

BRITAIN'S GAMBLE ON NEW TAX CUTS WORRIES EXPERTS

EYEING PAST MISTAKES

Move Could Clash With Worldwide Efforts to Combat Inflation

By JIM TANKERSLEY

A stunning rebuke from the International Monetary Fund this week underscored one of the biggest risks of the new British government's plan to slash taxes on high earners: It could exacerbate rapid inflation and destabilize markets at a precarious economic moment.

The alarm from economists, central bankers, investors and top U.S. officials centered on the likelihood that the tax cuts could stoke consumer demand by giving people more money to spend, pushing crushing high prices even higher. That would put the British government in direct conflict with aggressive efforts of the central banks around the globe — and in the United Kingdom — that are raising interest rates in a bid to bring inflation under control.

Many economists say British officials are also ignoring the lessons of the most recent bout of tax cuts — those engineered in the United States by former President Donald J. Trump. Empirical research on the early results of those cuts suggests that they mostly helped the economy by temporarily increasing consumer demand, an outcome that could prove particularly damaging in the high-inflation environment that Britain and much of the world are experiencing.

Liz Truss, Britain's new prime minister, has staked her fledgling government on an oversize, once-in-a-generation package of tax cuts and deregulation meant to energize the economy. It includes a cut in rates for the country's lowest income tax bracket — and, in what was a surprise move, a five-percentage-point cut in the coun-

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New York City Tightens Entry To Top Schools

Reviving Use of Grades After 2-Year Pause

By TROY CLOSSON

New York City's selective middle schools can once again use grades to choose which students to admit, the school chancellor, David C. Banks, announced on Thursday, rolling back a pandemic-era moratorium that had opened the doors of some of the city's most elite schools to more low-income students.

Selective high schools will also be able to prioritize top-performing students.

The sweeping move will end the random lottery for middle schools, a major shift after the previous administration ended the use of grades and test scores two years ago. At the city's competitive high schools, where changes widened the pool of eligible applicants, priority for seats will be limited to top students whose grades are an A average.

The question of whether to base admissions on student performance prompted intense debate this fall. Many Asian American families were particularly vocal in arguing that the lotteries excluded their children from opportunities they had worked hard for. But Black and Latino students are significantly underrepresented at selective schools, and some parents had hoped the previous admissions changes would become permanent to boost racial integration in a system that has been labeled one of the most segregated in the nation.

"It's critically important that if you're working hard and making good grades, you should not be thrown into a lottery with just everybody," Mr. Banks said, noting that the changes were based on family feedback.

New York City has used selective admissions for public schools more than any school district in the country. About a third of the city's 900 or so middle and high schools had some kind of admissions requirement before the pandemic disrupted many measures

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A Staggering Path of Ruin Across Florida



JOHNNY MILANO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Death Toll From Hurricane Ian May Jump

This article is by Patricia Mazzei, Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs, Frances Robles and Jack Healy.

FORT MYERS, Fla. — The extent of Hurricane Ian's destruction became clearer on Thursday as people across southwestern Florida, left without electricity, drinking water or inhabitable homes, began to assess the damage and gird for what Gov. Ron DeSantis said would be a years-long recovery.

The scale of the wreckage was staggering, even to Florida residents who had survived and rebuilt after other powerful hurricanes. The storm pulverized roads, toppled trees, gutted downtown storefronts and set cars afloat, leaving a soggy scar of ruined homes and businesses from the coastal cities of Naples and Fort Myers to inland communities around Orlando.

Although state officials had not released a death toll by late in the day, Mr. DeSantis said Thursday night that "we absolutely expect" to learn of storm-related fatalities as rescuers work through a backlog of 911 calls and scour the most devastated neighborhoods. More than 500 people in Charlotte and Lee Counties, the hardest hit, had been rescued on Thursday, the Florida Division of Emergency Management said; the small town of Fort Myers Beach, on a barrier island just off the coast, appeared decimated.

While Ian left Florida on Thursday afternoon as a tropical storm, South Carolina residents were bracing for lashing winds and heavy rain as it quickly became a hurricane again at sea; forecasters said it could strengthen again before doubling back onto land there by Friday.

Photos from several areas of the state showed homes crunched together in a chaotic jumble, or smashed into what looked like toothpicks. Fishing boats and pleasure cruisers had been hurled onto the ground as if they were bathtub toys. The streets were a perilous obstacle course of toppled trees and downed wires.

In North Fort Myers, where Marion Burkholder, 84, survived the storm by clambering into a dinghy inside a neighbor's screened-in porch and floating up with the rising waters, Thursday brought dreaded news. Her carpets were sopping and her floors were covered with a dark brown liquid. Her fridge lay on its side.

"Everything floated," said Marvis Long, 96, who lives nearby. "The water was coming in just like waves in here."

Mayors, sheriffs and other officials

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HILARY SWIFT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



HILARY SWIFT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Hurricane Ian's aftermath included flooding in Port Charlotte, Fla., top, and wreckage in Fort Myers Beach, above. Marvis Long, middle, said "everything floated" in her North Fort Myers home.

CHANGED VIEW Gov. Ron DeSantis is seeking the kind of federal aid he once opposed. PAGE A20

SEVERE TOLL In hard-hit areas of Florida, just 18.5 percent of homes have flood insurance. PAGE A16

ALEKSANDR: We can't take Kyiv. . . .
We just take villages, and that's it.

NIKITA: There are corpses lying around.

SERGEY: We were given an order
to kill everyone we see.

Bitter Tales of Failure and Fear In Russian Troops' Calls Home

This article is by Yousur Al-Hlou, Masha Frolia and Evan Hill.

KYIV, Ukraine — The Ukrainian capital was supposed to fall in a matter of days.

But plagued by tactical errors and fierce Ukrainian resistance, President Vladimir V. Putin's destructive advance quickly stalled, and his forces became bogged down for most of March on the city's outskirts.

From trenches, dugouts and in occupied homes in the area around Bucha, a western suburb of Kyiv, Russian soldiers disobeyed orders by making unau-

thorized calls from their cell-phones to their wives, girlfriends, friends and parents hundreds of miles from the front line.

Someone else was listening in: the Ukrainian government.

The New York Times has exclusively obtained recordings of thousands of calls that were made throughout March and intercepted by Ukrainian law enforcement agencies from this pivotal location.

Reporters verified the authenticity of these calls by cross-referencing the Russian phone numbers with messaging apps and social media profiles to identify soldiers and family members.

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At Flooded Nursing Home, a Rush to Save Those Too Frail to Walk

This article is by Richard Fausset, Campbell Robertson and Shawn Hubler.

ORLANDO, Fla. — The emergency call came from the nursing home shortly after 5 a.m.: Water was seeping into the low-slung, low-lying complex called Avante at Orlando and threatening its 106 residents, some too frail to walk.

By daybreak, dozens of rescue workers had descended on Avante, which bills itself as a skilled nursing and rehabilitation center. The water in the building was about a foot deep, but it was perhaps as high as three feet in the parking lot outside. Many of the patients, in their 80s or 90s, were wheeled out on cots, their white sheets billowing in the

Narrow Escapes Amid the Rising Waters

whipping winds trailing Hurricane Ian, their faces filled with fear and confusion.

Soon, however, they were safe — if shaken and wet — in vans and

buses bound for shelters and hospitals.

As epic rain and high wind pounded much of central Florida on Thursday, a picture emerged of what the storm had wrought, from wrenching catastrophe to mere gale-force inconvenience. The battered landscape ranged from utter devastation on the south-

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Last Days of a Toxic Town

The town of Wittenoom in Australia was poisoned by asbestos mining. Decades later, its holdouts are being removed so that it can be razed. PAGE A4

NATIONAL A16-25

Judge Overrules Trump Arbiter

Judge Aileen M. Cannon eased some demands by the special master she appointed to review documents seized from the ex-president's home. PAGE A23

SPORTS B6-10

A Worthy Successor

Roger Maris's family and teammates see parallels in Aaron Judge's home-run chase and think the former slugger would approve. On Baseball. PAGE B7

OBITUARIES B11-12

'Gangsta's Paradise' Rapper

Coolio, whose gritty West Coast hip-hop made him a star in the 1990s, and whose hit song won a Grammy for best rap solo performance, was 59. PAGE B12

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David Brooks

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