THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

DOW JONES | News Corp * * * * * THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2024 ~ VOL. CCLXXXIII NO. 26 WSJ.com ★★★★ $5.00

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What's News

Business & Finance

◆ **The Fed signaled it** was thinking about when to lower interest rates but hinted that a cut wasn't imminent when it held rates steady at its first policy meeting of the year. **A1**

◆ **U.S. stocks fell** after the central bank all but took a March interest-rate cut off the table, with the S&P 500, Dow and Nasdaq retreating 1.6%, 0.8% and 2.2%, respectively. **B11**

◆ **An investor group** led by Ancora took a big stake in Norfolk Southern and plans to run a proxy fight aimed at overhauling the railroad operator's board and replacing its chief executive. **B1**

◆ **Boeing, bracing for** a financial blow from an equipment failure on an Alaska Airlines flight, provided no financial targets for 2024 as it reported slightly better-than-expected quarterly results. **B1**

◆ **Allen Media Group** made a $14.3 billion offer to buy Paramount Global, the home of CBS and the Paramount Hollywood studio, according to people familiar with the situation. **B1**

◆ **Cigna Group agreed** to sell its Medicare business to Health Care Service Corp. for $3.3 billion in a deal the companies expect to close early next year. **B1**

◆ **Disney reached** a preliminary agreement to sell 60% of its Indian media business in a deal that values the operation at $3.9 billion, much less than what it was worth when Disney acquired it in 2019. **B1**

◆ **Walmart plans to** open or expand 150 stores in the U.S. over the next five years, reversing a strategy that had focused on keeping its number of stores unchanged. **B3**

World-Wide

◆ **Meta's Mark Zuckerberg**, TikTok's Shou Zi Chew and other tech CEOs faced withering bipartisan criticism from senators who said social-media platforms must bear more legal liability when children are harmed online. **A1**

◆ **The House passed** a bipartisan tax-cut bill that would deliver billions of dollars to companies and low-income families, but it faces tough sledding in the Senate. **A4**

◆ **Freedom of navigation** on the high seas, a pillar of worldwide trade, is being challenged around the globe, creating an interlocking set of maritime-security crises. **A1**

◆ **Senate Republican** and Democratic negotiators said they have largely completed a package to tighten security at the southern border, including by shutting down the processing of new, unscheduled asylum claims when the frontier becomes overwhelmed. **A4**

◆ **U.S. negotiators pushed** for a cease-fire deal that could stop the war in Gaza long enough to stall Israel's military momentum and potentially set the stage for a more lasting truce, U.S. and Arab officials familiar with the negotiations said. **A7**

◆ **Western officials and** Ukrainian soldiers are warning that rising tensions between President Zelensky and his top general could hamper the country's war effort. **A16**

◆ **The U.S. said it** disrupted a potentially life-threatening Chinese hacking operation that hijacked hundreds of infected routers and used them to covertly target American and allied critical infrastructure networks. **A4**

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EVELYN HOCKSTEIN/REUTERS

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg faced grieving parents Wednesday at a Senate hearing on risks to children using social media.

'Blood on Your Hands': CEOs Hit Over Harm to Kids Online

By John D. McKinnon And Ryan Tracy

WASHINGTON—Meta Platforms' Mark Zuckerberg, TikTok's Shou Zi Chew and other tech CEOs faced withering bipartisan criticism on Wednesday from senators who said social-media platforms must bear more legal liability when children are harmed online.

"You have blood on your hands," Sen. Lindsey Graham (R., S.C.) told the executives during a hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee, eliciting applause from a packed audience that included many holding pictures of children.

The presence of grieving families lent the roughly four-hour session an emotional charge, as lawmakers repeated stories of sexual exploitation, suicide and other suffering blamed on social media.

At the same time, it wasn't clear it would lead to a different result than previous congressional tongue-lashings of the tech industry. Several senators acknowledged the futility of their legislative response to date, despite a bipartisan consensus that the current laws don't adequately address harms to children on the platforms.

"We have an annual flogging every year," said Sen. Thom Tillis (R., N.C.). "And what materially has occurred?"

The Wall Street Journal has highlighted persistent dangers to children on social-media platforms, including how Instagram's algorithms connect a vast network of pedophiles. Several lawmakers cited the Journal's reporting in their criticism, and they pointed to a wave of lawsuits filed by parents and state attorneys general seeking to hold platforms accountable. Senators noted that many had been dismissed under laws designed to protect online speech.

Sen. Dick Durbin (D., Ill.), chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, blasted the executives for a "crisis" in child sexual exploitation online.

"Their design choices, their failures to adequately invest in trust and safety, and their constant pursuit of engagement and profit over basic safety have all put our kids and grandkids at risk," he said.

Zuckerberg, who got many of the most pointed questions, told lawmakers there are positive aspects of children's interactions on Meta platforms. He also praised Facebook's investment in

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Fed Hints Rate Cuts Are Not Imminent

Central bank holds steady, suggests it will lower if inflation risks have receded

By Nick Timiraos

The Federal Reserve signaled it was thinking about when to lower interest rates but hinted that a cut wasn't imminent when it held rates steady at its first policy meeting of the year on Wednesday.

The central bank held its benchmark federal-funds rate steady in a range between 5.25% and 5.5%, the highest level in more than two decades, as it awaits more convincing evidence that a sharp downturn in inflation at the end of last year will endure.

"It's a highly consequential decision to start the process" of lowering interest rates "and we want to get that right," Fed Chair Jerome Powell said at a news conference.

For most of January, investors in interest-rate futures markets have put a roughly 50% chance on a central bank rate cut at its March 19-20 meeting. But Powell volunteered on Wednesday that a cut then wasn't expected.

"I don't think it's likely that the committee will reach a level of confidence by the time of the March meeting" to justify a rate cut, "but that's to be seen," he said.

Stock indexes fell in response. The Dow Jones Industrial Average on Wednesday declined 317 points, or 0.8%,

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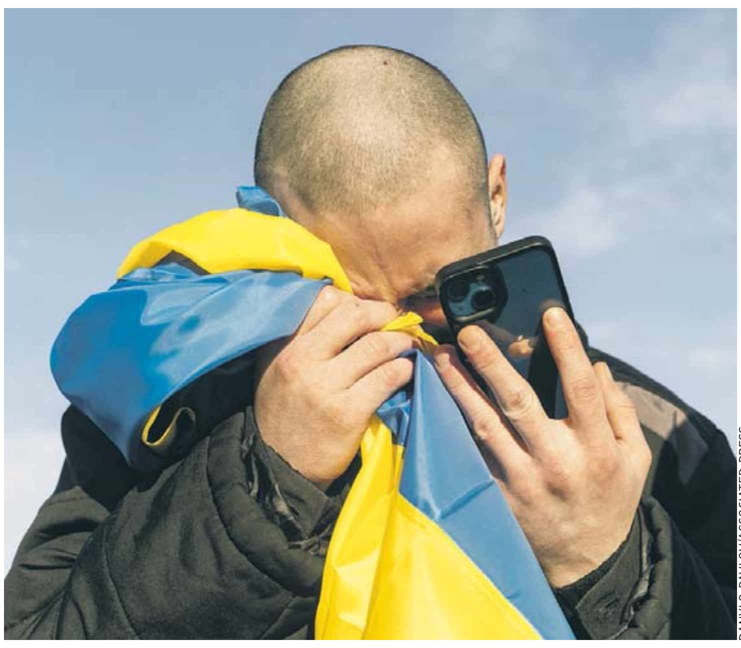
◆ **Greg Ip: Fed can't take too long to declare victory... A2**
◆ **Stocks score third straight monthly gain...................... B11**

POWs Swapped In War

A Ukrainian who had been held as a prisoner of war cries while calling his relatives after a POW exchange Wednesday on the Ukrainian-Russian border. Separately, tensions have flared between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and his top general, threatening to hamper the war effort. **A16**



DANYLO PAVLOV/ASSOCIATED PRESS

23andMe's Fall From $6 Billion To Nearly $0

Once-hot DNA-testing company is struggling to pivot to healthcare

By Rolfe Winkler

Five years ago, 23andMe was one of the hottest startups in the world. Millions of people were spitting into its test tubes to learn about their ancestry. Its valuation briefly topped $6 billion after a 2021 public offering and Forbes anointed Anne Wojcicki, 23andMe's chief executive and a Silicon Valley celebrity, as the "newest self-made billionaire."

Now Wojcicki's self-made billions have vanished. 23andMe's valuation has crashed 98% from its peak and Nasdaq has threatened to delist its sub-$1 stock. Wojcicki reduced staff by a quarter last year through three rounds of layoffs and a subsidiary sale. The company has never made a profit and is burning cash so quickly it could run out by 2025.

Silicon Valley's fortunes were built on the lofty ambitions of entrepreneurs swinging for the fences—even if most of them strike out. Wojcicki, for her part, isn't giving up. She's sticking to her goal to transform 23andMe from a supplier of basic ancestry and health data into a comprehensive healthcare company that develops drugs, offers medical care and sells subscription health reports.

She still has to prove the business can sustain itself. She's raised about $1.4 billion for 23andMe, and spent roughly 80% of it.

Known for her quirky

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Why Are All These People Singing?

* * *

Moviegoers surprised to find films are musicals

By Brianna Abbott

Musicals have taken over the box office, whether moviegoers know it or not.

Some of the biggest movie releases in recent months including "Wonka" and "Mean Girls" feature song and dance numbers. But in their trailers, the show tunes don't take center stage. That left some viewers confused when characters burst into song.

"I was totally duped," said Grace Beers, a 36-year-old real-estate agent from Livingston, Mont.

Beers said she likes musicals, when she is ready for them. That wasn't the case when she saw "Mean Girls" with her fiancé in January and

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Ship Attacks Threaten A Pillar of Global Trade

By Drew Hinshaw And Daniel Michaels

The modern economy rests on a rule so old that hardly anybody alive can remember a time before it: Ships of any nation may sail the high seas.

Suddenly, that pillar of the international order shows signs of buckling.

In the Red Sea, Houthi rebels have stormed onto cargo ships, causing freight rates to quadruple and setting a precedent that U.S. vessels aren't welcome across one of the world's most vital transport lanes. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has turned the Black Sea into a gauntlet of warships and mines, navigated by grain-laden bulk carriers sailing under the fragile consent of two warring states.

Near the Horn of Africa or the Strait of Malacca, pirates have roared back, crimping sea traffic. In the South China Sea, Beijing has asserted sovereign control over parts that have long been international waters, while its push to reunite Taiwan with the mainland raises questions about future transit through the Taiwan Strait.

"Throughout my long career as a naval officer...I have never seen such intense competition on the oceans of the world," said retired U.S. Adm. James Stavridis, who served as NATO supreme allied commander and wrote his Ph.D thesis on the United Nations' Law of the Sea treaty.

Open oceans allowed a global economy to emerge from the wreckage of two world wars. The freedom for all containerships to safely ferry goods on the high seas helped lift China from poverty, turn the U.S. into a country of middle-class consumers and cement the dollar as the world's reserve currency. Until the 20th century, trading nations competed in blood for the right to ship merchandise to foreign ports; these days they compete on

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OCTAVIO JONES/REUTERS

U.S. NEWS

Judge dismisses Disney's lawsuit accusing DeSantis of retaliation. **A3**

DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

PERSONAL JOURNAL

TSA puts new security checkpoint to the test with volunteers at Denver airport. **A9**

U.S. NEWS

CAPITAL ACCOUNT | By Greg Ip

Europe Regulates Its Way to Last Place

These are humbling times for Europe. The continent barely escaped recession late last year as the U.S. boomed. It is losing out to the U.S. on artificial intelligence, and to China on electric vehicles.

There is one field where the European Union still leads the world: regulation. Having set the standard on regulating mergers, carbon emissions, data privacy, and e-commerce competition, the EU now seeks to do the same on AI. In December it unveiled a sweeping draft law that bans certain types of AI, tightly regulates others, and imposes huge fines for violators. Its executive arm, the European Commission, might investigate **Microsoft**'s tie-up with **OpenAI** as potentially anticompetitive.

Never before has "America innovates, China replicates, Europe regulates" so aptly captured each region's comparative advantage.

The technocrats who staff the EU in Brussels aren't anti-free market. Just the opposite: they still believe in free trade, unlike the U.S. or China. Much of their regulation is aimed at protecting consumers and competition from meddling national governments.

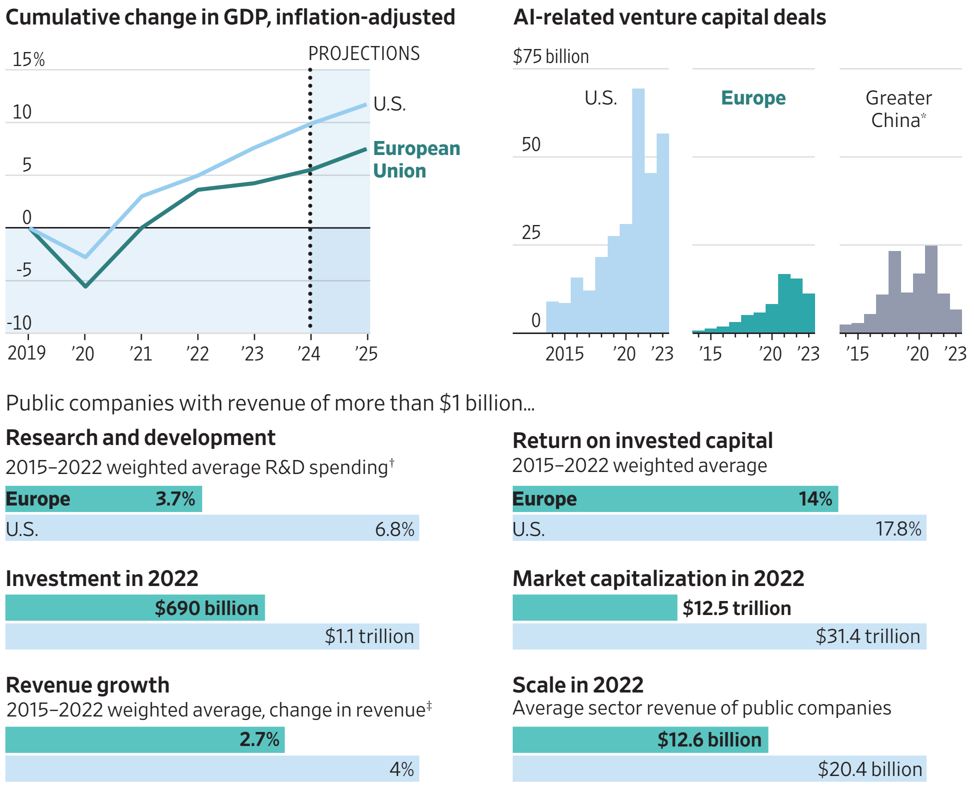
But there's a trade-off between consumer protection and the profit motive that drives investment and innovation, and the EU might be getting that trade-off wrong.

For example, to preserve competition, European regulators have resisted mergers that leave just a handful of mobile phone carriers per market. As a result Europe now has 43 groups running 102 mobile operators serving a population of 474 million, while the U.S. has three major networks serving a population of 335 million, according to telecommunications consultant John Strand. China and India are even more concentrated.

European mobile customers pay only about a third of what Americans do. But that's why European carriers invest only half as much per customer and their networks are commensurately worse, Strand said. He quipped that "getting a 5G signal in Germany is like finding a Biden supporter at a Trump rally," and estimated that putting European networks on a par with the U.S. would cost about $300 billion.

This has knock-on effects on Europe's tech sector. Swedish telecommunications equipment manufacturer Ericsson's sales in Europe suffer in part because many carriers are too small and unprofitable to update to the latest 5G networks. "Europe has prioritized shorter-term low consumer prices at the expense of quality infrastructure," Chief Executive Börje Ekholm told me in Davos earlier this month.

Of course, Europe's economy underperforms for lots of reasons, from demographics to energy costs. And U.S. regulators aren't exactly hands-off. Still, they tend to act on evidence of harm, whereas Europe's will act on the mere possibility. This precautionary principle can throttle innovation in its cradle.



*Greater China includes Mainland, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. †Percent of revenue ‡Inflation adjusted, average annual growth
Sources: IMF (GDP); PitchBook (VC deals); McKinsey (R&D, investment, revenue, invested capital, market cap, scale)

Starting in 2018, Europe's General Data Protection Regulation, or GDPR, imposed strict requirements on websites' collection and use of personal data with fines of up to 4% of global sales. A study by University of Maryland economist Ginger Jin and two co-authors found this depressed European venture-capital investment relative to the U.S. over the next two years.

History might be about to repeat with AI. Since 2021, AI-related venture-capital deals have raised $44 billion in Europe, roughly equal to China but just a quarter of the U.S., according to PitchBook, and the gap is growing. Last year Europe's AI industry warned lawmakers their AI law could "lead to highly innovative companies moving their activities abroad [and] investors withdrawing their capital."

The draft law was watered down, and days later France's **Mistral AI**, which aspires to be a European rival to OpenAI, closed a funding round valuing it at around $2 billion, according to Bloomberg.

European regulation has a protectionist element, often crafted to hit American tech giants while sparing indigenous startups. Despite that, European startups rarely become giants, and even established companies are smaller than their U.S. counterparts.

"I don't think that the lack of winners in recent decades can be attributed to a single monocausal factor," one European-born founder of a U.S. tech company told me. But Europe's regulatory culture, including prosaic tax and labor laws, is near the top, he said.

In a recent study, the McKinsey Global Institute noted Europe's internal market is larger than China's and almost as big as the U.S.'s. But when it compared companies with more than $1 billion in revenue, the U.S. firms spent 80% more on research and development, boasted 30% higher return on capital, and 1.3-percentage points faster revenue growth.

As the U.S. and China put more muscle into their technological contest, Europe risks falling even further behind. China spends 2% to 5% of GDP on industrial policy—support of sectors deemed strategic—compared with Europe's 1%, McKinsey said. In December, Brussels approved up to $1.3 billion of aid over eight years for cloud computing-related R&D, but that's just 4% of what Amazon's cloud division invests in a year, McKinsey noted.

If Europe is going to compete with the U.S. and China, it will need to rethink its balance between regulation and innovation. As German economy minister Robert Habeck observed last fall: "If Europe has the best regulation but no European companies, we haven't won much."

Fed Shouldn't Take Too Long to Declare Victory on Inflation

By Greg Ip

ANALYSIS

After the inflation surge of the past two years, you can't blame the Federal Reserve for taking its time to declare victory. On Wednesday, Chair Jerome Powell acknowledged inflation by some measures is down to its 2% target. He nonetheless set a relatively high bar to cutting interest rates in response. "It's a highly consequential decision to start the process," he told reporters Wednesday.

But he needs to be careful about setting the bar too high. Whether to cut depends not just on the data, but where rates are now. Powell himself noted they are "well into restrictive territory." Indeed, restrictive enough that it's hard to see how a modest cut could be a mistake. Conversely, waiting for absolute certainty that inflation has been beaten increases the opposite risk: the economy starting to wilt.

The Fed kept its target rate at 5.25% to 5.5%, and may not cut it until May, Powell suggested. Yet let's remember why the Fed raised it to that level last July. Inflation excluding food and energy by its preferred measure was 4.3% in the previous 12 months, and officials thought it would still be 3.9% by the end of the year. They reasonably expected it wouldn't return to 2% unless the Fed created some economic slack with tight monetary policy.

In fact, core inflation plummeted to 2.9% by the end of 2023 and just 1.9% in the past six months, annualized. This was because of improving supply, not falling demand, and thus growth and labor markets remained solid. So the rationale behind 5%-plus rates is no longer operative: The Fed doesn't have to push inflation down, it merely needs to keep it from going up. This can be achieved without weakening the economy or really high rates. And yet adjusted for inflation, "real" rates today are higher than in July.

Where should rates be? Go back to March 2022, when the Fed first started tightening. At the time, officials thought core inflation would end 2023 at 2.6% and unemployment at 3.5%—close to what actually happened. And they thought this would require a federal-funds rate of 2.8%—fully 2.5 percentage points lower than it is today.

This doesn't mean the rate should be 2.8% now, but it does mean the rate could be lower than 5.25% while remaining restrictive. Economists use the Taylor Rule to calculate where the Fed should set rates given actual and target inflation, economic slack and the neutral interest rate, which over time keeps both inflation and unemployment stable. Three versions of the rule calculated by the Atlanta Fed suggest the Fed's target rate should be 3.47% to 4.37%.

It's certainly possible inflation could edge higher from here; some of last year's drop may have been technical. Inflation by the better-known consumer-price index is running much higher. And with the economy still so strong, more price pressure can't be ruled out. That's a reason to start small.

Of course, it's not just the inflation data the Fed is watching. An "unexpected weakening in the labor market" would justify cutting sooner, Powell said. But such a scenario would suggest the Fed may have waited too long to cut.

Central Bank Holds Rate Steady

Continued from Page One

and the S&P 500, which on Monday closed at an all-time high, fell 1.6%, its largest one-day percentage decline since September. Yields on the 10-year Treasury note declined 0.091 percentage point to close at 3.965%.

The market-based probability of a March cut fell to around 35% on Wednesday afternoon, according to CME Group. "March is not the base case and in order for it to be a truly live meeting, the data has got to disappoint materially," said Michael de Pass, global head of rates trading at Citadel Securities.

Markets have rallied notably over the past two months as investors have anticipated cooler inflation would allow the central bank to dial back rate hikes this year. Investors expect the Fed to cut rates by nearly 1.5 percentage points in 2024, or the equivalent of a quarter-point rate cut at six of the Fed's seven meetings later this year.

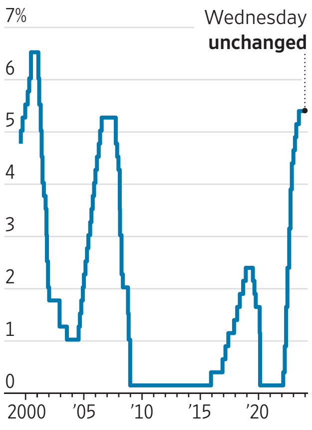
At their prior meeting in December, most officials anticipated they could cut rates three times this year if inflation continued to decline gradually to its 2% target and economic growth was steady but unspectacular. They only issue such forecasts every other meeting.

The fed-funds rate influences other borrowing costs throughout the economy, such as on mortgages, credit cards and business loans. The 30-year fixed-rate mortgage stood at 6.78% last week,

AL DRAGO/BLOOMBERG NEWS

Fed Chair Jerome Powell spoke Wednesday at his post-meeting news conference.

Federal-funds rate target



Note: Midpoint of range since 2008
Source: Federal Reserve

down from an October high of 7.9, the Mortgage Bankers Association said Wednesday.

The Fed jettisoned guidance in its heavily deliberated policy statement that since July, when officials last raised rates, has suggested it was more likely to raise rates than to lower them. In its place, officials adopted a neutral view by noting that the risks to achieving its goals of healthy labor markets and low inflation "are moving into better balance."

The Fed doesn't expect to lower rates "until it has gained greater confidence that inflation is moving sustainably toward 2%," the statement said.

Powell said Wednesday the Fed might be slower to cut rates or drag out the process if inflation proved to be more persistent. It could cut rates sooner and faster if the labor market weakened or there was "very, very persuasive lower inflation," he said.

The Fed has held its benchmark federal-funds rate steady at four consecutive policy meetings. Officials began raising rates from near zero in March 2022 and lifted them at the fastest pace in 40 years to combat inflation that also soared to a four-decade high.

One year ago, many economists anticipated that Fed officials would have to raise rates to levels that would create enough slack—such as unemployed workers and idled factories—to significantly slow inflation. But healed supply chains and an influx of workers into the labor force curbed wage and price increases in the second half of last year without causing broad weakness.

Economic growth has been stronger in recent months than Fed officials anticipated, which could make some of them cautious about declaring victory on inflation. But price pressures and wage growth have cooled even with better growth, suggesting stronger growth might not necessarily be a headwind to further cooling of inflation.

Wage growth slowed at the end of 2023, the Labor Department said Wednesday. The employment-cost index, which the Fed considers the most comprehensive measure of pay growth, showed private-sector pay rose 4.3% in the fourth quarter from a year earlier, the mildest gain in 2½ years.

Inflation excluding volatile food and energy prices fell to 2.9% in December from a year earlier, using the Fed's preferred gauge.

The improvement has occurred faster than many officials anticipated, leading some to question the economy's turn of fortune.

"We want to see more good data. It's not that we're looking for better data," Powell said. "Are the last six months flattered by factors that are one-off factors that won't repeat themselves? We don't think so. But that's the question...we have to ask."

Central-bank officials are trying to balance two risks: One is that they move too slowly to ease policy and the economy crumples under the weight of higher interest rates. The other is that they ease too much, too soon, allowing inflation to reaccelerate or become entrenched at a level above their 2% goal.

The Fed typically cuts rates because economic activity is slowing sharply, but officials are beginning to consider scenarios under which they could cut lower rates even with solid growth. That is because as inflation declines, inflation-adjusted or "real" rates will rise if nominal rates are held steady.

"The current stance of policy is no longer warranted by the inflation backdrop. The prudent policy stance is to return to a neutral setting," in which rates neither spur nor slow economic activity, said Daleep Singh, a former executive at the New York Fed who is now chief global economist at PGIM Fixed Income.

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Disney Suit Against DeSantis Dismissed

A federal judge Wednesday dismissed **Disney**'s lawsuit alleging Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and his allies retaliated against the company for criticizing legislation he backed, a blow to the entertainment giant in its long-running battle with the Republican governor.

By Arian Campo-Flores, Jacob Gershman and Robbie Whelan

Disney sued the defendants over a pair of laws targeting a special tax district covering the land that houses Walt Disney World. At DeSantis's urging, Florida's Republican-led Legislature effectively ended Disney's control of the district—which lawmakers renamed the Central Florida Tourism Oversight District—and gave the governor the ability to handpick its five-member supervisory board.

Disney alleged the actions improperly retaliated against the company for opposing a DeSantis-backed law restricting classroom instruction on gender identity and sexual orientation, violating Disney's First Amendment rights. DeSantis and Republican lawmakers said their actions were aimed at reining in excessive privileges that Disney had secured over decades.

In a 17-page opinion, U.S. District Judge Allen Winsor granted a motion to dismiss the case, saying that elements of Disney's case both lacked standing and failed on the merits. It was a victory for DeSantis, who has been locked in a legal saga with Disney over corporate power, governmental control and freedom of speech.

Jeremy Redfern, DeSantis's press secretary, said: "The federal court's decision made it clear that Gov. DeSantis was correct: Disney is still just one of many corporations in the state, and they do not have a right to their own special government."

Disney said Wednesday that it plans to appeal the decision.

"This is an important case with serious implications for the rule of law, and it will not end here," a Disney spokesman said after the ruling. "If left unchallenged, this would set a dangerous precedent and give license to states to weaponize their official powers to punish the expression of political viewpoints they disagree with. We are determined to press forward with our case."

Winsor premised his ruling against Disney largely on judicial precedent discouraging courts from probing the mindset of legislators when they cast votes on otherwise valid laws. That is the argument the new board made in its motion to dismiss Disney's case.

Winsor cited a federal appellate ruling from 2015 that upheld an Alabama statute restricting payroll deductions for public-employee union dues. A teachers union claimed lawmakers enacted the law in retaliation for its political speech on education policy, but the appeals court concluded that any antiunion motives behind the measure didn't matter because the law itself was constitutional on its face.

Likewise, "as Disney appropriately acknowledges, the Legislature can determine the structure of Florida's special improvement districts," Winsor wrote. "Disney does not argue that the First Amendment (or anything else) would preclude the Legislature from enacting the challenged laws without a retaliatory motivation."

Winsor also found the company lacked standing to sue DeSantis and Florida's commerce secretary.

The ruling represents a setback for Disney Chief Executive Bob Iger, who came out of retirement 14 months ago for a second stint as CEO, replacing Bob Chapek, whom Iger had supported as his successor in early 2020.

Chapek was CEO when Disney initially clashed with DeSantis over the parental rights law, a conflict that many Disney executives and shareholders saw as an unforced error.

Oklahoma Official Targets Teachers

Republican schools chief says educators 'indoctrinate'; some face online threats

By Adolfo Flores And Matt Barnum

MIKE SIMONS/TULSA WORLD/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Oklahoma's schools superintendent, Ryan Walters, left, shown in 2022, has sometimes clashed with the state's lawmakers.

Four years ago, Ryan Walters was a popular Oklahoma high-school teacher known for engaging Advanced Placement history lessons. Now, he is arguably the most incendiary critic of public-school teachers in the country.

Since taking office last year, Oklahoma's elected schools superintendent has labeled teachers unions as terrorist organizations and said that radical leftists have turned schools into an "Epstein island" of sexual predators. He has also taken the unusual step of criticizing individual teachers and school officials, often in harsh terms.

Some of the educators he has targeted in television interviews and social-media posts have said they aren't indoctrinating students, and that being a target has meant facing online threats of violence.

"We have rules, regulations, laws that say you're not going to go and indoctrinate kids and you still have left-wing activists who do it," the 38-year-old Republican said.

Since coming onto the national scene after Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt appointed him state secretary of education in 2020, Walters has sometimes clashed with Oklahoma lawmakers, including some Republicans who wanted to see him substantiate how he planned to fix problems in a state where students score worse than average on national exams.

Tensions peaked last year when lawmakers issued a legislative subpoena for Walters to hand over information they had been requesting for months. He appeared to have smoothed over relations after unveiling a "Back to Basics" proposal focused on math, reading, science and civics, sought to increase tutoring, offered teachers up to $50,000 recruitment bonuses, and advocated merit-based pay.

But state lawmakers took aim at Walters again this week after reports that his department had tried to claw back some of the teacher bonuses from people it said had received them in error. Walters played down the snafu, saying in a memo to lawmakers that some of the teachers had "misrepresented their experience and qualifications."

GOP state Rep. Mark McBride responded: "As a businessman, if I make a mistake on a contract I can't go back a week later, a month later, and say 'Hey wait a minute, I made a $50,000 mistake, can you pay me that back?' " If the Department of Education made a mistake in approving an application, it shouldn't demand the teacher pay for it, he said.

McBride said he continued to be concerned about Walters's rhetoric, saying it seemed "geared more toward grabbing attention" than improving the state's education.

"It's obvious that he's wanting to run for higher office or something," McBride said.

Walters has also thrown his support behind what could be the first religious charter school in the country.

Walters's bully pulpit approach has shocked some of his former students, who recalled a strict but well-liked history teacher who assigned debates on topics such as abortion, the Trail of Tears and Hiroshima. Although he had cardboard cutouts of Ronald Reagan and Winston Churchill in his classroom and a conservative presence on social media, he didn't discuss his views or try to impose them on his classes, the students said.

"He was compassionate, reasonable, levelheaded," said Starla Edge, one of his former students. "The things he says now are just so backward from anything he ever said to us in class."

Moms for Liberty, the conservative group that has sought to remake school boards around the country, said Walters was a "bold advocate for parents in Oklahoma." At the most recent State Board of Education meeting, some members of the public who spoke praised him and his policies.

"We are so thankful for you," said Polly Tyler, a board member of the Cherokee County Republican Party.

Raised in McAlester, Okla., Walters said he became an educator after being inspired by a teacher who made history come alive, particularly Abraham Lincoln's leadership under duress. He taught AP U.S. history, world history and government during his eight years at McAlester High School, and was a state Teacher of the Year finalist.

"I thought that would be my way of being able to make a difference," he said.

Walters called for the revocation of the teaching certificates of a middle-school and a high-school teacher during his tenure as state secretary of education and while campaigning for superintendent.

Summer Boismier, an English teacher at Norman High School, said that before the 2022 school year, teachers were told to pull any books that might run afoul of a state law that bars instructing students that they should feel psychological distress because of their race or gender or that they bear responsibility for past actions by members of their race or gender.

In protest, Boismier covered her classroom library with red butcher paper with the words "Books the state doesn't want you to read" and a QR code to the Brooklyn Public Library's Books Unbanned initiative. After a parent complained, school administrators asked her to drop her protest, she said. She chose to resign.

Walters accused Boismier on social media of providing pornographic material and called for her teaching certificate to be revoked, which Walters and the Oklahoma State Board of Education are set to discuss on March 28.

Boismier, who now works at the Brooklyn Public Library, said she has received online threats of violence and has sued Walters for defamation. Earlier this month, Walters asked the court to dismiss the lawsuit. In a court filing, Walters said Boismier didn't meet the standard for alleging a defamation claim as a public figure because she didn't "allege any actual malice on" his part.

Elementary School Principal Is Called Out, Leading to His Resignation

Last fall in an appearance on Fox News, Ryan Walters called for the firing of Shane Murnan, an elementary school principal in the Western Heights Public Schools, following reports that Murnan performed in drag on weekends and had faced a 2001 child pornography possession charge when he was a teacher in Stillwater.

The case was dismissed, according to the Oklahoman newspaper. Murnan said the charge was false and ultimately expunged.

After Walters called him out by name, Murnan and the school where he worked received death threats.

"It was scary, I've never had to deal with anything like this before," Murnan said. "I've always been supported in being who I am."

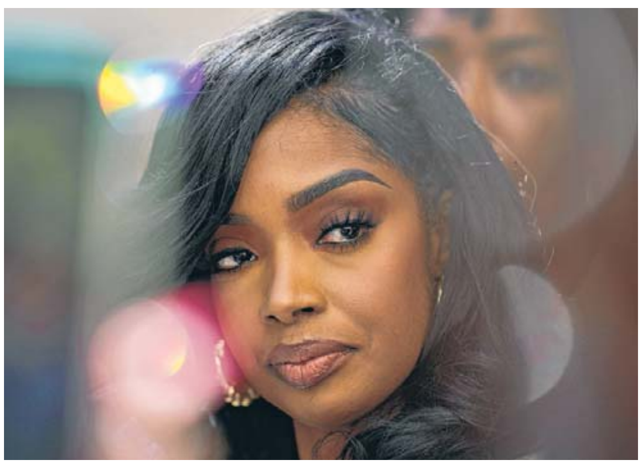
The Oklahoma State Department of Education, meanwhile, said it was reviewing Murnan's teaching certificate for potential dismissal "due to commission of an act of moral turpitude." After Walters threatened the district's accreditation, the district placed Murnan on administrative leave. Last week, it said it was prepared to terminate him if he didn't resign by Feb. 1, citing costs of extra security in response to the threats and hiring other people to perform his job when he isn't on site.

Murnan resigned on Friday. In a statement, superintendent Brayden Savage called the situation "heartbreaking" and said the district had hoped to keep Murnan employed but had been unable to because "the continued noise surrounding this situation has been incredibly taxing to our staff and budget."

Appeals Case Challenges Minority Business Grants

By Erin Mulvaney

From the day the Supreme Court outlawed racial preferences in college admissions last year, the business world has been sorting through what the decision might portend for programs that seek to boost opportunities for minorities. A case examining a venture-capital firm's grants to Black women entrepreneurs could provide some answers.



REBECCA BLACKWELL/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Arian Simone says her Fearless Fund is solving disparities.

A federal appeals court on Wednesday began considering a challenge to a program run by the Fearless Fund, an Atlanta-based venture firm that awards grants, through its philanthropic arm, to Black women looking to expand their startups. The grants, funded through corporate donations, provide $20,000 as well as mentorship and training opportunities.

The lawsuit, which alleges discrimination against potential non-Black applicants, is part of a broader campaign by affirmative-action opponent Edward Blum to challenge racial preferences in a variety of settings. One Blum-created nonprofit won the Supreme Court decision invalidating admissions programs at Harvard and the University of North Carolina. Another of his groups, the American Alliance for Equal Rights, is the plaintiff in this case, saying it has unnamed members who would like to apply for grants if the racial restrictions were lifted.

While there is a growing batch of cases challenging corporate diversity and inclusion efforts, the Fearless Fund litigation is one of the first to reach the appeals level since the Supreme Court's ruling. And attention on the case grew in September when a divided three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit voted to block the Fearless Fund from picking new grant winners for now.

"It's a really significant case, even though it's about a tiny organization giving grants to entrepreneurs," said Kenji Yoshino, law professor at New York University who specializes in constitutional and antidiscrimination law. "What happens in this case does have effects for Fortune 500 companies."

The suit is part of a campaign by affirmative-action opponent Edward Blum.

Yoshino said the outcome could particularly affect corporate programs aimed at working with minority-owned businesses as contractors or suppliers, internal company programs aimed at helping underrepresented groups and charitable arms that donate to causes promoting diversity and inclusion.

The Fearless Fund, which says its mission is to close the funding gap for minority women business owners, has given grants to about 350 businesses through its philanthropic arm. It also provides early seed funding and has helped more than 40 startups owned by women of color.

Arian Simone, chief executive and founding partner of the fund, said the lawsuit is part of a broader effort to stifle diversity initiatives that will create a chilling effect if it succeeds—just a few short years after the nation was eager to address discrimination following the murder of George Floyd.

"We are solving the disparities that exist," Simone said. "It's very disheartening, the moment we are in right now, to see the economic progress due to the racial reckoning of 2020 and seeing where we are four years later."

The case centers on a Civil War-era law aimed at protecting formerly enslaved people from discrimination. The law granted individuals the same rights and benefits "as is enjoyed by white citizens" to make and enforce contracts. Blum and others are citing the provision in reverse discrimination cases, arguing that its text means that race can't be considered at all in contractual relationships.

"The common theme shared by all of these lawsuits is the challenge to race-based factors in corporate, governmental, cultural and academic endeavors," Blum said. "All of the lawsuits are attempting to eliminate race as a factor in these programs and policies."

The fund in response argues that the challengers' arguments pervert the law's history and purpose, in an attempt to turn it against the very people it was designed to protect. It also says its program is protected expression under the First Amendment.

Among the entrepreneurs the Fearless Fund has supported is Amira Rasool, whose business, The Folklore, is a platform that makes it easier for big retailers to buy from emerging diverse and sustainable brands.

"The money at the early stages can make or break a business," she said.

A federal district judge in Atlanta in September rejected the American Alliance for Equal Rights' request for a preliminary injunction. Days later, an 11th Circuit panel voted 2-to-1 in favor of the group and enjoined the fund from picking new grant winners while the litigation continued.

A new ruling from the court is expected in the coming months.

Trump Legal Bills Eat Into Fundraising

Of $188 million his backers amassed in 2023, one-fourth went to attorneys

By Jack Gillum And Anthony DeBarros

Donors backing Donald Trump raised a combined $188 million last year to return him to the White House, a figure heavily offset by legal bills that are depleting his coffers.

The fundraising across Trump's campaign and outside political groups left $65 million in cash ahead of GOP contests in early primary states. But some of those same super PACs last year spent nearly $48 million on Trump's legal expenses, which were paid out at a relatively consistent clip as the former president faces several criminal and civil cases.

The latest figures, made public Wednesday by the Federal Election Commission, offer the clearest financial picture of the presidential candidates as they entered 2024. The data show millions of dollars spent on advertising, staff salaries and other expenses as Republicans in particular tried to convince voters they were a better alternative to Trump.

Now that nearly all of Trump's GOP challengers have left the race, his campaign and supportive super PACs are likely to tap those donors. But it's unclear how many will switch to the former president. At least 20% of Republican-leaning voters in the New Hampshire primary said they wouldn't support Trump even if he were the party's nominee, according to data provided by AP VoteCast.

President Biden's campaign, meanwhile, said earlier in January that it and the Democratic National Committee ended the year with $117 million cash on hand. Biden's re-election campaign and the DNC combined to raise more than $97 million in the final three months of 2023, according to his campaign. The Republican National Committee is hindered from pulling in more money for Trump until he's the nominee, according to a person familiar with the process, though weaker fundraising has come under scrutiny by some party insiders.

Trump's campaign didn't respond to a request seeking comment late Wednesday.

The fundraising of so-called super political-action committees, which can raise unlimited sums and buoy campaigns with independent expenditures on ads, are among the biggest advantages the GOP has in reclaiming the White House. They included a super PAC that backed Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, which spent more than $53 million last year before DeSantis dropped out ahead of the New Hampshire primary.

Other candidates ended December with little cash on hand.

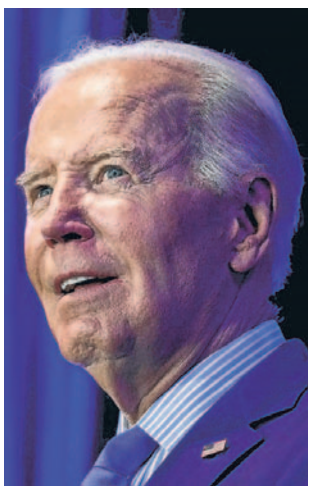
A key super PAC supportive of former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, called the SFA Fund, raised $50.2 million in the second half of the year. But the group ended 2023 with just $3.5 million in cash as Haley remains the sole GOP challenger against Trump. Haley's own campaign committee had $14.6 million in cash at year's end.

DeSantis's presidential campaign had $9.7 million in the bank as of Dec. 31, having spent $9.3 million during the quarter but raising only $3.4 million in individual contributions.

Independent candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. raised $7 million in the fourth quarter, ending the year with $5.4 million in cash. Former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who left the Republican race just before the Iowa caucuses in January, had about $2.3 million left in his campaign war chest.

Rep. Dean Phillips, the Minnesota congressman challenging Biden in the Democratic primary, lent his campaign $4 million in the fourth quarter but raised just $1 million in contributions, his filing showed. His campaign spent most of its receipts, ending the year with just $360,000 in cash.

RONDA CHURCHILL/REUTERS



JACQUELYN MARTIN/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Donald Trump may have a super PAC edge on President Biden.

JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES

Migrants on Wednesday put clothing over razor wire in order to climb over and cross into El Paso, Texas.

Border Talks Close In on Deal, But Final Approval Uncertain

Top Democrats and Republicans iron out final details amid GOP skepticism

WASHINGTON—Tomorrow might finally be here for long-running border talks.

By Siobhan Hughes, Michelle Hackman and Lindsay Wise

After repeatedly raising and then dashing hopes that a deal could be just a day or two away, Senate Republican and Democratic negotiators said Wednesday they have largely finalized a package to tighten security at the border, including by shutting down the processing of new, unscheduled asylum claims when the border becomes overwhelmed.

No legislative text has been released, but leaders of both parties said they hope to see it become public soon.

The release of the text would be the culmination of months of secretive talks to iron out what both parties say are complex provisions. GOP lawmakers demanded last year that a border deal be the condition for a separate $110.5 billion package that includes aid for Ukraine and Israel. But as talks continued, opposition mounted among conservatives, fueled by former President Donald Trump, leaving the bill's fate uncertain.

"I think we're close," said Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky.

McConnell, his party's fiercest supporter of Ukraine in its war against Russia, made the remarks after a lunch with Senate Republicans, who have started splitting into two camps, with one leaning toward endorsing the deal and the other opposed. Without the text, the Senate Republicans in charge of counting votes can't lock down the level of GOP support, lawmakers said. If GOP opposition blocks the border deal, that would effectively force a plan B for passing the foreign-aid bill.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D., N.Y.) said Democrats are continuing to work with Republican leaders on a few remaining issues "so we can get a text out there as soon as we can."

In the 51-49 Democratic-controlled Senate, the bill would need to pick up the support of nine Republicans to advance, assuming all the lawmakers who caucus with Democrats support the legislation. But Republicans have said that they would only provide the support to clear the 60-vote hurdle if a majority of their conference, or 25 Republicans, can agree to the package. That higher bar has for weeks delayed action.

"The deal is done. The question that is holding us up is whether...Republicans are gonna listen to Donald Trump or help solve the problem," said Sen. Chris Murphy (D., Conn.).

Any deal would need significant Republican support to have a chance in the GOP-controlled House, where Speaker Mike Johnson (R., La.) has taken a dim view of the details he has seen so far.

Speaking to reporters Wednesday, Trump said he told GOP lawmakers that "if you're not going to get a great border bill and immigration bill, don't do a bill."

The most potent GOP criticism has centered on a provision that would stop migrants from making new asylum claims once encounters hit a daily average of 5,000 over a week, or 4,000 if the Homeland Security Department decides to order a stoppage to processing claims from migrants without already scheduled appointments.

Under that approach, the first 5,000 migrants claiming asylum wouldn't all be permitted to stay in the country pending their appeals. More would likely fail a new, tougher initial asylum screening standard, making them immediately deportable. The remainder would either be detained or monitored using an ankle bracelet.

Republican critics have said the provision amounts to tacit acceptance of roughly 1.8 million migrants a year—not far from recent record highs.

—Paul Kiernan, Kristina Peterson and Alex Leary contributed to this article.

House Overcomes Party Split to Pass Tax-Cut Measure

By Richard Rubin

WASHINGTON—The House passed a bipartisan tax-cut bill that would deliver billions of dollars to companies and low-income families, overcoming election-year inertia and a series of objections from lawmakers in both parties.

The 357-70 vote late Wednesday pleased many business groups and progressive antipoverty advocates. Republicans voted 169-47 for the bill, while Democrats backed it by a 188-23 margin.

"It speaks for itself. The Senate needs to pick up the bill and pass it as it is," the bill's author, Rep. Jason Smith (R., Mo.), said. "We did it in 15 days. Surely, they can do it in 15 days."

But that broad coalition that Smith and Democrats assembled now faces tough sledding in the Senate. Republicans there have been lukewarm about the deal negotiated by Smith, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, and Sen. Ron Wyden (D., Ore.), chairman of the Senate Finance Committee.

The bill to benefit families and businesses faces a difficult Senate path.

The $78 billion Smith-Wyden agreement would revive several provisions that had been curtailed by Republicans' 2017 tax law. It would let businesses deduct domestic research costs immediately instead of over five years. The bill would also expand deductions for equipment purchases and interest costs.

It would expand the child tax credit, giving more money to low-income families that don't pay income taxes, particularly those with multiple children.

The business and child tax credit changes would all last through 2025, aligning their expiration with the bulk of the tax cuts from the 2017 law and setting up a giant tax debate next year.

The new legislation would also end the employee-retention tax credit, a pandemic-era program that has been filled with fraud and ineligible claims, according to the Internal Revenue Service. The bill would prevent the IRS from paying claims filed after Wednesday, accelerating deadlines that otherwise would have stretched as late as April 2025.

House Speaker Mike Johnson (R., La.), Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D., N.Y.) and the White House all support the bill, a rare bipartisan alignment in this closely divided and unproductive Congress.

"It's not what I would have written," said Rep. Richard Neal (D., Mass.), the top Democrat on the Ways and Means Committee. "But this is a decent tax package to go forward."

Getting the bill through the Senate will take at least 60 votes, and it is far from clear when or how that will happen. Senators are haggling over spending and immigration legislation. They are scheduled for a two-week recess starting Feb. 12, and aides don't expect lawmakers to consider the bill before then.

Sen. John Cornyn (R., Texas) said he doesn't feel any urgency to advance the bill, adding: "The price we're having to pay is pretty outrageous."

Wyden said a strong House vote would give senators momentum to pass the bill.

Some Republicans criticized a feature of the child tax credit that lets the benefit go to immigrants who are in the U.S. unlawfully but who have children with Social Security numbers. That is the way the credit has worked since the 2017 tax law that was signed by then-President Donald Trump.

On the Democratic side, opponents say the child-credit expansion doesn't go far enough. And they worry that the bill, if extended permanently, would tilt too much toward business.

—Lindsay Wise contributed to this article.

U.S. WATCH

WASHINGTON

U.S. Disables China Hacking Operation

The U.S. said it had disrupted a uniquely dangerous and potentially life-threatening Chinese hacking operation that hijacked hundreds of infected routers and used them to covertly target American and allied critical infrastructure networks.

Senior officials described the operation in unusually blunt terms as part of an evolving and increasingly worrisome campaign by Beijing to get a foothold in U.S. computer networks responsible for everything from safe drinking water to aviation traffic so it could detonate, at a moment's notice, damaging cyberattacks during a conflict, including over Taiwan.

Wednesday's announcement was part of an effort by senior Biden administration officials to underscore what Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Christopher Wray called the "apocalyptic scenarios" animating their fears about China's advanced and well-resourced hacking prowess. Western intelligence officials say its skill and sophistication have accelerated over the past decade. Officials have grown particularly alarmed at Beijing's interest in infiltrating U.S. critical infrastructure networks, which they say poses an unrivaled cybersecurity challenge.

The Justice Department and FBI took action in December after obtaining court approval to dismantle a botnet, or network of hacked devices, consisting of small office and home-office routers.

Officials were able to delete the botnet from the routers and sever their connection with the hackers while installing code to prevent reinfection. Individual owners weren't notified in advance of the FBI's operation on the routers.

—Dustin Volz

OHIO

Biden to Visit Site Of '23 Train Wreck

President Biden will travel to East Palestine, Ohio, in February to meet with residents, nearly a year after a fiery derailment of a Norfolk Southern train that released toxic chemicals into the community.

The trip would mark the first time Biden has visited the site since the accident devastated the small Ohio town near the Pennsylvania state line.

The president has faced criticism from Republicans and some local residents for not traveling to the site in the aftermath. Former President Donald Trump, Biden's expected 2024 presidential rival, traveled to the Ohio community about two weeks after the incident and called the federal response a betrayal.

The National Transportation Safety Board has said 38 cars derailed and a fire damaged an additional dozen train cars.

Residents on both sides of the Ohio-Pennsylvania border were ordered to evacuate their homes because of the derailment and the release of toxic chemicals.

—Ken Thomas

NORTH CAROLINA

Study Details Higher Cancer Risk at Base

Military personnel stationed at Camp Lejeune from 1975 to 1985 had at least a 20% higher risk for a number of cancers than those stationed elsewhere, federal health officials said Wednesday.

The study found military personnel stationed at U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune were at higher risk for some types of leukemia and lymphoma and cancers of the lung, breast, throat, esophagus and thyroid. Civilians who worked there also were at risk.

—Associated Press

CEOs Hit Over Harm To Children

Continued from Page One

child-safety work, saying the company has gone beyond legal requirements in seeking to remove abusive material.

"I'm proud of the work that our teams do to improve online child safety on our services and across the entire internet," Zuckerberg said, pointing to technology that detects inappropriate or abusive content and tools that he said help parents get more involved in children's decisions.

Meta reported about 27.2 million instances of suspected child sexual-abuse material on its main platforms to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in 2022, far more than any other company, according to the nonprofit group's data. The U.S. total for all platforms was about 32 million in 2022.

But Meta has announced plans to encrypt messaging on its platforms, a step that will block the automated detection systems responsible for the majority of its reports.

SUSAN WALSH/ASSOCIATED PRESS

From left, Discord's Jason Citron, Snap's Evan Spiegel (partially hidden), TikTok's Shou Zi Chew, X's Linda Yaccarino and Meta's Mark Zuckerberg watched a video Wednesday during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing in Washington.

Apology demanded

At one point, Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri, a Republican, asked Zuckerberg to apologize to parents in the audience. The Facebook founder stood, turned, and said: "I'm sorry for everything that you have all gone through. It's terrible. No one should have to go through the things that your families have."

"This is why we invest so much and are going to continue doing industry leading efforts…to make sure that no one has to go through the types of things that your families have had to suffer," Zuckerberg said.

Zuckerberg was asked about internal documents, released Wednesday by two lawmakers, that show top company officials asking him to invest in additional protections for children on their platforms.

Those requests for resources weren't granted, according to state attorneys general who previously referenced some of the same material.

A Meta spokesman said the documents "do not provide the full context of how the company operates or what decisions were made" and noted Zuckerberg's written testimony for the hearing said the company has spent $5 billion on safety and security in the past year.

Sen. Ted Cruz (R., Texas) cited a Journal report last year that Instagram in many cases has permitted users to search for terms that its algorithms know might be associated with illegal material. In such cases, a pop-up screen warned users the results "may contain images of child sexual abuse" and offered two options for users: "Get resources" and "See results anyway," the Journal reported.

"Mr. Zuckerberg, what the hell were you thinking?" Cruz asked. "In what sane universe is there a link to 'See results anyway?' "

"Well, we might be wrong" about the material being inappropriate, Zuckerberg responded. He noted that the company reports more suspected child-exploitation material to authorities than any other social-media company.

'I'm sorry for everything that you have all gone through,' Zuckerberg said.

In response to questions from the Journal, Instagram removed the option for users to view search results for terms likely to produce illegal images.

TikTok data

Chew's prepared remarks touted TikTok's growing U.S. user base—now at 170 million, up from 150 million in 2023—and its average age of 30. He said the platform takes steps to minimize the exploitation of children, such as prohibitions on direct messaging for users under 16 and on recommending their videos to strangers.

But Chew ran into critical questions from Sen. John Cornyn (R., Texas) over how well TikTok protects its U.S. users' data from Chinese authorities. TikTok is owned by Beijing-based ByteDance, and U.S. officials worry that it could be forced to provide sensitive U.S. user data to Chinese authorities.

Cornyn pointed to a Journal report this week that TikTok is struggling to wall off U.S. users' data from ByteDance as it has promised to do. Chew disputed the article's accuracy but said that "no system that any one of us can build is perfect." A Journal spokeswoman said: "We stand by our reporting."

Legal liability

Groups representing young victims of online harms including social-media addiction and sexual exploitation held media events this week to help drum up support for lawmakers' efforts to rein in social-media platforms.

John DeMay, the father of a Michigan teenager who died by suicide after falling victim to an online extortion scheme, said he hopes the Senate hearing will bring awareness "that social media is not a safe place, especially for children." He and his family are considering legal options.

But suing the companies for harm to children can be legally difficult.

Currently, the platforms often can avoid liability when someone is harmed as a result of social-media use because of special legal protections that Congress created for the platforms in the 1990s when the internet was in its infancy. Those protections generally immunize the platforms from liability for harm from content generated by other users.

Durbin and other lawmakers have proposed removing those special legal protections in cases where children are sexually exploited.

Industry representatives said that those bills could harm users' privacy, mainly by discouraging the platforms' use of encryption. Tech industry allies argue that could affect a range of groups from LGBTQ youth to people seeking reproductive health services.

Durbin pressed Snap Chief Executive Evan Spiegel at the hearing's outset, saying Snapchat's disappearing messages were a tool of choice for sexual predators.

"We already work extensively to proactively detect this type of behavior," Spiegel said. He contrasted Snapchat with other social-media apps, noting that it limits predators' ability to find people on the app.

Zuckerberg also sought to direct lawmakers' ire toward other tech companies, suggesting a law requiring smartphone app stores to get parental consent any time a child downloads an app. Such a change "should be pretty trivial" for iPhone maker Apple to implement, he said.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D., Minn.) said parental-control tools burden parents, likening them to using a mop to combat an overflowing faucet.

"The answer," Klobuchar said, "is opening up the halls of the courtroom, so that puts it on you guys to protect these parents and protect these kids."

—Jeff Horwitz contributed to this article.

Watch a Video

Scan this code for a video on Zuckerberg's testimony on Capitol Hill.

WORLD NEWS

U.S. Presses for Long Cease-Fire

U.S. negotiators are pushing for a cease-fire deal that could stop the war in Gaza long enough to stall Israel's military momentum and potentially set the stage for a more lasting truce, U.S. and Arab officials familiar with the negotiations said.

By Summer Said, Jared Malsin and Gordon Lubold

Israel and Hamas are considering a three-part deal that would release hostages in Gaza beginning with a six-week cease-fire, according to a draft of the pact hashed out this week by international intelligence chiefs in Paris. Subsequent phases would see fighting stop and more hostages freed.

U.S. negotiators, led by Central Intelligence Agency Director William Burns, argue that it would be difficult for Israel to resume the war at its current intensity after a long pause, the officials said. The U.S. also has told fellow negotiators that Israel was considering the idea of moving to a phase—after all hostages are released—during which major operations would be more limited, the officials added.

Initial six-week pause could stall momentum in fighting, see hostages freed.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office didn't respond to a request for comment.

Washington wants a longer pause in fighting than the weeklong cessation in November that saw some hostages freed. The White House says such a deal is closer at hand than at any time since that cease-fire collapsed. Getting it over the line would mean surmounting entrenched differences between the warring sides. The Arab officials said the obstacles make an imminent deal unlikely, but suggested that if they are overcome then a deal could be completed within a week to 10 days.

The Paris meeting included David Barnea, director of Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency, who broadly signed off on the deal's outline, people familiar with the talks said.

The willingness of both sides even to consider the outlines of a pact indicates a small but significant shift in positions. It also demonstrates the pressures on Israel and Hamas.

Israel, determined to eradicate Hamas, faces intensifying calls from some Israelis to end the war to get more than 100 hostages back, and a growing fatigue within the Biden administration with the conflict's toll. Washington's allies in Arab states are pressing for a permanent end to the war that has cost tens of thousands of lives.

Hamas has said it would only be willing to release the hostages in exchange for an end to the war, something Israel has said it won't do. The current proposal reflects an attempt to bridge the gap by buying time to negotiate a long-term truce and effectively end the conflict, officials familiar with the talks said. Hamas indicated to negotiators it would be flexible about the length of the truce as long as it guarantees a longer-term cease-fire, they added.

According to a draft of the deal read to The Wall Street Journal by officials involved in the talks, during the first phase Israel would stop all military operations in Gaza including drone surveillance for six weeks while Hamas gathers hostages for release. Civilian hostages would be freed. In Gaza, civilians would be allowed to move around the strip, and aid could reach all areas.

If that phase succeeds, a second would begin with Hamas releasing female Israeli soldiers, the draft says. More humanitarian aid would go into the strip and the deal would guarantee the operation of hospitals, water services and bakeries. In the third phase, Hamas would release male soldiers and the bodies of dead hostages, according to the draft.

Israel described the talks as constructive, while Hamas said it was studying the plan.

IBRAHEEM ABU MUSTAFA/REUTERS

Palestinians on Monday carried bags of flour distributed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in Rafah, southern Gaza.

Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza To Deepen Amid Freeze in Aid

By Thomas Grove And Lindsay Wise

Funding cuts from the U.S. and other international donors will likely hit the United Nations' Palestinian refugee agency operations over the coming month, adding to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and raising difficult questions for Washington about how best to deliver aid as the war drags on.

On Wednesday, a key group of Republican senators demanded the U.S. permanently halt funding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, less than a week after the U.S. suspended contributions following allegations that at least 12 of its employees had connections to Hamas's Oct. 7 attack on Israel.

At least 10 countries, some of them the agency's biggest donors, also have suspended funding pending an investigation. Intelligence reports seen by The Wall Street Journal said about 10% of all of the agency's Gaza staff have ties to Islamist militant groups.

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres this week warned that funding levels were insufficient to meet the agency's needs in February. Unrwa didn't respond to requests for comment on details.

The halt in funding threatens to hit Gaza's 2.2 million Palestinians at a point when food shortages and a lack of shelter and medical services are becoming more severe. More than 85% of the population has been displaced amid Israel's bombardment and land invasion.

More than 26,000 people, mainly women and children, have been killed in Gaza since the start of the Israel-Hamas war, according to Palestinian authorities. The figure doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Wednesday said it was "essential" the U.S. and other nations "work through the terrible allegations that have been raised with regard to some Unrwa personnel."

"At the same time," a spokesman for the State Department said, "we think Unrwa's work is critical and we believe that there is no other partner on the ground right now who can replace Unrwa and can deliver the humanitarian assistance."

In their letter, 24 Republican senators—nearly half the GOP conference—demanded that language permanently banning U.S. aid to Unrwa be added to a $110.5 billion package that would fund aid for Ukraine, Israel and the Indo-Pacific region, and tighten U.S. border security.

"As we consider ways to provide necessary assistance to Israel in its fight against Hamas terrorists, we request that any supplemental package include an immediate and permanent prohibition against U.S. contributions to Unrwa," wrote the senators in a letter to Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D., N.Y.) and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.).

The senators wrote that the revelation that Unrwa staff members played a part in the Oct. 7 attacks "is not an example of a few bad apples acting out of turn. Instead, it is emblematic of an organization where no investigation or subsequent corrective measures will ever be enough to cure the rot that is so clearly endemic to its mission."

Led by Sen. Pete Ricketts (R., Neb.), the letter also was signed by Sen. John Barrasso of Wyoming, a member of GOP leadership, Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, a close McConnell ally, and Sen. Jim Risch of Idaho, the top Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Other signatories include Sen. Mitt Romney of Utah, a vocal advocate for more Ukraine aid, and Sens. Thom Tillis (R., N.C.) and Joni Ernst (R., Iowa).

The U.S. typically gives $300 million to $400 million a year in funding to Unrwa, a State Department spokesman said Tuesday. Between Oct. 1 and the suspension of funding, the U.S. gave about $121 million to the agency.

The U.N. special rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri, said on X that famine for the Gaza Strip's 2.2 million Palestinians is inevitable following the decision to defund.

Ship Attacks Threaten Trade by Sea

Continued from Page One

price and quality.

Ships handle more than 80% of global goods, the United Nations said.

Not long ago, the world's most powerful navies cooperated to secure the seas. When Somali sailors seized two Chinese vessels in 2008, Beijing sent warships to help the U.S. patrol the Horn of Africa. After the Cold War, Russia teamed up with the U.S. military to clean nuclear waste from the Arctic Sea, before melting ice opened new shipping possibilities.

The U.S. can still call on allies in Europe or Japan, but today they are lightweights with few warships or skilled personnel: The British navy has fewer sailors than it did during the Revolutionary War 250 years ago, when its total population was one-seventh its current size. The U.S. Navy, sidelined during decades of counterterrorism campaigns, is stretched securing not just shipping lanes but also undersea data cables and gas pipelines that have become equally important to economic output.

The upshot: The oceans are back on the agenda. An interlocking set of maritime-security crises from Europe to East Asia has thrown up a troubling question, U.S. and European officials, insurers and analysts said: How much has freedom of navigation been a historical anomaly, unlikely to endure?

"It's very worrying," Defense Minister Kajsa Ollongren of the Netherlands said. Freedom of navigation "is a matter of principle."

For much of maritime history from Columbus onward, pirates, privateers and powerful navies set the rules on whose ships could sail where.

The alternative concept—"freedom of the seas"—dates back to at least the 1600s, holding that ships of any nation should be permitted to travel the open ocean. But it only took hold after the U.S. Navy emerged victorious over Imperial Japan in 1945.

At the time, the U.S. Navy boasted about 7,000 ships—alongside a political class populated with former Marines and sailors—and if any foreign adversary harbored a different vision of how the seas should work, it lacked the gunboats to impose it.

Today, the U.S.'s navy can field fewer than 300 ships and the world's largest fleet belongs to Beijing, which is reinforcing its unilateral claim on the vast South China Sea by creating and fortifying artificial islands. Stavridis called it "a preposterous claim that has been rejected by international courts," but he predicted China will continue.

Governments that have grown prosperous and accustomed to safe seas want to keep maritime chokepoints open, particularly the Suez Canal, the Taiwan Strait and the Horn of Africa. But they aren't budgeting for enforcement, said Jacques Vandermeiren, chief executive of the Port of Antwerp-Bruges, Europe's second-largest.

"Who is securing free trade in the world now?" Vandermeiren said. "Is it always the U.S.? A global coalition? Who will organize this and who will pay for it?"

In the sweep of history, eight decades separate the present from a past when most manufactured goods moved by land and a ship was only as safe as the state protecting it. Less than 500 million tons of dry cargo crossed the seas annually in the 1950s. The world was dotted with small manufacturers serving local buyers.

Today, containerships carry about 23 times as much tonnage, integrating a global economy. That integration has driven down costs, allowing IKEA to cheaply sell identical sofas in 59 countries and McDonald's to fry Idaho's Russet Burbank potatoes around the world.

But it has also made car factories, big-box retailers, fashion houses and electronics dealers significantly more vulnerable to even the smallest snags: Witness the tens of billions of dollars in trade held up when a single cargo ship, the Ever Given, ran aground in the Suez Canal for six days in 2021. Or the supply-chain breakdown that unfolded as the Covid-19 pandemic left containerships log-jammed outside Asian and U.S. ports.

These might have been a harbinger of how easily the oceans can close.

Since the Houthis seized the Galaxy Leader, a Japanese-owned car-carrying cargo ship, in November, freight rates to Genoa from Shanghai have quadrupled. Worldwide, the average cost of shipping a 40-foot container has jumped in that time, to $3,964, according to London-based Drewry Shipping Consultants. Manufacturers have had to suspend car production at German and Belgian plants while they wait for parts.

"The crisis is also reverberating in global food prices," the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development warned recently.

The U.S. and British navies have stepped forward to try to secure safe passage for ships transiting the Suez Canal, whatever their flag or destination. The latest time the U.S. Navy provided such extensive security for non-U.S. ships, the threat was from German U-boats and Japanese torpedoes, said Salvatore Mercogliano, chair of the Department of History, Criminal Justice and Politics at North Carolina's Campbell University. "You'd have to go back to the World Wars for that," he said. "This is a big change."

The trouble is, ships linked to, flagged in or owned by the U.S. and its allies are targets for Houthi rebels. Last week, shipping giant Maersk said it would stop sending U.S.-flagged vessels through the Red Sea.

That means the Red Sea passage that the U.S. is protecting is increasingly being used by ships either carrying Russian oil or flying a Chinese flag. On Jan. 22, a senior Houthi leader told a Russian media group chaired by Vladimir Putin's reputed girlfriend that Chinese and Russian vessels would be spared. Moscow and Beijing have both held back from engaging militarily, emerging as easy winners of a new era where the provenance of a ship matters.

If the Houthi example stands, a belligerent actor will have set the precedent of choosing whose vessels can cross which ocean passage: "Others might take what they are doing as a template, as role models, for the future," said Christian Bueger, professor of international relations at the University of Copenhagen.

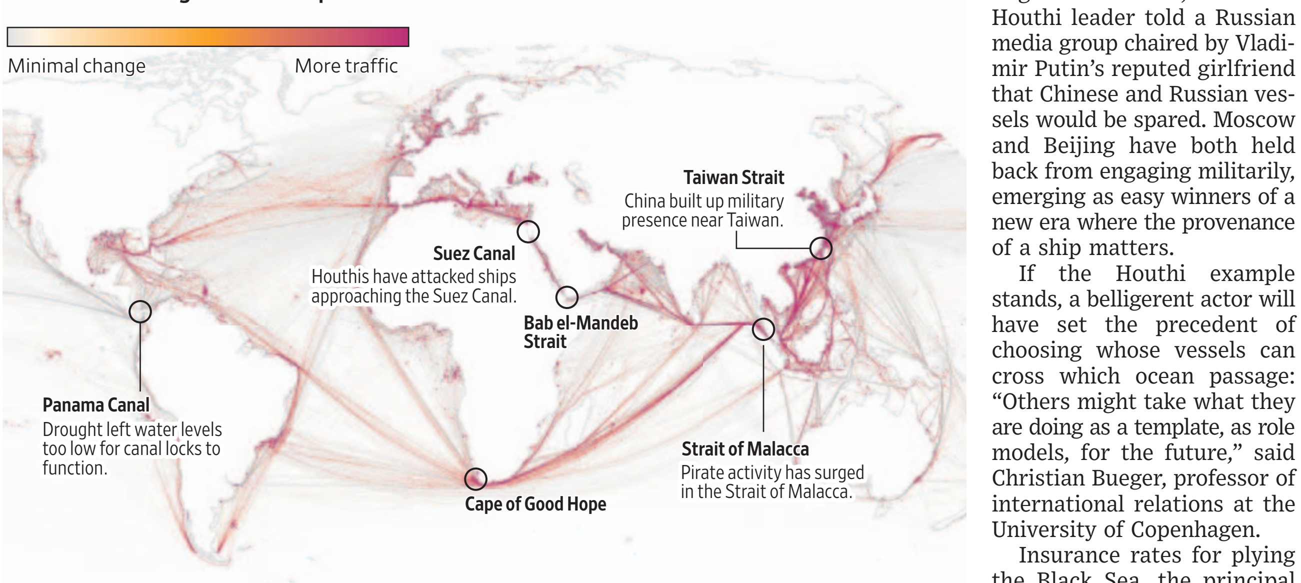
Insurance rates for plying the Black Sea, the principal export route for much of the world's grain, have grown so high that the cash-strapped government of Ukraine has had to effectively help underwrite the insurance policies on foreign vessels. The chaos there has made the world's ability to feed grain-importing countries dependent on an unstable combination of fleeting agreements between Moscow and Kyiv—and the latter's supply of sea drones and NATO-donated antiship missiles that have pushed Russian warships back from the coast.

Russia has built six Arctic naval bases to strengthen another advantage: Melting ice is opening a new sea route across the top of the world, a shortcut from Europe to China that Moscow could easily close to ships trading with any nation arming Ukraine.

"We really have to think about freedom of navigation and the connection between that and global trade," Foreign Minister Tobias Billström of Sweden said.

"As a nation very much dependent on global trade, we believe that global trade is the way forward," he said. "Without global trade and the possibility of maintaining the benefits of global trade, this world would be a much more difficult one for us to live in."

Routes where cargo- and oil-ship traffic increased from Dec. 2022 to Dec. 2023



Note: Based on total number of hours ships spent within each square kilometer
Source: Global Maritime Traffic
Carl Churchill/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

MC3 ROBERT HICKS/U.S. NAVY/PLANET PIX/ZUMA PRESS

The USS Daniel Inouye, front, and the USS Princeton participated in an exercise Wednesday on the Philippine Sea.

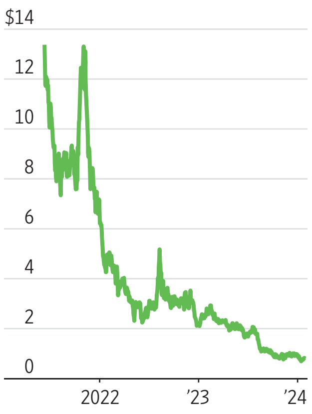
23andMe's Fall to Nearly Zero

Continued from Page One
charm and informal style—she typically wears workout gear to the office—Wojcicki, 50, has been searching for fresh capital. But with 23andMe's stock trading at just 73 cents, the company likely can't raise money by selling more shares. And the company's early-stage drug programs are so expensive, she has sought investor partners for some of them, so far unsuccessfully, and given up stakes in others. She could also plug the hole with her own cash.

FROM TOP: PETER DASILVA/REUTERS; TIFFANY HAGLER-GEARD/BLOOMBERG NEWS

Above, Anne Wojcicki of 23andMe remotely rang the Nasdaq opening bell on June 17, 2021. Below, a 23andMe DNA test kit.

23andMe share price since its SPAC IPO



Source: FactSet

Two challenges

At the center of 23andMe's DNA-testing business are two fundamental challenges. Customers only need to take the test once, and few test-takers get life-altering health results.

Wojcicki's most ambitious bet is developing drugs using 23andMe's stockpile of more than 10 million DNA samples that test-takers have agreed may be used for research. But getting new drugs to market is expensive and takes years.

In another blow to its brand, 23andMe had a data breach this fall that exposed nongenetic information of 6.9 million customers, highlighting the same privacy concerns that Wojcicki once blamed for slowing sales and exposing the company to a class-action lawsuit, filed last Friday.

Wojcicki (pronounced woh-JIS-key) attributes 23andMe's low share price to a broad downturn for small drug company stocks. "It's definitely been harder than we expected. But I don't think that we've executed yet on what the vision actually is," which is to use genetic information to give consumers more control over their healthcare, she said. "You know, the thing I found with people who are dismissive is like, you just have to prove them wrong," she said.

Patrick Chung, a longtime board member, said Wojcicki is a great startup founder because she has stuck to her big vision despite tough obstacles. "Anne has a willful ignorance of constraints," he said.

She's also dedicated to her personal brand, those who know her say. Last March, Mattel made Barbie dolls based on her and her two sisters, former YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki and pediatrics professor Janet Wojcicki, in a promotion for International Women's Day. Anne said she had to convince her more press-shy sisters to do it. Some 23andMe employees had found it odd that she spent time on it so soon after the year's first round of layoffs. One asked about it at the company's weekly all-hands meeting, known as "feisty Fridays," where her chief of staff said it was good for the "Anne brand."

Wojcicki said she jumped at the chance as a way to encourage science education for girls and connected it to 23andMe's genetic tests for quirky traits such as asparagus odor detection in urine. "I mean, honestly, there's parts of this in my personality that come through in the product," she said. "Like, if you make things fun, people engage more."

This article is based on interviews with more than 50 current and former 23andMe executives, employees, board members and others familiar with the company and its CEO.

Early years

The daughter of the onetime chair of Stanford University's physics department and a high-school journalism teacher, Wojcicki grew up at the center of Silicon Valley. She went to Yale and after college bounced around hedge funds and private-equity firms analyzing healthcare companies.

Two formative things happened during this period. She saw a crash in healthcare stocks, and how companies responded by pinching pennies on innovation. She said she decided she wanted to help consumers take more control over their healthcare.

She also met Sergey Brin. In 1998, he and Larry Page rented her sister Susan's garage to be the first office for their new company, called Google. Susan would become an executive in its advertising business before running YouTube years later.

The idea for a direct-to-consumer DNA-testing business came from Wojcicki's co-founder, Linda Avey, a genetics expert. Brin had expressed interest in Avey's prior work, so in 2005 she shared her idea with him. That's how Avey met Wojcicki, Brin's then-girlfriend, who told Avey after sitting in on meetings that she wanted to join the company.

Wojcicki was smart and driven, Avey said—and Brin could be a powerful backer. "I saw the stars aligning. If we wanted to get Google's support, Anne could help cement that support because of her relationship with Sergey. That was my thinking at the time," said Avey.

Brin gave the company its first capital and vetted some early hires. Google put in money too, announcing its investment two weeks after Brin and Wojcicki married in 2007.

> The company is burning cash so quickly it could run out by 2025.

Overnight Wojcicki went from little-known former financial analyst to Silicon Valley star. She helped build 23andMe's brand, organizing "spit parties" where guests gave DNA samples. They collected celebrity saliva at the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2008 and again at New York Fashion Week that year, where Barry Diller, Rupert Murdoch, Harvey Weinstein and Diane von Furstenberg headlined a 23andMe gathering after meeting Wojcicki at an Allen & Co. conference she had attended with Brin.

The parties didn't help the business much. 23andMe's test cost $399 at the time—too expensive to appeal to consumers.

In the office, Wojcicki tried to keep the company culture fun. She bought a remote-controlled fart machine and her secretary planted it on Avey's seat, setting it off when the two walked into their office.

Avey, who shared the office with her co-founder for more than three years, said Wojcicki loved the limelight and was competitive with Brin. "Early on she would joke that 23andMe is going to be way bigger than Google," Avey said.

By 2009, Wojcicki wanted to run 23andMe herself, according to people familiar with her wishes. She convinced the two independent board members to fire her co-founder, which they did in a surprise meeting. A person familiar with the board's deliberations said they went with Wojcicki due to her money and connections via Brin, which they felt might be central to the company's future.

Wojcicki said she was grateful for Brin's support during the company's early days. She declined to comment on the board's decision to fire her co-founder.

In 2012, a new funding round from Russian-born billionaire Yuri Milner—one of Wojcicki's and Brin's neighbors in Los Altos Hills—enabled 23andMe to reduce the price of its DNA test to $99.

The company's first national advertising campaign a few months later caught the eye of the Food and Drug Administration, which halted sales of the health test, citing a risk of false reports. 23andMe had taken a cavalier approach to regulation, typical of Silicon Valley, and hadn't gotten FDA authorization to market its test.

Wojcicki said the company had actively engaged the FDA before the sales halt but hadn't communicated effectively.

After two years and millions of dollars spent validating its health reports, 23andMe was cleared to sell them again.

Wojcicki said she wasn't surprised when, after 23andMe received FDA authorization, its test became a viral sensation. It had taken nine years to get to one million customers, and just three more to get to eight million.

Around the office, employees spotted U2's Bono and the Edge, supermodel Karlie Kloss and other celebrities dropping in for meetings. Wojcicki walked the Met Gala red carpet with a new boyfriend, baseball star Alex Rodriguez, carrying a clutch made from DNA test chips. She did a guest spot on "Shark Tank."

In 2021, the company went public during the SPAC boom, when hundreds of risky companies making bold projections sold high-priced shares to investors. The special-purpose acquisition company that worked with 23andMe was backed by Richard Branson, whom Wojcicki had met more than a decade earlier, when Branson invited her and Brin to a philanthropic gathering.

Out of favor

With so many DNA samples banked, 23andMe dialed up drug development, splitting costs and future profits in a deal with pharmaceutical giant GSK for therapies discovered inside 23andMe's database.

Unlike most small biotechs, which focus on a few areas, 23andMe investigated treatments for dozens of diseases. The payoff could be big, but any one drug can cost hundreds of millions of dollars and take 10 years to get through clinical trials. 23andMe says it has found more than 50 "drug candidates." So far two have made it to early-stage human trials.

By 2022, the drug development effort grew to a 150-person outpost in South San Francisco, one that would carry forward research after GSK's deal to share costs ended.

Wojcicki said she assumed she would be able to raise additional capital to support her development effort. When that time came this year, interest rates were high and small drug-company stocks were out of favor. Unable to raise money, Wojcicki cut half the development team last summer.

To create a recurring revenue stream, Wojcicki has pivoted to subscriptions. She rolled out 23andMe+, offering personalized health reports, lifestyle advice and unspecified "new reports and features as discoveries are made" for an initial $229, with annual renewals of $69. When the company last disclosed the number of subscribers a year ago, it had 640,000—less than half the number it had projected it would have by then.

Asked about the projection, Wojcicki first denied having given one. Shown the investor presentation that included it, she studied the page and after a pause said, "There's nothing else to say other than that we were wrong."

The idea behind 23andMe's health data is that there may be worrisome information locked inside your genetic code that you're better off knowing about. But most people don't have a life-changing disease lurking in their genetic code. It's not clear 23andMe has a compelling product worth $69 annually for either group.

Wojcicki said it's fair to criticize her for misjudging the subscription business thus far, but she said she sees the value proposition for consumers and trusts her product team to make it work. "The only thing I can do is execute," she said.

In November, 23andMe launched an even more ambitious subscription product. This one includes a more comprehensive, clinical-grade genetic test, as well as standard blood tests and appointments with 23andMe's doctors. It costs $1,188 a year, billed up front with no insurance coverage.

The product, Total Health, is the realization of Wojcicki's dream to provide genetics-based medical care. The medical establishment hasn't adopted such testing as a standard procedure. To usher in the vision, 23andMe paid $400 million for struggling telehealth company Lemonaid Health.

Wojcicki won't say how many 23andMe test-takers consult Lemonaid doctors, but acknowledges the number is very small, considering 23andMe hasn't integrated the telehealth company into its service.

Roelof Botha, a 23andMe board member and partner at Sequoia Capital, said the company's big-spending strategy made sense when money was cheap. Now that it isn't, "we've had to trim and focus on a smaller number of projects."

Sequoia, which invested $145 million in 23andMe, still holds all its shares, he said. Today they are worth $18 million.

—Jim Oberman, Elisa Cho and Theo Francis contributed to this article.

Musicals Surprise Moviegoers

Continued from Page One
the person on screen launched into the opening number. "She started singing, and we instantly looked at each other and we were like, that's a weird way to start it," Beers said. The songs kept coming. Beers and her fiancé didn't make it to the end. Afterward, they re-watched the trailer to see whether they had missed a spoiler about the show tunes.

"There was no warning," Beers said.

"Mean Girls" is a remake of the 2004 hit, a nonmusical comedy that Beers loved, and an adaptation of the 2018 Broadway musical based on the movie.

Paramount Pictures said its exit polls found that three-quarters of viewers on opening weekend knew the latest "Mean Girls" was a musical before seeing it. Warner Bros., the studio behind "Wonka," declined to comment.

Marketers are trying to reach the widest possible audience, with theater attendance lingering below where it was before the Covid-19 pandemic. Domestic box-office earnings of some $9 billion in 2023 were more than in the past few years but down from $11 billion in 2019, according to box-office tracker Comscore.

Moviemakers know musicals can be polarizing. They include classics and monster hits such as "The Sound of Music," and "Frozen." But some recent adaptations, such as the 2019 movie "Cats," fell flat at the box office.

"Mean Girls" has spent three weekends at the top of the box office since its Jan. 12 release, with a domestic gross of some $60 million. "Wonka," released Dec. 15, has earned $195 million domestically. "The Color Purple" has earned $60 million domestically since Christmas, Comscore data show.

JOJO WHILDEN/PARAMOUNT PICTURES/EVERETT COLLECTION

The new version of 'Mean Girls,' released Jan. 12, is a musical. The original movie wasn't.

Desiree Nguyen approached "Mean Girls" with mixed emotions. Nguyen, 28, who lives in Anaheim, Calif., and majored in theater in college, knew the updated "Mean Girls" was a musical before she saw it with her sister. Her sister doesn't usually watch musical movies, but liked it more than expected. Nguyen wished it had even bolder Broadway energy.

"Everybody likes to hate on musicals, but the truth is nobody actually hates musicals," Nguyen said. "They just haven't found one they like yet."

Shauna Greene remains unconverted. "I'm not one to sit there and be sung to unless I'm in church," said Greene, 40, a barbershop owner in Greensboro, N.C. "I like music. I just don't like music in the movies." Greene is a fan of the singer and actor Fantasia Barrino, so she went with her daughter to see her in "The Color Purple." Greene had heard the movie was a musical. But her daughter was unprepared. She kept asking how many songs were left. Toward the end, the 21-year-old hit her limit and left to wait outside. Barrino was phenomenal, Greene said. But the musical wasn't her favorite. "I wouldn't go if someone paid me to see it again."

Daniel Loria went with his wife to see "Cyrano," a romantic drama and musical starring Peter Dinklage, in New York City in 2022. After about five minutes and two songs, a couple sitting in front of them loudly asked if there would be singing the entire time.

How well an unexpected tune goes over depends on the film, said Loria, a senior vice president at The BoxOffice Company, a ticketing and showtime provider.

Jim Bingham, 60, wanted to be surprised by the new "Wonka" movie. The banker from Rockville Centre on Long Island dragged his sons, who are in their mid-20s, to see it before Christmas because of the nostalgia he felt for the original film starring Gene Wilder. None of them knew it was a musical. His sons would have protested if they had, Bingham said. They all left content. "I was ready for anything," Bingham said.

Other fans said they had seen enough clues in the teasers to catch the musical drift. The logo for the new "Mean Girls" movie has a musical note embedded in it. The new versions of "Mean Girls" and "The Color Purple" were adapted from Broadway shows, and earlier "Wonka" movies also came equipped with songs.

Cameron Woods, a 30-year-old kindergarten teacher in Little Rock, Ark., didn't get the hint before he went to see "Mean Girls" on Jan. 19. He did think it was strange to remake the original movie so soon. When the first song hit, Woods, who prefers horror movies, found it surprisingly catchy. "For a musical, it was actually really good," he said.

◀ Denver International Airport did a trial run of its new West Security checkpoint, which has 17 automated security lanes.

I Was a TSA Guinea Pig for a Day

Volunteers get a sneak peek at Denver's new security checkpoint, which opens fully next week

CARRY ON
DAWN GILBERTSON

Denver

The TSA agent at Denver International Airport did a double take scanning my driver's license last week.

"You're flying today?" he asked quizzically.

It's a bizarre question at an airport checkpoint. But this was no ordinary trip through security. I was among those getting a trial run of Denver's sprawling new checkpoint, which opens fully next week. Amid hundreds of volunteers, I was the only one actually flying that day.

The new West Security checkpoint is as long as a football field. It has Disney World-like wait-time monitors and 17 automated security lanes with the latest technology. Most travelers don't have to show a boarding pass with their ID, and even those without TSA PreCheck can keep their liquids and laptops in their bags.

The new checkpoint was built for Denver's swelling passenger ranks, but it also provides a glimpse into U.S. fliers' future as a wave of airport expansion and renovation continues. Airports hope it's a future that involves less time waiting and a better overall experience.

My shift in Denver offered some hopeful initial signs on an atypical day. Despite a new location and so much new technology—which has already given travelers fits elsewhere—things moved relatively smoothly. Infrequent fliers loved keeping their liquids and laptops in their bags.

But it wasn't perfect. When the technology breaks down, so does the entire process.

Dress rehearsal

Nearly 1,000 volunteers, including airport, airline and TSA employees and their friends and family, signed up to take as many trips through the new checkpoint as they could in an hour. It was the first test with (pretend) passengers for the airport's TSA agents since they began training at the new checkpoint in January.

The goal is to process as many as 200 passengers an hour in a standard screening lane, compared with 130 to 150 today. The busy airport needs it, with some of the longest security waits in the country.

I signed up for a Thursday morning session—because what could possibly be more fun than an airport security hamster wheel?

The volunteer instructions told us to pack as if we were traveling, encouraging strollers, baby formula, electronic devices and wheelchairs, but no prohibited items like guns or pocket knives.

◀ Ronald De Lautre, a retired United Airlines mechanic, and his wife, Harue Kinugawa, signed up for a three-hour shift at the airport.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT; DAWN GILBERTSON/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (2)

▲ Nyles Quenzer, an ICU nurse from Littleton, Colo., volunteered for a test of the new checkpoint.

Nyles Quenzer, an ICU nurse who lives in Littleton, Colo., volunteered because her husband is a TSA officer. Quenzer says she found it more stressful packing for the fake trip than a real one.

She stuffed her bag with pajamas she took off that morning and a large bottle of contact-lens solution with less than the maximum 3.4 ounces remaining.

"I don't travel very often, so it's an opportunity to go through security without him going, 'Oh, my God. You should know this,' " she says of her husband.

Quenzer says she initially had trouble finding the distant entrance to the TSA PreCheck lanes. She got the hang of it and ended up going through the new checkpoint more than 20 times.

Volunteers were randomly assigned to different checkpoint areas, including standard screening and TSA PreCheck/Clear. The crowds were light enough that it was possible to try them all multiple times.

Ronald De Lautre, a 78-year-old retired United Airlines mechanic, signed up at the last minute. He figured it would help during his volunteer shifts as an airport ambassador. He brought his wife, Harue Kinugawa, because she has a trip to Japan coming up.

They took on a three-hour shift. After a few trips through security, Kinugawa joked: "I don't know if I can do this for three hours."

Working out kinks

Airport officials watched how people navigated (or failed to navigate) the checkpoint. The TSA monitored how employees handled the new ID check and screening processes.

They encountered plenty of bugs. Some planned, others not.

My carry-on bag and backpack, screened without issue on my flight to Denver, were briefly diverted for a second look a few times during the trial run. TSA explosive specialists occasionally hopped into the screening lanes to send bags through, and the canine unit was training, too. I ran into Flint, a 3-year-old German shorthaired pointer, in the queue.

The biggest hassle I encountered on my seven trips through: A CT scanner malfunctioned and had to be reset, holding up bag screening for me and about 10 other people. That trip took 14 minutes, the longest of the day by far.

Real waits with real crowds would be much higher on peak days.

The biggest issue volunteers and a focus group had is getting the hang of the bigger bins, airport officials say. Instead of grabbing their stuff and leaving the bins on the belt, many picked up the bin and looked for a place to stack it as they've always done. (The bins automatically move to the front of the checkpoint.)

The airport plans to put up signs telling people to leave the bins on the belt, spokeswoman Stacey Stegman says.

For her troubles, Quenzer was treated to a chocolate chip muffin and a souvenir squishy airplane. Don't ask her to compare the experience with the time she volunteered for a drunken-driving simulation when her husband was a state trooper. "I mean, there was tequila involved," she says.

Tips for How to Get A 6% Mortgage Rate

By Veronica Dagher

Falling mortgage rates could help home buyers in two ways this year: Houses might become slightly more affordable, and there might finally be more listings to choose from.

Mortgage rates aren't generally expected to drop below 6% in 2024, though they are likely to decline gradually as the Federal Reserve starts making interest-rate cuts. The Fed held rates steady Wednesday, but some economists say cuts could begin this spring.

The Fed's moves don't have an impact on mortgage rates directly, but rate cuts usually lower the yield on the 10-year Treasury, which is an indicator lenders look to when setting mortgage rates.

Home buyers don't need to wait for the Fed to cut interest rates to get a 6% mortgage. The average 30-year fixed-rate mortgage has already dropped to 6.69% as of Jan. 25, according to Freddie Mac. That puts 6% in striking distance for some buyers, depending on their credit score and other factors. There are also additional steps to take for further discounts on the rate.

A $400,000 home with 20% down and a 6.93% 30-year fixed mortgage would translate to a roughly $2,113 monthly mortgage payment, said Ted Rossman, a consumer-spending analyst at Bankrate. If rates drop to around 6.18%, that monthly payment falls by about $158.

Raising your credit score or buying points can lower a mortgage rate.

Higher mortgage rates and an unwillingness of many homeowners to sell made 2023 the worst year for home sales in decades. Existing-home sales slid 19% in 2023 from the prior year to 4.09 million, the National Association of Realtors said recently.

Here's what home buyers should consider when shopping for a mortgage this spring.

Boost your credit score

Increasing your credit score, even by a small amount, can help reduce the cost of buying a home. A difference of a few points can sometimes mean lower mortgage rates that save buyers thousands of dollars over time.

Last year was the worst year for home sales in decades, partly due to higher mortgage rates.

HYUNGWON KANG/REUTERS

For example, a homeowner with a credit score of 760 or better and a roughly 6.33% mortgage rate would pay about $123 less a month for a $300,000 mortgage than someone with a credit score between 660 and 679 who gets about a 6.95% mortgage rate, according to a Bankrate analysis of recent FICO data. That adds up to roughly $44,280 in savings during the 30-year term of the mortgage, Rossman said.

Two other ways to raise your score are to make midmonth payments or lower your credit-utilization ratio. Spend less than 30% of the amount of credit offered to you on all your cards, and pay off your balance each month in full. If you really want to maximize your score, it helps to make an extra payment during the month, Rossman said.

Use points

Buyers can also use mortgage points to lower their interest rate, if getting to 6%, or under 6%, is important to them. Each point reflects 1% of the loan amount and might be paid up front to your lender.

One point on a $300,000 loan would cost $3,000. Each point lowers the interest rate by a quarter percentage point for the life of the loan. Think about whether you will refinance in the next five years or so if you are considering buying points.

Some sellers and home builders are offering to help lower a buyer's mortgage interest rate for a certain period, a move known as a rate buy-down. A seller could also offer to buy down a mortgage rate permanently to entice a potential buyer. The permanent version of a rate buy-down involves buying mortgage points at closing, Rossman said.

Finding a discount

Many home buyers assume they have to accept the first mortgage-rate offer they receive, financial advisers say. It pays to shop around and take advantage of existing financial relationships.

The primary bank where you have your checking, savings and investments may be able to offer you discounts based on your relationship, said Emily Irwin, senior director of advice for Wells Fargo. These discounts can range from a quarter to a full percentage point.

Some banks require high account minimums (often $200,000 or more) in order to get what could be a paltry discount, said Bankrate's Rossman. So it is usually best to cast a wide net in your mortgage search.

Borrowers who applied with two different lenders cut their mortgage rate by an average of 0.10 percentage point, according to research from Freddie Mac that examined purchases between 2010 and 2021.

ON THE CLOCK
CALLUM BORCHERS

Being the Boss Can Take a Toll

Migraines, ulcers and even premature death can afflict CEOs, but people want the top jobs anyway

Maybe the job of CEO should come with a warning label.

Nineteen chief executives died in office last year, the most since 2010, according to Challenger, Gray & Christmas, which tracks turnover at U.S. companies. The outplacement firm tallied a record 1,914 CEO exits in 2023, which Senior Vice President Andy Challenger partly attributes to the postpandemic burnout that many execs feel. In a January survey of 600 C-suite executives by the professional network Chief, 37% said avoiding burnout would be a personal challenge this year.

A candid help-wanted ad might go something like this: Company seeks visionary leader to take business to the next level. Incumbent will be paid handsomely but may have fewer years to enjoy earnings because the stress of the role can reduce life expectancy.

Such a disclaimer probably wouldn't put off a lot of candidates. JetBlue chief Robin Hayes will follow his doctor's advice and step down in February for unspecified health reasons. "The extraordinary challenges and pressure of this job have taken their toll," he said.

Yet for every Hayes, there are many more bosses like Oscar Munoz.

Munoz rose to the top post at United Airlines in 2015 and suffered a heart attack 37 days later. He returned to full-time work two months after a heart transplant and led the company until 2020.

"I know a lot of people who are CEOs or are in the running to be CEOs, and there is not a single one that's like, 'Hmm, let me consider whether or not I want to take on the physical and mental stress of the role,'" Munoz, 65 years old, told me. "It's what we've been working for all our lives."

In an age of performative work-life balance and washboard abs on business titans, a near-masochistic leadership drive persists. Current and former CEOs say the job has ever more land mines because many employees often expect them to comment on news events—from Israel's war with Hamas to the latest Supreme Court ruling.

Say the wrong thing, and you could be marching in the pink-slip parade behind an Ivy League president.

And bosses are one viral social-media post away from being drawn into controversy. A former Cloudflare employee who filmed her own firing and shared it on TikTok recently thrust the software company's CEO, Matthew Prince, into damage-control mode.

Nikki Barua, top, co-founder and CEO of Beyond Barriers, has committed to taking regular time off to recharge. Hubert Joly, right, says he prioritized sleep, exercise and nutrition during his tenure as CEO of Best Buy.

On a dangerous path

When bosses quip that their jobs are taking years off their lives, they might not be joking.

Ivan Menezes was a few weeks shy of retiring as CEO of alcohol maker Diageo when he died last June at age 63. The company said he was hospitalized for stomach ulcers and died after a brief illness. Notable CEOs who suffered fatal heart attacks on the job in the past 20 years include Jim Cantalupo of McDonald's, Samuel "Skip" Ackerman of Panacos Pharmaceuticals and Carolyn Reidy of Simon & Schuster.

A study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research in 2021 found that industrywide downturns reduce CEOs' life expectancies by 1.5 years. Most of the more than 1,600 CEOs in the study lived into their 80s, longer than average for the general population but shorter, in some cases, than they might have lived with less stress.

Nikki Barua, co-founder and CEO of the leadership-development firm Beyond Barriers, hit a wall in 2016 while leading a previous venture. She was prediabetic, suffering through ulcers and acid reflux, and had frequent migraines.

"I'm not the kind of person who could reduce my ambition—that's just not who I am—but I also knew that if I kept going the way I was going, I would die very young," says Barua, 49.

She lost 70 pounds during the next 18 months through diet and exercise, and committed to taking regular time off to recharge. She got better at declining personal and professional requests that would stretch her too thin.

JetBlue CEO Robin Hayes, above, is following his doctor's advice and stepping down in February.

The Zen masters

For Harry Kraemer, one key to being a healthy boss was The Boss. The former Baxter International chief says that when the occasional meeting cancellation won him a free hour, he'd take the opportunity to hop in his convertible, crank Bruce Springsteen and hit the McDonald's drive-through. (OK, it wasn't a perfect health routine, but the mental break lowered his blood pressure more than the Big Mac raised it. Besides, he says, he ordered Diet Coke.)

Former Best Buy CEO Hubert Joly says he never experienced health complications while leading the company from 2012 to 2019. He gave priority to sleep, exercise and nutrition, he adds, flashing an Oura ring that monitors his heart rate, blood oxygen and other biometrics.

Joly, who co-leads a Harvard Business School program for new chief executives, says he and fellow mentors devote a lengthy session to personal well-being.

"We tell them this is a marathon," he says. "Take care of your health—physically, mentally and spiritually—so you can sustain your leadership."

Returning slowly

Matthew Cooper, 41, knew when he co-founded the financial technology company EarnUp in 2014 that serving as its CEO would likely harm his health. He did it anyway.

"Work was a form of addiction," he says.

Anxiety, depression and panic attacks had dogged Cooper as he progressed from one intense environment to another: Princeton University to McKinsey to private equity. His dilemma was that his greatest stressors were also the things that fulfilled him.

When negative self-talk veered to thoughts of suicide in 2020, Cooper stepped down. He remained on the EarnUp board and offered occasional advice to the executive team but took a three-year break from day-to-day responsibilities. He returned last summer as president, which he describes as a part-time role.

Scaling back isn't easy for people whose identities and careers are intertwined, he says. But Cooper reserves greater sympathy for rank-and-file workers who don't have the luxury of taking career breaks or reducing their hours.

"There are people that have agency to change and those who don't," he says.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: SAM KELLY/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, ISTOCK (2); BLOOMBERG NEWS; ZUMA PRESS; NIKKI BARUA

A New Cut In the New Year Can Be A Gamble

BY LANE FLORSHEIM

It would be hard to pull off pink hair as well as Kylie Jenner, who debuted new cotton-candy locks recently for her nearly 400 million followers on Instagram. Fans sent matching heart emojis and heralded the return of "King Kylie," the nickname Jenner gave herself in the mid-2010s, when she switched her hair color more frequently.

In reality, "new year, new hair" is often more of a gamble—no matter how talented your stylist is.

Though the dramatic cut is a breakup cliché, people also use them to mark happy milestones: a move, a promotion, a birthday, the beginning of a new year. When done well, a hair transformation can make the recipient feel like the truest version of themselves. Done poorly, an identity crisis can ensue.

Grace Clarke knows this from experience. When she left her full-time job to start her own consulting firm, she sought to reinvent herself with a new look. "I wanted to have this power-bitch moment," Clarke said.

The stylist who lopped Clarke's long, blonde waves into a sleek lob struck Clarke as "almost like a SoulCycle [instructor]. It was like, 'You've got this, you came in here, the hard work was just getting here.' "

Afterward, Clarke said, she didn't recognize herself. "I thought if I looked very polished and austere, that would balance my personality, which is that of a kindergarten art teacher," she said. But the result was too sleek and serious. She started growing it out immediately.

Getting a drastic cut is a rite of passage memorialized in pop culture, from Monica's failed attempt at "Demi Moore hair" in "Friends" to the moment in "Fleabag" when Claire receives an asymmetric bob and declares, "I look like a pencil."

Getting a drastic hair cut is a rite of passage memorialized in pop culture.

Trying to copy a celebrity haircut can result in particularly sharp disappointment. Clémence Polès learned this when she brought a photo of the actress Asia Argento in the 1998 cyberpunk film "New Rose Hotel" to a hair appointment. "The hairdresser did exactly the reference I gave him," she said. But Polès, a photographer who lives in New York, has really thick hair, "so that boyish, European or Winona Ryder-esque haircut doesn't translate as well—mine is like a weird poof, like a mushroom top."

Instead of commenting directly on her new hairstyle, people would tell Polès that she had a great face instead. "It's been weird," she says.

▲ Clémence Polès tried for a new look, but afterward, people told her she had a great face instead of commenting on her new hairstyle.

Jess Smith, a professor and writer in Texas, had always lightened her hair, until 2008, when she realized she wanted to end things with her boyfriend. At the time, Kristen Stewart (and her wavy dark hair) was starring in the "Twilight" movies as Bella Swan. Inspired, Smith bought a box of chestnut-brown dye.

"Most people do the breakup and then dye their hair. I dyed my hair as prep," she said. She played music and drank wine as she applied the product and waited. "I pictured myself almost like in a movie montage," she said. But her hair not only came out much darker than expected, it was also patchy, with bits of dirty blonde poking through.

Hairstylist Mara Roszak says that it's common to want a major hair change around a significant life event. Before giving someone a dramatic cut, she asks them about how much time they spend on hair maintenance every day, why they want the style and how long they've been considering it.

"I feel there is some responsibility on the stylist to make sure this change was consciously thought through and planned for," said Roszak, whose clients include Emma Stone and Natalie Portman.

"January is a month where we're looking to do things we felt we didn't get to do the previous year," she said. "Hair falls into that. It's a new way of looking at yourself."

Cortne Bonilla, a fashion editor in Brooklyn, loves to get a haircut to start the new year. She estimated that she's done it four or five times. "You're starting fresh," she said.

Still, a new cut doesn't always go according to plan. And the growing-out process can be worse than a bad haircut itself. In the early 2010s, pixie cuts were coming back in style. Sarah Solomon was a college student when she decided to get one. Later, when she walked past the fraternity of the guy she was dating, a bunch of his brothers were sitting on the porch outside.

"They started screaming at me, 'What have you done?'" said Solomon, now an author in New York. Growing her curly hair out took two years.

CLÉMENCE POLÈS (2)

ARTS IN REVIEW

EXHIBITION REVIEW

African Epics Of Faith and Empire

Two museums offer wide-ranging explorations of religion and history

By Edward Rothstein

New York and Baltimore

One of the most alluring artifacts on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition "Africa & Byzantium" is an image painted on wood that, we are told, is "one of the oldest surviving icons in the world." Possibly dating from the second half of the sixth century, it shows Mary and the infant Jesus not as figures of extraordinary grace, but as wary, savvy, solemn. Mother and baby are haloed in gold but Mary's eyes look grimly to their left, aware of the earthly struggles yet to come. Stalwart saints flank the pair, backed by ghostly angels gazing upward at the hand of God.

The ancient Holy Monastery of St. Catherine in Sinai (which lent the icon to the Met along with other objects) may have received it as a gift from the Byzantine Emperor Justinian when he ordered the site to be provided with a church between 548 and 565. The icon is thus a direct link to the early years of Eastern Christian belief. Here, humanity seems to share close quarters with the magisterial divine, just as it does in the extraordinary sixth-century church, Hagia Sophia, built by Justinian in Constantinople (now Istanbul) around the same time.

There are many individual moments like this in the exhibition. And though the Met's show is different in many ways from one at the Walters Art Museum, "Ethiopia at the Crossroads," there are strong connections in their themes. And in both we come across familiar-seeming objects that surprise us with unexpected sensations, even when the objects are nearer our time.

In Baltimore, for example, we see a tome dating from the 18th and 19th centuries containing the 150 Psalms of the Hebrew Bible—one of the main texts of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church liturgy. The book is entirely written in Ge'ez—an ancient Semitic language that developed from South Arabian languages and is still used in Church ceremonies. The letters, so varied in character, resemble no Western script. And unless a visitor is well schooled in early Christianity, the confluences of traditions, languages and customs we encounter here can be startling. In the second quarter of the fourth century, the original Ethiopian kingdom—the Aksumite Empire—became the second nation to adopt Christianity (after Armenia); its church, we learn, adapted some practices from ancient Judaism, which had a strong foothold there, with lore tracing it back to the Queen of Sheba and her liaison with the Israelite King Solomon.

These two exhibitions share an unusual focus on an era and a region. Both take as their core the centuries in which the Roman Empire was giving way to early Christianity, for that transition shaped the history and art yet to come; Islamic conquests also play a strong role, and modest attention is given in both shows to Judaism's influence. The region that they are concerned with is not, as the Met's title suggests, the entire African continent, but its northern strip extending to the Horn of Africa: lands that were part of the great trading routes incorporating Western Asia, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

The Met show's curators—including Andrea Achi, associate curator of Byzantine art at the Met (and editor of an extensive catalog), and Kristen Windmuller-Luna, curator of African art at the Cleveland Museum of Art (where the exhibition will travel in April)—have gathered some 200 artifacts, including loans from more than 30 institutions. They nearly overwhelm the visitor with their variety, including mosaics, wall paintings, jewelry, coins, manuscripts, icons, sacred texts, textiles, religious symbols, amulets, scrolls, videos and 21st-century artworks.

The Walters exhibition focuses more specifically on Ethiopia, including the larger territory once controlled by the Aksumite Kingdom (which this exhibition dates from 270 to the early seventh century), and surveys the cultural and artistic connections to South Arabia, Egypt, the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, Armenia, Europe and India. Adding loans to the Walters's major Ethiopian collection, the exhibition (co-organized with the Peabody Essex Museum and the Toledo Museum of Art, where it will also appear) offers more than 220 objects as varied as those at the Met (if less aesthetically imposing).

The show's curator—Christine Sciacca at the Walters, who also edited a densely detailed scholarly catalog—has created an elaborate survey of a remarkable national heritage, not only in its religious distinctiveness but in Ethiopia's proud autonomy as the only African nation never colonized (though it came under Italian rule from 1935-41).

'Mosaic Panel of Preparations for a Feast' (late second century), above; 'Queen of Sheba and King Solomon Conceiving King Menelik I' (20th century), below

'Diptych With Mary and Her Son Flanked by Archangels, Apostles and a Saint' (late 15th century), top left; 'Icon With the Virgin and Child, Saints, Angels, and the Hand of God' (second half of the sixth century), above

Throughout we see the unusual Ethiopian style of figurative painting that shows tall, lean saints with prominent eyes; even when most solemn they can have an almost manga-like character. That style even carries over to a striking circa 1968 painting, "Battle of 'Adwa" by an unknown artist, showing Ethiopian troops defeating the invading Italian army in 1896. The continuity of image and style is one of the exhibition's themes. So is its converse. We see currents of influence flowing back and forth between Armenia and Ethiopia, as well as between the Italian Renaissance and Ethiopian painting of that period.

The Met's themes are uncannily similar, simultaneously drawing attention to cultural distinction and interchange. "Africa & Byzantium" is also part of a series of major exhibitions the Met has mounted in recent decades devoted to Byzantium (Helen C. Evans, who put together 1997 and 2004 shows, is named here as "consulting curator"). In some ways, this attention to the eastern Roman Empire, which lasted from the early fourth century under the Christian Emperor Constantine until its conquest by the Ottoman Empire in 1453, was intended to decenter Western art. The current exhibition is meant to take a further step, noting that "Byzantium's extensive connections to northern and eastern Africa are not well known."

The opening works show elements of Roman, Greek and North African cultures intertwined. From second-century Tunisia we see a floor mosaic punctuated with (as the label puts it) a "diverse group of men" in Roman garb carrying objects for an imminent feast. "Dark-skinned figures" are also portrayed along with Greek figures in Egyptian textiles from the fifth to seventh century. And the erotic ivory panels in a bridal chest from Nubia (now Sudan) that was created between the fourth and sixth century also portray an Egyptian god, maenads and satyrs.

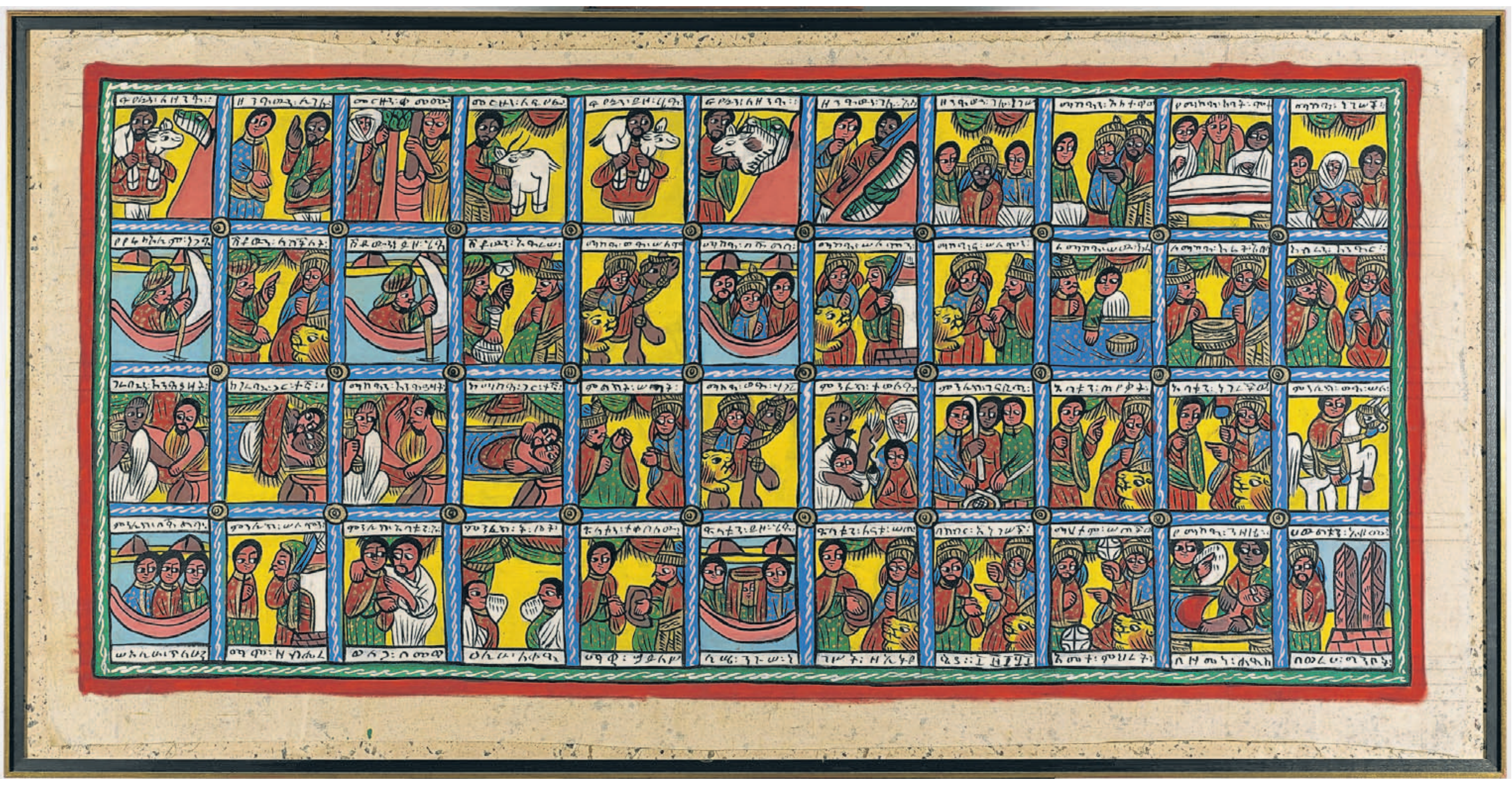
Most of the artifacts here, though, are associated with religious practice, so it would have helped to have a crisper outline of the evolution of Christian faith in the region and of the nature of its interactions with Islam (similarly, the Walters could have been more illuminating about ritual and doctrine). The Met also occasionally pushed some themes too far. When the exhibition states, "During the late antique period (around 284 to 641), every major city in the Mediterranean basin, particularly northern African ones, was diverse and multicultural," we tend to read this in the contemporary sense, suggesting openness and mutual respect, but I suspect that here, as in the Met's 2016 exhibition about Jerusalem, this idealization papers over the actual interaction with a modern gloss.

Ultimately, the Met's show does not dramatically decenter reigning perspectives, particularly since the history of religion—if not art—has regularly taken cognizance of these times and places. But there is so much that repays close attention in both exhibitions that a visitor's perspective is inevitably widened—which is, after all, their main point.

Africa & Byzantium
The Met Fifth Avenue, through March 3

Ethiopia at the Crossroads
The Walters Art Museum, through March 3

Mr. Rothstein is the Journal's Critic at Large.



CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM: WALTERS ART MUSEUM (2); THE HOLY MONASTERY OF SAINT CATHERINE, SINAI; THE MET

SPORTS

Orioles Deal Was Years in the Making

Private-equity billionaire David Rubenstein has long had eyes on buying his favorite team

By Jared Diamond, Miriam Gottfried and Lindsey Adler

Like many baseball fans, David Rubenstein had long dreamed about buying his favorite childhood team. The difference is Rubenstein is one of the few people on the planet actually capable of turning that fantasy into a reality.

Rubenstein, the co-founder of private-equity firm Carlyle, announced Wednesday that he has reached an agreement to purchase the Baltimore Orioles from John Angelos, the eldest son of Peter Angelos, the 94-year-old family patriarch currently ailing from dementia. The transaction values the Orioles at $1.725 billion—about 10 times what Peter Angelos and his group of investors paid for it in 1993.

If he is approved by the other major-league owners, Rubenstein and his partners would acquire 40% of the organization at first and then buy the remaining equity after the death of Peter Angelos, a person familiar with the matter said. This structure would ease the financial burden for the Angeloses, who stand to owe hundreds of millions of dollars in capital-gains taxes if they sell the Orioles while Peter Angelos is still alive.

For Rubenstein, the deal is the culmination of a long quest to land the Orioles. A Baltimore native and an alumnus of Baltimore City College, the 74-year-old Rubenstein was 4-years-old when the Orioles moved to the city from St. Louis in 1954. He grew up rooting for the likes of Brooks Robinson and Gus Triandos, and was a teenager when the Orioles brought a championship to Baltimore in 1966.

Rubenstein spent about three years negotiating on and off with the Angelos family and had his eyes on the Orioles for much longer. At one point he considered joining a group interested in buying the Washington Nationals, but ultimately decided to wait for the Orioles to become available. The Orioles were his top priority.

The Orioles recently agreed to a lease extension that will keep the team at Camden Yards. Left, Carlyle co-founder David Rubenstein.

Now, after numerous false starts, he is on the verge of taking control of the team he has always coveted—the local boy made good, returning home to become the steward of the local franchise. Rubenstein's investment partners include Ares Management CEO Michael Arougheti, Orioles legend Cal Ripken Jr., former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg, retired NBA star Grant Hill and former Baltimore mayor Kurt Schmoke. The deal also includes the Orioles' majority share of the Mid-Atlantic Sports Network, the regional sports channel that broadcasts the Orioles and the Nationals.

After years of ineptitude, the Orioles defied expectations last season by finishing with the best record in the American League. They have a roster loaded with burgeoning young stars like Adley Rutschman and Gunnar Henderson and a farm system filled with heralded prospects for the future.

That will happen as the Orioles transition from an Angelos family heirloom to the prized jewel of a private-equity billionaire who has made it a point to spend his money during his lifetime.

There is a sort of narrative continuity in the Orioles passing from Angelos to Rubenstein. Peter Angelos, like Rubenstein, is a lifelong Baltimorean and viewed the Orioles as a local institution. John Angelos became MLB's designated "control person" in 2020 in the wake of his father's illness and was set to inherit the team.

But these days, the Angelos family owning the Orioles seems quaint—a throwback to a time when the group of people who could conceivably join the club of baseball owners was considerably larger than it is today.

Peter Angelos was an attorney who amassed his fortune representing thousands of workers in asbestos-related compensation claims before leading a group that bought the Orioles for $173 million.

Indeed, just three decades ago, a union lawyer was capable of purchasing a controlling stake in a MLB team and having it become the primary driver of his family's wealth. Now, MLB franchise ownership is a perk that is increasingly available only to the Wall Street billionaire class.

In many ways, the Orioles' situation mirrors that of a recent sale of another MLB franchise: the New York Mets. Hedge fund billionaire Steve Cohen bought the team in 2020 from the Wilpons, a family of local real-estate developers who first bought a share of the franchise in 1980. As time passed, Fred Wilpon began ceding power to his son, Jeff, who appeared set to inherit the team.

But by the end, the Wilpons, like the Angeloses, had become deeply unpopular among fans. For the Wilpons, it was largely because of their financial woes in the aftermath of Bernard L. Madoff's fraud. In the case of the Angeloses, it stemmed from a bitter legal dispute involving the family's succession plans.

Fans of the Orioles are now imagining a similar outcome, with an eager and wealthy lifelong fan swooping in to take over a team that for years has had one of baseball's lowest payrolls—a growing frustration among Orioles fans at a time when the team seems ready to compete for titles.

Ultimately, this is the outcome Peter Angelos had always wanted. Court filings from 2022 revealed that before his health problems, Angelos believed his surviving heirs should sell the Orioles so that his wife, Georgia, "could enjoy the great wealth they had amassed together."

What was less clear was whether John Angelos shared that opinion.

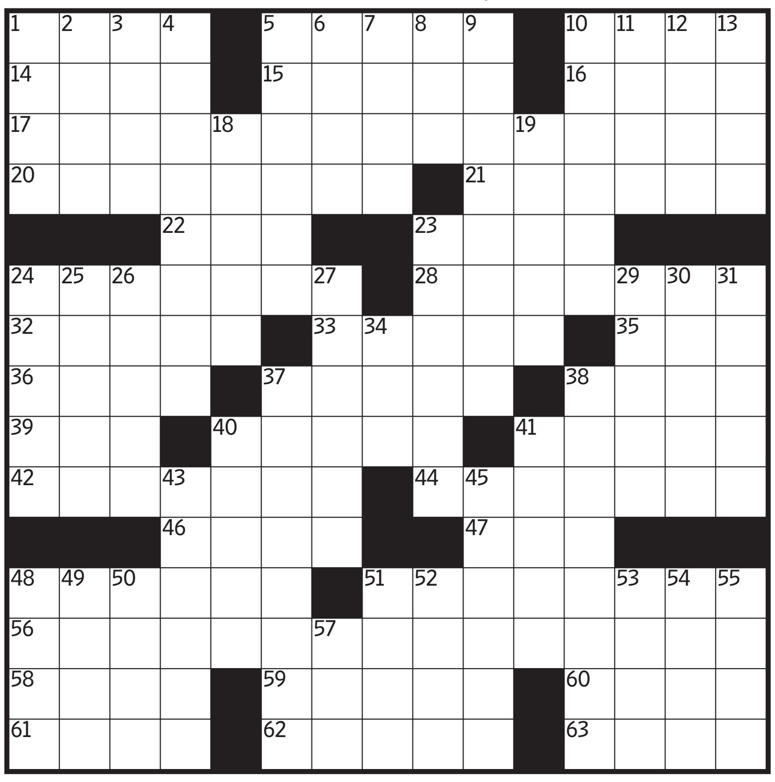
In mid-December, John Angelos and the state of Maryland agreed to a lease extension that will keep the Orioles at their ballpark in downtown Baltimore for as long as 30 years. The negotiations were protracted and contentious, sparking fears among fans that John Angelos would threaten to relocate the team and raising questions about the family's intentions moving forward.

The biggest issue revolved around John Angelos's desire to acquire the rights to develop the state-owned land around the stadium to build a mixed-use complex. The lease Angelos signed gave him until the end of 2027 to negotiate a separate agreement with the state for that land, or else the Orioles could terminate their lease after 15 years.

Those terms would transfer to Rubenstein—the man who will soon be in charge of one of baseball's oldest and most storied franchises.

FROM TOP: TOMMY GILLIGAN/USA TODAY SPORTS; FABRICE COFFRINI/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

The WSJ Daily Crossword | Edited by Mike Shenk



VANISHING ACT | By Mike Shenk

Across

1 Apply with a spatula, say
5 Spoonbill or stork
10 Sharpen
14 Humor writer Bombeck
15 Piercing
16 City about 200 miles southeast of Honolulu
17 Old kids' TV show featuring Mr. Moose and Mr. Bunny Rabbit
20 Ballot mailer
21 Gift
22 Energy drink suffix
23 Showed up
24 Ghosts, at times
28 Place to work on figures
32 Its anthem is "Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau"
33 Print measures
35 Feel remorse over
36 Made like
37 Spelunking enthusiast
38 Candle holder, of a sort
39 Soft shoe, for short
40 Less hesitant
41 Suite spot
42 Like a nervous person's stomach
44 Meditation goal
46 Andy Taylor's boy
47 Capp and Capone
48 Madison or Park
51 Some fortified wines
56 Medium for secret messages, and a hint to making sense of 12 Down answers
58 Polite address
59 Bring about
60 Do, say
61 Turn violently
62 Blissful spots
63 Worry

Down

1 Twice penta-
2 Dhow sailor, generally
3 Call makers
4 Like some African foxes
5 Fire extinguisher
6 Top club
7 Expected
8 H look-alike
9 Alamo service
10 The Pequod, e.g.
11 Take on
12 Musk of X
13 Horn output
18 Lake Titicaca setting
19 Series components
23 Foe of Mark Antony
24 Learned to crawl, say
25 Crime syndicate honcho
26 Oscar winner Guinness
27 Few and far between
29 Merit
30 Banjos' cousins
31 Sargasso Sea creatures
34 "___ had it!"
37 Adorable tot
38 Delivers
40 Get the last of, as gravy
41 Hunt for roles?
43 Generic
45 Low points
48 USN bigwigs
49 Medicine container
50 Jacob's twin
51 Cook's spice
52 Make ___ for it (flee)
53 Nonsense
54 Stopped fasting
55 Patch things up, perhaps
57 Close

Previous Puzzle's Solution

C	A	R	S	■	P	L	O	D	■	B	E	Z	O	S
A	R	E	A	■	A	I	W	A	■	A	L	O	N	E
Y	A	L	L	■	T	E	N	D	E	R	F	O	O	T
U	R	I	A	H	■	G	E	O	D	E	■	■	■	■
G	A	S	M	E	T	E	R	■	E	L	B	O	W	S
A	T	T	I	R	E	■	■	A	N	Y	I	D	E	A
■	■	■	■	T	A	L	E	S	■	■	D	E	A	D
■	B	U	Z	Z	L	I	G	H	T	Y	E	A	R	■
R	O	S	A	■	■	F	O	Y	E	R	■	■	■	■
I	N	S	P	A	C	E	■	■	N	E	S	T	E	A
P	E	R	S	I	A	■	J	U	N	K	Y	A	R	D
■	■	■	■	O	R	B	I	T	■	A	S	T	O	R
B	U	S	H	L	E	A	G	U	E	■	T	A	T	A
E	N	N	U	I	■	L	G	B	T	■	E	M	I	T
D	O	L	E	S	■	E	Y	E	S	■	M	I	C	E

▶ Solve this puzzle online and discuss it at WSJ.com/Puzzles.

The NBA's 3-Point Revolution Is Shaking Up a Different Sport

By Yusuf Khan

THE STATISTICAL revolution that has reshaped the modern NBA took more than three decades to take hold.

The league introduced the 3-point line back in 1979, but it wasn't until the 2010s that teams began to fully grasp the potential of the 3-pointer. Since then, one of the fastest-paced sports in the world has witnessed teams shoot more and more of them with every passing season.

For the more unhurried sport of cricket, where games unfold over several days and players still break for tea, progress has arrived a little more leisurely. But now, more than four centuries since this bat-and-ball game was invented on the grassy fields of the English countryside, a similar realization is turning the sport upside-down.

Just as the NBA's best teams understood that it made more mathematical sense to attempt 3-pointers instead of twos, cricket is beginning to see that shots worth six points—the reward for hitting a ball over the fence—are more valuable than those that count for just one.

Not long ago, England was a punchline in international cricket. Its matches were excruciating affairs that invariably ended in exactly the same way—between 2021 and 2022, England won just one of its 17 Test matches. Now England is one of the best teams in the world, led by a New Zealander coach who brought in the bombs-away batting approach and a captain who is cricket's equivalent to Shohei Ohtani.

The ultimate validation came last weekend, when England pulled off one of the biggest upsets in its long history. The team traveled to India and beat a powerhouse that had previously lost just three of its last 46 matches on home turf.

The journey began two years ago, when England was at perhaps the lowest point of its 150-year old history. In came new coach Brendon "Baz" McCullum, a former New Zealand player who led his country to a World Cup final through a brand of ultra-aggressive batting. He got the England team to unlearn a century of accepted wisdom and replaced it with what the cricket world now refers to as "Bazball."

The approach can broadly be defined as batting with unrestrained aggression, trying to hit more shots worth four and six points rather than steadily accumulating runs with low-risk shots that count for one or two. The idea behind it isn't simply to post the highest possible score, but to pile up runs as quickly as possible, which buys time for England to bowl the opponents out, as well as putting more pressure on the opposition.

Under McCullum, England's batters haven't merely scored faster. They have become the quickest-scoring team in Test cricket history. Over the past 70 years, the average number of runs scored per six-ball over has crept steadily higher, from 2.32 in the 1950s to 3.29 since 2000.

But since McCullum's appointment in May 2022, England has posted a run rate of 4.65 as its batsmen swing away on almost every other ball.

England's five-match series against India will mark the most searching examination of that newfound strength. Like in any sport, players are products of where they grow up, and in India the pitches the game is played on usually favor spin bowler—essentially pitchers who eschew fastballs in favor of curveballs that take a funky spin off the turf.

Warriors star Stephen Curry, left, and England captain Ben Stokes

That combination of skill, local conditions and a billion cricket-mad fans has made India virtually unbeatable at home, where they haven't lost a series in more than a decade.

Then Bazball arrived last week. Ollie Pope led the charge with a massive 196 runs, toying with India's bowlers in their own backyard in what commentators dubbed one of the best batting displays they had ever seen. England won the game inside four days.

England captain Ben Stokes said the victory was the greatest triumph of his captaincy, while former England captain Michael Vaughan went even further in his column in Britain's Daily Telegraph.

"This,"he wrote, "was the greatest England victory of my lifetime."

TIMMY HUYNH/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL; KYLE TERADA/USA TODAY SPORTS; FRANCIS MASCARENHAS/REUTERS

OPINION

The Republicans' Border Crisis

WONDER LAND
By Daniel Henninger

The United States, an alleged superpower, may soon join Italy, Greece and Russia as validation of Adam Smith's cautionary maxim: There is a great deal of ruin in a nation. The irony is that America's slow disintegration is occurring in perhaps its most robust state, Texas, where the southern U.S. border essentially no longer exists.

In December alone, the U.S. Border Patrol reported 302,000 encounters with illegal migrants at the southwest border. Total encounters for fiscal years 2022 and 2023 were an almost incomprehensible 4.7 million.

To endure, great nations find their way to solving large problems. Migration may turn out to be the issue that swallowed America's democratic order.

Other than Joe Biden and Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, no one in the past year has disagreed that the "situation" at the southern border is a crisis. Until they were forced to respond by overwhelmingly unfavorable opinion polling about the border last month—even in New Hampshire's primary—the Biden-Mayorkas see-no-problem pose was the nadir of political cynicism. But now come Donald Trump and his congressional followers, chasing the presumed political rewards of doing absolutely nothing about a serious national problem.

Oklahoma's very conservative Republican senator, James Lankford, has spent weeks attempting to shape a compromise on illegal migration with Democrats that would permit passage as well of a supplemental bill that has funding for embattled Israel, Ukraine and Taiwan. This isn't the unto-eternity discussion of reforming Social Security. These are national-security matters that needed addressing yesterday by the people elected to prevent the U.S. from being crushed by unsolvable problems.

About a week ago, Mr. Trump told congressional Republicans via his Truth Social platform to oppose any Lankford compromise: "I do not think we should do a Border Deal, at all, unless we get EVERYTHING." He elaborated: "A Border Deal now would be another Gift to the Radical Left Democrats. They need it politically." Mr. Trump ended his input by offering a solution to the current border crisis: "If you want to have a really Secure Border, your ONLY HOPE is to vote for TRUMP2024." Amid these statements, House Speaker Mike Johnson wrote that the Lankford compromise would be "dead on arrival."

The politics of immigration are well known. But let's step away from the Beltway mud-wrestle for a moment to acknowledge the practical, unavoidable result of Mr. Trump's position. Doing nothing so that he and Republicans will have an issue to run on means the migrant open hydrant will flow daily for all of 2024. And that means an additional two million or so illegal migrants will enter the U.S.

If the Republicans have been screaming bloody murder about migrant crossings and are on the brink of impeaching Mr. Mayorkas for not doing his duty, how can they justify allowing the Mayorkas policy to continue unabated all this year?

The GOP is branding itself as addicted to rage and internet fundraising.

Republicans say Mr. Biden could reverse his January 2021 executive orders on immigration, but the chances of that are nil. They are right to regard Mr. Biden as an untrustworthy partner. It's not beyond imagining that he might sign a compromise bill to decompress migration as an election issue, then slow-walk enforcement to appease his progressive base. This is the president who after the Supreme Court last year said his cancellation of $400 billion in student-debt relief overstepped his authority, simply interpreted various federal regulations to spend those billions on debt forgiveness anyway. No, he can't be trusted.

But whatever happened to Republicans' self-confidence in persuading voters to their point of view? The party, especially in the House, is self-branding as politicians whose only reason for being is to turn public issues into addictive rage and internet fundraising.

A main purpose of the Lankford compromise is immediately to put a thumb in the dike of so-called humanitarian parole, the once-useful entry policy for genuine asylum seekers, such as from Afghanistan, which Mr. Biden has turned into virtually unlimited catch-and-release. If Mr. Biden reneges on enforcing the new border law, with more daily images of the Rio Grande awash in migrants, the Republicans immediately get the issue of the president's bad faith on his commitments.

If Republicans think more than this temporary compromise will be needed next year, such as a legislated return to the Remain in Mexico policy for many asylum seekers, they should be willing to explain that to the American people to win a mandate for additional changes. A Republican do-nothing decision to let the border bleed across the next 10 months allows Mr. Biden and Democrats to tee up the entire party as a reject-everything Trump-MAGA caricature, rather than a GOP capable of governing.

Democrats criticize Texas Gov. Greg Abbott for busing migrants north. But what else was he, or the people of Texas, supposed to do with these migrant millions? Gov. Abbott did the country a favor by nationalizing an immigration problem that has festered for decades. A democratic system that consciously chooses to let the current level of political failure run indefinitely is heading onto thin ice.

Write henninger@wsj.com.

Biden Is Worse Than Churchill's Pudding

By Karl Rove

Last week I explored Donald Trump's challenges as the general election beckons. This week it's President Biden's turn.

That Mr. Biden trails Mr. Trump in the RealClearPolitics average, 43.9% to 47.8%, suggests the presumptive Democratic nominee has significant challenges. In the 18 polls conducted this year, Mr. Biden has led in only two and tied in three. So where to begin?

Winston Churchill reportedly once rejected an indifferent dessert, saying: "Take away this pudding! It has no theme." Mr. Biden's campaign is worse than Mr. Churchill's pudding. He not only lacks an effective, simple story line about who he is and what this contest is about; his attempts so far to draw one have only muddled things further.

He was elected in 2020 as a transitional figure who was supposed to return normality to the White House. Then in 2021 and 2022, his staff hyped him as the most transformational president since at least Lyndon B. Johnson. This year he is depicted as the defender of democracy and abortion. That may not be all that helpful to his re-election.

Team Biden doesn't seem to understand that attacking Mr. Trump as a fundamental threat to democracy revs up his base. Right or wrong, MAGA supporters see four indictments, a hostile media, and efforts to kick Mr. Trump off the ballot as threats to democracy. Most attacks on him have strengthened their devotion.

But railing about Mr. Trump's traversing of norms doesn't energize Biden voters, many of whom remain generally lethargic. The president would have more success focusing on specific matters that independents and swayable Republicans care about. For one, Mr. Trump promises to pardon those now imprisoned for offenses, including violent ones, related to the Jan. 6, 2021, riots. That's unacceptable to most Americans. He keeps claiming he won the 2020 election. While most Republicans believe that, nearly a third disagree, as do most independents.

Abortion may help turn out otherwise unenthusiastic Democrats in states with ballot measures on the issue, but the issue may not be all that Team Biden thinks it is. Neither Mr. Trump nor Nikki Haley is likely to mishandle the issue by supporting a six- or 10-week national ban.

While consumer confidence is rapidly rising, Mr. Biden still doesn't have an economic message that clicks with voters. Last year he used "Bidenomics" to describe what he claimed was a thriving economy, even though most Americans thought it stank. Now, though inflation is receding and growth is good, most voters are still adjusting to three years of price inflation and wages that didn't keep up.

Immigration is a disaster for Mr. Biden. If Congress doesn't pass border-security legislation, the president can't simply blame Republicans. People know he has neglected the southern border for three years. No amount of finger pointing will erase Mr. Trump's advantage on the issue—52% to 30% in a Jan. 22 Morning Consult swing-state poll.

Mr. Biden seems afraid that even if he gets a deal, closing the border would further diminish the enthusiasm of his party's left wing. He's probably right. But without action, he risks alienating other voters he needs—namely working-class and black Democrats—who are worried about illegal immigration.

Trump is beatable, but the president's campaign has no persuasive theme.

Then there are the U.S. soldiers killed by an Iranian drone strike in Jordan. Such attacks often cause Americans to rally around the president. Not this time. After his botched August 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan accelerated his slide in the polls, Mr. Biden may have lost his ability to rally support. He looks feckless and weak.

Don't forget Hunter Biden's legal difficulties. Though the lawyer for the president's son claims it's a political persecution, most Americans believe people who don't pay their taxes and lie on applications to purchase guns deserve punishment. Hunter has pleaded not guilty to these charges. There's no evidence so far of illegal action by the president, but his wayward son's continuing legal difficulties will hurt Mr. Biden's re-election chances.

There's also the president's campaign structure. Next month, two top advisers—Jen O'Malley Dillon, his 2020 manager, and Mike Donilon, his longtime messaging maven—will leave the White House to supervise the campaign. But they won't go to his Wilmington, Del., headquarters. They're decamping to an office a few blocks from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. How can they supervise a campaign staff that's more than 100 miles away?

All these challenges pale in significance compared with Mr. Biden's fundamental problem: He comes across as too old and lacking the mental sharpness necessary to be president. Each week his senior shuffle seems more pronounced, the moments he looks confused more frequent, his verbal miscues more prevalent. Words or deeds may overcome other challenges, but this fundamental question about Mr. Biden's fitness for office may be insurmountable.

Mr. Rove helped organize the political-action committee American Crossroads and is author of "The Triumph of William McKinley" (Simon & Schuster, 2015).

Why Do Black Pastors Oppose Israel?

By Alan Dershowitz And Andrew Stein

More than 1,000 black pastors are pressing President Biden to restrain Israel in its war with Hamas and threatening that if he doesn't do so, it will cost him black support in November. "We see them as a part of us," the Rev. Cynthia Hale of Decatur, Ga., told the New York Times, referring to Palestinians. "They are oppressed people. We are oppressed people." Barbara Williams-Skinner of the National African American Clergy Network said: "Black clergy have seen war, militarism, poverty and racism all connected."

Yet their focus on the Middle East is perplexing. "The Israel-Gaza war, unlike Iran and Afghanistan, has evoked the kind of deep-seated angst among black people that I have not seen since the civil-rights movement," Ms. Williams-Skinner said. Why? The world is filled with victims of oppression—the Uyghurs of China, the Kurds of Iraq, the Ukrainians. The black citizens of Sudan have been subjected to mass killing and enslavement at the hands of Arabs. What makes the Palestinians more worthy of sympathy—especially since, unlike these other groups, they have turned down numerous offers of statehood and have made terrorism their tactic of choice?

Henry Louis Gates had an answer more than 30 years ago.

Perhaps it is that their antagonists are Jews. In a 1992 article, the historian Henry Louis Gates Jr. pondered the causes of rising antisemitism in the black community. He considered the influence of "Christian anti-Semitism, given the historic importance of Christianity in the black community." But he laid the primary blame on black demagogues who were vying for leadership in the new "Afrocentric" movement.

Mr. Gates noted that many Jews were surprised by the "recrudescence of black anti-Semitism, in view of the historic alliance between the two groups." He cited the "brutal truth" that the "new anti-Semitism arises not in spite of the black-Jewish alliance, but because of it." The alliance had been formed by a previous generation of black ministers, led by Martin Luther King Jr., who sought integration. The new generation of Afrocentric leaders, including pastors, needed to keep blacks isolated to establish their own power.

Mr. Gates noted that "it is among the younger and more educated blacks that anti-Semitism is most pronounced" and that this bigotry "belongs as much to the repertory of campus lecturers as community activists." More than 30 years later, these words seem prophetic.

Mr. Dershowitz is a professor emeritus at Harvard Law School and author of "War Against the Jews: How to End Hamas Barbarism." Mr. Stein, a Democrat, served as New York City Council president, 1986-94.

BOOKSHELF | By Michael F. Bishop

A British 'Son Of America'

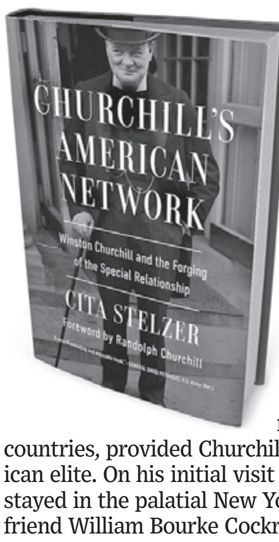
Churchill's American Network

By Cita Stelzer
Pegasus, 336 pages, $29.95

The 1940 elevation of Winston Churchill to the premiership of the United Kingdom marked the advent of the most extraordinary display of leadership in modern times. Yet it did not seem so to many of his Conservative parliamentary colleagues. Among them was R.A. "Rab" Butler—a staunch appeaser—who haughtily dismissed Churchill as a "half-breed American whose main support was that of inefficient but talkative people of a similar type."

Butler's sour observation was at least genealogically correct: Britain's wartime prime minister—born in Blenheim Palace the grandson of the seventh Duke of Marlborough—was indeed the son of a Brooklyn, N.Y., native, Jennie Jerome. After a whirlwind romance, Jerome had married Lord Randolph Churchill in 1874 and gave birth to Winston seven and a half months later, her labor pains having been precipitated by what her husband called "a rather imprudent & rough drive in a pony carriage."

Churchill embraced his dual heritage, and his long and circuitous path to 10 Downing Street was smoothed by supportive Americans seduced by his intellect and irrepressible energy. As Cita Stelzer explains in "Churchill's American Network," he would rely on this support throughout his life to achieve his



"twin goals of the defense of his nation's interests and his personal and financial advancement." Ms. Stelzer, the author of "Dinner With Churchill" (2013) and "Working With Winston" (2019), relies on "hundreds of press reports by national and local American newspapers of Churchill's lectures and his sightseeing tours" to produce a series of colorful itineraries presented with minimal analysis.

Churchill's mother, a beautiful socialite who had forged close alliances with wealthy and powerful men in both her native and adopted countries, provided Churchill his first introduction to the American elite. On his initial visit to the U.S., in 1895, the 20-year-old stayed in the palatial New York apartment of Lady Randolph's friend William Bourke Cockran, an Irish-born Democratic congressman with phenomenal oratorical gifts. An enthralled Churchill wrote later that Cockran's "conversation, in point, in pith, in rotundity, in antithesis, and in comprehension, exceeded anything I have ever heard."

Churchill was dazzled by America. "Not pretty and romantic," he wrote to his younger brother, Jack, "but great and utilitarian." Somehow he knew that the American connection would prove not only beneficial to himself but indispensable to Britain, writing in 1901: "Some day a common danger and a common cause may array in appalling battle-line the incalculable energies of the Anglo-Saxon family."

But first there was the matter of money. Churchill's ducal origins did not confer vast wealth, and his and his mother's extravagant tastes made short work of his inheritance. With phenomenal industry and ability, he wrote popular books about his military adventures in India, the Sudan and South Africa, and traveled across the U.S. to lecture about them. Over the years he also negotiated high fees to write articles for some American publications, including Collier's and Cosmopolitan, and forged close friendships with captains of finance such as Bernard Baruch and William Henry Crocker. As a result, he enjoyed lavish hospitality on both coasts and during his journeys between them, gliding across the country in private, gorgeously appointed railroad cars. In times of acute financial distress, he received much-needed gifts of cash. All this helped supplement the earnings from his many literary endeavors, most notably a biography of his ancestor, the first Duke of Marlborough, who triumphed over the forces of Louis XIV of France in the War of the Spanish Succession (not—as Ms. Stelzer has it—Napoleon at Waterloo).

Churchill's American adventures nearly cost him his life in 1931 when he exited a taxi on Fifth Avenue and crossed the street while looking in the wrong direction. He was struck by a car and suffered a "traumatic pleural hemorrhagic effusion" of his right lung. Even worse, he was confined to the nearby Lenox Hill Hospital during Prohibition, a regime abhorrent to

From a very young age, Churchill sensed that his relationship with America would prove not only beneficial to himself but indispensable to Britain.

his bibulous nature. But all was not lost. A New York physician wrote the following prescription: "This is to certify that the post-accident convalescence of the Hon. Winston S. Churchill necessitates the use of alcoholic spirits especially at meal times. The quantity is naturally indefinite but the minimum requirements would be 250 cubic centimeters." Churchill also earned a handsome fee by writing an article describing the impact of the automobile as a "concussion indescribably violent."

Ms. Stelzer deals only briefly with Churchill's prime ministerial visits to America, but highlights his warm relationship with Harry Hopkins, President Roosevelt's chief adviser and perhaps—other than Roosevelt himself—the most important and influential of all the many Americans to fall under Churchill's spell. It was Hopkins who—after a lengthy visit to Britain—persuaded a wary Roosevelt that Churchill and his people were resolute in their resistance to Hitler. Of course, even Churchill's inspirational rhetoric and assiduous wooing of the president could not draw the U.S. fully into the conflict before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor formalized the Anglo-American alliance. That "special relationship," however troubled and acrimonious beneath the surface, brought about Allied triumph and the vindication of Churchill's faith in his maternal homeland.

Churchill was awarded honorary U.S. citizenship by Congress in 1963. He was too ill to attend in person, but watched via satellite as his son, Randolph, accepted on his behalf. In his proclamation of citizenship, President John F. Kennedy declared Churchill "a son of America" and "a firm and steadfast friend of the American people and the American nation." In his response, read by Randolph, Churchill called the U.S. a "mighty and benevolent nation" and celebrated "the interwoven and upward progress of our peoples."

Churchill was voted the "Greatest Briton" in a 2002 BBC poll, a result that would doubtless have gratified him. But he might have been just as pleased to know—as the 150th anniversary of his birth approaches in November—that many of his most fervent admirers are still to be found in the country of his mother's birth.

Mr. Bishop, a writer and historian, is the former executive director of the International Churchill Society and the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.

OPINION

REVIEW & OUTLOOK

The GOP's Spending Boost for Biden

Booming federal outlays are providing a short-term lift to GDP.

The Federal Reserve held interest rates steady on Wednesday with a bias toward easing later in the year amid what Chairman Jerome Powell called a strong economy. But even Mr. Powell suggested that he had expected a weaker economy by now, and it's worth asking what's behind the strong recent growth. One under-noticed answer: a continuing surge of government spending.

Retail spending growth continues to exceed pre-pandemic levels, and employers keep adding jobs despite higher interest rates. This has fueled a stock-market rally that adds to the wealth effect for those who hold shares.

"When stock markets are up, it's kind of like this little drug we all feel like it's just great," JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon said recently in Davos. He was speaking for his fellow CEOs, though many Americans still wince when they see their grocery bills. But Mr. Dimon added: "But remember, we've had so much fiscal monetary stimulation." Yes, we have.

The San Francisco Federal Reserve in November estimated that households still have $430 billion in excess savings from the pandemic. These savings stem from a potpourri of Covid transfer payments, three-and-a-half years of student loan forbearance, and home refinancing at low interest rates.

The Administration is also slathering the economy with trillions of dollars of spending from the Inflation Reduction Act, Chips and Science Act, and infrastructure bill. Not a day goes by that our inbox doesn't receive a Biden Administration email, or several, boasting about another multibillion-dollar grant somewhere across the country.

The federal budget deficit for the 2023 fiscal year clocked in at $2 trillion and 7.5% of GDP—roughly double what the deficit averaged as a share of the economy from 2016 to 2019. Incredibly, the deficit during the last fiscal year was $400 billion larger than the growth in nominal GDP, and it shows no signs of shrinking.

The Congressional Budget Office says the federal deficit was $509 billion in the first three months of the current fiscal year, which is 21% larger than during the same period in the prior year. It's no accident this is all hitting in an election year.

Social Security and Medicare spending climbed 12% to 13% in the first three months of this fiscal year compared to last. Sweetened subsidies are boosting ObamaCare enrollment. Growing entitlement spending is one reason that government, healthcare and social assistance accounted for more than half of the net new jobs in December, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The deficit would be even larger if not for the Internal Revenue Service holding back a wave of more stimulus. The agency in September paused processing new claims for the Covid-era Employee Retention Credit owing to concerns over abuse and fraud. By one estimate, the IRS has a $244 billion backlog of claims, which will flood the economy when the IRS processes them.

All of this spending contributes to GDP, at least in the short term. But much of this isn't productive growth that will improve living standards in the long term, and the bills for all this spending will probably be paid in higher taxes.

* * *

That's why it's mind-boggling that House Republicans want to help Democrats throw another deficit party. The bipartisan tax deal that was scheduled for a House vote Wednesday night would sweeten the child tax credit and extend some business tax breaks through 2025. The official Joint Committee on Taxation score is $78 billion. But Dan Clifton of Strategas Research Partners says the bill's provisions would actually cut taxes by more than $200 billion in the first two years.

These include a larger deduction for interest payments so businesses can increase debt financing, along with immediate expensing for research and development and bonus depreciation for equipment. These tax extenders are temporary, and they retroactively reward investments or move forward some by a year or two. This reduces their long-term growth impact.

Democrats have signed on because they view the child-credit provisions as a down payment on a guaranteed annual income and want to boost flagging business investment this year. The political mystery is why Republicans want to add their signature. The tax bill negotiated by Democrat Ron Wyden and GOP Rep. Jason Smith is another in-kind contribution to the Democratic re-election campaign.

Requiem for an Alzheimer's Drug

Pharmaceutical innovation is filled with scientific and political risk. A case study is the Alzheimer's disease treatment Aduhelm, which drug maker Biogen laid to rest on Wednesday.

"When searching for new medicines, one breakthrough can be the foundation that triggers future medicines to be developed," CEO Christopher Viehbacher said in a statement announcing Biogen's termination of the drug's development and sale. "Aduhelm was that groundbreaking discovery that paved the way for a new class of drugs and reinvigorated investments in the field."

Biogen paid a high price for laying that groundwork. We've chronicled the controversy surrounding the Food and Drug Administration's approval of Aduhelm in 2021. The monoclonal antibody works by removing amyloid plaque in the brain that is a sign of the disease. It was the first drug that showed it could slow Alzheimer's progression.

However, data from the clinical trials was messy. Some scientists dismissed Aduhelm's potential because earlier amyloid-targeting antibody drugs failed in trials. But most criticism centered on its cost. Progressives in Congress howled that the drug would blow up Medicare spending even as they push to expand the entitlement's benefits.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services effectively killed Aduhelm by refusing to pay for the treatment outside of clinical trials. By the end of 2021, Aduhelm had a mere $3 million in sales. Its commercial failure led to layoffs and the ouster of former CEO Michel Vounatsos.

But more studies have since validated the science underlying Aduhelm, and other drug makers have learned from Biogen's effort. Two other anti-amyloid antibody drugs have demonstrated patient benefits, including Biogen's Leqembi, which won FDA approval last year. It could soon face competition from Lilly's antibody Donanemab.

Aduhelm's saga illustrates why drugs aren't cheap. It takes 10 to 15 years and $2.6 billion on average to develop an approved drug. Only 0.02% of medicines that enter preclinical testing reach patients. Even then, only 20% to 30% of those approved recoup the investment needed to bring them to market. Very few become blockbusters like Ozempic, the diabetes drug.

A final salute to FDA principal deputy commissioner Janet Woodcock, who suffered many political blows over Aduhelm's approval. She left the agency on Wednesday after a 38-year career. Alzheimer's patients are better off for her leadership.

The Taylor Swift 'Psyop'

Populist paranoia on the Trump right takes an even more bizarre turn.

What does it imply about the political vulnerabilities of Donald Trump that some of his wing men are saying he might lose the 2024 election because of Taylor Swift? As if Ms. Swift weren't ubiquitous enough, the pop megastar is now a focus for Trumpy internet trolls, who are accusing her of . . . well, read on.

The background is that Ms. Swift has been dating Travis Kelce, the tight end for the Kansas City Chiefs, who are going to the Super Bowl after an upset win this past Sunday. The 34-year-old singer endorsed President Biden in 2020, and news reports say the White House hopes she'll do the same this year. Connect the dots, sheeple.

"I wonder who's going to win the Super Bowl next month," Vivek Ramaswamy wrote recently on social media. "And I wonder if there's a major presidential endorsement coming from an artificially culturally propped-up couple this fall." He told the New York Times he is serious: "What your kind of people call 'conspiracy theories,' I simply call an amalgam of collective incentives hiding in plain sight."

One internet pundit has posted a video, with hundreds of thousands of views, claiming that Ms. Swift's relationship with Mr. Kelce is a fake "psyop." This yarn involves the CIA, because of course, as well as George Soros, because of course. The story is that the Super Bowl on Feb. 11 will be rigged so that the Chiefs win in a dramatic fashion. Ms. Swift and Mr. Kelce will get engaged. That way they'll be at peak influence to cut a joint October ad for Mr. Biden.

This is either lunacy or it's theater. Our guess is the latter. Many of its purveyors well know they're putting on an act, but there's fame and notoriety and money to be had from spinning conspiracy theories, the crazier the better.

Yet the paranoia on the right about a romance between the most popular singer in the world and an NFL player does make Republicans seem, frankly, weird. Americans who want a return to normalcy won't find it in a movement that demonizes two of America's healthier entertainments.

Maybe the Chiefs will win the Super Bowl, or maybe not. Maybe Ms. Swift and Mr. Kelce will live happily ever after, in a world-historical setback for the art form of breakup songs, or maybe not. Maybe she will endorse Mr. Biden again, or maybe not. But the CIA isn't orchestrating it all, and neither are the Illuminati, the Freemasons, Elvis, JFK, Bigfoot, Opus Dei, or alien lizard people living among us.

A question, though, for the trolls: If they believe defeating Mr. Trump is so easy that Mr. Biden can do it merely by getting an endorsement from a singer who backed him in 2020, doesn't that suggest the GOP might be making a mistake by nominating such a weak candidate?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

For Consumers, Economic Light Is Pretty Dim

Alan Blinder's "The Public May Soon See the Economic Light" (op-ed, Jan. 24) is remarkable for the slice of history that he has chosen for comparison. He picks the year 1967, when "the unemployment rate was steady as a rock . . . and CPI inflation averaged 2.8%" on the year. But then 1969 brought a recession. Oops!

Mr. Blinder and other economists have an obsession with unemployment. But inflation was accelerating in the late 1960s. From 1964 to 1980, with a few spikes, inflation gained steam. The CPI hit 3.8% in October 1966 then dipped temporarily before it accelerated above 4% by May 1968. Then the federal-funds rate rose above 9% in August 1969 and CPI rose to 6.4% in February 1970.

This is what happens when the Federal Reserve lets inflation run free. At first it seems mild and benign, then it consumes reality. If this is 1967, be afraid, be very afraid. Cherry-picking statistics doesn't change history. But maybe the real purpose here is to keep the Federal Reserve on hold until November.

Robert Brusca, Ph.D.
Chief economist, FAO Economics
New York

Mr. Blinder compares today to 1967 when people were similarly restless despite good economic statistics. With the benefit of hindsight, people were right to be concerned in the late 1960s. They were on the verge of a decade of war, crime, riots, recessions, inflation and some very questionable fashion trends. Let's hope it will work out better this time.

Kevin Clark
Franklin, Tenn.

The reason the public is sour on the economy is obvious to anyone who goes food shopping. Does Mr. Blinder do the food shopping for his household?

Though inflation is down from its high, prices of most foods are up 10% to 50% or more. There is precious little in the supermarket under $1, whereas not too long ago there were many canned goods and pastas that were. A loaf of bread or six rolls can cost over $5. Cereal can cost over $6 a box. These aren't luxury items.

It isn't only food, either. I was recently quoted $3,700 for drapes for one window. Sofas and refrigerators that cost thousands of dollars only last a few years now.

An economist can blame "lags in perception about the economy," but people who shop "see the economic light," and it's not bright.

Adrienne Fishman
Boynton Beach, Fla.

Cuba Is No Sponsor of International Terrorism

Mary Anastasia O'Grady's "Why Cuba Belongs on the Terrorism List" (Americas, Jan. 22) misses the mark. Cuba's government deserves criticism, but the "terrorism list" is just that—a list of regimes that sponsor international terrorism. She presents no evidence that Cuba belongs on it.

Cuban officials meet with counterparts in Russia and China, but so do American officials. Alliances with Russia and China, also cited as evidence of support for terrorism, would put half the world on the list. When it comes to spying, Cuba and other countries have had spies in the U.S.

Ms. O'Grady's argument about Cuba's support for Venezuela's oppressive dictator might sound convincing, but Venezuela itself isn't on the list. Cuba harbors some aging American fugitives, but none of them have been accused of international terrorism.

To be sure, there are countries that belong on the list. North Korea threatens to launch nuclear weapons at us. Syria used chemical weapons on its own people and finances regional terrorists. Iran funds the rockets that rain down on Israel.

Cuba's government is repressive; its economy is in shambles. If those were criteria for being on the list, it would be a mile long. It's fine to criticize Cuba, but let's be honest about who the real terrorists are. A policy of constructive engagement with Cuba might lead to more democracy. Wrongly labeling it as a sponsor of international terrorism only furthers a broken status quo.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D., Mass.)
Worcester, Mass.
Sen. Peter Welch (D., Vt.)
Norwich, Vt.

Why Do Republicans Pledge Fealty to Trump?

Your editorial "The Trump-MAGA Purge" (Jan. 26) makes clear the choice many Republicans face. You're either for or against the Trump Party. After listening to Donald Trump's New Hampshire victory speech, I made my choice. I will quit the Republican Party and declare as an independent.

The presumptive Republican nominee's ranting about Nikki Haley's dress was odd and childish. But it wasn't surprising. Mr. Trump eventually turned his faux charm on for South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott, then humiliated him by commenting on Mr. Scott's appointment by Ms. Haley. But my empathy for Mr. Scott was short-lived after his follow-up remark declaring his love for Mr. Trump.

Let's not forget Vivek Ramaswamy, so enamored of Mr. Trump that one could argue he's auditioning to replace Melania Trump as First Lady.

It's become clear that the Republican Party is now the RITO Party—Republican in Trump Only. I look forward to a No Labels unity ticket as a refreshing alternative.

Jay McHugh
Lago Vista, Texas

Mr. Trump's plan to ban anyone from his party who donates to Ms. Haley's campaign is quite a fortuitous opportunity. A $100 donation is a small price to pay if it will stop all of those annoying phone calls, emails and text messages from the Trump campaign. It might also help her get elected and bring some sanity to America.

Jerry L. Knoski
Tucson, Ariz.

DEI Can Never Properly Weigh Disadvantages

While Ronald Fryer's op-ed "DEI Is Worth Saving From Its Excesses" (Jan. 23) provides a refreshingly level-headed evaluation of the promises and dangers of diversity equity and inclusion, it also demonstrates the opposite of what he intended. The aspiration of DEI to counter disadvantages with purposeful application of corrections fails at the point of application when it can't account for many types of disadvantage, much less weigh them against each other.

What percentage of GRE takers have study partners with math scores hovering around the 99th percentile, as Mr. Fryer tells us he did? How could anyone possibly weigh that advantage against his disadvantage of having an imprisoned father?

Yet it seems that is precisely what he proposes with his terrifying algorithmic solution. The promise of machine learning "to help with decisions like hiring or promotion to counter human biases" should be understood for what it is: a guarantee of truly systemic racism.

Humans will always have biases, but we can't apply them with the brutal consistency of a machine.

Micah Fusselman
Omaha, Neb.

Granny Is Nearing the Edge

Dennis Gasper, in his Jan. 26 letter, asserts that Donald Trump has "inoculated" himself against ads that would accuse him of pushing granny over a cliff. Indeed, Mr. Trump, the Democratic Party and most of official Washington have insulated themselves from such ads. Unfortunately, that metaphorical granny continues to slide toward that metaphorical cliff, and our political class is more interested in avoiding blame than in arresting her impending fall.

Larry Ciolorito
Darnestown, Md.

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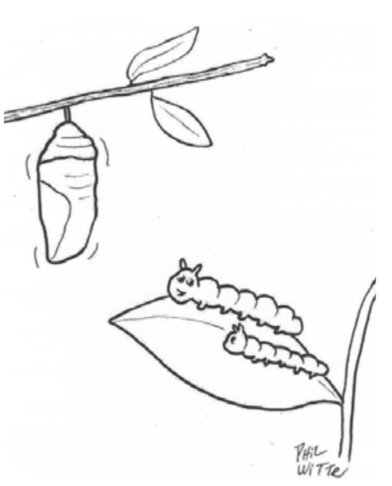
Pepper ... And Salt

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



"Will there be a gender reveal party?"

OPINION

Trump Is a Danger to U.S. Security

By John Bolton

When I became President Trump's national security adviser in 2018, I assumed the gravity of his responsibilities would discipline even him. I was wrong. His erratic approach to governance and his dangerous ideas gravely threaten American security. Republican primary voters should take note.

Mr. Trump's only consistent focus is on himself. He invariably equated good personal relations with foreign leaders to good relations between countries. Personal relations are important, but the notion that they sway Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping and their ilk is perilously wrong.

His isolationist views and erratic thinking and style would pose even greater risks in a second term.

Mr. Trump's most dangerous legacy is the spread of the isolationist virus in the Republican Party. The Democrats long ago adopted an incoherent melding of isolationism with indiscriminate multilateralism. If isolationism becomes the dominant view among Republicans, America is in deep trouble.

The most immediate crisis involves Ukraine. Barack Obama's limp-wristed response to Moscow's 2014 aggression contributed substantially to Mr. Putin's 2022 attack. But Mr. Trump's conduct was also a factor. He accused Ukraine of colluding with Democrats against him in 2016 and demanded answers. No answers were forthcoming, since none existed. President Biden's aid to Ukraine has been piecemeal and nonstrategic, but it is almost inevitable that a second-term Trump policy on Ukraine would favor Moscow.

Mr. Trump's assertions that he was "tougher" on Russia than earlier presidents are inaccurate. His administration imposed major sanctions, but they were urged by advisers and carried out only after he protested vigorously. His assertions that Mr. Putin would never have invaded Ukraine had he been reelected are wishful thinking. Mr. Putin's flattery pleases Mr. Trump. When Mr. Putin welcomed Mr. Trump's talk last year of ending the Ukraine war, Mr. Trump gushed: "I like that he said that. Because that means what I'm saying is right." Mr. Putin knows his mark and would relish a second Trump term.

An even greater danger is that Mr. Trump will act on his desire to withdraw from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. He came precariously close in 2018. The Supreme Court has never ruled authoritatively whether the president can abrogate Senate-ratified treaties, but presidents have regularly done so. Recently enacted legislation to stop Mr. Trump from withdrawing without congressional consent likely wouldn't survive a court challenge. It could precipitate a constitutional crisis and years of litigation.

Mr. Trump is unlikely to thwart the Beijing-Moscow axis. While he did draw attention to China's growing threat, his limited conceptual reach led to simple-minded formulas (trade surpluses good, deficits bad). His tough talk allowed others to emphasize greater Chinese misdeeds, including massive theft of Western intellectual property, mercantilist trade policies, manipulation of the World Trade Organization, and "debt diplomacy," which puts unwary countries in hock to Beijing. These are all real threats, but whether Mr. Trump is capable of countering them is highly doubtful.

OLIVIER MATTHYS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Trump at a NATO summit in Brussels, July 12, 2018.

Ultimately, Beijing's obduracy and Mr. Trump's impulse for personal publicity precluded whatever slim chances existed to eliminate China's economic abuses. In a second term, Mr. Trump would likely continue seeking "the deal of the century" with China, while his protectionism, in addition to being bad economic policy, would make it harder to stand up to Beijing. The trade fights he picked with Japan, Europe and others impaired our ability to increase pressure against China's broader transgressions.

The near-term risks of China manufacturing a crisis over Taiwan would rise dramatically. Mr. Xi is watching Ukraine and may be emboldened by Western failure there. A physical invasion is unlikely, but China's navy could blockade the island and perhaps seize Taiwanese islands near the mainland. The loss of Taiwan's independence, which would soon follow a U.S. failure to resist Beijing's blockade, could persuade countries near China to appease Beijing by declaring neutrality.

Taiwan's fall would encourage Beijing to finalize its asserted annexation of almost all the South China Sea. Littoral states like Vietnam and the Philippines would cease resistance. Commerce with Japan and South Korea, especially of Middle Eastern oil, would be subjected to Chinese control, and Beijing would have nearly unfettered access to the Indian Ocean, endangering India.

And imagine Mr. Trump's euphoria at resuming contact with North Korea's Kim Jung Un, about whom he famously boasted that "we fell in love." Mr. Trump almost gave away the store to Pyongyang, and he could try again. A reckless nuclear deal would alienate Japan and South Korea, extend China's influence, and strengthen the Beijing-Moscow axis.

Israel's security might seem an issue on which Mr. Trump's first-term decisions and rhetoric should comfort even his opponents. But he has harshly criticized Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu since the Oct. 7 attacks, and there is no foreign-policy area in which the absence of electoral constraints could liberate Mr. Trump as much as in the Middle East. There is even a danger of a new deal with Tehran. Mr. Trump almost succumbed to French President Emmanuel Macron's pleading to meet Iran's foreign minister in August 2019.

Mr. Trump negotiated the catastrophic withdrawal deal with the Taliban, which Mr. Biden further bungled. The overlap between Messrs. Trump's and Biden's views on Afghanistan demonstrate the absence of any Trump national-security philosophy. Even in the Western Hemisphere, Mr. Trump didn't carry through on reversing Obama administration policies on Cuba and Venezuela. His affinity for strongmen may lead to deals with Nicolás Maduro and whatever apparatchik rules in Havana.

Given Mr. Trump's isolationism and disconnected thinking, there is every reason to doubt his support for the defense buildup we urgently need. He initially believed he could cut defense spending simply because his skills as a negotiator could reduce procurement costs. Even as he increased defense budgets, he showed acute discomfort, largely under the influence of isolationist lawmakers. He once tweeted that his own military budget was "crazy" and that he, Mr. Putin and Mr. Xi should confer to prevent a new arms race. Mr. Trump is no friend of the military. In private, he was confounded that anyone would put himself in danger by joining.

A second Trump term would bring erratic policy and uncertain leadership, which the China-Russia axis would be only too eager to exploit.

Mr. Bolton served as the president's national security adviser, 2018-19, and ambassador to the United Nations, 2005-06. This article is adapted from the forward to the new edition of his book "The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir."

The Intelligence Paradox: AI May Make Markets Less Rational

By Alena Brynjolfsson
And Erik Brynjolfsson

The evolution of artificial intelligence raises profound questions for financial markets. Will human portfolio managers become obsolete as AI algorithms become smarter? Will markets become perfectly efficient and reflect the ultimate equilibrium, in which prices mirror economic reality without human distortion?

Economists' longstanding debate about market efficiency sheds light on these questions. In the 1970s, Eugene Fama argued in his efficient-market hypothesis that asset prices reflect all available information, and it is therefore impossible for an investor to outperform the markets consistently. This thesis shaped modern finance, only to be countered a decade later by Robert Shiller, who argued that stock prices are far more volatile than would be expected if investors were making decisions based on strictly rational thinking. He proposed instead that human irrationality drives market bubbles, crashes and overall inefficiency. Despite their opposing views, Messrs. Fama and Shiller were jointly awarded the Nobel Prize in 2013.

Our perspective aligns with Mr. Shiller's: Market participants' irrational behavior can cause market inefficiency. Yet market inefficiency isn't solely the product of market participants' acting irrational at times; different circumstances can compel even rational investors toward actions that collectively generate inefficiencies. Each player in the financial market is constrained by unique economic circumstances, and these economics drive even the smartest players to act in a way that isn't necessarily efficient for the underlying asset or the market as a whole.

Example: A natural-gas producer hedging a production output may have a significantly lower optimal trading price than a utility safeguarding its end users' contracts. Unless these two participants—which often bring significant volumes of the commodity to the market—trade at exactly the same time, their market actions can drive asset prices far from their fundamental value.

Hedge funds and other speculative entities may intervene, seeking to correct and benefit from the inefficiencies. Their actions, however, are also bound by economic constraints, such as limited capital or risk parameters. When they hit these limits, the speculative entities may be forced to unwind their positions, amplifying the price swing they had been working to dampen. As a result, while trying to solve one mispricing, they may introduce a set of new mispricings, perpetuating and even amplifying the cycle of price inefficiencies. We saw this phenomenon with GameStop and other meme stocks—which gained popularity through social media—when risk limits drove short sellers to buy back the stocks they were shorting, driving those equities ever further from their fundamental value.

These inefficiencies aren't only products of extreme market conditions but are recurring phenomena, even in stable economic periods. Nearly a century ago economist Nicholas Kaldor documented wild price swings for corn and hog markets. Today, speculative traders, including quantitative algorithms, frequently exit their positions while solving for a market price inefficiency. In fact, these market actions are often crucial parameters in their strategies to ensure a consistent volatility of their returns. Their actions can be individually logical and profitable over the long term but collectively disrupt the market's march toward an efficient equilibrium.

Even the smartest algorithm has to operate within its limitations on risk and capital.

AI could reduce dramatically or even eliminate behavioral irrationality, the inefficiencies born of pure human bias and emotion, not derived from economic constraints. Quantitative systems already outperform human traders in most scenarios when market conditions aren't at their extremes. Unfettered by human biases, AI has the potential to uncover complex market patterns and relationships beyond human ability.

On the other hand, structural irrationality—the inefficiencies born from the inherent constraints and economic imperatives of each market participant, including AI—could persist or even grow. Even the most sophisticated AI algorithm must operate within the confines of risk parameters and capital limitations. For that reason, it can bring a new set of inefficiencies during its market participation.

We saw a glimpse of this during the flash crash of 2010, when algorithms reacted to other algorithms' market actions that were triggered by their economic constraints. AI models have exhibited incredible growth in intelligence in recent years. The current generation of AI—Google Gemini Ultra—has scored 90% on a benchmark assessment called the Massive Multitask Language Understanding test. This is an astonishing leap from the AI models that were commonly scoring around 60% two years ago, and it's already in line with or higher than scores achieved by human experts. Other measurements of AI performance show it is rapidly reaching or surpassing human levels. AI will likely outperform human portfolio managers—even humans using AI tools—in due time. Yet this doesn't guarantee overall market efficiency.

The increasing intelligence of individual market participants doesn't necessarily translate to collective market wisdom. Instead, as the Red Queen told Alice in Wonderland, each participant may have to move faster and faster merely to stay in the same place.

As we enter this new era, we must grapple with the reality that the financial markets may continue to reflect their human creators in their irrationality—a paradox of intelligent inefficiencies.

Ms. Brynjolfsson is CIO of Tiara Capital, a commodities trading fund using machine learning strategies. Mr. Brynjolfsson is a professor at Stanford and co-chairman of Workhelix, a company that assesses machine-learning opportunities.

In the 'Asian Century,' Indians and Chinese Flee

EAST IS EAST
By Sadanand Dhume

Geopolitical pundits often describe this as the "Asian century." The economic rise of China and India is supposed to end 500 years of Western preeminence any day now. But votaries of this notion often overlook a curious fact: Both China and India continue to account for a large portion of the world's emigrants. If these countries' prosperity and stability are assured, then why are so many—including the well-educated and the wealthy—eager to leave?

Each year, tens of thousands of Indians and Chinese are willing to risk life and limb to enter America illegally. In fiscal 2023, Customs and Border Protection agents encountered 97,000 Indian and 53,000 Chinese inadmissible aliens, or people without authorization to enter the country. That's more than three times as many Indians and more than twice as many Chinese as were caught in 2021. Based on CPB data, China's numbers are on track to rise dramatically this year.

To an extent, these numbers reflect a global rush to America's southern border on Joe Biden's watch. "Ten years ago, border crossings were overwhelmingly by Mexicans and Central Americans," says Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies. "You would write a news story about it if a couple of Indian or Chinese men were caught crossing the border in Arizona. Now it's increasingly common."

Though Chinese and Indians still make up only a small proportion of unauthorized crossings into the U.S.—150,000 of 3.2 million last year—it's notable alongside the strong flow of legal migration from those two countries. China and India have long dominated student visas to the U.S., though Chinese are more likely than Indians to return home after their studies. Last year about 55,000 Chinese and 69,000 Indians pursued optional practical training, a year or two of work following graduation that often leads to a job in America.

Indians and Chinese also receive more H1-B temporary visas for skilled workers than do citizens of any other country. Indians alone typically get more than half the 85,000 H1-B visas issued each year. According to the Migration Policy Institute, Indians are now the second-largest immigrant group in the U.S., after Mexicans. Chinese are third.

As with illegal migration, this surge largely mirrors a global pattern. The United Nations estimates that in 2019 about 3.5% of the world's population, or 272 million people, were international migrants—defined as people living somewhere other than their country of birth or citizenship. The largest group of migrants in 2019 was Indians (17.5 million people), and Chinese were third (10.7 million people) behind Mexicans (11.8 million people).

Why are the brightest and wealthiest so eager to leave these supposedly ascendant countries?

At one level, this isn't that surprising, says Mr. Krikorian. "They are the two most populous nations in the world," he says. "If anything, you would think that there would be even more people coming." India and China account for 36% of the world's population. Their share of the world's migrant population is slightly over 10%.

But look more closely and these emigration patterns reveal weaknesses that Asian-century believers often miss. One telling sign is the outflow of "high net worth individuals," banking jargon for wealthy people. Thriving nations typically attract capital and talent. They don't drive them away. Yet in 2022 China lost more millionaires than any other country—10,800 people, according to Henley & Partners, a firm that helps the wealthy acquire foreign residency. India came in third, losing 7,500 millionaires that year, just behind Russia's 8,500. If you include Hong Kong, then together China and India accounted for nearly 25% of the 84,000 high net worth individuals who migrated that year.

In China's case, blame Xi Jinping's crackdown on the private sector to tighten his grip on Chinese society. Well-off Chinese have long shifted their money into assets or property in the U.S., Canada, the U.K., Australia or Singapore—all countries that follow robust Anglo-Saxon legal traditions.

Mr. Xi's hard-line approach seems to have spooked them still further. The number of Chinese "family offices"—which handle financial matters for wealthy immigrants—in Singapore rose from a handful in 2018 to some 750 in 2022. Chinese nationals have long acquired more EB-5 investor visas that allow permanent residency in the U.S. than nationals of any other country. A Western passport is an insurance policy against a return to political chaos in China.

For Indians, the concerns are different. The country's patchy governance often drives the wealthy and best-educated away. They want to escape polluted cities, harassment by tax authorities, subpar public-health programs and shoddy urban infrastructure. Last year Indians received the second highest number of EB-5 investor visas. Millionaire flight, combined with the outflow of Indian engineers and doctors, takes a chunk of the country's most productive people each year.

Outbound migration from China and India by itself may not be enough to alter the countries' trajectories. But the fact that so many Chinese and Indians vote with their feet to leave these putative superpowers should raise questions about how inevitable their rise really is.

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Tensions Grow Between Zelensky and Top General

Speculation stirs in Ukraine that the president might fire armed-forces chief

By James Marson

GLEB GARANICH/REUTERS

The relationship between Gen. Zaluzhniy, left, and President Zelensky might be irreparable.

Western officials and Ukrainian soldiers are warning that rising tensions between President Volodymyr Zelensky and his top general could hamper the country's war effort.

The strains flared this week with speculation in Ukrainian political circles and news media that Zelensky was planning to dismiss Gen. Valeriy Zaluzhniy, the commander in chief of Ukraine's military. A spokesman for Zelensky said Monday that the general hadn't been dismissed. Zaluzhniy posted a selfie with an aide wearing matching "Army Ukraine" sweaters. Neither responded to requests for comment Wednesday.

Western officials say the relationship might be irreparable and the dismissal of Zaluzhniy is inevitable. The tensions compound problems for Ukraine.

Russian forces are back on the offensive. Ukraine also is facing a crunch in military and financial support as internal political disputes in the U.S. and the European Union have stalled proposed aid.

To many in Ukraine and in the West, the tensions reek of the factionalism and political jockeying that has impaired Ukraine's government for decades. Ousting Zaluzhniy now could risk undermining military and public morale, as well as relations with the West, at a critical moment in the war.

The 50-year-old general is a career military man who has served as Ukraine's top officer since 2021. He is widely respected by Ukraine's soldiers and Western partners, and the only person who rivals Zelensky for popularity in public polls.

Zaluzhniy has won praise for his leadership of a military that repelled the Russians from around Kyiv early in the war and reclaimed about half the territory that Russia initially seized. Soldiers credit him for efforts to overhaul the military and expunge its Soviet legacy by putting more emphasis on individual soldiers and junior officers.

Signs of discord between the two leaders, long dismissed as rumors by aides, emerged after Zaluzhniy referred to the war as a stalemate in an interview with the Economist last fall, saying Ukraine needed a major upgrade to military capabilities if it hoped to expel Russian forces. Zelensky rejected that characterization of the war.

More recently, differences have surfaced about how to fill Ukraine's ranks to hold off the larger Russian army. Zaluzhniy says he needs more resources, including hundreds of thousands more troops. Zelensky has questioned the cost of a large increase in military personnel and called for a plan to demobilize soldiers who have been fighting for nearly two years.

The possibility of Zaluzhniy's ouster drew criticism from Ukraine's political opposition. Former President Petro Poroshenko said it would be a blow to national unity.

Western officials have long lauded Zelensky's performance in the first year of the war when his bravery and oratory rallied Ukrainians and Western allies. But Ukraine's recent struggles on the battlefield and in seeking more aid from the West have highlighted the limited political experience of Zelensky, a former TV comedian.

Some soldiers see evidence of interventions by Zelensky's office in military decision-making, particularly during last year's counteroffensive. If Zaluzhniy is dismissed, it could be an effort to find a scapegoat for that operation's failure, they said.

Also Wednesday, Ukraine and Russia exchanged prisoners in one of the biggest swaps so far. Russia said that each side handed more than 195 soldiers; Zelensky said 207 Ukrainians had returned from captivity. The swap is the first since Russia last week claimed that Ukraine shot down a Russian plane carrying 65 captured Ukrainian soldiers. Ukraine said Russia provided no details about the incident.

—Laurence Norman, Nikita Nikolaienko and Ievgeniia Sivorka contributed to this article.

WORLD WATCH

LUIS GANDARILLAS/EPA/SHUTTERSTOCK

MINI MART: Indigenous Aymara girls chat with each other during the Alasitas Fair in La Paz, Bolivia. Nearly a hundred children assumed the roles of crafts and food vendors. During the festival, which honors Ekeko, the Aymara god of abundance, people buy miniatures of goods, such as cars, computers or food, they would like to give somebody.

MEXICO

High Court Blocks Energy Law

Mexico's top court on Wednesday struck down key provisions of president Andrés Manuel López Obrador's electricity overhaul that sought to recover state control over the industry, a setback for his nationalist agenda.

Under changes in the law passed in 2021, state power utility CFE was given priority over private generators for placing electricity on the national grid, putting most of the country's renewable-energy facilities at a disadvantage. It also eliminated the requirement that the grid operator use the cheapest electricity first, which had favored wind and solar generators over the state company.

The court ruled 3-2 in favor of several companies that filed an injunction against the law, arguing that both provisions violated free competition and environment protection stipulated in the constitution.

—Juan Montes

GERMANY

Inflation Drop Fuels Rate-Cut Hopes

German inflation fell in January to its lowest level since June 2021, dragged down by falling energy prices, likely leading to further calls for the European Central Bank to start cutting rates sooner.

Consumer prices were 2.9% higher in January than the same month a year earlier, compared with 3.7% in December, measured by national standards, data from the German statistics office Destatis showed on Wednesday.

The lower rate was driven by energy prices, which were 2.8% lower than at the same point a year ago, despite the introduction of a new carbon tax, Destatis said.

Money markets are currently pricing in a first ECB rate cut in April, although the bank's president, Christine Lagarde, said at last week's monetary-policy meeting that it was premature for policymakers to be discussing cuts.

—Ed Frankl

ETHIOPIA

Nearly 400 Dead From Starvation

Nearly 400 people have died of starvation in Ethiopia's Tigray and Amhara regions in recent months, the national ombudsman said, a rare admission of hunger-related deaths by a federal body. Local officials have previously reported starvation deaths in their districts, but Ethiopia's federal government has insisted these reports are "completely wrong."

Ethiopia's ombudsman office sent experts to the regions, which are gripped by drought and still reeling from a devastating civil war that officially ended 14 months ago. They concluded that 351 people died of hunger in Tigray in the past six months, with 44 more deaths in Amhara.

Few of the needy people in Tigray are receiving food aid, according to an aid memo, more than one month after aid agencies resumed deliveries of grain following a lengthy pause over theft.

—Associated Press

PERU

Ex-Official Jailed In '92 Massacre

The intelligence chief of former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori was sentenced on Wednesday to 19 years and eight months in prison in connection with the 1992 massacre of six suspected rebels in central Peru.

Vladimiro Montesinos, already in prison because of previous convictions, this week pleaded guilty to charges of homicide, murder and forced disappearance for ordering the slayings of the six farmers in the town of Pativilca. The six were accused of being members of a rebel group, taken from their homes by soldiers and executed.

A former military officer and a lawyer for drug traffickers in the 1980s, Montesinos became intelligence chief after Fujimori was elected president in 1990. Fujimori, who also faces charges in the case, hasn't pleaded guilty and a trial is expected on his role.

—Associated Press

Negative Takes on China's Economy Vanish Online

By Jonathan Cheng

BEIJING—Several prominent commentaries by economists and journalists in China have vanished from the internet in recent weeks, raising concerns that Beijing is stepping up its censorship efforts as it tries to put a positive spin on a struggling economy.

This month, top lieutenants of Chinese leader Xi Jinping urged officials to "promote the bright prospects of China's economy."

Those calls came after an unusual warning from China's top spy agency in December, which cautioned the public to be wary of those who denigrate the economy. "Economic security is a key component of national security," the Ministry of State Security said.

One recent commentary that disappeared was an editorial published in December by Caixin Media, a Beijing-based business-news outlet known for backing pro-market overhauls.

The editorial called for officials to confront economic challenges directly, harking back to when China's economy was on the brink of collapse during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s.

The editorial said that, at the time, officials insisted that "the situation is excellent," but in reality people were destitute.

Within hours, the editorial disappeared from Caixin's website. A representative for Caixin declined to comment.

That same day, Li Xunlei, an economist at state-owned Zhongtai Securities, warned in a column published on Chinese news outlet Yicai that insufficient household consumption would persist unless China's leadership took steps to help lower-income families. Li also highlighted a study conducted by Beijing Normal University showing that some 964 million Chinese people, representing roughly 70% of the population, were living on a monthly income of less than 2,000 yuan, equivalent to about $280.

That data point quickly went viral on Weibo before it disappeared from the Chinese microblogging platform's official list of trending topics. Before long, Li's column vanished from Yicai's website, too. It has also become inaccessible on Li's public account on Chinese messaging platform WeChat, where a message read: "The content can't be viewed due to violation of regulations."

Li couldn't be reached for comment. Yicai didn't respond to a request for comment.

Beijing's increased concern about the discourse around its economy comes as growth in the world's second-largest economy has slowed.

Reversal of Fortune In Pakistan Politics Is Par for the Course

By Saeed Shah

LAHORE, Pakistan—Nawaz Sharif was in prison just over five years ago when his popular rival and former cricket star, Imran Khan, was elected prime minister. Now it is Khan who is in prison and Sharif who is seen as the front-runner to become prime minister in elections next week.

The reversal of fortunes reflects the roller-coaster ride that is Pakistani politics and the influence of the country's powerful military. The nuclear-armed country of 240 million people has seen four military dictators but in recent years, the armed forces have preferred to exercise sway from behind the scenes.

On Wednesday, Khan, who was ousted by a 2022 parliamentary vote after locking horns with the military, was convicted on a corruption charge and sentenced to 14 years in prison. That followed a conviction on Tuesday for disclosing official secrets. He is barred from running in the Feb. 8 vote.

Meanwhile, after Sharif returned from a four-year exile in October, a rapid succession of moves paved the way for him to become the front-runner. Pakistan courts overturned his corruption convictions and a court also scrapped another provision that disqualified him from elections. The army sought a rapprochement with Sharif and the smoothing of his path back to power after its confrontation with Khan, political analysts say.

> The country's next prime minister will inherit an economic mess.

The army has said it interfered in Pakistan's politics in the past but denies doing so any longer.

Shuja Nawaz, author of a book on the Pakistan army, said the poor performance of civilian governments has undermined their ability to stand up to the powerful military.

"The political parties constantly seek the military's approval and once they lose it, they lose viability due to poor governance," said Nawaz, a distinguished fellow at the Atlantic Council, a think tank in Washington. "The military has coercive power and it does what it knows best, which is to get rid of the problem."

Pakistan's next prime minister will inherit an economic mess. A doubling of external debt since 2015 means annual debt repayments eat up more than the country's entire tax revenues, the International Monetary Fund said last year. Inflation is running at a punishing 30%. The country's economy is being kept afloat by an IMF bailout program that will need to be renegotiated this year.

A survey released on Jan. 10 by Gallup Pakistan, a local pollster, showed a tight race, with Khan's Tehreek-e-Insaf party having the edge, despite its leader being in jail. However, a controversial Supreme Court ruling in January further tilted the electoral field in Sharif's favor, political experts say, by barring Khan's party from using its recognizable cricket bat symbol on the ballot, which will make it difficult for voters to identify its candidates.

Khan has said he would turn Pakistan into a country of justice modeled on Islamic ideals and fight corruption. Sharif has pitched reviving economic growth and big infrastructure projects. The pro-business Sharif drew Pakistan closer to Beijing in his last term, following his election in 2013, with a $30 billion Chinese construction program that also added to Pakistan's debts.

"If our last government had been allowed to finish its term, there would be no one jobless here," Sharif told a crowd of thousands on Sunday in the city of Sialkot, in the important electoral province of Punjab.

Sharif's term ended abruptly in 2017 after the Supreme Court disqualified him from office. Sharif says the military leadership conspired against him. His previous two terms also ended prematurely because of military intervention, including a coup in 1999. His outreach to archenemy India was among the issues that riled the armed forces.

No prime minister has ever managed to complete their five-year term in office.

By the time of the 2018 elections, Sharif had been convicted of corruption in connection with the purchase of a plush London apartment. He denies wrongdoing. In 2019, he was allowed to leave Pakistan from jail to seek medical treatment, entering a life of comfortable exile in that apartment.

This time, it is Khan who has faced imprisonment after a run-in with the military.

In May, Khan was arrested, and his Tehreek-e-Insaf party has faced a crackdown after his supporters protested his arrest, including at military sites.

A security official said the military "has no preference or otherwise towards any specific political orientation."

The military said on Wednesday that it would provide security during the election, as Pakistan's constitution allowed.

"No one would be allowed to indulge in violence in the name of political activity and sabotage the quintessential democratic exercise of conduct of free and fair elections," the military said.

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Boeing Withholds 2024 Targets

Company to 'focus on every next airplane' in wake of Alaska jet blowout, CEO says

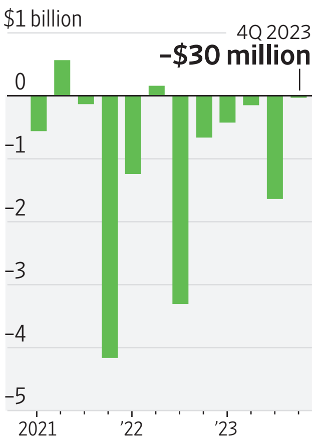
By Sharon Terlep

Boeing is bracing for a financial blow from the Alaska Airlines door-plug blowout. The jet maker just doesn't know how big it will be.

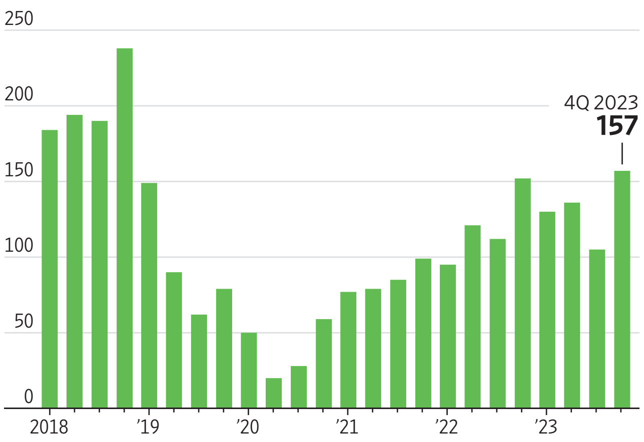
The manufacturing giant didn't provide financial targets for 2024 as it reported quarterly results on Wednesday that were slightly better than expectations. It generated $3 billion of cash flow on $22 billion of fourth-quarter revenue.

"While we often use this time of year to share or update our financial and operational objectives, now is not the time for that," CEO Dave Calhoun said in a message to employees. "We will simply focus on every next airplane."

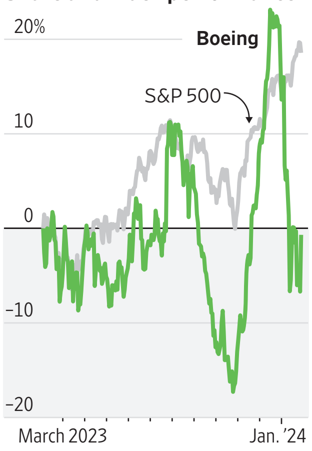
Boeing's net profit/loss



Commercial airplane deliveries



Share and index performance



Sources: S&P Capital IQ (profit/loss); the company (deliveries); FactSet (performance)

Investors are worried that added regulatory scrutiny and Boeing's efforts to improve its manufacturing process could slow deliveries and weaken cash flow. Some airlines that rely on Boeing's jets have already warned of the impact on their businesses.

Boeing said it continues to deliver 737 airplanes and its production rate is now at 38 a month. The company said it is also producing about five of its 787 Dreamliners a month.

Shares of Boeing, which have slumped this month, closed up 5.3% on Wednesday.

U.S. air-safety regulators last week put limits on Boeing's production of 737 MAX jets, weeks after a door plug ripped away from a MAX 9 shortly after it took off, leaving a hole the size of an emergency exit in its side.

Boeing and other industry officials increasingly believe the plane maker's employees failed to secure the door plug during production, The Wall Street Journal has reported.

"We've taken significant

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◆ **Heard on the Street: Investors fly blind........ B12**

Activists To Launch Proxy Fight At Norfolk Southern

By Lauren Thomas And Esther Fung

An investor group led by **Ancora Holdings** has taken a big stake in **Norfolk Southern** and plans to run a proxy fight aimed at overhauling the railroad operator's board and replacing its chief executive.

The group has built a roughly $1 billion stake and nominated a majority slate of directors to Norfolk Southern's board in a bid to oust Chief Executive Alan Shaw, according to people familiar with the matter.

The director slate includes former Ohio Gov. John Kasich and Sameh Fahmy, who was an executive at railroad Kansas City Southern.

The idea would be to take control of the board to effect changes aimed at boosting Norfolk Southern stock, which is down by about one-quarter from a high two years ago as revenue and profit fall. Norfolk Southern was the worst-performing stock last year of all the Class 1 railroads that include Union Pacific, CSX and Canadian National Railway.

Norfolk Southern has met with the investor group in recent weeks. In those private conversations, the group's director nominees have zeroed

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Cigna Deals Medicare Business for $3.3 Billion

By Anna Wilde Mathews

Cigna Group has agreed to sell its Medicare business to **Health Care Service Corp.** for $3.3 billion.

Under the terms, HCSC would pay cash for Cigna's Medicare lines, including Medicare Advantage, Medicare supplement and Medicare drug plans, as well as a unit called CareAllies that works with physician groups and other healthcare providers, the companies said Wednesday.

The companies expect the deal to close in early 2025 if antitrust authorities and other regulators sign off.

The transaction involves a services agreement, under which HCSC would continue to use a Cigna subsidiary to handle drug benefits for the acquired units.

The Wall Street Journal had

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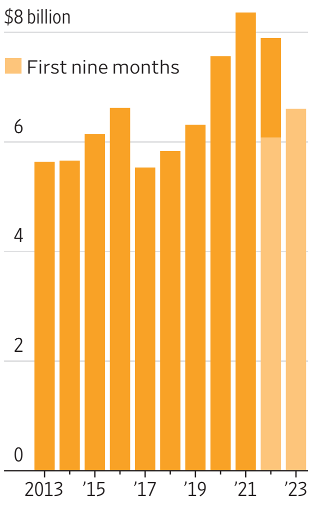
Cigna's annual Medicare Advantage premiums revenue



Sources: S&P Capital IQ; the company

Allen Media Offers $14.3 Billion In Second Bid for Paramount Global

By Jessica Toonkel And Gareth Vipers

Media entrepreneur Byron Allen is throwing his hat in the ring for **Paramount Global**, his second attempt in less than a year to acquire the home of CBS and the Paramount Hollywood studio.

Allen Media Group has made a $14.3 billion offer to buy Paramount Global, according to people familiar with the situation. That comes after Allen made an even bigger offer in April, when he bid about $18.5 billion for the company, according to one of the people.

The latest offer was made on Tuesday when Allen emailed and texted several members of the board and management of Paramount, including Paramount Chief Executive Bob Bakish and Paramount's controlling shareholder, Shari Redstone, said the people.

Allen's offer comes as David Ellison's **Skydance Media** and **Warner Bros. Discovery** expressed interest in Paramount. **National Amusements**, Redstone's privately held movie-theater company, which controls Paramount, has been exploring a sale in recent months.

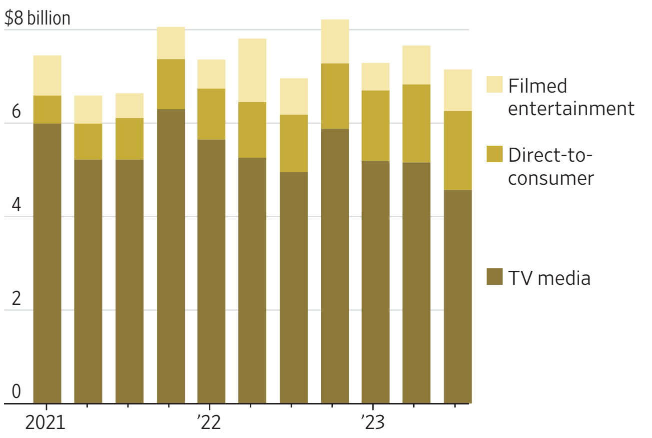
Allen, a comedian-turned-entrepreneur, has built up a large portfolio of cable networks and is a frequent bidder for large media properties. Beyond his offers for Paramount, he made bids to buy Disney's ABC and Paramount's BET Media Group in less than a year.

Allen Media Group offered $28.58 for each voting share of Paramount and $21.53 for each nonvoting share, according to Tuesday's offer letter, a copy of which was viewed by The Wall Street Journal. The offer is about 50% higher than the 90-day average of both classes of shares, the letter said. With debt, the offer is around $30 billion.

JEROD HARRIS/GETTY IMAGES

Media entrepreneur Byron Allen contacted several members of the board and management.

Paramount Global segment revenue



Source: S&P Capital IQ

Voting and nonvoting classes of Paramount shares were up about 24% and 8%, respectively, Wednesday but were trading significantly lower than the price offered by Allen Media Group.

Tuesday's offer letter said Allen Media Group submitted an offer to buy Paramount to the company's board in April of last year. The offer was rebuffed, the letter said, because the board expected the stock price to go up.

"Since our last offer, the stock price has declined approximately 37%," it said.

Paramount and National Amusements, the controlling shareholder of Paramount, declined to comment.

Allen Media Group has been in discussions with companies that expressed interest in Paramount's studio and lot, one of the people said—and if a deal happens, it would keep the cable networks, which include Comedy Central and Nickelodeon, and CBS broadcast network.

Allen Media Group's portfolio includes the Weather Channel, HBCU GO, theGrio streaming app and more than two dozen ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox network-affiliate television stations.

Last year, after Disney CEO

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Disney To Sell 60% Of India Media Unit

By Robbie Whelan And Jessica Toonkel

Walt Disney has reached a preliminary agreement to sell 60% of its Indian media business in a deal that values the overseas operation at $3.9 billion, dramatically less than what it was worth when Disney acquired it in 2019.

The entertainment giant signed a memorandum of understanding in late December to merge its India business with Viacom18, a partnership between billionaire Mukesh Ambani's **Reliance Industries**, **Paramount Global** and **Bodhi Tree Systems**, according to people familiar with the details of the deal. Bodhi Tree is an investment fund founded by media scion James Murdoch and former Disney India chief Uday Shankar.

Under the agreement's terms, Disney will retain ownership of 40% of its India operations, while Reliance will own 51% and Bodhi Tree will

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Stock Plunge Reignites Fear for Regional Banks

By Gina Heeb And Will Feuer

Shares of **New York Community Bancorp** plummeted 38% Wednesday after the company swung to a fourth-quarter loss and slashed its dividend to shore up capital following its purchase of the assets of the collapsed Signature Bank.

The company swung to a loss of $252 million, or 36 cents a share, at the end of December. That compared with a profit of $172 million, or 30 cents a share, in the same period a year earlier. Analysts expected earnings of 27 cents a share for the fourth quarter.

Loan losses surged and the bank set aside millions of dollars more to prepare for future potential losses.

The stock on Wednesday, closed at $6.47, its worst day on record.

Chief Executive Thomas Cangemi said the company is adjusting to the regulatory demands of being a large bank after its purchase of assets and liabilities from Signature Bank, one of three banks that failed in rapid succession in early 2023 after spooked customers pulled cash en masse.

With the Signature deal, which closed last March, NYCB's total assets surpassed $100 billion, a key regulatory threshold that comes with stricter capital and liquidity standards. The bank also acquired Flagstar Bancorp in late 2022.

As part of its steps to bolster those capital and liquidity levels, the company cut its quar-

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INSIDE

Canadian Pipeline Promises To Cut Americans' Oil Discount

By David Uberti And Vipal Monga

Drivers in the Midwest may soon have to pay a bit more at the pump. The reason? Cheap Canadian oil will soon have a new set of buyers.

For years, Canada's oil fields have had few choices but to funnel the country's thick, tarlike crude oil through pipelines snaking through the Midwest to the Gulf Coast. That has pushed down prices paid by many U.S. refiners and, in turn, gasoline stations and airports from Minneapolis to Chicago to Detroit.

Those days are numbered. Canadian oil companies will soon have the option to ship crude through a long-delayed, 715-mile pipeline expansion to the Pacific Ocean. That will allow traders to sell more oil to the U.S. West Coast and to fast-growing Asian economies.

The Trans Mountain expansion, which will nearly triple the capacity of an existing pipeline to 890,000 barrels a day, promises to give Canadian companies more pricing power and boost the country's position as a global energy powerhouse.

"This is a big deal that's been 10 years in coming," said Kevin Birn, an analyst with S&P Global Commodity Insights. "It does allow Canada, for the first time in its history, as the fourth-largest oil producer in the world, direct access to international markets."

That could come at the expense of Canada's largest trading partner. Americans guzzled Canadian oil even as U.S. crude output ballooned in recent years, turning Canada into an export juggernaut. Imports from north of the border surpassed 4 million barrels a day some months last year, U.S. officials say, nearly two-thirds of total shipments.

Those supplies have come at a bargain, as the price of Canadian oil accounts for transport costs, differences in crude quality and a limited pool of buyers. Benchmark Canadian crude cost about $18 a barrel less than its U.S. coun-

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INDEX TO BUSINESSES

These indexes cite notable references to most parent companies and businesspeople in today's edition. Articles on regional page inserts aren't cited in these indexes.

INDEX TO PEOPLE

Cigna Sells Medicare Business

Continued from page B1

reported earlier that Cigna, one of the largest health insurers in the U.S. and owner of a major pharmacy-benefit manager, and HCSC, a big nonprofit health insurer, were nearing agreement.

The deal would mark a major expansion for HCSC, which is the parent of Blue Cross Blue Shield plans in five states, including Illinois and Texas.

"We've been steadily growing our capabilities and diversifying our businesses while retaining our focus on local relationships," HCSC Chief Executive Maurice Smith said.

The sale of its Medicare Advantage business to HCSC leaves Cigna without a foothold in a sector that has long been a major growth engine for the health-insurance industry.

"While we continue to believe the overall Medicare space is an attractive segment of the healthcare market, our Medicare businesses require sustained investment, focus, and dedicated resources disproportionate to their size" within the company's portfolio, said Cigna Chief Executive David Cordani.

Cigna also said that the deal will enable it to free up $400 million in financial reserves that it can retain and deploy. As a result, it said the transaction would effectively be worth $3.7 billion.

HCSC has about 217,000 Medicare Advantage members spread across five states.

According to the companies, Cigna had about 600,000 members enrolled in Medicare Advantage, the private-insurance version of the federal program for the elderly and disabled. Cigna had approximately 450,000 in supplement plans, which beneficiaries purchase to fill gaps in the traditional government Medicare offering, and 2.5 million with Medicare Part D drug plans.

The Medicare business is facing a major challenge, with members' rising use of medical services increasing costs for insurers. **Humana**, the second-largest Medicare insurer, reported a steep loss for the fourth quarter and said its financial woes will extend into next year and potentially farther. The disclosure helped push down shares of the entire sector and took a bit of the shine off a business that has long been a Wall Street favorite.

JULIA RENDLEMAN/GETTY IMAGES

The insurer made a cash deal.

Novartis Slides as Profit Disappoints

By Adrià Calatayud

Novartis shares dropped after the Swiss pharmaceutical giant reported fourth-quarter earnings and sales that missed consensus expectations and issued guidance that analysts said fell short of hopes.

The company's Switzerland-listed shares fell 3.5% in Wednesday's trading. American depositary shares slid 4%.

Novartis reported core operating profit—one of its preferred earnings metrics, which strips out exceptional items—of $3.82 billion, up 4.8% compared with the year-earlier period, on sales that climbed 8% to $11.42 billion.

Analysts polled by Visible Alpha had forecast the company's quarterly sales at $11.51 billion and core operating profit at $4.08 billion.

The company forecast growth in the mid-single-digit-percentage range for sales and high-single-digit for core operating income this year, excluding currency movements.

Analysts at Jefferies said Novartis's 2024 guidance points to sales of $46.7 billion and $48 billion, and a core operating profit of $17.0 billion to $17.5 billion.

Current consensus expectations stand at $47.69 billion for sales and $18 billion for core operating profit, according to estimates compiled by Visible Alpha.

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Biogen Quits Controversial Alzheimer's Drug Aduhelm

By Jennifer Calfas and Colin Kellaher

Biogen is pulling the plug on its ill-fated Alzheimer's disease drug Aduhelm.

The company said it is ending the development and sale of Aduhelm and terminating a postmarketing study aimed at gaining full approval from U.S. drug regulators.

The decision marks the end of the Aduhelm saga for Biogen, which faced scrutiny of its pursuit of approval and the steep list price it set for a drug that many doctors and researchers said wasn't fully proven to work.

The Cambridge, Mass., company said it will continue to advance Leqembi, the Alzheimer's drug it developed with partner **Eisai** that won full U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval last year and is on sale.

Biogen said it also plans to accelerate the development of other, potential new Alzheimer's treatments.

"When searching for new medicines, one breakthrough can be the foundation that triggers future medicines to be developed," said Biogen Chief Executive Christopher Viehbacher. "Aduhelm was that groundbreaking discovery that paved the way for a new class of drugs and reinvigorated investments in the field."

JESSICA RINALDI/PRESS POOL

The biotech priced Aduhelm at $56,000 a year per patient.

About six million people in the U.S. suffer from Alzheimer's, a progressive, degenerative brain disorder that affects a person's memory and cognitive skills.

For a time, Aduhelm was among the most closely watched Alzheimer's drugs in development. Doctors, patients and their families hoped it would slow the march of the disease, while investors estimated tens of billions of dollars in sales.

The FDA's June 2021 approval of the monthly infusion, which has the molecular name aducanumab, marked the first new approval for an Alzheimer's drug in nearly two decades.

Yet many doctors and even some of the U.S. government's own expert advisers questioned how well the drug really worked. The biotech priced Aduhelm at $56,000 a year per patient. Medicare denied routine coverage of the drug.

The questions, price tag and limited insurance coverage reduced Aduhelm's reach to many patients. Sales were dismal.

Biogen's former CEO Michel Vounatsos and research chief, who had shepherded the drug's development, left the company, and it effectively abandoned marketing the drug.

An investigation by House Democrats in December 2022 found the FDA inappropriately worked with Biogen officials before approving the drug.

Biogen didn't break out Aduhelm's performance in the company's most recent earnings report. Analysts on Wednesday said Biogen's decision was largely expected.

Last year, Biogen began seeking potential partners or external financing for Aduhelm, but outreach proved fruitless. Biogen posted a $60 million charge related to close-out costs for the program.

Biogen will return the rights to the drug to **Neurimmune**, a Switzerland-based biotech company.

Biogen said it will redirect a large portion of the resources released from the Aduhelm program toward its Alzheimer's franchise anchored by Leqembi, which Eisai has said could generate $7 billion in annual sales globally by 2030.


CARSTEN SNEJBJERG/BLOOMBERG NEWS

The company's Ozempic, seen here, has suffered shortages as patients struggling to get Wegovy have turned to it instead.

Novo Nordisk Builds Wegovy Supply

By Dominic Chopping and Peter Loftus

Danish pharmaceutical giant **Novo Nordisk** this month started to gradually increase the supply of lower-dose strengths of its blockbuster Wegovy weight-loss drug, having limited supply in the U.S. since May to safeguard access for current patients.

The surging popularity of Wegovy has forced the company to restrict supply while it scrambles to increase stocks. Efforts to ease the pressure are continuing and the company has outlined plans to invest more than $6 billion to boost capacity.

"We are now enabling more new U.S. patients to initiate treatment by more than doubling the amount of the lower-dose strengths of Wegovy compared to the previous months," Doug Langa, head of Novo Nordisk's North American operations, said on a conference call with analysts Wednesday. "We will be gradually increasing supply throughout the remainder of 2024."

Last year, Novo Nordisk reduced the supply of lower doses of Wegovy to limit new patients starting treatment. Patients are supposed to start at a low dose and gradually increase the dosage as a way to mitigate side effects such as nausea. Patients who had already started Wegovy were able to get the higher doses.

The company still expects continued periodic supply constraints and related drug-shortage notifications across a number of products and geographies.

With the limited supply of Wegovy, obesity patients have been turning to Novo Nordisk's Ozempic diabetes drug as an alternative because both medications share the same active ingredient, which has also led to Ozempic shortages among patients who use it for treating their diabetes.

Even with supply constraints, sales of both drugs have soared. Ozempic and Wegovy belong to a class of drugs known as GLP-1 and the company said Wednesday sales of its total portfolio of GLP-1 medications grew 55% to 37.76 billion Danish kroner, or about $5.49 billion, in the fourth quarter, with Wegovy sales more than tripling to 9.61 billion kroner from 2.45 billion kroner a year prior.

"Our focus in 2024 will be on reaching more patients, progressing and expanding our pipeline as well as the continued significant expansion of our production capacity," said Chief Executive Lars Fruergaard Jorgensen.

Novo Nordisk also hopes to improve insurance coverage of Wegovy in the U.S., aiming to overcome resistance by some employers who won't cover it because of the high costs. One way the company plans to widen coverage is to tout the additional health benefits of Wegovy beyond weight loss. The company said it expects U.S. regulators to decide by midyear whether to allow Novo to promote Wegovy's ability to reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes, as shown in a study last year.

Net profit in the quarter jumped to 21.96 billion kroner from 13.59 billion kroner, beating the 20.64 billion kroner forecast by analysts in a FactSet poll.

Reported sales rose 37% to 65.86 billion kroner, compared with a FactSet estimate of 62.62 billion kroner.

For 2024, the company expects sales growth of 18% to 26% and operating profit growth of 21% to 29% at constant exchange rates. Sales and operating profit growth reported in Danish kroner are expected to be 1 and 2 percentage points lower than at constant exchange rates, respectively.

Novo Nordisk has launched a new share-buyback program of up to 20 billion kroner and declared a final dividend of 6.40 kroner a share, bringing the total 2023 dividend to 9.40 kroner compared with 12.40 kroner in 2022.

◆ **Heard: Coverage isn't an issue for drug firms....... B12**

GSK Raises Outlook After Vaccines Boost Sales

By Joseph Hoppe

GSK expects to further grow sales and earnings after its best-selling shingles vaccine Shingrix and the launch of RSV vaccine Arexvy helped the pharma giant beat analysts' estimates.

The British pharmaceutical major posted sales of £8.05 billion, equivalent to $10.22 billion, for the fourth quarter of last year, up from £7.33 billion the year prior and beating a Visible Alpha consensus of £7.61 billion. Vaccine sales rose 25% to £2.58 billion, driven by Shingrix growth and the Arexvy launch in the third quarter.

The company said Wednesday that it expects turnover in the current year to grow between 5% and 7%, adjusted operating profit to rise 7% to 10%, and adjusted earnings-per-share growth of 6% to 9%.

It also upgraded its longer-term 2021-26 outlook, predicting a sales rise of more than 7% on a compound annual growth rate, and an adjusted operating profit compound annual growth rate of more than 11%. In 2021, it had guided for more than 5% and more than 10%, respectively.

The 2031 sales outlook has been lifted to more than £38 billion, an increase of £5 billion compared with an estimate given in 2021.

Fourth-quarter adjusted operating profit increased to £1.75 billion from £1.595 billion.

For the full year, operating profit rose to £6.745 billion from £6.43 billion, while turnover climbed to £30.32 billion from £29.32 billion, beating a company-provided consensus of £29.92 billion.

The board declared a quarterly dividend of 16 pence a share, bringing the total for the year to 58 pence a share from 61.25 pence.

The board expects to pay 60 pence over 2024.

BUSINESS NEWS

H&M Replaces CEO Amid Struggle to Grow

Fashion retailer posts disappointing earnings for quarter, stock retreats 12%

By Trefor Moss

H&M Hennes & Mauritz has unexpectedly replaced its chief executive as the fast-fashion giant seeks to revive its fortunes after several years of stagnant growth and nonstop crises.

The Swedish company said Wednesday that Helena Helmersson, CEO for the past four years, would step down with immediate effect. She will be succeeded by Daniel Ervér, a 42-year-old company veteran who previously oversaw the H&M brand.

The management change comes as H&M contends with fierce competition from low-cost, ultrafast online rivals such as Shein, an uncertain consumer environment and rising costs.

News of Ervér's appointment, coupled with H&M's reporting of weaker-than-expected fourth-quarter profit, was greeted by a more than 12% fall in the company's share price on Wednesday.

Helmersson had taken charge of an H&M that had recently lost its crown as the world's largest fashion retailer to Zara owner **Inditex**, and was struggling to increase sales. Her mission was to reconnect consumers, especially young women, with the H&M brand and kick-start a new phase of growth for the Swedish firm.

However, her tenure was punctuated by a string of crises that eventually took their toll.

"Many things happened that we really couldn't expect," Helmersson said Wednesday. "It's time for me to slow down, and you can't do that in this job."

Things went sideways almost immediately when Helmersson assumed leadership of the company in January 2020, just as the Covid-19 pandemic was erupting. H&M's sales slumped by a fifth that year relative to the year before as Covid lockdowns closed stores.

Still reeling from ongoing lockdowns, H&M in 2021 faced a consumer boycott in China, previously a key growth market, over its stance on cotton sourced from Xinjiang. Its Asian sales, which are anchored by China, have been gradually recovering, but were still down 16% last year relative to 2019.

Then Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 deprived the company of another significant market, as H&M closed 185 stores in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The war also fueled inflation, which dented consumer confidence and limited disposable incomes.

These curveballs prompted H&M to shift its thinking away from sales growth, and give priority to profit margins, said the 51-year-old Helmersson, who exited the company after 26 years.

SAMUEL STEEN/TTN NEWS/REUTERS

Helena Helmersson announces her departure as company chief on Wednesday. She will be succeeded by Daniel Ervér.

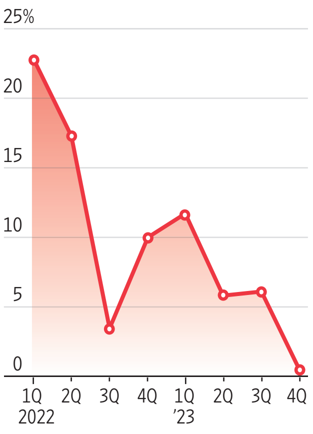
That shift included a cost-cutting program launched in 2022 involving 1,500 layoffs, and the closure of hundreds of stores. From over 5,000 stores in 2019, the H&M group now has 4,369 outlets globally.

Helmersson also broadened the group beyond its core offering of H&M fashion by growing its other brands, which include Cos, Weekday and Arket, and expanding the company's offerings in sports, beauty and homewares.

Even so, H&M's prolonged recovery from the pandemic contrasted with that of other retailers, notably Zara. Consistently weak results led analysts to question whether the Swedish company would be able to find growth.

H&M on Wednesday said full-year 2023 sales increased 6% relative to the year before to 236 billion Swedish krona, equivalent to $22.7 billion. In doing so, H&M's posted sales that surpassed prepandemic levels for the first time, with 2023 revenues roughly 1% higher than 2019's level.

H&M's quarterly revenue, change from a year earlier



Note: Latest fiscal quarter ended Nov. 30.
Source: S&P Capital IQ

Zara owner Inditex also suffered during the pandemic, but it bounced back much more strongly. Its 2022 sales were up 15% relative to 2019, with the Spanish company—roughly the same size as H&M in 2016—having pulled away from its Swedish rival in recent years in terms of both sales and profit.

H&M has been more vulnerable to the rise of fast fashion retailers such as Shein because it caters to a younger and less affluent audience than Zara.

H&M said Wednesday it was sticking to a target of achieving a 10% profit margin—a figure it last reached in 2017—this year, having reported a 6.2% margin for 2023. It also still aims to double sales by the end of decade relative to 2021 when the goal was set. To do so, H&M will need to increase revenues by 8% each year between now and 2030.

"We think these targets are unachievable," said Bernstein analysts in a research note, reflecting criticism of H&M's direction among analysts more broadly.

The task of hitting those numbers now falls to Ervér, who has worked at the company for 18 years.

Ervér, who started out as an H&M trainee in 2005, said he was surprised when the board first sounded him out about taking the CEO role a few weeks ago. He said he was committed to increasing profitability and would work toward the long-term targets set by the board.

But, "it's premature for me to explain a plan of how to get there," he said.

Investment in the H&M brand, which Ervér will continue to oversee, has improved its ability to get the latest styles into stores more quickly, he said, enabling it to push back against ultrafast fashion rivals. "There is huge potential, and we are making progress," he said.

H&M is majority-owned by the Persson family, which founded the company in 1947. Karl-Johan Persson, the grandson of the founder, chairs H&M, having ceded the CEO job to Helmersson in 2020.

EBay to Pay $59 Million in Settlement Over Pill Presses

By Dean Seal

EBay will pay $59 million to settle the federal government's allegations that thousands of pill presses and encapsulating machines were sold on its popular online marketplace.

The Justice Department said Wednesday that eBay has also agreed to enhance its compliance program to resolve claims that the sales of pill presses and encapsulating machines on its platform violated the Controlled Substances Act.

The government claims that hundreds of pill-press buyers on eBay also purchased counterfeit molds, stamps or dies needed to produce pills that mimic the products of legitimate pharmaceutical companies. Many of those buyers have since been prosecuted in connection with trafficking illegal counterfeit pills, the Justice Department said.

According to the settlement agreement, eBay denies the federal government's contention that it is subject to the Controlled Substances Act and didn't admit liability in connection with the allegations.

The company said in a statement that it worked to remove products that could be used for counterfeit pills before the Justice Department reached out and "years before the government turned its attention to these products."

"Government officials have repeatedly commended eBay for our partnership with law enforcement and efforts to support investigations into illegal pill press usage," the company said.

Nonetheless, the settlement is in the best interest of shareholders and would avoid the distractions, costs, uncertainty and distraction of litigation, eBay said.

The Justice Department is calling the agreement its fourth-largest Controlled Substances Act settlement ever and its first with an e-commerce company.

VICTOR J. BLUE/BLOOMBERG NEWS

The retailer plans to open or expand 150 stores in the U.S. over the next five years.

Walmart to Open New Sites in U.S., Shifting Flat-Store-Count Strategy

By Sarah Nassauer

It has been a while since **Walmart** felt it was too small.

The retailer plans to open or expand 150 stores in the U.S. over the next five years, reversing a strategy that had focused on keeping its store count flat. Most stores targeted in the project will be new locations.

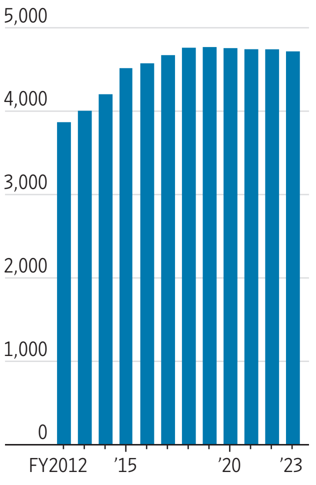
Walmart in 2016 began to slow new-store openings as it worked to fend off Amazon.com, saying it aimed to invest in online growth, along with improving existing stores. By the end of 2019 that trickle slowed to a near halt as existing real-estate projects wrapped up. It hasn't opened a new U.S. supercenter in about two years.

In a staff memo sent Wednesday, Walmart said it would open around 12 new stores this year and convert one smaller location to a Walmart Supercenter, the large stores that sell everything from lettuce to vacuums.

Over the next few years Walmart will convert several smaller-format stores to Supercenters, in addition to building new locations.

"We plan to build new stores in a way that we have not done in many years," said a Walmart spokeswoman. She declined to share the cost of adding and expanding locations or where they will be.

Walmart U.S. store count



Source: the company

Walmart, which has around 4,700 U.S. locations, reported strong sales growth throughout the pandemic. In recent years stores have become a larger part of the company's e-commerce supply chain, with staff sourcing online orders from store inventory.

It has also closed stores in urban areas such as Chicago, citing profits that lag behind many of its rural and suburban locations. During the first three quarters of its current fiscal year, Walmart didn't open a store and closed several.

Some retailers have expanded their footprint in recent years as more people return to in-person shopping following the pandemic and companies use physical stores as part of their e-commerce strategy.

Store openings outpaced closures for the second straight year in 2023 after years of net closures, according to research firm Coresight Research.

Walmart said it also plans to remodel around 650 of its U.S. locations over the next 12 months. That is on top of upgrades to around 1,400 stores over the last two years, an effort that the company said cost around $9 billion.

Walmart is also working to attract and retain store managers as the company expands its base of locations.

The company recently sweetened bonuses for its store managers, promising the best ones annual compensation topping $400,000.

Ship Operators Offer to Bury Emissions

New vessels can transport liquefied CO_2 and pump it into offshore wells

By Costas Paris

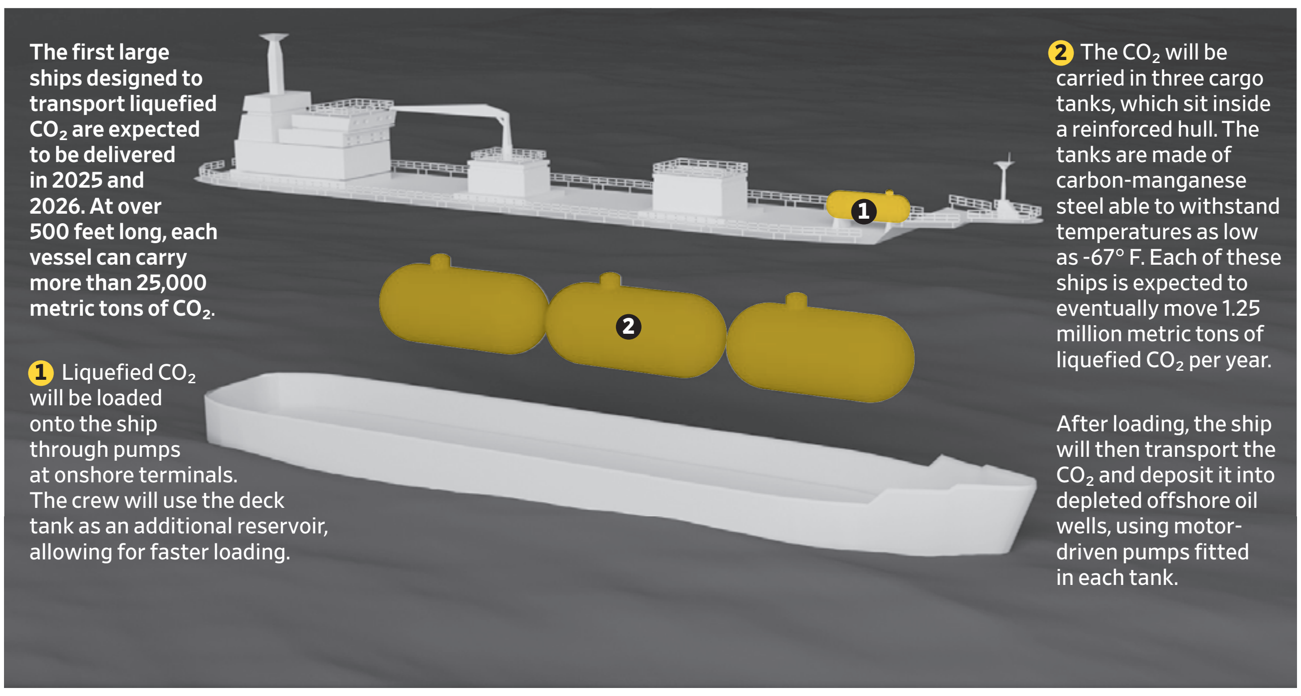
ATHENS—Ship operators have a radical idea for industrial companies that are searching for ways to dispose of carbon emissions: Take the captured CO_2 out to sea and bury it deep under the ocean floor.

But first, supercool the carbon emissions to temperatures so low that they become a liquid.

HD Hyundai Heavy Industries, the world's largest shipyard, and Greece-based shipowner **Capital Product Partners** have designed a specialized vessel to carry liquefied CO_2. They envision such ships transporting their cargo to depleted offshore oil-and-gas wells, where it would be pumped in and entombed for permanent storage. Capital Product Partners signed a deal for four such ships, to be delivered in 2025 and 2026, that together cost more than $300 million.

"Ships move everything from oil to our furniture, clothes and toothpaste. Now they'll move our emissions, which is in effect waste management," said Jerry Kalogiratos, chief executive of U.S.-listed Capital Product Partners, which operates more than 100 cargo vessels.

The strategy faces unknowns on its safety and environmental impact, as storing large volumes of CO_2 under the seabed long term hasn't been tested and research is inconclusive on the effects if it escapes.



Note: Illustration is based on diagrams provided by Capital Product Partners. Source: Capital Product Partners Peter Champelli/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

In some countries, big corporate emitters must pay taxes for their CO_2 discharges, which they try to minimize by trapping them before they hit the atmosphere. This leaves companies with millions of metric tons of CO_2 that they need to store.

In some areas, inland facilities for storing captured CO_2, such as depleted oil wells, are gradually running out of room and becoming increasingly expensive, prompting emitters and cargo-ship owners to look for an offshore solution.

A typical voyage of the CO_2-carrying ship, which will have a reinforced hull and special tanks, would start at a terminal with gas-liquefaction facilities. Cooled to minus 50 degrees Celsius (minus 58 Fahrenheit), carbon dioxide becomes a liquid more than 600 times denser than gas, enabling the transportation of large volumes. The vessels are built to each move up to 25,400 metric tons of CO_2 per trip, according to Capital Product Partners.

Liquefied natural gas has long been transported by ship, but liquefied carbon dioxide is heavier than LNG and moved under higher pressure and temperatures, requiring different storage tanks and ship design.

The ships would take their cargo of liquefied CO_2 to terminals in Northern Europe where it could be pumped into inland oil wells through a series of pipes. Or, they would head out to sea, where they would use the pumps in offshore rigs to transfer the CO_2 into disused offshore oil-and-gas wells and designated caverns under the seabed.

Capital Product Partners said it invested in the vessels after talks with some of its biggest clients, including major energy companies, utilities and commodity traders. Kalogiratos said he is convinced that seaborne CO_2 transportation will take off in coming years as many areas lack inland wells to store the emissions.

The global carbon-capture, utilization and storage market is expected to grow to $5.2 billion by 2026 from $2.6 billion in 2021, at a compound annual growth rate of around 15%, according to Boston-based BCC Research. In the European Union, carbon storage is expected to rise to 80 million metric tons of CO_2 in 2030 and reach at least 300 million metric tons in 2040, according to the EU Commission.

Cement and building materials companies such as **Heidelberg Materials** and **Holcim**, chemical giants like **BASF**, and energy companies including **BP**, Denmark's **Ørsted** and Norway's **Equinor** plan to build their own carbon-capture plants. They aim to dispose of their emissions inland and offshore, for instance in undersea caves off Norway and in the North Sea, potentially using the specialized ships. Some big EU companies plan to build their own berths to load CO_2 waste for transport.

The concept faces hurdles. Storing CO_2 under the seabed hasn't been conclusively tested, and inland storage is still at a relatively early stage. Geologists say one risk is that seals on depleted wells may erode over time, and the CO_2 could escape.

Digital News Site Shuts Down After Less Than a Year

By Talal Ansari And Alexandra Bruell

Digital-news startup the Messenger is shutting down less than a year after it launched.

Founder and Chief Executive Officer Jimmy Finkelstein delivered the message Wednesday to the company in an internal memo.

"I am personally devastated to share that we have made the painfully hard decision to shut down The Messenger, effective immediately," Finkelstein said in the memo to staffers, which was viewed by The Wall Street Journal.

The venture launched in May 2023 with $50 million in funding and 175 reporters. A representative for the publisher at the time said its ambition was to have 500 journalists by the end of 2024.

Many digital-media companies have struggled in recent years amid a volatile advertising market and a steep decline in traffic from external sources such as Google or social-media platforms. Several outlets, including the Los Angeles Times and Sports Illustrated, have announced layoffs in recent weeks.

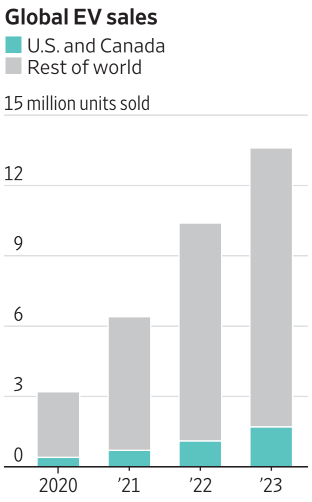
Finkelstein said the Messenger had exhausted options to secure funding that would enable the company to reach profitability.

Employees aren't receiving severance, according to a person close to the company.

German Tech Startup FINN Bets on EV Subscriptions


FINN

FINN hopes to entire more drivers to go electric with a six- to 18-month subscription service.



Source: Rho Motion

By Yusuf Khan

Still not persuaded to buy an electric vehicle? How about a six-month rental to try one out?

German tech startup FINN is betting that it can get more people to go electric with its six- to 18-month subscription service, letting consumers try before making a permanent switch to electric. Founded in 2019, it has 25,000 subscribers, around 40% of whom opted for EVs.

Most of those people are in Germany, but it has about 2,000 subscribers on the U.S. East Coast and hopes to expand into California and Florida. Around 7.5% of FINN's American customers have opted for an EV.

"What this does is allow you to kick the tires in your real life," said Maximilian Wühr, chief executive of FINN. Wühr said subscribers are often hesitant to commit to new technologies and that one of the most common concerns is range anxiety—the worry of being left stranded with a dead battery and without a charger. FINN's subscriptions are shorter and more expensive than leasing, which are typically a three-year commitment and about 10% cheaper according to Wühr.

Governments are spending billions of dollars to encourage the shift to EVs, a central part of many of their decarbonization plans.

Uptake is growing—in the U.S. and Canada, 1.7 million battery EVs and plug-in hybrids were sold last year, up from just over 1.1 million in 2022, according to Rho Motion, an electric-mobility consulting firm.

However, the rate of growth is starting to slow and many U.S. carmakers have recently moderated their EV expansion plans.

Potential buyers are held back by the high upfront costs for new EVs and anxiety about the technology and infrastructure, as well as by the lack of a substantial second-hand market, according to Ian Plummer, commercial director at Auto Trader, a British online marketplace for cars.

In the U.S., EV prices have come down considerably in the past year: In January 2023, the average EV premium was 19%, but by December, it had fallen to 4%, according to Kelley Blue Book, a vehicle-valuations firm.

Other efforts to let traditional car drivers try EVs before they buy have struggled. Rental company Hertz is selling 20,000 EVs, including Teslas, from its U.S. fleet and adding gasoline-powered cars, because of weak demand and high costs for EVs maintenance and repairs. Hertz in 2021 committed to buying 100,000 Tesla vehicles.

FINN says it mitigates the risk of low resale prices by bulk buying cars directly from the manufacturer, pricing each subscription so that every car is profitable and agreeing a resale price with car dealerships ahead of time.

In Germany, FINN's gas and diesel vehicles are priced from €409 to €2,399 a month, equivalent to $443 to $2,598, and the electric and plug-in hybrids range from €449 to €1,699, or $486 to $1,840. Comparing prices for one make, the gas-powered Fiat 500 is €409 and the Fiat 500e is €459.

In the U.S., customers can choose a range of gas or mild-hybrid vehicles for between $579 and $900 a month, with EVs for between $869 and $1,199 a month.

Qualcomm Revenue Tops Estimates

By Denny Jacob

Qualcomm logged better-than-expected revenue in the latest quarter, led by growth in handsets and automotive products.

The mobile-phone chip maker posted net income of $2.77 billion, or $2.46 a share, for the fiscal first quarter ended Dec. 24, up from $2.24 billion, or $1.98 a share, a year earlier. Adjusted earnings were $2.75 a share, above analysts' estimates of $2.37.

Revenue increased 5% to $9.94 billion from $9.46 billion. Analysts polled by FactSet expected $9.51 billion.

Revenue in its Qualcomm CDMA Technologies, known as QCT, unit rose 7% to $8.42 billion, while the Qualcomm Technology Licensing subsidiary, known as QTL, edged down 4% to $1.46 billion. QCT's revenue streams consist of handsets, automotive and Internet of Things. Revenue in handsets and automotive grew by 16% and 31%, respectively, from a year earlier, while IoT fell 32%.

Qualcomm sells communication and data-processing chips crucial in phones from Apple and Samsung. It forecast revenue between $8.9 billion and $9.7 billion as well as adjusted earnings in the range of $2.20 a share to $2.40 for the second quarter.

Paramount Gets New Allen Bid

Continued from page B1
Bob Iger floated the possibility of selling off some of the company's TV assets, including ABC, Allen made a $10 billion bid for ABC and other TV assets. Iger has since said that ABC and the other networks aren't for sale after all.

Also last year, Allen made a bid of about $3 billion for Paramount's BET Media Group, which included its BET and VH1 cable networks and a piece of its BET+ streaming service, but Paramount decided against selling the business.

Allen Media Group's offer letter for Paramount said the proposed transaction would be financed by "a combination of senior secured debt, senior unsecured notes and equity," and that it has been working with several partners on financing.

Allen is known for the pressure he puts on large U.S. corporations to spend more ad dollars with Black-owned media companies. He has called on advertisers to spend at least 2% of their budgets with Black-owned media companies—a target he later increased to 5%.

About a decade ago, his production company sued several pay-TV operators, alleging that racial discrimination was behind their decision not to carry its networks. The suits were settled.

Companies owned by Allen Media Group filed two lawsuits accusing McDonald's of discriminating against Black-owned media companies and not fulfilling public commitments to spend more with these firms, which the restaurant chain denies. Both suits remain open.

Allen is one of many possible suitors for Paramount. Last month, the Journal reported that Skydance Media's Ellison was discussing an all-cash bid for National Amusements, with financial help from other Skydance investors including his father, billionaire Larry Ellison.

Warner Bros. Discovery CEO David Zaslav has met Bakish to discuss a possible merger between two of Hollywood and cable's biggest brands. The Journal reported that the executives broached the idea of a deal, but no formal talks between the companies were under way.

Paramount, like its peers, is struggling to make its streaming business profitable as its traditional TV business continues to shrink.

—Heather Haddon contributed to this article.


KEVIN C. COX/GETTY IMAGES

Paramount has rights deals for NCAA college football and basketball games that air on its streaming service and cable networks. Below, Nickelodeon's 'SpongeBob SquarePants.'


PARAMOUNT/EVERETT COLLECTION

Adidas Full-Year Earnings, Sales Beat Guidance

KRISZTIAN BOCSI/BLOOMBERG NEWS

Adidas said its revenue and operating profit last year exceeded company guidance after a better-than-expected performance in the fourth quarter and the group's decision not to write off most of its Yeezy inventory.

The German sporting-goods company said Wednesday that sales on a currency neutral basis were flat last year compared with 2022, better than Adidas's most recent forecast of a low-single-digit rate contraction despite the drag from the devaluation of the Argentine peso in the fourth quarter. In reported terms, annual sales slipped 5% to €21.43 billion, or about $23.24 billion.

Adidas made an operating profit of €268 million in 2023, down from €669 million in 2022. However, the result is better than company guidance of a €100 million operating loss. On an underlying basis, operating profit came in at roughly €200 million in 2023, also above guidance of around €100 million.

"The improvement is due to the better operating business of around €100 million and the decision to not write off €268 million of Yeezy inventory," said Chief Executive Bjorn Gulden. "Our consumer, retail and trade research has shown that we can sell this remaining inventory in 2024 for at least the cost price."

Gulden is expecting a "flattish" start to sales this year, but revenue should then improve every quarter. The group is targeting currency-neutral sales growth at a mid-single-digit rate and an operating profit of around €500 million in 2024.

"This year is the next building block needed to bring Adidas back to be a company with double-digit growth and 10% operating margin," Gulden said.

—Mauro Orru

Uber Gets Fined Almost $11 Million By Dutch Watchdog

By James Rundle

Dutch regulators on Wednesday fined **Uber Technologies** €10 million, or about $10.9 million, accusing the ride-hailing company of violating European privacy laws.

The Dutch Data Protection Authority, known by its Dutch acronym AP, alleged Uber failed to disclose information on how long it keeps data on drivers in Europe and made it unnecessarily complicated for drivers to ask for their data.

"Drivers have the right to know how Uber handles their personal data. However, Uber did not explain this with sufficient clarity. It should have informed its drivers better and more diligently in this regard," said AP Chairman Aleid Wolfsen in a statement announcing the fine.

The company was accused of violating European privacy laws.

When drivers wanted to review their data, the regulator said, Uber threw various obstacles in their path, among them, burying the function to request the data within its app across multiple menus. The data Uber did provide was difficult to interpret, AP added. The company also failed to include in its terms and conditions how long it retained driver data, or what security measures it took when it sent the data to countries outside the European Economic Area, AP said.

On Wednesday, Uber said it had addressed the issues AP raised.

"The Dutch Data Protection Authority has acknowledged that Uber fixed the small number of 'low impact' issues raised by the drivers, while dismissing the vast majority of their claims as unfounded," an Uber spokesman said. "We are committed to continuously improving our data-request processes and will always cooperate constructively with the authorities to address their concerns."

In announcing the fine, the regulator noted that Uber had taken "improvement measures."

The European Union has strict privacy rules codified in an omnibus law known as the General Data Protection Regulation, which can result in stiff penalties for companies that breach the rules.

Data-protection authorities in each EU member state are responsible for investigating complaints against companies whose headquarters—or European headquarters, as in Uber's case—fall within their borders. The European Commission, the executive arm of the EU government, recently tightened its oversight of these regulators amid complaints about the glacial pace of enforcement.

The complaint against Uber was originally raised by over 170 French drivers to the French human-rights organization Ligue des droits de l'homme et du citoyen, which in June 2020 filed it to France's data protection authority. As Uber's European headquarters are in the Netherlands, the case was passed to the Dutch regulator.

The company has also sparred with municipal authorities in the U.S. over how it handles data in its scooter-rental programs.

Boeing Withholds '24 Goals

Continued from page B1

steps over the last several years to strengthen our safety and quality processes, but this accident makes it absolutely clear that we have more work to do," Calhoun said.

The Federal Aviation Administration said its production limits affect Boeing's 737 MAX, not other commercial aircraft it makes. The agency said it would freeze MAX production rates at current levels.

The company had been planning to increase production of its 737 jets to 50 a month, a goal the company had expected to hit next year.

The National Transportation Safety Board, which is leading the U.S. government's main probe of the blowout, is still investigating what caused it and might not issue its conclusions for months.

The incident also threatens Boeing's ability to launch two new MAX variants, the shorter MAX 7 and slightly longer MAX 10. The company had been expecting certification of the planes, both of which are already delayed, as soon as this year.

Fallout from the incident overshadowed a solid end to 2023, in which the company improved on its own forecasts and succeeded in ramping up production from earlier in the year. The company delivered 157 commercial aircraft in the fourth quarter.

Boeing booked a net loss of $30 million in the quarter ended Dec. 31, less than the $663 million loss a year ago. Analysts polled by FactSet expected a $140 million loss.

The company reported $3 billion of free cash flow from its operations for the quarter. Boeing generated $4.4 billion of free cash flow for the year, hitting its targeted range of $3 billion to $5 billion.

Disney To Sell India Stake

Continued from Page One

own 9%. Disney's India business includes the Star India family of television networks and the streaming service Hotstar, as well as a minority stake in the satellite TV company Tata Sky.

Viacom18 will pay about $1.5 billion in cash in addition to stock in return for its stake in the merged company, some of the people said.

The deal, which isn't finalized and could change, is expected to close in February, the people familiar with the matter said. Bloomberg earlier reported that Disney was in talks to merge the India business with Reliance's media business.

The drop in value for the India business is a sign of how difficult it has been for big media companies to navigate a market home to 1.43 billion people who speak dozens of languages.

Disney has been exploring strategic options for the India business since at least July.

The merger with Viacom18 reunites Murdoch and Shankar with a business they spent years building. Murdoch helped build Star India when he was chairman of its former parent company, the European broadcaster Sky, which was then part of Fox. He is a son of Rupert Murdoch, chairman emeritus of News Corp, owner of The Wall Street Journal.

Shankar was CEO of Star India for a decade until 2020, when he departed. In 2021, James Murdoch and Shankar partnered to form Bodhi Tree, an investment vehicle focused on buying media assets in India that is backed by $1.7 billion from the Qatar Investment Authority and Comcast. Bodhi Tree invested more than $500 million in Viacom18.

Part of Disney's challenges in India have been determining how much to pay for the rights to broadcast cricket, which was introduced to South Asia in the 18th century by British colonists and has grown into the region's most popular spectator sport.

The cost of TV and streaming rights to various cricket competitions has risen dramatically in recent years, exacerbating the mismatch between the large investment required to supply the country's hundreds of millions of viewers with original shows and live sports content and the comparatively low prices that most Indian subscribers can afford.

When Disney bought most of the 21st Century Fox's global entertainment assets in 2019, the India business was considered a crown jewel of the deal, in large part because Star held several key packages of cricket rights.

Estimates by people familiar with details of the deal and third-party analysts pegged its value at the time between $7 billion and $16 billion.

But as competition for the country's TV and streaming audiences heated up, Disney found it hard to maintain that value.

In summer 2022, Viacom18 outbid Disney for the streaming rights to the wildly popular Indian Premier League cricket competition, paying $2.6 billion for the right to stream it for the next five years. Disney retained the right to air IPL matches on its broadcast TV networks.

The consequence of losing the streaming rights became clear in August, when Disney said in its quarterly earnings report that it had lost more than 12 million streaming subscribers in India in the space of three months. That decline was largely the result of customer cancellations after Hotstar dropped IPL, and delivered a blow to Disney's ambitions to rapidly expand its global streaming subscriptions.

Hotstar's subscriber count, which is included in the total reported global subscriber base of Disney+, peaked at 61.3 million in October 2022. As of the most recent quarter, the service had 37.6 million subscribers.

Hotstar subscribers pay Disney an average of 70 cents a month—compared with $6.70 in other countries, including wealthier markets like the U.S. and Europe—making it hard for the company to profit from streaming in India.

The India business has also been hurt in recent years by the falling value of the rupee, which has declined about 20% against the dollar since the Fox deal closed in 2019.


SESHADRI SUKUMAR/ZUMA PRESS

The cost of TV and streaming rights to various cricket competitions has risen dramatically in recent years.

Railway Is Hit by Proxy Fight

Continued from page B1

in on a number of issues, including how the company handled a train derailment involving a toxic chemical spill last year, and what they see as Shaw's failure to hit operating targets.

Separately, hedge funds **Sachem Head Capital Management** and **D.E. Shaw** have recently been building their own stakes in Norfolk Southern, some of the people said. The size of those positions couldn't be determined.

Norfolk Southern is among the top five largest railroad operators in North America by revenue. It operates across the Eastern U.S. in 22 states and in Washington, D.C. The company's market capitalization stands at roughly $54 billion.

Norfolk Southern's fourth-quarter results last week showed a 19% decline in earnings and a 5% drop in revenue compared with year-ago levels as railroads grapple with declining demand from lumber and coal suppliers, among others. The company, which has complained of a "stubbornly weak freight market," said it focused on safety and service for much of 2023 and is aiming to improve productivity this year.

Ahead of the report, the railroad operator told employees that it planned to lay off 7% of its nonunion workforce, including management and administrative staff, according to a memo reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.

"The overall macroeconomic environment and prolonged weak freight market has limited the amount of business we can attract, and our cost structure is too high for our top line," CEO Shaw said in the memo.

The dismal earnings report led multiple research analysts to downgrade the stock.

"Norfolk has long been an underperforming self-help story that simply can't figure out how to help themselves," Stifel analysts wrote in a research note.

The company's stock fell after a train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, resulted in damaged cargo, fires and chemical releases across the area a year ago.

The accident led to scrutiny of Norfolk Southern's safety practices, with costs associated with the derailment eclipsing $1 billion.

Shaw, a Norfolk Southern employee since 1994, became CEO in 2022 and has faced challenges during his tenure. Bruising negotiations between unions and freight railroads in 2022 led President Biden to intervene to prevent a potentially damaging strike.

Other hurdles for Norfolk Southern and its railroad peers have included disruption because of extreme weather and supply-chain congestion.

Cleveland-based Ancora has nearly $9 billion in assets under management. Last year, the firm was successful in winning board seats at packaging supplier Berry Global and vehicle marketplace RB Global. It also played a role in replacing the CEO at retailer Kohl's.

MARKETS DIGEST

EQUITIES

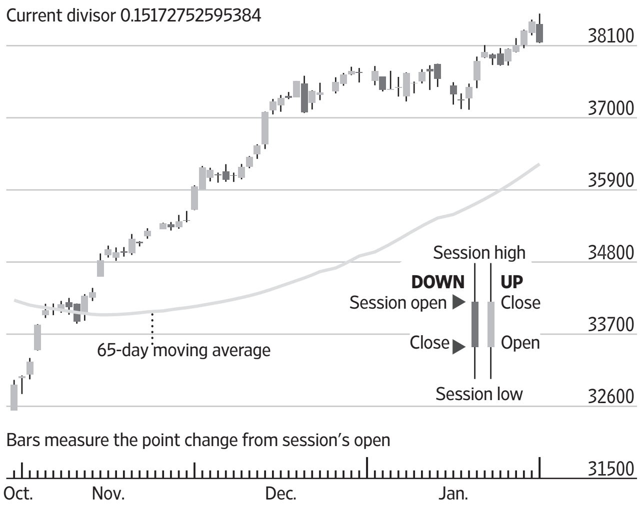
Dow Jones Industrial Average

38150.30 ▼317.01, or 0.82%

High, low, open and close for each trading day of the past three months.

	Last	Year ago
Trailing P/E ratio	25.16	22.60
P/E estimate *	19.46	18.13
Dividend yield	1.93	2.02
All-time high	38467.31, 01/30/24	

Current divisor 0.15172752595384

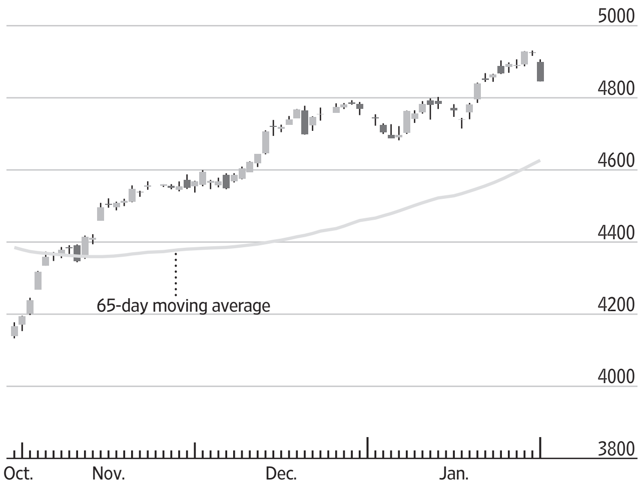


S&P 500 Index

4845.65 ▼79.32, or 1.61%

High, low, open and close for each trading day of the past three months.

	Last	Year ago
Trailing P/E ratio *	22.33	19.72
P/E estimate *	22.01	18.29
Dividend yield *	1.51	1.67
All-time high	4927.93, 01/29/24	

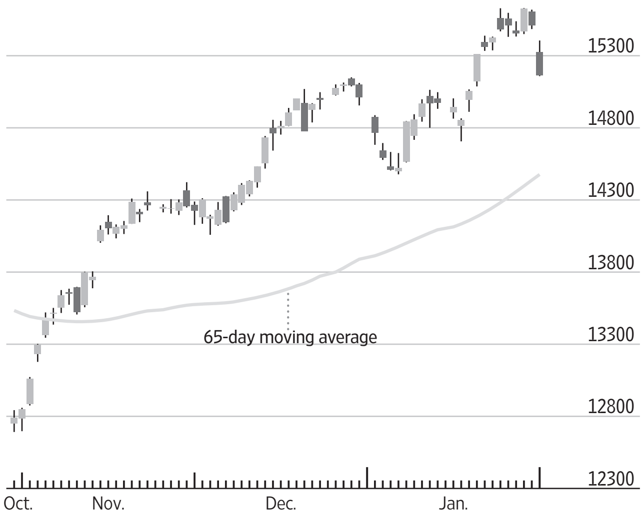


Nasdaq Composite Index

15164.01 ▼ 345.89, or 2.23%

High, low, open and close for each trading day of the past three months.

	Last	Year ago
Trailing P/E ratio *†	31.37	26.36
P/E estimate *†	30.15	23.08
Dividend yield *†	0.85	0.91
All-time high:	16057.44, 11/19/21	



* Weekly P/E data based on as-reported earnings from Birinyi Associates Inc.; † Based on Nasdaq-100 Index

Major U.S. Stock-Market Indexes

	Latest High	Low	Close	Net chg	% chg	52-Week High	Low	% chg	% chg YTD	3-yr. ann.
Dow Jones										
Industrial Average	38588.86	38139.66	**38150.30**	-317.01	**-0.82**	38467.31	31819.14	**11.9**	1.2	**8.4**
Transportation Avg	15903.40	15510.12	**15515.80**	-260.51	**-1.65**	16695.32	13444.01	**2.1**	-2.4	**8.7**
Utility Average	866.01	848.01	**853.04**	-1.74	**-0.20**	976.42	783.08	**-12.4**	-3.2	**0.03**
Total Stock Market	48942.18	48270.24	**48275.32**	-826.89	**-1.68**	49169.02	38697.55	**15.9**	1.0	**7.3**
Barron's 400	1087.83	1064.40	**1064.76**	-23.07	**-2.12**	1087.83	881.58	**5.3**	-0.7	**7.1**
Nasdaq Stock Market										
Nasdaq Composite	15405.55	15158.49	**15164.01**	-345.89	**-2.23**	15628.04	11138.89	**28.3**	1.0	**5.1**
Nasdaq-100	17375.32	17128.74	**17137.24**	-339.47	**-1.94**	17596.27	11830.28	**38.6**	1.9	**9.9**
S&P										
500 Index	4906.75	4845.15	**4845.65**	-79.32	**-1.61**	4927.93	3855.76	**17.6**	1.6	**9.3**
MidCap 400	2788.16	2730.37	**2732.18**	-51.36	**-1.85**	2809.23	2326.82	**1.4**	-1.8	**5.3**
SmallCap 600	1301.49	1264.06	**1265.19**	-33.44	**-2.58**	1339.63	1068.80	**-1.6**	-4.0	**2.1**
Other Indexes										
Russell 2000	2003.15	1946.89	**1947.34**	-48.89	**-2.45**	2066.21	1636.94	**-0.7**	-3.9	**-2.1**
NYSE Composite	17123.20	16910.35	**16911.13**	-178.33	**-1.04**	17089.46	14599.05	**4.9**	0.3	**5.5**
Value Line	588.20	576.21	**576.37**	-10.55	**-1.80**	606.49	498.09	**-3.7**	-2.9	**-0.2**
NYSE Arca Biotech	5205.79	5101.31	**5109.01**	-91.41	**-1.76**	5644.50	4544.40	**-9.0**	-5.7	**-5.1**
NYSE Arca Pharma	967.53	953.84	**954.86**	1.01	**0.11**	959.06	791.91	**14.6**	4.9	**11.0**
KBW Bank	97.93	95.68	**95.72**	-2.28	**-2.33**	115.10	71.71	**-15.7**	-0.3	**-0.7**
PHLX§ Gold/Silver	116.26	113.32	**113.54**	-0.65	**-0.57**	144.37	103.31	**-16.6**	-9.7	**-6.4**
PHLX§ Oil Service	82.89	80.57	**80.70**	-1.90	**-2.30**	98.76	69.29	**-13.1**	-3.8	**19.9**
PHLX§ Semiconductor	4334.81	4220.95	**4260.92**	-59.07	**-1.37**	4483.33	2892.39	**38.6**	2.0	**13.9**
Cboe Volatility	14.61	13.18	**14.35**	1.04	7.81	26.52	12.07	**-19.7**	15.3	**-24.3**

§ Nasdaq PHLX

Sources: FactSet; Dow Jones Market Data

Late Trading

Most-active and biggest movers among NYSE, NYSE Arca, NYSE Amer. and Nasdaq issues from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. ET as reported by electronic trading services, securities dealers and regional exchanges. Minimum share price of $2 and minimum after-hours volume of 50,000 shares.

Most-active issues in late trading

Company	Symbol	Volume (000)	After Hours Last	Net chg	% chg	High	Low
SPDR S&P 500 ETF Trust	SPY	18,599.4	483.25	0.37	**0.08**	487.39	482.67
Walgreens Boots Alliance	WBA	15,691.4	22.64	0.07	**0.31**	22.79	20.65
Apple	AAPL	4,772.3	185.21	0.81	**0.44**	186.40	175.76
Qualcomm	QCOM	4,556.5	147.83	-0.68	**-0.46**	154.69	143.30
Pfizer	PFE	4,433.3	27.11	0.03	**0.11**	27.20	27.04
KeyCorp	KEY	3,811.8	14.55	0.02	**0.14**	14.61	14.51
Edison International	EIX	3,807.0	67.48	...	**unch.**	68.26	67.46
Fastenal	FAST	3,775.0	68.20	-0.03	**-0.04**	68.23	67.78

Percentage gainers...

Company	Symbol	Volume (000)	Last	Net chg	% chg	High	Low
Nextracker	NXT	595.5	54.99	9.72	**21.47**	59.00	45.27
Align Technology	ALGN	335.8	296.20	28.88	**10.80**	315.99	267.10
Protagonist Therapeutics	PTGX	271.0	27.00	1.99	**7.96**	28.58	25.01
Sunnova Energy Intl	NOVA	200.1	11.20	0.68	**6.46**	11.55	10.51
Ezcorp Cl A	EZPW	104.5	9.10	0.50	**5.81**	9.99	8.60

...And losers

Company	Symbol	Volume (000)	Last	Net chg	% chg	High	Low
MaxLinear	MXL	86.6	18.52	-2.30	**-11.05**	20.82	18.06
CH Robinson Worldwide	CHRW	275.8	79.00	-5.09	**-6.05**	84.10	77.53
JPM BetaBld U.S. Agg Bd	BBAG	163.3	44.10	-2.34	**-5.04**	46.44	44.10
Wolfspeed	WOLF	569.7	31.11	-1.44	**-4.42**	34.29	30.27
Avalonbay Communities	AVB	67.4	172.05	-6.96	**-3.89**	179.09	170.50

Trading Diary

Volume, Advancers, Decliners

	NYSE	NYSE Amer.
Total volume*	1,278,498,651	20,736,120
Adv. volume*	218,090,669	7,848,760
Decl. volume*	1,043,862,880	10,661,664
Issues traded	2,916	310
Advances	616	90
Declines	2,227	199
Unchanged	73	21
New highs	179	6
New lows	28	12
Closing Arms†	1.17	1.18
Block trades*	4,584	138

	Nasdaq	NYSE Arca
Total volume*	5,875,616,678	470,370,061
Adv. volume*	2,152,215,858	144,339,651
Decl. volume*	3,683,531,548	324,677,305
Issues traded	4,446	1,924
Advances	1,137	431
Declines	3,159	1,486
Unchanged	150	7
New highs	134	143
New lows	131	43
Closing Arms†	0.62	0.56
Block trades*	36,031	2,620

* Primary market NYSE, NYSE American NYSE Arca only.
† (TRIN) A comparison of the number of advancing and declining issues with the volume of shares rising and falling. An Arms of less than 1 indicates buying demand; above 1 indicates selling pressure.

International Stock Indexes

Region/Country	Index	Close	Latest Net chg	% chg	YTD % chg
World	**MSCI ACWI**	**730.84**	−6.81	**−0.92**	0.5
	MSCI ACWI ex-USA	**313.31**	0.96	**0.31**	−1.0
	MSCI World	**3205.32**	−31.44	**−0.97**	1.1
	MSCI Emerging Markets	**975.80**	−4.79	**−0.49**	−4.7
Americas	**MSCI AC Americas**	**1836.72**	−28.93	**−1.55**	1.3
Canada	**S&P/TSX Comp**	**21021.88**	−205.99	**−0.97**	0.3
Latin Amer.	**MSCI EM Latin America**	**2533.72**	9.51	**0.38**	−4.8
Brazil	**Bovespa**	**127752.28**	350.47	**0.28**	−4.8
Chile	**S&P IPSA**	**3341.40**	9.21	**0.28**	−3.6
Mexico	**S&P/BMV IPC**	**57372.76**	−164.38	**−0.29**	−0.02
EMEA	**STOXX Europe 600**	**485.67**	0.04	**0.01**	1.4
Eurozone	**Euro STOXX**	**482.91**	−0.72	**−0.15**	1.8
Belgium	**Bel-20**	**3662.96**	19.03	**0.52**	−1.2
Denmark	**OMX Copenhagen 20**	**2436.89**	55.32	**2.32**	6.7
France	**CAC 40**	**7656.75**	−20.72	**−0.27**	1.5
Germany	**DAX**	**16903.76**	−68.58	**−0.40**	0.9
Israel	**Tel Aviv**	**1830.82**	−8.73	**−0.47**	−1.8
Italy	**FTSE MIB**	**30744.24**	120.97	**0.40**	1.3
Netherlands	**AEX**	**818.21**	−2.43	**−0.30**	4.0
Norway	**Oslo Bors All-Share**	**1486.47**	−4.58	**−0.31**	−2.2
South Africa	**FTSE/JSE All-Share**	**74555.87**	−55.58	**−0.07**	−3.0
Spain	**IBEX 35**	**10077.70**	38.40	**0.38**	−0.2
Sweden	**OMX Stockholm**	**888.52**	−0.41	**−0.05**	−1.6
Switzerland	**Swiss Market**	**11333.38**	−109.75	**−0.96**	1.8
Turkey	**BIST 100**	**8496.66**	22.36	**0.26**	13.7
U.K.	**FTSE 100**	**7630.57**	−35.74	**−0.47**	−1.3
U.K.	**FTSE 250**	**19357.95**	8.45	**0.04**	−1.7
Asia-Pacific	**MSCI AC Asia Pacific**	**166.51**	0.94	**0.57**	−1.7
Australia	**S&P/ASX 200**	**7680.70**	80.51	**1.06**	1.2
China	**Shanghai Composite**	**2788.55**	−41.98	**−1.48**	−6.3
Hong Kong	**Hang Seng**	**15485.07**	−218.38	**−1.39**	−9.2
India	**S&P BSE Sensex**	**71752.11**	612.21	**0.86**	−0.7
Japan	**NIKKEI 225**	**36286.71**	220.85	**0.61**	8.4
Singapore	**Straits Times**	**3153.01**	2.97	**0.09**	−2.7
South Korea	**KOSPI**	**2497.09**	−1.72	**−0.07**	−6.0
Taiwan	**TAIEX**	**17889.56**	−145.07	**−0.80**	−0.2
Thailand	**SET**	**1364.52**	−8.62	**−0.63**	−3.6

Sources: FactSet; Dow Jones Market Data

Percentage Gainers...

Company	Symbol	Latest Session Close	Net chg	% chg	52-Week High	Low	% chg
FibroBiologics	FBLG	29.10	21.10	**263.75**	55.00	8.00	**...**
Guardion Health Sciences	GHSI	8.38	3.23	**62.72**	10.75	4.66	**18.0**
Minim	MINM	4.10	1.56	**61.42**	14.00	0.60	**-24.4**
Powell Industries	POWL	118.53	36.94	**45.28**	125.49	38.87	**165.6**
Nyxoah	NYXH	10.82	2.68	**32.92**	12.61	4.00	**102.2**
2seventy bio	TSVT	5.14	1.13	**28.18**	15.25	1.54	**-61.1**
Bit Origin	BTOG	7.08	1.49	**26.65**	12.60	1.25	**-1.8**
Jin Medical International	ZJYL	264.25	53.85	**25.59**	509.87	4.84	**...**
Paramount Global Cl A	PARAA	23.33	4.14	**21.57**	29.51	13.40	**-16.1**
J-Long Group	JL	13.25	2.25	**20.45**	16.00	6.14	**...**
Plug Power	PLUG	4.45	0.72	**19.30**	18.88	2.26	**-74.8**
Sentage Holdings Cl A	SNTG	2.73	0.44	**19.21**	9.63	1.44	**23.0**
L Catterton Asia Cl A	LCAA	10.50	1.53	**17.06**	10.92	8.59	**1.5**
Reborn Coffee	REBN	3.50	0.51	**17.06**	9.20	2.09	**-60.2**
Cemtrex	CETX	4.10	0.59	**16.81**	14.46	2.93	**-65.3**

Percentage Losers

Company	Symbol	Latest Session Close	Net chg	% chg	52-Week High	Low	% chg
Deep Medicine Acqn	DMAQ	2.96	-5.43	**-64.72**	19.91	2.96	**-71.1**
Nuvve Holding	NVVE	1.24	-2.10	**-62.87**	61.20	1.06	**-97.5**
GRI Bio	GRI	1.62	-1.25	**-43.55**	258.30	1.61	**-97.2**
NY Community Bancorp	NYCB	6.47	-3.91	**-37.67**	14.22	5.58	**-36.3**
Nubia Brand Intl Cl A	NUBI	5.14	-2.74	**-34.77**	13.85	4.55	**-50.1**
Oragenics	OGEN	2.30	-1.17	**-33.62**	7.74	2.25	**-64.2**
Evaxion Biotech ADR	EVAX	3.93	-1.86	**-32.12**	21.10	3.36	**-76.2**
Spectral AI	MDAI	2.09	-0.82	**-28.18**	19.50	1.90	**-79.3**
Esports Entertainment	GMBL	2.46	-0.84	**-25.45**	5792.00	1.92	**-99.9**
Zoomcar Holdings	ZCAR	2.38	-0.72	**-23.23**	14.75	2.17	**-77.3**
Meta Materials	MMAT	3.82	-1.05	**-21.56**	107.00	3.75	**-96.2**
Extreme Networks	EXTR	13.51	-3.13	**-18.81**	32.73	13.10	**-25.9**
American Superconductor	AMSC	11.00	-2.44	**-18.15**	17.37	3.63	**95.4**
MarketAxess Holdings	MKTX	225.51	-48.82	**-17.80**	399.78	200.01	**-40.2**
Rockwell Automation	ROK	253.28	-53.94	**-17.56**	348.52	252.11	**-10.5**

Most Active Stocks

Company	Symbol	Volume (000)	% chg from 65-day avg	Latest Session Close	% chg	52-Week High	Low
Connexa Sports Techs	CNXA	**235,077**	5714.7	0.40	**101.21**	16.04	0.14
ProSh UltraPro Shrt QQQ	SQQQ	**175,089**	44.1	12.78	**5.88**	42.57	11.65
Direxion Dly Semi 3 Bear	SOXS	**170,125**	106.0	5.35	**4.49**	24.09	4.37
Advanced Micro Devices	AMD	**132,508**	93.7	167.69	**-2.54**	184.92	75.92
Plug Power	PLUG	**129,167**	202.5	4.45	**19.30**	18.88	2.26
NY Community Bancorp	NYCB	**127,526**	1265.4	6.47	**-37.67**	14.22	5.58
SPDR S&P 500 ETF Trust	SPY	**125,508**	59.7	482.88	**-1.63**	491.62	380.65
Phunware	PHUN	**113,936**	25.7	0.32	**10.68**	1.15	0.07
SoFi Technologies	SOFI	**109,084**	113.9	7.83	**-6.79**	11.70	4.45
Lytus Technologies	LYT	**103,476**	1544.9	0.10	**26.71**	1.16	0.08

* Volumes of 100,000 shares or more are rounded to the nearest thousand

Volume Movers

Ranked by change from 65-day average*

Company	Symbol	Volume (000)	% chg from 65-day avg	Latest Session Close	% chg	52-Week High	Low
JPM Glbl Select Eq	JGLO	11,186	**21651**	53.26	**-0.99**	53.83	45.26
iSh Paris Climt MSCI USA	PABU	2,070	**4811**	53.27	**-1.55**	54.31	41.86
Churchill Cap VII Cl A	CVII	7,006	**4743**	10.60	**0.47**	10.80	10.02
AllianzIM US LC Bf20 Feb	FEBW	405	**3640**	28.05	**-0.02**	28.09	24.38
AllianzIM US LC Bf10 Feb	FEBT	147	**2556**	29.41	**-0.70**	29.72	24.01
Nuveen Growth Opps ETF	NUGO	1,910	**2277**	26.40	**-2.36**	27.15	18.17
John Hancock Corp Bd	JHCB	166	**2233**	21.33	**0.24**	21.74	19.40
Canna-Global Acqn Cl A	CNGL	283	**2097**	11.00	**-1.61**	11.18	10.38
DP Cap Acquisition I A	DPCS	200	**1941**	10.95	**0.09**	11.30	10.33
Revelation Biosciences	REVB	1,906	**1867**	8.80	**10.69**	335.10	7.54

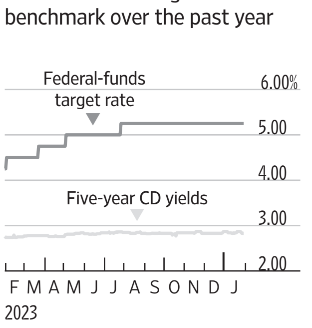
* Common stocks priced at $2 a share or more with an average volume over 65 trading days of at least 5,000 shares †Has traded fewer than 65 days

CREDIT MARKETS

Consumer Rates and Returns to Investor

U.S. consumer rates

A consumer rate against its benchmark over the past year



Selected rates

5-year CDs

Bankrate.com avg†:	**2.83%**
America First FCU	**4.20%**
Riverdale, UT	801-627-0900
Quontic Bank	**4.30%**
New York, NY	800-908-6600
Popular Direct	**4.45%**
Miami Lakes, FL	800-274-5696
First National Bank of America	**4.55%**
East Lansing, MI	800-968-3626
First Internet Bank of Indiana	**4.59%**
Indianapolis, IN	888-873-3424

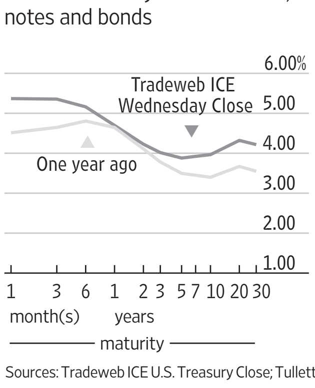
Interest rate	Yield/Rate (%) Last (●)	Week ago	52-Week Range (%) Low	High	3-yr chg (pct pts)
Federal-funds rate target	**5.25-5.50**	5.25-5.50	4.25	5.50	**5.25**
Prime rate*	**8.50**	8.50	7.50	8.50	**5.25**
SOFR	**5.31**	5.31	4.31	5.40	**5.25**
Money market, annual yield	**0.50**	0.51	0.38	0.64	**0.40**
Five-year CD, annual yield	**2.83**	2.87	2.74	2.87	**2.36**
30-year mortgage, fixed†	**7.14**	7.23	6.36	8.28	**4.24**
15-year mortgage, fixed†	**6.51**	6.55	5.54	7.42	**4.14**
Jumbo mortgages, $766,550-plus†	**7.19**	7.30	6.37	8.33	**4.24**
Five-year adj mortgage (ARM)†	**6.37**	6.40	5.36	7.16	**3.15**
New-car loan, 48-month	**7.66**	7.61	6.57	7.70	**3.64**

Bankrate.com rates based on survey of over 4,800 online banks. *Base rate posted by 70% of the nation's largest banks.† Excludes closing costs.

Sources: FactSet; Dow Jones Market Data; Bankrate.com

Treasury yield curve

Yield to maturity of current bills, notes and bonds



Sources: Tradeweb ICE U.S. Treasury Close; Tullett Prebon; Dow Jones Market Data

Forex Race

Yen, euro vs. dollar; dollar vs. major U.S. trading partners

Corporate Borrowing Rates and Yields

Bond total return index	Close	Yield (%) Last	Week ago	52-Week High	Low	Total Return (%) 52-wk	3-yr
U.S. Treasury, Bloomberg	2170.700	**4.120**	4.310	5.120	3.610	**1.225**	−3.603
U.S. Treasury Long, Bloomberg	3180.430	**4.300**	4.500	5.280	3.630	**−5.277**	−10.983
Aggregate, Bloomberg	2056.060	**4.590**	4.780	5.740	4.180	**2.098**	−3.171
Fixed-Rate MBS, Bloomberg	2027.510	**4.800**	5.010	6.050	4.140	**1.225**	−3.031
High Yield 100, ICE BofA	3542.437	**n.a.**	7.301	9.101	7.022	**9.163**	2.079
Muni Master, ICE BofA	586.503	**3.163**	3.299	4.311	2.757	**2.530**	−0.685
EMBI Global, J.P. Morgan	838.568	**7.441**	7.642	8.842	7.102	**5.147**	−3.124

Sources: J.P. Morgan; Bloomberg Fixed Income Indices; ICE Data Services

CURRENCIES & COMMODITIES

Currencies

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

Country/currency	Wed in US$	per US$	US$ vs, YTD chg (%)
Americas			
Argentina peso	.0012	826.2736	**2.2**
Brazil real	.2019	4.9533	**2.1**
Canada dollar	.7443	1.3436	**1.4**
Chile peso	.001074	930.78	**6.4**
Colombia peso	.000256	3908.50	**0.9**
Ecuador US dollar	1	1	**unch**
Mexico peso	.0581	17.2158	**1.4**
Uruguay peso	.02557	39.1150	**0.1**
Asia-Pacific			
Australia dollar	.6566	1.5230	**3.8**
China yuan	.1409	7.0995	**−0.2**
Hong Kong dollar	.1279	7.8179	**0.1**
India rupee	.01204	83.088	**−0.1**
Indonesia rupiah	.0000634	15767	**2.5**
Japan yen	.006805	146.95	**4.2**
Kazakhstan tenge	.002226	449.21	**−1.4**
Macau pataca	.1241	8.0590	**0.1**
Malaysia ringgit	.2114	4.7295	**2.9**
New Zealand dollar	.6116	1.6351	**3.3**
Pakistan rupee	.00358	279.570	**−0.6**
Philippines peso	.0178	56.310	**1.6**
Singapore dollar	.7462	1.3401	**1.6**
South Korea won	.0007491	1334.89	**3.1**
Sri Lanka rupee	.0031701	315.45	**−2.6**
Taiwan dollar	.03199	31.263	**1.8**
Thailand baht	.02813	35.550	**3.4**
Vietnam dong	.00004094	24425	**0.6**
Europe			
Czech Rep. koruna	.04358	22.946	**2.5**
Denmark krone	.1451	6.8913	**1.7**
Euro area euro	1.0820	.9243	**2.0**
Hungary forint	.002819	354.70	**2.2**
Iceland krona	.007305	136.90	**0.7**
Norway krone	.0952	10.5058	**3.3**
Poland zloty	.2499	4.0017	**1.7**
Sweden krona	.0962	10.3941	**2.9**
Switzerland franc	1.1610	.8613	**2.3**
Turkey lira	.0330	30.3405	**2.9**
Ukraine hryvnia	.0266	37.5500	**−1.6**
UK pound	1.2688	.7881	**0.4**
Middle East/Africa			
Bahrain dinar	2.6525	.3770	**0.01**
Egypt pound	.0324	30.9064	**−0.1**
Israel shekel	.2746	3.6416	**1.1**
Kuwait dinar	3.2520	.3075	**0.1**
Oman sul rial	2.5975	.3850	**unch**
Qatar rial	.2743	3.645	**0.05**
Saudi Arabia riyal	.2667	3.7502	**...**
South Africa rand	.0535	18.6851	**2.1**

	Close	Net Chg	% Chg	YTD % Chg
WSJ Dollar Index	97.81	0.01	0.01	**2.06**

Sources: Tullett Prebon, Dow Jones Market Data

Commodities

	Close	Wednesday Net chg	% Chg	52-Week High	Low	% Chg	YTD % chg
DJ Commodity	**961.60**	-4.45	**-0.46**	1035.63	930.59	**-6.61**	0.40
Refinitiv/CC CRB Index	**272.41**	-1.59	**-0.58**	290.29	253.85	**0.22**	3.25
Crude oil, $ per barrel	**75.85**	-1.97	**-2.53**	93.68	66.74	**-0.73**	5.86
Natural gas, $/MMBtu	**2.100**	0.023	**1.11**	3.575	1.991	**-14.91**	-16.47
Gold, $ per troy oz.	**2048.40**	16.90	**0.83**	2081.90	1808.80	**6.26**	-0.68

COMMODITIES

wsj.com/market-data/commodities

Futures Contracts

Metal & Petroleum Futures

	Open	High	hi lo	Low	Settle	Chg	Open interest
Copper-High (CMX)-25,000 lbs.; $ per lb.							
Feb	3.9110	3.9360	▲	3.8850	**3.9025**	−0.0040	1,922
March	3.9135	3.9470	▲	3.8835	**3.9060**	−0.0050	122,161
Gold (CMX)-100 troy oz.; $ per troy oz.							
Feb	2035.40	2055.00		2030.00	**2048.40**	16.90	15,980
March	2044.80	2064.10		2038.90	**2057.40**	16.30	1,994
April	2055.30	2074.60		2048.80	**2067.40**	16.50	342,407
June	2075.00	2093.90		2068.50	**2087.00**	16.50	31,596
Aug	2091.40	2110.30		2086.00	**2104.10**	16.20	18,087
Oct	2107.50	2126.00		2101.80	**2119.80**	15.70	5,094
Palladium (NYM) - 50 troy oz.; $ per troy oz.							
Feb					**992.90**	17.10	4
March	980.50	1000.00		971.00	**996.80**	17.30	19,834
Platinum (NYM)-50 troy oz.; $ per troy oz.							
Feb					**924.40**	1.10	137
April	933.50	944.00		925.00	**932.60**	0.90	65,717
Silver (CMX)-5,000 troy oz.; $ per troy oz.							
Feb					**23.051**	−0.056	707
March	23.290	23.445		22.895	**23.169**	−0.056	97,275
Crude Oil, Light Sweet (NYM)-1,000 bbls.; $ per bbl.							
March	77.84	78.11		75.52	**75.85**	−1.97	387,266
April	77.66	77.91		75.38	**75.71**	−1.94	184,024
May	77.43	77.70		75.23	**75.56**	−1.92	149,272
June	77.19	77.40		75.04	**75.35**	−1.87	157,640
July	76.79	77.03		74.72	**75.04**	−1.83	78,199
Dec	74.41	74.61		72.60	**72.89**	−1.58	171,329
NY Harbor ULSD (NYM)-42,000 gal.; $ per gal.							
Feb	2.7927	2.8418		2.7833	**2.8082**	.0014	3,282
March	2.7771	2.8111		2.7523	**2.7852**	.0086	109,673
Gasoline-NY RBOB (NYM)-42,000 gal.; $ per gal.							
Feb	2.2364	2.2544		2.1763	**2.1833**	−.0774	3,480
March	2.2940	2.3017		2.2178	**2.2312**	−.0656	106,926
Natural Gas (NYM)-10,000 MMBtu.; $ per MMBtu.							
March	2.090	2.158	▼	2.037	**2.100**	.023	404,244
April	2.112	2.175	▼	2.063	**2.121**	.017	145,886
May	2.201	2.265	▼	2.159	**2.209**	.008	139,913
July	2.526	2.589		2.498	**2.536**	−.002	80,468
Oct	2.653	2.712		2.625	**2.661**	−.006	100,726
Jan'25	3.801	3.852		3.773	**3.810**	−.002	62,686

Agriculture Futures

	Open	High	hi lo	Low	Settle	Chg	Open interest
Corn (CBT)-5,000 bu.; cents per bu.							
March	447.25	448.75		443.25	**448.25**	.50	647,869
May	458.00	459.25		454.00	**458.50**	−.25	291,050
Oats (CBT)-5,000 bu.; cents per bu.							
March	377.00	384.50		374.75	**382.50**	5.50	2,672
May	370.25	377.00		366.75	**375.50**	3.25	638
Soybeans (CBT)-5,000 bu.; cents per bu.							
March	1218.75	1223.00		1206.75	**1222.25**	3.50	307,744
May	1228.00	1233.25		1216.25	**1232.75**	5.00	182,662
Soybean Meal (CBT)-100 tons; $ per ton.							
March	363.00	369.70		359.00	**368.30**	5.30	187,634
May	360.90	365.60		357.00	**364.10**	3.20	131,246
Soybean Oil (CBT)-60,000 lbs.; cents per lb.							
March	46.00	46.30		45.26	**46.02**	.02	200,854
May	46.60	46.86		45.84	**46.54**	−.02	139,474
Rough Rice (CBT)-2,000 cwt.; $ per cwt.							
March	18.14	18.28		17.85	**17.87**	−.31	9,558
Sept	15.50	15.50	▼	15.35	**15.37**	−.15	1,348
Wheat (CBT)-5,000 bu.; cents per bu.							
March	605.00	605.00		591.75	**595.25**	−10.25	190,242
July	619.75	620.00		607.25	**610.25**	−10.00	84,679
Wheat (KC)-5,000 bu.; cents per bu.							
March	629.75	630.00		617.00	**622.00**	−8.75	109,074
May	628.25	628.25		616.25	**620.25**	−8.50	49,907
Cattle-Feeder (CME)-50,000 lbs.; cents per lb.							
March	240.950	241.550		239.550	**240.150**	−1.175	20,266
April	246.375	247.150		245.575	**246.150**	−.850	7,695
Cattle-Live (CME)-40,000 lbs.; cents per lb.							
Feb	177.550	178.100		177.200	**177.350**	−.675	31,907
April	181.250	181.650		180.550	**180.700**	−1.050	112,317
Hogs-Lean (CME)-40,000 lbs.; cents per lb.							
Feb	75.450	76.600	▲	75.350	**76.350**	.500	28,623
April	84.250	85.325		84.075	**84.825**	−.075	94,946
Lumber (CME)-27,500 bd. ft., $ per 1,000 bd. ft.							
March	566.50	567.00		558.00	**561.50**	−8.00	6,043
May	581.50	586.50		577.00	**583.50**	−3.50	1,741
Milk (CME)-200,000 lbs., cents per lb.							
Feb	16.35	16.35		16.02	**16.10**	−.13	4,739
March	16.99	17.20		16.60	**16.91**	−.02	6,817

	Open	High	hi lo	Low	Settle	Chg	Open interest
Cocoa (ICE-US)-10 metric tons; $ per ton.							
March	4,795	4,869	▲	4,770	**4,822**	17	111,963
May	4,721	4,803	▲	4,706	**4,754**	15	85,019
Coffee (ICE-US)-37,500 lbs.; cents per lb.							
March	194.00	195.55		192.05	**194.05**	.05	84,487
May	190.05	192.15		188.35	**190.95**	.70	69,353
Sugar-World (ICE-US)-112,000 lbs.; cents per lb.							
March	23.93	24.18		23.77	**24.13**	.22	271,971
May	23.05	23.29		22.98	**23.25**	.18	197,206
Sugar-Domestic (ICE-US)-112,000 lbs.; cents per lb.							
March					**41.50**	...	518
May					**41.49**	...	2,274
Cotton (ICE-US)-50,000 lbs.; cents per lb.							
March	84.68	85.37		84.50	**85.17**	.39	86,347
May	86.03	86.62		85.76	**86.41**	.35	70,078
Orange Juice (ICE-US)-15,000 lbs.; cents per lb.							
March	352.20	360.60	▲	344.60	**356.80**	4.35	5,228
May	345.40	352.75	▲	339.00	**351.05**	5.30	2,092

Interest Rate Futures

	Open	High	hi lo	Low	Settle	Chg	Open interest
Ultra Treasury Bonds (CBT) - $100,000; pts 32nds of 100%							
March	128-130	130-040		128-020	**129-070**	1-11.0	1,646,495
June	130-190	131-310		130-030	**131-040**	1-12.0	633
Treasury Bonds (CBT)-$100,000; pts 32nds of 100%							
March	121-180	123-000		121-130	**122-110**	1-03.0	1,421,793
June	121-170	123-000		121-140	**122-110**	1-03.0	4,765
Treasury Notes (CBT)-$100,000; pts 32nds of 100%							
March	111-255	112-205		111-235	**112-105**	22.5	4,719,247
June	112-110	113-070		112-110	**112-310**	23.5	13,675
5 Yr. Treasury Notes (CBT)-$100,000; pts 32nds of 100%							
March	107-317	108-177		107-307	**108-125**	16.2	5,931,317
June	108-152	109-002		108-150	**108-267**	16.7	6,612
2 Yr. Treasury Notes (CBT)-$200,000; pts 32nds of 100%							
March	102-201	102-295		102-198	**102-265**	7.7	3,921,243
June	103-058	103-153		103-057	**103-128**	8.1	2,912
30 Day Federal Funds (CBT)-$5,000,000; 100 - daily avg.							
Jan	94.6700	94.6725	▲▼	94.6700	**94.6700**		382,399
Feb	94.6775	94.6975		94.6750	**94.6775**	.0025	530,725
Three-Month SOFR (CME)-$1,000,000; 100 - daily avg.							
Nov	94.6375	94.6400	▲	94.6375	**94.6400**	.0050	2,996
March'24	94.8600	94.9800		94.8550	**94.9150**	.0600	1,261,773

Currency Futures

	Open	High	hi lo	Low	Settle	Chg	Open interest
Japanese Yen (CME)-¥12,500,000; $ per 100¥							
Feb	.6798	.6868		.6781	**.6852**	.0057	1,012
March	.6826	.6901		.6811	**.6884**	.0058	238,409
Canadian Dollar (CME)-CAD 100,000; $ per CAD							
Feb	.7462	.7488		.7440	**.7464**	−.0002	495
March	.7468	.7491		.7442	**.7467**	−.0001	154,157
British Pound (CME)-£62,500; $ per £							
Feb	1.2697	1.2751		1.2661	**1.2712**	.0014	1,379
March	1.2703	1.2755		1.2662	**1.2715**	.0015	179,075
Swiss Franc (CME)-CHF 125,000; $ per CHF							
March	1.1661	1.1753		1.1627	**1.1684**	.0019	47,031
June	1.1800	1.1861		1.1740	**1.1793**	.0019	433
Australian Dollar (CME)-AUD 100,000; $ per AUD							
Feb	.6602	.6627		.6556	**.6599**	−.0010	314
March	.6610	.6633		.6561	**.6605**	−.0010	163,864
Mexican Peso (CME)-MXN 500,000; $ per MXN							
Feb	.05830	.05830		.05796	**.05815**	−.00002	132
March	.05784	.05803		.05759	**.05785**	−.00002	249,518
Euro (CME)-€125,000; $ per €							
Feb	1.0853	1.0895	▼	1.0804	**1.0848**	−.0006	4,102
March	1.0866	1.0909	▼	1.0810	**1.0861**	−.0006	714,802

Index Futures

	Open	High	hi lo	Low	Settle	Chg	Open interest
Mini DJ Industrial Average (CBT)-$5 x index							
March	38568	38720	▲	38247	**38280**	−332	107,441
June	39009	39095	▲	38642	**38663**	−334	448
Mini S&P 500 (CME)-$50 x index							
March	4930.25	4938.00		4866.00	**4870.50**	−80.50	2,273,583
June	4988.00	4993.50		4921.00	**4925.25**	−82.00	29,039
Mini S&P Midcap 400 (CME)-$100 x index							
March	2805.00	2810.70		2741.40	**2743.30**	−52.60	41,177
June					**2766.00**	−51.40	1
Mini Nasdaq 100 (CME)-$20 x index							
March	17415.50	17484.00		17221.50	**17242.25**	−346.25	292,578
June	17670.25	17709.75		17447.25	**17463.75**	−351.50	1,749
Mini Russell 2000 (CME)-$50 x index							
March	2009.50	2019.60		1953.50	**1955.90**	−50.00	509,215
June	2030.70	2040.60		1975.00	**1977.20**	−50.40	1,031
Mini Russell 1000 (CME)-$50 x index							
March	2693.60	2714.00		2669.20	**2670.40**	−44.50	7,017
U.S. Dollar Index (ICE-US)-$1,000 x index							
March	103.25	103.57		102.76	**103.09**	−.13	25,283
June	102.94	103.18		102.48	**102.77**	−.12	445

Source: FactSet

Cash Prices

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

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

	Wednesday
Energy	
Coal,C.Aplc.,12500Btu,1.2SO2-r,w	71.000
Coal,PwdrRvrBsn,8800Btu,0.8SO2-r,w	14.000
Metals	
Gold, per troy oz	
Engelhard industrial	2057.00
Handy & Harman base	2053.25
Handy & Harman fabricated	2279.11
LBMA Gold Price AM	*2036.80
LBMA Gold Price PM	*2043.05
Krugerrand,wholesale-e	2131.90
Maple Leaf-e	2152.40
American Eagle-e	2152.40
Mexican peso-e	2479.56
Austria crown-e	2012.31
Austria phil-e	2152.40
Silver, troy oz.	
Engelhard industrial	23.5500
Handy & Harman base	23.1230
Handy & Harman fabricated	28.9040
LBMA spot price	*£18.2000
(U.S.$ equivalent)	*23.0750
Coins,wholesale $1,000 face-a	19546
Other metals	
LBMA Platinum Price PM	*925.0
Platinum,Engelhard industrial	930.0
Palladium,Engelhard industrial	982.0
Aluminum, LME, $ per metric ton	*2226.5

	Wednesday
Copper,Comex spot	3.9025
Iron Ore, 62% Fe CFR China-s	*134.8
Steel, HRC USA, FOB Midwest Mill-s	*1080.0
Battery/EV metals	
BMI Lithium Carbonate, EXW China, =99.2%-v,w	13200
BMI Lithium Hydroxide, EXW China, =56.5% -v,w	11475
BMI Cobalt sulphate, EXW China, >20.5% -v,m	4448
BMI Nickel Sulphate, EXW China, >22%-v,m	3628
BMI Flake Graphite, FOB China, -100 Mesh, 94-95% -v,m	538
Fibers and Textiles	
Burlap,10-oz,40-inch NY yd-n,w	0.7575
Cotton,1 1/16 std lw-mdMphs-u	0.8317
Cotlook 'A' Index-t	*93.30
Hides,hvy native steers piece fob-u	n.a.
Wool,64s,staple,Terr del-u,w	n.a.
Grains and Feeds	
Bran,wheat middlings, KC-u,w	150
Corn,No. 2 yellow,Cent IL-bp,u	4.2500
Corn gluten feed,Midwest-u,w	164.9
Corn gluten meal,Midwest-u,w	455.0
Cottonseed meal-u,w	350
Hominy feed,Cent IL-u,w	188
Meat-bonemeal,50% pro Mnpls-u,w	220
Oats,No.2 milling,Mnpls-u	4.4250
Rice, Long Grain Milled, No. 2 AR-u,w	36.25
Sorghum,(Milo) No.2 Gulf-u	n.a.
SoybeanMeal,Cent IL,rail,ton48%-u,w	369.50
Soybeans,No.1 yllw IL-bp,u	11.9800
Wheat,Spring14%-pro Mnpls-u	9.0725

	Wednesday
Wheat,No.2 soft red,St.Louis-u	6.0275
Wheat - Hard - KC (USDA) $ per bu-u	6.6200
Wheat,No.1soft white,Portld,OR-u	6.6000
Food	
Beef,carcass equiv. index	
choice 1-3,600-900 lbs.-u	275.77
select 1-3,600-900 lbs.-u	263.06
Broilers, National comp wtd. avg.-u,w	1.2788
Butter,AA Chicago-d	2.7650
Cheddar cheese,bbl,Chicago-d	152.00
Cheddar cheese,blk,Chicago-d	165.00
Milk,Nonfat dry,Chicago lb.-d	123.00
Coffee,Brazilian,Comp-y	1.8899
Coffee,Colombian, NY-y	2.1212
Eggs,large white,Chicago-u	2.3550
Flour,hard winter KC-p	18.15
Hams,17-20 lbs,Mid-US fob-u	0.74
Hogs,Iowa-So. Minnesota-u	75.46
Pork bellies,12-14 lb MidUS-u	n.a.
Pork loins,13-19 lb MidUS-u	1.0954
Steers,Tex.-Okla. Choice-u	n.a.
Steers,feeder,Okla. City-u,w	285.25
Fats and Oils	
Degummed corn oil, crude wtd. avg.-u,w	n.a.
Grease,choice white,Chicago-h	0.3500
Lard,Chicago-u	n.a.
Soybean oil,crude;Centl IL-u,w	0.4868
Tallow,bleach;Chicago-h	0.3975
Tallow,edible,Chicago-u	n.a.

KEY TO CODES: A=ask; B=bid; BP=country elevator bids to producers; C=corrected; D=CME; E=Manfra,Tordella & Brookes; H=American Commodities Brokerage Co; K=bi-weekly; M=monthly; N=nominal; n.a.=not quoted or not available; P=Sosland Publishing; R=SNL Energy; S=Platts-TSI; T=Cotlook Limited; U=USDA; V=Benchmark Mineral Intelligence; W=weekly; Y=International Coffee Organization; Z=not quoted. *Data as of 1/30

Source: Dow Jones Market Data

Bonds | wsj.com/market-data/bonds/benchmarks

Tracking Bond Benchmarks

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

Total return close	YTD total return (%)	Index	Yield (%) Latest	Low	High
Broad Market Bloomberg Fixed Income Indices					
2056.06	-0.3	U.S. Aggregate	4.590	4.180	5.740
U.S. Corporate Indexes Bloomberg Fixed Income Indices					
3115.57	-0.2	U.S. Corporate	5.110	4.830	6.430
2998.78	0.2	Intermediate	5.000	4.730	6.350
4180.61	-0.9	Long term	5.320	5.010	6.600
596.44	-0.6	Double-A-rated	4.660	4.320	5.760
839.68	n.a.	Triple-B-rated	5.320	5.080	6.700
High Yield Bonds ICE BofA					
525.90	n.a.	High Yield Constrained	7.842	7.620	9.560
505.35	-0.3	Triple-C-rated	n.a.	12.776	15.457
3542.44	n.a.	High Yield 100	n.a.	7.022	9.101
458.19	0.4	Global High Yield Constrained	7.738	7.648	9.440
348.92	0.8	Europe High Yield Constrained	6.288	6.262	8.022
U.S Agency Bloomberg Fixed Income Indices					
1786.19	0.3	U.S Agency	4.440	4.130	5.390
1579.70	0.4	10-20 years	4.420	4.120	5.370
3429.62	-0.6	20-plus years	4.670	4.300	5.740
2723.44	-0.1	Yankee	4.910	4.670	6.110

Total return close	YTD total return (%)	Index	Yield (%) Latest	Low	High
Mortgage-Backed Bloomberg Fixed Income Indices					
2027.51	-0.5	Mortgage-Backed	4.800	4.140	6.050
2001.82	-0.5	Ginnie Mae (GNMA)	4.810	4.170	6.020
1193.06	-0.5	Fannie mae (FNMA)	4.800	4.140	6.050
1840.67	-0.2	Freddie Mac (FHLMC)	4.700	4.090	6.190
586.50	-0.3	Muni Master	3.163	2.757	4.311
417.13	-0.3	7-12 year	2.839	2.392	4.097
474.54	-0.3	12-22 year	3.494	3.257	4.742
448.15	-0.2	22-plus year	4.144	4.020	5.274
Global Government J.P. Morgan†					
540.78	-0.5	Global Government	3.140	2.740	3.810
793.11	-1.2	Canada	3.400	2.880	4.260
n.a.	n.a.	EMU§	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
655.73	-0.7	France	2.790	2.540	3.630
464.50	-0.7	Germany	2.250	2.020	3.030
276.76	-0.8	Japan	1.130	0.710	1.300
504.82	-0.8	Netherlands	2.500	2.260	3.320
793.31	-2.3	U.K.	4.170	3.340	4.880
838.57	-1.2	Emerging Markets **	7.441	7.102	8.842

*Constrained indexes limit individual issuer concentrations to 2%; the High Yield 100 are the 100 largest bonds † In local currency § Euro-zone bonds

** EMBI Global Index

Sources: ICE Data Services; Bloomberg Fixed Income Indices; J.P.Morgan

Global Government Bonds: Mapping Yields

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

Coupon (%)	Country/ Maturity, in years	Yield (%) Latest	Previous	Month ago	Year ago	Spread Under/Over U.S. Treasurys, in basis points Latest	Prev	Year ago
4.250	U.S. 2	4.227 ▼	4.357	4.248	4.207			
4.500	10	3.965 ▼	4.056	3.860	3.527			
0.250	Australia 2	3.694 ▼	3.839	3.718	3.168	-53.6	-49.3	-104.4
3.000	10	4.024 ▼	4.153	3.965	3.561	5.5	11.9	4.9
2.500	France 2	2.443 ▼	2.570	2.917	2.726	-178.4	-176.3	-148.6
3.500	10	2.656 ▼	2.767	2.538	2.748	-131.2	-126.7	-76.4
3.100	Germany 2	2.521 ▼	2.634	2.401	2.657	-170.6	-169.9	-155.4
2.200	10	2.174 ▼	2.274	2.009	2.293	-179.1	-176.0	-121.9
3.600	Italy 2	3.034 ▼	3.118	3.013	3.099	-119.6	-121.4	-111.2
4.200	10	3.729 ▼	3.804	3.747	4.148	-23.9	-23.0	63.7
0.100	Japan 2	0.096 ▲	0.057	0.057	-0.017	-413.3	-427.5	-422.9
0.600	10	0.736 ▲	0.712	0.626	0.499	-323.2	-332.2	-301.3
0.000	Spain 2	2.989 ▼	3.097	2.943	2.908	-124.0	-123.5	-130.4
3.550	10	3.078 ▼	3.192	2.956	3.282	-89.0	-84.2	-22.9
3.500	U.K. 2	4.224 ▼	4.339	3.975	3.456	-0.5	0.7	-75.5
4.250	10	3.801 ▼	3.904	3.539	3.338	-16.7	-13.0	-17.4

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

Corporate Debt

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

Investment-grade spreads that tightened the most...

Issuer	Symbol	Coupon (%)	Yield (%)	Maturity	Spread*, in basis points Current	One-day change	Last week
Netflix	NFLX	4.875	4.66	April 15, '28	78	–48	76
Philip Morris International	PM	6.375	5.19	May 16, '38	124	–46	123
Banco Santander	SANTAN	2.749	5.76	Dec. 3, '30	189	–14	188
Sumitomo Mitsui Financial	SUMIBK	5.880	4.84	July 13, '26	62	–9	n.a.
Lloyds Banking	LLOYDS	3.750	4.98	Jan. 11, '27	98	–7	106
Royal Bank of Canada	RY	1.400	4.68	Nov. 2, '26	45	–7	46
Westpac Banking	WSTP	5.535	4.60	Nov. 17, '28	70	–7	72
Bank of America	BAC	6.110	5.23	Jan. 29, '37	128	–6	132

...And spreads that widened the most

Issuer	Symbol	Coupon (%)	Yield (%)	Maturity	Current	One-day change	Last week
Banque Federative du Credit Mutuel	BFCM	5.896	5.02	July 13, '26	78	28	76
Bank of Montreal	BMO	5.266	4.72	Dec. 11, '26	52	24	55
Citigroup	C	5.300	5.54	May 6, '44	122	16	n.a.
Hasbro	HAS	6.350	5.88	March 15, '40	156	10	148
Lloyds Banking	LLOYDS	4.650	5.46	March 24, '26	123	10	n.a.
FedEx	FDX	4.900	4.88	Jan. 15, '34	96	9	83
PNC Financial Services	PNC	4.050	4.99	July 26, '28	111	9	98
Reinsurance Group of America	RGA	5.500	5.46	Jan. 11, '31	154	9	153

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

Issuer	Symbol	Coupon (%)	Yield (%)	Maturity	Bond Price as % of face value Current	One-day change	Last week
Occidental Petroleum	OXY	6.450	5.67	Sept. 15, '36	106.988	0.71	104.741
Teva Pharmaceutical Finance Netherlands	...	3.150	5.82	Oct. 1, '26	93.500	0.57	92.875
Xerox	XRXCRP	6.750	8.54	Dec. 15, '39	84.617	0.53	83.960
Bath & Body Works	BBWI	6.950	7.18	March 1, '33	98.500	0.50	99.573

...And with the biggest price decreases

Issuer	Symbol	Coupon (%)	Yield (%)	Maturity	Current	One-day change	Last week
Dish DBS	...	5.125	28.90	June 1, '29	37.208	–2.29	39.500
Hughes Satellite Systems	...	6.625	24.24	Aug. 1, '26	68.375	–1.30	72.750
Navient	NAVI	5.625	8.82	Aug. 1, '33	79.750	–0.75	80.250
Talcott Resolution Life	TALRES	7.650	7.82	June 15, '27	99.500	–0.40	100.250
CSC Holdings	CSCHLD	5.250	5.51	June 1, '24	99.900	–0.29	99.930
Genworth Financial	GNW	6.500	7.69	June 15, '34	91.625	–0.27	91.500
Bausch Health	BHCCN	11.000	22.14	Sept. 30, '28	68.530	–0.20	68.520
Occidental Petroleum	OXY	6.200	5.97	March 15, '40	102.383	–0.17	n.a.

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

Source: MarketAxess

Macro & Market Economics

Watching the Gauges: U.S. Supply and Demand

Inventories, imports and demand for the week ended January 26. Current figures are in thousands of barrels or thousands of gallons per day, except natural-gas figures, which are in billions of cubic feet. Natural-gas import and demand data are available monthly only.

Inventories, 000s barrels | **Imports,** 000s barrels per day

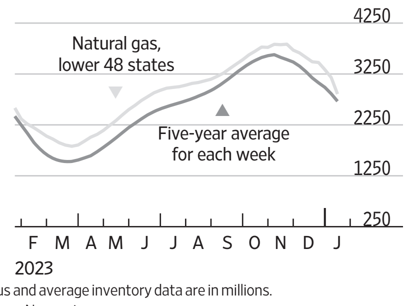
	Inventories: Current	Expected change	Previous week	Year ago	4-week avg	5-year avg	Imports: Current	Expected change	Previous week	Year ago	4-week avg	5-year avg
Crude oil and petroleum prod	1,231,521	...	1,241	1,236	1,249	1,254	7,276	...	7,201	9,304	8,006	8,680
Crude oil excluding SPR	421,912	-800	421	453	426	446	5,605	...	5,580	7,283	6,212	6,498
Gasoline	254,134	...	253	235	250	253	400	...	628	501	519	605
Finished gasoline	18,882	1,400	18	17	19	23	13	...	84	87	45	59
Reformulated	21	...	0	0	0	0	0	...	0	0	0	0
Conventional	18,861	...	18	17	19	23	13	...	84	87	45	59
Blend. components	235,252	...	235	218	231	230	387	...	545	414	475	545
Natural gas (bcf)	2,856	...	3	3	3	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kerosene-type jet fuel	41,148	...	42	35	41	40	92	...	104	110	80	104
Distillates	130,795	-800	133	118	133	137	138	...	201	313	182	406
Heating oil	6,404	...	6	7	6	9	3	...	0	0	1	1
Diesel	124,391	...	127	110	127	64	136	...	201	313	181	405
Residual fuel oil	26,716	...	26	31	26	31	126	...	121	204	111	229
Other oils	269,953	...	272	266	276	265	774	...	461	723	776	641
Net crude, petroleum products, incl. SPR	1,588,923	...	1,598	1,607	1,605	1,830	-2,543	...	-3,562	34	-2,382	688

Weekly Demand, 000s barrels per day

	Current	Expected change	Previous week	Year ago	4-week avg	5-year avg
Total petroleum product	20,119	...	19,556	20,106	19,787	20,547
Finished motor gasoline	8,144	...	7,880	8,491	8,155	8,556
Kerosene-type jet fuel	1,590	...	1,516	1,584	1,501	1,478
Distillates	3,757	...	3,784	3,692	3,655	3,991
Residual fuel oil	279	...	479	330	264	159
Propane/propylene	1,931	...	1,527	1,482	1,612	...
Other oils	4,418	...	4,371	4,527	4,604	...

Natural gas storage

Billions of cubic feet; weekly totals



Note: Expected changes are provided by Dow Jones Newswires' survey of analysts. Previous and average inventory data are in millions.
Sources: FactSet; Dow Jones Market Data; U.S. Energy Information Administration; Dow Jones Newswires

Exchange-Traded Portfolios | WSJ.com/ETFresearch

Largest 100 exchange-traded funds, latest session

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

ETF	Symbol	Closing Price	Chg (%)	YTD (%)
CommSvsSPDR	XLC	75.88	-2.47	4.4
CnsmrDiscSel	XLY	170.92	-1.82	-4.4
DimenUSCoreEq2	DFAC	29.27	-1.75	0.1
EnSelSectorSPDR	XLE	83.41	-1.87	-0.5
FinSelSectorSPDR	XLF	38.76	-1.22	3.1
HealthCrSelSect	XLV	140.38	-0.14	2.9
InvscNasd100	QQQM	171.61	-1.97	1.8
InvscQQQI	QQQ	416.97	-1.96	1.8
InvscS&P500EW	RSP	156.46	-1.28	-0.8
iShCoreDivGrowth	DGRO	54.50	-1.12	1.3
iShCoreMSCIEAFE	IEFA	69.87	-0.48	-0.7
iShCoreMSCIEM	IEMG	48.45	-0.45	-4.2
iShCoreMSCITotInt	IXUS	63.82	-0.55	-1.7
iShCoreS&P500	IVV	485.20	-1.64	1.6
iShCoreS&P MC	IJH	272.34	-1.86	-1.7
iShCoreS&P SC	IJR	104.00	-2.54	-3.9
iShCoreS&PTotUS	ITOT	106.33	-1.65	1.0
iShCoreTotUSDBd	IUSB	46.27	0.96	0.4
iShCoreUSAggBd	AGG	99.10	0.46	-0.2
iShEdgeMSCIMinUSA	USMV	79.72	-0.94	2.2
iShEdgeMSCIUSAQual	QUAL	150.50	-1.46	2.3
iShGoldTr	IAU	38.49	-0.05	-1.4
iShiBoxx$HYCpBd	HYG	77.48	-0.28	0.1
iShiBoxx$IGCpBd	LQD	110.17	0.25	-0.4
iShJPMUSDEmBd	EMB	87.98	-0.18	-1.2
iShMBS	MBB	93.80	0.53	-0.3
iShMSCIACWI	ACWI	102.05	-1.30	0.3
iShMSCI EAFE	EFA	75.01	-0.50	-0.5
iSh MSCI EM	EEM	38.39	-0.54	-4.5
iShMSCIEAFEValue	EFV	51.54	-0.54	-1.1
iShNatlMuniBd	MUB	108.46	0.28	0.0
iSh1-5YIGCpBd	IGSB	51.48	0.28	0.4

ETF	Symbol	Closing Price	Chg (%)	YTD (%)
iSh1-3YTreaBd	SHY	82.30	0.18	0.3
iShRussMC	IWR	76.63	-1.52	-1.4
iShRuss1000	IWB	265.77	-1.64	1.3
iShRuss1000Grw	IWF	310.56	-2.12	2.4
iShRuss1000Val	IWD	165.35	-1.05	0.1
iShRuss2000	IWM	192.88	-2.44	-3.9
iShS&P500Grw	IVW	77.24	-2.12	2.8
iShS&P500Value	IVE	174.26	-0.93	0.2
iShSelectDiv	DVY	115.12	-1.72	-1.8
iSh7-10YTreaBd	IEF	96.46	0.84	0.1
iShShortTreaBd	SHV	110.57	0.03	0.4
iShTIPSBond	TIP	107.85	0.65	0.3
iSh20+YTreaBd	TLT	96.66	0.98	-2.2
iShUSTreasuryBd	GOVT	23.00	0.57	-0.2
iSh0-3MTreaBd	SGOV	100.71	...	0.4
JPM EqPrem	JEPI	55.96	-0.55	1.8
JPM UltShIncm	JPST	50.49	0.04	0.5
PacerUSCashCows	COWZ	51.71	-1.28	-0.5
ProShUltPrQQQ	TQQQ	52.64	-5.88	3.8
SPDRBbg1-3MTB	BIL	91.78	0.01	0.4
SPDR DJIA Tr	DIA	381.37	-0.81	1.2
SPDR Gold	GLD	188.45	-0.07	-1.4
SPDRPtfDevxUS	SPDW	33.67	-0.56	-1.0
SPDRS&P500Value	SPYV	46.76	-0.93	0.3
SPDRPtfS&P500	SPLG	56.82	-1.56	1.6
SPDRS&P500Growth	SPYG	66.93	-2.09	2.9
SPDR S&P 500	SPY	482.88	-1.63	1.6
SchwabIntEquity	SCHF	36.61	-0.60	-0.9
SchwabUS BrdMkt	SCHB	56.28	-1.69	1.1
SchwabUS Div	SCHD	76.24	-1.23	0.1
SchwabUS LC	SCHX	57.23	-1.60	1.5
SchwabUS LC Grw	SCHG	85.13	-2.24	2.6
SPDR S&PMdCpTr	MDY	498.56	-1.84	-1.7

ETF	Symbol	Closing Price	Chg (%)	YTD (%)
SPDR S&P Div	SDY	123.53	-1.02	-1.2
TechSelectSector	XLK	197.68	-2.10	2.7
VangdInfoTech	VGT	493.91	-2.08	2.0
VangdSC Val	VBR	175.48	-2.19	-2.5
VangdExtMkt	VXF	160.38	-2.17	-2.5
VangdDivApp	VIG	172.49	-1.08	1.2
VangdFTSEAWxUS	VEU	55.21	-0.54	-1.7
VangdFTSEDevMk	VEA	47.38	-0.57	-1.1
VangdFTSE EM	VWO	39.64	-0.38	-3.6
VangdFTSE Europe	VGK	63.69	-0.75	-1.2
VangdGrowth	VUG	317.59	-2.16	2.2
VangdHlthCr	VHT	256.64	-0.23	2.4
VangdHiDiv	VYM	112.47	-1.12	0.8
VangdIntermBd	BIV	76.41	0.59	0.0
VangdIntrCorpBd	VCIT	81.24	0.48	-0.0
VangdIntermTrea	VGIT	59.48	0.64	0.3
VangdLC	VV	222.01	-1.57	1.8
VangdMegaGrwth	MGK	266.04	-2.22	2.5
VangdMC	VO	229.18	-1.38	-1.5
VangdMBS	VMBS	46.19	0.43	-0.4
VangdRealEst	VNQ	83.89	-0.96	-5.1
VangdRuss1000Grw	VONG	79.91	-2.10	2.4
VangdS&P500ETF	VOO	443.82	-1.63	1.6
VangdST Bond	BSV	77.25	0.31	0.3
VangdSTCpBd	VCSH	77.62	0.22	0.3
VangdShortTrea	VGSH	58.54	0.26	0.4
VangdSC	VB	207.58	-2.10	-2.7
VangdTaxExemptBd	VTEB	50.93	0.33	-0.2
VangdTotalBd	BND	73.43	0.42	-0.2
VangdTotIntlBd	BNDX	49.08	0.39	-0.6
VangdTotIntlStk	VXUS	56.97	-0.52	-1.7
VangdTotalStk	VTI	239.87	-1.68	1.1
VangdTotWrldStk	VT	102.88	-1.22	...
VangdValue	VTV	150.80	-0.94	0.9
WT FRTrea	USFR	50.28	0.06	0.1

BIGGEST 1,000 STOCKS

How to Read the Stock Tables

The following explanations apply to NYSE, NYSE Arca, NYSE American and Nasdaq Stock Market listed securities. Prices are composite quotations that include primary market trades as well as trades reported by Nasdaq BX (formerly Boston), Chicago Stock Exchange, Cboe, NYSE National and Nasdaq ISE.

The list comprises the 1,000 largest companies based on market capitalization.

Underlined quotations are those stocks with large changes in volume compared with the issue's average trading volume.

Boldfaced quotations highlight those issues whose price changed by 5% or more if their previous closing price was $2 or higher.

Footnotes:
▲-New 52-week high.
▼-New 52-week low.
dd-Indicates loss in the most recent four quarters.
FD-First day of trading.
h-Does not meet continued listing standards
lf-Late filing
q-Temporary exemption from Nasdaq requirements.
t-NYSE bankruptcy
v-Trading halted on primary market.
vj-In bankruptcy or receivership or being reorganized under the Bankruptcy Code, or securities assumed by such companies.

Wall Street Journal stock tables reflect composite regular trading as of 4 p.m. and changes in the closing prices from 4 p.m. the previous day.

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

A B C

Stock	Sym	Close	Net Chg
AECOM	ACM	88.19	-1.51
AES	AES	16.68	-0.12
▲ Aflac	AFL	84.34	-1.39
AGCO	AGCO	122.33	-1.93
Ansys	ANSS	327.83	-3.13
APA	APA	31.33	-1.09
ASE Tech	ASX	9.29	-0.09
▲ ASML	ASML	869.82	1.79
AT&T	T	17.69	0.16
AbbottLabs	ABT	113.15	-0.33
AbbVie	ABBV	164.40	-0.52
AcadiaHealthcare	ACHC	82.14	-2.20
Accenture	ACN	363.88	-7.42
AcuityBrands	AYI	238.16	-4.82
Adobe	ADBE	617.78	-10.18
AdvDrainageSys	WMS	130.42	-2.29
AdvMicroDevices	AMD	167.69	-4.37
Aegon	AEG	5.78	-0.08
AerCap	AER	76.56	-1.29
AffirmHldgs	**AFRM**	**40.51**	**-2.22**
AgilentTechs	A	130.10	-4.18
AgnicoEagleMines	AEM	49.16	-0.34
AirProducts	APD	255.71	-3.57
Airbnb	ABNB	144.14	-5.30
AkamaiTech	AKAM	123.23	-1.43
Albemarle	ALB	114.74	-5.57
Albertsons	ACI	21.22	-0.45
Alcon	ALC	75.11	-0.47
AlexandriaRlEst	ARE	120.90	-0.30
Alibaba	BABA	72.17	-0.15
AlignTech	ALGN	267.32	2.58
Allegion	ALLE	123.89	-2.30
AlliantEnergy	LNT	48.66	-0.22
Allstate	ALL	155.25	-1.24
AllyFinancial	ALLY	36.68	-0.60
AlnylamPharm	ALNY	172.91	-7.21
Alphabet A	**GOOGL**	**140.10**	**-11.36**
Alphabet C	**GOOG**	**141.80**	**-11.25**
Altria	MO	40.12	-0.34
Amazon.com	AMZN	155.20	-3.80
Ambev	ABEV	2.62	-0.01
Amcor	AMCR	9.43	-0.13
Amdocs	DOX	91.68	-0.99
Ameren	AEE	69.57	-0.46
AmericaMovil	AMX	18.05	-0.08
AmerAirlines	AAL	14.23	-0.30
AEP	AEP	78.14	-0.30
▲ AmerExpress	AXP	200.74	-3.41
AmericanFin	AFG	120.40	-1.44
AmHomes4Rent	AMH	35.05	-0.24
▲ AIG	AIG	69.51	-0.87
AmerTowerREIT	AMT	195.65	0.09
AmerWaterWorks	AWK	124.02	-0.38
AmericoldRealty	COLD	27.50	-0.45
Ameriprise	AMP	386.83	-6.72
Ametek	AME	162.05	-3.82
▲ Amgen	AMGN	314.26	-0.36
AmkorTech	AMKR	31.66	-1.56
Amphenol	APH	101.10	-1.68
AnalogDevices	ADI	192.36	-2.38
AngloGoldAsh	AU	17.62	-0.13
AB InBev	BUD	61.74	-0.70
AnnalyCap	NLY	19.19	-0.41
Aon	AON	298.43	0.25
ApellisPharm	APLS	63.29	-2.68
APi Group	APG	31.52	-0.97
▲ ApolloGlbMgmt	APO	100.40	-1.20
AppFolio	APPF	219.26	-6.20
Apple	AAPL	184.40	-3.64
ApplMaterials	AMAT	164.30	-1.94
Applovin	APP	41.13	-1.34
Aptargroup	ATR	129.88	-1.96
Aptiv	**APTV**	**81.33**	**-5.39**
Aramark	ARMK	29.08	-0.16
ArcelorMittal	MT	27.47	-0.26
ArchCapital	ACGL	82.43	1.85
ADM	ADM	55.58	-0.42
▲ AresMgmt	ARES	121.48	-0.77
argenx	ARGX	380.51	-0.64
AristaNetworks	ANET	258.68	-13.28
Arm	ARM	70.67	-1.30
AscendisPharma	ASND	129.93	0.73
AspenTech	AZPN	191.99	-9.75
Assurant	AIZ	167.95	-2.14
AstraZeneca	AZN	66.64	-0.56
Atlassian	TEAM	249.77	-7.66
AtmosEnergy	ATO	113.94	-0.57
Autodesk	ADSK	253.81	-2.66
Autoliv	ALV	107.12	-1.25
ADP	ADP	245.78	7.19
AutoZone	AZO	2762.13	-76.53
Avalonbay	AVB	179.01	0.57
Avangrid	AGR	30.38	-0.29
Avantor	AVTR	22.99	-0.43
AveryDennison	AVY	199.45	-1.79
AxaltaCoating	AXTA	32.42	-0.37
AxonEnterprise	AXON	249.06	-5.19
BCE	BCE	40.35	-0.42
BHP Group	BHP	61.22	-0.55
BILL	BILL	78.05	-0.16
BJ'sWholesale	BJ	64.34	-1.06
BP	BP	35.10	-0.79
▲ BWX Tech	BWXT	81.48	-1.40
Baidu	BIDU	105.31	0.02
BakerHughes	BKR	28.50	-0.84
Ball	BALL	55.45	-1.09
BBVA	BBVA	9.33	...
BancoBradesco	BBDO	2.80	0.02
BancodeChile	BCH	22.22	-0.08
BancSanBrasil	BSBR	5.72	-0.24
BcoSantChile	BSAC	18.28	-0.06
BancoSantander	SAN	4.00	0.04
BanColombia	CIB	31.46	-0.29
BankofAmerica	BAC	34.01	-0.78
BankMontreal	BMO	94.18	-1.69
▲ BankNY Mellon	BK	55.46	-0.58
BankNovaScotia	BNS	46.75	-0.19
Barclays	BCS	7.54	-0.22
BarrickGold	GOLD	15.60	-0.08
Bath&BodyWks	BBWI	42.66	-0.99
BaxterIntl	BAX	38.69	-0.01
BectonDicknsn	BDX	238.81	2.60
▼ BeiGene	BGNE	148.23	-6.81
BellRing	BRBR	55.27	-1.03
BentleySystems	BSY	50.40	-1.63
Berkley	WRB	81.88	0.25
▲ BerkHathwy B	BRK.B	383.74	-3.41
BerkHathwy A	BRK.A	578019	-6660.01
BerryGlobal	BERY	65.46	-1.71
BestBuy	BBY	72.49	-0.83
Bio-Techne	TECH	70.32	-2.39
Bio-RadLab A	BIO	320.89	-11.52
Biogen	BIIB	246.66	-0.42
BioMarinPharm	BMRN	88.08	-1.54
BioNTech	BNTX	95.04	0.06
Birkenstock	BIRK	46.39	-1.11
BlackRock	BLK	774.31	-7.42
Blackstone	BX	124.45	-2.75
Block	SQ	65.01	-3.21
BlueOwlCapital	OWL	15.54	-0.26
Boeing	**BA**	**211.04**	**10.60**
Booking	BKNG	3507.47	-47.68
BoozAllen	BAH	140.77	-3.91
BorgWarner	BWA	33.90	-0.52
BostonProps	**BXP**	**66.50**	**-3.50**
▲ BostonSci	BSX	63.26	1.84
BristolMyers	BMY	48.87	-0.52
BritishAmTob	BTI	29.60	-0.44
Broadcom	AVGO	1180.00	-28.16
BroadridgeFinl	BR	204.20	-4.76
▲ BrookfieldAsset	BAM	40.19	-0.85
Brookfield	BN	39.68	-1.28
BrookfieldInfr	BIP	31.39	-0.56
BrookfieldRenew	BEPC	27.92	-0.30
Brown&Brown	BRO	77.56	-0.74
Brown-Forman A	BF.A	56.37	-1.42
Brown-Forman B	BF.B	54.90	-1.21
Bruker	BRKR	71.51	-1.87
BuildersFirst	BLDR	173.73	-2.68
BungeGlobal	BG	88.09	-2.21
BurlingtonStrs	BURL	191.15	-5.96
CACI Intl	CACI	343.73	0.86
CBRE Group	CBRE	86.31	-0.38
CDW	CDW	226.72	-3.50
CF Industries	CF	75.51	-1.89
▲ CGI A	GIB	111.82	0.61
CH Robinson	CHRW	84.09	-1.82
CME Group	CME	205.84	-0.27
CMS Energy	CMS	57.16	-0.12
CNA Fin	CNA	44.07	-0.19
CNH Indl	CNHI	12.00	-0.07
▲ CRH	CRH	71.76	-0.38
▲ CSX	CSX	35.70	-0.15
CVS Health	CVS	74.37	0.52
CadenceDesign	CDNS	288.46	-6.16
CaesarsEnt	CZR	43.87	-0.40
CamdenProperty	CPT	93.84	-1.22
Cameco	CCJ	47.75	-0.15
CampbellSoup	CPB	44.63	-0.05
CIBC	CM	45.18	-0.77
CanNtlRlwy	CNI	124.04	-0.98
CanadianNatRscs	CNQ	63.99	-1.03
CdnPacKC	CP	80.47	1.07
CapitalOne	COF	135.32	-3.29
▲ CardinalHealth	CAH	109.19	2.13
▲ Carlisle	CSL	314.26	-6.12
Carlyle	CG	40.02	-0.74
CarMax	KMX	71.18	-1.57
Carnival	CCL	16.58	0.11
Carnival	CUK	15.16	0.10
CarrierGlobal	CARR	54.71	-1.62
Carvana	CVNA	43.06	-1.08
CaseysGenStores	CASY	271.36	-2.62
Catalent	CTLT	51.64	-1.40
▲ Caterpillar	CAT	300.31	-4.45
Celanese	CE	146.29	-4.10
CelsiusHldg	CELH	49.90	-1.04
Cemex	CX	8.28	-0.07
▲ **Cencora**	**COR**	**232.68**	**12.15**
CenovusEnergy	CVE	16.18	-0.26
Centene	CNC	75.31	0.45
CenterPointEner	CNP	27.94	-0.03
CentraisElBras	EBR	8.26	0.11
CerevelTherap	CERE	41.90	-0.19
CeridianHCM	CDAY	69.52	0.07
CharlesRiverLabs	CRL	216.28	-7.68
CharterComms	CHTR	370.71	-6.27
▲ CheckPoint	CHKP	158.93	-1.38
Chemed	CHE	592.79	-9.26
CheniereEnergy	LNG	163.99	-2.56
CheniereEnerPtrs	CQP	52.92	-2.06
ChesapeakeEner	CHK	77.11	-2.01
Chevron	CVX	147.43	-2.69
Chewy	CHWY	17.82	-0.54
▲ Chipotle	CMG	2408.77	-10.51
▲ Chubb	CB	245.00	1.83
ChunghwaTel	CHT	37.58	-0.28
▲ Church&Dwight	CHD	99.85	-0.65
ChurchillDowns	CHDN	120.97	-1.85
Ciena	CIEN	53.00	0.12
Cigna	CI	300.95	2.00
CincinnatiFinl	CINF	110.80	-1.23
▲ Cintas	CTAS	604.57	-4.24
CiscoSystems	CSCO	50.18	-2.06
▲ Citigroup	C	56.17	-0.92
CitizensFin	CFG	32.70	-1.61
CleanHarbors	CLH	167.96	-4.65
Cleveland-Cliffs	CLF	20.05	-0.08
Clorox	CLX	145.25	-0.48
Cloudflare	NET	79.05	-3.91
Coca-Cola	KO	59.49	-0.41
CocaColaCon	COKE	861.39	-7.33
▲ Coca-ColaEuro	CCEP	68.90	-0.24
CognizantTech	CTSH	77.12	-0.48
Coherent	COHR	47.54	-1.15
CoinbaseGlbl	COIN	128.20	-2.62
▲ ColgatePalm	CL	84.20	-0.03
Comcast A	CMCSA	46.54	-0.11
Comerica	**CMA**	**52.58**	**-3.01**
ComfortSystems	FIX	217.47	-4.71
▲ SABESP	SBS	15.93	0.19
ConagraBrands	CAG	29.15	-0.29
ConocoPhillips	COP	111.87	-2.18
ConEd	ED	90.90	0.22
ConstBrands A	STZ	245.08	-3.35
ConstellationEner	CEG	122.00	0.12
Cooper	COO	373.03	-2.17
Copart	CPRT	48.04	-0.91
Core&Main	CNM	41.31	-0.92
CorebridgeFin	CRBG	24.17	-0.46
Corning	GLW	32.49	-0.81
Corteva	CTVA	45.48	-0.35
CoStar	CSGP	83.48	-1.76
▲ Costco	COST	694.88	-5.86
CoterraEnergy	CTRA	24.88	-0.43
Coty	COTY	12.08	-0.19
Coupang	CPNG	14.00	-0.39
Credicorp	BAP	148.43	-1.41
CrowdStrike	CRWD	292.50	-8.85
CrownCastle	CCI	108.25	0.27
Crown Holdings	CCK	88.50	-2.19
CubeSmart	CUBE	43.22	-0.52
Cummins	CMI	239.30	-3.50
Curtiss-Wright	CW	222.57	-2.88
CyberArkSoftware	CYBR	233.48	-3.85
Cytokinetics	CYTK	78.13	-0.60

D E F

Stock	Sym	Close	Net Chg
DTE Energy	DTE	105.42	0.86
▲ Danaher	DHR	239.91	-5.04
Darden	DRI	162.58	-1.21
DarlingIngred	DAR	43.30	-1.27
Datadog	DDOG	124.44	-2.39
DaVita	DVA	108.16	0.64
DeckersOutdoor	DECK	753.73	-19.81
Deere	DE	393.58	-3.35
DellTechC	DELL	82.88	-1.92
DeltaAir	DAL	39.14	-0.38
DentsplySirona	XRAY	34.75	-0.28
DescartesSystems	DSGX	87.59	-1.52
DeutscheBank	DB	12.85	-0.27
DevonEnergy	DVN	42.02	-1.30
DexCom	DXCM	121.35	0.56
Diageo	DEO	144.33	-0.29
DiamondbkEner	FANG	153.74	-3.19
Dick's	DKS	149.07	-4.01
DigitalRealty	DLR	140.46	-3.76
DiscoverFinSvcs	DFS	105.52	-2.72
Disney	DIS	96.05	-0.89
DocuSign	DOCU	60.92	-0.69
DolbyLab	DLB	83.18	-1.48
DollarGeneral	DG	132.07	0.15
DollarTree	DLTR	130.62	-0.68
DominionEner	D	45.72	-0.02
Domino's	DPZ	426.22	-8.52
Donaldson	DCI	64.59	-0.58
DoorDash	DASH	104.20	-1.27
Dover	DOV	149.78	-1.70
Dow	DOW	53.60	-0.87
▲ DrReddy'sLab	RDY	71.95	2.56
DraftKings	DKNG	39.05	-1.24
Dropbox	DBX	31.68	-0.86
DukeEnergy	DUK	95.83	0.30
Duolingo	DUOL	178.89	-8.29
▼ DuPont	DD	61.80	-1.15
Dynatrace	DT	57.00	-2.35
elfBeauty	ELF	159.53	-1.48
▲ EMCOR	EME	228.11	-2.64
ENI	E	31.95	-0.50
EOG Rscs	EOG	113.79	-2.99
EPAM Systems	EPAM	278.11	-4.78
EQT	EQT	35.40	-0.75
▲ EagleMaterials	EXP	226.28	-2.58
EastWestBncp	EWBC	72.81	-2.04
EastGroup	EGP	177.43	-1.28
EastmanChem	EMN	83.55	-1.54
Eaton	ETN	246.08	-4.19
eBay	EBAY	41.07	-0.88
Ecolab	ECL	198.22	-2.52
Ecopetrol	EC	12.03	-0.22
EdisonIntl	EIX	67.48	0.17
EdwardsLife	**EW**	**78.47**	**4.57**
ElancoAnimal	ELAN	14.74	-0.38
Elastic	ESTC	117.06	-4.49
ElbitSystems	ESLT	206.80	-0.03
ElectronicArts	EA	137.58	0.03
ElevanceHealth	ELV	493.44	1.09
EmersonElec	EMR	91.73	-3.02
Enbridge	ENB	35.50	-0.48
▲ EncompassHealth	EHC	71.04	-0.83
Endeavor	EDR	24.75	-0.73
▲ EnergyTransfer	ET	14.30	-0.26
EnphaseEnergy	ENPH	104.13	-2.22
Entegris	ENTG	117.70	-4.26
Entergy	ETR	99.76	-0.49
EnterpriseProd	EPD	26.76	-0.27
Equifax	EFX	244.34	-3.87
▲ Equinix	EQIX	829.77	-11.81
Equinor	EQNR	28.67	-0.79
Equitable	EQH	32.69	-0.60
EquityLife	ELS	67.69	-0.20
EquityResdntl	EQR	60.19	0.89
▲ ErieIndemnity	ERIE	345.83	0.98
EssentialUtil	WTRG	35.86	-0.34
EssexProp	ESS	233.27	-1.20
EsteeLauder	EL	131.99	-2.19
Etsy	ETSY	66.56	-3.16
Everest	EG	384.97	5.24
Evergy	EVRG	50.77	0.08
EversourceEner	ES	54.22	-0.59
ExactSciences	EXAS	65.40	-0.28
Exelon	EXC	34.81	-0.24
Expedia	EXPE	148.33	-3.39
ExpeditorsIntl	EXPD	126.33	-2.16
ExtraSpaceSt	EXR	144.44	-1.12
ExxonMobil	XOM	102.81	-2.04
F5	FFIV	183.70	-3.14
FMC	FMC	56.20	-1.29
▲ Fabrinet	FN	213.51	-6.32
▲ FactSet	FDS	475.92	-3.32
FairIsaac	FICO	1198.83	1.77
Fastenal	FAST	68.23	-0.49
FederalRealty	FRT	101.73	-1.87
FedEx	FDX	241.29	-2.48
Ferguson	FERG	187.86	-3.00
Ferrari	RACE	345.92	-3.49
FidNatlFinl	FNF	50.03	-0.94
FidNatlInfo	FIS	62.26	-0.89
FifthThirdBncp	FITB	34.24	-1.13
FirstCitizBcshA	FCNCA	1510.00	-26.97
FirstHorizon	FHN	14.24	-0.57
FirstSolar	FSLR	146.30	-2.73
FirstEnergy	FE	36.68	-0.08
FirstService	FSV	167.63	-3.27
▲ Fiserv	FI	141.87	-2.18
FiveBelow	FIVE	179.46	-3.28
FleetCorTech	FLT	289.93	-7.00
▲ Flex	FLEX	23.74	-0.29
Floor&Decor	FND	100.56	-1.61
FlutterEnt	FLUT	207.64	0.89
▲ FomentoEconMex	FMX	135.54	-2.28
FordMotor	F	11.72	-0.06
Fortinet	FTNT	64.49	-2.22
Fortis	FTS	40.13	-0.18
▲ Fortive	FTV	78.18	3.48
FortuneBrands	FBIN	77.59	-3.20
FoxA	FOXA	32.30	...
FoxB	FOX	30.01	0.21
Franco-Nevada	FNV	108.25	0.11
FranklinRscs	BEN	26.63	-0.50
FreeportMcM	FCX	39.69	-0.28
FreseniusMedCare	FMS	19.30	-0.13

G H I

Stock	Sym	Close	Net Chg
GE HealthCare	GEHC	73.36	-0.64
GFLEnvironmental	GFL	33.97	-0.05
▲ GSK	GSK	39.44	0.35
Gallagher	AJG	232.16	1.59
Gaming&Leisure	GLPI	45.65	-0.19
Gap	GPS	18.69	-0.66
Garmin	GRMN	119.49	-2.37
Gartner	IT	457.44	-8.10
GenDigital	GEN	23.48	-0.49
Generac	GNRC	113.67	-2.17
▲ GeneralDynamics	GD	264.99	-3.68
▲ GeneralElec	GE	132.42	-1.51
GeneralMills	GIS	64.91	-0.44
GeneralMotors	GM	38.80	0.65
Genmab	GMAB	27.61	-0.52
Gentex	GNTX	33.13	-0.50
GenuineParts	GPC	140.23	-3.02
Gerdau	GGB	4.23	-0.05
GileadSciences	GILD	78.26	-0.36
GitLab	GTLB	71.11	-3.27
GlobalPayments	GPN	133.23	-2.71
GlobalFoundries	GFS	54.98	-1.49
Globant	GLOB	235.81	-9.18
▲ GlobeLife	GL	122.82	-1.54
GlobusMedical	GMED	52.79	-1.11
GoDaddy	GDDY	106.66	-2.34
GoldFields	GFI	14.80	0.15
▲ GoldmanSachs	GS	384.01	-2.86
Grab	GRAB	3.07	-0.01
Graco	GGG	85.30	-1.54
▲ Grainger	GWW	895.64	-19.14
GraphicPkg	GPK	25.51	-0.41
GpoAeroportuar	PAC	155.89	-2.32
GpoAeroportSur	ASR	292.34	-0.87
Guidewire	GWRE	111.68	-2.94
▲ HCA Healthcare	HCA	304.90	3.31
HDFC Bank	HDB	55.49	-0.23
HF Sinclair	DINO	56.49	-0.47
HP	HPQ	28.71	-0.44
HSBC	HSBC	39.33	-0.53
H World	HTHT	31.77	-0.13
Haleon	HLN	8.20	-0.03
Halliburton	HAL	35.65	-1.16
▲ HartfordFinl	HIG	86.96	-0.67
HealthpeakProp	PEAK	18.50	-0.12
Heico	HEI	179.59	-3.09
Heico A	HEI.A	141.47	-1.85
HenrySchein	HSIC	74.84	0.06
Hershey	HSY	193.54	-3.84
Hess	HES	140.53	-2.99
HessMidstream	HESM	33.81	-0.33
HewlettPackard	HPE	15.29	-0.60
Hilton	HLT	190.96	-3.22
Hologic	HOLX	74.44	-0.49
HomeDepot	HD	352.96	-4.14
HondaMotor	HMC	33.49	0.11
Honeywell	HON	202.26	-3.64
HormelFoods	HRL	30.37	-0.31
DR Horton	DHI	142.91	-0.35
HostHotels	HST	19.22	-0.46
HoulihanLokey	HLI	119.78	-3.13
HowmetAerospace	HWM	56.26	0.28
Hubbell	HUBB	335.57	-8.74
HubSpot	HUBS	611.00	-12.98
Humana	HUM	378.06	1.23
JBHunt	JBHT	200.98	-3.67
HuntingtonBcshs	HBAN	12.73	-0.39
▲ HuntingIngalls	HII	258.92	-1.40
HyattHotels	H	128.37	-2.33
ICICI Bank	IBN	24.40	0.03
IdexxLab	IDXX	515.08	-5.95
ING Groep	ING	14.20	-0.04
Invesco	IVZ	15.83	-0.44
IQVIA	IQV	208.23	-8.85
ITT	ITT	120.78	-2.49
IcahnEnterprises	IEP	18.25	0.09
Icon	ICLR	260.87	-1.65
IDEX	IEX	211.50	-2.17
▲ IllinoisToolWks	ITW	260.90	-4.91
Illumina	ILMN	143.01	-4.19
Immunogen	IMGN	29.32	-0.07
ImperialOil	IMO	57.69	-1.20
Incyte	INCY	58.77	-0.51
Informatica	INFA	30.00	-0.47
Infosys	INFY	19.86	-0.09
▲ IngersollRand	IR	79.86	-0.75
Ingredion	INGR	107.57	-1.69
Insulet	PODD	190.87	-1.25
Intel	INTC	43.08	0.16
InteractiveBrkrs	IBKR	88.75	-0.97
▲ ICE	ICE	127.33	-1.69
InterContinentl	IHG	95.26	-1.35
IBM	IBM	183.66	-4.21
IntlFlavors	IFF	80.68	-0.32
IntlPaper	IP	35.83	-0.49
Interpublic	IPG	32.99	-0.28
Intuit	INTU	631.33	-16.39
IntuitiveSurgical	ISRG	378.22	0.93
InvitatHomes	INVH	32.93	-0.15
IonisPharm	IONS	51.39	-0.51
IronMountain	IRM	67.52	-0.74
ItauUnibanco	ITUB	6.60	0.09

J K L

Stock	Sym	Close	Net Chg
JD.com	JD	22.55	-0.20
▲ JPMorganChase	JPM	174.36	-1.91
Jabil	JBL	125.29	-2.31
JackHenry	JKHY	165.83	-3.62
JacobsSolns	J	134.77	-3.54
JamesHardie	JHX	37.56	-0.38
JazzPharm	JAZZ	122.72	-2.84
JefferiesFinl	JEF	40.76	-0.13
J&J	JNJ	158.90	0.13
JohnsonControls	JCI	52.69	-1.80
JonesLang	JLL	177.06	-0.34
JuniperNetworks	JNPR	36.96	-0.22
KB Financial	KB	42.27	0.29
KBR	KBR	52.11	-1.34
KE Holdings	BEKE	14.17	0.11
▲ KKR	KKR	86.58	-1.19
KLA	KLAC	594.04	-1.31
KarunaTherap	KRTX	313.42	-0.44
Kaspi.kz	KSPI	91.45	0.35
Kellanova	K	54.76	-0.53
Kenvue	KVUE	20.76	-0.11
KeurigDrPepper	KDP	31.44	-0.36
KeyCorp	KEY	14.53	-0.47
KeysightTech	KEYS	153.26	-4.46
KimberlyClark	KMB	120.97	-0.73
KimcoRealty	KIM	20.20	-0.27
KinderMorgan	KMI	16.92	-0.29
KinsaleCapital	KNSL	397.57	-2.46
Knight-Swift	KNX	57.38	-0.57
Philips	PHG	21.13	-0.30
KoreaElecPwr	KEP	7.39	0.02
KraftHeinz	KHC	37.13	-0.22
Kroger	KR	46.14	-0.51
LKQ	LKQ	46.67	-0.86
LPL Financial	LPLA	239.19	-5.12
L3HarrisTech	LHX	208.42	-2.30
LabCorp.ofAmerica	LH	222.30	-4.05
LamResearch	LRCX	825.17	-10.62
LamarAdv	LAMR	104.68	-2.14
LambWeston	LW	102.44	-1.07
LasVegasSands	LVS	48.92	-0.59
LatticeSemi	LSCC	60.86	-0.33
Lear	LEA	132.90	-1.76
LegendBiotech	LEGN	55.06	-0.51
Leidos	LDOS	110.47	-1.14
Lennar A	LEN	149.85	-1.22
Lennar B	LEN.B	138.75	-0.56
LennoxIntl	LII	428.16	-19.59
LiAuto	LI	27.68	0.13
LibertyBroadbandC	LBRDK	78.45	-0.96
LibertyBroadbandA	LBRDA	77.82	-0.98
LibertyGlobalA	LBTYA	19.70	-0.35
LibertyGlobalC	LBTYK	20.94	-0.29
LibertyFormOne A	FWONA	61.09	-0.48
LibertyFormOne C	FWONK	67.25	-0.72
LibertySirius C	LSXMK	30.36	0.19
LibertySirius B	LSXMB	30.86	0.04
LibertySirius A	LSXMA	30.39	0.12
Light&Wonder	LNW	80.38	-2.08
▲ EliLilly	LLY	645.61	0.63
▲ LincolnElectric	LECO	222.22	-4.79
Linde	LIN	404.83	-3.02
LithiaMotors	LAD	294.85	-12.10
LiveNationEnt	LYV	88.85	0.02
LloydsBanking	LYG	2.11	...
LockheedMartin	LMT	429.41	-2.27
▲ Loews	L	72.86	-0.92
LogitechIntl	LOGI	83.39	-1.05
Lowe's	LOW	212.84	-1.68
Lucid	LCID	3.38	-0.08
lululemon	**LULU**	**453.82**	**-27.58**
LyondellBasell	LYB	94.12	-1.53

M N

Stock	Sym	Close	Net Chg
M&T Bank	MTB	138.10	-5.63
MGM Resorts	MGM	43.37	-0.29
MKS Instrum	MKSI	106.45	-3.74
▲ MPLX	MPLX	38.55	0.04
MSCI	MSCI	598.62	-3.62
MagnaIntl	MGA	56.85	-0.15
▲ **ManhattanAssoc**	**MANH**	**242.56**	**18.78**
▲ ManulifeFinl	MFC	22.11	-0.11
Maplebear	CART	24.47	-0.99
MarathonOil	MRO	22.85	-0.69
▲ MarathonPetrol	MPC	165.60	-4.29
Markel	MKL	1497.43	-3.30
MarketAxess	**MKTX**	**225.51**	**-48.82**
Marriott	MAR	239.73	-3.46
Marsh&McLen	MMC	193.84	0.81
MartinMarietta	MLM	508.42	-9.08
MarvellTech	MRVL	67.70	-1.13
Masco	MAS	67.29	-1.22
▲ Mastercard	MA	449.23	4.04
MatchGroup	MTCH	38.38	0.65
McCormickVtg	MKC.V	68.00	0.45
McCormick	MKC	68.16	-1.11
McDonald's	MCD	292.72	-1.93
▲ McKesson	MCK	499.89	9.87
Medpace	MEDP	291.58	-10.42
Medtronic	MDT	87.54	0.57
MercadoLibre	MELI	1711.81	-23.49
▲ Merck	MRK	120.78	-0.88
MetaPlatforms	META	390.14	-9.92
MetLife	MET	69.32	-1.49
Mettler-Toledo	MTD	1197.19	-40.31
MicrochipTech	MCHP	85.18	-0.78
MicronTech	MU	85.75	-0.41
▲ Microsoft	MSFT	397.58	-11.01
MicroStrategy	MSTR	501.21	-18.30
MidAmApt	MAA	126.38	-3.59
Middleby	MIDD	141.07	-4.01
▲ MitsubishiUFJ	MUFG	9.35	0.06
MizuhoFin	MFG	3.64	0.02
▼ Mobileye	MBLY	25.86	-0.39
Moderna	MRNA	101.05	-1.42
MolinaHealthcare	MOH	356.44	1.24
MolsonCoorsB	TAP	61.79	-1.08
monday.com	MNDY	210.04	-8.04
Mondelez	MDLZ	75.27	-1.07
MongoDB	MDB	400.52	-15.01
MonolithicPower	MPWR	602.72	-10.70
MonsterBev	MNST	55.02	-0.29
▲ Moody's	MCO	392.04	-4.47
MorganStanley	MS	87.24	-0.38
Morningstar	MORN	279.30	-2.37
▼ Mosaic	MOS	30.71	-1.07
MotorolaSol	MSI	319.50	-8.02
MurphyUSA	MUSA	352.52	-3.61
NICE	NICE	208.10	-5.29
▼ NIO	NIO	5.62	-0.17
NNN REIT	NNN	40.34	-0.23
NOV	NOV	19.51	-0.33
NRG Energy	NRG	53.04	-0.58
NVR	NVR	7075.29	-45.38
NXP Semicon	NXPI	210.57	-4.60
Nasdaq	NDAQ	57.77	-0.68
Natera	NTRA	65.94	-0.06
NationalGrid	NGG	67.53	0.02
NatWest	NWG	5.72	-0.10
NetApp	NTAP	87.20	-1.75
NetEase	NTES	97.64	0.08
Netflix	NFLX	564.11	1.26
Neurocrine	NBIX	139.77	-2.29
NewOrientalEduc	EDU	76.66	0.09
▼ **NY CmntyBcp**	**NYCB**	**6.47**	**-3.91**
NYTimes A	NYT	48.56	-0.99
Newmont	NEM	34.51	...
NewsCorp B	NWS	25.57	-0.22
NewsCorp A	NWSA	24.64	-0.16
NextEraEnergy	NEE	58.63	-0.65
Nike	NKE	101.53	-2.65
NiSource	NI	25.97	-0.15
Nokia	NOK	3.60	-0.08
▲ **Nomura**	**NMR**	**5.74**	**0.53**
Nordson	NDSN	251.72	-5.51
NorfolkSouthern	NSC	235.24	-1.61
NorthernTrust	NTRS	79.64	-1.22
NorthropGrum	NOC	446.76	3.26
NorwegCruise	NCLH	17.80	0.14
Novartis	NVS	103.47	-4.28
▲ **NovoNordisk**	**NVO**	**114.74**	**5.72**
NuHoldings	NU	8.61	-0.17
▲ Nucor	NUE	186.93	-1.97
Nutanix	NTNX	56.20	-0.28
Nutrien	NTR	49.87	-1.25
nVentElectric	NVT	60.04	-1.40
NVIDIA	NVDA	615.27	-12.47

O P Q

Stock	Sym	Close	Net Chg
ONEOK	OKE	68.25	-1.58
ON Semi	ON	71.13	-1.44
OReillyAuto	ORLY	1023.05	-18.07
OccidentalPetrol	OXY	57.57	-1.33
Okta	OKTA	82.65	-2.73
OldDomFreight	ODFL	391.02	-4.85
OldRepublic	ORI	28.04	-0.21
OmegaHealthcare	OHI	29.00	-0.31
Omnicom	OMC	90.38	-1.00
OnHolding	ONON	26.56	-0.94
OntoInnovation	ONTO	161.50	-2.79
▲ OpenText	OTEX	43.61	-0.42
Oracle	ORCL	111.70	-2.46
Orange	ORAN	11.93	-0.05
Orix	IX	95.54	-0.17
Oshkosh	OSK	110.10	-3.87
▲ OtisWorldwide	OTIS	88.44	-1.56
Ovintiv	OVV	42.42	-1.10
OwensCorning	OC	151.53	-1.44
PDD	PDD	126.87	1.59
PG&E	PCG	16.87	-0.10
PNC Finl	PNC	151.21	-3.04
POSCO	PKX	78.00	-1.90
PPG Ind	PPG	141.04	-2.03
PPL	PPL	26.20	0.18
PTC	PTC	180.65	-3.40
PVH	PVH	120.26	-3.69
Paccar	PCAR	100.39	-1.58
PackagingCpAm	PKG	165.88	-3.19
PalantirTech	PLTR	16.09	-0.65
PaloAltoNtwks	PANW	338.51	-7.38
ParamountB	**PARA**	**14.59**	**0.91**
ParamountA	**PARAA**	**23.33**	**4.14**
ParkerHannifin	PH	464.50	-13.36
Paychex	PAYX	121.73	-0.69
PaycomSoftware	PAYC	190.24	-5.28
Paylocity	PCTY	158.41	-0.50
PayPal	PYPL	61.35	-2.33
Pearson	PSO	12.22	0.03
PembinaPipeline	PBA	34.43	-0.40
PenskeAuto	PAG	148.37	-7.67
Pentair	PNR	73.17	0.27
Penumbra	PEN	252.19	2.13
PepsiCo	PEP	168.53	-1.09
PerformanceFood	PFGC	72.68	-1.07
PermianRscs	PR	13.48	-0.46
▲ PetroleoBrasil	PBR	17.07	0.03
▲ PetroleoBrasilA	PBR.A	16.40	0.11
Pfizer	PFE	27.08	0.06
PhilipMorris	PM	90.85	-0.91
▲ Phillips66	PSX	144.31	1.90
PinnacleWest	PNW	68.90	-0.64
Pinterest	PINS	37.47	-1.17
PioneerNatRscs	PXD	229.83	-4.31
PlainsAllAmPipe	PAA	15.44	-0.36
PlainsGP	PAGP	16.18	-0.32
Pool	POOL	371.25	-8.40
▲ Primerica	PRI	234.16	0.83
PrincipalFinl	PFG	79.10	-1.65
ProcoreTech	PCOR	71.39	-1.71
▲ Procter&Gamble	PG	157.14	-0.35
Progressive	PGR	178.25	-1.46
Prologis	PLD	126.69	0.16
PrudentialFinl	PRU	104.93	-1.70
Prudential	PUK	20.68	-0.56
PublicServiceEnt	PEG	57.99	-0.26
PublicStorage	PSA	283.19	-1.57
PulteGroup	PHM	104.56	-0.99
PureStorage	PSTG	39.99	-1.16
Qiagen	QGEN	43.66	0.12
Qorvo	QRVO	99.74	-0.52
Qualcomm	QCOM	148.51	2.53
QuantaServices	PWR	194.05	-3.20
QuestDiag	DGX	128.43	-0.40

R S

Stock	Sym	Close	Net Chg
RBC Bearings	RBC	268.54	-5.81
RB Global	RBA	63.97	0.04
▲ RELX	RELX	41.35	-0.44
RPM	RPM	106.66	-1.26
RTX	RTX	91.12	0.52
RalphLauren	RL	143.67	-2.79
Rambus	RMBS	68.53	-2.90
RangeResources	RRC	29.04	-1.04
RaymondJames	RJF	110.18	-3.31
RealtyIncome	O	54.39	-0.53
RegalRexnord	RRX	133.46	-5.42
RegencyCtrs	REG	62.67	-0.51
▲ RegenPharm	REGN	942.78	-16.95
RegionsFinl	RF	18.67	-0.81
▲ ReinsGrp	RGA	173.89	1.38
RelianceSteel	RS	285.42	-5.33
▲ **RenaissanceRe**	**RNR**	**228.83**	**13.77**
RentokilInit	RTO	26.05	-0.49
Repligen	RGEN	189.40	-4.09
▲ RepublicSvcs	RSG	171.12	-1.76
ResMed	RMD	190.20	-1.18
▲ RestaurantBrands	QSR	78.08	-0.61
Revvity	RVTY	107.18	-4.00
RexfordIndlRealty	REXR	52.59	-0.61
RioTinto	RIO	69.27	-0.93
Rivian	RIVN	15.31	-0.35
RobertHalf	RHI	79.54	-1.87
Robinhood	HOOD	10.74	-0.27
Roblox	RBLX	38.81	-0.33
RocketCos.	RKT	12.31	-0.36
▼ **Rockwell**	**ROK**	**253.28**	**-53.94**
RogersComm B	RCI	46.71	-0.58
RoivantSciences	ROIV	10.00	-0.22
Roku	ROKU	88.06	-2.86
Rollins	ROL	43.31	-0.24
RoperTech	ROP	537.00	-24.57
RossStores	ROST	140.28	-2.23
RoyalBkCanada	RY	97.61	-1.67
RoyalCaribbean	RCL	127.50	1.14
RoyalGold	RGLD	114.39	-0.65
RoyaltyPharma	RPRX	28.39	-0.29
RyanSpecialty	RYAN	43.32	-0.65
Ryanair	RYAAY	133.60	-1.79
SAP	SAP	173.10	-2.63
▲ S&P Global	SPGI	448.35	-6.21
SBA Comm	SBAC	223.86	0.76
SEI Investments	SEIC	63.24	-1.00
SK Telecom	SKM	20.95	0.08
SS&C Tech	SSNC	61.02	-1.03
Saia	SAIA	450.58	-2.45
Salesforce	CRM	281.09	-6.64
Samsara	IOT	31.40	-0.69
Sanofi	SNY	49.90	-0.35
SareptaTherap	SRPT	118.99	-0.10
Schlumberger	SLB	48.70	-0.65
SchwabC	SCHW	62.92	-1.46
Sea	SE	38.14	-1.11
Seagate	STX	85.68	-1.91
Sempra	SRE	71.56	-0.37
SentinelOne	S	26.80	-0.82
ServiceIntl	SCI	67.12	-0.99
ServiceNow	NOW	765.40	-20.33
Shell	SHEL	62.91	-0.98
SherwinWilliams	SHW	304.38	-3.25
ShinhanFin	SHG	30.69	0.31
ShockwaveMed	SWAV	226.25	-0.13
Shopify	SHOP	80.07	-2.26
SimonProperty	SPG	138.61	-0.63
SimpsonMfg	SSD	180.99	-7.41
SiriusXM	SIRI	5.09	-0.02
SiteOneLandscape	SITE	154.55	-3.42
SkechersUSA	SKX	62.44	-1.40
Skyworks	SWKS	104.46	0.13
SmithAO	AOS	77.61	-2.11
Smith&Nephew	SNN	28.03	0.23
Smucker	SJM	131.55	-1.39
Snap	SNAP	15.89	-0.58
Snap-On	SNA	289.93	-4.38
Snowflake	**SNOW**	**195.64**	**-10.61**
▼ **SOQUIMICH**	**SQM**	**42.07**	**-3.06**
SoFiTech	**SOFI**	**7.83**	**-0.57**
Sony	SONY	97.75	0.35
Southern	SO	69.52	0.27
SoCopper	SCCO	82.10	-0.69
SouthwestAir	LUV	29.89	-0.30
SouthwesternEner	SWN	6.45	-0.18
Splunk	SPLK	153.37	-0.05
Spotify	SPOT	215.35	-2.27
StanleyBlackDck	SWK	93.30	-1.99
▲ Stantec	STN	80.40	-1.44
Starbucks	SBUX	93.03	-1.05
StateStreet	STT	73.87	-0.98
SteelDynamics	STLD	120.69	-1.76
Stellantis	STLA	21.96	0.09
Steris	STE	218.95	0.78
Stevanato	STVN	31.74	-0.37
StifelFinancial	SF	72.95	-1.62
STMicroelec	STM	44.12	-0.22
▲ **Stryker**	**SYK**	**335.48**	**18.84**
SumitomoMits	SMFG	10.29	0.04
SunComms	SUI	125.35	1.07
SunLifeFinancial	SLF	51.86	-0.02
SuncorEnergy	SU	33.12	-0.45
SuperMicroComp	SMCI	529.61	16.64
Suzano	SUZ	10.40	-0.10
Symbotic	SYM	43.03	-1.07
SynchronyFinl	SYF	38.87	-0.83
Synopsys	SNPS	533.35	-9.83
▲ Sysco	SYY	80.93	0.11

T U V

Stock	Sym	Close	Net Chg
TC Energy	TRP	39.43	-0.41
TD Synnex	SNX	99.98	-1.70
TE Connectivity	TEL	142.19	-3.04
Telus	TU	17.90	-0.21
Ternium	TX	38.66	-0.47
TFI Intl	TFII	131.47	-1.88
TIM	TIMB	17.58	0.12
▲ TJX	TJX	94.91	-1.91
TKO	TKO	83.69	-1.31
T-MobileUS	TMUS	161.23	-0.47
TPG	TPG	41.63	-0.64
T.RowePrice	TROW	108.45	-3.26
TaiwanSemi	TSM	112.96	-3.10
TakeTwoSoftware	TTWO	164.93	-2.01
TakedaPharm	TAK	14.60	0.06
Tapestry	TPR	38.79	-0.67
TargaResources	TRGP	84.96	-2.08
Target	TGT	139.08	-1.44
TechnipFMC	FTI	19.34	-0.45
TeckResourcesB	TECK	40.01	-0.51
TeledyneTech	TDY	418.47	-9.80
Teleflex	TFX	242.83	-2.02
Ericsson	ERIC	5.51	-0.16
TelefonicaBras	VIV	10.32	0.09
Telefonica	TEF	4.09	-0.05
TelekmIndonesia	TLK	25.16	-0.17
TempurSealy	TPX	49.89	-1.92
Tenaris	TS	31.81	-0.36
TencentMusic	TME	9.40	0.35
TenetHealthcare	THC	82.74	...
Teradyne	**TER**	**96.59**	**-8.00**
Tesla	TSLA	187.29	-4.30
TetraTech	TTEK	158.18	-5.83
▲ TevaPharm	TEVA	12.10	0.37
TexasInstruments	TXN	160.12	-1.93
TexasPacLand	TPL	1461.33	-42.58
▲ TexasRoadhouse	TXRH	125.72	-1.11
Textron	TXT	84.71	-1.29
ThermoFisher	TMO	538.98	-28.14
ThomsonReuters	TRI	148.62	-2.16
3M	MMM	94.35	-1.40
Toast	TOST	17.77	-0.67
Toll Bros	TOL	99.35	-0.80
TopBuild	BLD	369.13	-5.67
Toro	TTC	92.48	-1.47
TorontoDomBk	TD	60.73	-1.02
TotalEnergies	TTE	65.18	-0.83
ToyotaMotor	TM	199.70	-2.15
TractorSupply	TSCO	224.60	-3.19
TradeDesk	TTD	68.43	-0.85
Tradeweb	TW	95.39	-2.98
TraneTech	TT	252.05	-5.70
▲ TransDigm	TDG	1092.68	6.74
TransUnion	TRU	69.19	0.38
▲ Travelers	TRV	211.36	-2.18
Trex	TREX	81.48	-1.89
Trimble	TRMB	50.86	-1.98
Trip.com	TCOM	36.56	0.19
TruistFinl	TFC	37.06	-1.11
Twilio	TWLO	70.33	-2.85
TylerTech	TYL	422.75	-9.31
TysonFoods	TSN	54.76	-0.30
UBS Group	UBS	29.91	-0.32
UDR	UDR	36.02	-0.46
UFP Inds	UFPI	113.45	-3.44
U-Haul N	UHAL/B	63.87	-1.30
U-Haul	UHAL	66.26	-1.56
US Foods	USFD	46.01	-0.74
UWM	UWMC	6.70	-0.12
Uber	UBER	65.27	-1.57
Ubiquiti	UI	125.74	-3.49
UiPath	PATH	22.98	-0.87
UltaBeauty	ULTA	502.05	-6.69
Unilever	UL	48.69	-0.35
▲ UnionPacific	UNP	243.93	-2.77
UnitedAirlines	UAL	41.38	-0.28
UnitedMicro	UMC	7.71	-0.12
UPS B	UPS	141.90	-3.16
UnitedRentals	URI	625.40	-17.58
US Bancorp	USB	41.54	-1.80
US Steel	X	47.02	-1.15
UnitedTherap	UTHR	214.78	-0.24
UnitedHealth	UNH	511.74	8.13
UnitySoftware	U	32.40	-1.11
UnivDisplay	OLED	169.77	-4.86
▲ UniversalHealthB	UHS	158.81	-0.14
UnumGroup	UNM	48.34	0.50
VICI Prop	VICI	30.12	-0.12
VailResorts	MTN	222.00	1.05
Vale	VALE	13.69	-0.20
ValeroEnergy	VLO	138.90	-1.92
VeevaSystems	VEEV	207.41	-3.50
Ventas	VTR	46.39	-0.61
Veralto	VLTO	76.69	-1.64
VeriSign	VRSN	198.88	-2.92
VeriskAnalytics	VRSK	241.53	-4.56
▲ Verizon	VZ	42.35	-0.12
VertexPharm	VRTX	433.38	-12.70
▲ Vertiv	VRT	56.33	-0.33
Viatris	VTRS	11.77	-0.04
VinFastAuto	VFS	5.95	-0.05
Vipshop	VIPS	15.89	0.06
▲ Visa	V	273.26	-3.89
▲ Vistra	VST	41.03	-0.20
Vodafone	VOD	8.60	-0.25
VoyaFinancial	VOYA	72.37	-0.72
VulcanMatls	VMC	226.01	-5.04

W X Y Z

Stock	Sym	Close	Net Chg
WEC Energy	WEC	80.76	...
▲ WEX	WEX	204.39	-5.20
W.P.Carey	WPC	61.96	-0.39
WPP	WPP	48.42	-2.14
▲ Wabtec	WAB	131.57	-1.12
WalgreensBoots	WBA	22.57	-0.19
Walmart	WMT	165.25	-0.34
WarnerBrosA	WBD	10.02	-0.08
WarnerMusic	WMG	36.49	-0.54
▲ WasteConnections	WCN	155.26	-1.39
▲ WasteMgt	WM	185.63	-1.48
Waters	WAT	317.71	-10.67
Watsco	WSO	390.98	-5.36
WebsterFin	**WBS**	**49.48**	**-2.89**
▲ WellsFargo	WFC	50.18	-1.01
Welltower	WELL	86.51	-0.42
WescoIntl	WCC	173.52	-2.09
WestPharmSvcs	WST	373.03	-3.06
WestAllianceBcp	**WAL**	**63.96**	**-4.39**
WesternDigital	WDC	57.25	-0.87
WesternMidstrm	WES	28.73	-0.59
Westlake	WLK	138.35	-3.31
WestRock	WRK	40.26	-1.13
Weyerhaeuser	WY	32.77	-0.32
WheatonPrecMet	WPM	46.87	-0.53
Williams	WMB	34.66	-0.54
Williams-Sonoma	WSM	193.39	-7.19
WillisTowers	WTW	246.30	-1.48
WillScotMobile	WSC	47.30	-0.57
▲ Wingstop	WING	281.11	1.91
Wipro	WIT	5.66	0.01
Wix.com	WIX	126.88	-2.34
WoodsideEnergy	WDS	20.88	-0.40
Woodward	WWD	137.77	-3.71
WooriFinl	WF	31.01	0.29
Workday	WDAY	291.07	-3.79
WynnResorts	WYNN	94.43	-0.56
XP	XP	24.58	-0.43
XPO	XPO	85.44	-0.65
XcelEnergy	XEL	59.87	0.11
XPeng	XPEV	8.33	-0.32
Xylem	XYL	112.44	-1.31
YPF	YPF	17.28	-0.01
Yum!Brands	YUM	129.49	-1.13
YumChina	YUMC	34.59	-0.53
ZTO Express	ZTO	16.36	-0.12
ZebraTech	ZBRA	239.55	-11.36
Zillow C	Z	56.84	-0.61
Zillow A	ZG	55.09	-0.69
ZimmerBiomet	ZBH	125.60	3.23
Zoetis	ZTS	187.81	-3.62
ZoomVideo	ZM	64.61	-2.57
Zscaler	ZS	235.67	-5.45

IPO Scorecard

Performance of IPOs, most-recent listed first

Company SYMBOL IPO date/Offer price	Wed.'s close ($)	% Chg From Offer price	% Chg From 1st-day close
FibroBiologics **FBLG** Jan. 31/$8.00	29.10	**263.8**	...
ArriVent Biopharma **AVBP** Jan. 26/$18.00	21.55	**19.7**	7.8
BrightSpring Health Services **BTSG** Jan. 26/$13.00	11.02	**–15.2**	0.2
Haoxi Health Technology **HAO** Jan. 26/$4.00	7.65	**91.3**	44.9
CG Oncology **CGON** Jan. 25/$19.00	37.26	**96.1**	0.2
Planet Image International **YIBO** Jan. 25/$4.00	2.42	**–39.5**	–13.3
J-Long Group **JL** Jan. 24/$5.00	13.25	**165.0**	78.1
SU Group Holdings **SUGP** Jan. 24/$4.00	3.70	**–7.5**	–7.5
JVSPAC Acquisition **JVSAU** Jan. 19/$10.00	10.14	**1.4**	0.2
CCSC Technology International Holdings **CCTG** Jan. 18/$4.00	21.19	**429.8**	175.2

Sources: Dow Jones Market Data; FactSet

Dividend Changes

Company	Symbol	Yld %	Amount New/Old	Frq	Payable / Record
Increased					
First Business Finl Svcs	FBIZ	2.7	.25 /.2275	Q	Feb21 /Feb08
German American Bancorp	GABC	3.3	.27 /.25	Q	Feb20 /Feb10
HCA Healthcare	HCA	0.9	.66 /.60	Q	Mar29 /Mar15
MSCI	MSCI	1.1	1.60 /1.38	Q	Feb29 /Feb16
Oshkosh	OSK	1.7	.46 /.41	Q	Feb29 /Feb15
Shutterstock	SSTK	2.6	.30 /.27	Q	Mar14 /Feb29
United Parcel Service B	UPS	4.6	1.63 /1.62	Q	Mar08 /Feb20
Williams Cos	WMB	5.5	.475 /.4475	Q	Mar25 /Mar08
Initial					
USCB Financial Holdings	USCB		.05		Mar05 /Feb15
Stocks					
Alaunos Therapeutics	TCRT		1:15		/Feb01
Ambow Education ADR	AMBO		1:10		/Feb20
CalAmp	CAMP		1:23		/Feb02
CareMax	CMAX		1:30		/Feb01
Foreign					
Cdn Pacific Kansas City	CP	0.7	.1415	Q	Apr29 /Mar28
Triton Intl Pfd. A	TRTNpA	8.3	.53125	Q	Mar15 /Mar08
Triton Intl Pfd. B	TRTNpB	7.9	.50	Q	Mar15 /Mar08
Triton Intl Pfd. C	TRTNpC	7.2	.46094	Q	Mar15 /Mar08
Triton Intl Pfd. D	TRTNpD	7.1	.42969	Q	Mar15 /Mar08
Triton Intl Pfd. E	TRTNpE	6.9	.35938	Q	Mar15 /Mar08

Sources: FactSet; Dow Jones Market Data

KEY: A: annual; M: monthly; Q: quarterly; r: revised; SA: semiannual; S2:1: stock split and ratio; SO: spin-off.

Borrowing Benchmarks

wsj.com/market-data/bonds/benchmarks

Money Rates

January 31, 2024

Key annual interest rates paid to borrow or lend money in U.S. and international markets. Rates below are a guide to general levels but don't always represent actual transactions.

Inflation

	Dec. index level	Chg From (%) Nov. '23	Chg From (%) Dec. '22
U.S. consumer price index			
All items	**306.746**	–0.10	3.4
Core	**311.907**	0.10	3.9

International rates

	Latest	Week ago	52-Week High	52-Week Low
Prime rates				
U.S.	**8.50**	8.50	8.50	7.50
Canada	**7.20**	7.20	7.20	6.70
Japan	**1.475**	1.475	1.475	1.475
Policy Rates				
Euro zone	**4.50**	4.50	4.50	2.50
Switzerland	**2.25**	2.25	2.25	1.50
Britain	**5.25**	5.25	5.25	3.50
Australia	**4.35**	4.35	4.35	3.10
Overnight repurchase				
U.S.	**5.39**	5.37	5.48	4.34

U.S. government rates

	Latest	Week ago	52-Week High	52-Week Low
Discount				
	5.50	5.50	5.50	4.50
Federal funds				
Effective rate	**5.3300**	5.3300	5.3500	4.3400
High	**5.6500**	5.6500	5.6500	4.6500
Low	**5.3100**	5.3100	5.3300	4.3100
Bid	**5.3100**	5.3100	5.3300	4.3200
Offer	**5.3300**	5.3300	5.3700	4.3400
Treasury bill auction				
4 weeks	**5.280**	5.285	5.840	3.190
13 weeks	**5.210**	5.225	5.345	4.590
26 weeks	**4.985**	5.020	5.350	4.620

Secondary market

	Latest	Week ago	52-WEEK High	52-WEEK Low
Fannie Mae				
30-year mortgage yields				
30 days	**5.949**	6.106	7.495	5.244
60 days	**5.955**	6.113	7.554	5.250

Other short-term rates

	Latest	Week ago	52-Week high	52-Week low
Call money				
	7.25	7.25	7.25	6.25
Commercial paper (AA financial)				
90 days	**n.a.**	5.23	5.54	4.70
Secured Overnight Financing Rate				
	5.31	5.31	5.40	4.31

	Latest	Value Traded	52-Week High	52-Week Low
DTCC GCF Repo Index				
Treasury	**5.375**	24.000	5.504	4.336
MBS	**5.384**	40.520	5.689	4.401

Notes on data:

U.S. prime rate is the base rate on corporate loans posted by at least 70% of the 10 largest U.S. banks, and is effective July 27, 2023. **Other prime rates** aren't directly comparable; lending practices vary widely by location; **Discount rate** is effective July 27, 2023. **Secured Overnight Financing Rate** is as of January 30, 2024. **DTCC GCF Repo Index** is Depository Trust & Clearing Corp.'s weighted average for overnight trades in applicable CUSIPs. Value traded is in billions of U.S. dollars. **Federal-funds rates** are Tullett Prebon rates as of 5:30 p.m. ET.

Sources: Federal Reserve; Bureau of Labor Statistics; DTCC; FactSet; Tullett Prebon Information, Ltd.

New Highs and Lows

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

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

Highs

Stock	Sym	52-Wk Hi/Lo	% Chg
ADMA Biologics	ADMA	5.41	-3.0
Aflac	AFL	86.20	-1.6
AG Mortgage PfdC	MITTpC	23.76	...
AGNC InvtPfdD	AGNCM	24.72	0.5
AGNC InvtPfdF	AGNCP	23.22	-0.1
ASML	ASML	884.00	0.2
AZEK	AZEK	39.56	-1.8
AZZ	AZZ	64.53	-1.7
AbacusLife	ABL	12.67	0.1
AimeiHlthTechUn	AFJKU	11.31	0.6
AlpineImmune	ALPN	27.12	3.4
Alvotech	ALVO	16.03	4.1
AmerExpress	AXP	205.32	-1.7
AmFinDeb	AFGE	20.68	-3.6
AIG	AIG	71.07	-1.2
Amgen	AMGN	316.64	-0.1
ApolloGlbMgmt	APO	102.21	-1.2
ApolloGlbPfdA	APOpA	59.42	-0.9
Archrock	AROC	16.86	-2.6
AresMgmt	ARES	123.76	-0.6
Arvinas	ARVN	43.16	5.1
AssuredGuaranty	AGO	83.43	-2.0
AxosFinancial	AX	60.00	-2.4
BWX Tech	BWXT	83.43	-1.7
BancoMacro	BMA	34.51	...
BankofAmNt66	MERpK	25.88	0.3
BankNY Mellon	BK	56.43	-1.0
BelFuse A	BELFA	71.34	0.7
BerkHathwy B	BRK.B	387.92	-0.9
BlueLinx	BXC	119.98	1.3
BoiseCascade	BCC	139.13	-1.5
BostonSci	BSX	64.49	3.0
Brady	BRC	61.89	-2.2
BrookfieldAsset	BAM	41.22	-2.1
CCSC Tech Intl	CCTG	30.00	16.6
CGI A	GIB	115.67	0.5
CompassPath	CMPS	12.30	-1.6
CRH	CRH	72.69	-0.5
CSW Industrials	CSWI	220.08	-2.9
CSX	CSX	36.12	-0.4
Cadre	CDRE	34.72	-1.6
Caleres	CAL	32.80	-3.4
CardinalHealth	CAH	111.40	2.0
CardiolTherap	CRDL	1.43	-12.2

Continued on Page B10

Mutual Funds

Data provided by LIPPER

Top 250 mutual-funds listings for Nasdaq-published share classes by net assets.

e-Ex-distribution. **f**-Previous day's quotation. **g**-Footnotes x and s apply. **j**-Footnotes e and s apply. **k**-Recalculated by Lipper, using updated data. **p**-Distribution costs apply, 12b-1. **r**-Redemption charge may apply. **s**-Stock split or dividend. **t**-Footnotes p and r apply. **v**-Footnotes x and e apply. **x**-Ex-dividend. **z**-Footnote x, e and s apply. **NA**-Not available due to incomplete price, performance or cost data. **NE**-Not released by Lipper; data under review. **NN**-Fund not tracked. **NS**-Fund didn't exist at start of period.

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

Fund	NAV	Net Chg	YTD % Ret
AB Funds			
MuniIncmShares	11.12	+0.06	0.3
AB Funds - ADV			
LgCpGrAdv	96.26	-1.71	3.7
American Century Inv			
Ultra	76.05	-1.53	2.1
American Funds Cl A			
AmcpA	38.67	-0.65	1.4
AMutlA	51.36	-0.44	0.7
BalA	32.22	-0.23	0.7
BondA	11.44	+0.06	NA
CapIBA	65.99	-0.41	-0.3
CapWGrA	60.45	-0.64	0.5
EupacA	54.63	-0.33	-0.1
FdInvA	72.26	-1.02	1.1
GwthA	64.26	-1.11	1.7
HI TrA	9.49	-0.01	0.4
ICAA	51.04	-0.73	1.3
IncoA	23.33	-0.13	-0.5
N PerA	56.13	-0.72	0.4
NEcoA	54.79	-0.86	1.5
NwWrldA	74.04	-0.48	-1.3
SmCpA	64.19	-0.65	-3.1
TxExA	12.43	+0.04	-0.1
WshA	57.75	-0.64	1.0
Artisan Funds			
IntlVal Inst	45.82	-0.47	-0.3
Baird Funds			
AggBdInst	9.82	+0.04	-0.2
CorBdInst	10.14	+0.04	...
BlackRock Funds			
HiYldBd Inst	7.02	-0.01	0.4
BlackRock Funds III			
iShS&P500IdxK	568.20	-9.28	1.7
BlackRock Funds Inst			
EqtyDivd	19.32	-0.19	0.7
StratIncOpptyIns	9.42	+0.02	...
TotRet	10.00	+0.05	NA
Calamos Funds			
MktNeutI	14.24	-0.02	0.4
Columbia Class I			
DivIncom I	30.82	-0.31	1.3
Dimensional Fds			
5GlbFxdInc	10.01	+0.01	0.5
EmgMktVa	28.67	-0.01	-2.6
EmMktCorEq	21.65	-0.07	-3.4
IntlCoreEq	15.11	-0.09	-1.4
IntSmCo	18.93	-0.09	-2.0
IntSmVa	20.91	-0.09	-1.5
LgCo	32.15	-0.52	1.7
US CoreEq1	36.38	-0.63	0.9
US CoreEq2	32.64	-0.58	0.5
US Small	42.97	-1.07	-3.1
US SmCpVal	43.68	-1.23	-2.8
US TgdVal	30.87	-0.83	-3.2
USLgVa	44.84	-0.56	0.7
Dodge & Cox			
Balanced	100.96	-0.78	-0.3
GblStock	14.67	-0.19	-1.7
Income	12.61	+0.06	-0.1
Intl Stk	47.73	-0.39	-2.9
Stock	243.82	-3.88	0.1
DoubleLine Funds			
TotRetBdI	8.81	+0.02	...
Edgewood Growth Instituti			
EdgewoodGrInst	NA	...	NA
Federated Hermes Int			
TtlRtnBdI	9.55	+0.05	...
Fidelity			
500IdxInstPrem	168.27	-2.75	1.7
Contrafund K6	24.15	-0.45	4.8
ExtMktIdxInstPre	76.20	-1.66	-2.4
FidSerToMarket	15.86	-0.27	1.1
GrowthCompanyK6	23.21	-0.52	3.4
IntlIdxInstPrem	47.18	-0.21	-0.4
LgCpGwId InstPre	30.23	-0.65	2.5
MidCpInxInstPrem	29.53	-0.46	-1.4
SAIUSLgCpIndxFd	20.06	-0.33	1.7
SeriesBondFd	9.04	+0.05	-0.1
SeriesOverseas	13.05	-0.08	0.6
SerLTTreBdIdx	5.74	+0.05	-1.8
SmCpIdxInstPrem	24.07	-0.61	-3.9
TMktIdxInstPrem	133.21	-2.28	1.1
TotalMarketIndex	16.81	-0.29	1.1
TtlIntIdxInstPr	12.92	-0.07	-1.7
USBdIdxInstPrem	10.39	+0.05	-0.1
Fidelity Advisor I			
Total Bd	9.55	+0.05	...
Fidelity Freedom			
FF2030	16.57	-0.07	...
FF2040	10.50	-0.10	0.1
Freedom2030 K	16.56	-0.07	0.1
Freedom2035 K	14.52	-0.09	0.1
Freedom2040 K	10.50	-0.10	0.1
Idx2030InsPre	18.89	-0.09	-0.1
Idx2035InsPre	21.47	-0.16	-0.1
Idx2040InsPre	22.18	-0.21	-0.1
Idx2045InsPre	23.14	-0.24	-0.1
Idx2050InsPre	23.18	-0.24	-0.1
Fidelity Invest			
Balanc	27.28	-0.21	1.3
BluCh	178.35	-3.98	2.9
BluChpGr K6	27.57	-0.56	2.7
Contra	16.87	-0.32	4.8
ContraK	16.93	-0.32	4.8
CpInc	9.66	-0.04	0.5
GroCo	32.89	-0.78	3.0
InvGrBd	10.07	+0.06	...
LowP	43.66	-0.51	-0.9
Magin	12.80	-0.22	4.0
NASDAQ	192.14	-4.38	1.0
OTC	18.83	-0.44	3.0
Puritn	23.70	-0.20	1.7
SAIUSQtyIdx	20.09	-0.35	3.8
SrsEmrgMkt	16.62	-0.12	-4.1
SrsGlobal	13.63	-0.07	-1.6
SrsGroCoRetail	20.08	-0.47	3.1
SrsIntlGrw	17.40	-0.10	1.6
SrsIntlVal	11.59	-0.06	-0.7
TotalBond	9.56	+0.04	...
Fidelity SAI			
TotalBd	9.05	+0.05	0.1
U.S.TreBdIdx	8.79	+0.05	-0.2
Fidelity Selects			
Semiconductors r	25.51	-0.50	5.2
Softwr	28.40	-0.71	2.6
Tech	29.53	-0.66	3.6
First Eagle Funds			
GlbA	63.25	-0.60	0.3
Franklin A1			
IncomeA1	2.31	...	-0.4
FrankTemp/Frank Adv			
IncomeAdv	2.29	...	-0.4
FrankTemp/Franklin A			
Growth A	125.21	-2.06	2.1
RisDv A	89.22	-0.91	0.9
Guggenheim Funds Tru			
TotRtnBdFdClInst	23.77	+0.12	0.1
Harbor Funds			
CapApInst	100.57	-1.93	4.2
Harding Loevner			
IntlEq	25.08	-0.16	-3.4
Invesco Funds A			
EqIncA	10.09	-0.09	0.1
Invesco Funds Y			
DevMktY	36.66	-0.25	-5.1
JHF III DispVal			
DispValMCI	26.95	-0.37	-1.5
John Hancock			
BondR6	13.59	+0.07	0.1
JPMorgan I Class			
CoreBond	NA	...	NA
EqInc	NA	...	NA
LgCpGwth	NA	...	NA
JPMorgan R Class			
CoreBond	NA	...	NA
CorePlusBd	NA	...	NA
Lord Abbett I			
ShtDurInc p	3.86	+0.01	0.7
Metropolitan West			
TotRetBdI	9.15	+0.06	NA
TRBdPlan	8.58	+0.05	NA
MFS Funds			
IIE	32.77	-0.22	-0.5
MFS Funds Class I			
GrowthI	179.68	-4.11	4.4
ValueI	47.88	-0.30	0.6
Natixis Funds			
LSGrowthY	23.86	-0.41	2.7
Northern Funds			
StkIdx	49.80	-0.81	1.7
Old Westbury Fds			
LrgCpStr	17.57	-0.26	1.2
Parnassus Fds			
ParnEqFd	56.04	-1.01	1.7
PGIM Funds Cl Z			
TotalReturnBond	NA	...	NA
PIMCO Fds Instl			
AllAsset	NA	...	NA
TotRt	8.64	+0.04	NA
PIMCO Funds A			
IncomeFd	10.63	+0.03	0.6
PIMCO Funds I2			
Income	10.63	+0.03	0.6
PIMCO Funds Instl			
IncomeFd	10.63	+0.03	0.6
Price Funds			
BlChip	154.66	-3.32	3.6
DivGro	71.39	-0.75	0.8
Growth	89.18	-1.89	3.0
LgCapGow I	68.34	-1.23	3.9
MidCap	100.01	-1.54	...
NHoriz	55.58	-0.86	-1.1
R2025	15.70	-0.11	-0.1
R2030	23.92	-0.20	-0.1
R2040	27.63	-0.33	...
Schwab Funds			
1000 Inv r	103.81	-1.73	NA
S&P Sel	74.32	-1.22	NA
TSM Sel r	81.87	-1.40	NA
TIAA/CREF Funds			
EqIdxInst	34.05	-0.58	1.1
IntlEqIdxInst	21.77	-0.11	-0.4
LrgCpGrIdxInst	53.13	-1.13	2.5
VANGUARD ADMIRAL			
500Adml	447.36	-7.31	1.7
BalAdml	44.86	-0.38	0.6
CAITAdml	11.44	+0.04	...
CapOpAdml r	178.93	-2.66	-0.2
DivAppIdxAdm	46.82	-0.50	1.3
EMAdmr	32.97	-0.12	-3.5
EqIncAdml	83.77	-0.98	-0.6
ExplrAdml	101.24	-2.07	-1.9
ExtndAdml	121.71	-2.67	-2.4
GNMAAdml	9.28	+0.04	-0.5
GrolncAdml	92.47	-1.58	2.5
GrwthAdml	163.61	-3.64	2.3
HlthCareAdml r	88.79	-0.39	0.7
HYCorAdml r	5.38	-0.01	-0.3
InfProAd	23.10	+0.14	0.3
IntlGrAdml	99.28	-1.13	-2.5
ITBondAdml	10.33	+0.06	...
ITIGradeAdml	8.65	+0.04	...
LarCapAd	112.10	-1.84	1.7
LTGradeAdml	8.03	+0.04	-0.8
MidCpAdml	283.77	-4.12	-1.5
MuHYAdml	10.69	+0.05	0.1
MuIntAdml	13.70	+0.04	-0.1
MuLTAdml	10.95	+0.04	-0.2
MuLtdAdml	10.83	+0.01	-0.1
MuShtAdml	15.75	+0.01	0.1
PrmcpAdml r	157.12	-2.01	0.5
RealEstatAdml	118.96	-1.12	-4.9
SmCapAdml	99.50	-2.10	-2.6
SmGthAdml	82.55	-1.63	-2.9
STBondAdml	10.11	+0.03	0.3
STIGradeAdml	10.24	+0.02	0.4
STIPSIxAdm	23.92	+0.05	0.5
TotBdAdml	9.66	+0.05	-0.2
TotIntBdIdxAdm	19.61	+0.03	-0.4
TotIntlAdmIdx r	30.57	-0.16	-1.8
TotStAdml	116.78	-1.98	1.1
TxMCapAdml	250.56	-4.17	1.4
TxMIn r	15.21	-0.09	-1.2
USGroAdml	150.45	-3.21	2.6
ValAdml	58.85	-0.55	1.0
WdsrllAdml	76.78	-1.19	0.9
WellsIAdml	60.11	-0.10	-0.5
WelltnAdml	71.77	-0.65	0.5
WndsrAdml	71.39	-1.06	-1.4
VANGUARD FDS			
DivdGro	37.76	-0.18	1.5
IntlVal	39.53	-0.28	-2.1
LifeCon	20.34	-0.05	-0.1
LifeGro	41.40	-0.38	-0.1
LifeMod	30.41	-0.17	-0.1
PrmcpCor	31.91	-0.42	0.5
STAR	26.78	-0.21	-0.3
TgtRe2020	26.84	-0.07	-0.1
TgtRe2025	18.36	-0.08	-0.1
TgtRe2030	35.43	-0.22	-0.1
TgtRe2035	22.11	-0.16	...
TgtRe2040	39.27	-0.34	-0.1
TgtRe2045	26.65	-0.26	...
TgtRe2050	44.42	-0.47	...
TgtRe2060	45.66	-0.48	-0.1
TgtRet2055	49.56	-0.52	-0.1
TgtRetInc	13.00	-0.02	-0.2
Welltn	41.57	-0.37	0.5
WndsrII	43.28	-0.67	0.9
VANGUARD INDEX FDS			
ExtndIstPl	300.33	-6.59	-2.4
IdxIntl	18.28	-0.09	-1.8
MdCpGrAdml	93.15	-1.70	-1.5
MdCpVlAdml	73.94	-0.83	-1.5
SmValAdml	75.44	-1.67	-2.5
TotBd2	9.54	+0.04	-0.2
TotIntlInstIdx r	122.26	-0.64	-1.8
TotItlInstPlId r	122.29	-0.64	-1.8
TotSt	116.75	-1.99	1.1
VANGUARD INSTL FDS			
BalInst	44.86	-0.39	0.6
DevMktsIndInst	15.23	-0.09	-1.3
DevMktsInxInst	23.81	-0.14	-1.2
ExtndInst	121.70	-2.67	-2.4
GrwthInst	163.62	-3.64	2.3
InPrSeIn	9.41	+0.06	0.3
InstIdx	400.08	-6.53	1.7
InstPlus	400.07	-6.54	1.7
InstTStPlus	83.27	-1.42	1.1
MidCpInst	62.69	-0.91	-1.5
MidCpIstPl	309.16	-4.48	-1.5
SmCapInst	99.50	-2.10	-2.6
SmCapIstPl	287.20	-6.05	-2.6
STIGradeInst	10.24	+0.02	0.4
STIPSIxins	23.94	+0.05	0.5
TotBdInst	9.66	+0.05	-0.2
TotBdInst2	9.54	+0.04	-0.2
TotBdInstPl	9.66	+0.05	-0.2
TotIntBdIdxInst	29.42	+0.04	-0.4
TotStInst	116.80	-1.98	1.1
ValueInst	58.84	-0.56	0.9
WCM Focus Funds			
WCMFocIntlGrwIns	23.28	-0.13	2.3
Western Asset			
CoreBondI	NA	...	NA
CorePlusBdI	NA	...	NA

BlackRock Broadens Focus With Infrastructure Deal

By Jack Pitcher

BlackRock's $10 trillion asset management empire is built around passive index investing. Chief Executive Larry Fink is betting that infrastructure will help drive his firm's next wave of growth.

The money manager agreed in early January to buy **Global Infrastructure Partners** for $12.5 billion, its biggest push yet into what are known as private-market investments that don't trade on a public exchange.

GIP, a New York-based infrastructure fund manager with roughly $100 billion in assets, owns and operates energy, transportation, and waste and water companies around the world.

The acquisition would bring assets ranging from London Gatwick Airport to U.S. natural-gas pipelines and data centers into the BlackRock portfolio. BlackRock would be among the world's largest private-infrastructure managers after the GIP assets are combined with its own—and would take on a bigger role operating companies.

"GIP has a strong culture of operating and running businesses," Martin Small, BlackRock's chief financial officer, said. "Unless you're an excellent operator and improver of assets, you're not going to be a great private-markets firm."

BlackRock became the behemoth it is today thanks to the rapid growth over the past 15 years of passive investing and exchange-traded funds. But fees have eroded in the hypercompetitive fund management industry.

For BlackRock, the GIP acquisition would significantly boost what are known as its illiquid alternative assets—the private-market debt and equity funds that charge much higher fees.

BlackRock has made several smaller acquisitions to build its alternatives business in recent years, but nothing on the scale of GIP, which would be its largest acquisition since buying **Barclays**'s asset-management business in 2009. The deal would roughly double BlackRock's private market base management fees, the firm said.

Illiquid alternatives made up 1% of BlackRock's $10 trillion in assets under management at the end of 2023 but generated 7% of its base management fees—those that aren't tied to a fund's performance and make up the bulk of BlackRock's revenue.

Some analysts expect BlackRock isn't done with private-market acquisitions.

"I think infrastructure is a good first step in terms of a broader alternatives expansion plan," said Cathy Seifert, an analyst at CFRA Research. "Given where fee structures are going, it's smart for them to get into an area where there's still money to be made."

Wall Street analysts expect the GIP deal to increase BlackRock's earnings by about 1% in 2025.

"Given the size of BlackRock, it's going to take a lot for them to move the needle in terms of contributions to the bottom line from alternatives," Seifert said.

Private-infrastructure funds have grown rapidly since GIP was founded by Nigerian-born banker Bayo Ogunlesi in 2006. As government budget deficits balloon, private investors have increasingly financed and run critical infrastructure.

Big investors and private-equity firms have plowed money into the asset class, which had grown to $1.3 trillion globally at the end of 2022, according to McKinsey. Toronto-based **Brookfield Asset Management** and Australia's **Macquarie Asset Management** are among the private infrastructure giants that BlackRock will now rival.

The returns are unspectacular in the high-single-digit-percentage range, but steady. That is thanks to the predictability of demand for utilities and transportation hubs. Lower-risk investments that promise steady returns are in high demand with subsets of BlackRock's clients such as insurance companies and retirees.

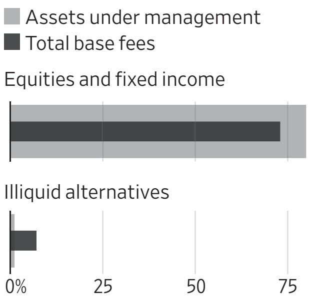
BlackRock is betting that the combination of aging infrastructure, budget deficits and government subsidies for infrastructure projects will be major tailwinds for growth in the decade ahead.

"Infrastructure investing appears to have a very favorable growth runway, supported by investors' attraction to the yields and general lack of correlation with other asset classes," Finian O'Shea, a Wells Fargo analyst, wrote in a note to clients about the deal.

Government subsidies around the world add to the case for infrastructure investing. In the U.S., the Inflation Reduction Act, the Chips Act and the infrastructure law are set to award billions of dollars in subsidies to private companies in the coming years.

The GIP acquisition fits with Fink's clean-energy ambitions. In his 2023 letter to shareholders, Fink wrote that "some of the most attractive opportunities in the years ahead will be in the transition finance space" and that BlackRock aims to be the leading investor in those opportunities for clients.

Percentage of total BlackRock assets and base fees, fourth quarter



Source: the company

Co-founders Dean Bloembergen, left, and Adam Guild, right.

MARISSA ROCKE

Owner.com Hits New Valuation Of $200 Million

By Yuliya Chernova

Adam Guild, a work-obsessed 24-year-old who never finished high school, has steered Owner.com, his restaurant-software startup, to a new round of financing at a $200 million valuation.

Existing investors Redpoint Ventures and Jack Altman, through his fund Alt Capital, co-led the $33 million Series B. "This was about thrusting money at the company because they are doing so well," Altman said about the deal. Altman is co-founder and chairman of human resources company **Lattice**, and the brother of OpenAI's Sam Altman.

Independent restaurant owners use Owner's tools to create websites with online-ordering features, as well as for tasks such as running marketing campaigns and improving placement in online search results. Palo Alto, Calif.-based Owner serves thousands of customers in the U.S.

Guild co-founded Owner in May 2020 and is chief executive. He has been an entrepreneur since high school, which he quit in the middle of 10th grade to pursue a business idea. Guild was a recipient of a Thiel Fellowship grant, a program created by venture capitalist Peter Thiel for young people who drop out or never attend college. (Owner's other co-founder, Dean Bloembergen, didn't finish college.)

Guild's dedication to his business looks extreme even by Silicon Valley standards. He says he has worked 15-hour days, seven days a week, without taking a vacation or sick day, for the past six years. Hundreds of Owner's customers have Guild's phone number and can text him any time, he said. "I believe startups are the Olympics of business," Guild said. "I believe if I want to win in the Olympics, I have to show up."

Owner operates in a competitive sector that has seen valuations decline in the public markets. Valuations for software companies that serve specific industries, a category called vertical software, are lower than several other subcategories, according to an analysis by Tomasz Tunguz, general partner at venture firm Theory Ventures. Shares of restaurant-software company **Toast**, for example, trade at about 1.7 times forward revenue, one of the lowest revenue-multiples in the group of public cloud companies tracked by the BVP Nasdaq Emerging Cloud Index.

Guild said Owner's business model generates healthy margins that he believes won't face headwinds in the public markets in the future.

Owner charges restaurants a $500 a month fee for the use of its software, a one-stop shop for all the digital needs of a small business, Guild said. Restaurants save money compared with orders placed on the sites of third parties such as **DoorDash** and **Uber Eats**, Owner says. Owner also gets a portion of online-order payments.

Owner says it has tens of millions of dollars in annualized revenue. The company said in a job posting several months ago that it had $15 million in annualized revenue. It says it has since been growing at a rate of 30% month-over-month. The company recently hired Josh Brown, former chief financial officer of Lattice, as CFO.

$500

The monthly fee Owner.com charges restaurants for the use of its software

Owner closed its Series B round in late 2023. Other investors in the financing, which brought Owner's total raised to $58.7 million, included Horsley Bridge Partners, Activant Capital and Transpose Platform Management.

Existing backers include SaaStr Fund, Day One Ventures and Browder Capital, as well as individuals who are founders and early leaders of startups including **Instacart**, Rippling, Stripe and **Dropbox**. Sam Bankman-Fried, founder of FTX, who was recently convicted of fraud in the collapse of the crypto company, is an early investor, though he holds a small stake in Owner and didn't invest in the Series B round.

Owner's Series B round was at a higher valuation than its Series A round and provided one of the best markups in the portfolio of Day One Ventures over the past year, said Masha Bucher, the firm's general partner and founder.

Startup Nets $140 Million to Help Bring High-Tech Solutions to School Bus Ride

By Marc Vartabedian

A Silicon Valley startup is bringing high-tech solutions to one of America's lowest-tech childhood staples: riding the bus to school.

Zum operates a private school bus fleet, contracting with school districts to handle their bus routes. Its pitch to school districts is that artificial-intelligence-infused software can help cut the costs of ferrying children to and from campuses. Zum said it serves more than 4,000 U.S. schools in cities including San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago and Boston.

The Redwood City, Calif.-based company raised a $140 million Series E funding round at a $1.3 billion valuation to continue developing its AI-driven technology platform. The round was led by Singapore sovereign-wealth fund GIC. Additional investors in the round include Sequoia Capital and SoftBank Vision Fund 2.

GIC said it was attracted to how Zum was modernizing school transportation, making it safer and more sustainable. Zum said it feeds unused energy from the batteries on its electric buses back to the energy grid. Zum declined to say how many electric buses it has, but said it owns more than 2,000 total buses in its fleet, which include internal combustion and electric-powered buses.

ZUM

Zum CEO Ritu Narayan said the business has a predictable and stable revenue model.

Zum's funding round is a growth deal, a financing stage in which companies typically focus on scaling the business, expanding operations and increasing market share. Zum's financing comes as many startups in the growth stage struggle to raise capital, partly because the market for initial public offerings has been essentially at a standstill.

Last year, U.S. startups raised $36.1 billion in the venture growth stage, a 33% drop from what was raised in 2022, according to analytics firm PitchBook Data.

Zum Founder and Chief Executive Ritu Narayan said this reality factored into its fundraising, which kicked off in June of last year and closed in December.

"There is more desire from the investors to focus on the fundamentals toward not just the growth rate but also the profitability and sustainability of the business in the long run," Narayan said. "Our preparation was before fundraising, on making sure we had a strong business and we went out with strong metrics into the [fundraising] environment."

Narayan said Zum's business has a predictable and stable revenue model. Its largest contract is for $400 million with Los Angeles Unified School District, she said.

Zum says it can operate district bus routes more efficiently, in part by using artificial intelligence software to optimize routes. That allows it to reduce the number of buses used to serve the routes. For instance, the San Francisco school district was using 236 buses. Zum cut it to 193 buses, Narayan said.

New Highs and Lows

Continued From Page B9

Stock	Sym	52-Wk Hi/Lo	% Chg
Carlisle	CSL	322.29	-1.9
Caterpillar	CAT	305.75	-1.5
Celestica	CLS	35.23	3.8
CellebriteDIWt	CLBTW	1.90	-8.2
Cencora	COR	235.06	5.5
CentralPuerto	CEPU	9.84	...
CheckPoint	CHKP	163.02	-0.9
ChimeraInvPfdB	CIMpB	24.33	-0.5
ChimeraInvPfdD	CIMpD	23.98	...
Chipotle	CMG	2439.63	-0.4
Chubb	CB	248.55	0.8
Church&Dwight	CHD	101.00	-0.6
Cintas	CTAS	611.69	-0.7
CitigroupPfdJ	CpJ	26.37	0.8
Citigroup	C	57.95	-1.6
Coca-ColaEuro	CCEP	69.86	-0.3
ColgatePalm	CL	84.95	...
CommvaultSystems	CVLT	92.81	4.1
SABESP	SBS	16.22	1.2
CompassPfdA	CODIpA	26.06	2.0
ConstructionPtrs	ROAD	46.14	1.3
CostamarePfdE	CMREpE	26.67	0.8
Costco	COST	705.52	-0.8
Couchbase	BASE	25.40	1.3
Crane	CR	127.63	0.9
CullinanOncology	CGEM	15.71	4.8
Danaher	DHR	248.78	-2.1
DianthusTherap	DNTH	19.96	-2.4
DrReddy'sLab	RDY	73.60	3.7
EMCOR	EME	233.03	-1.1
EagleMaterials	EXP	230.02	-1.1
EaglePointPfdF	ECCF	25.05	0.1
EdgewiseTherap	EWTX	18.27	3.5
ElPasoEngy pfC	EPpC	47.39	0.1
EllingtonFinPfdE	EFCpE	25.25	...
EncompassHealth	EHC	72.99	-1.2
enCoreEnergy	EU	4.76	-2.1
EnergyTransfer	ET	14.65	-1.8
EnovaIntl	ENVA	63.56	-7.4
EnstarPfdD	ESGRP	25.64	-0.4
Equinix	EQIX	846.85	-1.4
ErieIndemnity	ERIE	350.05	0.3
EssentGroup	ESNT	56.45	-1.9
Euroseas	ESEA	40.48	-0.6
EvercoreA	EVR	182.00	-2.6
EyePointPharm	EYPT	27.96	4.2
FTAI Aviation	FTAI	54.54	-0.3
Fabrinet	FN	221.20	-2.9
FactSet	FDS	482.51	-0.7
FibroBiologics	FBLG	55.00	263.8
FirstCitizenPfdC	FCNCO	23.29	-1.5
FirstInternetBncp	INBK	33.45	0.6
FirstWatchRest	FWRG	22.03	-1.1
FirstCash	FCFS	118.17	-2.4
Fiserv	FI	144.82	-1.5
FlameAcqn	FLME.U	14.00	3.2
Flex	FLEX	24.18	-1.2
FomentoEconMex	FMX	138.47	-1.7
FordMotor6%Nts	FpC	25.25	1.5
FordMotor6.2%Nt	FpB	25.64	1.4
Fortive	FTV	82.17	4.7
FusionPharm	FUSN	12.24	3.7
FutureHealthESG	FHLTU	11.40	2.9
FutureHealthESG	FHLT	11.60	4.7
GMS	GMS	86.82	-2.0
GSK	GSK	41.31	0.9
GeneralDynamics	GD	269.50	-1.4
GeneralElec	GE	134.47	-1.1
GibraltarInds	ROCK	84.20	-2.6
GlobalIndl	GIC	43.82	-2.2
GlobalPtrs	GLP	47.99	2.8
GlobeLife	GL	125.18	-1.2
GoldmanSachs	GS	393.91	-0.7
GooseheadIns	GSHD	80.51	-2.7
GracellBiotech	GRCL	10.33	0.6
Grainger	GWW	922.50	-2.1
GpoFinGalicia	GGAL	22.26	0.5
GuardionHlth	GHSI	10.75	62.7
HCA Healthcare	HCA	309.33	1.1
HCM Acqn A	HCMA	11.39	-1.0
HaoxiHlthTech	HAO	8.50	-1.0
HartfordFinl	HIG	88.40	-0.8
HuntingIngalls	HII	263.00	-0.5
IDT	IDT	35.44	-2.0
IRSA Wt	IRS.WS	0.62	4.6
IllinoisToolWks	ITW	267.12	-1.8
InceptionGrowth	IGTAU	11.76	9.5
InceptionGrowth	IGTA	10.83	0.7
InFinTAcqnA	IFIN	11.37	...
InflectionPtIIA	IPXX	10.45	0.1
IngersollRand	IR	80.85	-0.9
InnovativeIndPfdA	IIPRpA	27.51	1.6
ICE	ICE	129.93	-1.3
Invivyd	IVVD	5.20	-3.4
IronHorseAcqns	IROHU	10.10	...
IronwoodPharm	IRWD	14.43	2.8
JPMorganChase	JPM	178.30	-1.1
JacksonFinlPfdA	JXNpA	27.53	0.2
KKR	KKR	88.51	-1.4
Kadant	KAI	290.38	-0.4
KalVistaPharm	KALV	16.21	6.5
LamfGlbl A	LGVC	11.94	0.6
LCattertonA	LCAA	10.92	17.1
LandosBio	LABP	5.47	7.8
EliLilly	LLY	663.55	0.1
LincolnElectric	LECO	228.18	-2.1
Loews	L	74.00	-1.2
MGIC Investment	MTG	20.26	-1.9
MPLX	MPLX	38.75	0.1
Macrogenics	MGNX	14.77	2.1
MainStreetCap	MAIN	46.04	-1.5
MakeMyTrip	MMYT	56.97	2.5
ManhattanAssoc	MANH	258.91	8.4
ManulifeFinl	MFC	22.40	-0.5
MarathonPetrol	MPC	171.42	-2.5
Mastercard	MA	462.00	0.9
MauiLand	MLP	20.51	-2.7
McGrathRent	MGRC	127.02	-0.6
McKesson	MCK	507.21	2.0
MerchantsBncpPfdB	MBINO	24.57	...
Merck	MRK	122.85	-0.7
MerrimackPharm	MACK	13.56	-0.3
Merus	MRUS	36.97	-0.1
MetalsAcqn	MTAL	13.47	4.0
Microsoft	MSFT	415.32	-2.7
MitsubishiUFJ	MUFG	9.50	0.6
MiX Telematics	MIXT	9.60	11.6
Moody's	MCO	399.36	-1.1
MorganStanleyPfdA	MSpA	22.99	1.7
MorganStanleyPfdP	MSpP	26.86	0.6
NMI Holdings	NMIH	32.50	-1.1
NaborsEnerII	NETDU	10.52	0.3
Neurogene	NGNE	34.73	-4.3
NexaResources	NEXA	7.35	4.6
Nomura	NMR	5.91	10.2
NovoNordisk	NVO	116.12	5.2
Nucor	NUE	190.96	-1.0
NuSTAREnergy	NS	22.14	...
OdysseyMarine	OMEX	5.07	-1.7
OlympicSteel	ZEUS	69.77	-2.1
OpenText	OTEX	44.57	-1.0
OtisWorldwide	OTIS	92.13	-1.7
PacGE pfE	PCGpE	19.10	0.6
PapayaGrowthI	PPYAU	11.94	8.3
ParPacific	PARR	37.60	-0.8
PerceptionCapIII	PFTA	10.95	-1.1
PerceptionCapIIIUn	PFTAU	11.00	0.1
PerspectiveTherap	CATX	0.85	7.9
PetroleoBrasil	PBR	17.39	0.2
PetroleoBrasilA	PBR.A	16.72	0.7
Phillips66	PSX	147.68	1.3
PowellIndustries	POWL	125.49	45.3
Primerica	PRI	236.71	0.4
Procter&Gamble	PG	158.50	-0.2
QuettaAcqn	QETA	10.34	-0.3
RELX	RELX	41.99	-1.1
RedRockResorts	RRR	56.11	-1.1
RegencyCtrsPfdB	REGCO	24.90	1.9
RegenPharm	REGN	965.66	-1.8
ReinsGrp	RGA	175.34	0.8
RenaissancePfdF	RNRpF	25.01	0.4
RenaissanceRe	RNR	233.85	6.4
RepublicSvcs	RSG	173.55	-1.0
RestaurantBrands	QSR	79.94	-0.8
RunwayGrowthNts	RWAYZ	25.48	0.4
S&P Global	SPGI	457.19	-1.4
SCE IV Pfd	SCEpJ	23.07	-0.1
SLM Pfd B	SLMBP	71.07	-1.2
SPX Tech	SPXC	104.96	-3.9
SachemNts2025	SCCC	24.73	0.3
SaratogaInv8.125Nt	SAY	25.59	-0.4
SilenceTherap	SLN	24.33	15.4
SizzleAcqn	SZZLU	11.23	8.0
SizzleAcqn	SZZL	11.29	-0.9
SkyWest	SKYW	54.93	-2.7
SmithDouglas	SDHC	27.29	-4.7
SpringWorks	SWTX	46.20	0.7
SpruceBio	SPRB	3.88	6.7
Stantec	STN	82.36	-1.8
StewartInfo	STC	63.87	-2.8
Stryker	SYK	342.80	5.9
Sysco	SYY	81.47	0.1
TJX	TJX	97.00	-2.0
Teekay	TK	9.12	...
TeekayTankers	TNK	63.22	0.1
TevaPharm	TEVA	12.64	3.2
TexasRoadhouse	TXRH	127.69	-0.9
TextainerPfdB	TGHpB	24.98	0.2
TransDigm	TDG	1100.00	0.6
Travelers	TRV	215.21	-1.0
TritonIntlPfdC	TRTNpC	26.17	0.9
USCellularNts2069	UZD	21.16	-0.2
UnionPacific	UNP	248.00	-1.1
UniversalHealthB	UHS	161.32	-0.1
Ur-Energy	URG	1.89	-0.5
VTEX	VTEX	8.38	-0.9
Vaxcyte	PCVX	73.61	6.0
VeraTherap	VERA	37.61	5.5
Verizon	VZ	43.21	-0.3
VerraMobility	VRRM	24.28	0.3
Vertiv	VRT	57.60	-0.6
Visa	V	279.99	-1.4
VistaEnergy	VIST	33.32	-0.5
Vistra	VST	41.66	-0.5
WEX	WEX	210.95	-2.5
Wabtec	WAB	133.27	-0.8
WasteConnections	WCN	158.24	-0.9
WasteMgt	WM	188.00	-0.8
WellsFargo	WFC	51.44	-2.0
WhitestoneREIT	WSR	13.09	-0.6
Wingstop	WING	286.56	0.7
Y-mAbsTherap	YMAB	13.39	2.0

Lows

Stock	Sym	52-Wk Hi/Lo	% Chg
AerwinsTech	AWIN	0.08	-4.1
AehrTestSys	AEHR	14.85	-6.0
AerSale	ASLE	9.29	-4.7
AgEagleAerial	UAVS	0.06	-13.0
agilon health	AGL	5.63	3.2
AimfinityWt	AIMAW	0.01	-2.7
Akili	AKLI	0.25	-8.0
AmericanLithium	AMLI	0.87	-10.2
AppliedDNA	APDN	0.52	-3.7
AultAlliance	AULT	0.48	-10.5
AuroraCannabis	ACB	0.38	-4.0
ByndCannasoft	BCAN	0.20	-5.9
Baijiayun	RTC	0.79	-35.7
Bausch+Lomb	BLCO	13.99	-2.4
BeiGene	BGNE	147.88	-4.4
BiodexaPharm	BDRX	1.60	-3.6
Biofrontera	BFRI	1.27	-2.2
Biolase	BIOL	0.74	-8.0
Biophytis	BPTS	0.45	-4.3
BiosigTech	BSGM	0.17	-10.7
BlackBerry	BB	2.79	-2.4
bluebirdbio	BLUE	1.01	-3.8
BoqiiHolding	BQ	0.29	-9.3
BrightGreen	BGXX	0.20	-5.7
BurgerFiIntl	BFI	0.60	-7.8
BuzzFeed	BZFD	0.17	2.9
CalAmp	CAMP	0.13	-8.2
CalidiBiotherap	CLDI	0.80	-7.5
Cemtrex	CETX	2.93	16.8
CetusCapitalAcqnRt	CETUR	0.12	-19.9
ChengheAcqnA	CHEA	8.57	16.2
ChickenSoupPfdA	CSSEP	1.23	-20.0
ChickenSoupNts	CSSEN	2.87	-15.8
ChinaNaturalRscs	CHNR	0.97	-3.9
CompassTherap	CMPX	1.29	-7.1
ComtechTel	CMTL	6.31	-6.8
CoreScientific	CORZ	2.88	-6.7
DSS	DSS	1.84	-5.0
DaqoNewEnergy	DQ	18.05	-2.2
DeepMedicineAcqn	DMAQ	2.96	-64.7
DenaliCapAcqnA	DECA	4.23	-3.2
DuPont	DD	61.72	-1.8
DyadicInt	DYAI	1.19	-0.8
EMX Royalty	EMX	1.46	-0.7
ElevaiLabs	ELAB	0.62	8.0
Emeren	SOL	1.71	-5.0
EmergentBiosol	EBS	1.67	-3.5
EndeavourSilver	EXK	1.51	-3.2
EnvericBiosci	ENVB	0.71	-7.3
ExtremeNetworks	EXTR	13.10	-18.8
EzFill	EZFL	1.45	-0.6
ForwardAir	FWRD	44.26	-2.2
FrontierInvtWt	FICVW	0.01	-80.0
GDS Holdings	GDS	5.27	-0.2
GRI Bio	GRI	1.61	-43.6
GenentaScience	GNTA	3.55	-1.5
Genprex	GNPX	0.19	-29.1
GeoVaxLabs	GOVX	3.25	-14.6
GinkgoBioworksWt	DNA.WS	0.07	-7.4
GlblMofyMetaverse	GMM	2.33	-13.1
GoldResource	GORO	0.22	-9.3
GrafTechIntl	EAF	1.32	-9.5
GreenGiant	GGE	0.04	-1.2
GroceryOutlet	GO	24.75	-2.7
GromSocialEnts	GROM	0.70	-4.3
HWH Intl	HWH	1.13	-9.2
HelloGroup	MOMO	5.79	0.5
HepionPharm	HEPA	1.72	6.0
Hesai	HSAI	5.79	-7.3
HubCyberSecurity	HUBC	1.41	...
HuizeHolding	HUIZ	0.58	3.0
IHS Holding	IHS	3.91	-1.0
Ideanomics	IDEX	0.96	-5.7
Imax	IMAX	13.84	0.1
Imunon	IMNN	0.50	-0.3
iQIYI	IQ	3.31	-0.3
iRobot	IRBT	13.50	-4.6
KaixinAuto	KXIN	0.27	-60.5
KaziaTherap	KZIA	0.27	0.5
Kennedy-Wilson	KW	10.41	-4.6
KingsoftCloud	KC	2.45	1.6
LL Flooring	LL	2.58	-5.8
Lanvin	LANV	1.66	3.8
MFAFinNts29	MFAN	24.95	-0.5
MGE Energy	MGEE	64.35	-2.1
MainzBiomed	MYNZ	0.95	-4.0
MalibuBoats	MBUU	40.29	0.5
MeiwuTechnology	WNW	1.71	-17.1
MesaRoyalty	MTR	10.74	-1.0
MetaMaterials	MMAT	3.75	-21.6
MicroAlgo	MLGO	0.37	-3.1
Mobileye	MBLY	25.77	-1.5
Mosaic	MOS	30.71	-3.4
MotusGI	MOTS	0.60	...
MyMD Pharm	MYMD	0.15	-8.5
NIO	NIO	5.43	-2.9
NewHorizAircraft	HOVR	1.56	-2.4
NY CmntyBcp	NYCB	5.58	-37.7
Next.e.GO	EGOX	0.31	-1.1
NKGenBiotech	NKGN	1.49	-10.7
NovaGoldRscs	NG	2.54	-3.0
Novavax	NVAX	3.95	-0.7
NuvveHolding	NVVE	1.06	-62.9
Nxu	NXU	0.92	-7.8
OneConnectFin	OCFT	2.35	-2.8
Oragenics	OGEN	2.25	-33.6
PetcoHealth	WOOF	2.38	-5.2
PiedmontLith	PLL	15.26	-4.4
Playstudios	MYPS	2.20	-3.5
PrestoAutomation	PRST	0.21	-10.2
Prothena	PRTA	28.27	-4.9
PsyenceBiomed	PBM	1.78	-3.8
ReconTech	RCON	0.16	-6.5
RegencellBio	RGC	7.91	-2.3
RelianceGlobal	RELI	0.42	0.2
ReToEcoSol	RETO	0.34	0.3
RevanceTherap	RVNC	5.03	-8.6
RevelstoneCapWt	RCACW	0.03	-0.4
RichtechRobotics	RR	1.90	0.9
RiskOnIntl	ROI	0.10	7.5
Rockwell	ROK	252.11	-17.6
RomaGreenFin	ROMA	0.70	-8.0
RoyaltyMgmt	RMCO	1.20	-13.5
SanJuanBasin	SJT	4.79	-2.6
SemperParatusA	LGST	5.18	-8.5
Shapeways	SHPW	1.85	-7.5
ShengfengDevt	SFWL	1.57	-8.1
SigmaLithium	SGML	19.68	-6.2
SiNtxTech	SINT	0.15	-34.5
60DegreesPharm	SXTP	0.27	-8.8
SnailA	SNAL	0.88	-4.9
SOQUIMICH	SQM	42.07	-6.8
SocietyPass	SOPA	0.18	1.1
SouthlandWt	SLND.WS	0.30	-5.3
Synaptogenix	SNPX	0.17	-16.4
TCBioPharm	TCBP	1.05	-7.6
TROOPS	TROO	1.65	-6.9
TRX Gold	TRX	0.33	-1.5
TrailblazerI Rt	TBMCR	0.08	-2.2
TrioPetroleum	TPET	0.16	-6.9
TuSimple	TSP	0.22	-20.5
U Power	UCAR	0.09	-4.5
Urgent.ly	ULY	1.95	5.5
VCIGlobal	VCIG	0.85	-5.4
VNET	VNET	1.63	0.6
VyneTherap	VYNE	1.67	-4.5
VastRenewables	VSTE	1.98	-11.3
ViomiTech	VIOT	0.75	0.4
WallboxWt	WBX.WS	0.10	5.3
Waterdrop	WDH	0.95	...
WstAstHiIncmFdIIRt	HIXrw	0.01	-26.6
WeTrade	WETG	2.80	2.1
Workhorse	WKHS	0.26	-6.5
XBPEurope	XBP	2.25	-7.8
Zoomcar	ZCAR	2.17	-23.2
ZuraBio	ZURA	2.85	-10.4

Stocks Score Third-Straight Monthly Gain

Indexes fell on day as Fed chief's talk made March rate cut more unlikely

By David Uberti

Stocks veered lower after Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell all but took a March interest-rate cut off the table. It didn't stop major indexes from grinding out their third consecutive month of gains.

All three indexes finished January in the green despite choppy trading that ranged between growing confidence about the U.S. economy and continued caution toward the central bank's monetary policy for the rest of the year.

WEDNESDAY'S MARKETS

The S&P 500 led the pack in January with a 1.6% advance, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 1.2%. The Nasdaq Composite, weighted down by slumping **Tesla** and **Apple** shares, logged a 1% monthly gain.

On Wednesday, many on Wall Street again turned their attention toward Washington, where central bankers kept interest rates steady as expected. But this Fed day was about future Fed days, with bond and stock investors searching for hints about when the central bank might start cutting rates and in turn lower borrowing costs for businesses and consumers across the country.

Powell on Wednesday pointed to balancing risks of both persistent inflation and tightened financial conditions—a change in rhetoric that some investors view as a sign of interest-rate cuts beginning in the coming months.

"That's laying the foundations for a shift," said Guy LeBas, chief fixed-income strategist at Janney Montgomery Scott.

His firm believes that could start as soon as May or June, less than a year after the central bank hit pause in its inflation fight. "The turnaround has just been unbelievably fast," LeBas said.

Investors' fluttering expectations about rate policy have shaped bond markets in recent weeks, with the optimism of the new year turning into mid-January wariness and back again by month's end. The yield on benchmark 10-year Treasurys slipped Wednesday to 3.965%, a hair above where it started 2024.

Oil prices in January traded in the green for the first time since September, propelled by fears of wider conflict in the Middle East and winter storms that shut production across swaths of oil fields in North Dakota and Texas. Benchmark U.S. crude finished the month 5.9% higher at $75.85 a barrel.

On Wednesday, the Dow edged down 0.8% and the S&P 500 fell 1.6%. The tech-heavy Nasdaq declined 2.2% as each of the "Magnificent Seven" companies logged losses.

Google-owner **Alphabet** led the retreat, pulling back 7.5% after its advertising sales last quarter missed Wall Street's expectations. **Microsoft** fell 2.7% despite reporting its fastest earnings growth in more than two years late Tuesday, while chip-making giant **Nvidia** lost 2%.

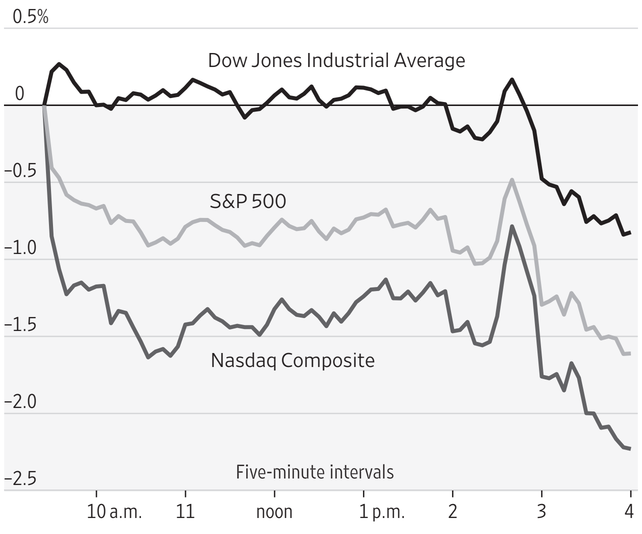
Tesla slid 2.2% following a Delaware judge's decision to strike down Chief Executive Elon Musk's $56 billion pay package. Shares in the electric-vehicle-maker dove 25% in January.

Earnings season kicked into high gear this week, with shares of **New York Community Bancorp** plummeting 38% Wednesday after the company swung to a fourth-quarter loss. The results sent new tremors across regional bank stocks, pulling an index tied to the sector 6% lower.

Companies will continue pumping out fourth-quarter results Thursday, when Amazon.com, Apple and Facebook-owner Meta report after the bell. Charlie Ripley, senior investment strategist for Allianz Investment Management, will focus on nontech names for clues on the economy.

Overseas, the Stoxx Europe 600 was unchanged. At midday Thursday, Japan's Nikkei 225 was down 0.7%, but Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index was up 1.6% and South Korea's Kospi was up 1.2%. S&P 500 futures rose 0.3%.

Index performance on Wednesday



Source: FactSet

Watch a Video

Scan this code for a video on how markets reacted to the Fed's signals.

Pipeline To Cut Oil Discount

Continued from page B1

terpart Tuesday. That differential reached $47 in 2018, forcing the government of Alberta to curtail production to support prices.

Traders are already anticipating markdowns to shrink by a few dollars a barrel. Forward Western Canadian Select discounts for the second quarter traded at $13.80 a barrel Monday, according to Platts, part of S&P Global.

"That's a huge hit," said Kristine Oleszek, an analyst at East Daley Analytics, adding that the total annual impact on the U.S. could reach billions of dollars. "The refiners aren't going to eat that themselves. It's going to be passed along [to consumers]."

The project cleared its last major regulatory hurdle in mid-January, and workers are laying the final stretch of pipe that will carry Canadian crude from Alberta's oil sands to the Pacific. Traders are trying to time the startup of the project, which faces last-minute construction challenges before it can shake up the North American market.

Canadian companies have ramped up production in anticipation that more supplies may soon reach an export terminal and pipeline hookups to Washington state. November output in the prolific oil-producing province of Alberta rose to a record 4.16 million barrels a day, according to government figures.

Kinder Morgan initially proposed an expanded pipeline in 2013, expecting to spend the equivalent of $4 billion to twin a pipeline that now winds southwest from Edmonton to the Vancouver suburb of Burnaby, British Columbia. But regulatory delays and opposition from environmentalists frustrated the Houston-based company so much that it sold the project to the Canadian government in 2018 for $3.5 billion.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau vowed to finish the expansion, calling it "vital" to Canada's strategic interests. The pipeline in January appeared to have cleared its last obstacle when the Canada Energy Regulator approved a change in the pipeline's thickness during the final stretch of drilling.

Construction snarls, regulatory hurdles and court cases have run up government spending on the project to about $25 billion, according to the latest estimates.

The project is meant to boost a Canadian industry whose growth over the past 15 years in many ways reflects that of its hulking counterpart down south. While America's hottest oil field in West Texas and New Mexico pumps out light, sweet crude, Alberta's oil sands dish out heavier supplies that are generally costlier to refine.

Companies across much of the U.S., including some owned by Canadian companies, have responded by adding capacity or honing operations to turn Canadian crude into fuel, chemicals or asphalt. The Midwest, the country's largest importing region, hasn't received foreign shipments from anywhere but Canada in years, according to the Energy Information Administration.

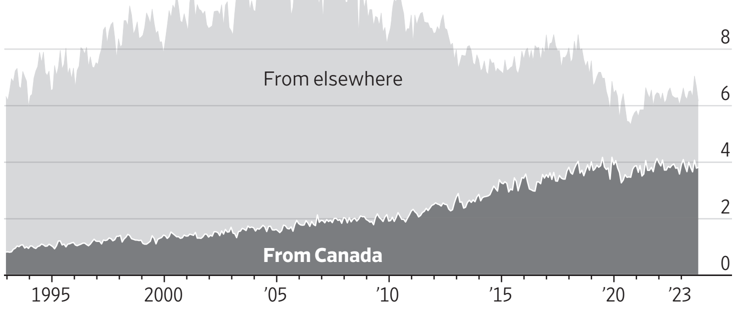
"The Midwest is held captive by Canadian crude oil," said Mark King, an analyst at RBN Energy. Farther south, where refineries and export terminals dot the shores of Texas and Louisiana, traders have more alternatives in the heavier crude produced in Mexico or Venezuela.

U.S. refining officials have played down the impact on American consumers and the domestic fuel-making industry, saying the sector can tweak plant-by-plant operations based on what crude is available. But some have warned that it could siphon off supplies from the arcane business of sending tankersfull of Canadian crude to countries such as China.

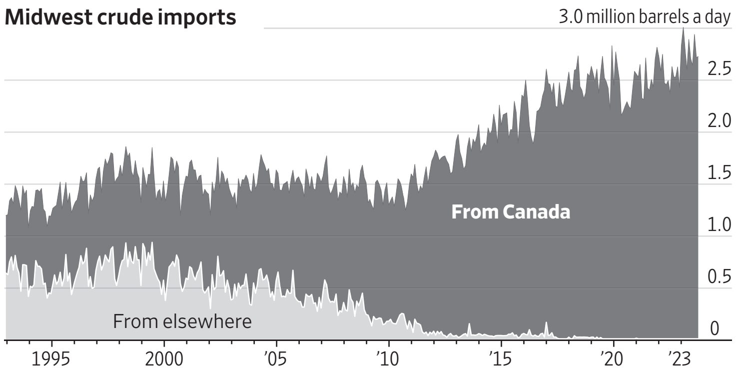
North of the border, the project represents a much-needed correction for energy companies and investors after years of discounted commodity prices. Until those companies' production levels outstrip Trans Mountains' expanded capacity, "they're going to have the leverage," said Jacques Rousseau, an analyst at ClearView Energy Partners.

Assuming that crude actually begins flowing. On Monday, Trans Mountain said drilling issues in the final section of construction would delay the project's startup to the second quarter. Canadian oil prices fell 5.5% that day in response.

U.S. crude imports

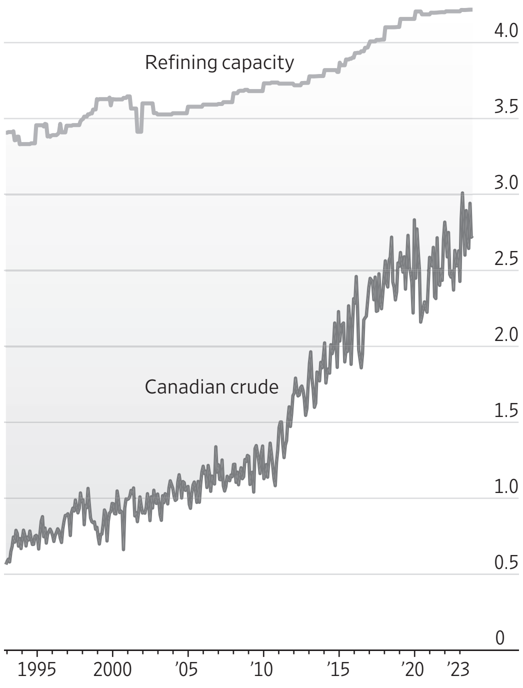


Midwest crude imports



Note: Date are monthly, through October 2023

Midwest refining capacity and crude imports from Canada



Source: Energy Information Administration

JENNIFER GAUTHIER/REUTERS

The Trans Mountain expansion will nearly triple the capacity of an existing pipeline.

AUCTION RESULTS

Here are the results of Wednesday's Treasury auction. All bids are awarded at a single price at the market-clearing yield. Rates are determined by the difference between that price and the face value.

17-WEEK BILLS

Applications	$161,856,051,300
Accepted bids	$60,295,661,300
" noncompetitively	$610,638,300
" foreign noncompetitively	$0
Auction price (rate)	98.297639 (5.150%)
Coupon equivalent	5.327%
Bids at clearing yield accepted	32.06%
Cusip number	912797JZ1

The bills, dated Feb. 6, 2024, mature on June 4, 2024.

Buyout Firm Beats Goal for New Fund

By Chris Cumming

Buyout firm TJC has closed the largest fund in its more than 40-year history.

The New York investment manager, previously known as the Jordan Co., raised $6.85 billion for its Resolute Fund VI, above a $6 billion goal, said Chief Executive Partner Rich Caputo. The fundraising tally also exceeded that of the previous fund, which closed with $5 billion in 2021.

Pension managers that committed to the new vehicle include the Nebraska Investment Council, the Alaska Retirement Management Board, the New Mexico Public Employees Retirement Association and the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund, according to publicly available documents. The Wisconsin Investment Board pledged $125 million, according to the WSJ Pro Private Equity LP Commitments database.

The firm backs midmarket companies valued at about $100 million to $2 billion, typically in the industrial, industrial technologies, healthcare and logistics sectors, Caputo said. TJC emphasizes investments in companies involved in the technological development of the supply-chain and logistics sectors, he said.

So far, TJC has made five investments from the new fund, Caputo said. While private-equity dealmaking is down across the board—global transaction value fell about 35% to $474 billion last year, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence—Caputo said it is a favorable time to invest, as the amount of available capital and the number of competing investors have shrunk. Last year "was a great time to be a buyer," offering opportunities "to buy businesses you feel can be fairly resilient and put capital structures on them that can be durable during periods of uncertainty," Caputo said.

TJC's recent investments include maritime logistics business Global Transport Solutions Topholding and the commercial aviation business of L3Harris Technologies. Exits have included contract-research business Worldwide Clinical Trials and industrial-technologies company Inrcore.

Founded in 1982, TJC is one of the oldest midmarket investment firms in the U.S. Caputo, who joined the firm in 1990, has been heading its management since 2012, he said. The firm manages about $29 billion.

Private-equity fundraising has been under pressure for nearly two years, as higher interest rates and tighter debt markets restrict the amount of capital available for buyout deals. Last year, global private-equity and venture-capital fundraising fell about 12% to $804 billion, the lowest annual sum since 2017, according to data-provider Preqin.

Regional Bank Fears Return

Continued from page B1

terly dividend to 5 cents a share from 17 cents a share.

"We took decisive actions to build capital, reinforce our balance sheet, strengthen our risk management processes, and better align ourselves with the relevant bank peers," Cangemi said.

The results took some investors back to the bank crisis in early 2023, when Signature, Silicon Valley Bank and First Republic Bank all failed within a span of weeks. At those banks, large amounts of uninsured deposits, concentrated customer bases and paper losses on their bond portfolios had sparked a crisis of confidence among their depositors and investors.

The **SPDR S&P Regional Banking ETF** and the KBW Nasdaq Regional Banking Index each fell about 6% Wednesday, while the S&P 500 lost 1.6%. The 10-year Treasury yield fell to its lowest level in weeks.

In the fourth quarter, deposits at NYCB were down 2% from the previous quarter, driven by a $1.8 billion decrease in custodial deposits related to the Signature transaction.

"In the spring, it was deposits running out the door," said Casey Haire, an analyst at Jefferies. "This is preparing to be a $100 billion bank and credit risk."

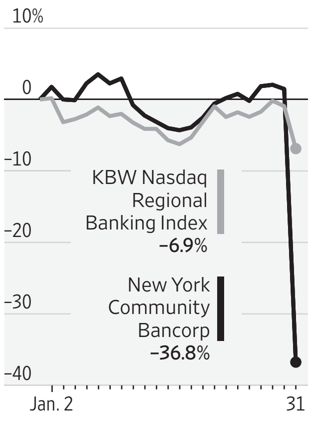
NYCB said more of its property loans have started to sour. The bank also piled into its reserves for potential losses, particularly in the commercial-property space that has come under stress.

Net charge-offs surged to $185 million from $1 million a year earlier, driven by two loans in that sector. One was an office loan that had gone bad after an updated valuation in the third quarter. The other was a co-op loan that wasn't in default but that the bank expects to sell in the first quarter.

"I don't see systemic issues within their loan portfolio that I'm overly concerned about," said Mark Fitzgibbon, head of financial services research at Piper Sandler. "It felt like this was a cleanup quarter...the company said we're going to rip the Band-Aid off all at once."

—Eric Wallerstein contributed to this article.

Share-price and index performance, year to date



Source: FactSet

HEARD ON THE STREET

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS & COMMENTARY

BOEING/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Boeing executives meeting with employees at a Renton, Wash., facility on Jan. 25.

Boeing Investors Fly Blind

Cautious approach leaves markets with few reasons to back jet maker

The impact on Boeing's reputation of a 737 MAX 9 door plug blowing out midflight is clear, but Wall Street is scrambling to guess its financial magnitude. Investors should act in a way that the plane maker recently failed to do: While in a storm, err on the side of caution.

On Wednesday, the U.S. plane maker published its first earnings since the Jan. 5 accident during an Alaska Airlines flight. Its shares rose more than 5% because **Boeing** lost less money during the final quarter of last year than median analyst forecasts were suggesting. Free cash flow for 2023 overall came in near the high end of the range executives had announced.

What markets wanted to know most of all was the extent to which the incident might throw the company's recovery off course. Boeing promised steady cash flow and progress with the problems at its defense arm in 2024, but declined to give explicit guidance. "We won't get ahead of our regulator," Boeing Chief Executive Officer David Calhoun told analysts Wednesday.

Officials are still investigating the blowout. So far, it seems likely that the problem was caused by factory workers failing to properly secure the plug, rather than a design issue. The MAX 9 is flying again and Boeing is delivering it to customers.

Nevertheless, there seem to have been quality-control lapses in several aircraft flown by Alaska and United Airlines. After an order from U.S. regulators last week, production rates of the 737 family will remain frozen at 38 a month until controls are assessed. Investors' expectations had been based on Boeing's plans to boost output to 50 by next year.

Two 737 variants that Boeing is trying to get certified—the MAX 7 and the MAX 10—were supposed to feature in the production increase. Extra scrutiny seems set to create further delays. Boeing confirmed Tuesday that it is withdrawing its request that the MAX 7 be exempted from safety standards related to its deicing system.

This seems to be part of Calhoun's commitment to treading more cautiously, which includes adding additional quality checks to the manufacturing process and giving airline operators access to the factory. In an unprecedented move, 737 production was paused for an entire day last week, he revealed.

Boeing stock has fallen about 14% since Jan. 5, though this has simply returned it to November levels.

Meanwhile, brokers have cut their forecasts for Boeing's narrow-body deliveries in 2024 by only 2%, data by Visible Alpha show. They seem to think Boeing will be able to shift some resources left idle by lower production of the existing MAX variants to the coming MAX 10. They project 2024 losses will mostly be offset by higher production rates in 2025 and 2026, especially when it comes to the MAX 7.

Markets have solid reasons not to embrace doomsday scenarios. Boeing's order backlog is now above 5,600 commercial aircraft. Supply constraints and the advantages of fleet commonality mean carriers can't simply switch over to its competitor Airbus. And Calhoun's stop-and-start approach is the right one to eventually restore confidence.

Yet it may come with more financial trade-offs than investors seem to be assuming. On top of the extra costs associated with stricter quality control, greater caution might mean casting further doubt on customers' schedules, which will create backlash. Last week, United CEO Scott Kirby said he will study an alternative plan that doesn't include the MAX 10s that he has on order.

This variant still features in analysts' forecasts for this year, but it is quite plausible that it won't fly until well into 2025. MAX 7 deliveries seem likely to slide into 2026.

When there is no visibility, landing the plane is a good idea. But that also means it isn't going anywhere.

—*Jon Sindreu*

Tesla Needs Vote to Fix Musk Pay Mess

Ruling against his prior deal throws negotiations over his next package into disarray

Would **Tesla** shareholders approve Chief Executive Elon Musk's 2018 pay package, worth $51 billion at today's stock price, if they had to vote for it again?

The question is raised by Kathaleen McCormick's explosive post-trial opinion in the long-simmering Delaware legal case brought by shareholder Richard Tornetta against Musk and Tesla's board for what turned out to be a gargantuan multiyear compensation plan.

The judgment in favor of Tornetta rested partly on the conclusion that the record-breaking compensation package wasn't "entirely fair"—the high standard required of a company's transactions with a controlling stockholder under Delaware law. Importantly, McCormick dismissed the fact that 73% of shareholders, excluding Musk and his brother Kimbal Musk, approved the deal when it was first announced.

Tesla could appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court of Delaware. Alternatively, it could feasibly take the deal back to minority shareholders with a more explicit set of disclosures regarding Musk's role in influencing it.

The company has an unusually high share of individual shareholders, many of whom are also die-hard Musk fans. Insiders and institutions own just 57% of Tesla shares, according to FactSet. Some

CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

Tesla CEO Elon Musk.

institutional investors have said Musk's extraordinary rewards were due payment for unlikely achievements. But others have been critical, led by proxy advisers Glass Lewis and ISS.

Perhaps a compromise could be found that brings down the number of options the CEO is entitled to. This would make it easier for institutional investors and proxy advisers to support.

But that would be complicated, too. Voting with the benefit of hindsight misses the key point that Musk, at the time, seemed unlikely to earn what he is now entitled to. The CEO also seems to want all the options he can get: He said on his social-media platform, X, that he might take his artificial-intelligence ideas elsewhere if he didn't control 25% of Tesla—roughly double his current share. The solution of giving him votes without the economic rights, for which he voiced support in last week's earnings call, is yet another governance taboo.

The judgment throws whatever new compensation plan for Musk the board was working on in the air. McCormick cited the 15-year relationship between Tesla's CEO and the chairman of its compensation committee, venture capitalist Ira Ehrenpreis, as a reason why the process leading to the approval of the 2018 pay deal was "deeply flawed." Ehrenpreis, who netted over $200 million in 2021 by exercising one-quarter of the Tesla options he had been granted, chairs the compensation committee tasked with coming up with a new plan.

If Tesla really wanted to address longstanding governance concerns, it could do so by appointing people to the board who aren't so close or financially indebted to Musk. But this probably isn't where this saga is heading, given the CEO's demands for more control. The only way to square this vicious governance circle seems to be to appeal to shareholders directly.

That brings the question back to just what level of pay for Musk a majority of Tesla minority shareholders would vote for. This year's proxy season will be hot.

—*Stephen Wilmot*

Obesity-Drug Coverage Not an Issue for Drug Firms

Nearly every employer in the country is grappling with how—and whether—to pay for new weight-loss drugs. But for **Eli Lilly** and **Novo Nordisk**, it actually doesn't matter, for now. They are selling every injection they can make.

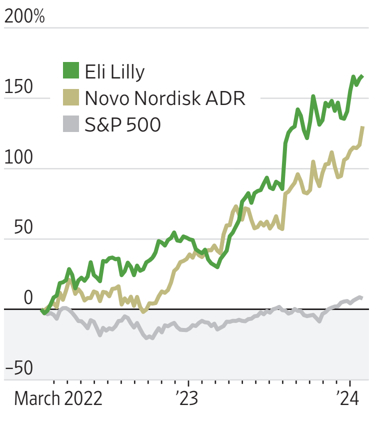
That isn't to diminish the importance of making sure patients have access to the medications. But there isn't enough to go around: Novo Nordisk has been restricting supply of starter doses of Wegovy to new patients. On Wednesday, Novo's head of North America operations, Doug Langa, told analysts during its fourth-quarter earnings call that the company is "doubling the amount of the lower dose strength of Wegovy compared with the previous months," enabling more patients to start. "We will gradually be increasing the overall supply throughout the remainder of 2024," he added.

The company reported fourth-quarter sales rose 37% to 65.9 billion Danish kroner, equivalent to $9.6 billion, beating analyst estimates, according to FactSet. That was driven by sales of GLP-1 drugs Ozempic and Wegovy. For 2024, the company expects sales growth of 18% to 26% and operating profit growth of 21% to 29% at constant exchange rates.

The supply constraints of the two drugs and Lilly's Zepbound mean it could take years for there to be enough supply to meet demand. Novo in November said it would spend about $2.3 billion to expand a production facility in France and more than $6 billion to expand manufacturing capacity in Denmark. Lilly recently announced a $2.5 billion investment to expand a manufacturing site in Germany and pledged more than $11 billion in manufacturing investments in the past three years.

Expanding the manufacturing of injectables is complicated. "You're talking about billions of pens," says Guggenheim analyst Seamus

Share-price and index performance, past two years



Source: FactSet

Fernandez. "Producing pens is a very complex process."

The debate around covering these drugs for employees remains front and center. Spending on the popular drugs can cost more than $1,000 a month, which can mean millions of dollars for insurance plans. Some employers cut off insurance coverage. Medications such as Wegovy cost the North Carolina State Health Plan $100 million last year, leading it to recently end coverage for weight-loss medications. That ordinarily would have sent a drug stock plunging. In the case of Lilly and Novo, they kept rising. Novo rose 5.3% in U.S. trading on Wednesday and was up about 9% this year.

The manufacturing difficulties are a double-edged sword. While it is limiting growth now, it means that potential competitors will have to go through the painful process of scaling up, giving Lilly and Novo an edge for years to come. How to pay for weight-loss drugs will be an important matter for Lilly and Novo. Right now, simply making them is the challenge.

—*David Wainer*

Microsoft's Value Has Set Expectations High

It is definitely easier being **Microsoft** than Google these days, but hardly easy.

The two tech titans have very different core businesses, yet they face many of the same overall challenges. Both are already colossal companies that have to find tens of billions of dollars in new revenue every year just to manage low-double-digit growth rates. Both are in regulators' crosshairs for supposedly being too big already. And both are gunning hard to build significant new businesses using generative artificial intelligence technology, which was the key topic of interest in quarterly results issued by the two companies Tuesday afternoon.

Like their dueling reports three months ago, this round went to Microsoft. The software giant's revenue and operating income of $62 billion and $27 billion, respectively, each set new quarterly records and beat Wall Street's estimates by a healthy margin. That was despite disappointing earnings from the segment that includes the company's Windows, gaming and device businesses.

More important, Microsoft's Azure cloud computing business saw revenue grow 30% year over year in the fiscal second quarter that ended December, a pickup from the pace seen in the September period and 2 percentage points above analysts' expectations.

Revenue growth in Google's much smaller cloud business improved as well, rising 26% year over year in the fourth quarter compared with 22% growth in the previous quarter. But that wasn't enough to fully offset disappointing growth in advertising, which still accounts for 77% of parent company **Alphabet**'s total annual revenue.

Alphabet's operating income of $23.7 billion for the fourth quarter also missed Wall Street's consensus target by about 1%. Its shares fell 7.5% on Wednesday following the results.

But Microsoft now faces the particular challenge of even loftier expectations. Its stock had surged 68% over the past 12 months compared with a 56% gain by Alphabet ahead of Tuesday's results. That made Microsoft the second U.S. company to attain a market capitalization of $3 trillion.

Hence, Microsoft's shares also fell Wednesday, closing down 2.7%. The company's earnings call included a revenue projection that was slightly below Wall Street's target. It should be noted that Microsoft's shares now carry a 54% premium to Google's parent as a multiple of forward earnings—more than double the 22% they have averaged over the past five years, according to data from FactSet.

Investors will likely get over it. Tuesday's reports did little to dispel the notion that Microsoft maintains a comfortable lead in the AI race—or that it is running it more profitably.

The company's cloud revenue totaled $124.3 billion in calendar 2023 and grew 23% for the year. That compares to 26% growth for Google Cloud, which is nearly one-quarter the size. Microsoft also noted that AI contributed six points to the growth of its Azure revenue for the recent quarter, while Google didn't break out any specific financial contribution from its own generative AI services in Tuesday's call.

Microsoft's forecast implies an operating margin of 43% in the March quarter, 3 percentage points higher than Wall Street's forecast, while Alphabet is expected by analysts to manage a 28% margin for the same period.

But the price tag is also rising sharply for both.

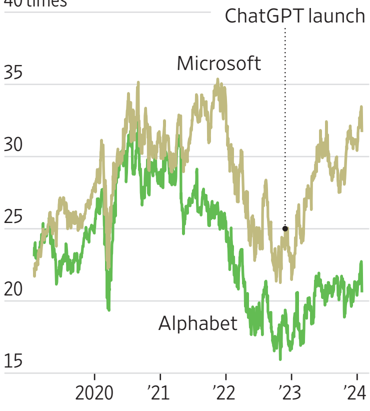
Google's parent dropped a record $11 billion on capital expenditures during the fourth quarter, and Chief Financial Officer Ruth Porat projected "notably larger" expenditures in 2024 compared with last year because of growing infrastructure investments to support its AI build-out.

Microsoft CFO Amy Hood likewise said capex would "increase materially" in the March quarter following a 55% year-over-year jump to $9.7 billion in the just-ended period.

Supporting a $3 trillion enterprise doesn't come cheap.

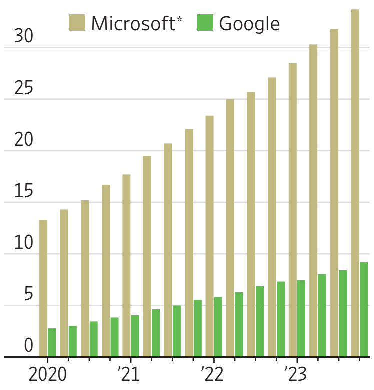
—*Dan Gallagher*

Share price as a multiple of forward earnings



*Fiscal year ends in June

Cloud revenue, by calendar quarter



Sources: FactSet (share price); the companies (revenue)