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Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 2022 • B2

Ukrainian attack hits far behind front lines

Strike on Russian base in Crimea is claimed to be work of special forces

BY ISABELLE KHURSHUDYAN, LIZ SLY AND ADELA SULIMAN

KYIV, UKRAINE — A powerful attack on a Russian air base in occupied Crimea was the work of Ukrainian special forces, a Ukrainian government official told The Washington Post on Wednesday, suggesting an increasingly important role for covert forces operating deep behind enemy lines as the country expands efforts to expel Russian troops.

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly on the matter, did not disclose details of how Tuesday's attack was carried out. The attack marks a significant escalation in the nearly six-month-old war, demonstrating a new ability by Ukrainian forces to carry out attacks farther behind the front lines than had previously been thought possible.

At least three explosions rocked the Saki air base Tuesday in a coastal area of the Crimean Peninsula, which was annexed by Moscow in 2014 and is a popular vacation destination for Russians.

The Ukrainian air force said in a statement Wednesday that nine Russian military planes were destroyed at the base, which the authorities have said was used by Russia to launch missile strikes against Ukrainian-controlled territory.

If confirmed, the losses would

SEE CRIMEA ON A12



Source: Aug. 10 control data via Institute for the Study of War
THE WASHINGTON POST



WOJCIECH GRZELINSKI FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

A Ukrainian miner who works some 1,200 feet underground in a Donbas coal mine. The war has made coal mining more dangerous as well as more critical.

Russia's underground heist

Moscow is widening its control over mineral-rich lands in the east worth trillions of dollars, weakening Ukraine in the process

BY ANTHONY FAIOLA AND DALTON BENNETT

Less than 100 miles east, artillery salvos pound Ukrainian defensive positions as Russian forces inch forward. But below the surface of this sprawling Donbas coal field, a dwindling number of miners are still working, extracting a fuel that is emblematic of one of Ukraine's biggest challenges.

The Kremlin is robbing this nation of the building blocks of its economy — its

natural resources.

After nearly six months of fighting, Moscow's sloppy war has yielded at least one big reward: expanded control over some of the most mineral-rich lands in Europe. Ukraine harbors some of the world's largest reserves of titanium and iron ore, fields of untapped lithium and massive deposits of coal. Collectively, they are worth tens of trillions of dollars.

The lion's share of those coal deposits,

SEE WEALTH ON A10

Trump takes Fifth throughout N.Y. deposition

QUESTIONS IN CIVIL CASE GO UNANSWERED

At both state and federal levels, legal tumult builds

BY SHAYNA JACOBS, JOSH DAWSEY AND DEVLIN BARRETT

NEW YORK — Donald Trump spent hours in a deposition Wednesday with the New York attorney general and repeatedly invoked his Fifth Amendment right not to answer questions, the latest in a series of ominous legal developments that would have once been considered devastating for a former president considering another run for the White House.

Trump emerged from the question-and-answer session with praise for the "very professional" way Attorney General Letitia James's team handled the meeting, in which he refused more than 400 times to answer questions about his businesses, property valuations and loans, according to a person with knowledge of the discussion. This person, speaking on the condition of

anonymity to describe the closed session, said Trump stated his name, formally declared his Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate himself, and from then on replied to many questions with two words: "Same answer."

Less than two years after leaving office, Trump faces legal jeopardy from multiple directions, with criminal probes into his possible withholding of classified documents and efforts to overturn the 2020 election results; James's civil probe; and congressional inquiries into his taxes and his conduct related to the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot.

In a lengthy statement Wednesday, the former president denied any wrongdoing and accused the U.S. government of unfairly targeting him in multiple ways. Incredibly, his deposition marked just the halfway point of what has been a frenetic week for Trump and his lawyers.

SEE TRUMP ON A6

Democracy is teetering, historians warn Biden

In a private meeting, they compare threats in U.S. to the pre-Civil War era

BY MICHAEL SCHERER, ASHLEY PARKER AND TYLER PAGER

President Biden paused last week, during one of the busiest stretches of his presidency, for a nearly two-hour private history lesson from a group of academics who raised alarms about the dire condition of democracy at home and abroad.

The conversation during a ferocious lightning storm on Aug. 4 unfolded as a sort of Socratic dialogue between the commander in chief and a select group of

scholars, who painted the current moment as among the most perilous in modern history for democratic governance, according to multiple people familiar with the discussions who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe a private meeting.

Comparisons were made to the years before the 1860 election when Abraham Lincoln warned that a "house divided against itself cannot stand" and the lead-up to the 1940 election, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt battled rising domestic sympathy for European fascism and resistance to the United States joining World War II.

The diversion was, for Biden, part of a regular effort to use outside experts, in private White House meetings, to help him work through his approach to

SEE BIDEN ON A15

Pace of inflation eases for July, as energy prices settle

Markets rally as official statistics mark lowest reading since May 2020

BY RACHEL SIEGEL

July inflation climbed 8.5 percent over the past year, a slightly slower pace than previous months, thanks to falling gas and energy prices, offering fresh hope to families and businesses that inflation may start to simmer down after months of gains.

A different measure of prices showed the pace of inflation in

July was flat when compared with the month before, in one of the most encouraging signs since prices took off last year. The latest figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics marked the lowest month-to-month inflation reading since May 2020.

"These kind of swings should be a reminder of how far our economy is right now from some semblance of normal," said Claudia Sahm, founder of SAHM Consulting and a former Federal Reserve economist. "We should take a deep breath today but not do a victory dance."

The upbeat inflation report could help Democrats in Wash-

SEE INFLATION ON A15

For the chronically ill, a domino effect from abortion bans

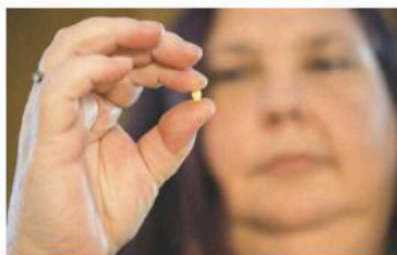
Laws complicate access to drugs used for cancer and arthritis that can also end pregnancies

BY KATIE SHEPHERD AND FRANCES STEAD SELLERS

Becky Hubbard, 46, has decided to get sterilized so that she can go back on the only medication that has relieved her disabling pain from rheumatoid arthritis for the past eight years.

Soon after the Supreme Court struck down *Roe v. Wade*, the Tennessee woman said she got an ultimatum from her rheumatologist. If she wanted to stay on the treatment of choice for her condition, a drug called methotrexate, she was told she had to go on birth control despite her age and history of infertility.

"It is frustrating as hell," said



DAVE NEUBAUER FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Becky Hubbard relies on methotrexate — a drug that at higher doses can induce an abortion — to treat rheumatoid arthritis.

Hubbard, a former nurse who lives in Johnson City, Tenn., now waiting to see her gynecologist.

The sudden imposition of anti-abortion laws after *Roe's* reversal has left patients, doctors and pharmacists wading through a minefield of treatment issues and legal and ethical dilemmas related to women's health care — even in situations like Hubbard's that have nothing to do with pregnancy.

Medicines that treat conditions from cancer to autoimmune diseases to ulcers can also end a

SEE MEDICATION ON A20

The abortion debate: Adoptees' experiences inform their views. C1