



Boat operators, who have come from miles around to work as ferrymen in submersed regions of southern Pakistan, often use power lines as navigation landmarks.

New York Lags Other Big Cities In Job Recovery

By NICOLE HONG and MATTHEW HAAG

The darkest days of the pandemic are far behind New York City. Masks are coming off, the Square is packed with tourists and Midtown Manhattan lunch spots have growing lines of workers in business suits. Around the city, it often feels like 2019 again. But the bustling surface obscures a lingering wound from the pandemic. While the country as a whole has recently regained all of the jobs it lost early in the health crisis, New York City is still missing 178,000, representing the slowest recovery of any major metropolitan area, according to the latest employment data. New York relies more than other cities on international tourists, business travelers and commuters, whose halting return has weighed on the workers who cater to them — from bartenders and baggage handlers, to office cleaners and theater ushers. A majority of the lost private sector jobs have been concentrated in the hospitality and retail industries, traditional pipelines into the work force for younger adults, immigrants and residents without a college degree. By contrast, overall employment in industries that allow for remote work, such as the technology sector, is back at prepandemic levels. The lopsided recovery threatens to deepen inequality in a way where apartment rents are soaring. Continued on Page A15

Rising Despair As Floodwaters Engulf Villages

By CHRISTINA GOLDBAUM and ZIA UR-REHMAN

DADU, Pakistan — The view from Muhammad Jaffer's small, green cotton business suite in his home in southern Pakistan used to bring him a sense of relief. Rolling fields of green cotton stretched as far as the eye could see. But now, the view is a desolate landscape of brown mud and debris. Floodwaters have inundated hundreds of villages across much of Pakistan's fertile land. In Sindh Province in the south, the floodwater has effectively transformed what was once farmland into two large lakes that have engulfed entire villages and turned others into fragile islands. The flooding is the worst to hit the country in recent history, according to Pakistani officials. They warn that it may take three to six months for the floodwaters to recede. Continued on Page A6

With Rail Strike Inching Closer, Biden Urges Sides to Reach Deal

By JIM TANKERSLEY and ANA SWANSON

WASHINGTON — President Biden, desperate to avert a damaging freight rail strike that could exacerbate rapid inflation, is pushing rail companies and unions to reach an agreement ahead of a Friday deadline, while exploring whether he can do anything unilaterally to assuage workers' concerns. Biden and his economic team have been inserting themselves into final-hour negotiations between rail unions and large rail companies, which are at logger-

In Russian Border City, a War Feels Less Distant

By VALERIE HOPKINS

BELGOROD, Russia — Military trucks and armored personnel carriers spray-painted with the letter Z rumble through intersections, and groups of men in camouflage walk the streets and shop for military goods like thermal underwear. Refugees pour in from territories in Ukraine that were recently lost to the enemy. The sounds of nearby explosions have become a regular occurrence in Belgorod, 25 miles from the Ukrainian border, and anxious store owners call the police reporting imagined "bomb threats," a sign of the paranoia that is starting to spread. Residents express fear about what will come next, with some even speculating that Ukrainian troops could take a step they have avoided for nearly seven months and enter Russian territory. "It is as if they are already here," an ashen-faced woman told me. She declined to be interviewed for this article, but declined to provide his full name out of fear of retribution. The mood at the market, a warren of stalls selling clothes, home goods and military gear, was tense. Though the city of Belgorod Continued on Page A12



Solemn Salute to Queen King Charles III followed his mother's coffin to Westminster Hall, where she will lie in state. Page A8.

Bomb Scare, Murder, Fights: Thousands of 911 Calls at One Site

By MICHAEL WILSON

New York City 911, the emergency dispatcher answered, "Do you need police, fire or medical?" "I need police — 312 Riverside Drive," the caller said in a hoarse voice. "The lady in Room 340 on the third floor is cutting herself. She's mentally ill. She's back naked and she's mentally ill and she's cutting herself with a razor?" The dispatcher asked follow-up questions and assured the man: "Help is on the way." That call, just past midnight on Dec. 16, was the first of five that day reporting dire emergencies at that same address. Fights, stab wounds, sexual assaults, shots fired — all at 312 Riverside Drive. It was the location of hundreds of 911 calls going back more than two years — without question, the most dangerous address in all of

ZELENSKY VISITS CITY RECAPTURED IN EASTERN BLITZ

SIGN OF NEW BOLDNESS

Surprise Appearance in Izium Aims to Erode Moscow's Morale

By ANDREW E. SKRAMER and MARC SAKTORA

IZIUM, Ukraine — Standing in a cold drizzle among wreckage left behind by Russia's chaotic retreat, President Volodymyr Zelensky looked to the sky on Wednesday toward Ukraine's flag flying over the main square of a city reclaimed just days ago in a stunning counterattack. "Today, when we look up, we are looking for only one thing — the flag of Ukraine," Mr. Zelensky told soldiers in front of the city's central market building. "Our blue and yellow flag is already flying in de-occupied Izium. And it will be so in every Ukrainian city and village." The president's unannounced appearance in Izium, about 100 miles from the front in Ukraine's northeast, was a tangible sign of Ukraine's soaring morale and its growing boldness — a demonstration that the military could ensure Mr. Zelensky's safety even near the front end of the war. It would staunchly defied what had been claimed. Russian soldiers fled the city in a haphazard retreat last week, abandoning tanks, trucks and boxes of ammunition in the streets, and Mr. Zelensky's visit, like most other residents interviewed for this article, he declined to provide his full name out of fear of retribution. The mood at the market, a warren of stalls selling clothes, home goods and military gear, was tense. Though the city of Belgorod Continued on Page A12

Fear Grips Residents as Retreat Drives Home Reality of Conflict

By VALERIE HOPKINS

BELGOROD, Russia — Military trucks and armored personnel carriers spray-painted with the letter Z rumble through intersections, and groups of men in camouflage walk the streets and shop for military goods like thermal underwear. Refugees pour in from territories in Ukraine that were recently lost to the enemy. The sounds of nearby explosions have become a regular occurrence in Belgorod, 25 miles from the Ukrainian border, and anxious store owners call the police reporting imagined "bomb threats," a sign of the paranoia that is starting to spread. Residents express fear about what will come next, with some even speculating that Ukrainian troops could take a step they have avoided for nearly seven months and enter Russian territory. "It is as if they are already here," an ashen-faced woman told me. She declined to be interviewed for this article, but declined to provide his full name out of fear of retribution. The mood at the market, a warren of stalls selling clothes, home goods and military gear, was tense. Though the city of Belgorod Continued on Page A12

Amazon Hit With California Antitrust Lawsuit

By CHRISTINE MAO DUC and ANA DASS MATHIAS

California sued Amazon.com Inc., the state attorney general said, alleging the online retailer's contracts with third-party sellers and wholesalers inflate prices, stifle competition and violate the state's antitrust and unfair competition laws. Attorney General Rob Bonta said on Wednesday his office filed a lawsuit in San Francisco Superior Court seeking to halt Amazon policies he said prevent merchants from offering lower prices through competitors' websites. The suit is the result of an investigation that began in early 2020. Mr. Bonta said. The suit asks the court to block Amazon from enforcing those policies and to appoint a monitor to oversee the company's compliance, according to a copy filed by the state. The Wall Street Journal. It seeks unspecified damages for harm to the state economy and \$2,500 for each violation of the state's civil and professional code provisions at trial. Amazon denied the claims. The lawsuit represents the biggest challenge to the company in the U.S. for Amazon, which was sued by the District of Columbia and a congressional committee by the Federal Trade Commission, the European Union and a congressional committee in this country. Please turn to page A9

Mystery in Manhattan Traced to Lone Man

By MICHAEL WILSON

New York City by this measure. Again and again, police officers had raced to the tree-lined block of the Upper West Side, between West 165th and 164th Streets. Firefighters and paramedics met them there. But the responses all ended the same way: The emergency vehicles turned and left, their sirens wailing, only to be stopped responding to the calls at all. Because there is no 312 Riverside Drive. The calls had been traced to a lone man. Again and again, police officers had raced to the tree-lined block of the Upper West Side, between West 165th and 164th Streets. Firefighters and paramedics met them there. But the responses all ended the same way: The emergency vehicles turned and left, their sirens wailing, only to be stopped responding to the calls at all. Because there is no 312 Riverside Drive. The calls had been traced to a lone man. Again and again, police officers had raced to the tree-lined block of the Upper West Side, between West 165th and 164th Streets. Firefighters and paramedics met them there. But the responses all ended the same way: The emergency vehicles turned and left, their sirens wailing, only to be stopped responding to the calls at all. Because there is no 312 Riverside Drive. The calls had been traced to a lone man. Continued on Page A18

What's News

Business & Finance

Biden administration officials huddled with union and rail company representatives trying to avert a strike that threatened to shut down a crucial vein of the U.S. economy and put fresh pressure on prices. AI

California sued Amazon, alleging the company's contracts with third-party sellers and wholesalers inflate prices, stifle competition and violate the state's antitrust and unfair competition laws. AI

SoftBank is considering the launch of a third Vision fund to invest in AI startups, after the company's first two funds raised more than \$10 billion in total. AI

U.S. suppliers cut prices for a second straight month in August, underscoring a turbulent inflation picture that has fueled uncertainty. AI

A court largely upheld a 2018 decision by the U.S. Competition regulator that fined Google \$4.3 billion. AI

U.S. stocks posted modest gains after Tuesday's rout, with the S&P 500, Nasdaq and Dow rising 0.3%, 0.7% and 0.1%, respectively. BI

Netflix has estimated that an ad-supported version of its streaming service would reach about 60 million viewers globally by the third quarter of 2023. BI

Patagonia founder Chouinard is giving away the company with a goal of using the proceeds to fight climate change. BI

Federal regulators have demanded to see more information from Citigroup on plans to fix its risk management system. BI

World-Wide

The EU outlined a plan to subsidize about \$10 billion from energy companies to consumers and businesses in a bid to cushion the blow of high prices. BI

The Biden administration is considering sanctions targeting Russia's oil and gas exports, according to a report by the Heritage Foundation. BI

Prosecutors accused three Russian men allegedly linked to the country's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of seeking election to the U.S. government and other U.S. positions. BI

A Sweden's prime minister considered a resignation over a coup attempt in Sweden, according to a report by the Swedish media. BI

A TikTok executive pushed back against senators grilling the company over its ties to China, expressing confidence in a deal with the U.S. government would safeguard American users' data. AI

Britain's royal family united in procession as Queen Elizabeth II's coffin was moved from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Hall, where the late monarch will lie in state until her funeral. AI

Zelensky Visits Liberated Region, Seeks New Aid From West



ON THE GROUND: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Wednesday visited the town of Izium, part of the Kharkiv region recaptured from Russian forces. Kyiv is highlighting its battlefield gains to encourage more backing from the West. A8

EU Proposes Energy Firms Give \$140 Billion to Users

BRUSSELS — The European Union outlined a plan to redistribute about \$140 billion from energy companies to consumers and businesses in a bid to cushion the blow of high prices. BI

Amazon Hit With California Antitrust Lawsuit

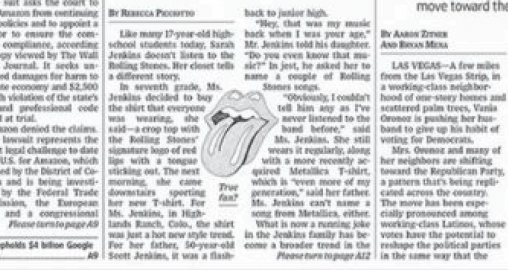
By CHRISTINE MAO DUC and ANA DASS MATHIAS

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Old Rock Band T-Shirts Are in Fashion — Never Mind the Music

Tens take to Rolling Stones, Nirvana logos, even if they can't name any songs

By BRIGITTE PICCOLI and JEFFREY M. HARRIS



Strike Threat Triggers Supply Concerns

Freight-rail operators, unions negotiate as Amtrak suspends long-distance services

Biden administration officials huddled Wednesday with union and freight-rail company representatives trying to avert a strike that threatened to shut down a crucial vein of the U.S. economy and put fresh pressure on prices at a time when inflation is hovering near four-decade highs.

By ANNE HUFFORD, JENNIFER BRONKHORST and Esther Fung

As negotiations between the railroads and labor unions approach a Friday deadline, passenger-rail provider Amtrak said it would suspend all long-distance train services starting Tuesday to avoid disruptions caused by a potential strike by freight workers. While the negotiations don't involve Amtrak workers, Amtrak's long-distance trains operate on freight lines, and the company said it wanted to avoid passenger disruptions in the event of a strike.

In a setback, one of the unions representing U.S. railroaders rejected a tentative agreement its leaders had reached. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters had voted to reject a deal reached with the biggest U.S. freight railroads, part of a union effort to force Amtrak to pay more for freight services.

Supervisors remain unsettled. AI

James Mackintosh: Markets keep making new mistakes. AI

SoftBank Weighs New Vision Fund

By KYLE BROWN

Global tech investor SoftBank Group Corp. is considering the launch of a new joint startup fund after its \$10-billion Vision Fund 2 investors weighed down two earlier attempts to dominate startup investing, according to people familiar with discussions at the company. The Tokyo-based tech conglomerate, by far the world's largest startup investor in recent years, would likely use its first cash for what would be the third SoftBank Vision Fund.

Latino Voters Split On Economic Lines

Working-class voters in particular move toward the Republican Party

By ANNE TERRY and ANA SWANSON

LAS VEGAS — A few miles from the Las Vegas Strip, in a work-study program, runs a taxi business with her husband and backed President Joe Biden in 2020 when she cast her first vote as a U.S. citizen. She said Mrs. Obama and many of her neighbors are shifting toward the Republican Party, a pattern that's being replicated across the country. The move has been especially pronounced among working-class Latinos, who have the potential to reshape the political parties in the same way that the movement of white, working-class voters has made them a pillar of the Republican Party. Mrs. Conroy, a 44-year-old immigrant from Slovakia, runs a taxi business with her husband and backed President Joe Biden in 2020 when she cast her first vote as a U.S. citizen. She said Mrs. Obama and many of her neighbors are shifting toward the Republican Party, a pattern that's being replicated across the country. The move has been especially pronounced among working-class Latinos, who have the potential to reshape the political parties in the same way that the movement of white, working-class voters has made them a pillar of the Republican Party. Mrs. Conroy, a 44-year-old immigrant from Slovakia, runs a taxi business with her husband and backed President Joe Biden in 2020 when she cast her first vote as a U.S. citizen. She said Mrs. Obama and many of her neighbors are shifting toward the Republican Party, a pattern that's being replicated across the country. The move has been especially pronounced among working-class Latinos, who have the potential to reshape the political parties in the same way that the movement of white, working-class voters has made them a pillar of the Republican Party. Please turn to page A12