

Nine-Year Term For Griner Puts Focus on Swap

Sentence Ratchets Up Pressure on Biden

By IVAN NECHEPURENKO and RICHARD HÉREZ-PEÑA

A Russian court on Thursday sentenced the American basketball star Brittney Griner to nine years in a penal colony after convicting her on a drug charge, a harsh penalty that keeps her fate entwined with the geopolitical showdown over the war in Ukraine and ramps up already intense pressure on President Biden to win her release.

The U.S. government contends that she is among several Americans who have been "wrongfully detained" by Russia, used as bargaining chips in the increasingly hostile relationship between Moscow and Washington. The Biden administration has offered a prisoner swap involving Ms. Griner, but Russian officials said it was premature to discuss a deal while her case was under way.

Now that the trial is concluded, Mr. Biden faces a difficult choice between standing firm on his proposal to trade for Ms. Griner and another American, Paul N. Whelan, or sweetening the offer somehow, with either position liable to draw domestic criticism.

The Kremlin, for its part, can use them as leverage, with no incentive to resolve the cases quickly. Her supporters, voicing anger at the verdict and sentence, are clamoring for the president to do something, while the administration is wary of giving in to Russian tactics it has all too often labeled as blackmail.

"My administration will continue to work tirelessly and pursue every possible avenue to bring Brittney and Paul Whelan home safely as soon as possible," Mr. Biden said in a statement after the verdict.

Ms. Griner, 31, one of her sport's biggest global stars, sat mostly expressionless, eyes downcast, leaning her long frame toward the bars of the defendant's box in a cramped courtroom outside Moscow to hear on the stand the judge, Anna S. Sotnikova, were quickly translated for her. She had already pleaded guilty and convictions in at least certain Russian courts, so the verdict was a foregone conclusion; the real question was about sentencing.

The answer was devastating. Continued on Page A7



Brittney Griner in the defendant's box in a courtroom outside Moscow after the judge, Anna S. Sotnikova, imposed her sentence.

With Missiles, China Sends Warning on Taiwan

This article is by Chris Buckley, Amy Chang Chen, Eric Schmitt and David E. Sanger.

At least 11 Chinese missiles struck south, south and east of Taiwan on Thursday, less than 24 hours after Speaker Nancy Pelosi celebrated the island as a bulwark of democracy next to authoritarian China. The People's Liberation Army declared that its missiles "all precisely hit their targets," even as Japan said five landed in its waters.

The Chinese military called the exercises a prelude to a bigger show of force intended to punish the island for a visit by Ms. Pelosi that challenged Beijing's claims to Taiwan. The drills, pushing ever closer to Taiwan and expected to run 72 hours, will also give Chinese forces valuable practice should they one day be ordered to encircle and attack the island.

China's top leader, Xi Jinping, said that he hopes to eventually unify Taiwan and China through peaceful steps, as part of his vision for a "rejuvenated" and powerful nation. But like his predecessors, he has not ruled out force, and China's military buildup has reached a point where some commanders and analysts think an invasion is an increasingly plausible, though still highly risky, scenario.

Even if imminent conflict is unlikely, the exercises are putting the island on a high alert, and tensions could dangerously escalate, especially if something goes wrong, with the missiles landing near Japan seen as a message that China could hit the U.S. forces stationed there and intended as a warning to the government in Tokyo of its exclusive economic zone, the first time any had landed in those waters.

Another missile, the government said, landed 50 miles northwest of Yanaguni, a small island of Japan's southernmost tip and just a short distance from Taiwan; the missile did not land in Japan's economic zone.

Japan lodged a protest with the Chinese government. "This is a grave issue that concerns our national security and the safety of the people," said Japan's defense minister, Nobuo Kishi.

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Rebuke for Pelosi Visit, and Drill for a More Aggressive Move

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U.S. Calls Rise Of Monkeypox An Emergency

By SHERYL GAY STOLBERG and APOORVA MANDAVILLI

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration on Thursday declared the growing monkeypox outbreak a national health emergency, a rare designation signaling that the virus now represents a significant risk to Americans and setting in motion new measures aimed at containing the threat.

The declaration by Xavier Becerra, President Biden's health secretary, marks the fifth such national emergency since 2001 and comes as the country remains in a state of emergency over the coronavirus pandemic.

The World Health Organization declared a global health emergency over the outbreak last month.

Mr. Becerra's announcement, at an information news briefing where he was joined by a raft of other top health officials, gives federal agencies the power to quickly direct money toward developing and evaluating vaccines and drugs, to gain access to emergency funding and to hire additional workers to help manage the outbreak, which began in May.

"We're prepared to take our response to the next level in addressing this virus," Mr. Becerra said.

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4 OFFICERS FACE FEDERAL CHARGES IN TAYLOR KILLING

2020 RAID IN KENTUCKY Counts Include Using False Information to Obtain a Warrant

By NICHOLAS HOGELE-BURBOUGAIS

SAN FRANCISCO — More than two years after police officers killed Breonna Taylor during a late-night raid of her apartment in Louisville, Ky., the Justice Department announced a series of federal charges on Thursday against four of the officers involved in the operation that set off racial justice protests across the country.

Federal prosecutors accused three officers of knowingly including false information in an affidavit used to justify the raid and a fourth officer of firing blindly into Ms. Taylor's apartment from outside, sending bullets flying into a wall next door where an unsuspecting family slept.

The indictments unsealed on Thursday do not charge either of the two white officers who shot Ms. Taylor, a Black 26-year-old emergency room technician whose former boyfriend the police were investigating for possibly selling drugs. But the charges are the most aggressive effort yet to hold police officers accountable in a case that has become a rallying cry for the Black Lives Matter movement.

The officer accused of firing the shot that struck one of the officers in the leg, Three officers returned

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China Encircled Taiwan, With Rocket and Ballistic-Missile Fire While Testing the Democratic Self-Governing Island's Defenses with Navy Ships and

By WENJIN PAN and CHIN HONG WANG in Hong Kong and Japan

China encircled Taiwan, with rocket and ballistic-missile fire while testing the democratic self-governing island's defenses with navy ships and

shortly after midday Thursday. The show of force in response to Ms. Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own territory, disrupted commercial air and sea traffic and raised concerns about further military escalation between Taiwan and the U.S. condemned China's moves, with the White House saying the U.S. would Reagan aircraft carrier and its accompanying ships would remain in the region "to monitor the situation."

The four-day exercises, which included firing nearly a

dozen missiles—are taking place in six zones delineated by the Chinese military. Several U.S. Navy's biggest commercial ports and overlap with what the island claims as its territorial waters.

Chief Chang, an associate research fellow with Taiwan's National Policy Foundation, said the drills as a rehearsal of China's playbook for a confronta-

tion over Taiwan. The proximity of the drills could erode the buffer zone between the island and the mainland and increasing the risk of clashes, he said.

"When an incident happens, a conflict is likely to break out, even if both sides are not expecting it," he said.

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Drills hint at Beijing's strategy

South Korean leader skips Pelosi visit

Trip triggers frustration for Chinese

What's News

Business & Finance

The Bank of England raised interest rates by a half percentage point, the most in more than 25 years, even as it predicted the U.K. economy will fall into recession this year. AI

Warner Bros. Discovery is exploring launching a free, ad-supported streaming service, the latest effort by a streaming giant to reach a broader audience as competition for users intensifies. AI

The biggest U.S. companies keep stepping up their spending on capital projects, an encouraging signal to investors in an uncertain economic climate. AI

Mark accused Twitter of fraud, saying it misrepresented the condition of its business and key metrics about users before he agreed to acquire the company. AI

Major U.S. stock indexes ended mixed. The S&P 500 gained 0.4%, while the S&P 500 and Dow lost 0.05% and 0.3%, respectively. AI

Amazon agreed to pay \$2.7 billion to acquire iRobot, a consumer electronics company. AI

Alibaba failed to post revenue growth for the first time since 2014 listing. AI

Goldman Sachs said that the CFPB is investigating business practices at its credit-card unit. AI

Toyota's profit took a hit from rising raw-material costs and production cuts. AI

Adas Air said it agreed to buy a majority stake of investors led by Apollo in a deal with an equity value of \$2.2 billion. AI

World-Wide

China encircled Taiwan with rocket and ballistic-missile fire while testing the democratic self-governing island's defenses with navy ships and warplanes, as Beijing proposed a visit by U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The exercises have begun, China's navy said on its official social-media account

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Alex Jones was ordered by a jury to pay \$4.1 million to the parents of a 6-year-old boy who died in the first of several trials seeking damages for his public statements suggesting the school massacre was a hoax. AI

U.S. health officials declared monkeypox a public-health emergency as cases continue to mount across the country, a move aimed at forcing the federal response to the outbreak. AI

Ukrainian forces struck a railway bridge in the southern region, Ukraine's military said, as it seeks to cut Moscow's supply lines in preparation for a possible counteroffensive. AI

Russian Court Sentences Griner to Nine Years in Drug Case



HELD: U.S. woman's basketball star Brittney Griner, who attended the verdict announcement Thursday in court in Russia, was convicted of bringing marijuana with criminal intent into the country and sentenced to nine years in prison. A6

China Begins Live-Fire Drills, Effectively Blockading Taiwan

China encircled Taiwan, with rocket and ballistic-missile fire while testing the democratic self-governing island's defenses with navy ships and warplanes, as Beijing proposed a visit by U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

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Warner Eyes Streaming With Ads

Warner Bros. Discovery Inc. is exploring launching a free, ad-supported streaming service, the latest effort by a streaming giant to reach a broader audience as competition for users intensifies.

The new company, the result of Discovery's merger with AT&T Inc., WarnerMedia earlier this year, said it was a previously announced plan to combine its two main streaming services, HBO Max and Discovery+, executives said during a call with investors. The combination will be rolled out starting in the U.S. next summer, said Jill

Trouble Flying With Your Dog? Not for the Private-Jet Pet Set

Airport snarls lead strangers to charter planes together; 10 dogs and two cats

LONDON—Hannah Crosby plans to move from Durham, N.C., to London in a few months, but she also is desperate to bring her animal companions into the U.K.

Bank of England Raises Rates by Half Point

Largest increase since 1995 comes with a recession warning as inflation skyrockets

By Wael Hossain

LONDON—The Bank of England raised interest rates by the most in more than 25 years on Thursday, even as it predicted the U.K. economy will fall into recession this year, underscoring global central banks' urgency in fighting a surge in inflation.

The rate increase—to 1.75% from 1.25%—was the largest since 1996 and the first half-point increase since the bank was granted independence in 1997. The move mirrors recent rate increases by the Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank, reflecting fears that the larger inflation is allowed to persist, the harder it will be to bring down.

The Bank of England offered a particularly bleak outlook for the U.K., saying the economy that would last for five consecutive quarters starting in the final three months of this year, a downturn as bleak as the one that followed the 2008 financial crisis but not as deep.

"When an incident happens, a conflict is likely to break out, even if both sides are not expecting it," he said.

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French lawmakers approve measure to fight inflation. A8

Heard on the Street: Central bankers' No. 1 job... B12

Companies' Capital Spending Ramps Up, Buoying Investors

The biggest U.S. companies keep stepping up their spending on capital projects, an encouraging signal to investors in an uncertain economic climate.

Companies from Google parent Alphabet Inc. to General Motors Co. to PepsiCo Inc. are among those that have increased spending on big-ticket items, such as real estate, equipment or technology, to fuel growth. The investments are generally intended to expand the companies' fast-growing operations or even

optimize their inventory in the midst of a challenging business environment, executives say.

Capital expenditures among companies in the S&P 500 have been growing at a faster pace than stock repurchases for the first time since the first quarter of 2021, according to data analyzed by S&P Dow Jones Indices from the second-quarter earnings season.

Based on results from roughly three-quarters of the companies in the index, capital expenditures have risen 21% from a year earlier to \$165.5

billion, roughly in line with the quarter's growth rate. Meanwhile, share repurchases have climbed 14% to \$175.5 billion and also have been increasing at a faster pace.

The spending boom has offered a leg of support to the first time since the first quarter of 2021, according to data analyzed by S&P Dow Jones Indices from the second-quarter earnings season.

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A Flashy Bishop Robbed at Church Has His Own History of Theft

By MICHAEL WILSON

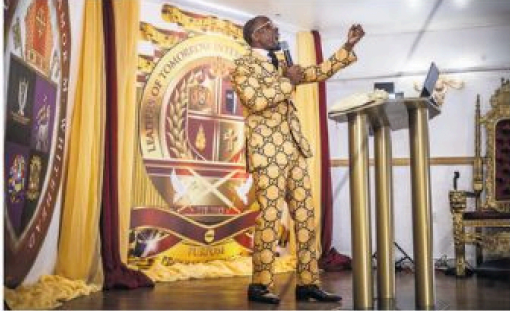
Inside his church in Brooklyn, seated in a chair that looked more like a throne and dressed in a slim-cut, banana-yellow suit, Bishop Lamer Whitehead prepared to deliver the sermon his followers had been waiting a long week to hear.

It had been seven days since the obscure little congregation, Leaders of Tomorrow International Ministries, was robbed by three armed and masked men during a service on July 24, the heist caught on a livestream video. The robbers relieved Bishop Whitehead and his wife of many chains, watches and other jewelry — the total value of which is as high as \$1 million — and escaped outside on Remsen Avenue.

Bishop Whitehead rose. "The devil didn't want me back in this pulpit," he said solemnly. "God said, 'You can't take his life. You can touch his material things. But you can't touch his soul.'"

Then he re-enacted the robbery. Twice.

In the wake of the brazen heist, attention has focused on Bishop Whitehead's wife, Mary Adams, who has a felony identity theft



THE BISHOP'S REAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

"The devil didn't want me back in this pulpit," Bishop Lamer Whitehead said Sunday in Brooklyn.

convictions in his past. Why, someone would ask, would a suggestion by a tiny congregation have a small fortune in jewelry on his person? And his immediate reaction during the robbery, as if practiced, has led to questions about whether he knew the robbers were coming — a suggestion he dismissed as ludicrous.

"It's being said because people can't believe that this happened," he said, asking about whether the jewelry was insured, he dismissed

Jury Tells Infowars Host to Pay Sandy Hook Family \$4 Million

By ELIZABETH WILLIAMSON

AUSTIN, Texas — A Texas jury on Thursday awarded the parents of a child killed in the 2012 mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School more than \$4 million in compensatory damages from the conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, the first time he has been financially liable for defaming the victims' parents by spreading lies that they were complicit in a government plot to stage the shooting as a pretext for gun control.

The decision was the first in a series of potential awards against Mr. Jones. On Friday the jury considered evidence of Mr. Jones's net worth to determine how much, if anything, to award the parents. Scarcely a week has passed since his net worth was \$1 million, in punitive damages.

Two other trials by Sandy Hook parents seeking damages from Mr. Jones are set to begin next month, though they may be delayed because his company filed for bankruptcy last week.

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