



Sunny 93/78 • Tomorrow: Hot and humid 94/75

Democracy Dies in Darkness

MONDAY, AUGUST 8, 2022 • #2

Brazen hit by Russia, timid reply from Berlin

Unwillingness to punish Putin part of a pattern of appeasement, critics say

BY SOUAD MEKHENNET AND LOVEDAY MORRIS

BERLIN — Germany's new government had been in power for just a week last December when it was presented with a test of its mettle.

In a wood-paneled hearing room at Berlin's highest court, Vadim Krasikov, 56, was convicted of carrying out a killing on behalf of Russia — an act the judges slammed as “state terrorism.” The 2019 murder of former Chechen fighter Zelimkhan Khangoshvili, 40, had been particularly brazen. He was shot three times in broad daylight in a Berlin park by a hit man riding a bike.

In response, the government of Chancellor Olaf Scholz expelled two Russian “diplomats” who were in fact intelligence officers — not from the FSB, the Russian intelligence agency the court deemed most likely responsible for ordering the murder, according to one official, but from the GRU, Russia's military intelligence. The hope, German officials said, was that Germany could maintain its intelligence presence in Moscow — much smaller than the number of Russian operatives in Berlin — and avoid large tit-for-tat verdicts.

Germany's timid reaction to the verdict was part of a long-standing pattern of appeasing the Kremlin, critics say, a policy that straddled different governments

Senate passes key climate, health bill



“This is one of the most significant pieces of legislation passed in a decade,” Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) said before the Senate acted on Sunday. “Things that Americans have longed for, and couldn't get done.”

SWEEPING GOALS WERE LONG STALLED

Biden agenda gets boost as Democrats unite

BY TONY ROMM

The Senate on Sunday approved a sweeping package to combat climate change, lower health-care costs, raise taxes on some billion-dollar corporations and reduce the federal deficit, as Democrats overcame months of political infighting to deliver the centerpiece to President Biden's long-stalled economic agenda.

The party-line vote was a milestone in a tumultuous journey that began last year when Democrats took control of Congress and the White House with a promise to bring financial relief to ordinary Americans. With a tiebreaking vote from Vice President Harris, the 50-50 Senate sent the bill to the House, which aims to approve it and send it to the White House for Biden's signature later this week.

Dubbed the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, the package would authorize the biggest burst of spending in U.S. history to tackle global warming — about \$370 billion to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below their 2005 levels by the end of this decade. The proposal also would make good on Democrats' years-old pledge to reduce prescription drug costs for the elderly.

In part by tweaking federal tax laws — chiefly to target tax cheats and some billion-dollar companies that pay nothing to the government — the bill is expected to raise enough money to cover its

Sinema's stand: Her changes grant private equity firms relief. **A+**

Insulin prices: GOP senators block a \$35 cap for many patients. **A-**

Why the ‘Inflation Reduction Act’ is no such thing

BY STEVEN PEARLSTEIN

One of the more enduring fallacies informing discussions of the economy is that there are a couple of dials located in a vault somewhere in Washington that officials can turn this way or that to control employment, output, inflation — even the price of gasoline.

Anytime something good hap-

pens, some politician inevitably steps forward to claim credit for having got the dials just right. And anytime something bad happens, you can be sure the media and political opponents will blame officials for tuning the dials to the wrong settings.

That's what happened earlier this year when inflation began

to take off and the president, Congress and the Federal Reserve were criticized for overstimulating the economy in response to the pandemic. We heard it again late last month when the government reported a second quarterly decline in gross domestic product, triggering dire and exaggerated predictions of recession from Republicans. And now Democrats in

Congress are embracing the same fallacy as they ram through a package of climate, tax and health-care initiatives fancifully marketed as the “Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.” Though kernels of truth stud all of these critiques, they derive from a faulty mental model of the economy and how it works. So let's step back and see what

Patients with recalled sleep apnea devices left in lurch

BY LAURIE MCGINLEY

Jenny Shields was terrified when she would awaken coughing and spitting up phlegm seeded with black specks. “I couldn't figure out what it was,” she said. Shields had her house checked for mold. Nothing. Her doctor was mystified.

Eventually, Shields found out a machine she uses to control a serious medical condition had been recalled because it could spew particles and gases into the device's air pathway.

Shields, like millions of Americans, has sleep apnea, which causes short pauses in breathing, raising the risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and an irregular heartbeat. Devices called continuous positive airway pressure, or CPAP, machines are the recommended treatment. The small bedside units pump a steady stream of air through a hose and face mask to ensure

Strangers huddled. Then lightning struck.

A woman raising money for refugees is the sole survivor of a blast that killed three others

BY WILLIAM WAN, DANIEL WU AND VANESSA G. SANCHEZ

All day long, the tall, leafy tree had been a source of shade and comfort for Amber Escudero-Kontostathi.

Amid 90-some degree heat, she'd spent hours canvassing tourists in front of the White House for donations to help refugees in Ukraine, her family said. As she finished her shift on Thursday last week, a storm gathered overhead, thickening with clouds, rain and thunder.

That Thursday happened to be her 28th birthday, her family said. So while Amber waited for her husband to pick her up for a celebratory dinner, she sought shelter once again from the same tree, huddling with three others under its outstretched branches, according to her family and authorities.

One was Brooks Lambertson, a young and rising bank vice president from Los Angeles. There was Donna Mueller, 75, a retired teacher, and her husband James Mueller, 76, who came from Wis-



Visitors pass by a makeshift memorial at the site of a lightning strike in Lafayette Square that killed three people and severely injured another last week in Washington.

Inflation aids gig companies and hurts their workers

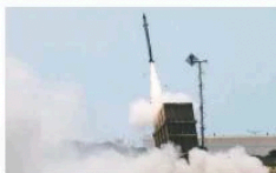
BY GERRIT DE VYNCK, FAIZ SIDDIQUI AND NITASHA TIKU

Debbie Welker quit working as a delivery driver for Shipt and Instacart in Dallas earlier this year because gas prices were cutting too deeply into her earnings.

She would work 12-to-14-hour days, seven days a week, to make about \$1,200, but then would have to use some of that to pay for gas and other expenses. People stopped tipping, or tipped between \$2 and \$5 for an hour of shopping, something she thinks was affected by inflation. “After deductions, I was making less than minimum wage for the hours I was working or sitting in a store parking lot waiting for an order,” added Welker, who started during the pandemic.

Inflation is putting new pressure on the burgeoning work force of gig workers who deliver food, drive passengers and per-

IN THE NEWS



A cease-fire Israel and militants in the Gaza Strip agreed to pause a series of airstrikes and rocket attacks that left 43 dead in Gaza. **A-**

Cross-strait crisis China is expanding live-fire drills around Taiwan after a visit to the island by U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. **A-**

THE NATION Recruiters said OB/GYNs are turning down offers to work in red states that have enacted strict antiabortion laws since the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. **A+**

A small GOP cohort is waging an uphill battle to offer more federal support to families after *Roe's* fall. **A+**

THE WORLD Brazil's Crackland, one of the world's oldest open-air drug markets, is on the move again amid a clampdown by police. **A-**

THE ECONOMY Planning a party? The Help Desk explains the best ways to tackle digital invites. **A+**

THE REGION After a shooting in Northern Virginia that left two landscapers dead, some have criticized prosecutors for dropping charges in an earlier case involving the suspect. **B**

Montgomery County

Executive Marc Elrich declared victory in a tight Democratic primary rematch with Potomac businessman David Blair, after the Associated Press deemed the race too close to call. **A+**

THE WEEK AHEAD **MONDAY** Secretary of State Antony Blinken is in Africa to meet with officials in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.

TUESDAY President Biden is expected to sign the Chips and Science Act at the White House. **Primary elections** take place in several U.S. states.

Kenya holds a general election.

WEDNESDAY Biden is expected to sign a bill into law that will aid veterans who were exposed to toxic burn pits. **Deputy Energy Secretary** David Turk will discuss “the dual global energy and climate change crises” at a Resources for the Future event.

THURSDAY Jobless claims are estimated at 260,000. **FRIDAY** Members of the U.S. House are expected to return early from a recess to discuss inflation reduction legislation.

INSIDE



STYLE **Vinyl exam** How a record store owner uncovered that a label had been deceiving customers for years. **A+**

Whatever the weather Guest violinist Gil Shaham and the National Symphony Orchestra made the most of a wet and muggy night at Wolf Trap. **A+**

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