

"All the News
That's Fit to Print"

VOL. CLXXI ... No. 59,539

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2022

Printed in Chicago \$3.00

Around U.S., Voting Offices Raise Security Responding to Barrage of Violent Language

By NEIL VIDGOR

In Wisconsin, one of the nation's key swing states, cameras and plexiglass now fortify the reception area of a county election office in Madison, the capital, after a man wearing camouflage and a mask tried to open locked doors during an election in April.

In another bellwether area, Maricopa County, Ariz., where the beleaguered election workers had to be escorted through a scrum of election deniers to reach their cars in 2020, a security force was added to protect the perimeter of a vote tabulation center.

And in Colorado, the state's top election official, Jena Griswold, the secretary of state and a Democrat, resorted to paying for private security out of her budget after a stream of threats.

As the nation hurtles closer to the midterm elections, those who will oversee them are taking a variety of steps to beef up security for themselves, their employees, polling places and even drop boxes, tapping state and federal funding for a new set of measures.

The heightened vigilance comes as violent rhetoric from the right intensifies and as efforts to intimidate election officials by those who refuse to accept the results of the 2020 election become commonplace.

Discussing security in a recent interview with The Times, Ms. Griswold, 37, said that threats of violence had kept her and her aides up late at night as they combed through comments on social media.

At a right-wing group's gathering in Colorado this year, she said, a prominent election denier with militia ties suggested that she should be killed. That was when she concluded that her part-time security detail provided by the Colorado State Patrol wasn't enough.

"They called for me to be hung," said Ms. Griswold, who is running for re-election. "It's a long weekend. I'm home alone, and I only get seven hours of State Patrol coverage."



Fresh fruit for sale at GUM, a luxury shopping mall in Moscow, where business has continued to thrive during the fighting in Ukraine.

A War Out of Sight and (for Many) Out of Mind

By VALERIE HOPKINS

MOSCOW — On a recent evening in Red Square, a corps of elite paratroopers dressed in camouflage performed a battle-like dance with pyrotechnics. An Egyptian performer dressed as a pharaoh rode back and forth in a chariot wielding an ank, as an ancient Egyptian symbol of life, as a band played "Katyusha," a Soviet-era patriotic war song.

Natalya Nikonova, 44, was one of thousands of spectators cheering from the bleachers at a festival celebrating the military of Russia and friendly nations including Belarus, India and Venezuela.

"I was so thrilled that I just said Ms. Griswold, who is running for re-election. 'It's a long weekend. I'm home alone, and I only get seven hours of State Patrol coverage.'"

Even in places where there was never a shadow of a doubt about the political leanings of the electorate, election officials have found themselves under threat. In a Texas county that President Donald J. Trump won by 59 percentage points in 2020, all three election officials recently resigned, with at least one citing repeated death threats and stalking.

One in five local election officials who responded to a survey this year by the Brennan Center for Justice said that they were "very" or "somewhat" unlikely to continue serving through 2024.

The collective angst is a recurring theme at workshops and conferences attended by election officials, who say it is not unusual for them to exchange anecdotes about threatening messages or harassment at the polls.

Putin's Goals at Home Rely on Detachment Felt in Moscow

By ERIC Lipton

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JUUL WILL SETTLE FOR \$438 MILLION ON YOUTH VAPING NEARLY 3 DOZEN STATES

Company Acknowledges No Misdeeds as F.D.A. Weighs Its Future

By CHRISTINA JEWEIT

Juul Labs, fighting for its survival in the United States, on Tuesday tentatively agreed to pay \$438.5 million to settle an investigation by nearly three dozen states over marketing and sales practices that they contend set off the nation's teenage vaping crisis.

The company said it did not acknowledge any wrongdoing in the settlement, but that it was trying to "resolve issues from the past" while awaiting a decision by the Food and Drug Administration over whether it would be permitted to continue to sell its products.

Juul has been trying to reposition itself as a seller of vaping products that could help adults quit smoking. In June, it launched Juul Nicotines, an effort to rehabilitate its tarnished reputation and improve its diminished market value.

The tentative settlement prohibits the company from marketing to youth, funding education in schools and misrepresenting the level of nicotine in its products. But Juul had already discontinued several marketing practices and withdrawn many of its flavored pods that appealed to teenagers, under public pressure from lawmakers, parents and health experts.

On Tuesday, the inspectors reported having found Russian military equipment parked inside buildings, as well as damage to buildings housing fresh nuclear fuel and radioactive waste. Plant operators, they said, were being denied access to some parts of the site.

The Justice Department faces partly conflicting goals as it weighs how to proceed in its inquiry into the handling of classified documents at Mr. Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate following a key hearing, former prosecutors say.

There is no Guinness World Record for the most banging of a gavel by a local government official. But a Hinds County board of supervisors meeting last year in Mississippi was surely one for the history books.

What's News

Business & Finance

Juul Labs agreed to pay at least \$438.5 million in a settlement with more than 30 states, the latest step by the beleaguered e-cigarette maker to resolve allegations that it marketed its products to underage users.

The EU blocked Illumina's acquisition of cancer test developer Grail, putting a \$7.1 billion merger in jeopardy days after a U.S. administrative-law judge allowed it to go forward.

Financial pain is spreading in the junk-loan market, showing how interest-rate increases are hurting debt-laden companies and worrying investors that a credit crunch looms as the economy slows.

The U.S. aviation sector is expected to shrink faster in August than in July, according to separate surveys, adding to other mixed signals on the strength of the economy.

U.S. stocks fell, with the S&P 500, Nasdaq and Dow ending Tuesday's trading sessions down 0.4%, 0.7% and 0.6%, respectively.

Red Bath & Beyond named Laura Crossen, who was promoted to chief financial officer, as its interim CFO following the death of George Arano.

Lawyers for Musk and Twitter debated at a hearing over their stalled deal whether Musk can incorporate a shareholder's objections into his contract.

Theranos founder Elizabeth Holmes is seeking a new trial after she said a prosecution witness visited her house to expose her role in her trial, according to a court filing.

Quake Strikes China, Killing at Least 66, Injuring Hundreds



TO SAFETY: Rescuers on Tuesday use a helicopter to evacuate injured people in Luding County in China's Sichuan province after a 6.9-magnitude earthquake struck. At least 66 people were killed and more than 200 were injured.

Junk-Loan Defaults Trigger Jitters About a Credit Crunch

By MATT WAT

Financial pain is spreading in the junk-loan market, showing how interest-rate increases are hurting debt-laden companies and worrying investors that a credit crunch looms as the economy slows.

Deficits on so-called leveraged buyouts hit \$6 billion in August, the highest monthly total since October 2020, when pandemic shutdowns hobbled the U.S. economy, according to Fitch Ratings. The figure represents a fraction of the sprawling loan market, which doubled over the past decade to about \$5.5 trillion.

Investment banks are particularly vulnerable to the double whammy of weaker earnings and rising interest rates. Morgan Stanley's biggest loss last year was \$1.5 billion, according to Leveraged Buyout Research.

Investors worldwide charge less for junk bonds. The market is expected to shrink faster in August than in July, according to separate surveys, adding to other mixed signals on the strength of the economy.

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Juul Settles Probe on Underage Vaping

Company to pay at least \$438.5 million to 33 states and Puerto Rico, curb marketing

By JENNIFER MALONEY

Juul Labs Inc. agreed to pay at least \$438.5 million in a settlement with more than 30 states, the latest step by the beleaguered e-cigarette maker to resolve allegations that it marketed its products to underage users.

The settlement includes a ban on the sale of flavored e-cigarettes to minors, a requirement for the company to fund education programs in schools, and a requirement for Juul to fund research on the health effects of e-cigarettes.

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Plea From U.N. To End Shelling At Nuclear Site

By ERIC Lipton and MATTHEW MPORKE BIGG

The United Nations' nuclear watchdog on Tuesday called for a no-fire zone around an embattled Ukrainian nuclear generator, but like the plant itself, the agency was quickly caught up in the war between Russia and Ukraine.

In a highly anticipated report, nuclear inspectors who had to wade their way through the battlefield to reach the plant said they were "gravely concerned" about conditions there.

"We are playing with fire, and something very very catastrophic could take place," Rafael Mariano Grossi, the U.N. official who led the inspectors, said in an address to the Security Council on Tuesday afternoon.

Occupied by Russian forces just after they invaded Ukraine in March, the Zaporizhzhia nuclear complex has been limping along for months, its vital cooling system and other equipment damaged by shelling.

On Tuesday, the inspectors reported having found Russian military equipment parked inside buildings, as well as damage to buildings housing fresh nuclear fuel and radioactive waste. Plant operators, they said, were being denied access to some parts of the site.

World-Wide

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INSIDE



JASON GAY
Francesca Schiavone's long journey to a win against Rafael Nadal.

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BREACH

A video showed that conservative activists had access to county voting systems in Georgia in January 2021. PAGE A17

A New School Year in Uvalde

Classes resumed on Tuesday after a summer of grief in the South Texas community. PAGE A14.

China's Tangled Role in iPhone Keeps Apple From Straying Far

By TRIPP MICKLE

SAN FRANCISCO — This fall, Apple will make some of its flagship iPhones outside China for the first time, a small but significant change for a company that has built one of the most sophisticated supply chains in the world with the help of the Chinese authorities.

Unruly Times Spark Ruckus Of Gaveling

By KIM MACKEARL and PETER LORRIS

BRUSSELS — The European Union blocked Illumina Inc.'s acquisition of cancer test developer Grail, putting a \$7.1 billion merger in jeopardy days after a U.S. administrative-law judge allowed it to go forward.

EU Flexes Its Power, Blocks U.S. Merger

By KIM MACKEARL and PETER LORRIS

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Schools Try to Reverse Losses In Learning During Pandemic

By SCOTT CAHILL

ASHLAND CITY, Tenn. — Delaney Tidwell says she loves reading. The tricky part for her is understanding the words on the page.

Salesforce. #1 CRM.

Ranked #1 for CRM Applications based on IDC 2021 Revenue Market Share Worldwide. Includes a line graph showing market share from 2017 to 2021, with Salesforce leading significantly over competitors like SAP, Oracle, and Microsoft.