



Putin set to seize 4 regions of Ukraine

Russian president to defy international law, sign 'accession treaties'

BY ROBYN DIXON

Russian President Vladimir Putin will formally move Friday to seize four Ukrainian regions by signing what the Kremlin is calling "accession treaties," in defiance of international law and widespread condemnation from world leaders.

The signing ceremony, to take place in the Grand Kremlin Palace, marks Putin's attempt to annex the regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, even though Russia does not fully control them militarily or politically.

Late on Thursday, Putin signed two decrees recognizing Kherson and Zaporizhzhia as "independent" territories, an intermediate step toward annexation. Russia already recognizes Donetsk and Luhansk, in eastern Ukraine, as sovereign republics.

The move potentially slams the door on diplomacy for years to come and ensures further escalation of the war in Ukraine. Kyiv

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Zaporizhzhia: Region mocks an annexation it doesn't accept. A12

Aid to Russia: A U.S. Army doctor allegedly tried to leak records. B1

Contested ALS drug gains FDA approval

BY LAURIE MCGINLEY

The Food and Drug Administration on Thursday overcame doubts from agency scientists and approved a fiercely debated drug for ALS, a move that heartened patients and advocates who pushed for the medication but raised concerns among some experts about whether treatments for dire conditions receive sufficient scrutiny.

"It's a huge deal," said Sunny Brous, 35, who was diagnosed with ALS seven years ago after she had trouble closing her left glove while playing softball. She plans to begin taking the drug as soon as she can.

"Anything that shows any amount of efficacy is important," the resident of Pico, Tex., added. Even a small change, Brous said, "might be the difference between signing my own name and someone else signing it for me."

The newly approved therapy, which will be sold under the brand name Relyvrio, is designed to slow the disease by protecting nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord destroyed by ALS — amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. The ailment paralyzes patients, robbing them of their ability to walk, talk and eventually breathe. Patients typically die

SEE ALS ON A17

Rescuers deploy amid destruction

Ian ravages Florida from west to east, then gains strength over Atlantic as it heads for S.C.



WILFRED LEE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

The hurricane left damaged homes and debris in its wake across Fort Myers, Fla. More than 2.5 million Floridians remained without power in a region where storm surge, winds and downpours inundated roads, flipped boats, unmoored houses from foundations, and made rescue missions slow and challenging in hard-hit coastal communities.

As waters warm, 7 super storms have lashed the U.S. since 2017

BY SCOTT DANCE AND KASHA PATEL

As Hurricane Ian barreled toward Florida this week, it did what six other storms did over the past six years as they approached the United States: It intensified, quickly.

A few factors help account for the shift, including the warming waters — fueled by climate change — that give hurricanes more energy to release through crushing winds and pounding waves. Climate scientists suspect the slow movement of storms like Ian also stems from global warming, giving them a greater opportunity to strengthen and destroy as long as day-to-day conditions remain ripe.

Since 2017, an unprecedented number of storms rated Category 4 or stronger have lashed the U.S. shoreline: Harvey, Irma, Maria, Michael, Laura, Ida and now Ian. They all qualify as "rapid intensification events," when a storm's wind speeds increase by at least 35 mph within 24 hours.

These kinds of storms have increased in number in recent decades. Sixteen of the last 20 hurricanes in the Atlantic basin have undergone rapid intensification.

"Especially in the near-coastal region where the hurricane is just ahead of landfall, what we are

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JOHN WALSH/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Residents are rescued from floodwaters in Orlando. The central Florida city, home to Walt Disney World, set a 24-hour rainfall record with 12.49 inches — roughly twice its monthly average.

With fish in the floodwaters, last-minute escapes

BY TIM CRAIG

FORT MYERS, Fla. — Kathy Sharp thought she would be safe at the Thunderbird Park, a mobile home community for retirees dotted with palm trees two miles from the Gulf of Mexico. For days, forecasters had indicated Hurricane Ian was heading north to Tampa.

But as the storm's eyewall tore through Fort Myers, Sharp looked

out a window and noticed pieces of her neighbor's roof flying into the air. Not long after, her own home started to break apart, the fierce wind casting aluminum paneling into the swirl of airborne debris.

Then the water hit.

"It was just like a river out of nowhere," said Sharp, 74, describing the apocalyptic storm surge Ian pushed ashore. "There was nothing there, and then all the

sudden there was like a foot of water in the house."

Frightened, Sharp and her husband, Lonny Henry, frantically called 911. Even before a dispatcher picked up, however, she knew no one would be coming to her rescue.

Harrowing stories of survival surfaced across southwest Florida on Thursday as first responders rescued hundreds of people

SEE SURVIVORS ON A9

Storm 'changed the character' of much of state, DeSantis says

This article is by Molly Hemmes-Fiske, Brittany Shammass, Lori Ross, Karin Brulhardt and Reis Theobald.

FORT MYERS BEACH, Fla. — Emergency crews and search teams deployed across the battered flood zones of southwest Florida on Thursday, hunting for survivors and the missing while only beginning to measure the massive scope of destruction wrought the day before by one of the most powerful hurricanes ever to hit the United States.

More than 2.3 million Floridians remained without power Thursday night in a region where a three-pronged punch of storm surge, fearsome winds and downpours inundated roads, flipped boats, unmoored houses from their foundations and destroyed at least two bridges to barrier islands.

Yet even as the Gulf Coast emerged from more than a day of harrowing weather, Ian made clear it was not yet finished. Early Thursday, weakened to a tropical storm, it dumped record-setting rain on what officials predicted would be a deadly and costly path across the peninsula. It then moved offshore into the

SEE HURRICANE ON A8

Rescue effort: A daughter took to Twitter to get help for her mom. A8

IN THE NEWS



MICHELLE LIMINA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Coolio dies at 59 Best known for "Gangsta's Paradise," he also invited us on a "Fantastic Voyage." Obituary, B6. Appreciation, C1

THE NATION Absenteeism in public schools soared during the pandemic, which experts say helps explain a plunge in test scores. A3

A JUDGE appointed by President Donald Trump said Trump's lawyers do not have to comply with the special master's order that they clarify claims on set Mar-4-Lago documents. A6

IN A RARE bipartisan compromise, the Senate passed a bill to avoid a

government shutdown until mid-December. A4

THE WORLD Britain's Queen Elizabeth II died of old age, according to her official death certificate, which did not list any other factors. A16

Vice President Harris toured the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea, becoming the most senior Biden administration official to inspect it during a

visit to Asta dominated

by Indo-Pacific security concerns. A16

THE ECONOMY A company that puts on for-profit Trump rallies is having trouble paying its bills. A18

THE REGION Metro's failure to properly track whether safety problems get fixed could put riders in danger, according to an audit. B1

The University of Maryland is dedicating a residence hall named to honor two Black students who broke barriers

on campus. B1

A jury was seated in the trial of Oath Keepers leader Stewart Rhodes and four other group members charged in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol. B5

Fairfax County Public Schools committed to hiring reforms after a counselor kept his job after being convicted of soliciting a minor. B4

The brother of a Baltimore teen whose 1999 slaying was the subject of the podcast "Serial" will appeal a decision to vacate Adnan Syed's murder conviction. B5

INSIDE



WEEKEND Museum mixers After hours parties are roaring back to life at D.C. art institutions.

STYLE 10 to tune in to A guide to what's worth watching in a diminished "Fall TV" season. C1