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FRIDAY, MAY 17, 2024

Prices in Canada may be higher

#### Today, dry, turning warmer, partly cloudy, high 73. Tonight, increasing clouds, mainly dry, low 57. Tomorrow, cloudy, possible late showers, high 67. Weather map, Page A24.

NATO CONSIDERS

SENDING TROOPS

TO HELP UKRAINE

FOR TRAINING RECRUITS

For Now, U.S. Is Resisting

Move That Would Pull

It Deeper Into War

This article is by Helene Cooper, Julian E. Barnes, Eric Schmitt and

 ${\tt BRUSSELS-NATO}$  allies are

inching closer to sending troops

into Ukraine to train Ukrainian

forces, a move that would be an-

other blurring of a previous red

line and could draw the United

States and Europe more directly

Ukraine's manpower shortage

has reached a critical point, and its position on the battlefield in re-

cent weeks has seriously wors-

ened as Russia has accelerated its

advances to take advantage of de-

lays in shipments of American

weapons. As a result, Ukrainian

officials have asked their Ameri-

can and NATO counterparts to

help train 150,000 new recruits closer to the front line for faster

So far, the United States has

said no, but Gen. Charles Q.

Brown Jr., the chairman of the

Joint Chiefs of Staff, said on

Thursday that a NATO deploy-

ment of trainers appeared inevita-

ble. "We'll get there eventually,

For now, he said, an effort inside

Ukraine would put "a bunch of

NATO trainers at risk" and would

probably mean deciding whether

Lara Jakes.

into the war.

deployment.

over time," he said.

\$4.00

## **Turning Point** As Auto Union Eyes Alabama

Southern Leaders See Risk in U.A.W. Wins

By JACK EWING

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. - More than 5.000 Mercedes-Benz workers in Alabama are voting this week on whether to join the United Automobile Workers union, a decision both supporters and opponents say will have consequences far beyond two factories near Tuscaloosa where the German carmaker churns out luxury sport utility vehicles and batteries for electric cars.

Conservative political leaders have portrayed the union campaign to organize Mercedes workers as an assault by outsiders on the region's economy and way of life. The vote tally is expected to be released by federal officials on

Six Southern governors, including Kay Ivey, an Alabama Republican, issued a statement last month criticizing unions as "special interests looking to come into our state and threaten our jobs and the values we live by." Alabama recently passed a law intended to discourage union organ-

For the union, a win would add to a string of victories in the South, where organized labor has traditionally been weak, and provide momentum to the U.A.W.'s efforts to win over workers at other nonunion automakers like Hyundai, Toyota, Honda and Tesla.

If the U.A.W. loses, it could sharply slow down a campaign by the union's president, Shawn Fain, to organize auto and battery plants across the country. That effort began after the union last fall reached new contracts with hefty pay raises and other benefits for workers at General Motors, Ford Motor and Stellantis, the parent company of Chrysler, Jeep and

In Alabama, which was a crucible of the civil rights movement, union organizers and supporters cast the Mercedes campaign as part of a decades-long struggle to dismantle an economic system based on the exploitation of poor

Continued on Page A20



At a U.A.W. organizing event in Birmingham, Ala.



The Ukrainian police with an evacuee from Vovchansk, which was attacked. Russia's gains intensify Ukraine's need for trained recruits.

## Before Attack, Slovakians Felt Political Strain

By ANDREW HIGGINS and CASSANDRA VINOGRAD

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia - To the government that charged him, he was a "lone wolf," an off-kilter individual representing nobody but himself when he pumped at least four bullets into Prime Minister Robert Fico of Slovakia.

The assassination attempt on Wednesday, however, has put a spotlight on a far wider collective malfunction in Slovakia. In this country in Central Europe, society and political culture are so bitterly divided that the violence attributed to a man who the authorities say acted alone has become yet another club with which each side can beat the other.

"There is a level of polarization that has never existed before in this country," said Daniel Milo, a former government official responsible for tracking disinformation who now works for a technology company. "I've never seen anything like it," he added.

The Covid-19 pandemic, he said, hardened previously fluid lines into what have since become hostile camps, with little room for nuance. Roughly half the population welcomed vaccines and half rejected them. "It became: Are you for or against? Do you believe or Continued on Page A11

## At Alito's Home, a 'Stop the Steal' Symbol Flew

By JODI KANTOR

After the 2020 presidential election, as some Trump supporters falsely claimed that President Biden had stolen the office, many of them displayed a startling symbol outside their homes, on their cars and in online posts: an upsidedown American flag.

One of the homes flying an inverted flag during that time was the residence of Supreme Court Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr., in Alexandria, Va., according to photographs and interviews with neigh-

The upside-down flag was aloft on Jan. 17, 2021, the images showed. President Donald J. Trump's supporters, including some brandishing the same symbol, had rioted at the Capitol a Sign of Trump Support While Justice Mulled 2020 Election Case

week and a half before. Mr. Biden's inauguration was three days Alarmed neighbors snapped photographs, some of which were recently obtained by The New York Times. Word of the flag filtered back to the court, people who worked there said in interviews.

While the flag was up, the court was still contending with whether to hear a 2020 election case, with Justice Alito on the losing end of that decision. In coming weeks, the justices will rule on two cli-

mactic cases involving the storming of the Capitol on Jan. 6, including whether Mr. Trump has immunity for his actions. Their decisions will shape how accountable he can be held for trying to overturn the last presidential election and his chances for re-election in the upcoming one.

"I had no involvement whatsoever in the flying of the flag," Justice Alito said in an emailed statement to The Times. "It was briefly placed by Mrs. Alito in response to a neighbor's use of objectionable and personally insulting language on yard signs.'

Judicial experts said in interviews that the flag was a clear violation of ethics rules, which seek to avoid even the appearance of bias, and could sow doubt about Continued on Page A20

to use precious air defenses to protect the trainers instead of critical Ukrainian infrastructure near the battlefield. General Brown briefed reporters on his plane en route to a NATO meeting in Brus-As a part of NATO, the United

States would be obligated under the alliance's treaty to aid in the defense of any attack on the trainers, potentially dragging America into the war.

The White House has been adamant that it will not put American troops, not even trainers, on the ground in Ukraine, a position that an administration official reiterated on Thursday. The administration has also urged NATO allies

But in February, President Emmanuel Macron of France said that "nothing should be ruled out" when it comes to sending Western troops to Ukraine. Mr. Macron has doubled down on his comment since then, even after senior American diplomats asked him to

The government of Estonia has not ruled out the possibility of sending troops to western Ukraine to take over rear roles that could free Ukrainian troops to go to the front, Estonia's national security adviser said this week.

Lithuania's foreign minister, Gabrielius Landsbergis, backed Mr. Macron's stance in an interview with the The Guardian last week. "Our troops have been training Ukrainians in Ukraine before the war," he said, adding, "So returning to this tradition

might be quite doable." The American military has done training for Ukrainian troops Continued on Page A10

# Governor in Texas Pardons Man In Fatal Shooting of a Protester

By J. DAVID GOODMAN

HOUSTON — Gov. Greg Abbott ist online comments he had made of Texas on Thursday pardoned a man who was convicted of fatally shooting a protester during a Black Lives Matter demonstration in the summer of 2020, fulfilling a promise he made last year amid pressure from conservatives

The decision immediately followed a pardon recommendation from the state's Board of Pardons and Paroles, whose members are appointed by the governor. Law-yers for the man, Daniel S. Perry, argued that he had acted in selfdefense against the protester, who was carrying an AK-47-style rifle.

Mr. Perry was sentenced to 25 years in prison in an emotional hearing last year in which prosecutors presented evidence of rac-

and said that psychological experts had found him to be "basically a loaded gun." As the pardons board considered the case, lawyers with the Travis County district attorney, José Garza, met with the board to argue against a pardon.

Under Texas law, a recommendation from the board is necessary before the governor can grant a pardon.

'Texas has one of the strongest 'stand your ground' laws of selfdefense that cannot be nullified by a jury or a progressive district attorney," Mr. Abbott, a Republican, said in a statement on Thursday. "I thank the board for its thorough

Continued on Page A20



## **Breathing In the Art**

The Louvre is celebrating the Olympics with exercise classes. Tickets sold out in a flash. Page A4.

# Are Scores of Women Quitting the Pill, as Social Media Suggests?

## By ALISHA HARIDASANI GUPTA

The woman in the video looks resolute, and a little sad, as she cuts up a pack of birth control pills. "These silly little pills have literally ruined me as a person," reads the caption. The clip, which is on TikTok, has 1.1 million likes. It's one of thousands that have proliferated on social media in re-

cent years with virtually the same message: The pill causes terrible, sometimes irreversible side effects, and women should free themselves from it.

Anecdotal reports from news outlets have suggested that women are quitting the pill in large numbers because of this type of online post. "We've known for a long time that people really rely

#### Contrary to Anecdotal Reports, Usage Is Up

on their social circles to help them with medical decision making as it relates to contraception," said Dr. Deborah Bartz, an obstetriciangynecologist at Brigham and

Women's Hospital. Against a backdrop of increasingly restrictive abortion access, the idea that women might be giving up a reliable form of contraception because of social media hype has concerned researchers and doc-

But, according to initial data, prescriptions for the birth control Continued on Page A19



**INTERNATIONAL A4-11** 

## **Nuclear Expert Turns Envoy**

With atomic fears rising, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency is more like a mediator

## **Easing Congo Sanctions**

A deal to allow the Israeli billionaire Dan Gertler to cash out has angered human rights activists. PAGE A8 NATIONAL A12-21

## Biden Invokes Privilege

The move follows a committee vote to hold the attorney general in contempt for withholding recordings.

## **Cross-Examination for Cohen**

Donald J. Trump's criminal trial entered a critical and combative phase as his lawyer grilled a star witness. PAGE A14

**OBITUARIES B11-12** 

#### Painter With Personal Palette Katherine Porter's was an intuitive

Expressionism, unique in its large scale, its unmistakably unfiltered quality and its vivid colors. She was 82. PAGE B12



**BUSINESS B1-6** 

## That Sounds Too Familiar!

A couple who work as voice actors say an A.I. company cloned their voices without their permission.

## Watchdog's Funding Upheld

The Supreme Court backed the funding mechanism of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. PAGE B1 SPORTS B7-10

## The Catcher in the Way

In modern baseball, catchers play closer to the plate, helping them frame pitches but making them even more vulnerable to injury. As one manager said, "The risk is extreme." PAGE B7

## Mark Your Calendar

The N.F.L. released its schedule for the coming season, with all the marquee matchups, bye weeks and quick turnarounds, and with the Jets playing six games in prime time. PAGE B9

OPINION A22-23 **Margaret Renkl** 

PAGE A23



## A Creator of Readable Art

Jenny Holzer's signboards predated by a decade the news "crawl" that runs across the bottom of the TV screen. She is continuing to bend the curve. PAGE C1

