACT
Korea	₩500
Malaysia	RM150
Pakistan	Rupee 350
Philippines	Peso 140
Singapore	S\$5800inc GST
Taiwan	NT\$160
Thailand	Bh140
Vietnam	US\$450

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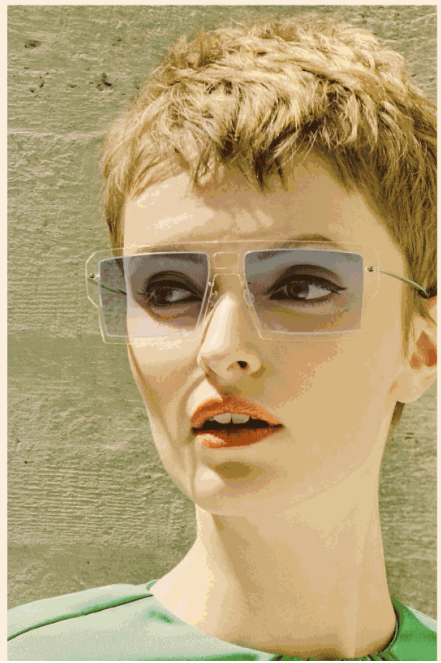
Electric-car makers warned lithium supply crunch is set to last until 2030

HARRY DEMPSEY — LONDON

Carmakers face a shortage of the lithium needed to help power the electric vehicle revolution which will last for the rest of the decade, one of the biggest producers of the metal has warned. Kent Masters, chief executive of Albemarle, the largest publicly traded lithium producer, said the shortfall would persist despite efforts to produce more of the metal. The challenge facing the industry would be "systemic for a pretty long period of time", Masters said. "For seven to eight years it stays pretty tight." Lithium's use in electric-car batteries has put it at the heart of a global competition pitting the world's largest carmakers against each other and drawing in governments as they race to safeguard supplies. The price of lithium compounds has surged more than eightfold

since the start of 2020, and is hovering near the record \$70,000 per tonne it first hit in April. Carmakers ranging from Stellantis to BMW have this year invested in lithium start-ups, underlining the pressure the industry faces as more of the world shifts to electric vehicles. Last week, General Motors said it would pay Livent, another producer, \$200m upfront to secure the raw material. Albemarle, which is based in Charlotte, North Carolina, and counts Tesla and other major carmakers as customers, has lifted its earnings forecast three times this year as it expects to increase production and turn cash flow positive faster than previously expected. Lithium is a key material in electric batteries alongside nickel and cobalt, and can be extracted from brine, hard rock and clay. One technology that some

are betting on to increase volumes is direct lithium extraction, which removes the metal from brine without relying on evaporation. But Eric Norris, president of lithium at Albemarle, said hopes for a rush of supply overestimated suppliers' ability to match demand from carmakers that has become "broader, deeper and more certain". "The ability to execute capital projects is not widely held," said Norris, adding that lithium companies have historically delivered as much as 25 per cent less production than promised in a given year because of chronic delays and technical mishaps. "There's a serious challenge with lithium availability," said Chris Berry, founder of House Mountain Partners, a battery metals advisory firm. "That \$70,000 [per tonne] number is sticky,"



STOCK MARKETS				CURRENCIES				INTEREST RATES					
	Aug 5	Prev	%chg	Aug 5	Aug 29	Aug 5	Jul 29		price	yield	chg		
S&P 500	4116.73	4151.94	-0.85	\$/€	1.017	1.020	0.829	0.822	US 2 yr	3.21	3.06	0.15	
Nasdaq Composite	12561.39	12720.58	-1.25	\$/£	1.206	1.217	1.186	1.194	US 10 yr	2.85	2.69	0.16	
Dow Jones Ind	32571.59	32728.82	-0.47	€/¥	0.843	0.838	0.767	0.767	US 30 yr	3.09	2.98	0.12	
FTSE100	1713.01	1724.77	-0.68	¥/¥	135.345	133.650	E index	79.537	79.546	UK 2 yr	2.13	2.00	0.14
Euro Stoxx 50	3721.44	3754.60	-0.88	¥/€	163.220	162.639	Sfr/€	1.162	1.159	UK 10 yr	2.95	1.88	0.17
FTSE 100	7439.74	7448.06	-0.11	Sfr/£	0.979	0.971			UK 30 yr	2.43	2.28	0.15	
FTSE All-Share	4111.51	4118.32	-0.17	£/¥	0.984	0.981			JPN 2 yr	-0.11	-0.10	-0.01	
CAC 40	6472.35	6513.39	-0.63						JPN 10 yr	0.16	0.17	-0.01	
Xetra Dax	1573.93	1582.69	-0.65										

Dubai

Nikkei	28175.87	27952.20	0.87
Hang Seng	20201.94	20174.04	0.14
MSCI World \$	2781.65	2755.25	0.23
MSCI EM \$	994.59	985.81	0.88
MSCI ACWI \$	640.94	639.00	0.30
FT Worldshre 7500	5409.51	5414.27	-0.09
FT Worldshre 5000	42241.34	42276.69	-0.08

COMMODITIES			
	Aug 5	Jul 29	%Week
Oil WTI \$	89.74	100.19	-10.43
Oil Brent \$	95.48	105.05	-9.11
Gold \$	1783.20	1753.50	1.69

JPN 30 yr	1.15	1.18	-0.03
GER 2 yr	0.45	0.30	0.14
GER 10 yr	0.95	0.80	0.15
GER 30 yr	1.16	1.03	0.13

Prices are latest for addition Data provided by Bloomberg

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INTERNATIONAL

Nuclear complex

Ukraine attack raises radiation leak fears

Kyiv and Moscow deflect blame for military action after storage facility hit

ROMAN OLEARCHYK — KYIV

Artillery barrages struck Europe's largest nuclear power station, located in Russian-occupied territory in southern Ukraine, at the weekend, sparking international fears over the risk of radiation leaks.

The shelling on Saturday damaged radiation sensors after striking close to a storage facility for spent fuel at Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, Energoatom, Ukraine's state nuclear power holding company, said yesterday.

Each side blamed the other for the

attack. No radiation leaks were reported. But the mounting concern about the threat came as the situation at Ukraine's Black Sea ports had appeared to be easing, with another convoy of vessels carrying agricultural exports setting sail yesterday.

Russia's Interfax news agency yesterday quoted Russian occupation forces who accused Ukraine of conducting the shelling and confirmed that a location near the spent nuclear fuel store had been hit. But, in a statement, Energoatom said the Russians had fired rockets at the plant.

The development follows two shelling incidents late last week that prompted the UN's nuclear safety watchdog to sound the alarm and call for a team of independent experts to go to the plant.

Rafael Mariano Grossi, director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said on Saturday he was "extremely concerned by the shelling... which underlines the very real risk of a nuclear disaster that could threaten public health and the environment in Ukraine and beyond".

'Russian nuclear terror requires a stronger response from the international community'

Yesterday, he said in a tweet that "the IAEA team must go to Zaporizhzhia... We can put together a safety, security and safeguards mission and

deliver the indispensable assistance and impartial assessment that is needed."

The Zaporizhzhia plant is one of four operating nuclear power stations in Ukraine, in addition to the decommissioned Chernobyl facility, site of the world's worst nuclear accident in 1986, when the country was under Soviet rule.

Following a phone call yesterday with European Council president Charles Michel to discuss the situation at Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelenskyy said: "Russian nuclear terror requires a stronger response from the international community: sanctions on the Russian nuclear industry and nuclear fuel."

Josep Borrell, the EU's foreign policy chief, said in a tweet on Saturday: "The EU condemns Russia's military activi-

ties around Zaporizhzhia." He added: "This is a serious and irresponsible breach of nuclear safety rules and another example of Russia's disregard for international norms."

The heightened tension around the nuclear plant came as Energoatom reported that four more commercial vessels carrying Ukrainian grain for export had yesterday sailed from ports in the Odesa region.

They follow the first four shipments of Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea that set off last week as part of a UN and Turkey-brokered agreement aiming to break Russia's months-long naval blockade of Ukrainian trade.

Additional reporting by Mehul Srivastava in Odesa See Opinion

Pandemic

EU regulator awaits trial data before deciding on Covid jab

DOMATO PAOLO MANCINI — LONDON

The European drugs regulator is holding firm with plans to review Covid-19 vaccines designed to tackle the original coronavirus and the Omicron variant, its head said, in contrast with US authorities, which plan to approve these jobs before the release of clinical data on their efficacy.

It might mean Europe receives vaccines tailored to the highly infectious BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron sub-variants later than the US.

It is unclear whether the vaccines would be better than those tailored for BA.1, a previously circulating form of Omicron, because no data are available.

Emer Cooke, head of the European Medicines Agency, said in an interview that reviewing available data was paramount and that her agency would stand firm. The EMA is reviewing two so-called bivalent shots, which incorporate elements from the coronavirus as it appeared in 2019 and BA.1.

"Irrespective of what is happening, we have to have confidence in the vaccines that we authorise, and that is our primary responsibility as we have done with all the vaccines that have been presented to us," Cooke said.

"All this comparison between BA.1 and BA.4/BA.5 is something I think we're over-focusing on at the moment. Promises are not enough for me."

Cooke's remarks contrast with calls made by industry figures who have urged regulators to approve vaccines that incorporate BA.4/BA.5 components without waiting for clinical data.

BioNTech chief executive Ugur Sahin said in June it would be "useful" to adapt vaccines "without the requirement to do extra clinical trials" so that jabs could target the latest strains before the virus mutated further. Moderna has made similar remarks.

The US Food and Drug Administration has recommended manufacturers incorporate BA.4/BA.5 components to the upcoming booster campaign.

Cooke said recent studies indicated that effective rollout campaigns played a more significant role in tackling the virus than the specific effectiveness of each vaccine.

"Frankly, if we started a new wave tomorrow, I'd take the old vaccine, because that's what is available," she said. "Our priority is to ensure that the member states have a plurality of options available that would meet their individual strategies." She noted that the state of the epidemic differed greatly within member countries and that the BA.5 resurgence peaked in about half of the EU's 27 member states.

She said reviews of the BioNTech/Pfizer and Moderna shots would be completed in early September, "if there are no surprises".

Cooke stressed the agency would be able to move quickly if it became clear that a bivalent shot made to target BA.4/BA.5 turned out to be a better approach. But, she added, this would only be clear when data showing this was the case became available. Health experts have repeatedly said it is possible that a Covid-19 resurgence could put health systems under significant pressure later this year if vaccine protection wanes in the face of new mutation.

Asia. Military exercises

China-Taiwan tension threatens global trade

Blockade of the island would have a huge effect on supply chains and shipping activity

WILLIAM LANGLEY AND CHAN HO-HIM — HONG KONG THOMAS HALE — LONDON

China's missile launches into Taiwan's coastal waters last week have underlined the risks to global supply chains from any sustained escalation of tension between Beijing and Taipei.

The military exercises in response to a visit by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan resembled a rehearsal for a blockade of the export-dependent island, over which Beijing claims sovereignty, with some cargo ships forced to adjust course and airlines cancelling flights.

Three of the six areas blocked off for the exercises are in or near the Taiwan Strait, the body of water between the island and Chinese mainland that is only 130km wide at its narrowest point. The Strait is the primary shipping route between China and Japan, the world's second and third-biggest economies, respectively, and Europe. It also serves as a trading route for technology powerhouse South Korea, carrying manufactured goods from the factories of Asia to many of the world's consumers.

"In an environment where China tries to take a more assertive role and tries to block the Strait... it'll be hugely disruptive," said Anoop Singh, principal analyst at shipbroker Braemar. "Everything will get impacted."

China's military drills in the Strait and the East China Sea last week, which were significantly broader in scope than war games staged during the last such crisis in 1995 and 1996, were only scheduled to last a few days. But analysts said the manoeuvres could initiate a sustained period of heightened tension across the Strait.

Beijing claims Pelosi's visit, the first by a Speaker to Taiwan in 25 years, was part of a "hollowing out" of Washington's "One China" policy, under which the US recognises Beijing as the sole government of China and acknowledges, but does not accept, its claim to the island.

"Prolonged or regular drills in the Taiwan Strait could create significant disruptions in Taiwan's trade with the rest



Strait ahead: tourists take photographs on Pingtan Island, China, the closest point to Taiwan on the mainland (Ng Han Guan/AP)

of the world and in global supply chains", Homin Lee, Asia macro strategist at Lombard Odier, wrote in a note.

Half of the global container fleet and 88 per cent of the world's largest ships by tonnage passed through the Strait this year, according to data reported by Bloomberg.

While live fire exercises are "an extremely common event at sea", they are usually restricted to less heavily trafficked areas, Braemar's Singh said. He added that 1mm barrels of crude oil and oil products normally pass through the Strait per day. "This water is typically very, very congested."

Singh said he knew of at least two big ship owners that had asked vessels to avoid the Strait following reports of live fire in the area. "Most others are likely to follow [their] lead," he added.

Elsewhere in Asia-Pacific, Japanese shipping group NYK Line issued a warning to avoid the Strait, while South Korean carrier Korean Airlines cancelled all flights between Seoul and Tai-

pei on Thursday and Friday. Korean media also reported that Asiana Airlines cancelled its flights between Seoul and Taipei, while Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific said it was "monitoring the developments very closely".

Any prolonged attempt to impede international commerce from Taiwan, with several of the main military exercises happening near two of the island's main ports, would hurt global trade.

Taiwan is a crucial link in global technology supply chains. Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co accounts for 90 per cent of the world's cutting-edge chip capacity, while downstream electronic product manufacturers, such as Apple supplier Foxconn, produce components and assemble products from smartphones to servers for some of the world's biggest companies.

Further cross-Strait fallout could be devastating for Taiwan's economy, with 40 per cent of its exports going to China and Hong Kong, according to figures from Capital Economics. China has

'In the event of a disaster I don't know how the global supply chain for the tech industry could survive'

already announced the suspension of thousands of agricultural imports from the island. "In the event of a disaster that actually shut down Taiwan for a period of time, really I don't know how the global supply chain for the tech industry could survive," said Dan Nystedt, vice-president at TriOrient Investments. "You've got at least \$3tn-\$4tn worth of work that's not going to get done, potentially."

Paul Tsui, managing director of Hong Kong-based logistics services group Janel Group, which serves companies such as General Electric, said some disruptions to business from Pelosi's visit to Taiwan. "If tensions in the Taiwan Strait do escalate, cost and transit times would hike significantly [and] it could be even worse than Covid disruptions," said Tsui.

Additional reporting by Kathrin Hille in Taipei, Song Jung-a in Seoul, Eri Sugiura in Tokyo and Maiqi Ding in Beijing Leo Lewis see Letters page

US politics

Democratic senator defends stance on private equity tax perk

AIME WILLIAMS — WASHINGTON CAITLIN GILBERT — NEW YORK

When the centrist Democratic senator Kyrsten Sinema gave the green light this week to move forward with the much-slimmed-down version of her party's long-awaited climate and tax bill, her colleagues sighed with relief.

However, Sinema's assent came with a notable caveat: she opposed the measure

in this election cycle alone, representing about 10 per cent of her fundraising from individual donors. This includes individual donations totalling \$54,900 from executives at KKR, \$35,000 from Carlyle, \$27,300 from Apollo, \$24,500 from Crow Holdings Capital and \$23,300 from Riverside Partners.

Sinema is not the only Democrat to have resisted funds from the interests

competitiveness". The spokesperson added: "At a time of record inflation, rising interest rates and slowing economic growth, disincentivising investments in Arizona businesses would hurt Arizona's economy and ability to create jobs."

Sinema, who wields outsized influence in a Senate split 50/50 along party lines, has been a frequent obstacle to Democratic legislative plans, refusing to back

sion began attracting headlines in 2007, when a tax law professor pointed out in an academic journal that a "quick" in US tax law allowed some of the richest people to "pay tax on their labour income at a low rate".

Democrats estimated that their proposal to close the carried interest loophole would raise a relatively modest \$14bn in revenue, but the tax provision is worth more to some of the personal fin-

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...have received funds from the private
equity industry. Executives at groups
including Blackstone, KKR and Lazard
have collectively donated \$1.28m to
New York senator Chuck Schumer, the
top Democrat in the Senate, representing
about 4.4 per cent of his fundraising
from individual donors this cycle.

At first sight, the decision to insist on
keeping a provision that benefits some
of the US's wealthiest people seems a far
cry from the concerns of voters in Arizona's
south-western home state of Arizona.
However, a Financial Times analysis
shows that the senator is a beneficiary
of significant contributions from the
private equity industry whose lobbying
machine and political influence have
grown increasingly powerful over the
past two decades.

According to Federal Election Commission
filings, Sinema has received more
than \$500,000 in campaign donations
from private equity group execu-

...to also regressive policy, leading to
various past iterations of the Build Back
Better bill, now renamed the Inflation
Reduction Act.
The so-called carried interest provi-

A spokesperson for Schumer said he
was "a longtime champion of closing the
carried interest loophole", adding he
had "worked until the very end to try to
keep the provision in the legislation and
will continue to seek opportunities to
eliminate it".

A spokesperson for Sinema said she
had been "clear and consistent for more
than a year that she will only support
tax reforms and revenue options that
support Arizona's economic growth and

...to close the carried interest loophole,
which would allow investors to pay less
tax on capital gains. The provision was
included in the Inflation Reduction Act.

The so-called carried interest provi-



Krysten Sinema: aims to support
investments in Arizona businesses

...to close the carried interest loophole,
which would allow investors to pay less
tax on capital gains. The provision was
included in the Inflation Reduction Act.

Private equity executives at Blackstone
stood to receive close to \$500,000
in carried interest-based pay as at the
end of last year, assuming their investments
were sold at their year-end 2021
value, according to filings analysed by
the FT.

While the proposal to close the carried
interest provision is politically popular
among voters, according to political
consultancy Beacon Policy Advisors, it
is not a charged enough issue to change
voting patterns.

"Carried interest is the epitome of tax
lobbying," said Ben Koltun, director of
research at Beacon. "There are some
taxes that a lot of people care a little
about, but a few people care a lot about."

INTERNATIONAL

Putin's spectre looms large over Italy's snap election

Speculation grows over whether Russia helped bring down Draghi

AMY KAZMIN — ROME

Italian cabinet minister Mara Carfagna, a former Miss Italy contestant and television presenter, has long been one of the most prominent faces in Silvio Berlusconi's Forward Italy party.

But Carfagna, minister for territorial cohesion, has abandoned the former media tycoon over his role in the collapse of Mario Draghi's government — and her suspicion that a foreign hand was behind it. Defecting to the centrist Action party, Carfagna said she needed "the certainty of being in a party where no one will dream of plotting with Russia or with China to the detriment of the current government".

Her belief that global geopolitics lies behind Italy's political crisis is not uncommon. Ever since Draghi's government imploded last month, Italians have speculated over whether Russian president Vladimir Putin helped to script the prime minister's ousting as payback for his tough stand over the invasion of Ukraine.

The trio of politicians that pulled the plug on Draghi — the anti-establishment Five Star Movement's Giuseppe Conte, the rightwing League's Matteo Salvini and Berlusconi — are known for their

'It's a fact that Draghi was taken down by the three parties that have the closest ties to the Kremlin'

historically friendly relations with Putin and his United Russia party.

Although analysts say all three leaders had convincing domestic political rationales for their decisions, that has not quelled speculation that Moscow colluded with disgruntled members of Draghi's coalition to take the prime minister down.

In his final speech to parliament before his resignation, Draghi warned that Italy had to "step up efforts to combat interference from Russia and other autocracies in our politics, in our society", though he gave no details, nor did he explicitly suggest a foreign plot against him.

Yet that idea is at the centre of the campaign rhetoric for September's snap election. "Italians have a right to know if Putin is behind Draghi's fall," the centre-left Democratic party (PD) wrote in a tweet last month.

Carlo Calenda, leader of Action, which hopes to woo moderate centrist voters disillusioned with Berlusconi and wary of the far right, has called the September 25 poll "a choice between an Italy that is one of the great countries of Europe or an Italy allied with [Hungarian president Viktor] Orbán and Putin".

Draghi, the former European Central Bank chief, resigned on July 21, after the Five Star Movement, the League and Forward Italy withdrew support for his leadership amid a crisis triggered by

Conte. Conte was agitated by a recent party split and eager to shore up his credentials as an anti-establishment rebel. Salvini and Berlusconi were eyeing polls that showed them both bleeding support to Giorgia Meloni's increasingly popular far-right Brothers of Italy, but also poised for decisive election victory if they teamed up with Meloni.

But Italian analysts say that amid the domestic political calculations, geopolitical factors loomed. "It's a fact that Draghi was taken down by the three parties that have the closest ties to the Kremlin," Nathalie Tocci, director of the Rome-based Institute of International Affairs, said.

After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Draghi turned his back on Italy's traditionally close ties with Moscow. He was at the forefront of the EU's tough response to the Kremlin, pushing sanctions against Russia's central bank and championing Ukraine as a candidate for EU membership; a stance that discomfited members of his national unity government.

"Important politicians like Salvini and Berlusconi clearly have sentiments of friendship and ties with Russia, especially with Putin's Russia," said Stefano Stefanini, Italy's former ambassador to Nato.

In May, Salvini announced plans for his own "peace trip" to Moscow organised by the Russian embassy in Rome. The trip was cancelled amid public anger and an outcry from other parts of the government.

But last week La Stampa, a leading Italian daily, reported that the League's discussions with Moscow did not stop there. In a front-page exposé, it cited leaked intelligence documents claiming that Rome-based Russian diplomat Oleg Kostyukov asked a top League representative in May whether the party would withdraw ministers from Draghi's cabinet.

"What is strange and weird is that in May, there was nobody, no observer, in Italy talking about the fall of the Draghi cabinet, not so quickly at least," Jacobo Iacoboni, who wrote the exposé, told the Financial Times.

Salvini has dismissed La Stampa's report as "fake news". Moscow, too, has rejected the report.

"This is not true. Russia has nothing to do with domestic policy processes in Italy," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

But various Italian rival parties and independent analysts have called for the matter to be investigated.

"I think this deserves a proper inquiry," said Tocci. "To what extent were these ministers encouraged by the Kremlin to vote against the government or have their ministers resign... There is a war being fought against Europe, and Draghi, you have an enemy state that is trying to meddle in your democratic process. Whether they are successful or not, you should be worried."

Additional reporting by Max Seddon



'[Italy must] step up efforts to combat interference from Russia and other autocracies in our politics, in our society'
Mario Draghi

Face time: Matteo Salvini, leader of Italy's rightwing League, appears on TV 'Porta a Porta' against the backdrop of a picture of Vladimir Putin
Reuters (3) VityaKorotkiy/Portfoto/Getty Images

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Monetary policy

Japan has 'once-in-lifetime' chance to end deflation war

CHANCE TO CIRCULATION War

KANA INAGAKI — TOKYO

Japan needs a bolder monetary and fiscal stimulus to seize "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" from global inflationary pressures to end its war on deflation, according to a Bank of Japan board member who recently left the central bank.

The BoJ has come under market pressure in recent months to reassess its ultra-easy monetary policy as central banks globally race to raise interest rates to tame increasing food and commodity prices. With Japanese interest rates still at minus 0.1 per cent, a divergence in global yields earlier this year sent the yen to a 24-year low against the US dollar.

But Goushi Kataoka, an aggressive deflationist who left the BoJ board last month and was appointed PwC Consulting's chief economist in Japan, warned that any attempt to weaken the central bank's efforts to hit and sustain its 2 per cent inflation target would have serious consequences for Asia's largest

advanced economy. After Japan's economic bubble burst in 1990, the country became locked into a vicious cycle of slow growth and stagnant or falling prices, leading to a persistent lack of demand.

"Japan is at an important crossroads where the trend in prices could dramatically change if both the government and the Bank of Japan took bold measures" to expand fiscal and monetary stimulus, Kataoka said in his first interview since leaving the BoJ's board. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the BoJ."

When hedge funds piled up short positions on Japanese government bonds in June, the BoJ was forced to significantly increase bond purchases to a cap on 10-year bond yields at close to zero, a policy called yield curve control. While some critics have called on the BoJ to widen the yield curve to address distortions in the financial sector, Kataoka said fixing the bond yield at zero at a time when global rates are rising is crucial in increasing the easing impact.

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INTERNATIONAL

Pandemic

Lockdown traps Chinese tourists in resort

Tens of thousands caught in restrictions at city dubbed country's 'Hawaii'

RYAN MCCORMOR — BEIJING

Chinese authorities hastily locked down the southern coastal city of Sanya over the weekend, trapping tens of thousands of holidaymakers after a highly infectious Omicron strain of coronavirus was detected in the province known as "China's Hawaii".

Covid-19 cases in China's Hainan province rose rapidly over the week to a cumulative 828, forcing authorities to abruptly announce a lockdown early on

Saturday. Public transport was suspended, travellers were removed from planes on the tarmac and motorists were turned round from checkpoints at the exits of the beach town of 1mm, according to local news and social media reports.

China's state broadcaster CCTV reported on Friday that the outbreak was attributable to the infectious BA.5 Omicron sub-variant, which has driven the reintroduction of restrictions in cities across China and become the dominant strain in western countries.

Movements have been restricted to emergency services and visitors will be required to take five nucleic acid tests within seven days in order to leave the

island, according to state media. It was not immediately clear when the measures would be lifted.

A video circulated on social media of a local official at Sanya airport, protected by a ring of police, using a megaphone to tell throngs of stranded travellers that they would be booked into hotels for free rather than being allowed to leave. "We want to go home, go home, go home," the crowd chanted, spurring the official to flee.

President Xi Jinping has vowed to prioritise eradicating coronavirus outbreaks to protect China's population over the economy. Since freeing the financial hub of Shanghai from a two-month lockdown in June, sporadic

Covid outbreaks have paralysed cities across the country.

Sanya, the main destination in Hainan province, is famous for its five-star beach resorts and duty-free luxury shopping. Hainan has previously benefited from Beijing's Covid restrictions, which prevented wealthy Chinese from holidaying in Thailand or Europe and driving high-end spending at home.

But the Sanya lockdown will mark the latest blow to China's tourism industry and efforts to boost the ailing economy through consumer spending. The economy narrowly missed a contraction in the second quarter.

In the first half of the year, tourist trips fell 22 per cent, while travel spend-

ing collapsed 28 per cent, according to government statistics.

While attempting to suppress Covid inside the country via lockdowns, mass testing and other restrictions, Beijing has also severely curtailed inbound travel for both citizens and foreigners. The number of flights into the country each day has plunged from pre-pandemic levels, and the aviation regulator has introduced policies to automatically suspend routes if a flight breaches a threshold of Covid cases.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China, the regulator, announced a slight relaxation of the automatic suspension policy yesterday.

Additional reporting by Sun Yu in Beijing

Middle East

Israeli strike kills second Islamic Jihad leader as Gaza crisis worsens

JAMES SHOTTER — JERUSALEM

An Israeli air strike has killed a senior figure in the militant group Palestinian Islamic Jihad, amid the most serious flare-up in hostilities between Israel and militants in the Gaza Strip for more than a year.

Over the past three days, Israeli forces have repeatedly bombed sites in Gaza — an impoverished stretch of land hemmed in between Israel and Egypt that is home to more than 2m Palestinians — while Islamic Jihad militants have fired hundreds of rockets into Israel.

According to the health ministry in Gaza, 31 Palestinians, including six children and four women, have been killed since the fighting began. No Israeli deaths have been reported.

Israel said yesterday that among those killed was Khaled Mansour, who commanded Islamic Jihad's operations in the south of Gaza and was targeted by an air strike on Saturday. His counterpart in northern Gaza, Taysir al-Jabari, was killed by an Israeli strike on Friday, triggering the latest round of fighting.

The escalation is the sharpest since Israel and Hamas, the militant group that rules Gaza, fought an 11-day war last year.

Israel said it had launched the air raids in response to an "imminent threat" from Islamic Jihad, following days of tension sparked by the arrest of another senior member of the group in the occupied West Bank last week.

Islamic Jihad, an Iran-backed group founded in the 1980s, responded by firing a barrage of rockets into Israel.

Israel's prime minister, Yair Lapid, said yesterday that the military was continuing strikes on "terrorist targets and operatives, and to thwart rocket-launching squads", adding: "This operation will continue as long as necessary."

Gaza's health ministry said that in addition to the 31 Palestinian deaths, "Israeli aggression" was responsible for injuries to 265 people.

An Israeli official said 17 militants had been killed. Israeli officials also said that one incident, in which children were killed in the Jebeliyah refugee camp in northern Gaza, was the result of a rocket launched by Islamic Jihad militants misfiring and falling short of its target.

Yesterday morning, Islamic Jihad fired rockets towards Jerusalem, but they were intercepted to the west of the city by Israel's Iron Dome defence system. Rockets fired towards Tel Aviv, Israel's Mediterranean business hub, on Saturday were also intercepted.

A spokesperson for Israel's military said that, as of yesterday morning, 580 rockets had been fired at Israel, adding that 97 per cent of the 450 that had reached its skies had been intercepted.

The fighting in Gaza has sparked concerns that Hamas, which has run the Gaza Strip since 2007 and has greater military capabilities than Islamic Jihad, could enter the fighting. Israel and Hamas have fought four wars in the past 15 years.

As of yesterday Hamas had not joined, although spokesman Haneen Qassem issued a statement saying Israel was "deluded" in thinking it could

Brazil. Presidential race

Bolsonaro hopes economy will be election boon

Rebound in growth will help the rightwing leader but inflation remains stubborn

BRYAN HARRIS — SÃO PAULO MICHAEL POOLER — VITÓRIA

Isabel da Costa, a restaurant manager in São Paulo, is conflicted about the state of the Brazilian economy. On one hand, she says she sees a strong bounceback from the coronavirus pandemic, with new bars and businesses popping up across the city.

On the other, she says, soaring levels of inflation have undercut any sense that life is improving for the average citizen. "People are coming back. New bars and restaurants are opening and the public is starting to consume again. But inflation is a huge problem. Everything is too expensive."

As the country gears up for elections in October, the economy is dominating the national debate. In surveys, voters have repeatedly ranked economic issues as the most important, above crime and corruption, which figured prominently in previous elections. Rightwing president Jair Bolsonaro will be hoping that recent economic data will boost his chances, say analysts.

Driven by a strong rebound in the services sector, Brazil's economy is now forecast to grow 1.7 per cent this year, a substantial improvement from as recently as January, when prominent banks predicted a recession.

Spurred by the full reopening following Covid-19 restrictions, unemployment has fallen below double digits for the first time since January 2016, and services sector activity has reached its highest level since 2015, according to government data.

Yet, at 11.4 per cent annually, inflation remains high. Despite largely successful government efforts to tamp down the cost of fuel through tax cuts, food prices have also continued to rise, hurting the tens of millions of poor Brazilians who struggle to put food on the table. The price of carrots and potatoes has risen about 70 per cent, while that of milk has increased more than 30 per cent in the past 12 months.

"There's a phenomenon today, which is more jobs but lower income, with salaries corroded by inflation," said Sérgio



Street anger: public sector workers, carrying a cut-out of Jair Bolsonaro depicted as film character Edward Scissorhands, protest in Brasília against salary cuts — Edoardo Peres/AP

you need to have for a business, it ends up being very difficult."

Bolsonaro has recognised the importance of giving citizens a boost. Last month, his government passed a R\$41bn (\$7.7bn) spending package, which will increase monthly cash payments to Brazil's poorest by 50 per cent to R\$600 until the end of the year, in addition to creating fuel subsidies for truck and taxi drivers.

But the president still faces an uphill battle to win re-election. A study from Datafolha showed him trailing his main rival, leftwing former leader Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, by 18 percentage points. Other polls in recent weeks showed the former army captain appearing to narrow the gap to less than 10 percentage points.

"It is a fact that a country that is doing well economically tends to re-elect its presidents. The recent economic indicators can help Bolsonaro, but it's hard to say whether they will be enough to change enough minds to give him a victory," said Felipe Nunes, founder of poll-

controversy, notably his perceived mishandling of the pandemic. His rejection rate is 53 per cent among voters.

Armando Castelar, an economist at the Brazilian Institute of Economics, says the improving economy and spending package will make "the election more disputed than polls suggest."

"The economy in 2022 is shaping up to be better than feared. The unemployment rate is falling surprisingly fast and a lot of this has to do with the recovery of services, which has been the last sector to recover after the pandemic," he said.

Service sector activity — which accounts for more than 60 per cent of gross domestic product — expanded by 9.4 per cent this year up to May, fuelled by a rebound in transport, tourism and restaurants, according to official government statistics.

Brazil also received a boost from high commodity prices as a result of the war in Ukraine, while tightening monetary policy weighed less on growth than expected, Castelar added.

The brighter outlook for Latin Amer-

"The economy in 2022 is shaping up to be better than feared"

by local banks and predicted Brazil would grow 2.1 per cent this year.

"Of course [the banks] are wrong. Either they are wrong or they are militant politically. They are trying to affect the election," Guedes told the Financial Times last year. "It is more likely that Brazil has some growth and resilient inflation [in 2022] than lower inflation and no growth," he said at the time.

Camila Abdelmalak, an economist with Veedha Investimentos, pointed to effective government efforts to stimulate growth — including allowing employees to withdraw cash from a mandatory redundancy fund — even before the spending package passed.

For Paulo Alberto Seibel, a 58-year-old businessman who runs a booming brick factory in the interior of coastal state Espírito Santo, Bolsonaro deserves credit for the improving economy.

"They say that the country isn't growing," he said. "Well, we can't manufacture enough." Despite being a diehard supporter of the president, however, he cannot ignore the pinch from inflation:

Vale, chief economist at MB Asociados. According to da Costa: "When you add in gas, electricity, rent, everything

ster Quast. Elected in 2018 as a populist outsider, Bolsonaro's first term was marked by

ica's largest economy will vindicate finance minister Paulo Guedes, who last year dismissed forecasts of a recession

"If diesel was a bit cheaper, things would be even better still." Additional reporting by Carolina Ingizua

"undermine the growing resistance across Palestine by assassinating Palestinian resistance commanders".

Africa

China role viewed as key battleground by rivals vying for Kenya presidency

ANDRES SCHIPANI — NAIROBI

The two men going head to head to become Kenya's next president agree on one thing: China is at the heart of tomorrow's election.

For deputy president William Ruto it is the spread of Chinese nationals in cities, many of whom are trying to earn a living selling local street food dishes. And former prime minister Railo Odinga has

made much of the high cost of the east African country's borrowing from Beijing, which it is now struggling to service. Their focus highlights the central role China has occupied during the election campaign.

Chinese workers are an increasingly common sight in cities and a large proportion of repayments for debts racked up over the past decade are owed to Chinese lenders. Total debt servicing eats

up 3 per cent of the country's gross domestic product. China has embarked on a 20-year lending spree that has made Beijing Africa's largest source of development finance and a big financier of legacy infrastructure projects in Kenya under current president Uhuru Kenyatta, who is standing down after serving two terms and is backing Odinga after falling out with Ruto.

Speaking to the Financial Times, Ruto deflected his sharp criticism of some Chinese arrivals, including a threat to deport those who set up small retail businesses or sell roasted street food dishes such as roasted maize.

"That's my position," he said, reaffirming the comments he made during a campaign event in Nairobi in June that "we have enough aeroplanes to deport them back to where they came from".

His comments come at a time when Kenyans are struggling to cope with inflation at a five-year high of 8.3 per cent in July.

Odinga, who is making his fifth attempt to be elected president, has focused on Chinese loans to Kenya,

which have risen from \$4.1bn to \$6.4bn over the past five years, according to official numbers.

As prime minister, he negotiated deals with China including a \$3.8bn railway linking the port of Mombasa with Nairobi that has been criticised over the alleged opaqueness of its financial terms. Odinga said he intended to renegotiate loans with some creditors, including China, if he won. Some loans

could be converted so they had longer repayment periods and lower interest rates to release money for new development projects, he suggested.

Ruto, by contrast, has made clear that he is "not looking at negotiating any debt", referring to existing borrowing.

Kenya's total external public debt topped \$36.7bn, or 34.4 per cent of GDP, at the end of last year, putting the country at "high risk of distress", according to the IMF. China is among the top lenders but trails behind multilateral creditors. An Afrobarometer poll from last year showed that 87 per cent of Kenyan respondents felt their country had overborrowed from Beijing.

Only recently, Kenyatta inaugurated the country's first public-private partnership road project, a \$588m highway in Nairobi with pagoda-like toll booths that was designed, financed and built using Chinese funds.

Any change in Nairobi's stance towards Beijing would mark a shift in tone and policy, say analysts, making tomorrow's vote one of Africa's most important elections this year.

Despite the campaign focus on China, Hannah Ryder, chief executive of Development Reimagined, an Africa-focused consultancy with headquarters in Beijing, said there had as yet been no signs of anti-China sentiment in Kenya.

"It would be surprising, very surprising, if whoever is elected does not quickly try to engage China," said Ryder.

Opinion polls put the candidates in a dead heat, and analysts expect a runoff following the election. To win outright, a presidential candidate must win 50 per cent plus one vote while securing 25 per cent of the votes in the majority of Kenya's 47 counties.

As the election has neared, candidates have sought to make clear their differences. While they may agree on China being a key issue, Odinga suggested that he would opt for dialogue over deporting workers if he became the country's next president.

"If the Chinese offer better terms and also better prices for the goods and services that we want, we will continue to deal with the Chinese," he said. "We don't see that China is a threat."



Rallying cry: William Ruto addresses supporters last week in Thika

Legal Notices section containing two notices from The Companies Act regarding resolutions and amendments to the Memorandum and Articles of Association for various companies.

Sanction enforcement The west faces a clear choice on fossil fuels: it must stop fuelling Putin's war machine OLEG USTENKO

Companies & Markets

US oil and gas producers reject pleas to open the taps

- Operators defy Biden's investment call
Dividends and buybacks take priority

JUSTIN JACOBS — HOUSTON

America's largest oil and gas producers are keeping a lid on supply, defying calls from the Biden administration to lift output even as soaring fuel prices driven by Russia's war in Ukraine deliver bumper profits.

Top shale oil and gas producers including ConocoPhillips, Pioneer Natural Resources and Devon Energy unveiled sharp rises in second-quarter profits this month as high crude and gas prices filled the industry's coffers.

But executives say they remain under pressure from Wall Street to return the windfall to investors through dividends and share buybacks rather than spending heavily to increase production.

'Unless shareholders say we do not like these big dividends, I see no reason to change our strategy'

"Unless we have shareholders that come in and say: look, we absolutely do not like these big dividends; we do not like your share repurchase programme; we want you to go back to a growth model," Rick Munceff, chief executive of Devon Energy, one of the biggest shale producers, told analysts. "Until we see that, I see no reason to change our strategy."

That sentiment was echoed by other shale executives in the latest sign that oil companies and their shareholders remain unmoved by politicians' calls for more oil and gas supply after Russia's invasion of Ukraine sent fuel prices soaring. Energy prices have driven inflation rates across the US and Europe to levels not seen in 40 years.

US president Joe Biden and other western politicians have attacked the oil companies' decision to funnel profits

back to shareholders rather than invest in new production that would help tame prices.

Over the past decade, the US shale industry became notorious for free-wheeling spending that delivered rising output but inflicted heavy losses on shareholders and plunged companies deep into debt.

The approach now being adopted has slowed the country's oil supply growth compared with recent years when commodity prices were elevated. The US is producing about 12.1mm barrels a day of crude, according to the Energy Information Administration. That is up about 800,000b/d from a year ago, but still shy of pre-pandemic highs.

The growth in output this year has primarily been driven by private operators not under the same kind of shareholder pressure to cap investment.

Occidental Petroleum says it is still focused on paying down more of the debt it took on to buy Anadarko Petroleum in 2019 and lifting its dividend.

For now, it sees ploughing money into its own shares as a better bet than expanding output. "We don't feel the need to grow production," said chief executive Vicki Hollub. "We feel like one of the best values right now is investment in our own stock."

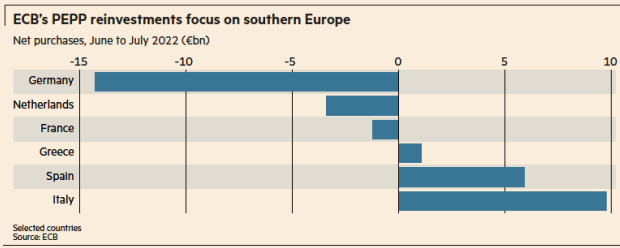
Billionaire investor Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway has built a near-20 per cent stake in Occidental, helping its share price to more than double over the past year.

The S&P oil and gas producers exchange traded fund is down about 26 per cent from highs in early June, but remains up 25 per cent this year, making it a standout in a bleak year for the broader market. Yet many oil executives claim that the disruption in supply stemming from Russia's invasion of Ukraine will put a floor under crude prices even as economic growth slows.

Fragmentation fears ECB injects billions of euros into the weaker bloc debt markets



European Central Bank: the bank has poured €17bn into Italian, Spanish and Greek markets — Michael Probst/AP



NIKOUL ASGARI — LONDON

The European Central Bank is using its pandemic-era bond-buying programme to shield highly indebted eurozone countries from the effects of its decision to unwind stimulus programmes in its bid to fight inflation.

The central bank concluded net purchases under its pandemic emergency purchase programme in March, but is focusing reinvestments of maturing bonds on the bloc's more financially fragile members.

Between June and July, the ECB injected €17bn into Italian, Spanish and Greek markets, while allowing its portfolio of German, Dutch and French debt to fall by €18bn, according to Financial Times calculations based on the central bank's data.

The reinvestments highlight the ECB's eagerness to keep a lid on borrowing costs for countries such as Italy and prevent a eurozone debt

melt-down as it pulls back from the accommodative monetary policy that has supported the bloc since the debt crisis a decade ago.

It comes after the ECB last month raised interest rates for the first time since 2011 after making the decision to conclude the PEPP programme, and a longer-running bond-buying scheme called the asset purchase programme.

Sven Jari Stehn, chief European economist at Goldman Sachs, said the "extent of the flexibility that has been utilised" in reinvesting proceeds of bonds that were part of the PEPP programme was "somewhat more than people had expected".

ECB policymakers and investors are worried that tighter monetary policy will widen the gulf between the region's strongest and weakest economies — so-called "fragmentation risk". These fears pushed wider the difference between Italian and benchmark German 10-year bond yields to

as much as 2.4 percentage points in June, a level last seen during the market tumult in the early days of the pandemic in 2020.

The spread has since narrowed to about 2.1 percentage points after the ECB committed itself to pushing back against fragmentation. The ECB last month said flexibility in deploying PEPP reinvestments would be the "first line of defence" in its attempt to keep a lid on so-called spreads.

The central bank also last month put in place a new transmission protection instrument that can be used in case PEPP reinvestments fail to keep spreads under control. The tool allows the ECB to buy the bonds of any country it deems as facing market pressures outside the economic outlook, at unlimited scale.

Investors have been watching Italian spreads cautiously to see when the ECB may step in, with many deeming 2.5 percentage points an important mark.

Merck says it obeys tax law despite probe by Senate

JAMIE SMYTH — NEW YORK

Drugmaker Merck has defended the company's approach to tax after a US congressional committee accused it of exploiting loopholes to avoid paying billions of dollars and blocking an inquiry into its practices.

Chief financial officer Caroline Litchfield said the company operated with the highest "ethics and integrity in absolutely everything we do" and was continuing to co-operate with the Senate finance committee's investigation.

Merck is one of several US-based multinational companies that have come under scrutiny from the committee, which is investigating how Big Pharma uses a combination of offshore subsidiaries, tax exemptions and legal loopholes to slash their tax bills.

In 2021, the company paid an effective tax rate of 11 per cent, almost half the US corporate tax rate of 21 per cent. Almost half of its sales were generated in the US, according to company filings. "From a tax perspective, we operate and comply with not only the words of tax law but the spirit of tax law in each and every country in which we operate," Litchfield said in an interview.

Litchfield's comments follow blistering criticism of Merck last week from Democrat Ron Wyden, the Senate finance committee chair, who accused the company of stonewalling the committee's investigation into the tax policies of US pharmaceutical companies.

Merck had twice declined to provide information to the committee and is choosing to keep secret how much of its profits are reported by offshore subsidiaries for tax purposes, he said.

"There appears to be a substantial discrepancy between where Merck generates prescription drug sales and where Merck books profits from those drug sales for tax purposes," he added.

The committee is investigating how Merck structures sales of its blockbuster cancer drug Keytruda, which reached \$17.2bn last year, an increase of 19.5 per cent compared with 2020. It is examining why all profits generated from sale of Keytruda — including sales made to American buyers — are taxed in jurisdictions outside the US.

"Since Merck holds the intellectual property rights to Keytruda in the Netherlands and manufactures the drug entirely in Ireland, Merck is able to avoid billions of dollars of taxes on profits from sales in the US," said Wyden.

Financials. Green policy

Banks tout fossil fuel credentials after ESG backlash

Republican-led states attack lenders they claim have gone too far with climate agenda

PATRICK TEMPLE-WEST AND JOSHUA FRANKLIN — NEW YORK

In recent years, Wall Street companies have tried to talk up their commitment to the environment and social justice. Now they are singing a different tune.

Large US banks such as Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan Chase are among a clutch of global financial services groups that have been touting their business relationships with oil and gas companies. They are doing so to placate politicians in Republican-led states who are penalising them for not doing enough to support the fossil fuel industry.

So far, their entreaties have fallen on deaf ears. West Virginia last month banned five financial companies — BlackRock, JPMorgan, Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley and Wells Fargo — from banking activities in the state.

Riley Moore, West Virginia state treasurer, accused them of having “policies aimed at weakening our energy industries” in a state where coal and fossil fuel taxes are the third-largest source of revenue.

The West Virginia move is the latest in a wave of attacks on financial institutions that Republican lawmakers view as having gone too far in their subscription to the environmental, social and governance, or ESG, agenda.

Some of the lenders that have been targeted in West Virginia have responded by brandishing their financing of fossil fuels, a discordant volte-face that follows years of trying to convince

climate change activists that they are not complicit about the environment.

In a July letter to West Virginia's treasurer, Goldman said it had provided more than \$118.9bn in financing to fossil fuel companies since 2016, and \$17.8bn in financing last year alone.

In a similar letter, JPMorgan general counsel Stacey Friedman touted the bank's \$42.6bn credit exposure to fossil fuel companies, including the state's largest banks, told the state it had financed \$208m in US oil and gas projects.

The restrictions imposed by West Virginia do not yet pose a significant revenue risk but that could change if the efforts to freeze banks out of state business become more widespread, analysts said.

“From an optical standpoint, it's not the headlines you want,” said Gerard Cassidy, analyst at RBC Capital Markets. “The pendulum has swung so far left in the last five years, particularly with the sustainable energy [and] ESG policies. Now the pendulum is coming back.”

The swinging of that pendulum is being felt, in differing degrees, across Wall Street. Last month, BlackRock said it voted for fewer environmental and social shareholder petitions this year

compared with 2021. The world's largest money manager argued that shareholder proposals were becoming too prescriptive and that Russia's invasion of Ukraine had changed its calculus.

Banks will soon face another test in Florida. Last month, the state's Republican governor, Ron DeSantis, said he would propose legislation next year to “protect [voters] from the ESG movement”, which he accused of “targeting disfavoured individuals and industries to advance a woke ideological agenda”.

DeSantis, a possible 2024 presidential contender, said he wanted to ban the agency that oversees the state's pension funds from using money managers who consider ESG factors. Instead it would be required to “only consider maximising the return on investment on behalf of Florida's retirees”.

The challenge with such restrictions was that there were no settled definitions in the US of ESG, said Joshua Lichtenstein, a partner at law firm Ropes & Gray. “If you are a real estate fund, you can't ignore sea level rise when buying coastal buildings. It becomes actually an investor prudence issue,” he added.

Some state Republicans in West Virginia have said they fear banning global banks over their ESG commitments could result in higher borrowing and financing costs.

Economists in July estimated that Texas state and local borrowers would pay an additional \$303m-\$532m in interest on the \$32bn of municipal bonds that were issued after the boycott measures were introduced.

“We see massive increase in yields for those most affected places in Texas,” said Daniel Garrett, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and a co-author of the research.



Ron DeSantis, Florida governor has criticised a 'woke ideological agenda'

IN THE COURT OF CHANCERY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE
IN RE: LEASE INVESTMENT FIGHT (LIFT)) C.A. No. 2022-0384-LJW
TRUST, a Delaware Statutory Trust

NOTICE OF DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROOFS OF CLAIM OF OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 29, 2022 (“BAR DATE”).
COLLECTIVELY, THE “DELAWARE LIFT ENTITIES”

Lease Investment Fight Trust, a Delaware statutory trust (“LIFT”)
LIFT Trust-Sub 1, a Delaware statutory trust (“Sub 1” and together with LIFT, the “Petitioners”)
All Delaware subsidiaries of the Petitioners (collectively, including the Petitioners, the “Delaware LIFT Entities”)
A list of the Delaware LIFT Entities can be found by reference to the Petition (defined below), a copy of which is available for review at <https://liffreports.com>

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE THAT, on June 29, 2022, the Court of Chancery of the State of Delaware (the “Court”), having jurisdiction over the Verified Petition for Approval of Trustees’ Plan of Reorganization (the “Petition”) filed with the Court on May 2, 2022 in the captioned matter entered an order (the “Bar Date Order”) approving Thursday, September 29, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. (prevailing Pacific Time) (the “Bar Date”) as the deadline for each person or entity (including, without limitation, individuals, partnerships, corporations, joint ventures, trusts and governmental entities) to file any proof of claim (a “Proof of Claim”) against the Delaware LIFT Entities. Any person or entity who fails to file a Proof of Claim prior to the Bar Date will be precluded from filing a Proof of Claim against any of the Delaware LIFT Entities thereafter. Copies of the Petition and the Bar Date Order can be found at <https://liffreports.com>.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT, all Proofs of Claim must be filed by hand delivery, by nationally recognized overnight courier, or by certified or registered mail, postage prepaid to us by **actually received** by Phoenix American Financial Services, Inc., as Administrative Agent of LIFT (the “Administrative Agent”) on or before the Bar Date at the following address:
Lease Investment Fight Trust
c/o Phoenix American Financial Services, Inc.,
as Administrative Agent
2401 Kenner Boulevard
San Rafael, California 94901
Attention: Joseph Morgan, Senior Vice President

Proofs of Claim will be deemed timely filed only if a paper copy of the complete Proof of Claim with supporting documentation is received by the Administrative Agent at the address above on or prior to the Bar Date. Proofs of Claim may also be delivered by facsimile, telecopy, email or any other electronic transmission. Any Proofs of Claim timely and properly filed will be processed and settled following the Bar Date.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT, all Proofs of Claim must include:
(1) the name of the claimant;
(2) the claimant's address, telephone number and email address;
(3) the total amount claimed; and
(4) an itemized statement of support for the amounts claimed.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT, the Court has scheduled a final hearing for November 23, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. (prevailing Eastern Time) (the “Hearing”) on the Trustees’ Plan of Reorganization, any objections thereto as well as any dispute regarding any Proof of Claim and any other issue relevant to the foregoing. The hearing will be held via Zoom. Any party interested in attending the Hearing by Zoom may obtain hearing information from the below listed contact for the Petitioners. The Hearing may be continued at the option of the Court. The Petitioners will file with the Court their proposed Plan of Reorganization and final order approving same by motion submitted as soon as practicable after the Bar Date, but no later than twenty (20) days prior to the Hearing. Any parties that have the standing and grounds to object must file their objections with the Court at least ten (10) days prior to the Hearing.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT, you MUST submit a Proof of Claim in accordance with the procedures set forth herein to be eligible to receive a distribution on any valid claim you may have against any of the Delaware LIFT Entities. For the purposes of this notice, the word “claim” means (a) a right to payment, whether or not such right is reduced to judgment, liquidated, unliquidated, fixed, contingent, matured, unmatured, disputed, undisputed, legal, equitable, secured, or unsecured; or (b) a right to an equitable remedy for breach of performance if such breach gives rise to a right to payment, whether or not such right to an equitable remedy is reduced to judgment, fixed, contingent, matured, unmatured, disputed, undisputed, secured, or unsecured. Please also note that certain claims may be subordinate to other claims and may not qualify for distribution on that basis.

If you have any questions relating to this Notice, please feel free to contact New York counsel for the Petitioners, Paul Dransky, Esq. of Milbank LLP at (212) 512-6411 or pdransky@milbank.com, or you may contact the Petitioners’ Delaware counsel, John H. Newcomer, Jr., Esq. of Morris James LLP, at (302) 888-9975 or jnewcomer@morrisjames.com.

YOU SHOULD CONSULT YOUR OWN ATTORNEY IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, INCLUDING WHETHER YOU SHOULD FILE A PROOF OF CLAIM. MILBANK LLP AND MORRIS JAMES LLP, THE ATTORNEYS FOR THE PETITIONERS, ARE NOT AUTHORIZED TO PROVIDE YOU WITH ANY LEGAL ADVICE.

Dated: June 29, 2022
BY ORDER OF THE COURT
/s/ Vice Chancellor Lori W. Hill

COMPANIES & MARKETS

Climate, war and inflation rouse reinsurers

Covid and catastrophe claims eroded profits and now new threats are forcing price rises or a retreat from cover

Life has not been easy for reinsurers in the past few years. Claims for natural catastrophes and pandemic-related losses have wiped out a large part of their profits.

But the latest set of global problems: the war in Ukraine, galloping inflation and the ever-increasing risks of climate change, have jolted them into action. In some areas, they are putting up the price of cover, in others they are retreating altogether.

“What looked like . . . a gradual change is increasingly looking like a knee-jerk change,” said Stephen Catlin, an industry veteran and chief executive of insurer Convex.

Reinsurers play a vital role in trade and the global economy, offering insurance to insurers to reduce the risk that a big claim will wipe them out. This backstop against a whole range of financial risks, which is underpinned by \$700bn in capital, gives insurers the confidence to provide cover to a much wider market.

Among the biggest reinsurance groups are the four major European players, Munich Re, Swiss Re, Hannover Re and Scor, as well as the Lloyd's of London market and Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway.

Swiss Re's chief executive Christian Mumenthaler said that “timid” price rises in natural catastrophe reinsurance in recent years had now accelerated after three years of higher costs from losses.

For contracts renewing in July, Swiss Re implemented a 12 per cent rise in premiums across its property and casualty business, which includes natural catastrophe cover and other types of insurance.

“It's very big, because it's [across] everything . . . I can't remember a rise like that,” said Mumenthaler.

Executives attribute the market tightening to robust demand, fuelled by inflation driving up the value of what is being insured, and a fall in supply after



Climate risks rise: a blaze in Sheffield last month as an unprecedented heatwave across the UK sparked wildfires in northern England — Christopher Furlong/Getty Images

catastrophe losses resulted in poor underwriting results, which have now contributed to a reduction in the supply of reinsurance capacity,” she added.

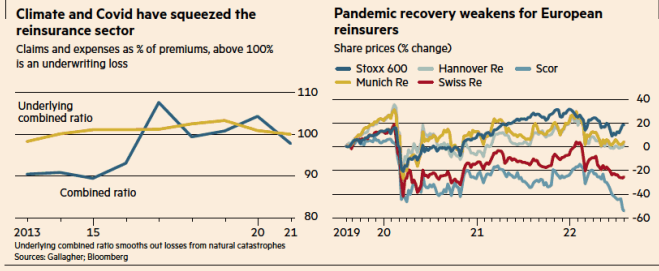
This, plus increased demand, has made it easier for reinsurers to push up prices, Mowery said.

A sign that things are changing came in June, a busy time for renewals of property catastrophe reinsurance policies focused on the Florida market. A lack of capacity was one factor that drove the cost of reinsurance up 20-30 per cent on average, said TigerRisk.

Broker Aon said in a report on the reinsurance market in June and July that years of “above-average” natural catastrophe claims had reduced reinsurers' appetite for taking catastrophe risk.

“For the first time since the US hurricanes of 2004 and 2005, property natural catastrophe capacity contracted materially, and some reinsurers would not write certain risks . . . at any price,” it said. Those seeking reinsurance in

‘Now for the first time [reinsurance prices] are going up faster than they are for insurance’



ation now expect billions of dollars of claims from the owners of the hundreds of planes left stranded by the war.

Reinsurers reducing capacity can create what is called a “hard market”, where demand substantially outstrips supply and prices surge.

Some executives are saying that those conditions are now present, citing recent exits by some reinsurers from the natural catastrophe business. Big Ukraine-related losses could persuade more providers to cut their exposure.

After years of volatility and growing claims, New York-listed reinsurer Axis Capital declared in June it was getting out of the property reinsurance business, which includes natural catastrophe cover. Chief executive Albert Benchimol said the “significant and increasing effects of climate change and the challenges faced by the catastrophe reinsurance market” had forced its hand.

A month earlier, France's Scor said it was on track to reduce its exposure to natural catastrophes by 15 per cent, while Axa said its reinsurance unit had cut its natural catastrophe exposure by 40 per cent at the start of the year.

Executives and brokers attribute

reinsurance areas such as aviation and marine also had to contend with the “most challenging renewal in a generation, reflecting the potential for large losses from the Russia-Ukraine conflict”, Aon added.

Joe Monaghan, a senior executive in its reinsurance broking division, said the reinsurance sector “may be fast approaching a true hard market”.

The next key renewal season on January 1, known as 1/1, is being viewed as a litmus test of the market. A rush to reissue insurance and reinsurance for risks such as war and political violence is already under way, said several industry executives.

While some reinsurers step back, others may seek to fill the gap. At a recent investor event, Munich Re said it was prepared to take advantage of rising prices by writing more reinsurance business, according to a person familiar with the discussions.

Still, much of the industry predicts reinsurance cover will become more expensive and harder to find.

Going through the year, primary insurers will “realise they are going to have to run more risk, buy less reinsurance and it is going to be much more

investor pressure caused some reinsurers to pull back, in particular from the natural catastrophe business.

There has also been reduced appetite, they say, from institutional investors to take on reinsurance risks through insurance-linked securities, partly after losses on these sorts of investments and partly because yields on bonds have increased.



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A publication from the Financial Times

We think the [reinsurance] market is turning. We are now seeing momentum," said Aki Hussain, chief executive of Hiscox, one of the biggest insurers on the London market, which has its own reinsurance unit.

"In the past five years [reinsurance] prices have lagged and now for the first time they are going up faster than they are for insurance."

Another factor in rising prices today is big claims arising from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Insurers in areas such as av-

some of these moves to investor pressure on reinsurers. "Investors have said we don't want more catastrophe risk," said Rod Fox, co-founder of reinsurance broker TigerRisk. "That has trickled down."

Many see 2022 as a turning point. In recent years, an "abundance" of property catastrophe reinsurance outstripped demand and held down rates, said Lara Mowery, global head of distribution at reinsurance broker Guy Carpenter. "Over the past five years elevated

and it is going to be much more expensive", said Catlin. "The [primary] market will be looking at life very differently at 1/1 than it does today."

The natural conclusion would be that the cost of insurance, which has already been rising for years in some markets, has still further to climb.

Jérôme Haegeli, group chief economist at Swiss Re's research department, agreed that rising reinsurance prices are likely to be passed on: "I would expect a knock-on effect."

Financials

Sell-off pushes Berkshire to a \$43.8bn loss

ERIC PLATT — NEW YORK

Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway dramatically slowed new investment in the second quarter after setting a blistering pace at the start of the year, as the US stock market sell-off pushed the insurance-to-railroad conglomerate to a \$43.8bn loss.

Berkshire said on Saturday the drop in global financial markets had weighed heavily on its stock portfolio, which fell in value to \$328bn, from \$391bn at the end of March.

The \$53bn booked loss in the three months to June far outweighed an upbeat quarter for its businesses, which improved their profitability.

The company's filing with US securities regulators showed its purchases of new stocks dwindled to about \$6.2bn in the quarter, down from the \$51.1bn it spent between January and March — a spurt that surprised Berkshire shareholders. Berkshire sold \$2.3bn of stocks in the latest three-month period.

Berkshire also spent \$1bn buying back its own shares in June, a commonly used tactic when Buffett and his investment team find fewer appealing targets in the market.

The 91-year-old investor signalled at the company's annual meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, in April that the spree of multibillion-dollar stock purchases was likely to slow as the year progressed, saying the atmosphere in the company's headquarters had become more "lethargic".

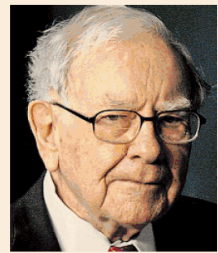
Berkshire's mammoth cash and Treasury holdings were little changed

from the end of March, falling less than \$1bn to \$105.4bn. While net income slid to a \$5.5bn profit at the year's start to a \$43.8bn loss, operating income — which excludes the ups and downs of Berkshire's stock positions — rose 39 per cent to \$9.3bn. That included a \$1.1bn currency-related gain on its non-US dollar debt.

Berkshire is required to include the swings in the value of its stock and derivatives portfolio as part of its earnings each quarter, an accounting rule that Buffett has warned can make the company's earnings figures look "extremely misleading" and volatile.

The loss amounted to \$29,754 per class A share. It stands in contrast to the \$18,488 per share profit the company reported a year earlier.

Berkshire's results are parsed by ana-



Warren Buffett: atmosphere at Berkshire HQ more 'lethargic'

lysts and investors for signs of the health of the broader US economy, as its businesses cut across much of the country's industrial and financial heart.

Inflationary pressures continued to bite, although many of its divisions were able to pass along higher prices to customers.

The BNSF railroad, which Buffett has described as one of the "four giants" within Berkshire, reported a 15 per cent increase in revenue as fuel surcharges it levied on clients offset a drop in shipping volumes. Fuel costs for BNSF, which has more than 32,500 miles of rail tracks across 28 states, jumped more than 80 per cent year on year.

Insurance unit Geico recorded a \$497mn pre-tax profit underwriting loss in the quarter, up from the three months before. The division blamed the bigger loss on much higher prices for new cars and auto parts that it must pay when its clients are involved in accidents.

In April, Buffett said the company was seeing the effects of inflation first hand, warning that it "swindles almost everybody".

Berkshire's housing businesses, including modular home unit Clayton Homes and home decor retailer Nebraska Furniture Mart, offered hints about how consumers were responding to higher prices and increased mortgage rates. Furniture sales were relatively flat, with higher prices compensating for lower orders.

Shares of Berkshire Hathaway's class A common stock have fallen about 2 per cent this year, outperforming the 15 per cent drop in the benchmark S&P 500.

COMPANIES & MARKETS

Market questions. Week ahead

UK output set to fall as recession looms

Did the UK economy shrink in the second quarter?

The UK economy is expected to contract marginally in the second quarter as it heads for a recession of a scale not seen since the 1990s later this year.

Economists polled by Reuters forecast a report on Friday to show output contracted 0.2 per cent between the first and the second quarter.

Gross domestic product is forecast to have shrunk by 1.5 per cent between May and June, affected by the platinum jubilee extra day's holiday and partially reversing May's expansion.

This follows growth of 0.8 per cent in the first quarter with the slowdown reflecting the impact of the hit to households' finances from surging energy prices. Last week, the Bank of England downgraded its UK economic forecast as it increased interest rates by the largest margin in nearly 30 years.

After some growth in the third quarter, the bank said that the UK was projected to enter recession from the fourth quarter of this year and to continue to contract until the end of 2023. After that, growth was expected to be "very weak by historical standards", the BoE said.

This is a significant downward revision from the May's assessment, following the new surge in gas prices that reflected the protracted war in Ukraine and cuts in gas supply to Europe.

"The big picture, though, is that the economy is still on track to be smaller in 2025 than it was in 2019, before the pandemic," said Thomas Pugh, economist at the consultancy RSM UK. "The much weaker economy is likely to create more unemployment." *Valentina Romel*

Is US core CPI being overlooked?

Headline inflation captures the highly visible food and petrol categories that sting consumers when prices soar, but the US core consumer price index — which excludes those volatile categories — is expected to outpace the headline number in July, and may continue to do so in months to come.

Economists polled by Reuters expect



Slowdown: economists predict UK gross domestic product will have shrunk by 1.5 per cent between May and June *Molly Darlington/Reuters*

US headline inflation to increase 0.2 per cent month on month from June to July, while core CPI is expected to rise 0.5 per cent. The report is due out on Wednesday.

Derek Holt, head of capital markets economics at Scotiabank, sees core CPI as the figure that may more clearly show how persistent inflation is in the US.

He said the US might have already reached peak inflation in terms of food and fuel, but expected price growth for durable goods and some services to continue rising.

"We're still in the phase that gets a reopening effect on the more volatile high-contact service prices, where people are getting out and about in the summer and travelling more," he said.

Property and vehicle prices, for example, could continue to rise as food and fuel prices reached a plateau, especially after Opec+ last week agreed to a slight production increase and Ukraine and

Russia agreed a deal that would allow Ukraine to export its grain into a supply-constrained market.

But heightened tensions between China and Taiwan could disrupt the island's dominant semiconductor industry and send ripples through the global economy.

"A disruption to Taiwan would strike at the heart of many manufactured durable and big-ticket items and grind a lot of supply chains to a bigger halt," Holt said, with the caveat that he did not expect that kind of disruption.

Jaren Kerr

Will eurozone industrial production stall?

The eurozone is set for a deceleration in economic activity as rising interest rates and surging food and fuel prices caused by Russia's war in Ukraine push the region towards recession.

Eurozone industrial production data

"The [UK] economy is still on track to be smaller in 2025 than it was in 2019, before the pandemic"

for June is set to be released on Friday and will show the impact of soaring energy prices and prolonged supply chain disruption on industrial output. The May figure beat analysts' expectations, with industrial production rising 0.8 per cent on a month-on-month basis, but analysts are now expecting it to flatline in June.

"Activity in the euro area is deteriorating in a broad-based fashion, across sectors and countries," said Barclays analysts, who expect the bloc to fall into recession by the end of the year.

German manufacturing orders fell in June as the eurozone's largest economy grappled with supply chain issues and interruptions stemming from the Ukraine war. Analysts and economists broadly expect the region to slip into recession, as business and industrial activity declines and consumer spending slows, squeezed by the cost of living and energy price crisis. *Nikou Asgari*

Pharmaceuticals

Eli Lilly warns Indiana will lose jobs over abortion curbs

JAMIE SMYTH — NEW YORK

Eli Lilly said it would divert employment outside its home state of Indiana following the Republican-controlled legislature's decision to pass a nearly total ban on abortion.

"We are concerned that this law will hinder Lilly's — and Indiana's — ability to attract diverse scientific, engineering and business talent from around the world," the US drugmaker said.

It added that it had expanded its employee health plan to cover interstate travel for abortion and reproductive services, but added this might not be enough for some current and future staff. "Given this new law, we will be forced to plan for more employment growth outside our home state."

The Indiana bill bans abortion from conception except in certain cases such as rape, incest and severe health risks to the mother. It was passed by the state legislature on Friday. It is the first legislation passed into law since the US Supreme Court overturned the 1973 Roe vs Wade ruling in June, although several other states already had trigger laws in place that implemented abortion restrictions immediately.

Lilly employs more than 10,000 people in Indiana and more than 36,000 worldwide. The decision by one of Indiana's largest employers to divert investment outside its home state underscores the challenges faced by US businesses as they manage healthcare needs of staff while trying not to provoke reprisals from conservative politicians for taking a stand on abortion.

The statement by Lilly follows the company's announcement in May that it would invest \$2.1bn in two manufacturing plants in Indiana, which are expected to create up to 500 new Lilly roles and an estimated 1,500 construction jobs. Lilly told the Financial Times it intended to honour its "current commitments" to Indiana.



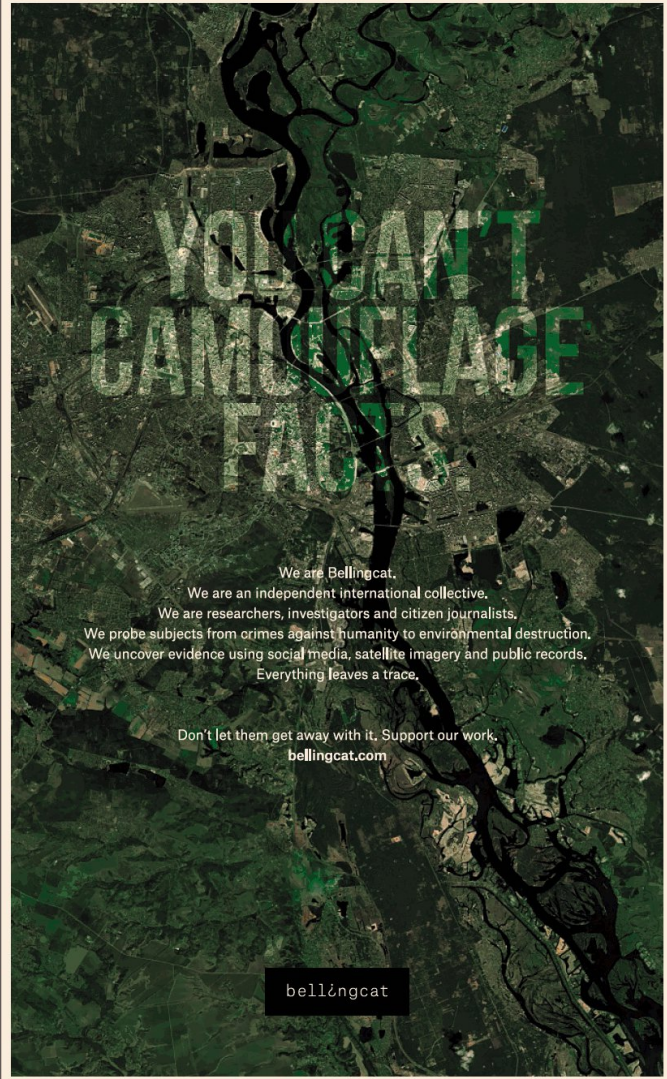
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MARKET DATA

WORLD MARKETS AT A GLANCE				FT.COM/MARKETSDATA			
Change during previous day's trading (%)	<p>S&P 500 No change</p> <p>Nasdaq Composite -1.25%</p> <p>Dow Jones Ind -0.47%</p> <p>FTSE 100 -0.11%</p> <p>FTSE Eurofirst 300 -0.68%</p> <p>Nikkei 0.87%</p> <p>Hang Seng 0.14%</p>	<p>FTSE All World \$ -0.69%</p> <p>\$ per € -0.392%</p> <p>€ per \$ -0.413%</p> <p>¥ per \$ 1.660%</p> <p>£ per € No change</p> <p>Oil Brent \$ Sep 0.35%</p> <p>Gold \$ 1.25%</p>					

AMERICA				EUROPE				ASIA				ROW			
<p>Stock Market movements over last 30 days, with the FTSE All-World in the same currency as a comparison</p> <p>Country Index Latest Previous</p> <p>USA S&P 500 3,902.62 3,878.40</p> <p>USA Nasdaq Composite 11,627.35 11,812.37</p> <p>USA Dow Jones Industrial 31,384.55 31,421.48</p> <p>UK FTSE 100 7,899.09 7,939.74</p> <p>EUROPE FTSE Eurofirst 300 1,635.07 1,713.01</p> <p>EUROPE FTSE MIB 6,006.70 6,472.35</p> <p>ASIA Nikkei 225 28,107.65 28,175.87</p> <p>ASIA Hang Seng 21,643.58 21,643.58</p> <p>ASIA Shanghai Composite 3,364.40 3,277.03</p> <p>ROW BSE Sensex 54,778.45 54,778.45</p>	<p>Country Index Latest Previous</p> <p>France CAC 40 4,737.39 4,737.39</p> <p>Germany DAX 13,703.63 13,703.63</p> <p>Spain IBEX 35 8,122.50 8,122.50</p> <p>Italy FTSE MIB 6,006.70 6,472.35</p> <p>Japan Nikkei 225 28,107.65 28,175.87</p> <p>South Korea KOSPI 2,158.07 2,158.07</p> <p>India BSE Sensex 54,778.45 54,778.45</p> <p>China CSI 300 3,364.40 3,277.03</p> <p>Brazil Ibovespa 100,729.78 100,729.78</p> <p>Indonesia Jakarta Comp 7,944.62 7,944.62</p> <p>Indonesia IDX Composite 8,865.30 8,865.30</p> <p>Indonesia IDX Allw 125 1,980.33 1,980.33</p>	<p>Country Index Latest Previous</p> <p>Philippines Manila Comp 4,605.50 4,605.50</p> <p>Philippines PSEi 4,605.50 4,605.50</p> <p>Philippines PSEi Gen 4,605.50 4,605.50</p> <p>Philippines PSEi Top 100 4,605.50 4,605.50</p> <p>Philippines PSEi Top 50 4,605.50 4,605.50</p> <p>Philippines PSEi Top 20 4,605.50 4,605.50</p> <p>Philippines PSEi Top 10 4,605.50 4,605.50</p> <p>Philippines PSEi Top 5 4,605.50 4,605.50</p> <p>Philippines PSEi Top 1 4,605.50 4,605.50</p> <p>Philippines PSEi Top 0.1 4,605.50 4,605.50</p> <p>Philippines PSEi Top 0.01 4,605.50 4,605.50</p> <p>Philippines PSEi Top 0.001 4,605.50 4,605.50</p>	<p>Country Index Latest Previous</p> <p>India BSE Sensex 54,778.45 54,778.45</p> <p>India Nifty 500 14,600.40 14,600.40</p> <p>India Nifty 200 14,600.40 14,600.40</p> <p>India Nifty 100 14,600.40 14,600.40</p> <p>India Nifty 50 14,600.40 14,600.40</p> <p>India Nifty 25 14,600.40 14,600.40</p> <p>India Nifty 10 14,600.40 14,600.40</p> <p>India Nifty 5 14,600.40 14,600.40</p> <p>India Nifty 1 14,600.40 14,600.40</p> <p>India Nifty 0.1 14,600.40 14,600.40</p> <p>India Nifty 0.01 14,600.40 14,600.40</p> <p>India Nifty 0.001 14,600.40 14,600.40</p>												

STOCK MARKET: BIGGEST MOVERS				UK MARKET WINNERS AND LOSERS			
<p>ACTIVE STOCKS</p> <p>Stock price change</p> <p>Advanced Micro Devices 52.3</p> <p>Apple 183.5</p> <p>Microsoft 372.1</p> <p>Amazon.com 35.9</p> <p>Alphabet 101.1</p> <p>Meta Platforms 144.1</p> <p>Facebook 117.0</p> <p>Twitter 44.1</p> <p>Costco Wholesale 52.2</p>	<p>ACTIVE STOCKS</p> <p>Stock price change</p> <p>Shell 135.8</p> <p>BP 136.1</p> <p>British Petroleum 141.1</p> <p>GlaxoSmithKline 111.3</p> <p>Glaxo 111.3</p> <p>Roche 70.6</p> <p>Novartis 72.7</p> <p>Novartis N 97.0</p> <p>Novartis M 1.52</p> <p>Novartis G 1.52</p> <p>Novartis S 1.52</p> <p>Novartis B 1.52</p> <p>Novartis C 1.52</p> <p>Novartis D 1.52</p> <p>Novartis E 1.52</p> <p>Novartis F 1.52</p> <p>Novartis G 1.52</p> <p>Novartis H 1.52</p> <p>Novartis I 1.52</p> <p>Novartis J 1.52</p> <p>Novartis K 1.52</p> <p>Novartis L 1.52</p> <p>Novartis M 1.52</p> <p>Novartis N 1.52</p> <p>Novartis O 1.52</p> <p>Novartis P 1.52</p> <p>Novartis Q 1.52</p> <p>Novartis R 1.52</p> <p>Novartis S 1.52</p> <p>Novartis T 1.52</p> <p>Novartis U 1.52</p> <p>Novartis V 1.52</p> <p>Novartis W 1.52</p> <p>Novartis X 1.52</p> <p>Novartis Y 1.52</p> <p>Novartis Z 1.52</p>	<p>ACTIVE STOCKS</p> <p>Stock price change</p> <p>Novartis B A's 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p>	<p>ACTIVE STOCKS</p> <p>Stock price change</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p> <p>Novartis B 208.3</p>				

Commodity prices table including Oil, Gas, Metals, and Grains. Columns include Commodity, Unit, Price, and Change.

CURRENCIES table showing exchange rates for major currencies like Dollar, Euro, Pound, and Yen. Columns include Currency, Rate, and Change.

News are derived from Reuters, Bloomberg and Moringstar (indices are at production). Some values are rounded. Coverage discontinued by 1000. The afternoon rates printed in this table are also available on www.ft.com/markets

FTSE ACTUARIES SHARE INDICES

Table of FTSE Actuarial Share Indices for various countries including Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, India, Japan, etc.

FTSE 100 INDEX

FTSE 100 Index performance table with columns for Date, Index, Change, and % Change.

FTSE 500 INDEX

FTSE 500 Index performance table with columns for Date, Index, Change, and % Change.

FTSE 250 INDEX

FTSE 250 Index performance table with columns for Date, Index, Change, and % Change.

FTSE 100 SECTORS: LEADERS & LAGGARDS

Table showing top and bottom performing sectors in the FTSE 100, such as Technology, Healthcare, and Financials.

FTSE 100 SUMMARY

Summary table for FTSE 100 with columns for Sector, Index, Change, and % Change.

UK STOCK MARKET TRADING DATA

Table of UK stock market trading data including volume, value, and price changes.

UK RECENT EQUITY ISSUES

Table of recent equity issues in the UK, including company names, amounts, and dates.

UK COMPANY RESULTS

Table of UK company results showing earnings, revenue, and other financial metrics.

FT500: THE WORLD'S LARGEST COMPANIES

Table of the world's largest companies by market capitalization, including Apple, Microsoft, and Amazon.

UK RIGHTS OFFERS

Table of UK rights offers with columns for Company, Amount, and Date.

UK COMPANIES LISTED

Table listing UK companies with their respective market caps and sectors.

UK RECENT EQUITY ISSUES (continued)

Continuation of UK recent equity issues table.

UK RECENT EQUITY ISSUES (continued)

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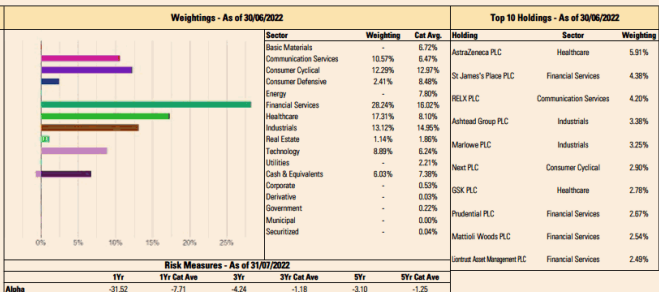
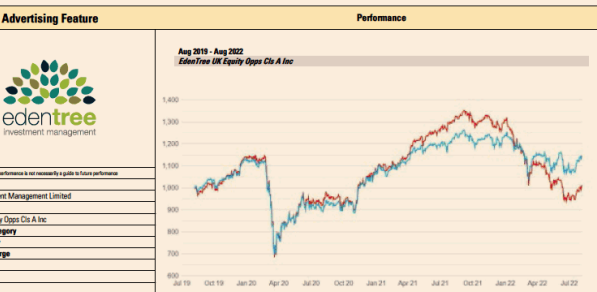
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Investment Performance Summary Table with columns for Fund, Bid, Offer, +/-, Yield, 1Yr, 3Yr. Includes a small table for ESG Metrics and a table for Risk/Return Statistics.

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Rutherford Hall
Critical Comms

will remember who was there at the start, now it just looks like jumping on the bandwagon.

As I said, there are good reasons not to make donations – you do after all have us, and we are pretty well plugged into her people. Have I ever mentioned our brilliant former Treasury spud, Christopher? He knows everyone who counts in Tory circles. But if you really feel strongly about giving, I advise waiting till she's been in power for a few months and then saying you like what you have seen. That way you'll stand out from the crowd.

I know it seems counter-intuitive to wait, but there are better moves in any case. Remember, political parties specialise in finding ways to extract money from rich people without giving much in return. When I was in Downing Street we used to joke about

yourself up to political attacks. Joining business panels, reviews or the boards of ministries offer better lines in. Donations are highly scrutinised, so any decision that benefits the company will generate negative publicity for them and you. Let me talk to a few people and get back to you tomorrow.

Rutherford
Find me on Strava, EoM Sydenham Hill, PR London to Brighton: 4h 37m

Whatsapp: To Stephen. Who's our best line into Team Truss, and don't say Christopher. I know he's uncontaminated by working for the Sunak campaign but we might consider why that is. I mean seriously, in a world of racing bikes the man's a total Chopper. Does Jennifer know the Truss people? We aren't as well in as I'd like, but I think I see an opportunity.

economic strategy.

Whatsapp: To Mike (LizforLeader). Great. Leave it to me.

Whatsapp: To James W. Just to follow up, we are working up some longer-term ideas, but I think there is a real opportunity for a quick win with Team Truss. Are there any of her policies you want to speak up in favour of?

Whatsapp: To James W. What none? Can you have another think?

Whatsapp: To James W. Phew. The plan is we send a public letter with four or five big business names and you as first signature so everyone knows you wrote and organised it. (We've got a draft ready for you.) Team Truss are v excited and know it's down to you.

in favour of? What none? Can you have another think?



Whatsapp: To Mike (LizforLeader): A pleasure. But I can't take all the credit. You've run a blinder of a campaign and deft to lunch. And absolutely, I'd love to meet our new PM at the party conference! But I was going to suggest James W come to one of the biz dinners there and it would be v helpful if he could get just a quick hello with her. I couldn't have done this without him.

From: Rutherford@Monkwellstratgy To: JamesW@L.KandW.co.uk

Fantastic result: they are asking if you'll be at Tory conference. No promises, but there might even be a chance of a quick meeting with Liz. And there may be a new business advisory group in the works. Welcome aboard the Truss train.

Messages recovered by Robert Shrimley

Future of the office

Can a city be redesigned for the new world of work?

Post-pandemic, it is time to reimagine urban areas as spaces alive both day and night, at work and at play, writes Edwin Heathcote



In 1748, Giambattista Nolli published a map of Rome. It was like nothing that had been seen before.

It did not just depict the city as the spaces between the solid black forms of buildings but showed the real complexity of the metropolis at ground level. The map detailed the public and accessible interiors and courtyards, the churches and monastery gardens, the arcaded forecourts of public offices, the access alleys and covered lanes. It was the city as experienced on foot by an inhabitant familiar with a far more complex and nuanced use of space, both public and private, than the usual neutral bird's eye view.

In Northern Europe such a map might have looked very similar: the interiors of buildings, guild halls, markets, churches, exchanges, alleys and arcades. This was a permeable city in which public and private, work and home were less delineated, in which shop and innkeepers lived above their premises, in which trading might be done in a church, a courtyard or a coffee shop.

The royal court too was a more public and accessible place with courtiers and citizens gathering to be seen and to be in proximity to power. London's 17th-century stockbrokers met in coffee shops such as Jonathans's in Change Alley. Lloyd's of London is, famously, named after the coffee shop in which it was founded.

Before the invention of the office in the late 19th century, the whole city was a workplace. The question is whether that idea of the city itself as a dispersed place of work might return.

We have all worked in cafés, in airports, on trains, planes and, of course, at home. As the world of work is transformed post-pandemic, how might the city itself adapt?

The first response to a less tethered workforce and the cult of the start-up was the co-working space, which emerged in San Francisco in the mid-2000s and took a knock through the spectacular implosion of office space provider WeWork in 2019. Yet, despite the fussball and free coffee, it remains just another office. For more than a century the office has been a single building, a concentration of workers, first constructed by corporations as an efficient container and a marker of power and presence in the city and then, increasingly, as an asset class.

Offices around the world all look the same because overseas investors can understand what they are buying more easily – square footage not culture, workspace not architecture. Peter Wynne Rees, the former City of London Corporation's chief planning officer, says he spent his time there "trying to

Private dining domes in Somerset House courtyard, which was being used as a carpark before the grand building was reborn as a palace of culture
Via: Veleco/2019 image/Shutterstock

put the place back into workplace". "When I started [in the 1980s] the City would die after 5.30pm. Now we have banking halls turned into nightclubs. We need to understand that these people gossipping outside pubs or around Lloyd's are also working."

Richard Sennett, professor of sociology at the London School of Economics, agrees. "The French go the café at lunch-time and after work. But they are still working, that is part of the working day. The challenge for cities is how to make them more sociable after the isolation of the pandemic."

City centres are undergoing a moment of radical change. Physical stores have been destabilised by online retail, offices remain half-empty as employees choose to work from home. Public buildings are increasingly being turned into hotels or flats as councils respond to government austerity.

It may seem the infrastructure of public interiors is collapsing, however a whole new layer of potential has emerged. The shuttered department stores, restaurants and bars, the emptying malls are there to be exploited. Beyond these is the network of underused but huge corporate entrance lobbies, representational spaces occupied by only a security guard. These spaces could be used for working, for retail, for activity. This reimagining of something between the lobby and the library could constitute the Nolli courtyards of the contemporary city.

If corporations, which often choose their headquarter's location to reduce tax liabilities, want to build on the attraction of their urban office locations for loyalty and quality of life for their employees, there is a trade off. Taxpayer-funded infrastructure and culture might demand a payback in the opening up of corporate space to the city. The hotel lobby is already understood as a kind of public space, the corporate

lobby should belong to that same world, a place open to the functions of the city.

Jinhua Zhao, associate professor of city and transportation planning at MIT points to two Boston buildings. There is the Hancock Tower, a classic office block, which he describes as a "wonderful building designed by IM Pei, it even has its own plaza. But it feels very cold, people don't feel part of it." Then there is the Prudential Building. "The top is offices but the first and second floors are commercial, showrooms and a food court. It's popular but it could have been just another corporate lobby."

Julia Hobsbawm's new book *The Nowhere Office* explores the way in which work is changing and agrees we may well see corporate lobbies repurposed.

"We need to understand that people gossipping outside pubs or around Lloyd's are also working"

"They have remained stuck in post-9/11 security. There is a physical and cultural barrier to entry which is at odds with the desire to meet and hang out."

A more permeable city creates more places to work, the city itself understood as a web of space adaptable to an individual's preferred patterns. "We certainly need spaces where people can work outdoors," Rees says. "A city needs a work ambience but not to be turned into a leisure destination, we don't need more tourists, we need more people using the city for work."

Rather than the precarity of hot-desking, workers might be encouraged to engage with the city, to have a meeting in a museum café, even to see an exhibition in work time?

This is not about the colonisation of civic space by corporations but rather

that using these unexpected urban sites makes a more equitable city.

There are precedents. Somerset House in London was begun in 1776 as a vast public building for the Royal Navy and the newly-emerging public offices. It embraced the Royal Academy and Royal Societies, blending culture and science with tax and military spending. By the late 20th century its vast courtyard, every bit as grand as those of the great palaces, was being used as a carpark. Now Somerset House has been reborn as a palace of culture, home to a revived Courtauld Institute, blockbuster exhibitions and art fairs, public events and a range of subsidised studios for artists and designers, all in this grandest of buildings.

Or you might look to Madrid's former slaughterhouse, the Matadero, made into an enjoyable cultural campus with shared facilities, completely open to the public, a place alive both day and night, at work and at play.

The reuse of space has become a necessity for reasons of climate, sustainability, economy and continuity, it is a requirement amplified in the suburbs and smaller cities, and has become even more critical for the survival of urbanity. The pandemic has shown how working from home can revitalise suburban high streets as people are around to use their local facilities, but it needs intensifying.

This revived, engaged city does not require new buildings but it does demand serious thought into how the city is used and for whom it is being designed. New offices are being built in exactly the same way as they were in the 1960s. What's necessary is an appreciation of the complexity and diversity of urban space. Most of what is needed is already there. It just asks employers to understand how it can be used and what they can do for the city.

The writer is the FT's architecture and design critic

Dear Jonathan

YOUR QUESTIONS FOR OUR EXPERT – AND READERS' ADVICE

I want to be a TV presenter but can't see a way into the industry



This week's problem

I have always wanted to be a television presenter, but was concerned about job stability. I instead went into marketing and subsequently climate and development, working in research, strategy and report writing at a consultancy/think-tank since 2017. I hoped to build and apply this content expertise as a presenter. Yet I don't see a clear route into the industry. Would employers value my experience? Are there routes in at this later point? Female, 30

Jonathan's answer

Popular and successful TV presenters make the work look effortless, a skill built up from subject knowledge (think cooking, dancing, sport, or natural history), and experience. With the limitless choice of shows to watch, TV producers know the quality of programmes and their presenters have to be excellent.

Experienced BBC TV presenter Anne Davies has seen the industry change to be more subject led. "What do you see yourself presenting?" she asks. "Successful presenters are authentic and believe in the subject, be it CBeebies or the 10 o'clock news."

There may be two parallel routes for you to follow: as a researcher for the podcast industry; and with your own show reels on social media. The former would give you the contacts and experience in a larger organisation; the latter could help build your personal brand in your subject area.

"The podcast industry is less siloed into roles than TV," says Anna Sinfield, producer of the FT's Working It podcast at Novel (an independent production house). "If you joined a production role like a researcher, you could climb your way towards voicing features and presenting."

She suggests using your current experience to apply for roles as a researcher, building your presence in your chosen subject area, and increasing your "right time, right place" luck.

Sinfield also suggests building your social media presence, a point endorsed by Esther Stanhope, a former senior BBC producer and now a professional coach and speaker. "No one will employ someone without experience," says Stanhope, "so press record and create

your own YouTube channel." She encourages you to "employ yourself and not wait to be picked".

As a researcher and report writer, you already have experience of collating information into a compelling story and then presenting it to an audience. This includes doing this fluently out loud, engaging the audience and answering questions confidently. Davies believes the skills for a successful TV presenter include, "having authority, being clear, direct and to the point, and remaining authentic. However, above all, they have to be kind, and have a sense of humour."

If you already have, or develop, these key skills, and have built a social media presence, then, as Sinfield says, "next time someone on your team is looking for the perfect host for the next big climate crisis podcast, they'll think of you... and not just Greta Thunberg".

Readers' advice

Focus on your climate and development skills and offer yourself around as an expert. Who do you know in your field who is a regular pundit? Ask them for advice. **makemineatea**

The media is a contacts industry, so ask friends, and friends of friends, if they can put you in touch with anyone who might be able to steer you in the right direction. **Northwold**

Find a presenter whose work you admire in the field in which you have interest. Then research the route to entry that person took and as far as possible, duplicate it. **Rouleur1**

Next problem

I am an economics undergraduate and considering which direction my career should take. I am interested in finance but don't know which area would be most suitable in terms of the trade-off between work and leisure. How do I find real potential for career progression and a decent salary alongside time to follow my personal interests? Male, 20s

Sinfield also suggests building your social media presence, a point endorsed by Esther Stanhope, a former senior BBC producer and now a professional coach and speaker. "No one will employ someone without experience," says Stanhope, "so press record and create

Jonathan Black is director of the Careers Service at the University of Oxford. Every fortnight he answers your questions on personal and career development and working life. Do you have a question for him? Email: dearjonathan@ft.com

'People have no idea what goes into a product. That's not a good thing'

The folding-bike company boss explains why we need to 'care more about the stuff we buy', writes Emma Jacobs

Will Butler-Adams arrives at Brompton Bicycle's headquarters in Greenford, west London on a navy Brompton bike in a black branded polo shirt (also worn by employees in the factory), lace-up boots and light pink shorts (a flourish of his own) and greets a colleague. "Tip top, buddy, tip top."

After folding his bike and parking it in reception alongside dozens of others, the Brompton chief executive takes me past a table tennis table and on to the factory floor. The 48-year-old picks up a frame. The brazing — joining two bits of steel together with silicon bronze — has been done by an apprentice who nervously awaits the verdict from the CEO. It is only her second time doing the task. "I'm really impressed," he says before pointing out tiny flaws. "There's three little bubbles in it. Technically, perfectly good, but aesthetically not so pleasing."

The art of brazing is a topic that takes up a whole chapter in his new book, *The Brompton: Engineering for Change* (which he underscores is co-authored with Dan Davies, a journalist). The minutiae of engineering is not an obvious pitch to a general reader, but he wants to highlight the importance of manufacturing. "This is not a dark, satanic mill." We stop at a workspace where they have taken delivery of new bicycle bells. "Yes. Hallelujah!" The employee rings it. "That small bell is brilliant!"

The book tells the history of the company: from the folding bike's first designs in 1975 by founder and engineer Andrew Ritchie, the creation of Brompton, and the arrival in 2002 of Butler-Adams (then a young engineer fresh from British chemicals group ICI) who six years later led a management buyout and became CEO. Along the way, it describes the challenges and virtues of design, and management problems such as changing workers' earnings from piecework to skills-based pay.

'When it goes completely tits up, that is a very accurate thing you can measure'

After we speak, I realise that the past two years navigating Brexit, lockdowns and supply chains — while also rapidly expanding the workforce from 432 employees to almost 800 — could probably fill a book on its own.

He hopes to make readers "care more about the stuff we buy... People have no idea what goes into a product. That's not a good thing. We have a climate crisis. We forget how powerful the consumer is. If the consumer... maybe buys a little bit less, that will be good for planet Earth." This is not cheap (£850 to almost £4,000) but they are robust.

Showcasing engineering, he hopes, will help attract "the best brains... solving the world's problems, not going off into the City and creating reams of paper like lawyers". Another way to get the public onside is a new site which he hopes will open in 2027 in Ashford, Kent. Twice the size of Greenford, it will not only have a manufacturing facility but a museum and visitor centre.

My tour is a rehearsed piece of showmanship. Past photos of factory visitors include the late Prince Philip and David Cameron, the former UK prime minister. Brompton is now a British success story, but in the early days, "embassies were so snooty". He made it his mission to get publicity and to network with politicians and businesses. "We had no money. You've got to find ways to leverage awareness." For example, getting Prince William on a Brompton bike in Shanghai for a photo.

I had been told this book described spats with Ritchie, who Butler-Adams replaced as CEO. The odd couple (Ritchie's pernickety and Butler-Adams' determination to make the company commercial) is part of the mythology. The book seems restrained. "This isn't about some vitriol," Butler-Adams tells me in a tucked-away corner of the open-plan office. Brompton exists, he says, because of Ritchie — "genius [and] nutter. I had the easy job. Andrew had the tough bit, getting it off



Will Butler-Adams at Brompton Bicycle's headquarters in Greenford, west London. The CEO says the company's future is both electric and overseas — Charlie Bizzby/FT

the ground... If you have a mad inventor, somebody else has to take it over." Has Ritchie read the book? "He hasn't even seen it. I don't dare send it."

Ritchie is no longer on the board but has an engineering consulting role. Aside from work, they meet socially, most recently, over dinner at Ritchie's home. "He's a complete soldering legend. It doesn't mean he isn't a monstrous pain in the arse and occasionally drives me potty. He'd probably say the same about me. He doesn't think I listen to him... a lot. I just don't do everything he says... like parents and children."

Butler-Adams' actual father was in the family wine trade business before the company was sold to Griersons, then part of the Forte Group. Rugby school, he says, kept him on the educational straight and narrow. "If I hadn't had that very privileged education, I would not be here now. I found formal education thoroughly boring, totally irrelevant."

After studying engineering, he went to ICI, which taught him, among other things, that it was easy to tweak projected earnings to win over investors or managers. "If all the projects we did delivered what they said they were going to deliver, that thing would have been printing money." It reinforced the need to understand worst-case scenarios. "When it goes completely tits up, that is a very accurate thing you can measure. Rather than wasting energy with over-exaggerated upsides, if you want to innovate fast, protect the downside."

To that end, he has created a "fuck-it fund" to develop ideas with money Brompton can afford to lose. Butler-Adams wants his staff to find him approachable. The Brompton T-shirt is key. "If I'm in my ivory tower... and I'm wearing a suit and tie... I very much lose [the feeling] we're in

this together... People know what I earn." How much? "£210,000."

The company pays the London living wage, but skilled staff can expect far more. About 80 per cent of its workers are on a nine-day fortnight. Some compress 38 hours into a four-day week, others are on flexitime, helping to encourage more women to join the traditionally male workforce. By 2024, the company wants 40 per cent of staff to be female. Butler-Adams works most days, he says. As an early riser, he'll get up on holiday and send some emails well before his wife and three teenage daughters wake up.

Some modern workplace practices are perplexing. "You can't touch anybody," he says, lightly tapping my shoulder. The past few years have been extremely tough, he says, putting his head in his hands for a moment. "Brexit, talk about shoot[ing] yourself in the foot, but hey, we'll make it work."

During the first lockdown his main concern was job losses. "I thought we

'I thought we were going to be in for a full five-year recession. That scared me'

were going to be in for a full five-year recession. That scared me" Production lines continued to run but initially were hit by reduced demand and later by Omicron infections among staff. But sales swelled as customers sought alternatives to public transport and the company grew quickly. The last company accounts showed sales increased by a third to £76.1m in the year to March 2021, with pre-tax profits up to £9.7m from £6m, the previous year.

"This year, he says, turnover is up but 'profits is under strain' due to 'logistics [problems]'. Then we've got inflation, [IT] just goes on. It's hitting us. It's a bit scary, but we'll be fine."

The future is both electric and overseas. Earlier this year, Brompton released its latest electric folding bike with a lighter titanium frame. In China, the product is a luxury for "movers and shakers, people in politics, people who are architects, people who are lawyers... They will be the people that shift how you change urban design." The pandemic demonstrated the potential for cities with fewer cars and has reinforced to Butler-Adams the company's ultimate mission, which he writes is "providing freedom to urban people and making their lives better."

He feels lucky to have "bumble[d] into this company just before the world started waking up to the... climate emergency". However, he cautions against grandiose political statements. "Business is being voted on [24/7], not every five years like politicians."

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Three questions

How do you resolve a work argument?
Speak with honesty and by and large common sense prevails.

How should a small business get publicity?
Network, never say no to an invitation; breakfast, lunch, dinner to get your word out. Have an opinion; don't be a shrinking violet, and be passionate. If you believe in what you are doing, people will go out of their way to help.

Should businesses get involved in politics?
That is not the priority of any business, but you can't ignore it as politicians make decisions that affect our business, our customers, our staff and our suppliers.

ARTS

Taipei's futuristic home for culture and community

Open after 10 troubled years of construction, the Performing Arts Center has been designed to democratise public space, writes James Chater

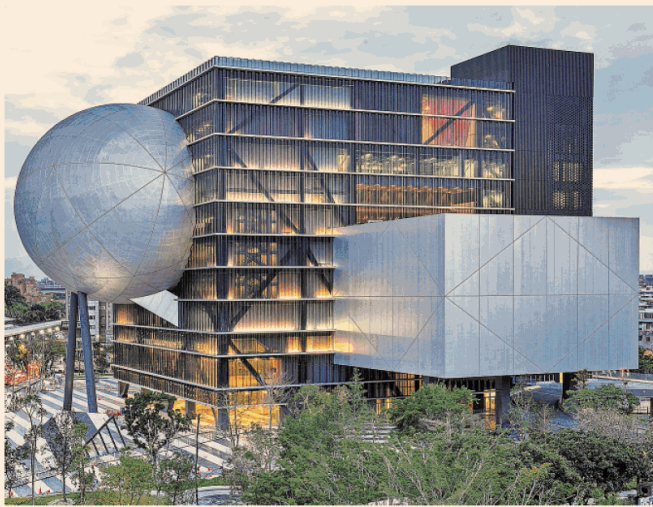
Over the past decade, a futuristic edifice has slowly taken shape above the Shilin night market's narrow, sprawling lanes, just north of central Taipei. The Taipei Performing Arts Center (TPAC), co-designed by Dutch duo Rem Koolhaas and David Gianotten of OMA, is an imposing 15-storey aluminium and glass cube which, caught in the right light, exposes the building's industrial black and grey skeleton.

The genesis of the Taipei city government project, which has cost 6.7bn new Taiwan dollars (\$220mn), approaching double its original budget, is one of fits and starts, replete with contractor bankruptcies, paused construction and a Covid cluster infection among engineers. But on Sunday August 7, even as tension with China (which claims ownership of the island) swirled over US politician Nancy Pelosi's visit, the building, with its three theatres, finally opened.

"It's been a long, long 10 years," says Austin Wang, the chief executive of the centre, over Zoom a week before the official opening.

The three auditoria protruding from the TPAC's sides are the 1,500-seat Grand Theatre; the 800-seat reconfigurable Blue Box Theatre, with a warehouse vibe; and the 800-seat Globe Playhouse, which has a surprisingly intimate feel despite sitting inside a vast metallic sphere which looms over nearby overground metro tracks.

The 59,000-square-metre complex was designed to bleed into the local life that surrounds it. A tunnel from the night market — one of Taipei's biggest — feeds directly into the centre's ground floor; a spacious first-floor plaza has the air of a public square. The net effect: the



Above: the centre accommodates three theatres. Above right: the 800-seat Globe Playhouse — Chris Stowers



Taiwanese multimedia artist Hsieh Chun-te, the marrying of two theatres is perfect for dramatising a central theme of his work: parallel universes. "I think the Super Theatre was designed for me," he says, chucking. His work, NEXEN, will be one of the first to use the 60-metre-long space, simultaneously telling a single story from alternate realities across both stages.

Gianotten, fresh out of travellers' quarantine when we meet, says he was anxious to see the building for the first time in two and a half years. He had reason to be. In 2016, the centre's main contractor, International Engineering & Construction, filed for bankruptcy with NT\$2bn of debt. Construction on the centre was halted for 21 months. When trial performances began in March this year, audiences complained of damaged seats, shoddy air conditioning and confusing signage that led to toilet queues "as long as a dragon", according to one Taipei city councillor.

Wang and Gianotten are transparent about the centre's teething problems. They say the Grand Theatre's scaffolded seats are a hangover from halted construction. The seats, made by Italian company Poltrona Frau, arrived just before construction stopped and were left exposed to the elements in the abandoned building site. The damaged seats are now being hurriedly covered in a temporary fabric, Wang says, and should be completed within two months.

Other hitches, Gianotten says, simply require fine-tuning. "A theatre like this needs a lot of training to operate. There are always issues at the beginning."

The TPAC's architectural ingenuity feels as though it will eventually bring early naysayers around. Public areas are spatially diverse; intimate corridors and low-ceilinged bars give way to vaulted courtyards and roomy balconies, with panoramic views of the mountains that envelop Taipei.

"Theatre in Taiwan is still quite exclusive. Breaking down barriers is very important"

For Chang Tieh-chih, founder of Taiwan's Verse culture magazine, the TPAC's programming encapsulates a shift that has taken place in Taiwanese culture since the country democratised in the mid-1990s: one that fuses traditional "high" artforms with elements native to Taiwan. He also believes the TPAC, in its own effort to democratise public space, is a spatial symbol of that artistic trend.

"The TPAC isn't set apart from society. It emphasises openness and grassroots," Chang says. "The design of the building reflects the essence of Taipei's culture."

tpac-taipei.org

boundary between public space and cultural institution is blurred.

"The building itself is so open... so we expect to attract all kinds of people," says Wang. "We want to treat it as a theatre for citizens. That's our main purpose. We have to communicate with local communities."

Take the Public Loop, a long passage-way through the building with small windows into backstage and technical areas. It's designed, Gianotten says, to reveal what is usually hidden in a theatre, so any visitor can see the centre's internal machinations. "People can come here even if they don't have a ticket [and] experience what theatre-making is," Gianotten says as he ascends



OMA's David Gianotten (left) and Rem Koolhaas (right), with the TPAC's Austin Wang — Billy Barnack/Outgroup

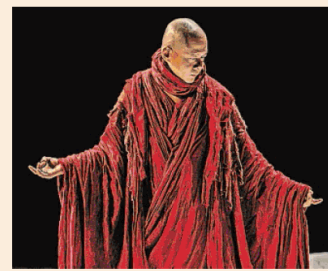
the deep-orange escalator that begins the route. "Very often, [in] theatres, when there is no performance on, the doors simply close, and it's no longer public. This is another way... to still let people taste the space."

"Theatre-making in Taiwan is something for people of all ages," he continues. "But we also noticed that it's still quite exclusive. Breaking down those barriers... is very important in making people move into more 'formal space'."

In that regard, the TPAC offers Taipei something new. Taiwan's capital is not short of large performance spaces, with the Taiwan Traditional Theatre Center and the twin buildings of the National Theatre and Concert Hall often hosting big international names. But those spaces have a more rarefied feel. The twin theatres are located in Taipei's Liberty Square, metres away from a memorial to Chiang Kai-shek, the former president who ruled Taiwan as a dictator until his death in 1975. It's that grandiose exaltation of culture that TPAC's building seeks to offset.

The programming is designed to do that too. Thirty-seven productions are scheduled for the TPAC's first season, with an emphasis on local Taiwanese artists working across media: Formosa Circus Art will team up with the Taipei Male Choir; the Bulareyaung Dance Company will perform a new work fusing the music and dance of Taiwan's indigenous Atayal people.

One of the building's highlights is the "Super Theatre", which combines the Grand and Blue Box theatres into an enormous 2,550-seat space traversing the length of the building. For



The opening season will include "The Monk from Tang Dynasty"

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Looted artefacts speak for themselves

PODCASTS

Fiona Sturges



In the BBC's *The Museum of Bad Vibes*, a series of artefacts come to life and tell us their thoughts and feelings.

Yes, I know how that sounds. There is no better way to round a piece of narrative storytelling than by shoe-horning in hammy dramatised segments. They are a very BBC mannerism, having also appeared lately in *Lady Killers with Lucy Worsley* and *Fake Psychic*, about the fraudster M Lamar Keene. While those fictionalised moments could feasibly have taken place, here the listener is asked to go further in suspending their disbelief.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. *The Museum of Bad Vibes* is part of BBC Sounds' Audio Lab, a new strand devoted to unearthing fresh talent and showcasing diverse voices. Our guide is Hanna Adan, who tells the stories behind a series of objects housed in British museums. But this isn't your regular educational tour told from a curator's perspective, since the artefacts in question are stolen.

from pre-colonial Ghana, which now lives in Edinburgh's National Museum of Scotland.

Adan's aim is to discover what the pieces meant to those who made or previously owned them, how their origin stories have been obscured and what could or should be done by way of restitution. She does this with thoughtfulness and equanimity. Adan is not anti-museums, though she is, quite reasonably, against theft.

"Museums are not neutral spaces," she says. "What some of us don't realise is that many of these objects we so casually glance at as we pass from one room to the other are inherently spiritual in nature... The sterile environment of most museums makes it difficult to appreciate [their] sanctity."

And so to the dramatised parts. In the opening episode, the Benin bronze issues muffled shouts from inside its

box before busting its way out and revealing its past life as a ceremonial staff shaped into a bird of prophecy, a nod to a legend in which a bird foretold how Benin would lose a battle with the Igala people. These exposition-filled interludes are clearly intended to bring texture and character to a series that, given the many contributions from academics, might otherwise feel dry. But for me, they are a gratifying and unnecessary distraction.

The Museum of Bad Vibes isn't the first podcast to tell outrageous stories of colonial theft. *Stuff the British Stole*, from ABC in Australia, is an illuminating and often uncomfortable podcast in which the writer and journalist Mar Fennell relates how specific artefacts, from a dodgy skull to the Parthenon Marbles, ended up in British museums.

bbc.co.uk/abc.net.au



The Benin expedition of 1897, in which a British force captured the city of Benin and stole artefacts — some of which ended up in British museums

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Among the items under discussion are a bronze staff looted from the kingdom of Benin (now part of south-west Nigeria) and currently in storage in the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford; a Chinese ancestral tablet from the Horniman Museum in south London; and an Akan gold weight in the shape of a sankofa bird



Pictures from History/ Universal Images Group via Getty Images

Monday 8 August 2022

FINANCIAL TIMES

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FT BIG READ. PROPERTY

The pandemic drove an ecommerce boom and turbocharged demand for industrial shed space, but interest rate rises and a cooling global economy now threaten that rush of investment.

By George Hammond



The end of the warehouse bubble

At the property sector's annual gathering in the French Riviera in March an unlikely group of delegates was centre stage: warehouse salesmen. In years past at the Cannes Mipim conference, purveyors of "sheds" – as they are known in the industry – have been shunted out to tents at the end of the promenade, away from the spotlight. But events over the past three years have changed that.

"On the back of Covid... investors who were awash with cash all put logistics [properties] at the top of their shopping list. You would go into any meeting and investors just wanted to buy sheds," says Marcus de Minckwitz, head of industrial and logistics property for Europe at Savills estate agents.

In the early months of 2020, his team flew drones around vast empty warehouses in the UK to provide virtual tours to investors. Cash poured into sheds all over Europe – much of it diverted away from areas of the property sector that were proving vulnerable to Covid lockdowns, such as offices and shops. A boom in ecommerce during the pandemic only increased demand for warehouse space.

As this flood of money washed into a relatively small corner of the real estate market "prices went up", de Minckwitz says, "and they went up so quickly... the second half of 2021 was astonishing. Everyone was pushed to the limit."

Yet the sector now faces a growing list of concerns that threatens to reverse that rush of interest. The ecommerce boom is showing signs of slowing, the global economy is cooling and pushback from local opposition groups to massive warehouse complexes is growing more vociferous in some parts of Europe.

These factors are clouds on the horizon, but the storm immediately overhead is rapidly rising interest rates. The Bank of England has already raised rates multiple times since the start of the year, culminating last week with the biggest increase in nearly 30 years. Last month the European Central Bank announced it would follow suit with its first rate rise in more than a decade as inflation surges, energy supply concerns mount and political turmoil builds across the continent.

If European economies tip into recession – as economists have warned is "increasingly likely" – a wave of business failures could leave warehouse owners saddled with acres of empty space. In May, a stark warning about the

'Prices went up and they went up so quickly... the second half of 2021 was astonishing. Everyone was pushed to the limit'

[become] used to it and now we're going to a new environment, it's undeniable."

Froth in the market

The apparent unwinding of a prolonged era of cheap money has changed the outlook for investors. Their basic calculus is simple: to make a given project worthwhile, a new purchase can be signed off as long as the costs – chiefly construction, upkeep and repayments of debt – are outweighed by the potential rental income.

Rental income relative to the value of the property (known as rental yield and expressed as a percentage) is a key metric for commercial property investors. Broadly speaking, if the yields on a property are higher than the all-in borrowing costs, they can expect to make money.

While borrowing costs were extremely low, investors were buying sheds with rental yields of less than 3 per cent. But as rates have risen, the margin between interest payments and yields has narrowed (and in some cases entirely disappeared), forcing investors to revise their calculations.

Rate rises have cooled investment across all commercial real estate sectors, but the inertia for warehouse investors is particularly great. "The all-in debt cost has doubled, so paying 3 per cent for a shed just doesn't work. Logistics was right at the front of this [rising interest rate] storm because yields had gotten so slow," says de Minckwitz.

Inflation in the cost of labour and building materials is becoming another burden for developer-investors, pushing the expense of erecting and maintaining a shed up considerably. The price of some materials has increased 20 per cent or more, according to a number of agents, investors and developers. Ultimately, they believe that prices will have to come down to meet the new economic conditions, but for now, they say, there is stasis while buyers and sellers recalibrate.

"Everything freezes and deals stop over the summer [but] when we come back in September, I think we will see repricing," says Nick Preston, chief executive of Tritax EuroBox, an investor and operator of large logistics warehouses in Europe.

A number of UK assets, whether individual sheds or portfolios of properties, have been pulled from the market, with sellers unable to shift them at the desired price. The largest portfolio to be withdrawn in recent weeks consisted of

16 warehouses spread around England, which private equity firm KKR and logistics investor Mirastar had been hoping to sell for more than £800m, according to React News.

"A lot of froth has been taken out of the market and a few large transactions... have not gone through," says Ferland.

He says the UK's more developed warehouse market has adjusted quicker than its European counterparts, with deals being negotiated at prices 10-20 per cent below their peak earlier in the year – a drop that might push through some deals. On the continent, the correction had only been 5-10 per cent, he adds, with sellers struggling to adapt to the new economic environment.

"Everyone is willing the market to go through a very, very quick correction. You talk to the private equity houses and institutional investors, [they are] hoping that vendors wake up and realise that the market has changed and changed for the long term," says de Minckwitz.

Cold shower

The shed market's rampant growth over the past decade has been underpinned by the ecommerce boom, with online retailers requiring more storage space than their high-street competitors. Every additional £1bn spent online translates into demand for 1m square feet of warehouse space, according to estate agency CBRE.

The market is broadly split into two: mammoth, out-of-town sheds, known as "big boxes", and smaller, urban sites dedicated to last-mile delivery. Over the past decade, vacancy rates across both types of asset in Europe have consistently fallen. As well as the growth in online retail, warehouse demand has been supported by the expansion of grocers and third-party logistics firms such as DHL and FedEx, as well as the arrival of new tenants such as movie studios. Higher demand for new space gave landlords more freedom to raise rents.

Investment in the sector steadily increased and red-hot demand brought a windfall for the biggest landlords. Segro, which owns warehouses and data centres mostly in the UK, has been one big winner. In the decade to the end of last year, the company's share price increased by 600 per cent.

Private investors have been an increasingly active presence. Since describing warehouses as its "highest conviction" sector in 2019, private equity fund Blackstone has built a

Big Box and Segro lost 20 per cent of their market capitalisation; US-focused Prologis lost about 50 per cent. None of the three has recovered those losses in the months since.

European investors and analysts play down the impact of Amazon's statement in Europe, claiming the company is only retrenching in the US and that it still has room to expand on the continent. "The Amazon warning was a cold shower for the sector, but it has to be seen in context. The growth in the US during the pandemic was humongous [and] in this business the wind blows west to east," says Ferland.

Few expect the pandemic's breakneck rate of ecommerce growth to continue. In the UK, the proportion of total retail sales booked online almost doubled between February 2020 and January 2021, peaking at 58 per cent, but has since dropped back to 25 per cent, according to official data. One-quarter of the new leases signed last year by the



US's Prologis, the largest warehouse owner in the world, were to ecommerce businesses. In the first half of this year, it was 14 per cent. Prologis now anticipates a small increase in the vacancy rate in US warehouses next year – an ominous sign if the industry winds do blow from west to east.

De Minckwitz estimates that 65 per cent of the logistics market is in some way linked to retail, a sector that would be at the sharp end of a consumer-led downturn. "We're in the market and we still believe in the trend but obviously everything has changed," says Ferland. "There is part of me that struggles to believe you can have a recession and demand will continue skyrocketing. I suspect it will slow down."

Across Europe, there is still an under-supply of warehouse space, and individual investors are bullish about their

If recession hits Europe, a wave of business failures could lead to acres of empty space in warehouses. Construction of a shed in Suffolk, below; the UK market is negotiating deals 10-20 per cent below their peak price – Paul Parmer / Agency Stock Photo

cated, but a lot of the newcomers are paralysed. There are a huge number who came in over the past five years."

Judging the moment

Another barrier to the sector's continued rise is more prosaic: local communities might want the convenience of having their shopping delivered fast, but they bristle at the idea that the cavernous sheds required to make that happen might be placed in their eye line.

Planning battles are live across Europe, according to a number of agents and investors. In cities, developers are having to vie with housebuilders for land on which to build new distribution centres.

"Planning is tough and getting harder and there's only so much land. Unless we start seeing more multistorey warehouses, that barrier to entry will always exist," says Kevin Mofid, head of industrial and logistics research at Savills.

In Germany, one developer is giving up plots of land because the local mayor is blocking efforts to build a new warehouse. Preston says. Ferland notes that in France proposed Amazon developments have seen local residents "up in arms".

On their own, such concerns may contain the growth of the logistics sector, but they are unlikely to derail it. And even if the pace of ecommerce growth slows, investors are banking that overall demand will continue to grow thanks to other shifts in the global economy.

The chastening experience of a pandemic during which stocks of everything from face masks to toilet paper ran short has shifted the way a range of businesses operate. Their priorities are now orientated towards building supply-chain resilience rather than pursuing maximum efficiency at all costs. That is creating demand for more local warehouse storage to guard against future shortages.

"Every single person we talk to from an occupational perspective is talking about this: pharmaceutical companies, retailers, everyone," says Preston.

His company, Tritax EuroBox, has leased a vast warehouse in the southern Netherlands to food retailer Lidl. The shed is packed full of non-perishable goods that Lidl has no immediate intention of selling. "It's a resilience package for them, full of pasta, tinned tomatoes, goods that won't go off. Because when Covid came along, shelves were empty, they learnt their lesson," he says.

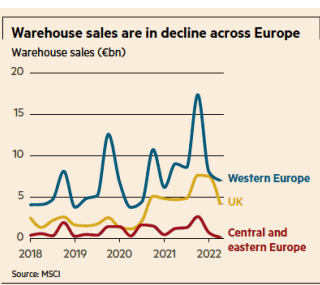
The second factor underpinning demand is the dislocation of global sup-

'Everything has changed. There is part of me that struggles to believe you can have a recession and demand will continue skyrocketing – I suspect it will slow down'

potential impact of an economic slowdown on the sector came as e-commerce giant Amazon warned its growth rate would ease and shares in listed warehouse owners tumbled.

Investors also face challenges – especially those who stretched themselves to buy into the sector at the top of the market and who may struggle when they come to refinance their loans on harsher terms.

“My entire career has been [spent] in a lower-interest-rate environment, and I started in 2006,” says Louis-Simon Ferland, founder of Boreal IM, an investment manager that is assembling a €3bn pan-European logistics portfolio in partnership with Canadian real estate investor Cadillac Fairview. “We have all



€21bn European platform and was the biggest spender in the European warehouse market over the past 12 months.

That growth was turbocharged by the pandemic, but there are signs that it might now be falling back. In April, Amazon issued a profit warning that wiped billions from the value of listed warehouse owners around the world. It is difficult to overstate Amazon's influence over the sector – both as a customer for space and a barometer for online retail sentiment. The company accounted for one-quarter of all new space leased in 2020 and 2021 in the UK and has an even more established presence in the US.

In the fortnight following Amazon's warning, UK-focused companies Tritax

ability to pick up new tenants should existing occupants fold. But, as in any hot market, those who bought poorer quality properties now look exposed as the economy turns.

“In the right location, with the right building, you will do OK. But some of the indiscriminate carpet bombers will in some cases come unstuck,” says Preston. “Some of those properties will prove to not be good purchases.”

Landlords who signed long-term leases without inflation-linked rent reviews are most exposed to the worsening of the economic outlook, says Alistair Calvert, chief executive of Clarion Partners Europe, a logistics property investor. “There is still a core contingent in the market who are very sophisti-

ply chains – as result of both Russia's invasion of Ukraine and a growing rift between China and the west. Coupled with higher fuel costs, those factors are motivating businesses to stock goods closer to their customers, boosting demand for European warehouse space.

Comforted by these shifts, investors are still raising cash to spend on sheds. All of those interviewed for this story say they are looking to grow their portfolios – just at the right price.

Judging the correct moment to pounce could be the next big challenge, says de Mincowitz. “If you wait for the crash you're likely to miss it because there's so much money out there,” he says. “Everyone is waiting to pile back in when there's a correction.”

The FT View



FINANCIAL TIMES
“Without fear and without favour”

ft.com/opinion

The challenges for Latin America's new left

Incoming presidents face a daunting agenda, above all delivering strong growth

A former guerrilla takes power in Colombia on Sunday as the country's first leftwing president. Gustavo Petro is part of a trend: five of Latin America's six biggest economies will now be run by the left. If current opinion polls are reflected at the ballot box, Brazil will complete the regional pivot in October.

Formidable challenges await Petro and his peers. They must tackle some of the world's slowest economic growth rates, high levels of corruption, entrenched inequality, inadequate health and education services and poor infrastructure. Colombia faces additional problems of its own. These include a faltering peace process with thousands of former insurgents, rampant deforestation in the Amazon and a history of bad relations with the author-

itarian regime of Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela.

The experience of Petro's ideological soulmates in Chile, Peru and Argentina offers useful lessons. The first is to avoid interpreting their recent electoral success as a triumph of socialism or an invitation to repeat the failed state-centric economic policies of the early 2000s. Instead of voting for fresh ideas, Latin Americans have been voting against incumbent governments.

Most of the region's sitting presidents were conservatives, so a change of guard inevitably means a shift left. Reasons for discontent abound: living standards are falling, the state is failing to deliver and the best opportunities are too often reserved for a privileged few. The pandemic exacerbated social tensions.

As a result, presidential honeymoons are short and expectations almost impossibly high. The perils for new leaders are obvious: the presidents of Chile and Peru have seen their approval ratings collapse in a matter of months

because they disappointed impatient voters. In Argentina, the incumbents facing a drubbing at the polls next year are on the left. Voters care about results, not ideology.

A second lesson is that broad coalitions are essential to make the deep structural changes Latin America needs in areas such as tax reform. Chile's president Gabriel Boric quickly lost support after pursuing a divisive and economically risky new constitution. So far Petro has shown welcome pragmatism, negotiating multi-party support in Congress and appointing a widely respected economist, José Antonio Ocampo, as finance minister.

Strong, sustainable growth is also essential for the just, inclusive society that Petro and his peers are promising. Delivering that growth requires a well-educated workforce, stable rules for doing business, efficient courts and infrastructure fit for the 21st century.

Latin America is well placed to exploit some outstanding business opportuni-

ties. It ought to boom from the “near-shoring” of production from China to countries closer to the US. Its abundant natural resources can help to feed the world and speed the drive towards clean power.

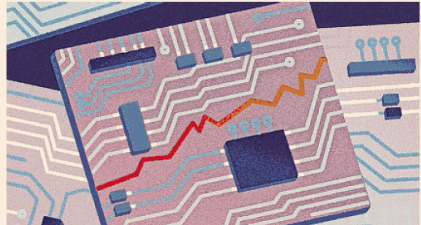
Yet none of this will happen without supportive policies. Too often in the past, governments in Latin America have focused on boosting spending rather than wealth creation, and electorally motivated fixes such as welfare handouts and fatter state payrolls rather than delivering high quality public services efficiently.

Petro has the chance to show he can do better. Colombia's economy is forecast by JPMorgan to grow at 7.2 per cent this year, by far the best of the region's larger nations. The test of the new president's success – and that of his regional peers – will not be the size of their social programmes nor the number of politically symbolic appointments. It will be to deliver and sustain south-east Asian levels of economic growth.

Opinion Asia

US and China decoupling but not as fast as you think

Maria Herguata



Leo Lewis

Before China's fighter jets roared and its ballistic missiles screamed into the seas off Taiwan last week, analysts had already begun laying out – from incursion to inaction – what investors could expect next.

Consensus among those forecasters was in short supply, and if anything, there is even less of it now. Both the US and China have spent recent days arguing about the definition and condition of the status quo, but the status quo now flows unambiguously in motion. The safest-looking analytical bet, in that context, is on sharply accelerated economic decoupling between the US and China, but how likely is it to move from the current, highly selective form to a broader split?

Beyond the three days of Chinese military exercises due to end on Sunday and the petulantly imposed sanctions on Nancy Pelosi herself, the possible consequences of the US House

building advanced semiconductor manufacturing in the US, while requiring any recipients of that funding not to upgrade any China-based factories for a decade. Non-American companies are included and the decoupling lure for South Korean chipmakers could prove decisive. Japan, which could soon confront efforts by Beijing to force its high-tech companies to design certain products in China, may also feel stronger decoupling pressure building.

The narrative may also be gaining traction outside the US and its closest Asian allies. In a note to clients last week, analysts at Gavekal Dragonomics identified a deepening consensus within the EU to treat China as both an economic and a security threat. Policy could turn increasingly defensive under that understanding, even as the lobbying power of European companies with heavy investments in China remains formidable and a fully fledged debate on decoupling remains some distance away.

For now, at least, there are three significant constraints on the accelerated decoupling story. The first is that the US ability to bring others along with the programme may be more fragile than it looks, even with a close ally such as Japan. As decoupling is increasingly pushed through legislation or regulation, questions over the underlying intention will intensify. Efforts to protect national and economic security are fine; deliberate hobbling of the Chinese economy will win fewer converts.

The second is that, on both the Chinese and US sides, corporate resistance to accelerated decoupling will be quietly substantial, however noisy the politics becomes. The business relationships, investments and supply chains are not trivial that can be

Letters

A backwards argument on superpower tensions over Taiwan

Stephen Roach (“Two insecure superpowers stumble towards collision over Taiwan”, Opinion, August 5) misstates and misdiagnoses the causes of the tensions between the US and China. For instance, he says the US blames China for its trade deficit. That is not the case. The US accuses China of unfair trade practices (as do others like Australia, Norway and Germany) but not of being the main cause of its trade deficits with Japan, South Korea and many others.

Roach's suggestion that Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi's comments supporting a free, and independent Taiwan are an affront

to the One China principle of the 1972 Shanghai communique misses two key points. First, that communique is not the sole governing document of US policy on Taiwan.

The US did not explicitly state Taiwan's status in the joint US-PRC communiqués of 1972, 1979 and 1982. These statements all acknowledged the “one China” position of both sides of the Taiwan Strait, but did not endorse this position. Washington has never recognised Beijing's claim of sovereignty over Taiwan nor has it recognised Taiwan as a sovereign state. It has always regarded the issue as unsettled and, most importantly, as

something that must be settled peacefully. Moreover, since 1979 the Taiwan Relations Act has governed US policy on the issue. This act stipulates that settlement of the issue be by peaceful means.

The US has never agreed that Beijing may determine who visits Taiwan, and it has always opposed the possible use of force now being threatened by the PRC. In likening the Xi Jinping regime's thinking on Taiwan to that of Vladimir Putin's Russia on Ukraine, Roach implies that Nato, whose members are all voluntary and none of whom has sent a soldier into Ukraine, was the cause of the war in Ukraine

and that America, which has always insisted only on a peaceful settlement, would be the cause of a war over Taiwan. This sounds backwards, it's because it is.

Roach's suggestion of a permanent US-China Secretariat in a neutral location is interesting, but success would require a mutual commitment to peaceful change. It is not clear that the PRC has such a commitment any more than did Vladimir Putin.

Clyde Prestowitz
President, Economic Strategy Institute
Former adviser to presidents Barack Obama, Bill Clinton and George HW Bush
Potomac, MD, US

Here's an elegant way to promote price restraint

On work experience in the early 90s recession referenced by the Bank of England (Report, August 5), I witnessed first hand the repositioning of a family home and cannot countenance the academic abstraction of controlling inflation at the cost of job losses, however few. Price restraint is therefore key to the cost of living crisis and I see two levers in the hands of government to help.

First, the bully pulpit. The prime minister, the chancellor, the business secretary and as many of their colleagues as can, should be all over all manner of media for weeks and weeks, calling for price restraint by business – demanding it, explicitly expecting it – until it becomes socially unacceptable to raise prices.

Second, while the stick of a windfall tax has been waved in some directions, what about the carrot of incentives? How about offering to any energy, food or clothing business with, say, more than a hundred UK employees, that if they can prove their prices in the coming last two quarters of this financial year are at (or below) what they were in the last two quarters of the last financial year, then they get an Employer's NI holiday for the next financial year.

The size of company and sectors targeted can be finessed. But wouldn't this be an elegant and humane way to promote price restraint without demonising profits? Key consumer-facing sectors would be incentivised to control prices with a reward that will be greater the more jobs they sustain.

Gavin Underhill
London SE15, UK



There is no incentive for airlines to price in customer satisfaction

Reward firms using model of customer satisfaction

Your article “The nightmare that is today's air travel” (Opinion, August 1) centred on a problem of the volume-based business model.

The strategy target volume as the main driver of profit. Airlines are a good example of an industry that relies upon this strategy. The calculation is simple: a dissatisfied customer incurs a cost of ‘X’ for lost revenue due to the dissatisfied customer and close friends and colleagues they have told.

The cost of installing an adequate customer satisfaction infrastructure can be represented by ‘Y’. If Y is greater than X, there is no incentive for an airline to provide customer satisfaction. This is where our

correctly value customer satisfaction instead of relying on a volume-based business? Certainly, this would be a business strengthening force. If airlines paid less for funding, investors would respond positively and so would potential customers. Additionally, airlines would be incentivised to provide accurate and clear communication to the potential customer in order to highlight the value they are providing.

A volume-driven business model does not value clear communication; any dissatisfied customers that are lost are offset due to increased volume or are tolerated due to the higher cost of providing adequate customer service. The current volume-driven business model should shift to one based on rewarding companies that efficiently price customer satisfaction.

Peter Balchert
Kilchberg, Switzerland

Group of UK economists should be diverse

I get very nervous when economists agree. In the depths of the pandemic there was consensus among economists that the UK economy would take several years to recover. It bounced back and the labour market is running hot. Now we have uniformity of opinion from a uniformly white, London-centric, Monetary Policy Committee. Whether the current inflationary shocks are transitory or not will be largely determined by commodity prices, many of which are falling. Predictions about the future are indeed difficult.

What has to be questioned is the legitimacy of a group of white economists imposing hardship on a

Money, machines and fundamental mistakes

In his interesting letter (Letter, August 5), Konstantinos Gravas says that “money is a machine” and repeats the thought in several ways. To the contrary, money is not a machine. Financial markets are not machines. Economies are not machines. The mechanistic metaphor when applied to money, markets and economies is a source of fundamental mistakes.

All of these are complex, uncertain, recursive, reflexive, expectational, unpredictable, intertwined, interacting events, not machines. We don't have a good name for these fascinating and often surprising worlds in which we live and interact.

FA Hayek in 1968 proposed the name “catallaxy” to express that they are composed of ongoing exchanges, based on the Greek word “to exchange.” This did not catch on.

My suggestion is to name them “interactivities.” A key aspect of interactivities is that no one is outside them, looking down in divine fashion. Everyone, including central banks, regulators and experts of every kind, is inside the interactivity, subject to its fundamental uncertainty.

Alex J Pollock
Senior Fellow, Mises Institute
Lake Forest, IL, US

Conservative party is like an unfashionable store

What is happening to the Conservative party is like watching a familiar family department store fragment into franchises and concessions to brands whose fashionable appeal will run out. It stimulates to be out of price and high and

...to the list of bad plausible scenarios. Decoupling has a credible ring. There is already visible political momentum for it on both sides. There is nothing to suggest greater closeness is in prospect, and plenty that foreshadows the divergence expanding well beyond the two central players – including Chinese missiles landing in Japan's exclusive economic zone for the first time. The decoupling narrative, though, is one with hard limits of both time and scale and they should not be overlooked because of the events of the past week.

Proponents of the more rapid decoupling thesis have a fair stack of evidence on their side. The Made in China 2025 programme is all about technological self-containment and the Biden administration has so far done little to reduce the tone of hawkishness on China established by its immediate predecessor.

This week, in a decoupling milestone, the US president will sign the Chips and Science Act passed by Congress in late July. This dangles more than \$50bn in federal grants to compa-

...quickly unbound, and the Chinese market is still the most attractive long-term growth bet. Chinese companies cannot yet afford a cliff-edge exit of foreign technology and a sudden break in their learning curve.

The third issue is time. In late July, the US Senate proposed a new bill that could in theory create tax incentives that would draw the electric vehicle battery production chain out of China (which dominates in all key areas) and into the US. This is logical stuff, given where electric vehicle markets are heading. The bill would superficially fit the rapid decoupling story. The reality, according to analysts at Goldman Sachs, is a rather more sedate process that would involve lead times of between four and seven years for each of the six principal points in the supply chain.

Decoupling is happening, and the pace is accelerating. It is not a matter of time on decoupling to unprecedented levels. Any real acceleration, however, may be illusory.

leo.lewis@ft.com

Inflation 'wheeze' would push us into a spiral

Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey criticises unions for seeking pay rises above inflation, while mostly they appear to be simply trying to keep up and, in any case, wage rises generally only have an indirect effect on inflation. He did briefly mention the danger of above-inflation price rises, which do have a direct influence on the level of inflation. Arguably, this is where our focus should be.

Your correspondent Cat Rutter Pooley ("Telecom operators call upon an inflation 'wheeze'", Report, August 5) has drawn attention to this behaviour by some companies.

The misuse of what is intended as a measure of price changes, not as a determinant of such changes, should not be tolerated, if all product and service providers adopted this "wheeze" we really would be in an inflationary spiral with no end in sight.

Tony Cox
London SE11, UK

...governments should intervene. Governments are supposed to be focused on making people's lives easier and safer. Will it take an airport riot or attack for governments to step in and help their constituents? Most likely they would intervene with more security and or penalties.

History has shown this will not solve the problem (just provide an incentive to circumvent the rules). A governmental framework needs to be developed that will incentivise the company owners to place a value on customer satisfaction.

Airlines have been rescued in the past via government funding and subsidies without any regard for the customer. Why shouldn't governments price the allocation of capital to airlines based on government endorsed customer satisfaction ratings? Should an airline not pay more interest for a loan (government subsidised or via a regulated bank) if they provide terrible customer satisfaction? If airlines were accountable for customer satisfaction via their profit and loss statement, would there not be an incentive to

...diverse country. Their judgments may or may not be correct but it is the mechanism legitimate? Even a Tory cabinet is more diverse than the MPC.

Michael Hobbs
London N13, UK

Persilschein cannot wash away Nazi exploitation

Nazi Billionaires by David de Jong (FT Books & Essays, July 30) mentions Friedrich Flick's conviction at Nuremberg. Early on, he refused point blank for decades to pay any compensation to former slave labourers forced to toil in his factories during the war. *Less than Slaves* by Benjamin B Perence (1979) describes the Nazi exploitation by Flick in graphic detail. Only in 1986, after his death (1972), did Flick's empire finally pay the former enslaved labourers.

At a national congress in September 1981, Solidarity issued an appeal to the workers of eastern Europe to follow the Polish example and set up free trade unions. Tass, the official Soviet news agency, denounced the appeal as the work of "a whole conglomerate of counter-revolutionaries, including agents of imperialist secret services".

Even though its leaders are either in prison or have fled abroad, the Belarussian opposition has not become radicalised. Its basic demands are for free elections, individual liberty and justice. Today these rights seem far out of reach in Belaruss. But they are not permanently unobtainable. Should change come, perhaps it will happen because they are the same rights of which Russia itself is in sore need.

Kees van Rij
Den Haag, the Netherlands

...is suggested to be the case. It is not high energy but traditionally classic while edgy and contemporary. The thumping background music of different brands drawn each other out. The store fights for footfall in a world where we point and click our opinions as we expect next day delivery of a new phone at the stroke of a touchpad. We recognise the Edwardian building as we drive past.

Sebastian Payne's point that the one brand is devaluing the whole party is correct in his article about Liz Truss and the Tory right ("A prime minister Truss will need to face down the Tory right", Opinion, August 5).

Maybe, sooner than we think, the public will ask itself, "Are you being served?" Then footfall will count.

Simon Crosby
Aysgarth, N Yorks, UK

Please explain

Will someone explain the mechanism whereby increasing interest rates decreases inflation except via recession and unemployment.

Carol Wilcox
Highcliffe, Christchurch, UK

Opinion

The thirst for freedom in Belarus is unquenchable



The peaceful pro-democracy protests that swept through Belarus in August 2020 evoked memories of Solidarity, the mass movement that had arisen in neighbouring Poland 40 years earlier. The focus of discontent was identical: a repressive regime, aligned with Moscow, that mistreated citizens and brought shame on the nation. Even the patriotic colours on display in the protests were the same in Minsk as in Warsaw – white and red.

Two years on, the parallels between Belarus and Poland appear even more striking. Just as the Polish communist authorities suppressed Solidarity under martial law in December 1981, so the regime of Alexander Lukashenko has carried out a ferocious crackdown on

the democratic opposition of Belarus. The prospect of any reprieve seems as remote as in Poland four decades ago, not least because relations between western countries and the Kremlin are as bad now as in the early 1980s – or even worse, with war raging in Ukraine.

In 1989, however, Poland liberated itself from communism with not a drop of blood shed. It was the prelude to a "springtime of nations" in central and eastern Europe, whose peoples rose up for national independence and civic freedoms. Desperately bleak as the outlook is today, is there any chance that something similar could occur in Belarus by the end of the 2020s?

Much as events in Poland and Belarus resemble each other, the differences are important. One precondition for Poland's turn to freedom was the ascent to power in 1989 of Mikhail Gorbachev, a Soviet leader who, unlike his predecessors, did not crush dissent in virtually every friendly country with tanks, as in Budapest in 1956 and Prague in 1968. As long as Vladimir Putin rules Russia, the prison-like conditions prevalent in Belarus are unlikely to change.

Another difference is the extreme strategic vulnerability of Belarus. It has been locked into a "union state" with Russia since 1999. Lukashenko drew two years ago on Russian financial and political support to stamp out the protests that followed his fraudulent election victory. As a result, he fell more heavily into Putin's debt than at any time since his dictatorship began in

Anti-Lukashenko mood is not anti-Russian. A more enlightened Kremlin leader might understand that

1994. In tandem with the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Putin has placed Belarus under Russian military control.

A third point is that even though Wojciech Jaruzelski, the general who served as Poland's communist party leader, was reviled for imposing martial law, he did not employ Lukashenko's gangster-like methods of rule. The tyrant of Belarus ordered the hijacking

of a Ryanair plane last year to arrest an opposition activist. He orchestrated a surge of Iraqi, Syrian and other migrants to Poland's border.

Whereas the jails of Belarus are full of Lukashenko critics, Jaruzelski declared an amnesty in July 1984 that freed hundreds of political prisoners. To be sure, it was a limited measure. Dissidents such as Adam Michnik were soon back in jail. The regime's secret police kidnapped and murdered Poland's most popular pro-Solidarity priest. But the amnesty preceded the era of Soviet liberalisation under Gorbachev. It was a sign that Jaruzelski was seeking a way out of the stalemate with Polish society created by the ban on Solidarity. Nothing similar is to be expected from Lukashenko.

At the same time, there are grounds to lose all hope for the people of Belarus. Their desire for change represents the delayed awakening of a nation to which independence came as something of a surprise when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. By now this process is irreversible. Furthermore, the anti-Lukashenko mood of Belarussian society is not anti-Russian. A more

enlightened leader in Moscow might understand that.

The differences with Poland in 1980-81 are instructive. Unlike the democratic Belarussian opposition, Solidarity became increasingly outspoken under the influence of radical activists. At a national congress in September 1981, Solidarity issued an appeal to the workers of eastern Europe to follow the Polish example and set up free trade unions. Tass, the official Soviet news agency, denounced the appeal as the work of "a whole conglomerate of counter-revolutionaries, including agents of imperialist secret services".

Even though its leaders are either in prison or have fled abroad, the Belarussian opposition has not become radicalised. Its basic demands are for free elections, individual liberty and justice. Today these rights seem far out of reach in Belaruss. But they are not permanently unobtainable. Should change come, perhaps it will happen because they are the same rights of which Russia itself is in sore need.

tony.barber@ft.com

Tories risk forgetting a rich economic tradition

Tim Pitt

Boris Johnson's government has been fundamentally "un-Conservative". That has been the impression given by the Tory leadership contest so far. Inevitably, the debate has been dominated by the modern Conservative party's most successful leader, Margaret Thatcher.

What we have heard is at best only a partial reflection of her philosophy: Tory grandees have lined up to remind the contenders of her aversion to unfunded tax cuts when inflation is spiralling. Moreover, the debate ignores a much richer history of Conservative economic thinking.

Conservative economics has ebbed and flowed over the past two hundred years. Robert Peel's liberalising agenda in the mid-19th century was followed by a period of scepticism towards *laissez-faire*. With Labour's rise the party shifted to define itself against socialism, but the period after 1945 saw the Tories make peace with the welfare state and preside over a mixed economy. It was only under Thatcher that rolling back the state became central.

This evolution should not be confused with a lack of principles, however. Throughout, four basic tenets of Conservative economic thinking have endured. First, conservative economics has tended to be pragmatic, sceptical of ideology and grounded in realism. Conservatism has rejected intellectual rigidity, instead adapting to address the issues of the day.

Second, it has welcomed economic change, both for the progress it can

To address the inequality and fiscal challenges ahead, today's Conservatism must adapt once more

deliver and as necessary to ensure political and social stability. The task is to manage change carefully, with proper appreciation of how people and communities must be protected.

The third key principle is a belief in the need for prosperity and opportunity to be shared broadly. This thread runs from Benjamin Disraeli's recognition of the dangers of there being "two nations", rich and poor, to Harold Macmillan's acknowledgment of Conservatism's "clear duty" to those sections of society not sharing in economic progress.

Finally, there is the role of the state. Yes, Conservatives have always looked warily at over-mighty government – but this should not be confused with small state libertarianism. The Conservative approach has been to see the state as an enabler, rather than controller, of economic activity.

It is these principles that must now be applied to the challenges ahead. In the short-term that means managing the

Rule changes spell bad news for Big Tech



Much has been written about whether Big Tech has peaked. Meta recently announced its first sales drop, amid a fall in online advertising. Amazon, Netflix and others have cut back on hiring. Plenty of platforms have seen their stock prices crushed this year, which is typical as rates go up, and their growth slow.

But these are short-term trends that depend on the global economic cycle. The bigger change is that real thinkers are starting to show in Big Tech's core business model, which hinges on globalisation and the network effect to create scale. Three key political and regulatory shifts are challenging platforms' ability to cross borders and lock in market share. And they are doing so in ways that will prove longer lasting and have more impact than the ups and downs of share prices in a global recession.

First, consider the EU rules, approved in July, which will force the world's largest instant messaging services – including Apple's iMessage, Meta's WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, and very likely Google Chat and Microsoft Teams

harder for such companies to secure market share through the usual Big Tech land grab, which involves luring users to a particular service and then locking them in by making it hard to shift their data and information to rivals.

When contact lists and other data are instantly portable, it becomes easy to shift from one service to another. This may create a more competitive technology landscape over time, though privacy advocates worry it will also create more potential for data abuses since it will require a more open software paradigm that some believe could undermine security).

On the political front, the opposite is happening – it's becoming harder for many tech companies to cross boundaries. Two weeks ago, Alibaba, the Chinese technology platform giant, applied for a primary listing on the stock exchange in Hong Kong. In anticipation of new US financial rules that require more auditing of sensitive data than Beijing is willing to allow. Some 200 Chinese companies may end up delisting in the US because of the regulation. This underscores the bipolar or even tri-polar world that is developing in technology, with the US, Europe and China diverging.

While there's some talk of the US administration of Joe Biden lifting tariffs on China, the American economic and political elite have little expectation that we will go back to having a single, uni-



force report entitled "Confronting Reality in Cyberspace: Foreign Policy for a Fragmented Internet". This declared that "the era of the global internet is over", and "Washington will be unable to stop or reverse the trend towards fragmentation".

The task force, which included technologists, chief executives, public sector officials and intelligence officers, urged politicians to build digital trade among "trusted partners" (which sounds akin to "friend-shoring"), resolve US-EU data transfer issues and ease Europe's General Data Protection Regulation law as the basis of a shared privacy policy for liberal democracies.

There's plenty of work to do on that front – the US can't even get a federal privacy law passed. This is in part

Political and regulatory shifts challenge platforms' ability to cross borders

because of fears on the political left that the technology industry has managed to water down the national legislation proposal so much that it would actually undermine the tough rules already operating in states such as California. There is also concern that a federal law would put too much of an enforcement burden on one agency, the Federal Trade Commission.

But the FTC, under its antitrust trailblazing chair Lina Khan, is already pursuing a potentially game-changing case in another area. In late July, it challenged Meta's bid for the virtual reality firm Within, arguing that the company was already a key player in VR and was trying to "buy its way to the top" rather than competing on its own merits.

The case, which is highly unusual since it involves a small, start-up acquisition rather than a merger between two behemoths, cuts right to the core of Big Tech's model of snapping up potential competitors in their infancy. For example, Facebook's pre-Meta 2014 acquisition

operating system didn't compete with its own. Its acquisitions of Instagram and WhatsApp likewise stopped those companies becoming social network competitors.

Meta is hardly alone here. Numerous start-ups have accused Amazon of acquiring their technology to launch competing products. And Google has snapped up hundreds of would-be competitors. But if the current case, which will play out over years, is successful, it would profoundly change the Big Tech tactic of smothering young competitors.

All this would, in turn, start to undermine the network effect that has allowed the largest companies to reach such size and concentration. It might even open the door for the break-up of platforms. The process will take time to play out and will do so in different ways depending on geography. But these challenges to the Big Tech business model are real. Investors should take note.

to communicate with each other. This kind of "interoperability" will make it

fied worldwide web. The Council on Foreign Relations recently released a task

ability to access markets and lock in market share

tion of Oculus, an up-and-coming VR firm, ensured that the upstart's promis-

rana.faroohar@ft.com

The west's phantom energy sanctions fuel Putin's war machine

Oleg Ustenko

Western sanctions on Russian fossil fuels are a phantom. The revenues flowing into the Kremlin's coffers from foreign sales of oil, gas and coal are sky-high, having doubled in the first 100 days of the war. The west's energy sanctions regime is not working. That is for a very simple reason — it does not exist.

Before Vladimir Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February, Russia was comfortably the world's largest fossil fuel exporter. Today it can sell oil, gas and coal directly to every country except the US, which was a negligible customer to begin with.

Some influential US and European commentators assert that restrictions on Russian oil exports are inflicting pain on ordinary citizens in western countries without reducing the Kremlin's

revenues. They contend that the west's sanctions have backfired.

Yet the measures that the west has taken so far cover less than 5 per cent of Russia's prewar crude oil exports. Exports of seaborne crude, though down since mid-June, remain higher than at the start of the invasion. In large part, that is because it has been legal to import Russian oil into the EU and UK, and will remain so until at least December. Every week, some 10mn to 20mn barrels of crude arrive in Europe from Russian ports as traders turn so-called "phase-outs" into feeding frenzies.

Even in the US, the only country with sanctions on the direct import of Russian oil, motorists — perhaps without knowing it — are continuing to fill the tanks of their vehicles with petrol of Russian origin. In what can only be described as a global laundering operation, Russian crude is taken to foreign refineries and then imported into the US as petrol. Once the oil has been refined into other products, it can legally enter the US without breaking sanctions.

The UK is also going to continue importing millions of barrels of blended

Russian oil in coming months. This trade is likely to carry on even after a British ban comes into effect at the end of this year. It will be possible because of carve-outs in the rules that will allow companies to import CPC Blend, crude oil that is a mixture of Kazakh and Russian products, transported via a Caspian Sea pipeline.

These are hardly the embargoes Americans and Britons were entitled to

Moscow can still sell oil, gas and coal to every country except the US, which was a tiny customer to begin with

expect when US president Joe Biden and Boris Johnson, the UK's outgoing prime minister, announced punitive measures in March. The failure to impose a genuine embargo on Russian oil and gas is turbocharging Putin's revenues and financing war crimes in Ukraine.

To some degree, today's high energy prices reflect the anticipation of traders

that restrictions on Russian oil are coming down the line. But crude oil prices were increasing for months before the invasion and before the west announced any sanctions.

What is more, West Texas Intermediate and Brent crude oil prices have been coming down steadily since early June, just as Russia's crude exports began to decline. The claim that current oil prices are a result of the minimal restrictions imposed by western governments on Russia's fossil fuel exports does not stand up to scrutiny.

Big energy companies, which have posted enormous profits for the past six months, bear far more responsibility for the pain energy consumers are feeling. Companies such as BP & Shell in the UK, which made \$8.5bn and \$11.5bn respectively from April to June, and Winterhall in Germany, which made \$1.9bn, are doing very well, but these profits are nothing new for the industry. This is a sector which has made staggering profits every single day for the past 50 years.

In recent days, EU and UK policymakers have watered down their existing restrictions. They have created a straw

man in their sanction regimes. Without having given sanctions a chance to work properly, they are now dismantling them. This backsliding rewards Putin even as his forces commit atrocities in Ukraine and as Russia expands the territorial aims of its illegal war.

Ukraine will never forget the support our partners have given us. But on fossil fuels, the west faces a clear choice. Anyone serious about their support for Ukraine must stop funding Putin's regime. Business as usual serves only to prolong the war, which has hamstringing the entire global economy. The most effective solution must include a complete and immediate embargo on Russian fossil fuels in Europe and the rapid enactment of G7 proposals for a global price cap on Russian oil.

The sooner Putin is stopped, the faster we can get on with Ukraine's reconstruction. That means keeping Russian fossil fuels in the ground and turning phantom energy sanctions into real ones.

The writer is chief economic adviser to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine

massive spike in inflation and the downturn it may bring. Beyond that, the next prime minister must set his or her eyes on the longer-term challenges. Given recent anaemic growth, a plan to maximise it must be an absolute priority. But a proper Conservative is a realist and must acknowledge that even the most brilliant execution might nevertheless see the economy grow more slowly than it used to, held back by unavoidable structural factors: an ageing population, the inexorable shift towards more services and retreating globalisation. The pursuit of growth cannot, therefore, be used as cover to avoid difficult decisions elsewhere.

Specifically, lower growth means two further challenges the UK already faced are likely to intensify. Levels of income and regional inequality in Britain are high by both historic and international standards. History tells us low growth tends to see more intense fights over distribution, adding urgency to the issue. Lower growth also means structural pressures on the public finances cannot be ignored.

To address the growth, inequality and fiscal challenges ahead, today's Conservatism must adapt once more; but it must be grounded in longstanding Conservative principles, not in the vacuous promises of a partial imitation of Thatcherism.

The writer, a former senior adviser to UK chancellors Philip Hammond and Sajid Javid, is a partner at Flint Global; he writes in a personal capacity



Chain reaction
Brompton bike boss: 'We need to care more about what we buy'

HOW TO LEAD

Why young workers have an image problem



Pilita Clark
Business Life

Not that long ago, Mark Zuckerberg logged in to a Q&A session with his staff that I would very much like to have seen. Specifically, I wish I had witnessed the Facebook founder's face when an employee in Chicago named Gary asked if the extra days off that were brought in during the pandemic would continue in 2023.

Zuckerberg looked "visibly frustrated" by this question, according to an account of the meeting on the Verge news site. He had just explained the economy was probably tanking. TikTok was a competitive menace and he'd had to freeze hiring for some jobs.

So no, Gary in Chicago, the extra holidays would not last and nor would the days of pampering employees. People had to work harder and Zuckerberg didn't care if some decided to quit. "Realistically, there are probably a bunch of people at the company who shouldn't be here," he said.

Now, I have no idea how old Gary is, but considering the average age of a Facebook employee has been about 28, I doubt he saw the first moon walk. I also think a lot of bosses reading this would like what Zuckerberg said.



As work returns to something approaching pre-Covid normality, I have lost count of the complaints I have heard from managers, most in their late thirties and forties, about their coddled, disengaged and indifferent 20-something employees.

Here are some examples. There was the flummoxed investor who had told junior staff they should be in the office when clients visited, only to have those staff say: thanks for the feedback but I would rather keep working from home.

There was the TV executive who was told that young staff working on a long shoot would prefer shorter hours if they had to leave head office.

A consultant told me of a younger colleague who refused to travel abroad to client meetings any more, insisting they could be done online. And a financial adviser who fumed about young people logging in to important internal meetings where they kept

Listen to them. Offer great training. But do not heed their every whim, because you're not actually helping them

their cameras off and said nothing. I know that these are merely anecdotes. Some of the hardest working people I know are under 30 and too much weight is put on lazy generational stereotypes.

Also, as British researcher Professor Bobby Duffy wrote in his excellent book, *Generations*, last year, complaints about the young date back to ancient Greece, when Socrates lamented their contempt for authority, bad manners and greed.

Still, the volume and consistency of these latest gripes makes me wonder if something else is going on.

Dr Eliza Filby, a generational researcher who advises companies on how to manage and recruit people in their twenties, thinks there is.

She told me the other day that the pandemic had heightened factors that set these workers apart, starting with their overworked, burnt-out bosses in their thirties and forties.

These older managers had made it through the jolting uncertainty of the global financial crisis, then Covid, but often still relied on their parents to avoid financial disaster.

No wonder, says Filby, their juniors ask: "Why are you working so hard?"

What have you got to show for it?" Younger workers also have a far better idea of how their job compares with what is on offer elsewhere, thanks to endless social media updates.

They grew up knowing money could be made on commerce sites such as Depop, which is just as well because they often do less part-time work than older employees did at their age, partly because school is more competitive now.

The upshot of this is that a lot of younger, over-parented staff arrive in their first job with little idea of how much better it is than serving beer — and little faith it will meet their lifelong financial needs.

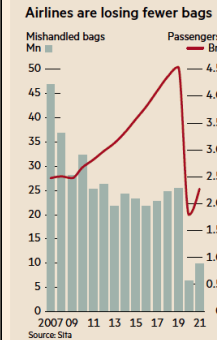
Filby's advice: listen to them. Offer great training. But do not, on any account, heed their every whim, because "you're not actually helping them through life".

I agree. I also think there has never been a better time to be an ambitious, hardworking young employee. Finding a great job isn't easy but if you can do it, you may well find yourself surrounded by a lot of people your age setting an unusually low bar.

pilita.clark@ft.com

Lex

Travel: why airports lose your luggage



Reasons for delayed bags

Transfer mishandling 41%	Failure to load 18%
Airport/customers/weather/space weight restriction 5%	Arrival mishandling 5%
Tagging error/other 6%	Loading error 4%
Ticketing error/bag switch/security/other 18%	

Luggage cannot be trusted. It wanders off on its own. Only his week, Heathrow, the UK's shambolic main airport, complained about "bags not travelling with passengers". And how is anyone supposed to tell suitcases apart when so many of them are black, gripped a Frankfurt Airport boss a few days earlier. Passengers correctly blame lost bags on airports and airlines. They are struggling to cope with a sharp recovery in air travel.

Sita, an aviation IT business, says luggage snafus in airports were 17 per cent higher in July than in the same month of 2019. Airline ground handlers are often the first point of contact for bag routing. They are a third fewer at Heathrow compared with pre-pandemic levels. That is one reason British Airways extended a cap on short-haul ticket sales from Heathrow.

On average, only 0.4 per cent of bags are delayed or mislaid at airports. Heathrow's reported level of failed "baggage connections" is about double that. Last month, low-cost US airline Delta mounted a rescue mission for 1,000 American suitcases stranded at Heathrow. Its Airbus A330-200 to Detroit carried luggage and nothing else. If you race across a stopover airport worrying that baggage handlers

lack your sense of urgency, your fears are justified. Bungled transfers account for two-fifths of luggage delays, according to Sita. Chaos at Newark airport may ensure that your suitcase goes to Phoenix even though you are headed for San Diego.

One-fifth of baggage delays are simply the result of baggage handlers falling to put cases on aircraft. The same proportion comes down to ticketing mistakes and security inspections. Peter Drummond, Sita's head of baggage, points out that the world "behind the black curtain" is fraught with logistical complexity. But greater digitisation of baggage handling is reducing lost luggage, according to Sita. Some iPhone users pop cheap Apple AirTag GPS locators into their luggage. That was how Briton Elliot Sharrod located a suitcase that went missing during an Aer Lingus flight from South Africa via Germany. The bag was in Pimlico, London.

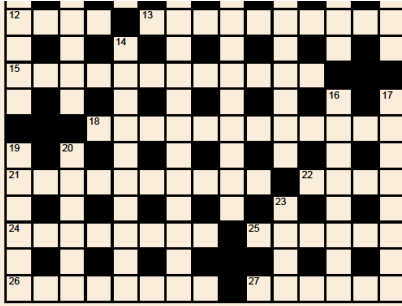
One mystery remains for Lex, a regular flyer with weary experience of lost luggage. The poignancy of waiting for a mislaid bag in an empty baggage hall is deepened by watching a lonely, unclaimed suitcase rotating endlessly on the carousel. It always seems to be bright pink. Why?

NIKKEI Asia The voice of the Asian century

CROSSWORD
No 17167 Set by PHSSTHPOK

ACROSS
1 Blue heard describing boat ready to row (6)
4 Tailless baby pigeon spurred and spat (3)
9 Pharaoh severs masked Egyptian head (6)





- 10 Attack on evil misbehaviour by church (8)
 - 12 Have a thing for nothing (4)
 - 13 Princess is nursing swelling (10)
 - 15 Analysis of stars by psychiatrist so misguided it is deleted (12)
 - 18 Realise leaders of every diocese are embraced (12)
 - 21 Where prisoner hopes to be kept healthy (2,4,4)
 - 22 Rogue computer connected to oxygen ring (4)
 - 24 City pier is to be renovated (8)
 - 25 Favourite city slum (6)
 - 26 Following the Titanic, perhaps finally donate to charity (8)
 - 27 Instrument for beating used by riot police (6)
- DOWN**
- 1 Alas, broke filter with implant (8)
 - 2 Never eat shredded sap (8)
 - 3 Discover who works for GCHQ? (4)
 - 5 Unfortunately, tenses when injecting into fruit's core (12)
 - 6 Fixing *Annie Hall* is one thing they did (5,5)
 - 7 Criminal gang has sex appeal (6)
 - 8 Come out of crisis with a third missing (6)
 - 11 Is brandishing weapons friendly? (4,4,4)
 - 14 Not a sensible reason to train (10)
 - 16 Touching a posh outfit takes a little bit of money (8)
 - 17 Recommend liqueur to get energy, but not a double (8)
 - 19 Break up broadband company in Delaware (6)
 - 20 After sampling drug, lie really is more unattractive (6)
 - 23 Specimen cabinet (4)

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