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China’s automation drive has been guided by government directives. Clockwise from top left: a robot with a humanoid hand, which is still in testing, at a Zeekr automobile factory in Ningbo, China; a robotic cart with auto parts; a half-marathon to show advances in automation, featuring 20 humanoid robots; and an assembly line.

11 Short Weeks
To Meet Pledge
On Trade Deals

By ANA SWANSON

WASHINGTON — For a president who advertises himself as a paramount deal maker, the next 11 weeks will be a pivotal test, as his advisers race to accomplish what no other administration has done before and reach dozens of individual trade deals with other governments.

President Trump has promised big gains for American trade, and officials from Japan, South Korea, India and elsewhere have been pushing for agreements as they look to forestall punishing tariffs. But trade experts say the administration has set up a seemingly impossible task, given that traditional trade deals typically take months or years to negotiate.

Mr. Trump has tried to use tariffs as leverage to notch quick agreements, and his trade adviser, Peter Navarro, has promised “90 deals in 90 days.” But the levies are creating chaos and financial pain for many businesses, and they have not brought some of America’s largest trading partners, including China, to the table.

Some U.S. trade with China has ground to a halt after the countries imposed triple-digit tariffs on each others’ products, and a wave of bankruptcies, especially among small U.S. businesses that rely on Chinese imports, appears to be looming if the trade barriers are maintained.

Some Trump officials recognize that the situation with China is not sustainable and have been strategizing how to reduce the tariffs between the countries, two people familiar with the discussions said. Another person familiar with the discussions said administration officials were concerned about the hit to the stock market, which has experienced intense volatility and some of its worst trading days in years. The S&P 500 is down more than 10 percent since Mr. Trump’s Jan. 20 inauguration.

On Tuesday, Mr. Trump signaled that the 145 percent tariff he put on Chinese imports could drop. “It won’t be anywhere near

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Army of Robots Gives China Edge in Trade War

By KEITH BRADSHER

NINGBO, China — China’s secret weapon in the trade war is an army of factory robots, powered by artificial intelligence, that have revolutionized manufacturing.

Factories are being automated across China at a breakneck pace. With engineers and electricians tending to fleets of robots, these operations are bringing down the cost of manufacturing while improving quality.

As a result, China’s factories will be able to keep the price of many of its exports lower, giving it an advantage in fighting the trade war and President Trump’s high tariffs. China is also facing new trade barriers by the European Union and developing countries, including Brazil, India, Turkey and Thailand.

Factories are now more automated in China than in the United States, Germany or Japan. China has more factory robots for every

Advanced Automation
in Factories Keeps
Exports Cheap

10,000 manufacturing workers than any other country except South Korea or Singapore, according to the International Federation of Robotics.

China’s automation drive has been guided by government directives and backed with huge investment. And as robots replace workers, automation is positioning China to continue to dominate mass production even as its labor force ages and becomes less willing to take industrial jobs.

He Liang, founder and chief executive of Yunmu Intelligent Manufacturing, one of China’s top

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Cuomo’s Tactic
For Comeback:
Try to Lie Low

**By EMMA G. FITZSIMMONS
and JEFFERY C. MAYS**

He arrives at campaign events like a well-preserved relic of the political past, a little leaner and more gray, but spry enough to extract himself from behind the wheel of his muscle car of the moment, a sleek Dodge Charger.

Questions?

He’ll take a few, perhaps, but only after the event — typically a Sunday visit to a Black church in New York City.

Will he attend the next Democratic mayoral forum?

Probably not, especially if the other candidates, who trail him in the polls, might be onstage with him. But if given a chance to speak alone, unencumbered by rivals who might draw attention to the scandals that led to his resignation as governor in 2021, Andrew M. Cuomo may well be interested.

In his comeback run for mayor of New York City, Mr. Cuomo has fully embraced a so-called Rose

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MAYOR’S RACE Adrienne Adams, the Council speaker, picked up four big endorsements. **PAGE A17**

THE WEATHER
Today, mostly sunny with light winds, high 72. Tonight, partly cloudy, mild, low 58. Tomorrow, a mixture of clouds and sunshine, high 76. Weather map, Page A22.

U.S. PRESSES KYIV
TO ACCEPT A DEAL
FAVORING MOSCOW

‘FREEZE’ OF TERRITORY

Zelensky Rejects the Plan
— Trump Calls Him
‘Inflammatory’

This article is by David E. Sanger, Michael D. Shear and Mark Landler.

WASHINGTON — President Trump and his top aides demanded on Wednesday that Ukraine accede to an American-designed proposal that would essentially grant Russia all the territory it has gained in the war, while offering Kyiv only vague security assurances.

The American plan, which would also explicitly block Ukraine from ever joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, was rejected by President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine, whose long-running dispute with Mr. Trump broke into the open two months ago in the Oval Office. The proposal also appears to call for the United States to recognize Russia’s 2014 takeover of Crimea, a region of Ukraine.

“There is nothing to talk about,” Mr. Zelensky said. “This violated our Constitution. This is our territory, the territory of Ukraine.”

Mr. Trump shot back on social media that the Ukrainian president was being “inflammatory” and said he would only “prolong the ‘killing field.’”

Mr. Trump suggested the proposal was on the verge of acceptance by President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. “I think we have a deal with Russia,” he told reporters at the White House. The problem, he suggested, was Mr. Zelensky.

“I thought it might be easier to deal with Zelensky,” he said. “So far it’s harder.”

Vice President JD Vance struck a similar theme while traveling in India.

He said the United States would “walk away” from the peace process if both Ukraine and Russia refused to accept the American terms. But Mr. Zelensky was clearly the target.

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KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Vice President JD Vance offered an “explicit proposal.”



TOMAS MUNTA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Swiss Guards accompanied Pope Francis’ coffin in a procession to St. Peter’s Basilica on Wednesday.

A Revolutionary Pope, Just Not as All Expected

By JASON HOROWITZ

VATICAN CITY — When Pope Francis convened Roman Catholic bishops at the Vatican in 2019 to discuss the ordination of married men in remote parts of South America, the meeting raised expectations about the possibility of revolutionizing the celibate priesthood.

The bishops recommended he do it, and Francis himself had long said he wanted change in the church to come from the bottom up.

But Francis ultimately balked, deciding that the church wasn’t yet ready to lift a roughly 1,000-year-old restriction. Many of his supporters, who expected him to be a pope of radical change, felt let down.

It was a salient example of how Francis, who died on Monday at 88, was a pope of great, often out-sized, expectations. His revolutionary and free-wheeling style led Catholics across the spectrum to invest him with their most ambitious — at times unrealistic — hopes and fears, sometimes independent of what he said or did.

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SPORTS B7-10

From No-Name to Nearly No. 1
Cam Ward, the quarterback projected as the top pick in Thursday’s N.F.L. draft, used doubts to fuel his ascent. **PAGE B7**

Rangers Draped in Dread
After missing the N.H.L. playoffs, the team fired its third coach in four years and added to a culture of chaos. **PAGE B9**

INTERNATIONAL A4-10
An Exodus Across Canada
With homes nearing \$1 million in cities like Vancouver, Canadians are moving, and they want the next prime minister to address housing affordability. **PAGE A4**

NATIONAL A11-19, 22
Same-Sex Marriage Battle
State efforts to urge the Supreme Court to reconsider have not advanced, but they have reopened the issue. **PAGE A11**

Key Senate Democrat to Retire
Richard J. Durbin’s departure will set off a primary for his Illinois seat and open a top leadership slot. **PAGE A16**



ARTS C1-6
Back in the Limelight
Minka Kelly’s acting career had stalled. Then came her memoir, and now the Netflix hit “Ransom Canyon.” **PAGE C1**

The Brick Resistance
In the Disney+ “Star Wars” series “Andor,” rebellion resembles a construction project. **PAGE C1**

BUSINESS B1-6
U.S. Seeks Reforms at I.M.F.
The Treasury secretary called for major overhauls to the missions of the fund and the World Bank, but said the U.S. remained committed to a leadership role at the institutions. **PAGE B1**

Dead Apps Rise at Meta Trial
In the landmark antitrust case, tech executives have harked back to a by-gone era of Silicon Valley when social apps like Myspace, Path, Orkut and Google Plus boomed. **PAGE B1**

OPINION A20-21
Jeffrey Toobin **PAGE A20**



THURSDAY STYLES D1-6
A Trump-Friendly Reporter
Natalie Winters may be a White House correspondent, but she spends a lot of time reporting and commenting on what she calls “opposition forces.” **PAGE D1**

